

Towards a School Community Hub at Thebarton Senior College

Thebarton Senior College develops and delivers senior secondary education to a wide range of students, including a significant number of students who are new arrivals, many of whom are refugees.

The College has responded to the changing nature of the student population and has developed support services that address the students' needs. Education and student services are delivered on and off site.

The College has been evolutionary in its approach, developing programs and services as needs have been identified.

These developments are taking place in a context which is having an impact on the demand for an expanded role for schools:

- The rate of change and the range of needs in the community, including seeing young people and families in situations not seen before; changing family structures; mental health demands; the impact of intergenerational disadvantage; services that have short term funding and are not connected; increasing demand for people in their communities to develop local solutions; increased information about the negative impact of fragmented services on the community they serve
- Recognition, by the wider community and government, that schools are a community resource
- Government policy priorities for increasing service connectedness for children, students and families.

South Australia will soon have legislation that will enable and support the way all sectors integrate policies, planning and support for the development of children and young people. Schools as Community Hubs are part of that: a place where everyone can access services through community hubs. The work at Thebarton Senior College, along with other sites in South Australia, is blazing a trail for these developments.

What we do now at TSC

The services that came into TSC on a weekly basis in 2012 were:

- Youth workers through FLO funding (every day of the week)
- Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (twice a week)
- Anglicare Housing (once a week)

- the Apprenticeship broker for Trade Schools for the Future (once a week)
- a psychologist (once a week)
- Youth JET Service (Two sessions a week) and
- THEMOS (a midwifery service from the Women's and Children's Hospital) (once a week).

Students also access off site services, for example, through English Language Outreach programs run at Kilburn, The Parks, and the West Torrens Council Library at Cowandilla. There are also a number of programs for young mothers in partnership with Centacare and Second Story.

There are programs that operate as partnerships with other agencies. Two examples are:

- The SET program was launched in November 2012. It is a joint venture between Reconnect - New Arrival Youth Service, Western Futures and TSC. This program enables students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to transition from College educational programs to work or community options.
- Community Bridging Services have a presence at TSC. This is a training and employment program for young people with a disability.

The counsellors and youth workers at TSC have developed a wide knowledge of services that students can access. This is an area that has been identified as one for further development, so that the College's referral services continue to be both timely and accurate. For example, students are referred to Uniting Communities, Centacare, Multicultural Youth SA (MYSA), Australian Refugee association (ARA), Second Story and the Service to Youth Council. This is an example of the government's No Wrong Door policy in action.

What have we done to develop the community hub model?

TSC hosted a forum in August 2012. More than forty people from education, health and care attended as well as people from the local service and community sectors. The forum developed a series of broad priorities for development across the community.

The forum decided that a small group would move the work forward. This group met in September, November and December 2012 to finalise a proposed model and make decisions about the next steps to make it happen.

A diagrammatic version of the model is attached.

What are the next steps?

For the TSC hub group within TSC, develop internal improvements to sustain the community hub:

Strengthen internal communication

Streamline case management

Identify additional services that complement the directions TSC is already taking, as well as its bias for yes and its existing ethos in the next TSC three year plan.

For the TSC hub group as a whole:

Determine priorities and timelines for program development in 2013

Develop communication strategies about the initiatives: for DECD and for the TSC community

Negotiate the partnerships/MOUs for program development

Negotiate staff/resourcing/administrative arrangements to sustain the program/initiative at local, regional and state levels.

The actions above will be embedded in the Thebarton Senior College Operational Plan for 2013.

Developments at TSC, along with other innovations at other sites, are influencing planning for other community engagement models as new state networks emerge in 2013.

