

BANYULE / NILLUMBIK LOCAL LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

Board Meeting

Monday, December 8th

4.00 – 5.00

Shire of Nillumbik

1. WELCOME

- a) **Attendance:** Gerry Fogarty (Chair), Kate Rhodes (Executive Officer), Cheryle Michael, Marie McNeil, Stephen Smith, Ian Harrop, Lindsay Round, Jackie Doyle, Darrel Caulley, Stephen Fiyalko, and Diane Crech (Bundoora SC) and Teresa Durka (Youth Transitions Branch, DEECD)
- b) **Apologies:** Diana Murphy, Julie Johnson, Jacinta Feeley, Sue Lees, Ian Roberts, and Pam Wheatley
- c) **Welcome:** Gerry welcomed Diane Crech the school nurse at Bundoora SC who was invited to speak to the Board about youth mental health issues.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) **Declaration of conflict of interest - Nil**
- b) **Minutes of previous meeting – Wednesday, November 12th confirmed**

Moved: Darrel Caulley

Second: Marie McNeil

3. CORRESPONDENCE

Kate highlighted the following items:

- Letter from Edmund Mission, DEECD, with the signed endorsed 2009-2001 Strategic Plan and the 2009 Annual Implementation Plan
- Letter from DPCD regarding the unsuccessful grant application for the Youth Participation & Access program
- A copy of a letter to Wayne Craig from Montmorency Secondary College informing them that the school was no longer going to manage the Nillumbik Community VCAL program
- Letter from the Youth Research Centre at the University of Melbourne regarding young people joining the "Life Patterns Study".

Moved: Cheryle Michael

Second: Stephen Smith

4. REPORTS

a) Finance Report

Stephen tabled the report and noted that to date the LLEN had spent 84% of its income and the LCP only 76%.

Moved: Stephen Smith

Second: Jackie Doyle

b) Staff Report

Kate highlighted the successful submission by the BNYSN for a project officer to look at the homeless issue for youth. Also noted the number of youth led projects being undertaken in West Heidelberg through the Victorian Youth Foundation. One of these projects is with the

Pavilion. The Pavilion is being considered as a model in other areas and Wayne Craig, the Regional Director of the NMR recently visited the Pavilion.

Moved: Cheryle Michael

Second: Jackie Doyle

5. BUSINESS ARISING

b) Youth mental health – Guest speaker, Diane Crech

Diane explained that she would speak first about adolescent stress then move to anxiety and finally depression. Stress can move on to become an anxiety and finally lead to depression however it is essential to understand that if you can deal with the stress this will help avoid the other mental conditions.

Stress needs to be distinguished from the things that might cause the stress, such as exams, divorce etc. They are the stress source; the stress comes when “you don’t think you can manage”. Stress is not a disease; in fact it can even be beneficial. The problem arises if the stress becomes overwhelming.

Many adolescents are under more stress than at any other point in their lives. This is due to a number of causes such as high expectations, possibly a date or even being overscheduled. A young person may not fit in socially and be either ahead or behind in their physical development of their peer group and this can cause stress. Other factors that can cause stress are throwing a party, family dysfunction and money. In fact even a positive like winning a scholarship to college can create stress as the young person is under pressure to perform.

Conflicting feelings cause stress, e.g. love and hate of parents, feelings of independence and identity development, and / or conflict between the ideal self and what they actually are. In general stress is caused by:

- School work 78%
- Parents 78%
- Romance 64%
- Friends 64%
- Siblings 64%

Adolescents need to learn how to handle stress, how to build up the strength to meet adversity. They need to have resilience, the strength to bounce back. You can do a lot of physical activities to reduce stress. Also getting young people to think and plan can assist and trying to help them be less judgmental about themselves. It is also important for them to share what they are feeling not just with friends.

Anxiety is the next step beyond stress and if the anxiety becomes extreme it becomes an anxiety disorder. If anxiety is affecting your life in a negative way over more than two weeks then it is an anxiety disorder such as being afraid to go out on your own. Young people tend to deal with anxiety disorders by self medicating or using drugs or alcohol. For example young people using “Dutch Courage” before going out where they drink to control their worries.

There are different types of anxiety disorders. To manage an anxiety disorder you need to see a professional and if it leads to depression this might involve medication. In Australia 1 in 5 young people will experience depression and 3% experience a major depressive disorder. The reaction to stress differs between boys and girls; boys tend to just disengage and deal with it, but girls will seek help. Girls are more likely to commit suicide but they are also more likely to seek help. Young people may be suicidal but unlike adults they still have a future, what they want to end is what is causing the pain not to actually die; but they are far more impulsive. In summary 40% of young people will get help but 60% won’t get help.

To cope with depression you need sleep, a balance between school and other aspects of your life and to know how to solve a problem. A young person can learn to deal with different stresses in their lives. They need to have the strategies to deal with problems. They need early intervention and to understand that it is ok to fail. Diane discussed how school can remain a connection for a young person even after they have left and the need to be able to refer young people to outside services.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

a) 2009 Meeting dates and Planning Day

Kate tabled the proposed 2009 meeting dates and the Board discussed a date for a full day planning session. Kate has asked Peter Mildenhall to facilitate the day. It was agreed that the Planning Day should be the third week of the school term in February and that a full day was required. The 18th of February was suggested. It was agreed that the Planning Day could replace the February Board meeting.

ACTION: For Kate to talk to Peter Mildenhall and then send out a list of possible dates for the Planning Day to the Board to determine a day before Christmas.

b) LCP Strategic Plan

Kate explained that a revised LCP Strategic was due to DEEWR by the end of February. She suggested that the Strategic Directions Standing Committee meet to look at a revised plan and then the draft could be sent out to the Board for approval. The Board agreed that a range of possible dates be sent to the Board to arrange a meeting for late January or early February.

c) Nillumbik Community VCAL

Kate provided a brief summary of the background concerning the decision of Montmorency SC to not continue the management of the Nillumbik Community VCAL program next year. It was noted the importance of continuing to rent the building from the Shire of Nillumbik and the possibility of other community agencies using it for a range of youth related programs.

Meeting closed: 5.15 pm

Next meeting: Planning Day, Wednesday, February 18th (tbc)
9.30 to 4.30
Venue to be confirmed