Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge Fitzroy High School for their involvement in this project as the demonstration site and thank Principal Pauline Rice and her staff for their participation and enthusiasm.

Fitzroy Demonstration Pilot Project is an initiative of Yarra Education Youth Commitment and was developed by members of the School Community Action Team- known as Fitzroy Engagement And Transition (FEAT) Action Team- and supported by funding from the Inner Northern Youth Connections Consortia members NMIT, the Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network (INLLEN) and Fitzroy High School itself.

Thank you for the high level expertise and passion demonstrated by FEAT in their strategic coordination of the Project and for their ongoing commitment to continue this important work.

This report has been prepared by Rebecca Creighton, Project Officer, FEAT Project 2013-2014.

Project Partners:

- Fitzroy High School
- Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network Inc
- City of Yarra- Youth Services
- headspace Collingwood
- Inner Northern Youth Connections Consortia
- Melbourne Citymission
- Youth Connect
- YSAS
- Yarra Education Youth Commitment
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Transition has always been an important focus of Fitzroy High School. The school welcomes students each year from an average of fifty feeder primary schools. When new students and their families join the Fitzroy High School community they generally feel a strong sense of belonging and go on to contribute to the rich culture of the school. This project has afforded us the resources and expertise to focus on the small number of students and their families for whom this has not been their experience, and to identify a range of strategies to better support these members of our school community.

Through this project, the school community has gained a greater understanding of transition theory and the stages of transition and recognises that transition is not limited to the experience of moving from primary school to secondary school. Our community recognises the complexity of transition; reviewing and mapping our transition processes was insightful and informed our practice. We valued the opportunity to listen to what members of our school community – students, families, and staff members – had to tell us about how the school engages with students and their families, and where we can improve.

We valued the opportunity of working more closely with a group of primary and secondary schools in the City of Yarra. Our Shared Learning Community developed a collegiate approach to transition and produced the online transition form. We hope this way of sharing student transition information from primary to secondary will ease the load of our feeder primary schools and provide us with rich and timely information to make informed decisions to assist the transition process for our new students.

It was fortuitous that our Project Officer also worked for City of Yarra Youth Services, which enabled her to refer students to their services and provide support to students in both contexts, providing a sense of holist community support. We intend to maintain extend and our networks in order to further develop the collaborative, multidisciplinary partnership model which is at the heart of this project.

Engaging in this project has also helped to inform our leadership structure. At the beginning of 2014, we created a new role for a Wellbeing Leader, as well as refining the role of the Pathways and Community Leader. Both of these roles are key in the transition process and will be leading the implementation of many of the recommendations of the project. Through attending the 2013 Transition Forum, we also discovered the Hands on Learning partnership program, which we have initiated in 2014. This program will assist young people who are experiencing attendance, engagement or wellbeing issues and contribute to a better transition.

I would like to thank Rebecca Creighton, Project Officer and author of report, the Yarra Education Youth Commitment, the City of Yarra and the INLLEN, in particular Rochelle Darby who has been a great contributor to this project. I would also like to thank Zita Pinda of Seven Ways Consulting and the members of the Leadership Team of Fitzroy High School who participated in the project: Linda Mitchell, Assistant Principal; Sandra Dickins, Pathways and Community Leader; Jenny Fulford, Indigo (Year 7 & 8) Team Leader; Rainer Parker-Stebbing, Wellbeing Leader; and Peter Bennet, Data Management Leader. In addition, I acknowledge the assistance of the school psychologist and SSSOs in the project, Julian Couzins, Carl Castle and Karen Hutchinson.

Pauline Rice
Principal
Fitzroy High School
Executive Summary

Why the Project?

Project Context

The Fitzroy High School and Community Demonstration Pilot Project was developed as a response to the recommendations of the Yarra Primary Secondary School Transition Project (YPSSTP) Report ‘Joining the Dots’. The YPSSTP is a major initiative of the Yarra Education Youth Commitment (YEYC). The YEYC is a network of Yarra schools, community organisations, government agencies and industry partners working in partnership to improve education, training and employment opportunities for young people in the City of Yarra. This is a strategic network, which has an action orientation to support its young people. The YEYC has identified primary to secondary transition as a critical issue. The Fitzroy Demonstration Pilot Project was undertaken at Fitzroy High School in from May 2013-June 2014 and was given the working title Fitzroy Engagement And Transition (FEAT) Project.

School Context

Fitzroy High School is a secondary government school with over 500 students. The school values children as individual learners who are full of potential and capable of excellence. Our students will be lifelong learners, reflective and creative thinkers, responsible and active citizens, and resilient and adaptable problem solvers able to navigate through an uncertain and constantly changing future. Fitzroy is a learning community where students and teams of teachers work together to: achieve high standards so that all students fulfill their capabilities in academic, intellectual, social, emotional and physical development; celebrate diversity and embrace individual differences, including class, culture, race, gender, sexuality and ethnicity; build a cohesive, compassionate and proud school community with a productive legacy for the future; develop beyond our current capacity through continuous change and review; and participate in and contribute to our wider community.

How was it implemented?

School Community Action Team

A School Community Action Team (SCAT) model was used to support and enhance the project. The SCAT is a whole of community approach that is informed by the School, Family and Community Partnerships Handbook (2010, Epsein.Joyce et al). This collaborative partnership model was formed in May 2013 and titled the Fitzroy Engagement And Transition Action Team (FEAT). The FEAT Action Team included the following members who met at regular intervals throughout.

Fitzroy High School
- Pauline Rice, Principal
- Linda Mitchell, Assistant Principal
- Sandra Dickins, Pathways and Community Leader
- Jenny Fulford, Indigo (Year 7 & 8) Team Leader
- Rainer Parker-Stebbing, Wellbeing Leader

Community Partners
- Rochelle Darby, Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network (INLLEN)
- Christine Denton, Headspace Collingwood
- Anna Hutchens, City of Yarra- Youth Services
- Horace Wansbrough, Youth Support + Advocacy Service (YSAS)
- Vanessa Rendina, Melbourne Citymission
- Keegan Bone, Youth Connect (Youth Connections)
**Project Brief**

A Project Brief was developed by the FEAT to define the scope of the project and to focus attention on four key areas (refer to Appendix 1):

1. **Primary Secondary Transition (Years 6-9)**
   Support Fitzroy High School to further develop and implement a primary to secondary school transition plan, which incorporates transition from primary as well as from team to team within Fitzroy High School. Develop better tracking systems and improve the understanding of various stages of transition and the processes of transition from years 6-9.

2. **Research and Capacity Building**
   Work with Fitzroy High School to collect and report on data about risk indicators and factors for students who disengage in the early years of secondary schools. Make recommendations about strategies to build the school’s capacity and take next steps, working within a partnership model.

3. **Advocacy Case Management**
   Develop a partnership approach to improve educational engagement of up to 20 Fitzroy High School students focusing on early intervention (Years 7-9) who are presenting signs of disengagement or are absent from school on average 2 days or more per week.

4. **Parent and Family Engagement**
   Develop a parent and family engagement strategy using a community approach to engage students in their learning. Actively engage parents in all young person’s learning and school community and build parental and family capacity to nurture and encourage successful learning practices.

**Terms of Reference**

A Terms of Reference was developed as the first stage of the project by the FEAT to ensure the partners were in agreement about how the project would be implemented (refer to Appendix 2).

**Action Plan**

An Action Plan was developed and regularly updated with members of the FEAT and the Project Officer (refer to Appendix 3).

**Role of Project Officer**

A Project Officer was employed for two days per week to undertake the advocacy case management; work with the FEAT on the other project areas; and help to write the final project report.

The role of the Project Officer involved several stages as outlined in the table below. The first six months focused predominately on the Advocacy Case Management area of the project while the second six months focused on the Parent and Family Engagement area and the writing of the report.
### Project Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Develop project referral pathways, project surveys, assessment forms</td>
<td>July – August 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meet Year Level Leaders and teachers to discuss Project and potential referrals</td>
<td>August – September 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meet students referred individually to explain the Project and gain an understanding of the issues and provide advocacy case management to assist reengagement into education</td>
<td>August - December 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Provision of weekly to fortnightly follow up sessions with students and parents where appropriate</td>
<td>August-December 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provision of a ‘drop-in’ like space for teachers for secondary consultations and students referred in need of youth counselling support</td>
<td>August-December 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Develop Interim Report and Recommendations Prepare for next 6months</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Continue providing advocacy case management sessions</td>
<td>January- June 2014</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Participate and support FHS Transition Auditing process with key school transitions staff</td>
<td>January-March 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Conduct Parent and Family consultations alongside INLLEN Partnership Broker</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Develop Final Report and Recommendations</td>
<td>June 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What were the key findings?

The key findings, outlined in full later in this report, indicate that there is much work to be done in the area of transition, both within the school and across the system. Transition is a broad term which covers not only the major change from primary to secondary school but also movements in year level, class, teacher, friendship group and the challenges of coming back to school after being absent. The issues nominated by students and parents, as well as the case studies, show that many of the issues are complex and interrelated. Absence from school can certainly be an indicator of a student at risk but is not always reliable. The formation and maintenance of good relationships is of paramount importance in ensuring that indicators of risk are identified early and followed up strategically.

A key finding was that students who experienced difficulty in transition from primary to secondary often had similar issues at primary school, such as few friends, bullying, poor achievement or low self esteem. For some students, literacy and numeracy issues that presented at primary school were exacerbated when they came to secondary school, especially as they moved from Year 7 into Year 8 and beyond. One of the major challenges is for the secondary school to learn about students’ individual characteristics and needs in a timely fashion so that programs can be implemented which support them through their transition. The concept of developing “learner profiles” of all students moving from primary to secondary is a worthy one, but will need careful planning and possibly more resources than are typically available in the system at the present time. For example, releasing teachers so that they can visit each other’s schools, would provide opportunities for the sharing of pedagogy and student information that is not currently afforded by paper, verbal or online transition processes.
The project has highlighted the significant impact positive parenting strategies can have on education for young people and their experience at school. Of particular priority are the students whose families are more difficult to contact or engage. Utilising a variety of strategies to engage these parents has been useful. This includes providing language assistance when required, making informal phone calls, arranging meetings and possibly home visits. There are some advantages to a Project Officer making this contact if the parents’ own experience of teachers and schools has historically been negative. It is also important to hold focus groups and to seek the view of parents and families.

Finally, the Project has shown the merits of working in a collaborative, multidisciplinary partnership model with external providers whose expertise in wellbeing and community engagement can be brought to bear on the important subject of transition. There are many excellent transition resources available to schools and the process of reviewing our practice, identifying the gaps and committing to improvement has been empowering.

What are the key recommendations?

The key recommendations, outlined in full later in this report, indicate, firstly, that schools need to plan carefully for key personnel and staffing structures which support transition. Fitzroy High School has been establishing staff in key roles, such as the Wellbeing Leader and the Pathways and Community Leader and is embedding these roles within the engagement and wellbeing and pathways and transitions structures of the school. Relationship and capacity building which supports transition is also a key recommendation, including further developing links with external agencies which provide youth services.

There are also recommendations about using the research and tools that are available to continue mapping, auditing and reviewing primary to secondary transition processes. Developing stronger links with primary schools and implementing processes which enable the free and timely flow of information is an important recommendation and requires system-wide changes in order to be more efficient and successful. In addition, putting more resources into the parent and family engagement strategy is seen to be an important way of making sure that families are better informed and included in the transition journey.

There are a number of recommendations about early identification of students at risk of having a poor primary to secondary or year to year level transition and the best way to provide support to these students and their families. Processes around referring students, including referrals to the Project Officer; the use of the SSSO service; and referrals to external agencies have been made. It is recommended that schools contact DEECD before setting up a project such as this one, to ensure that the correct privacy and consent forms have been used when referring to a Project Officer within the school.

Some of the recommendations are around creating programs which provide support and early intervention to students at risk. Fitzroy High School has implemented that Hands on Learning program this year and will continue to develop that program, along with peer support programs to assist students with developing friendships and countering bullying or low self-esteem.

Finally, there are important recommendations about the actual project processes. The reflections of the Project Officer indicate some of the areas where it is important to ensure that processes have been thought about and set up in advance of embarking on the project. These include orientation and project goals; student referrals and staff communication; and role clarity and supervision.
Primary Secondary Transition (Years 6-9)

Aim

Support Fitzroy High School to further develop and implement a primary to secondary school’s transition plan, which incorporates transition from primary as well as from team to team within Fitzroy High School. Develop better tracking systems and improve the understanding of various stages of transition and the processes of transition from Years 6-9.

Objectives

- Better understand the process and various stages of transition from years 6-9
- Identify at an early stage who might be “at risk” during the transition process
- Enable better collection and sharing of data about student learning to build “learner profiles”
- Strengthen and maintain relationships with primary schools and increased usage of the Online Transition Form
- Incorporate the Student Online Case System (SOCS) into the transition process to allow better identification of issues

Methodology

- A Fitzroy High School staff member was on the steering committee for the Yarra Education Youth Commitment Joining the Dots Transition Forum
- Key Fitzroy High School staff members attended the Joining the Dots Transition Forum in 2013
- A Fitzroy High School representative was on the steering committee for and community member of the Yarra Primary Secondary School Transition Project
- Fitzroy High School was one of five schools in Yarra to participate in the Transition Review Audit process
- The Project Officer interviewed the Fitzroy High School Indigo (Years 7 & 8) Team Leader, participating students and their families to determine successes and challenges of transition
- The school’s internal Student Management Tool was used to record and share information about students and in some cases the Online Transition Form was used
- The Student Online Case System (SOCS) was used when students were referred to SSSOs

Actions

- Preliminary exploration of the CEOM Transition audit against Fitzroy High School transition processes began at the Joining the Dots Forum
- Completed Transition Review Audit to document processes already in existence and to identify gaps in the school’s transition process
- Completed Plan for Action on Transition and Engagement matrix following Transition Review Audit process, which identifies short term and medium term transition goals for the school
- In 2014, created a new role in the school’s leadership structure: Pathways and Community Leader, a Leading Teacher role incorporating transition, career development and community liaison
- Implemented a Pathways and Transitions Leadership Team and allocated meeting time in the school’s meeting schedule
• In conjunction with the Shared Learning Community (group of five participating schools in transition review process):
  o determined student information required from feeder primary schools to improve Year 6 to 7 transition
  o developed common online transition form to collect student information from primary schools
  o contributed to the development of “Preparing for Secondary School – a Guide for Parents” to aid improved transition
  o reached agreement on school tour script when providing advice on secondary school choice and supporting neighbouring schools in a collegial manner
• Completed Adapted grid for 4 Phases/5 Areas of Transition Model to better record all transition activity at Fitzroy High School – two areas of action were added: Recruitment and Internal Administration
• Completed Adapted Grid for 4 Phases/5 Areas of Transition Model for Years 6 to Year 8
• Commenced Adapted Grid for 4 Phases/5 Areas of Transition Model for Year 8 to Year 12
• Youth service agencies attended 2013-2014 Transition Evening and a representative from a youth service agency presented information for new Year 7 students and their families
• To address historical limited family engagement, provided an information night to prospective students and their families at Fitzroy Primary School, a key feeder school. Presenters included key Fitzroy High School teachers, former Fitzroy Primary School students and a parent with children in year 7 at Fitzroy High School and a child in Year 5 at Fitzroy Primary School.
• Provided a student to attend an information night at Carlton Gardens Primary School

Findings

• Valuable knowledge of transition processes are often not documented due to time constraints
• Completing the Transition Review Audit process was a very useful activity
• Receiving Primary School student information prior to transition is often not thorough, not received in good time, and sometimes, not at all
• The Online Transition Form was not consistently used by all schools
• SOCS cannot be used to assist transition until more schools are using the system
• Some of the “at risk” factors are not necessarily easy to identify at an early stage
• Some students arrive at high school not having any friends or knowing a few people but not having a close friendship group and this is more of a “risk” factor than previously thought
• The Student Management Tool is a good tool to share information about students within the school and helps to see patterns of attendance, achievement or behaviour which may indicate students being “at risk”
• The development of “learner profiles” will require much more work and greater communication between the primary and secondary schools
**Recommendations**

1. Develop closer bonds with key primary schools to encourage further and timely student transition information to support student transition into high school

2. Fitzroy High School Leadership Team and FEAT to continue to review and implement findings/actions from the Transition Review Audit process

3. Continue to map the transition processes across the whole school and identify areas for improvement

4. Year 7 and 8 Team Leader to work closely with the Wellbeing Leader to flag identified ‘high at risk’ students at the beginning of the year and develop partnerships with appropriate external agencies to provide support

5. Wellbeing Leader or SSSO to provide advocacy case management support for ‘at risk’ students and complete a ‘soft referral’ to an appropriate external agency if required

6. FEAT to provide wellbeing workshops for parents about challenges and successes of transition years

7. Youth service agencies to attend transition evenings to inform both parents and students of available services and pathways to support if required

8. Continue to work on the development of “learner profiles”, including teacher visits between primary and secondary schools if possible
Research and Capacity Building

Aim

Work with Fitzroy High School to collect and report on data about risk indicators and factors for students who disengage in the early years of secondary schools. Make recommendations about strategies to build the school’s capacity and take next steps, working within a partnership model.

Objectives

- Develop increased linkages or partnerships between the school and external services and agencies
- Clearly define ‘at risk’ and identify the indicators and determinants for ‘high at risk’ in years 6-9
- Map early intervention processes/strategies within the school and identify opportunities to improve
- Enable better collection and sharing of data about student learning to build a learner profile
- Build in data collection and report back at the completion of project
- Make recommendations to Fitzroy High School as to next steps for school
- Build capacity for school to continue work once funding has finished

Methodology

- The Project Officer worked with the Data Management Leader to gain information about attendance
- The CEOM transition tool was used to help identify “at risk” factors and early intervention strategies
- The Student Management Tool was used to track attendance, behaviour and achievement of students
- The Personal Well Being Index (PWI), a Youth Connections tool, was used with the students
- Case studies were developed from interviews with students and their families

Actions

- ‘At risk’ indicators were researched and issues identified by young people and their parents were documented
- Pre and Post school attendance of the students identified for service provision was documented and compared
- Baseline data set on each student was developed and collected at end of project- Youth Connections Personal Well-being Index
- Early intervention processes/strategies within the school and identify opportunities to improve were mapped as part of the Transition Review Audit process
- The use of the Student Management Tool was further developed and refined to better collect and share data about student learning
- Case studies were developed and shared with the Leadership Team
- Key Fitzroy High School staff members attended professional learning to better identify early intervention processes and strategies
- A Wellbeing Leader role was created for 2014 and included the completion of an adolescent counselling course
- A Pathways and Community Leader role was created with a more specific focus on transition
- A Hands on Learning program for students in Years 7-9 who are at risk of disengagement was established
- The Peer Support program is established and growing
• An additional family interview room has been established in the school
• The Wellbeing Room has additional resources
• Next steps have been identified by the Leadership Team

Findings

Initial thinking about “At risk” factors:

The Fitzroy High School Indigo (Year 7 and 8) Team Leader, and Year 7 and 8 Leaders identified students they thought could benefit from being involved in the project, which included discussions around students who presented with ‘at risk’ factors. These determining factors included but were not limited to: number of days absent, challenging family circumstances, levels of disengagement in class, history of mental health concerns. These ‘at risk’ factors were usually known by teachers as a result of their rapport building with individual students, transition information from feeder primary schools, and/or having knowledge of generalist ‘at risk’ factors during transition. The school took an early intervention approach and initially prioritized Year 7 students to maximize the impact of the intervention.

Student Attendance at school:

Not all of the students who participated in the Project had poor attendance when the Project started, although many did. Of those who participated, three students left the school to more suitable settings, some improved their attendance, other students did not improve their attendance but did improve other factors, including their overall engagement and wellbeing. For many of the students, continued participation in school wellbeing programs and/or referrals to further services are required in order to improve attendance, engagement and achievement.

The following table shows attendance data for the students most regularly involved in the project, comparing the level of absences from the first half of the year before the project started (July 2013) and the second half of the year after they were involved in the project for some time (December 2013).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Days absent</th>
<th>Total Days</th>
<th>% Absences @ July 13</th>
<th>Days absent</th>
<th>Total Days</th>
<th>% Absences @ Dec 13</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>89</td>
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<td>6%</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Issues identified by the young people and their parents:

The Project Officer worked with 18 students and their families to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues and barriers facing young people and their families and the subsequent impact on school engagement. The table below outlines the range of issues identified during sessions at the school and/or over the phone with families and students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF ISSUES PRESENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. STUDENT ISSUES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>• Student was being bullied in and out of the schoolyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cyber bullying (e.g., Facebook, askfm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire/Plans to move to another school</td>
<td>• Plans to move house, move to another school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• General disinterest in attending school this school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>• Inconsistent attendance</td>
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<td>• Poor attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social isolation</td>
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<td>• Conflict with peers</td>
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<td>• School was seen as boring, subjects were irrelevant</td>
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<td>• Too much school work, too much pressure to finish work</td>
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<td>• Lack of quality friendships</td>
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<td>• Contributed to lateness- not wanting to go to class</td>
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<td>Boredom</td>
<td>• Students said school subjects were ‘boring’ and/or too hard</td>
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<td>• Students complained about what they saw as the irrelevance of some subjects</td>
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<td>• Students feeling confused about school work</td>
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<td>• Unable to understand school work</td>
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<tr>
<td>School disconnection</td>
<td>• Students feeling that they don’t fit in or belong</td>
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<td>• No activities during lunch &amp; recess to encourage friendships</td>
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## 3. PARENTAL CONCERNS

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<th>School connectedness</th>
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<td>• Boundary setting</td>
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<td>• Poor past experiences at this school and others</td>
<td>• Low income</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Not feeling welcome at the school</td>
<td>• Lack of understanding what is required by the school in regards to school work</td>
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</table>

The 18 students who participated in the project attended 15 different primary schools prior to their transition to Fitzroy High School. There were a broad range of issues associated with their experiences at primary school ranging from bullying, lack of friends, difficulty with school work, behaviour issues, moving interstate and overseas.

In terms of their experience at primary school most students engaged in this project arrived at high school either:

- not knowing any other students
- knowing one or more students but not having a close friendship with them
- a history of being bullied
- lack of confidence in their studies
- literacy and numeracy challenges
- negative experience of education

In terms of other factors present in the students’ own life and that of their families these included but were not limited to:

- financial difficulties
- ill mental and physical health
- drug use
- carer duties
- refugee experience

Students presented with multiple and complex situations, personally and within their family unit. Some students were experiencing mental health concerns; some were experiencing challenges in the family home due to factors listed above. Health deterioration of significant family members had an impact on those students experiencing this in a way that school was missed or engagement during school became difficult. The project has highlighted the significant impact positive parenting strategies can have on education for young people and their experience at school.

A majority of students involved in the project accessed some extracurricular activity within the community. Some accessed, and some had a long history, of accessing youth centres, scout groups, music lessons, and youth services groups. Some students however, were not connected to community activities and stayed home or saw peers occasionally. It was observed that there was a higher sense of boredom and isolation with these students. Most students were open to the suggestion of accessing extracurricular activities and welcomed suggestions. A ‘soft’ approach to referrals was required where the Project Officer took time to explain services in details, and where applicable phone the services with the student present.
It was noticed that some students felt particular isolation while at school, in particular during recess and lunchtime. Some students felt they had no peers to enjoy lunch and recess with which had a negative effect on their self worth. The Wednesday Lunchtime Art sessions currently run at the school were popular and a desire to do more of this was felt necessary to support students during lunch. The Project Officer made links with a Youth Arts Development Officer at Yarra Youth Services at the City of Yarra to investigate the potential of Youth Services running lunchtime groups. This has stemmed from findings from the Project that many students were struggling with friendship making and felt alienated at recess and lunch. This was received well by the Youth Arts Development Officer who will begin the process of coordinating such a group in the early stages of 2014.

Personal Wellbeing Index – Pre & Post Evaluation Results:

The students involved in the project completed the Youth Connections Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) evaluation tool at the commencement and end of the project. The following table shows the results.
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</table>
### Findings and limitations of data

- 1 student scored under 50 points
- 2 students scored quite high in the 80 point range
- More “accurate” results seemed to be obtained when rapport had been firmly established with the student
- The concept of “happy” proved ambiguous for some students, other words like “health” also needed clarification
- Scoring was dependant on how the student was feeling at the exact time of the survey, some students were having a challenging day and scored from that place rather than a general response
- Some students seemed to score what they thought was the “right” answer

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Young Person</th>
<th>Q1</th>
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Case Studies:

Case Study 1

Ben started Year 7 at FHS having no close friends attending the school and lived outside the municipality. He reported being bullied in primary school and that he didn’t want to go to his local high school due to fears of being bullied by these same students. Ben’s family were facing challenges caring for an aging parent and one of his parents survived a heart attack the year of his transition to high school. Ben’s parents attended the school during his transition for information sessions and other such activities.

Ben reported that he didn’t have many friends at high school currently and that he often didn’t know what to do at recess and lunch times. Ben experienced some hurdles relating to his peers and reported feeling dismissed and undermined at times which affected his confidence. Ben’s favourite subject was art, he had trouble concentrating in other subjects and often chose to not complete set tasks, distract other students and the teacher. Ben’s teachers were increasingly reporting concern about his classroom behaviour and his lack of engagement at school even after trying to engage him through altering his workload. Ben’s mother engaged with the FEAT Project Officer regularly in hope to support Ben’s learning and general his time at school.

After building rapport with Ben it was decided that he would attend a local youth centre and join some art based programs there in hope to support his enthusiasm for the arts and build his self-confidence. Ben engaged in this service well with the support of his parents and continued to attend 6months on.

Towards the end of term 4, after much discussion with Ben, his mother and his main teachers, he decided that he still wasn’t enjoying coming to school and that mainstream schooling might best not meet his learning needs.

Ben left Fitzroy High School at the end of year 7 and began year 7 again at his new alternative school. Reports from his mother suggest that he has integrated well and enjoys going to school. Attendance has not been an issue as yet and he has made positive links with peers and teaching staff at his new school.

Case Study 2

Kelly was referred to the FEAT project due to low and sporadic attendance. Kelly was reported to be not necessarily disruptive in class but did not complete tasks or engage in her work. Kelly reported to have experienced bullying in primary school and was happy to have left primary school. She often spoke of having no friends at primary school due to conflict with her peers. Teachers reported concerns regarding parental engagement in her learning and general concerns regarding challenges in the family home. Kelly reported significant illness in her family which she explained had stopped engagement of her family in her schooling. Kelly also reported lack of food in the family home and high carer responsibilities. On transition to high school her teachers reported low/no family engagement with the school. On referral Kelly reported issues with her peer group, both in making friends and conflict with friends. Kelly’s teachers increasingly reported concern regarding her wellbeing in the classroom. Kelly had a history of self-harm and began self-harming again in year 7 in response to difficulties with peers, school and family life. Kelly was referred to a local mental health service but could not attend due to parental consent issues. Kelly wished to attend but could not due to lack of parental consent. Kelly currently attends school relatively regularly however still is late at times or not attending at least once a week. She appears to have made some friends and intends to stay at this school for the time being.
## Recommendations

1. Continue to identify “at risk” factors and share issues identified by students and families with staff

2. Track attendance as one indicator of risk

3. Continue to develop the role of Wellbeing Leader to provide student and family wellbeing and support and to make appropriate referrals

4. Continue to develop the role of Pathways and Community Leader especially with regard to forming closer relationships with feeder primary schools

5. Continue to develop Peer Support program and train students to assist younger students with issues such as lack of friendship groups or fear of bullying

6. Continue to develop the Hands on Learning program and look towards sharing the program with at least one primary school as a transition strategy

7. Follow the processes and strategies for improvement suggested in the Transition Review Audit process

8. Develop already established partnerships with community agencies to provide appropriate programs to support the engagement of students during school hours e.g. lunch-time art activities, and furthermore connection with services available outside of school hours

9. Continue to provide professional development for school staff to educate them on how best to support and encourage those student and families who aren’t engaging with the school

10. Strengthen relationships with community agencies, and utilize FEAT, in order to provide wellbeing workshops for parents and students and other support where required
Advocacy Case Management

Aim

Develop a partnership approach to improve educational engagement of up to 20 Fitzroy High School students focusing on early intervention (Years 7-9) who are presenting signs of disengagement or are absent from school on average 2 days or more per week.

Objectives

• Identify students deemed to be ‘high at risk’ e.g. absent from school on average 2 days or more per week under the age of 16 years
• Identify the barriers that prevent the students from fully engaging in their learning and engage external supports where necessary
• Develop effective working relationship with school staff (leadership, teachers and welfare support staff) and external providers to support and advocate for those students
• Make sure that teacher and advisor knowledge is honoured and utilised and that the team and advisory structure, as well as the teaching philosophy at Fitzroy High School is embedded into the way students and families are engaged

Methodology

• A Project Officer who had the skills to work with young people was employed for two days per week
• The Project Officer worked with the school psychologist, then the Wellbeing Leader, as well as the SSSOs to make appropriate “soft referrals” when required
• The Project Officer communicated regularly with the Assistant Principal and Team Leaders about which students were “at risk”
• A teacher referral form was developed to make referrals to the Project Officer
• The Project Officer utilised the Student Management Tool to view, record and share information about students
• A locked filing cabinet and privacy methods similar to those of SSSOs were used for more confidential notes and reports
• To facilitate service provision to the students by the Project Officer, a parent consent and privacy form was developed with advice from the DEECD legal branch
• A dedicated wellbeing room was made available to the Project Officer and utilised by the students

Actions

Overview:

Advocacy Case Management was provided by the Project Officer to referred students and families over the 12month period of the Project. This work was undertaken at the school and sessions were held in an office at the school. This was the primary focus of the Project Officers role during the Project, particularly during the first 6months of the Project in 2013.

In 2013, 11 students had engaged with the Project Officer and in 2014 a further 7 students were referred. By the end of the Project this took the number of students the Project Officer was engaged with up to 18. Of these 18
students 13 parents/families were engaged in the Project in some capacity including phone contact, in person conversation, and these were a mixture of regular and sporadic sessions.

Referrals:

The Fitzroy High School Indigo (Year 7 and 8) Team Leader and Year 7 and 8 Leaders identified students they thought could benefit from being involved in the project, which included discussion around number of days absent, family circumstances, and engagement levels in class. The school took an early intervention approach and prioritised Year 7 students to maximise the impact of the intervention.

With guidance from the school psychologist, it was recommended that the number of referrals be capped at a manageable caseload of up to 12 Year 7 and 8 students and if students did not want to participate in the Project more could then be referred.

Referrals were submitted to the Project Officer via a referral form that was developed by the Project Officer and key school staff. The referral form was used as a tool to collect important information about the students’ situation and also to capture knowledge already gathered by the teacher in their relationship with the student.

Other important information was gathered from the Student Management Tool (SMT) including family contact details, students’ timetable and teachers involved with the students.

**Numbers of Students Referred to the Project (August-December 2013)**

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<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Numbers of Students Referred to the Project (Jan- June 2014) in-addition to above**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Numbers of Students Referred (August-June 2014)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFERRALS 2013-2013</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the 21 students referred to the Project during its entire duration 3 of those decided that they didn’t want to be involved due to personal reasons. Due to the voluntary nature of the project they were not obliged to participate. Refusing services can also been seen as an indicator of potential ‘at risk’ factors present and was noted by the Project Officer.

**Total Numbers of Students Engaged in the Project (August-June 2014)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent Consent:

Consent forms were developed by the Project Officer and the FEAT Action Team during the beginning of Term 3, 2013. The Project Officer took the approach of meeting with the referred students individually first to discuss the project and obtain their consent to be involved in the project. At this meeting, a consent form was given to the student to take home to their parents to inform them of the project and request their consent. Very few forms were returned via this method.

After investigation by the Assistant Principal, it was brought to the attention of the Project Officer that the consent forms being used were inadequate and that new forms needed to be developed and approved by DEECD legal branch in line with the new SSSO privacy and consent forms. By this stage several students were already engaged in the project. These forms were sent to families with a covering letter from the Assistant Principal.

Some of the parents of students referred to the project were notoriously difficult to contact, meaning that students may have missed out on receiving a service. Building rapport with parents on the whole was positive, but had its challenges. This might have been due to negative experiences some parents may have had with services in the past. To engage parents/families, phone calls were used to build rapport and to gain verbal consent for project involvement. A project mobile phone was provided by the school and was used as a means of contact for parents as it became clear that some were not responding to phone calls from the school telephone number.

The Project Officer adopted the strategy of using the mobile phone provided by the school and as a result more parents answered the call and/or responded via text. On the whole parents responded positively to mobile contact and sent texts and phoned the Project Officer via this method of contact. Some parents returned phone calls from the school number and felt comfortable accessing the Project Officer via the school’s main line. Some parents did not answer phone calls or return phone calls from either the school’s main phone number or the Project mobile.

Two parents who were not contactable via telephone were also notoriously not contactable by other school staff. In this instance other family members were engaged in gaining consent (verbal).
Most connections required several phone calls, a lot unanswered, left messages (voice and text) and letters sent home. Making connections with these families required persistence and also making the time and effort to try to engage them. Where possible other family members, as advised by the student, were contacted and consent was sort via this method. Where families/parents were not contactable via all methods used above the student was provided with a ‘triage’ type wellbeing service where the student was given if necessary a youth specific referral appropriate to their situation.

Taking the time to build a friendly rapport with parents where they were valued as an integral source of support and information for the young person paid off significantly in terms of how the parent felt about accessing the Project Officers service and also how they felt about coming into the school. It was observed that parental attitude towards the school, teachers and students school work had a significant impact on how the student themself approached their education and the relationship they build with the school and their approach to learning.

Service Provision by the Project Officer:

The Project Officer made connections with 14 of the 18 students referred during the 12 month period. These connections were a mix of phone and in person contact. The in person meetings were held at the school only. The contact was centred on building rapport in relation to gaining their trust, understanding and consent for their child to be involved in the project. Some students attended sessions weekly/fortnightly, some infrequently and sporadically. These meetings were centred on a strengths based youth counselling approach and were held in the Project Officer’s office at the school. The aim of these sessions were to identify students’ needs/concerns in relation to their experiences during their transition and the current presenting issues that may have come as a result of a challenging transition.

The Project Officer met with students on a number of occasions to support their needs and issues as part of the project. The number of sessions varied dependent on need and extent of engagement from the young people. The Project Officer met with at least, a minimum of 1 student a day. Session duration was approximately 30-60minutes. It became evident that some students were in need of further support than the Project Officer was able to provide due to time constraints and referrals to external agencies were made with student consent and where applicable parental consent. Some students began to access the Project Officer if they were having a challenging day and needed support, and others had scheduled session times.

The Wellbeing Leader refurbished the room used for these sessions into a welcoming and youth friendly setting, filled with informative posters and couches by the end of 2013. Students were visiting the Project Officer in this space regularly and at times also brought their friends along.
Referral to External Services:

The Project Officer made referrals to external agencies for some students. The need for external referrals was identified during student meetings where issues arose that both the student and Project Officer believed could be supported through another specific source.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Referred to in 2013-2014</th>
<th>Referrals made</th>
<th>Attended Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banyule City Council- Youth Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Yarra- Youth Services Individual Support program</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Yarra- Youth Services School Holiday Program</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Yarra- Youth Services Term based Programs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headspace Collingwood</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Connections</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>At intake stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An important link to an external service has been made with the Yarra Youth Services at the City of Yarra. Two students referred to this service regularly attended several after school arts based programs which they have excelled in and has supported their personal development and links to a local youth service.

The referral made to Youth Connections was for a student whose attendance at school was extremely low and was barely attending. Due to such low attendance the project officer deemed it necessary to refer to a service that could meet with the young person outside of school hours. Referrals could have been made to more services for extra support however some students were not ready for such a referral to be made, or did not want the extra support.

Findings

- Once the presence of the Project Officer was well known, students regularly utilized the Project Officer for wellbeing support during the school day
- School staff sought assistance regarding mental health support of students from the Project Officer on several occasions
- Students in distress required immediate mental health support during school hours on several occasions
- The development of a dedicated wellbeing room appeared to be welcomed by students. Having a private room where they felt safe to disclose distress has proved to be a useful tool for engagement
• Further inclusion of youth wellbeing support from community agencies could enhance the wellbeing of students
• Students who had relationship difficulties with teacher/s found it difficult to negotiate these challenges
• Students identified a lack of positive connection to their education in their primary years due to a variety of reasons including negative peer relations
• Students identified a number of issues that contributed to them having a negative experience at high school, including lack of friends, bullying, difficulties understanding school work
• Similarities in student behaviours were present during primary school i.e. difficulties with school work, lack of friends, to those current behavioural challenges
• Fear/anxiety was present for students who were coming back to school after long periods of absence
• Parental consent was often time consuming to obtain which impacted on the level of support provided by the Project Officer to students. Some families were hard to contact or not contactable, some taking 6+ months to respond to contact, some never responded
• Lack of parental involvement in the school impacted on the students connection with their education
• Historic and/or current complex issues were present in some families
• Student and parent knowledge of school processes and connection to teachers was often limited, sometimes unknown
• Families speaking a language other than English weren’t provided documentation in their language during enrolment and transition

Recommendations

1. Provide a defined point of contact for young people and parents to support their engagement at the school during transition Years 7-9
2. That role would sit as part of the Wellbeing structure and be suitably qualified to provide wellbeing assistance
3. Employ a suitably qualified person to provide immediate youth counselling to students in distress during school hours and to provide support and advice to school staff to support such students in the class room
4. Wellbeing Leader to partner with FEAT to provide workshops for teachers regarding student and family wellbeing and support
5. Student consent regarding receiving wellbeing support from the school- including referrals- to be defined in school policy and consent forms for students to receive wellbeing support to be included in enrolment forms
6. School to adopt youth participation principles where not only parental consent is sought but also student consent
7. Mature minor concept could also be adopted by the school regarding receiving wellbeing support
8. Develop further bonds with feeder primary schools to share specific transition information and identify engagement strategies and support for those students who may need extra support during transition into Year 7
9. Develop already established partnerships with community agencies to provide appropriate programs to support the engagement of students during school hours e.g. lunch-time art activities, and furthermore connection with services available outside of school hours.

10. Continue to provide professional development for school staff to educate them on how best to support and encourage those students and families who aren’t engaging with the school.

11. Strengthen relationships with community agencies, and utilize FEAT, in order to provide wellbeing workshops for parents and students and other support where required.
Parent and Family Engagement

Aim

Develop a parent and family engagement strategy using a community approach to engage students in their learning. Actively engage parents in all young person’s learning and school community and build parental and family capacity to nurture and encourage successful learning practices.

Objectives

- Enable effective engagement and consultation with parents, students and school staff to develop engagement strategy
- Develop and maintain a strong successful model of parent and community engagement within a culturally diverse school community
- Develop increased interest, participation and decision-making by parents in the education of their children and the school
- Effectively support students and work with their families to strengthen their engagement to school

Methodology

- The Project Officer initiated meetings with parents in order to support students and provided support to parents where required
- Parents were encouraged to contact and meet to discuss concerns and/or seek advice regarding the education and support of the young person
- To facilitate service provision to the students by the Project Officer, a parent consent and privacy form was developed with advice from the DEECD legal branch
- The Family Community School Partnerships Framework was used, which involves focus groups of students, teachers as well as individual interviews with parents to understand the issues that may impact their transition experience
- The Engaging Parents in Career Conversations (EPiCC) was used, which supports and equips parents to have a range of decision-making conversations with their children

Actions

- A comprehensive consultation process with students, parents and teachers to understand the barriers to positive engagement with the school and areas where they could improve was undertaken and the results were presented to the school Leadership Team by INLLEN partnership brokers
- The FEAT team undertook a school self-assessment utilising the Family Community School Partnerships Framework
- The school Leadership Team used the self-assessment to inform parent engagement strategies and developed an Action Plan for 2014
- Engaging Parents in Career Conversations (EPiCC) was delivered to parents as part of the work experience expo
- Two parents approached the school and organised a series of workshops ‘Sex Education – What’s Missing?’ aimed at students across all year levels and their parents
- Weekly school newsletters and Indigo Team (Years 7 & 8) information was printed and sent home with students who do not have internet access
- Interpreters continued to be used for 3-way conferences to encourage non English speaking families to attend
To address historical limited family engagement, Fitzroy High School provided an information night to prospective students and their families at Fitzroy Primary School, a key feeder school, including language support for the primary school families in attendance.

**Findings**

- As a general rule, Fitzroy High School families are engaged with the school and in supporting the learning of their children.
- This is evidenced in continual high participation rates at twice yearly 3 way conferences, student exhibition nights each term and other events.
- Results of interviews with parents provided evidence of positive parental and family engagement.
- A small number of families proved very challenging to engage and some of these were represented in the group of students referred to the Project Officer.
- Some families did not respond to the school’s request for information, required to assist in a number of decisions aimed to assist and support the transition process of moving from primary to secondary school.
- Some families were extremely hard to contact and some were not contactable at all.
- Some families were experiencing very complex issues; current, historic and intergenerational which impacted on student learning.
- Parents/families engaged with the Project Officer but some took 6+ months to respond to contact, some never responded.
- Family knowledge of school processes and connection to teachers was limited, some didn’t receive communication from the school due to no internet at home and no access to a PC.
- Families using a language other than English weren’t provided documentation in their language which could potentially create a barrier to connect with students learning and their feelings of connectedness at school.

**Case Studies: Working with Families**

**Family 1 Case Study**

The immediate family consists of mum, dad and 3 children. All live together in the family home a few suburbs away from the school. The young person referred to the Project rarely attends school, if ever.

Teachers have had a challenging time contacting both the young person and their parents over a long period of time. To some extent teachers have lost motivation to try to make contact due to no response and being time poor themselves.

The Project Officer phoned the family landline and mobile phone on numerous occasions. On one occasion the Project Officer spoke to dad who was open in sharing his challenges with getting his child to school and some difficulties he had with some teachers. After encouraging dad to get his child to attend school and to come into the school to meet me still no contact had been made with the young person due to lack of attendance.

Some months passed and with sporadic attendance and no contact the Project Officer sent home a letter to the family encouraging the young person to meet me. Still no response.

Eventually the young person by chance was at school the same day as the Project Officer, which had been an issue in the past, and a meeting was arranged that day.
Rapport began to be built but consistency was still an issue.

A referral was lodged to an external agency for the young person to support them in their education to potentially find another school as that is what the young person expressed that they wanted. However that agency could not contact the young person either.

After many phones a few letters sent home later eventually mum started returning the project officers phone calls- approximately 4-6months later.

After building rapport with mum the families situation and challenges were unveiled. Mum was caring to 1 toddler and an infant. The infant was born during the young persons start into year 7. Mum felt she was to blame for the young persons difficulties during transition in that she was unable to make time to help them get to school and attend transition sessions.

Mum came into meet the Project Officer and explore options of support. The Project Officer provided referrals and information regarding services in the local area.

The young person still struggles with attendance and seems to be due to lack of friends in their own year level, general motivation and feelings of irrelevance of school subjects.

Persistence and patience in accepting no response and continual welcoming of the young person no matter their attendance rate helped in this situation. Eventually with time this family began to engage.

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**Family 2 Case Study**

Mum was contactable and responsive from the beginning of the Project. She was a strong advocate for her child and responded to phone calls and made time to meet with the project officer. She was concerned about her child’s negative experience at school and the bullying they frequently spoke about at home.

The young person found concentrating in class challenging and was often sidetracked and became overwhelmed and behind in their work as a consequence.

Meetings were had with mum and the young persons teachers but still this young person didn’t enjoy coming to school, lacked friendships and found completing tasks difficult. The young person often said they hated coming to school and felt bad about themselves.

Ultimately even though family support was what seemed to be 100% the young person didn’t engage at school and requested to change schools. This happened at the end of the year. Mum reported that her child is doing better at their new school.
Recommendations

1. Through the school’s advisory model with a focus on relationships, work with identified students to be a conduit for their families to engage with the school and support their child’s education

2. Parent privacy and consent form for provision of school wellbeing support to be understood and signed at the beginning of each school year or at enrolment

3. Utilise a suitably qualified person (Wellbeing Leader or SSSO) to provide interim advocacy case management support for ‘at risk’ students from year 7-9 until a ‘soft referral’ has been completed with an appropriate external agency

4. Wellbeing Leader and Team Leaders to continue to refer to SSSOs as appropriate

5. Fitzroy High School Pathways and Community role to continued to be developed and embedded in school and local community primary schools

6. Parenting workshops to be offered by external providers via the FEAT to strengthen family engagement with the school and with other parents while also providing information and support to increase connectedness to the school community and their young persons’ education

7. Fitzroy High School Leadership Team and FEAT to continue to review and implement findings/actions as identified from the Parent and Family Engagement consultation process

8. Use information gained from primary schools to target families identified as at risk of not engaging with the school, and provide additional resources to reach out to those families
Reflections of the Project Officer

The following are some recommendations if a similar project was implemented elsewhere.

Orientation and Project Goals:

- Include a thorough orientation period at the school. Including orientation to school grounds, office, PC, mobile phone, stationary material, all staff etc. Rather than starting the project immediately get to know other staff and their roles, and your positioning at the school.
- Thoroughly unpack what the project is trying to achieve and what the school wants as an outcome. Find out whether the schools needs and outcomes are the same as the School Community Action Team. Work with both to align these needs/outcomes if they are different.
- Build strong professional relationships with key teachers and other school staff involved in the project. Meet individually with these staff members and as a group (several times) to understand what they know of the project and how they see it being performed and of benefit to the school. Their understanding of the project is important as they are going to be making the referrals.
- At the very beginning of the project find out via consultation with stakeholders and the school what forms are necessary (e.g. Referral forms, consent forms, assessment forms etc). Develop and get these forms approved prior to any work with students. This leads to what types of data is required for the final report which should be in mind from the beginning of the project. Baseline data must be approved and set prior to any client work.

Student Referrals and Staff Communication:

- Only after the project goals and means of achieving such goals are clearly defined should students start being referred to the project. Only work with students until the referrers are thoroughly briefed about the project and know how to articulate the project to students who they want to refer. This ensures the project criteria regarding appropriate referrals are met.
- Once the referral is lodged only meet and work with those students referred after parental consent is obtained (DEECD requirement). If no parental consent is obtained reject the referral for the project but provide options to the referrer regarding referral to an external agency or SSSO if deemed necessary. Seek assistance from the Wellbeing Leader/Team.
- Attend appropriate year level team meetings regularly to talk about the project and give updates. This helps to be further included and involved within the school as well as informing appropriate staff of outcomes and developments.
- Request the Project Officer’s role to be positioned in the Wellbeing team and attend meetings where possible. Request regularly meetings with the Wellbeing Leader/Team to inform them of the project happenings and discuss challenges and successes and to highlight any ‘at risk’ students.
- Understand school policies regarding student wellbeing including- home visits, self harm, bullying etc. If no policy is available consider having a discussion to set boundaries/policy around the issue in relation to the project officers role working with ‘at risk’ students.
Role Clarity and Supervision:

- Consider the necessity of having boundaries around role tasks and where some flexibility can be allowed to make space for individual school needs.
- Review project action plan regularly to ensure work is achievable and update the action plan where necessary when other tasks take priority. Consult the school appointed project coordinator when changes need to be made.
- If external stakeholders are involved in the co-coordination allocate one person to liaise with if necessary.
- Engage a suitably qualified external supervisor who is outside of the project and its stakeholders to provide support and feedback around the work on a monthly basis.
- If a report is to be written ensure the report format and base line data requirements are set at the beginning of the project. Consider whether the report would be best written by a research professional or whether a collaborative effort would be best earlier on in the project with a research officer working either with the social worker or on the data collected by the social worker to then write the report.

Summary Findings

- Valuable knowledge of transition processes are often not documented due to time constraints
- Completing the Transition Review Audit process was a very useful activity
- Receiving Primary School student information prior to transition is often not thorough, not received in good time, and sometimes, not at all
- The Online Transition Form was not consistently used by all schools
- SOCS cannot be used to assist transition until more schools are using the system
- Some of the “at risk” factors are not necessarily easy to identify at an early stage
- Some students arrive at high school not having any friends or knowing a few people but not having a close friendship group and this is more of a “risk” factor than previously thought
- The Student Management Tool is a good tool to share information about students within the school and helps to see patterns of attendance, achievement or behaviour which may indicate students being “at risk”
- The development of “learner profiles” will require much more work and greater communication between the primary and secondary schools
- Once the presence of the Project Officer was well known, students regularly utilized the Project Officer for wellbeing support during the school day
- School staff sought assistance regarding mental health support of students from the Project Officer on several occasions
- Students in distress required immediate mental health support during school hours on several occasions
- The development of a dedicated wellbeing room appeared to be welcomed by students. Having a private room where they felt safe to disclose distress has proved to be a useful tool for engagement
- Further inclusion of youth wellbeing support from community agencies could enhance the wellbeing of students
- Students who had relationship difficulties with teacher/s found it difficult to negotiate these challenges
- Students identified a lack of positive connection to their education in their primary years due to a variety of reasons including negative peer relations
- Students identified a number of issues that contributed to them having a negative experience at high school, including lack of friends, bullying, difficulties understanding school work
• Similarities in student behaviours were present during primary school i.e. difficulties with school work, lack of friends, to those current behavioural challenges
• Fear/anxiety was present for students who were coming back to school after long periods of absence
• Parental consent was often time consuming to obtain which impacted on the level of support provided by the Project Officer to students. Some families were hard to contact or not contactable, some taking 6+ months to respond to contact, some never responded
• Lack of parental involvement in the school impacted on the students connection with their education
• Historic and/or current complex issues were present in some families
• Student and parent knowledge of school processes and connection to teachers was often limited, sometimes unknown
• Families speaking a language other than English weren’t provided documentation in their language during enrolment and transition
• As a general rule, Fitzroy High School families are engaged with the school and in supporting the learning of their children
• This is evidenced in continual high participation rates at twice yearly 3 way conferences, student exhibition nights each term and other events
• Results of interviews with parents provided evidence of positive parental and family engagement
• A small number of families proved very challenging to engage and some of these were represented in the group of students referred to the Project Officer
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• Families using a language other than English weren’t provided documentation in their language which could potentially create a barrier to connect with students learning and their feelings of connectedness at school

Summary Recommendations

**Primary Secondary Transition (Years 6-9)**

1. Develop closer bonds with key primary schools to encourage further and timely student transition information to support student transition into high school
2. Fitzroy High School Leadership Team and FEAT to continue to review and implement findings/actions from the Transition Review Audit process
3. Continue to map the transition processes across the whole school and identify areas for improvement
4. Year 7 and 8 Team Leader to work closely with the Wellbeing Leader to flag identified ‘high at risk’ students at the beginning of the year and develop partnerships with appropriate external agencies to provide support
5. Wellbeing Leader or SSSO to provide advocacy case management support for ‘at risk’ students and complete a ‘soft referral’ to an appropriate external agency if required

6. FEAT to provide wellbeing workshops for parents about challenges and successes of transition years

7. Youth service agencies to attend transition evenings to inform both parents and students of available services and pathways to support if required

8. Continue to work on the development of “learner profiles”, including teacher visits between primary and secondary schools if possible

Research and Capacity Building

9. Continue to identify “at risk” factors and share issues identified by students and families with staff

10. Track attendance as one indicator of risk

11. Continue to develop the role of Wellbeing Leader to provide student and family wellbeing and support and to make appropriate referrals

12. Continue to develop the role of Pathways and Community Leader especially with regard to forming closer relationships with feeder primary schools

13. Continue to develop Peer Support program and train students to assist younger students with issues such as lack of friendship groups or fear of bullying

14. Continue to develop the Hands on Learning program and look towards sharing the program with at least one primary school as a transition strategy

15. Follow the processes and strategies for improvement suggested in the Transition Review Audit process

16. Develop already established partnerships with community agencies to provide appropriate programs to support the engagement of students during school hours e.g. lunch-time art activities, and furthermore connection with services available outside of school hours

17. Continue to provide professional development for school staff to educate them on how best to support and encourage those student and families who aren’t engaging with the school

18. Strengthen relationships with community agencies, and utilize FEAT, in order to provide wellbeing workshops for parents and students and other support where required

19. Provide a defined point of contact for young people and parents to support their engagement at the school during transition Years 7-9

Advocacy Case Management

20. Employ a suitably qualified person to provide immediate youth counselling to students in distress during school hours and to provide support and advice to school staff to support such students in the class room

21. Wellbeing Leader to partner with FEAT to provide workshops for teachers regarding student
22. Student consent regarding receiving wellbeing support from the school- including referrals- to be defined in school policy and consent forms for students to receive wellbeing support to be included in enrolment forms.

23. School to adopt youth participation principles where not only parental consent is sought but also student consent.

24. Mature minor concept could also be adopted by the school regarding receiving wellbeing support.

25. Develop further bonds with feeder primary schools to share specific transition information and identify engagement strategies and support for those students who may need extra support during transition into Year 7.

26. Develop already established partnerships with community agencies to provide appropriate programs to support the engagement of students during school hours e.g. lunch-time art activities, and furthermore connection with services available outside of school hours.

27. Continue to provide professional development for school staff to educate them on how best to support and encourage those student and families who aren’t engaging with the school.

28. Strengthen relationships with community agencies, and utilize FEAT, in order to provide wellbeing workshops for parents and students and other support where required.

Parent and Family Engagement

29. Through the school’s advisory model with a focus on relationships, work with identified students to be a conduit for their families to engage with the school and support their child’s education.

30. Parent privacy and consent form for provision of school wellbeing support to be understood and signed at the beginning of each school year or at enrolment.

31. Utilise a suitably qualified person (Wellbeing Leader or SSSO) to provide interim advocacy case management support for ‘at risk’ students from year 7-9 until a ‘soft referral’ has been completed with an appropriate external agency.

32. Wellbeing Leader and Team Leaders to continue to refer to SSSOs as appropriate.

33. Fitzroy High School Pathways and Community role to continued to be developed and embedded in school and local community primary schools.

34. Parenting workshops to be offered by external providers via the FEAT to strengthen family engagement with the school and with other parents while also providing information and support to increase connectedness to the school community and their young persons’ education.

35. Fitzroy High School Leadership team and FEAT to continue to review and implement findings/actions as identified from the Parent and Family Engagement consultation process.

36. Use information gained from primary schools to target families identified as at risk of not engaging with the school, and provide additional resources to reach out to those families.
1. **Project Aims**

The Fitzroy High School and Community Demonstration Pilot is being developed as a response to the recommendations of the Yarra Primary Secondary Transition Project (YPSTP) Report *Joining the Dots*.

1. **Primary Secondary Transition (Years 6-9)**
   - Support Fitzroy High School to further develop and implement a primary to secondary school transition plan, which incorporates transition from primary as well as from team to team within Fitzroy High School. Develop better tracking systems and improve the understanding of various stages of transition and the processes of transition from years 6-9.

2. **Research and Capacity Building**
   - Work with Fitzroy High School to collect and report on data about risk indicators and factors for students who disengage in the early years of secondary school. Make recommendations about strategies to build the school’s capacity and take next steps, working within a partnership model.

3. **Advocacy Case Management**
   - Develop a partnership approach to improve educational engagement of up to 20 Fitzroy High School students focusing on early intervention (Years 7-9) who are presenting signs of disengagement or are absent from school on average 2 days or more per week.

4. **Parent and Family Engagement**
   - Develop a parent and family engagement strategy using a community approach to engage students in their learning. Actively engage parents in all young persons learning and school community and build parental and family capacity to nurture and encourage successful learning practices.

2. **Objectives**

1. **Primary Secondary Transition (Years 6-9)**
   - better understand the process and various stages of transition from years 6-9
   - identify at an early stage who might be ‘at risk’ during the transition process
   - enable better collection and sharing of data about student learning to build ‘learner profiles’
   - strengthen and maintain relationships with primary schools and increased usage of the Online Transition Form
   - incorporate the Student Online Case System (SOCS) into the transition process to allow better identification of issues

2. **Research and Capacity Building**
   - develop increased linkages or partnerships between the school and external services and agencies
   - clearly define ‘at risk’ and identify the indicators and determinants for ‘high at risk’ in years 6-9
   - map early intervention processes/strategies within the school and identify opportunities to improve
   - enable better collection and sharing of data about student learning to build a ‘learner profile’
   - build in data collection and report back at the completion of project
   - make recommendations to FHS as to next steps for school
   - build capacity for school to continue work once funding has finished
3. **Advocacy Case Management**
   - Identify students deemed to be ‘high at risk’ e.g. absent from school on average 2 days or more per week under the age of 16 years
   - Identify the barriers that prevent the students from fully engaging in their learning and engage external supports where necessary
   - Develop effective working relationship with school staff (leadership, teachers and welfare support staff) and external providers to support and advocate for those students
   - Make sure that teacher and advisor knowledge is honoured and utilised and that the team and advisory structure, as well as the teaching philosophy at FHS is embedded into the way students and families are engaged

4. **Parent and Family Engagement**
   - Enable effective engagement and consultation with parents, students and school staff to develop engagement strategy
   - Develop and maintain a strong successful model of parent and community engagement within a culturally diverse school community
   - Develop increased interest, participation and decision-making by parents in the education of their children and the school
   - Effectively support students and work with their families to strengthen their engagement to school

3. **Project Methodology**

   The project will use an action research model to commit, design, begin and undertake critical reflection on the school’s community partnership demonstration pilot to improve practices. This methodology is a tool for creating sustainable and positive change and more simply, action research is a way of working together to make things better.

4. **Action Team**

   The project will utilise an Action Team approach which involves school and community working together to support better education outcomes for students.

   - The Action Team will be a critical partnership for this project to be developed further
   - The Action Team is to be chaired by a School Representative, minutes kept and distributed
   - Meetings to be held at agreed intervals during the project

The Fitzroy Engagement and Transition Action Team will be comprised of appropriate representatives from:

- Fitzroy High School
- Youth Connect
- Melbourne Citymission
- City of Yarra
- Headspace Collingwood
- YSAS
- Inner Northern LLEN (INLLEN)

5. **Funding**

   The project will be funded through a range of sources:

   - Youth Connections Type 4 funds (capacity building)
   - Contribution from Fitzroy High School
   - City of Yarra Community Grant
   - In kind support from INLLEN, Youth Connections and Action Team members
6. Project Evaluation and Outcomes

Develop an evaluation framework for the Schools Community Demonstration Pilot

- design evaluation tool/s including “Wellbeing Index” (Pre and Post project)
- conduct the evaluation at an agreed date and time
- action team evaluation

Outcome 1:
Assist implementation of the Fitzroy High School Primary Secondary Transition Plan.

Outcome 2:
Improve student outcomes (student learning, engagement, pathways and transition) in education through early identification and support.

Outcome 3:
Develop a parent and family engagement strategy based on consultations with parents, families and carers, students and teachers.
Appendix 2-Terms of Reference

“Terms of Reference (ToR)” are not forever! Requirements or other circumstances can change over time and it will be necessary to periodically review the “ToR”.

The Fitzroy High School and Community Demonstration Pilot has been developed as a response to the recommendations of the Yarra Primary Secondary Transition Project (YPSTP) Report ‘Joining the Dots’.

1. Project Aims

1. Primary Secondary Transition (Years 6-9)
   Support Fitzroy High School to further develop and implement a primary to secondary school’s transition plan, which incorporates transition from primary as well as from team to team within Fitzroy High School. Develop better tracking systems and improve the understanding of various stages of transition and the processes of transition from years 6-9.

2. Research and Capacity Building
   Work with Fitzroy High School to collect and report on data about risk indicators and factors for students who disengage in the early years of secondary schools. Make recommendations about strategies to build the school’s capacity and take next steps, working within a partnership model.

3. Advocacy Case Management
   Develop a partnership approach to improve educational engagement of up to 20 Fitzroy High School students focusing on early intervention (Years 7-9) who are presenting signs of disengagement or are absent from school on average 2 days or more per week.

4. Parent and Family Engagement
   Develop a parent and family engagement strategy using a community approach to engage students in their learning. Actively engage parents in all young person’s learning and school community and build parental and family capacity to nurture and encourage successful learning practices.

2. Objectives

5. Primary Secondary Transition (Years 6-9)
   • better understand the process and various stages of transition from years 6-9
   • identify at an early stage who might be “at risk” during the transition process
   • enable better collection and sharing of data about student learning to build “learner profiles”
   • strengthen and maintain relationships with primary schools and increased usage of the Online Transition Form
   • incorporate the Student Online Case System (SOCS) into the transition process to allow better identification of issues

6. Research and Capacity Building
• develop increased linkages or partnerships between the school and external services and agencies
• clearly define ‘at risk’ and identify the indicators and determinants for ‘high at risk’ in years 6-9
• map early intervention processes/strategies within the school and identify opportunities to improve
• enable better collection and sharing of data about student learning to build a learner profile
• build in data collection and report back at the completion of project
• make recommendations to FHS as to next steps for school
• build capacity for school to continue work once funding has finished

3. **Advocacy Case Management**

• identify students deemed to be ‘high at risk’ e.g. absent from school on average 2 days or more per week under the age of 16 years
• identify the barriers that prevent the students from fully engaging in their learning and engage external supports where necessary
• develop effective working relationship with school staff (leadership, teachers and welfare support staff) and external providers to support and advocate for those students
• make sure that teacher and advisor knowledge is honoured and utilised and that the team and advisory structure, as well as the teaching philosophy at FHS is embedded into the way students and families are engaged

4. **Parent and Family Engagement**

• enable effective engagement and consultation with parents, students and school staff to develop engagement strategy
• develop and maintain a strong successful model of parent and community engagement within a culturally diverse school community
• develop increased interest, participation and decision-making by parents in the education of their children and the school
• effectively support students and work with their families to strengthen their engagement to school

3. **Project Methodology**

The project will use an action research model to commit, design, begin and undertake critical reflection on the school’s community partnership demonstration pilot to improve practices. This methodology is a tool for creating sustainable and positive change and more simply, action research is a way of working together to make things better.

4. **Project Time Line**

The Demonstration Pilot Project duration will be for the period of one year commencing from April 2013.

5. **Action Team Purpose**

The purpose of the “Action Team” is to establish and build a “Schools Community Partnership model”.

The project will utilise an Action Team approach which involves school and community working together to better support education outcomes for Fitzroy High School students.

The Action Team writes and implements plans for family and community involvement that will help produce desired results for students, families and the school as a whole.

The Action Team will be responsible for ensuring that the following tasks are undertaken:
• review & refine Demonstration Project Brief
• contribute to and endorse a “Terms of Reference”
• overall responsibility for managing the Project
• develop an evaluation process
• attend meetings regularly
• implement the key learnings from the project and embed improved processes within the school

See Appendix 1 regarding individual or organisational “Roles and Responsibilities”.

6. Action Team Membership

The project will utilise an Action Team approach which involves school and community working together to support better education outcomes for students.

The Fitzroy Engagement and Transition (FEAT) Action Team is comprised of representatives from:

a. Fitzroy High School  
b. Youth Connect  
c. Melbourne Citymission  
d. City of Yarra  
e. Headspace Collingwood  
f. YSAS  
g. Inner Northern LLEN (INLLEN)

7. Action Team Principles

The Schools Community Action Team will be guided by the following documents:

• School, Family and Community Partnerships- Your Handbook for Action, Joyce L. Epstein and Associates

8. Meeting Structure

• The Action Team is to be chaired by a School Representative  
• Secretariat work will be undertaken by an appointed school representative member of the Action Team  
• All meetings will have an agenda and minutes kept and distributed  
• Action Team meetings to be held at agreed intervals during the project

9. Reporting

The Project Officer will provide a project progress report at each meeting. Other members of the Action Team who undertake roles or responsibilities during the project will also be required to provide progress reports.

10. Funding

The project will be funded through a range of sources:

• Youth Connections Type 4 funds (capacity building)  
• City of Yarra Community Grant  
• Contribution from Fitzroy High School  
• In kind support from INLLEN, Youth Connections and Action team members

11. Project Evaluation and Outcomes
The Action Team will be responsible for developing an evaluation framework for the Schools Community Demonstration Pilot.

The evaluation tool(s) design will include the Youth Connections “Wellbeing Index” (Pre and Post project) and Fitzroy High School outcome measurement tools for:

- retention
- attendance
- engagement
- connectedness

Other project evaluation measurement tools may include school surveys (Parents, students and teachers), MIP’s plans or others determined by the action team.

The evaluation will be conducted at a date and time as agreed by the Action Team to track progress and assess the following demonstration pilot outcomes.

**Outcome 1:**

Assist implementation of the Fitzroy High School Primary Secondary Transition Plan.

**Outcome 2:**

Improve student outcomes (student learning, engagement, pathways and transition) in education through early identification and support.

**Outcome 3:**

Develop a parent and family engagement strategy based on consultations with parents, families and carers, students and teachers.

An evaluation of the Action Team will also be conducted at an agreed date and time.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Action Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Fitzroy High School  | • manage appointed Project Officer and monitor daily work practices, providing suitable working space including desk, laptop, email access, phone  
  • select appropriate school staff to be involved in the school’s community action team  
  • chair meetings and provide secretariat support for Action Team i.e. agenda, minutes  
  • provide suitable space to meeting space for Action Team, community and parents  
  • identify students who are at risk of disengagement and or /absent on average 2 days or more per week and are under 16 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| years of age | • ensure access to relevant staff when appropriate  
• make sure that teacher and advisor knowledge is honoured and utilised and that the advisory program and teaching philosophy at FHS is embedded into the way students and families are engaged  
• work with student services team to ensure that there are better processes for transfer of information, including use if SOCS, for PSD students, students at risk etc during transition  
• work with the student engagement and Wellbeing team (in the absence of a specified student Wellbeing coordinator) to look at programs that can be implemented to help students their families and their teachers  
• work with Transition Action Team to consider current transition processes  
• work with steering group of Scarlet Program Review to consider links between that review and this project  
• look at models for implementation and sustainability of the recommendations of the pilot project |
| Project Officer | • provide case management, advocacy and referral support for students where necessary  
• work closely with targeted students and their respective families  
• work closely with FHS staff and external providers  
• plan and implement parent and family, school and student consultation process  
• employ strategies to strengthen students’ engagement to school  
• document processes for early intervention with students  
• report to Schools Community Action Team on progress  
• write, edit and present a final report |
| INLLEN Partnership Broker | • assist in investigating and documenting applied and flexible learning options available  
• assist Project Officer in writing the final report  
• assist the brokerage of appropriate activities/partnerships to support the Project  
• provide secretariat support to the FEAT Action Team as agreed |
| City of Yarra Youth Services | • provide secretariat support to the FEAT Action Team as agreed  
• provide linkages with Yarra Youth Services’ case management,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>programs and other resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                | • provide a link between the progress of the FEAT project and the work of the Yarra Education Youth Commitment  
• assist in sourcing/organising PD for teachers as needed                                                                                                                  |
| headspace Collingwood          | • support the Project Officer  
• provide Psychosocial support to at risk students at Fitzroy High School  
• provide group work for year 7 and 8 students focussing on resilience, self image as well as a whole school approach to positive mental health which would encompass all year levels  
• provide professional development for teachers re mental health  
• work collaboratively with teachers to increase parental engagement, provide PD, involvement in consultative meetings etc  
• secondary consultation for teachers re at risk young people  
• work with FHS Supportive Friends program                                                                                                                                      |
| YSAS                            | • provide expert secondary consultation around youth alcohol or other drug (AOD) issues; including for student case review, family issues, and professional development for staff  
• support for staff around evidence based models of therapeutic case management (including Motivational Interviewing, Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach, Single session family work, etc)  
• provide a referral destination for students where there has been recent police contact (especially assaults, bullying, ‘sexting’, absconding from school/home at inappropriate hours) |
| Youth Connections               | Melbourne Citymission                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                | • link the Project Officer with Youth Connections worker  
• provide professional development for teaching staff  
• model strategies for project officer working in classrooms with “at risk” students                                                                                               |
<p>| Youth Connect                  | • provide de-identified case studies of young people they are working with including history of disengagement, family circumstances, reasons for disengagement, etc                                                                 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• link the Project Officer with Youth Connections workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• support Project Officer and students with re-engagement activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• progress report updates on Youth Connections YATMIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The **Fitzroy High School and Community Demonstration Pilot** has been developed as a response to the recommendations of the Yarra Primary Secondary Transition Project (YPSTP) Report, *‘Joining the Dots’*. The Project uses an action research model to commit, design, begin and undertake critical reflection on the school’s community partnership demonstration pilot to improve practices. This methodology is a tool for creating sustainable and positive change and more simply, action research is a way of working together to make things better.

In short, **school and community working together in partnership to better support education outcomes for Fitzroy High School students**.

### Appendix 3 – Action Plan 2013/2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Aims</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Primary Secondary Transition (Years 6-9)</strong></td>
<td>better understand the process and various stages of transition from years 6-9</td>
<td>Map transition processes and associated documentation for Grade 6 to Year 7 and Years 7-9</td>
<td>Aug - Apr 2014</td>
<td>Project Officer, Year 7 Transition Coordinator, Pathways Coordinator</td>
<td>Documented transition processes – Grade 6 to Year 7 and Years 7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing conversations with Year 7 Transition Coordinator to document successes and challenges for 2013</td>
<td>Jul – Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer and Year 7 Transition Coordinator</td>
<td>Documented transition successes and challenges from school, young person and family perspectives</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Ongoing conversations with parents and young people to document successes and challenges of Transition in 2013</td>
<td>Jul – Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend YEYC Transitions Forum</td>
<td>11 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer, AP, Year 7 and senior transition staff, wellbeing staff member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete CEOM Transition Audit</td>
<td>Sep- Apr 2014</td>
<td>Project Officer, AP, Year 7 and senior transition staff, wellbeing staff member and YEYC Transitions Project Officer</td>
<td>FHS staff have a clear understanding of the process of transition, Grade 6 – Year 9, along with tools to aid implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Early Years (Years 6)</strong></td>
<td>support early transition planning and implementation for Years 6 and Year 7</td>
<td>Develop transition management plans for Years 6 and Year 7</td>
<td>Sep - Apr 2014</td>
<td>Project Officer, Year 7 Transition Coordinator, Pathways Coordinator</td>
<td>Documented transition processes – Grade 6 and Year 7</td>
</tr>
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47 Fitzroy High School and Community Demonstration Pilot Project Report
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<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| b. identify at an early stage who might be ‘at risk’ during the transition process | b. identify at an early stage who might be ‘at risk’ during the transition process | • Review student information received from primary schools, keeping ‘at risk’ indicators in mind  
• Relevant information entered onto Student Management Tool (SMT) for each identified student | Dec 2013 – Feb 2014 | Year 7 Transition Coordinator                                                               | Potential and flagged ‘at risk’ students are identified and information communicated to all relevant FHS staff |
| c. enable better collection and sharing of data about student learning to build ‘learner profiles’ | c. enable better collection and sharing of data about student learning to build ‘learner profiles’ | • Utilise Student Management Tool (SMT) to share and store information about ‘at risk’ students  
• As appropriate, face-to-face teacher briefing with flagged information | Ongoing            | Year 7 Transition Coordinator, Project Officer, Year Level Coordinators, teaching staff Project Officer | SMT used as communication tool                                      |
| d. strengthen and maintain relationships with primary schools and increased usage of the Online Transition Form | d. strengthen and maintain relationships with primary schools and increased usage of the Online Transition Form | • Develop communication strategy with primary schools – telephone and face to face conversations  
• Founding membership of Yarra Transitions Network  
• Implement usage of Online Transition Form | Feb- June 2014 | Year 7 Transition Coordinator, Pathways and Community Coordinator                         | Strategy is developed and documented as part of the Transition Audit |
<p>| e. incorporate the Student Online Case System (SOCS)                         | e. incorporate the Student Online Case System (SOCS)                         | • Utilise SOCS to refer to SSSO service | ongoing 2014 |                                                                                        | Information about students who have been referred in primary school will be visible to secondary school |</p>
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<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Research and Capacity Building</td>
<td>a. develop increased linkages or partnerships between the school and external services and agencies</td>
<td>• Establish professional supervision arrangement for Project Officer</td>
<td>Jul-Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer, AP and headspace</td>
<td>Increased linkages between school and external agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop material for Transition Parent Evening that is proactive and educates parents</td>
<td>Nov 2013</td>
<td>AP, Year 7 Transition Coordinator, headspace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. FEAT Action Team members to present and develop a handout for parents and families</td>
<td>Nov 2013</td>
<td>AP, Year 7 Transition Coordinator, headspace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. clearly define ‘at risk’ and identify the indicators and determinants for ‘high at risk’ in years 6-9</td>
<td>• Research and document a series of ‘at risk’ indicators</td>
<td>Jul – Dec 2013</td>
<td>FEAT Team Members</td>
<td>Document risk and success factors based on students seen and also related to current research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify success factors for students who have made a good transition in 2013 and document why- Consider case studies as part of the report</td>
<td>Nov 2013</td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Possible series of case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Deliver an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. map early intervention processes/strategies within the school and identify opportunities to improve</td>
<td>• Review current transition process</td>
<td>Aug – Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer, Year 7 Transition Coordinator, Project Officer</td>
<td>Transitions processes documented, updated and integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Review Glenroy Under 16 Project report and identify good practice learnings for implementation at FHS</td>
<td>Aug – Dec 2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participate in Joining the Dots Forum Reference Group</td>
<td>Aug – Oct 2013</td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Inform development of Transitions Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Implement usage of SMT and SOCs when available</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>FHS, Wellbeing Coordinator</td>
<td>Plan and trial intervention processes/strategies as part of School Wellbeing model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Aims</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| d.          | enable better collection and sharing of data about student learning to build a ‘learner profile’ | • Conduct Student Wellbeing Index at commencement of project for baseline data  
• Re-do baseline data at end of the project  
• CEO Audit of Transition process  
• Develop “learner profile” along differentiation principles | Aug 2013  
April 2014  
Dec 2013-Ongoing  
Feb-June 2014 | Project Officer  
Project Officer  
FHS  
AP with a Team | Baseline data set developed  
Final project data set developed  
Findings and recommendations for improving transition developed and actioned  
Learner profile model developed |
| e.          | build in data collection and report back at the completion of project | • Compile Interim Project Report  
• Compile Final Project Report detailing findings and recommendations | Dec 2013  
May-Jun 2014 | Project Officer, INLLEN  
Project Officer, INLLEN | Interim Project Report compiled and distributed  
Final Project Report complete, ratified by FEAT Action Team and resource made available as part of YPSSTP |
| f.          | make recommendations to FHS as to next steps for school | • Active membership of Yarra Education Youth Commitment  
• Knowledge sharing through participation in Shared Learning Community | Ongoing  
Ongoing | AP, Pathways and Community Coordinator  
Year 7 Transitions Coordinator | |
| g.          | build capacity for school to continue work once funding has finished | • FHS to lead the project and take ownership of the School Community Action Team  
• Explore and deliver professional development opportunities for FHS staff – draw upon FEAT team member expertise | Ongoing  
Ongoing | FHS  
FEAT Action Team | School Community Action Team embedded in school ethos  
Build capacity of FHS staff |
### Advocacy Case Management

**Project Aims**
Develop a partnership approach to improve educational engagement of up to 20 Fitzroy High School students focusing on early intervention (Years 7-9) who are presenting signs of disengagement or are absent from school on average 2 days or more per week.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. identify students deemed to be ‘high at risk’ e.g. absent from school on average 2 days or more per week under the age of 16 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Team Leaders and Year Level Leaders work closely with Project Officer to identify up to 20 Year 7 &amp; 8 students who are at risk of disengagement</td>
<td>Jul-Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer and Year Level Leaders</td>
<td>Up to 20 Year 7 &amp; 8 students at risk of disengagement identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. identify the barriers that prevent the students from fully engaging in their learning and engage external supports where necessary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop Wellbeing Survey(s)</td>
<td>Jul 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Framework for gathering baseline data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meet with identified students to explain the Project and thereafter on a weekly/fortnightly basis as required</td>
<td>Jul – Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Students and families engaged in project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicate Project to students’ parents</td>
<td>Jul – ongoing</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Barriers to successful transition documented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parent and student consent forms developed and completed</td>
<td>Jul-Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Baseline data set documented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students complete Student Wellbeing Index and “Tell me how you’re going” surveys to establish baseline data set</td>
<td>Jul – Aug 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up conversations with appropriate Team Leader/Year Level Leaders/Teacher to gather any further information not already detailed on Referral Form</td>
<td>Jul – Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer and Team Leader/Year Level Leaders/Teacher</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Refer as appropriate to external agencies for more targeted support</td>
<td>Jul – Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refer to external agencies made as required with soft handovers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Aims</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Who</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| c. develop effective working relationship with school staff (leadership, teachers and welfare support staff) and external providers to support and advocate for those students | • Communicate Project and introduce Project Officer to FHS staff, young people and their families  
• Develop a teacher referral form and associated process  
• Ongoing conversations in person and via email to build trust and share knowledge  
• Utilise existing relationships with external agencies to enable soft handover as required  
• Explore additional relevant external agencies and build connections | May 2013  
Jul-Aug 2013  
Ongoing  
Ongoing | AP  
Project Officer, AP and Year Level Coordinators  
Project Officer, Year Level Coordinators and other teachers  
Project Officer, FEAT and other agencies  
Project Officer | All stakeholders have a clear and consistent understanding of the Project  
Referral form documented and implemented  
Trusting relationships developed between PO and FHS staff  
Students positively engaged in external agencies as required |
| d. ensure that teacher and advisor knowledge is honoured and utilised and that the team and advisory structure, as well as the teaching philosophy at FHS is embedded into the way students and families are engaged | • Regularly update Student Management Tool (SMT) with relevant information on student wellbeing  
• Follow up conversations with Year Level Leaders/teachers as appropriate making recommendations for programs or individual support as required | July 2013 –  
July 2013 - | Project Officer, Year Level Coordinator, teachers  
Project Officer, Year Level Coordinator, teachers | Current learner profiles for each at risk student developed  
Open and trusted lines of communication established |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Aims</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Who</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Parent and Family Engagement</td>
<td>a. enable effective engagement and consultation with parents, students and school staff to develop engagement strategy</td>
<td>• Seek DEECD legal advice to confirm requirement for gaining parental consent</td>
<td>May-Dec 2013</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Parent consent form developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop process and documentation for gaining parent consent</td>
<td>Jun-Dec 2013</td>
<td>Project Officer &amp; AP</td>
<td>Parent consent processes developed and documented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Sample consent forms to be shared with Project Officer</td>
<td>Jun 2013</td>
<td>YSAS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop and run Transition Information session for parents/families/carers</td>
<td>Nov 2013</td>
<td>FEAT Action Team</td>
<td>Transitioning families feel well informed and prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Presentation by headspace Collingwood on normalising anxiety experienced by young people and their families during transition process</td>
<td>Nov 2013</td>
<td>FHS and headspace</td>
<td>Families understand anxiety is normal and to be expected</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Review good practice examples from Glenroy and EPIC projects</td>
<td>Feb 2014</td>
<td>FEAT Action Team</td>
<td>Key learnings and good process applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop process for conducting parent/family, student and teacher consultations</td>
<td>Nov 2013 – Feb 2014</td>
<td>FEAT Action Team</td>
<td>Consultation process developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Conduct consultations and collate findings into a report</td>
<td>Apr 2014</td>
<td>Project Officer &amp; INLLEN</td>
<td>Consultation implemented with all 3 groups drawing together key successes and challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Workshop findings to develop framework for parent and family engagement strategy</td>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>FEAT Action Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Project Aims</td>
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<td>b.</td>
<td>Develop and maintain a strong successful model of parent and community engagement within a culturally diverse school community</td>
<td>Develop Parent and Family Engagement Strategy based on consultations, workshop report, FEAT member expertise and the Family-School Partnerships Framework</td>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>FEAT Action Team</td>
<td>Parent and Family Engagement Strategy developed and documented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual consultation, review and update of PFE Strategy</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>FEAT Action Team</td>
<td>Parent and Family Engagement Strategy that reflects the cultural diversity of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Develop increased interest, participation and decision-making by parents in the education of their children and the school</td>
<td>In line with consultation recommendations, explore opportunities to help parents/families to support their young people – both in school and at home</td>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>FEAT Action Team</td>
<td>Parents/families feel better able to support their young people’s education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In line with consultation recommendations, develop a parental communication strategy</td>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>FEAT Action Team</td>
<td>Parents/families/schools have efficient and trusted 2 way communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Effectively support students and work with their families to strengthen their engagement to school</td>
<td>Review current wellbeing team and support process for young people</td>
<td>Sep-Nov 2013</td>
<td>FHS</td>
<td>Permanent role for Project Officer as member of wellbeing team</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explore ongoing funding for Project Officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>FHS</td>
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**KEY**

**FITZROY HIGH SCHOOL FEAT MEMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Linda Mitchell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Rebecca Creighton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 Transition Coordinator</td>
<td>Jenny Fulford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Transition Coordinator</td>
<td>Sandra Dickins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Wellbeing</td>
<td>Rainer Parker-Stebbing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER FEAT ACTION TEAM MEMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Yarra</td>
<td>Georgia McRae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headspace Collingwood</td>
<td>Christine Denton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INLLEN</td>
<td>Rochelle Darby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Citymission</td>
<td>Vanessa Rendina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Connect</td>
<td>Emma Carlton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YSAS</td>
<td>Horace Wansbrough</td>
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