



MEDIA RELEASE

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School Focused Youth Services has successful year

Skateboarding, public speaking and a lunch club are just some of the ways Whitehorse City Council supported local students through a school based program over the past year.

Whitehorse Councillor John Koutras said the program, Whitehorse School Focused Youth Service (SFYS), had been very successful and was gearing up for another huge year with plenty of projects planned.

“The program aims to strengthen partnerships and collaboration between schools and community agencies to help young people who live, work and study in Whitehorse feel part of the community,” Cr Koutras said.

The state government funded program aims to promote engagement, positive mental health and relationships in school children across the municipality by strengthening support for vulnerable young people aged 10 to 18 years of age.

The SFYS program also provides funds for projects in local schools and the community. In 2009/10, almost \$49,000 in funding was provided for 14 projects in Whitehorse, including six projects with primary schools and eight projects with secondary schools.

One such project involved the creation of a lunch club at Box Hill Senior Secondary College, following a proposal put forward by two Year 12 students. They felt that some students who sit alone or have trouble making friends would benefit from a lunchtime gathering to feel welcome and meet new people.

A counsellor from Eastern Access Community Health and the local police Youth Resource Officer attended the lunch club sessions to help encourage social interaction and inform students of services that are available to them.

The project promoted healthy eating, encouraged social interaction and provided links with the Whitehorse community – helping to improve the social, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of students.

Other projects included a public speaking program at St Luke’s Primary School that assisted students to improve their confidence and oral presentation skills, and the Man 2 Man project at Forest Hill College that aimed to promote healthy relationships between male students and male role models by providing opportunities for interactions, mentoring and connections.

“These valuable programs help improve self esteem and motivation in our young people,” Cr Koutras said.

Schools and community agencies interested in finding out more about the Whitehorse SFYS can contact Coordinator Michelle Wright on 9262 6374 or email michelle.wright@whitehorse.vic.gov.au