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Hume Empowering Communities

Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network

By Viv Sercombe, The Bridging Place





'Now I know there are so many options' and 'I can be anything I want to be in life.'

(Year 6 Student Quotes, 2023)

HWLLEN Imagineering Plus Program Evaluation – 2022–2023

Statement of Purpose

The Imagineering Plus Program exposes students and parents to education pathways and future emerging work trends with an aim of influencing career pathway planning whilst ensuring engagement and successful transition to secondary school. Imagineering Plus is a family centred approach targeting students in Grades 5 & 6 with particular relevance to those who may have never had a family member engage in higher education or who are at risk of disengaging from school. Imagineering Plus utilises a partnership model involving the engagement of primary schools, tertiary education providers, local industry, and Hume City Council facilitated by the Hume Whittlesea Local Learning Employment Network (HWLLEN).

HWLLEN secured funding from the Hume City Council Empowering Community's Funds following its first iteration from 2018–2019, evaluated by Clear Horizon in 2020.

The purpose of Hume's Imagineering Plus Program Evaluation for the 2022–2023 program is to assess this innovative, early intervention approach, its multiple

benefits and occasional challenges over a 15-month period, from students' gradual inclusion into a normal school routine after 2 years of isolation at the end of 2022 as a result of Melbourne's protracted lockdowns in response to COVID-19.

The evaluation clearly illustrates the magnitude of COVID's impact and subsequent lockdowns via the numbers of schools and students that engaged over this 15-month period, developed, co-ordinated and delivered by the exceptional HWLLEN staff, Sofie Cross and Cynthia Petridis.

It describes the journey from its challenging beginnings in late 2022 (and further unpacked by the esteemed Professor Kim Cornish in her recent publication, The Post Pandemic Child), progressively informing students of potential career pathways, encouraging ongoing conversations at home and ultimately, became a form of social recovery as students and whole families began to 'imagine' different futures.

Foreword

Although The Imagineering Program has evolved over a number of years, its strength and purpose was profoundly evident 2022 and 2023. The Imagineering Plus Team, Sofie Cross and Cynthia Petridis were able to deliver an exceptional program in a challenging post COVID environment to primary schools, students and families across the City of Hume. It's unprecedented level of engagement – from students, families, schools and teachers – as the most immediate stakeholders became fully committed to its evolution and students began to realise its purpose as they connected with their own educational – and employment pathway.

Over 800 students were involved, 51 family groups attended excursions and 72 families participated in a variety of sessions and 47 teachers all participated in a total of 246 sessions. Parents were inspired to 'imagine' potential education and employment opportunities for themselves and their children while schools reinforced the program by deepening the learning through additional class time. Teachers have expressed that they would like to embed the program to become a long-term curriculum offering.

The outcomes for all stakeholders included:

- Increased Student Awareness of Career Pathways
- Positive Self-Image
- Parent Information Pack
- Strong Focus on Parent/Carer Engagement in Schools
- Engagement of Parents/Carers in Career Pathway Discussions
- Teacher Outcomes
- Guest Speaker and Higher Education Outcomes

There is no question that the Imagineering Plus program has been transformative for the City of Hume; an early intervention program that has offered hope and a renewed vision for the future after two years of lockdowns.

I cannot thank Sofie Cross and Cynthia Petridis, the Imagineering Team enough for their dedication and commitment to working with schools and their students, with La Trobe University and Kangan TAFE and the many and varied industry speakers who willingly volunteered their time to inspire others.

I invite you all to learn more about the Imagineering Program Plus program through this evaluation and to consider the implications and importance of its findings and recommendations for the future of children and families in the City of Hume.

Kim Stadtmiller, Executive Officer, Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network

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Imagineering Plus Project





HWLLEN Imagineering Plus Program Evaluation – 2022–2023

City of Hume

Hume is a region of great cultural diversity with up to 156 countries represented (36% of Hume's residents born overseas), 150 different languages with 4 out of 5 residents agreeing that it is a 'good thing' for a society to be made up of different cultures. Hume has also been described as a city of 'progressives'. As noted in Hume City Council's plan 2021 – 2025:

'Hume is a place of great contrasts – in geography, economy, background and cultural diversity. Located just 15 kilometres north of the centre of Melbourne. The City of Hume is one of the fastest growing and most culturally diverse communities in Australia.'¹

In 2022, Hume's 5 top employing industries were:

- Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Retail
- Health Care and Social Assistance

Hume City Council has demonstrated its long-term commitment to principles of social justice and environmental responsibility as it was a leading council in the early 2000's to have a Social Justice Charter, a Business Efficiency Network which has now transitioned to the Circular Business Network (underpinned by Circular Economy principles).

However, as Hume is 'one of Victoria's most diverse communities ... [it is also] one of the most disadvantaged local government areas in Victoria, with a Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) ranking of 947'.

Within Hume:

- 8 per cent of our residents have low English proficiency
- 17 per cent are classified as low-income
- 29.9 per cent of homeowners are at risk of mortgage stress
- 6.3 per cent live with a disability (compared to 4.9 per cent across Melbourne)
- 29 per cent have two or more chronic illnesses
- 22 per cent experience high psychological stress
- There is a high family violence rate (1,637 per 100,000)
- Our residents face higher than average unemployment (9.8 per cent across the City / 21.1 per cent in Broadmeadows in June 2020)²

As a long-term resident of Hume recently commented...

'Historically, Hume is a blue-collar area [and has been facing] challenges associated with the decline of the manufacturing generally. It has hit the area significantly, so those "traditional" jobs may not be as prevalent or desirable as was once the case.'

This broad demographic combined with progressive initiatives instigated by Hume City Council and other local stakeholders in the region creates a unique platform, fusing deep local knowledge, trusting and responsive relationships with impressive social innovation.

The Imagineering Plus Project demonstrated this – and more – throughout its 15 months of development and operation between 2022 and 2023.

¹ Hume City Council (15 July 2021). Hume City Council Plan 2021 – 2025, accessed April, 2022.

² Hume City Council (2021), <u>COVID-19 Recovery and Reactivation Plan</u>, Hume City Council, accessed April, 2022

The Imagineering Plus Program – 2022–2023

Hume's decline in manufacturing and subsequent transition to emerging industries in addition to a stressful post COVID environment provided an opportunity for the Imagineering Plus project to demonstrate its remarkable impact over 2022 – 2023 with *all its stakeholders* – students, parents, teaches, schools, industry speakers and tertiary partners.

Hume has 17,224 primary school aged children who attend 42 primary schools in Hume. Throughout 2022 – 2023, the **Imagineering Plus Program** was made available to all Grade 5 and 6 students in 2022 and 2023 reaching almost 50% of the entire primary school population in the City of Hume.

Imagineering Plus Program...

- exposed students and parents to education pathways and future emerging work trends with an aim of influencing career pathway planning and ensuring engagement and successful transition to secondary school.
- harnessed a *family centred approach* targeting students in Grades 5 & 6 with particular relevance to those who may have never had a family member engage in higher education or who are at risk of disengaging from school.
- utilised a *partnership model* involving the engagement of primary schools, tertiary education providers, local industry, and Hume City Council facilitated by the Hume Whittlesea Local Learning Employment Network (HWLLEN). HWLLEN's existing connections with local industries/businesses and higher educational institutions enabled the inkind contributions of guest speakers who facilitated interactive workshops to engage students and their families/carers for the purpose of raising career pathway awareness and initiate student parent conversations about future education and employment options.

Together, the Imagineering Plus Team, Sofie Cross and Cynthia Petridis coordinated seven schools, over 813 students, engaged 72 family groups, and 79 different industry leader sessions, and 16 tours of La Trobe University and Kangan Institute to share, learn and form aspirations for families and student's futures in a region that is typically associated with challenges and barriers. The Imagineering Plus Program did indeed lift schools, students and families as a positive intervention in a time of great need.

The carefully constructed overarching journey allowed students to tap into their own interests, attributes and aspirations, explore familial and community connections (their social network – parents, extended family, coaches, friends, teachers) and the ways their interests and connections might support future study or work opportunities (*Module 1 & 2 – Self Reflection and Career Networking*). The emphasis on support networks within the program also allowed students to understand that working towards a career pathway is a journey and through ongoing learning, can review their own interests alongside their 'imagined' future career and what may unfold in reality, due to external circumstances.

Further exposure to Guest Speakers in *Module 3* shifted students initial dreams and sparked future possibilities they had not previously considered in addition to learning about the different jobs within different industries e.g. female constructions workers in the trade union movement.

In *Module 4*, both students and families experienced the tertiary sector environment via tours and interactive activities at La Trobe University and Kangan Institute and the many and varied study options available. Parents commented that they learned about the different avenues to access post graduate certificates and degrees and the potential to explore this for themselves.

In *Module 5*, students shared their visions and hopes for the future through pictorial and written presentations.

The final module, *Module 6* offered opportunities for students to explore transitional issues, from primary school into secondary school.

The following table indicates the level of engagement from within the City of Hume, including schools, teachers, students, parents, business and industry engagement and the tertiary sector.

No. of Schools engaged	7		
Students participating	813 (over 12-month period)		
Teachers involved	47 (27 teachers/20 teacher		
	aides)		
Number of sessions delivered	246		
Guest speakers	30		
Number of Guest speaker sessions	79		
Number of excursions to TAFE and University	16		
Number of parents involved in sessions	72 family groups		
Number of parents involved in excursions	51 family groups		

Outcomes and Impact

The Imagineering Plus Program outcomes include:

Increased Student Awareness of Career Pathways: Activities have provided an increased exposure to education and career pathway options for students resulting in positive awareness of the benefits of education and raising aspirations for their future.

Positive Self-Image: The inclusive nature of this program has enabled all students to actively engage and, through the program design itself, measurements of self-awareness and confidence in their abilities are clearly apparent.

Parent Information Pack: Information relating to the program and resources supporting primary to secondary school transitions developed and available online via the HWLLEN website. This is a living document with additional resources added as information updated.

Strong Focus on Parent/Carer Engagement in Schools: Notable increase in parent/carer participation in student learning and attendance in school activities.

Engagement of Parents/Carers in Career Pathway Discussions: The program has promoted open communication between parents and their children.

Teacher Outcomes: This program has demonstrated shifts in perceptions of students and promotes higher expectations for their students. Benefits have been noted regarding the increased parent/carer engagement resulting in improved connections and interest with their child's education.

Guest Speaker and Higher Education Outcomes: Perceptions have changed about the benefits of engaging with younger cohorts of students and the opportunities this brings in being able to inform parents of career pathway options.

The Impact of COVID

The evaluation of the Imagineering Plus Project between 2022 and 2023 and the findings and recommendations outlined by Clear Horizon Consulting in 2020 based on the first iteration of the Imagineering Project (September 2018– December 2019) must be cognizant of the enormous impact of COVID-19 in Hume. Hume was a vulnerable community prior to COVID, however, Melbourne's lockdowns exacerbated and compounded those risk factors which have continued to reverberate in a post COVID environment.

In 2021, Mayor Joseph Haweil noted that COVID had 'crippling effects on the local economy in 2020 as many residents were **stood down or lost their jobs during the pandemic and some businesses have closed their doors permanently.'³** In addition, Hume's workforce is 'largely young and mobile' with 54% being **essential workers** who needed to travel for their job, which posed increased risk of infection due to large, multi-generational households.

'Fear is gripping the region, according to Hume Mayor Joseph Haweil, with people acutely aware an essential trip to the grocery shop could send them into quarantine, or, even worse, expose them to the virus. The people around here are very fatigued, very tired, very frustrated, and this added element of COVID being so prevalent in the community has put many people on the edge.¹⁴

Hume City Council responded by constructing a Recovery and Revitalization Plan for Hume by proposing to:

• Help to reconnect our community with the social recovery of individuals, families and communities

- Seize opportunities to accelerate economic recovery of businesses, employment and local investment.
- Re-imagining and redefining a better future for Hume.

These objectives were aligned in the development and delivery of the Imagineering Plus Program.

The Post-Pandemic Child

Professor Kim Cornish⁵ continues to highlight the ongoing and significant impact on children outlined in her publication 'The Post Pandemic Child', and in particular, those within the Melbourne metropolitan region, from culturally and linguistically diverse families experiencing trauma and disadvantage prior to the lockdowns. Cornish covers the psychosocial impacts on families and communities, highly relevant to the Hume community by exploring the very specific issues facing culturally and linguistically diverse families, job losses or loss of income, difficulty in meeting basic needs and the mental health and developmental issues facing children.

'During the pandemic, more than a quarter of Australian households experienced job or income loss, and 28 per cent had difficulty paying for food.'⁶

She continues...

'For families from non-English speaking countries or who did not speak English at home, understanding the COVID-19 restrictions and why they were necessary caused a great deal of stress. In communities across Australia, families were often left without government information written in their home language and

were dependent on religious leaders to provide critical COVID-19 updates. This heightened fears for the physical and financial safety of their families.'⁷

⁵ Cornish, K (2023) *The Post Pandemic Child*, In The National Interest Series, Monash University Publishing, Melbourne

⁶ Ibid., p. 26

⁷ Ibid., p. 38

³ Ilanbey S & Cunningham C (26 September 2021) '<u>How coronavirus closed in on the City</u> <u>of Hume</u>', *The Age*, accessed April 2022.

⁴ Ibid.

Cornish then tracks the return to school issues that emerged as children and families gradually began to return to schools in late 2021, citing that the two years of isolation, uncertainty and restrictions 'had left their mark.'⁸ She notes that 'many children still do not feel safe to amuse themselves in the playgrounds, visit friends' homes or *learn with other kids in a classroom.'* Teachers confirmed this profound shift in children with the 'rise in difficult student behaviours', the unexpected levels of disciplinary issues, including in school-ground fighting, children not paying attention, and children deliberately distracting others.

This was also evident in children's capacity to interact with others. The lockdowns and isolation had impacted children's friendships and to such an extent that younger children, had difficulty with instructions, sharing with peers, communicating and listening.' Ultimately, it was children's confidence that was severely damaged with behaviours such as 'having trouble in getting along with others, wanting to be alone and becoming irritable and angry when forced to interact.'

She summarises the renewed emphasis of educational policymakers that schools needed to focus on the facilitation of 'rebuilding the physical, psychological and social skills.' Indeed, this became a 'key priority for educators in 2023.'

The Imagineering Plus Program in a Post-COVID Environment

This background context is a salient reminder of the conditions many Hume families experienced at the height of the pandemic, especially when many of the Grade 5 & 6 participants in the Imagineering Plus 2022 and 2023 program were young children at the time and only beginning to adjust to school life at the end of Term 4 in 2022 with countless disruptions due to teacher shortages or illness.

For many of these children, the Imagineering Plus program allowed them to connect and re-connect with each other, in some cases, re-learn social skills and for families, participating in school excursions, encouraged by their community hubs, it became a form of social recovery, demonstrating an aligned guiding principle noted in the Hume Council's Recovery Plan. It was especially telling for families who may have lost their jobs during the pandemic and in extreme cases, lost family members to COVID. Within this context too, the Imagineering Plus program became so much more. It provided a pathway back to a sense of connection and a sense of hope for the future as much as it was about providing accurate information and options for future careers. It provided the potential to honour the student's nascent skills, interests and passions combined with inspired guest speakers and excursions to La Trobe University and TAFE.

Indeed, as Melbourne – and Hume – emerged from Melbourne's protracted lockdowns, as challenging as it may have been at times, the Imagineering Plus Program occurred when it was most needed. This is reflected in the following data and case studies provided by the participating schools. The ongoing impact of COVID and now, the geopolitical tensions across the globe suggests that the Imagineering Program must remain to inspire its local families with informed aspirations, social connections and positive visions for the future.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 39, 42

Imagineering Plus Project Evaluation

The Clear Horizon 2020 Evaluation Report Evaluation Methodology



HWLLEN Imagineering Plus Program Evaluation - 2022-2023

The Clear Horizon 2020 Evaluation Report

The 2020 Clear Horizon Evaluation Report presented the findings of the Imagineering Program on behalf of the Hume City Council and Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR). The Hume City Council contracted Clear Horizon to carry out an evaluation on Effectiveness, Impact and Implementation of the Imagineering program implemented by Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (HWLLEN).

The findings and recommendations from Clear Horizon Report in 2020 supported the design of the next iteration of the Imagineering Plus project in 2022 and 2023. It should also be noted that the program objectives from the first to second iteration focused initially on family engagement while the second iteration focused on student engagement and the *progressive* engagement of families.

As noted earlier, these findings and recommendations were made **prior** to COVID and Melbourne's lockdowns. The table on page 13 demonstrates the outstanding success of the Imagineering Program Plus to implement these recommendations despite the aforementioned contextual difficulties.

Findings Summary

For Families

- An increased exposure to education and career pathways.
- Positively affected students' knowledge and awareness of education and career pathways
- Some students with changed aspirations.
- Improved awareness of some parents about different pathways to education and employment.
- A contribution towards six family members securing employment and 12 family members enrolled or having completed training courses.

For Teachers

- A demonstrable shift in some teacher's perceptions.
- Highlighted the significant role teachers play in ensuring the Imagineering Program is fully supported and implemented.

University Outcomes

• The Imagineering Program changed the perceptions of university representatives on the advantages of working with primary schools, especially when most universities work with secondary schools.

Unexpected Outcomes

• The unexpected outcome of its impact on families and family interest and among family members of other students.

Program Implementation

- On track according to project plan
- Main challenge of the program implementation related to communication and co-ordination across different key stakeholders and the engagement of family members.

Key Success and Inhibiting Factors for Phase 1

- Strong engagement with primary stakeholders and having passionate and competent team members.
- Inconsistent communication and co-ordination across different stakeholders; low English and digital literacy amongst family members and challenging for engagement of new schools.

Phase 1 Recommendations for Phase 2

The following table outlines the **Recommendations for the Imagineering Plus Program** from the **Clear Horizon Report in 2020** and the ways in which the second iteration was implemented as the City of Hume was transitioning from Melbourne's lockdowns and students were returning to schools after two years.

Phase 1 – Imagineering Program – 2018–2019 ⁹	Phase 2 – Recommendations Implementation in Imagineering Plus Program – 2022–2023			
For Students	For Students – 1 April–31 May 2022 and June–August 2022			
 Directly involving students in the co-design of the program contents through various fun, child friendly and engaging co-design activities. Reviewing survey tool to assess students' perceptions after program activities in order to collect meaningful and useful evaluation data at the implementation or activity level. 	 Schools and students were engaged in a co-design process to ensure the program content would meet the immediate needs of the schools, families and students. EOI process allowed schools to select their preferred modules for 2023 as well as ensuring the key components of the course were delivered. 			
Family Members	For Family Members – June to August 2022			
 Changing the communication methods from e-mail and phone call to more effective methods such as direct engagement with schools, mothers' groups, fathers' groups and local communities. Providing more relevant in-person information sessions for family 	 Development of 'parent packs'¹⁰ to provide families with resources, links and materials to continue career conversations at home. Interest from Community Groups in Parent Packs, especially those in the Hume Empowering Communities Groups. 			
members.	May–July 2023			
Sessions could include:	Parents invited to excursions to La Trobe University and Kangan TAFE			
1. An explanation of HECS fees	Institute			
 A. Higher education options and pathways including university and TAFE Available services to improve English sessions. Employer led sessions 	 Parents invited to Employer Led Guest Speaking Sessions 			
Universities	For Universities – May–August 2022 and May–July 2023			
 Visiting a broad range of educational providers such as universities, TAFE's 	La Trobe University and Kangan TAFE Excursions for 2023 Confirmed			
and local businesses.	 Excursions to La Trobe and Kangan TAFE in June–July, 2023. 			
Program Implementation	Program Implementation – June–August 2022			
 Engaging a broader range of family members and ought to include fathers. Leveraging on the council's networks for local incursions and labour opportunities. 	 Increased community engagement by liaising with council and community agencies to provide additional case management support for disengaged young people, given the ongoing impacts of COVID, staffing shortages and wellbeing issues. 			

⁹ Clear Horizon (January 2020), Evaluation of the Imagineering Program, Recommendations Summary

¹⁰ Appendix 1 – Parent Pack Resources, p. 43 this document

 Increasing the resources for the Hub workers who have external facing
role to engage directly with end users and schools.

Phase 1 – Imagineering Program – 2018–2019	Phase 2 - Recommendations Implementation in Imagineering Plus		
	Program – 2022–2023		
Program Content	2022–2023		
 Continuing the program focus building career foundations for early year students and exploring a broader range of career options. Adjusting program contents according to local context, family members and student interests/career aspirations and the future growth of the job markets for the Hume area. 	 Throughout 2022 and 2023, the programs co-design process and adjustment of Imagineering Plus Program content met school, student and community needs ensuring meaningful and continuous student engagement. 		

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology included:

Preliminary Background Context and Considerations

- 1. Desktop Research on Clear Horizon 2020 Report
- 2. Desktop Research on Hume City Council Policies For Children and Social Recovery in the Community Post COVID
- 3. Impacts of COVID and post COVID environment on children
- 4. Strategic Alignment with HWLLEN Strategic Priorities

Data Collection and Stories of Change

- student surveys after each module
- reflective processes for students within sessions
- teacher surveys
- teacher and principal interviews for case studies Meadow Heights Primary School and Holy Trinity Catholic College
- parent surveys and engagement from the Parent Pack Portal
- ongoing reports from Imagineering Team including Hume Empowering Community (HEC) reports.
- internal discussions with Imagineering Team and HWLLEN EO, Kim Stadtmiller

Imagineering Plus Project Course Modules

The Imagineering Plus Course Modules – Overview

The **Imagineering Plus Program** delivered core modules, co-designed with school's leading teachers of Years 5 and 6 students, resulting in a workplan program scheduled over 4 school terms with content and timelines agreed with the principal.

Modules provide students with a progressive sequence of workshops beginning with strengths based self-reflections to assist in identifying interests and abilities, raising awareness of social connections for developing career networks, entrepreneurial skill development together with parent/carer engagement, consideration for health and wellbeing.

These school-based workshops are complemented with exposure to secondary and tertiary education pathways facilitated by excursions to local TAFE and University and incursions with a variety of industry guest speakers.

The final module aims to prepare Year 6 students and their families for their transition to secondary school.

Module 1 – Self Reflection Outline

'I liked the "who do you want to be" posters' Year 6 Student, Meadow Heights Primary School, 23 March 2023

The purpose of this module is to introduce the alignment of interests and influences on future career choices. The Self Reflection module provides opportunities for the Imagineering Coach, teachers and students to discuss career areas of interest and propose new and emerging career options.

Students reflect on their own interests, attributes and abilities and align the area of work that best represents their interests. For example, students' capabilities or interests may be based on 'I like to know how things work and I want to make something useful' or 'I like meeting new people and want to make a difference to

people's lives.' This concept is based on the Foundation for Young Australians Job Clusters.¹¹

Module 2 – Career Networking and Social Connections

' I enjoyed the network web...' and 'I enjoyed learning about many types of jobs' Year 5 Student, Meadows Primary School, 23 May 2023

Module 2 introduces the concept of career networking and engages students in activities to establish their own 'Career Network Web', utilising family, friends and school contacts initially, with the intention of expanding the network as the program progresses. This becomes a useful point of reference for students to gather information from their families and friends as 'contacts' and to gain insights to their potential career.

Module 3 – Guest Speaker Incursions

'I strongly enjoyed the session as I have never learnt so much about careers.' and 'I learnt there are so many job options in the world' and 'I learnt about industries and really cool jobs.'

Years 5 & 6 students at Mt. Ridley College, 6 June 2023

Module 3 invited inspiring guest speakers to present the concept of job readiness and transferrable skills through storytelling. A range of industry representatives were engaged to deliver in-house activities to students (incursions) with family participation encouraged.¹² Examples of industry guest speakers included:

- a physio and director of a health business
- a female construction worker working in trade unions.
- a paramedic

¹¹ Foundation for Young Australians (2017), <u>*The New Work Mindset*</u>, FYA's New Work Order report series, FYA, accessed April, 2022 p. 4

¹² Appendix 2 – Parents Invitation to Guest Speaker Session at Meadow Heights Primary School, 18 May 2023, p. 44 this document

Module 4 – La Trobe University and Kangan Institute Excursions

Years 5 and 6 students, student families and caregivers were invited to participate in an excursion to La Trobe University and Kangan Institute to better understand the different nature of the educational contexts (higher degrees and vocational learning) via different certificate courses, diplomas, associate's and bachelor's degrees. These excursions for families and their children were critical as it was often the first time family members had visited a university or TAFE campus. Students experienced a full immersion of the institute with a visit to lecture theatres, a tour of the campus, exposure to both social and educational pursuits on campus.

Module 5 – Imagineering Plus Student Presentations

Students presented their learnings and shared their aspirations to a wider audience as a result of all they had gained over the course of the Imagineering Plus Program. Students were encouraged to consider a variety of presentation platforms, as a digital, multi-media production or product design. The presentation process encapsulated student learning and their potential careers and pathways. Parents and family members were invited to attend and similarly, were encouraged to reflect on their own career pathway journey.

Module 6 – Health and Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing workshops on self-esteem, mindfulness and healthy lifestyles were also offered to schools and particularly relevant to the more vulnerable cohorts, who were supported to access and engage in positive physical, mental and emotional health. It was designed in consultation with School Hub Workers and welfare staff in participating schools. The number of workshops were determined in collaboration with the school whilst ensuring all students were able to participate in the first five modules of the Imagineering program.

Module 6 – Transition Excursion

Schools could also choose to participate in a Transition to Secondary School excursion. This was explored as part of an initial project plan and aimed to target Year 6 students and families who are the most vulnerable and unlikely to arrive at secondary school successfully. These vulnerable children and families are supported in small groups with time to address concerns and anxieties about moving to secondary school. It is supported by the YHOP team and/or the Imagineering Coach and targeted to the individual student needs.

Imagineering Plus Project



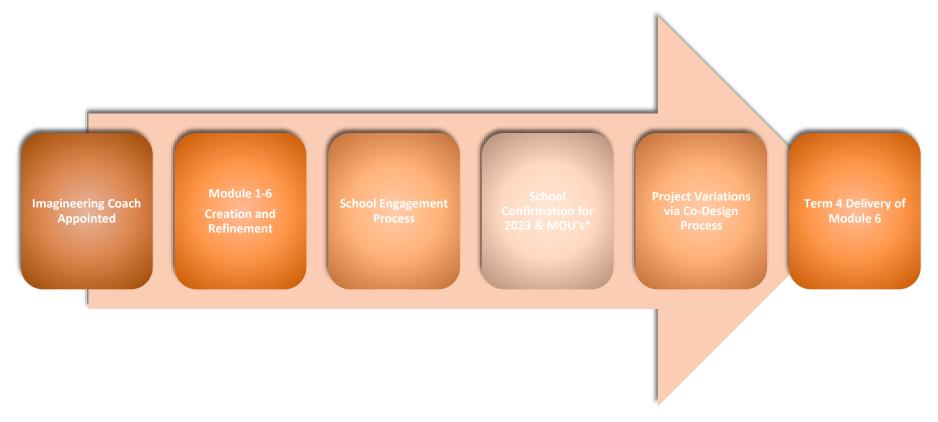


HWLLEN Imagineering Plus Program Evaluation – 2022–2023

Project Establishment Phase Term 4 Delivery of Module 6

The following pages outline the steps the Imagineering Plus Team, Sofie Cross and Cynthia Petridis undertook to establish school interest, engagement, project construction, and the co-design process for its delivery in Term 4, 2022.





Project Establishment Phase, March 2022 – September 2022; Term 4 Delivery of Module 6

School Confirmations for 2023

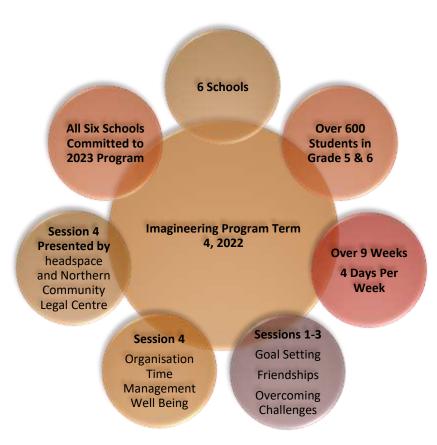
- Modules 1–6 Meadow Heights Primary School, Aitken Hill Primary School and Holy Trinity Catholic College (Terms 1–4)
- Modules 1–4; Module 6 Mt. Ridley College
- Modules 1–6 Meadows Primary School Commencing 24 April 2023 (Term 2) 4 December 2023
- Module 6 Dallas Brooks Community School Module 6 Only (Term 4)

2022 – Project Development and Implementation of Module 6 in Term 4, 2022					
Sofie Cross Appointed as Imagineering Coach					
Cynthia Petridis – Administrative Support For Imagineering Coach Module Refinement Completed					
t)					
reinforced from Counc	;il				
individual school need					
xposed to the most re	levant				
equired.					
equired.					

Imagineering Plus Program – 2022, Project Plan and Implementation

¹³ Appendix 3 – Imagineering Promotional Flyer, p. 45 this document

Term 4, 2022 – Module 6 Snapshot – Transition and Wellbeing¹⁴



¹⁴ All six schools participated in Module 6, which was designed to enhance further engagement and as a 'taster' for schools to consider ongoing participation for 2023.

Term 4, 2022 – Module 6 – Transition and Wellbeing

Module 6 offered all participating schools to engage with the Imagineering Plus program in Term 4, 2022. This was not only a mechanism to support schools transition programs but also to address student wellbeing. Students were invited to discuss their reflections about transitioning into secondary education which included:

- Goal Setting
- Overcoming Challenges
- Friendships
- Wellbeing
- Organisation and Time Management

Imagineering Coach, Sofie Cross outlined the emerging issues across all schools and COVID's significant impact on delivery of classroom sessions with each school. However, it should also be noted that Term 4 at any school, pre pandemic is *always* a challenging time of the year. Students were often tired and looking forward to the summer holidays. For students to return to school in Term 4, having been continually disrupted and effectively in social isolation presented challenges to all schools. This is reflected in the sessions experienced by Sofie but due to her perseverance and openness to adapting modules, teachers began to observe the positivity expressed by their students and worked with Sofie to support the programs development over the 9 weeks at the end of 2022.

This progressive shift over the 9-week period, from a small number of disruptive behaviours and limited engagement, teacher absence and the number of 'high needs students' present in the classroom to greater teacher buy-in was clearly demonstrated in one of the participating schools. Early within the program, sessions were unable to be completed due to student disruption, teacher absence or disengagement. Teachers also shared that for some students, concentrating for any length of time was challenging, even for short periods of time. It was particularly interesting too when the topic of 'Friendships' was introduced that unpredictable behaviour escalated. This reinforced that the lack

of social contact had fragmented friendship groups and that the discussion about friendships may have been confronting for some students.

A group of boys within the same school began a conversation about their desire to leave school at Year 10 and move into a trade or apprenticeship which allowed Sofie to provide accurate information about this pathway.

Some of the community organisations who presented in the school's sessions were also inexperienced in delivering presentations in challenging school environments. Further support was provided, ensuring these organisations had strategies and tools for future presentations.

In another case, a whole school intervention was required including the Assistant Principal and Social Workers being present in classrooms with follow up meetings with executive level staff to determine the best approach for 2023. It was acknowledged that despite the level of disruption and poor social behaviours, the school recognised the importance of the program and believed it needed to be imbedded within the schools 2023 program. Indeed, while the module was about 'transitioning' to secondary school, it also became a transitioning program back into school life, routines and rebuilding social skills.

Other school disruptions were in the form of absenteeism due to illness. However, despite the smaller numbers, the students were more engaged, demonstrating better self-regulation and openly shared more thoughtful responses. As a result, this less stressful environment also allowed students to be focused on the tasks. However, some students did not contribute at all which was clarified by the school principal, noting that some students had moved schools up to three times and experiencing a considerable degree of anxiety.

Another feature of one of the schools was to invite Year 7 students from a local secondary school to describe their experience, after almost 12 months, of moving from primary to secondary school.

Yet, despite these challenges, the schools' engagement and student participation was evident throughout these sessions as indicated below:

School	Student No.'s
Aitken Hill Primary School	160
Holy Trinity Catholic College	21
Meadows Primary School	56
Meadow Heights Primary School ¹⁵	96
Dallas Community Primary School	45
Mt. Ridley Primary School	250
Total	628

Term 4, 2022 were clear examples of Kim Cornish's 'post pandemic child.' Friendship tensions, distractions and short concentration spans were frequently mentioned in Imagineering reports. However, with great tenacity and on the recommendations of teachers, Sofie was able to modify the modules to accommodate the needs of the children. This ensured students were gradually able to connect with each other and with the many fun activities Sofie prepared. Yet, over 2023, the Imagineering Plus program became a highlight for many of the children as they settled back into school routines.



¹⁵ Meadow Heights Primary School – 2022 Year 5 students progressed in Year 6 Imagineering Program in 2023; Case Study, pp. 36–38 this document

Imagineering Plus Project 2023

HWLLEN Imagineering Plus Program Evaluation – 2022–2023

Term 1 – Modules 1 and 2 – Self Reflection; Career Networking and Social Connections

Modules 1 and 2 (Self Reflection and Career Networking and Social Connections) was undertaken by **four of the six schools**. The four schools were:

Participating Schools and Student Numbers

Schools	Student No.'s		
Aitken Hill Primary School	168		
Holy Trinity Catholic College	23		
Meadow Heights Primary School ¹⁶	96		
Mt. Ridley	125		
Total	412		

These schools had the opportunity to think about the world of work, participating in activities and games that enabled them to envision themselves and the ways in which they access the support around them in the future.

This provided Sofie Cross, the Imagineering Plus Program Coach, to appreciate the ongoing complexities experienced by the students, especially where families had experienced generational unemployment and/or were unemployed and/or underemployed or experienced a loss of income due to COVID but also the impact of teacher shortages.

The delivery of the two modules is again a testament to the strength of the program and quality of meaningful engagement with teachers and students despite the sometimes-challenging environments.

Module 1 – Self Reflection Outline

The purpose of this module is to introduce the alignment of interests and influences on future career choices. The Self Reflection module provides opportunities for the Imagineering Coach, teachers and students to discuss career areas of interest and propose new and emerging career options. Students reflect on their own interests, attributes and abilities to determine what area of work most aligns with them and choose (or create) an 'avatar' that best represents their chosen field. For example, students' capabilities or interests may be based on 'I like to know how things work and I want to make something useful' or 'I like meeting new people and want to make a difference to people's lives.' This concept is based on the Foundation for Young Australians Job Clusters.¹⁷



¹⁷ Foundation for Young Australians (2017), <u>*The New Work Mindset*</u>, FYA's New Work Order report series, FYA, accessed April, 2022, pp. 4, 16

¹⁶ See Meadow Heights Primary School Case Study (7 September 2023) for Further Details, pp. 36–38 this document

Module 2 – Career Networking and Social Connections

The four schools were also exposed to the concept of career networking by developing their own 'Career Network Web', initially utilizing family, friends and the schools as contacts for further information about different career opportunities. This 'network' then expanded throughout the program as they learned about other professions and associations.

While this became a useful point of reference for students to gather information from friends and families, it simultaneously highlighted students who had limited experience of or no exposure to different work cultures. This was especially relevant when Sofie noted that a student withdrew from the activities...

'... he sat with his hoody over his head, unable to communicate effectively. He would answer by saying he is sad but not sure why' [and appeared unable to respond] when asked about his siblings. [At times] ... his answers were mixed and appeared confused. When asked what his adult people do at home, he said dad doesn't work and neither does mum.'

Teachers have since recommended that activities that work well is when it is about the future and who students wish to be. Sofie immediately responded by including this activity for the same cohort of students in Term 3 for the student's final presentations.

However, while the schools continued to support the Imagineering Plus program, evident teething problems remained as the most successful sessions occurred when classroom teachers and or teacher aides were present. Where schools experienced chronic teacher shortages, newly arrived teachers or the programs were covered with relief teachers who had less engagement, students were unsettled and less focused to fully participate in the activities.

Term 2, Module 3 – Industry Guest Speakers

Module 3 invited inspiring guest speakers to present on job readiness and transferrable skills through storytelling. A range of industry representatives were engaged to deliver in-house activities to students (incursions) with family participation encouraged.

A Snapshot

- Over 90 sessions facilitated across the 5 schools over a 6-week period.
- Each school had 3-4 guest speakers attend and run workshops with students.
- Sessions ran for approximately 20-30 mins.

A range of representatives from different industries including

- Paramedics
- Nursing
- Physiotherapy
- Library Services
- Sporting Industries
- Scientists
- Animal Rescue





Parental Engagement

Two Parent Morning Teas were designed in collaboration with two primary schools – Meadow Heights Primary School (18 May 2023) and Meadows Primary School (13 June 2023).¹⁸

Over 25 parents attended the Parent Morning Tea at **Meadow Heights Primary School** in addition to Education Support Staff who were able to assist with interpreting. Teachers and the school principals also attended on the day. The event was supported and in collaboration with Giuseppina Caruso- Learning Specialist Grade 5/6 Lead Teacher.

Students work was displayed and additional Information on the program was also provided. Conversations about the excursions and feedback from the guest speakers was discussed with great enthusiasm.



¹⁸ Appendix 2 – Parents Invitation to Morning Tea – 18 May and 13 June 2023, p. 44 this

Meadows Primary – Ten parents attended the morning tea. This was supported by Maureen Leahy, the School HUB Coordinator as well as Jonathan Hobbs, the Year 5/6 Team Leader. Education Support Staff were also present to provide interpreting services for non-English speaking parents (Arabic & Turkish). Visual representations of the student's work was displayed and the upcoming excursions to La Trobe University and Kangan Institute discussed. Parents feedback and comments were positive, impressed by the nature of the program and the benefits to their child's learning and development.

Jonathan Hobbs, Year 5 & 6 commented that...

The teachers and students benefited so much from Imagineering, one example being that we used each of the Grade 6's aspirations for when they are older as part of their introduction when coming onto to stage at graduation!

document

Date	School	Year Level(s)	Guest Speakers	Student No.'s	Evaluation Methodology	No. of Student Surveys
18 May & 22 May 2023	Meadow Heights Primary School	Year 5 & 6	 A Paramedic A Physio Women's Trade Association Nicky Leitch – Soccer Player 	96	Surveys	22 surveys (18/5) 30 surveys (22/5)
23 May 2023	Holy Trinity College	Year 6	 Costa Mushroom Exchange (x2) Nurse Nicky Leitch – Soccer Player Librarian (Coding) 	23	Surveys and Testimonials	20 surveys
9 May, 6 June, 26 July	Mt. Ridley College	Year 5 & 6	 Nicky Leitch – Soccer Player Women's Trades Association – Courteney Munn & Angela Hansen 	125	Surveys and Testimonials	49 surveys (9/5) 19 Surveys (6/6)
15 May 2023	Aitken Hill Primary School	Years 5 & 6	 Laura Caruso- Nurse Courteney Munn- Women in Trades Katherine Hemsley & Rina Perera (Paramedics – Ambulance Victoria) Tiffany Doan & Declan Portman (Cost Exchange Mushroom Farm) 	168	No written surveys Verbal feedback only	
22 May 2023	Meadow Primary School	Years 5 & 6	 Megan Becke- Hume Library Services Nicky Leitch- Soccer Player Katherine Hemsley- Paramedic – Ambulance Victoria 	90	Surveys & Testimonials	31 Surveys (22/5)

A variety of guest speakers attended the participating schools as indicated in the following table:

Some Student Responses and Quotes About Industry Guest Speakers

Holy Trinity Catholic College – Over 50% of students found the information useful for their career; over 80% found it interesting to find out about different jobs.

Meadow Primary School – Over 50% of students found the information useful to their career and the speakers enabled deeper reflections about themselves, their interests and ideas about what they might like to do.

Mt. Ridley Primary School – 'I didn't know what to do ... now I do' and 'I have investigated the coolest jobs that I hadn't thought of before.'



Term 2 – Module 4 – Excursions to La Trobe University and Kangan TAFE

The Imagineering Project Plus co-ordinated a total of 9 excursions across 5 schools throughout Term 3¹⁹. Surveys and interviews all commented on the power of the excursions, noted as the highlight of the program for students, parents, schools and the tertiary sector alike.

Up to 51 parent groups accompanied their children on these excursions throughout Term 2 and community liaison staff from both La Trobe University and Kangan Institute expressed their surprise at the level of student engagement in addition to their ongoing interest in working with primary schools in the future.

It was also clear that the benefit of having the parents attend was that they openly spoke of their own professional backgrounds and the influence this had on their children's aspirations. The 152 student surveys demonstrated a

remarkable, if not an unexpected level of sophistication that developed as students began to make sense of their former learning about careers (social networks, guest speakers and their own interests and attributes) and the potential pathway to achieving their goal by visiting both La Trobe University and Kangan Institute. Many students described their initial understanding of TAFE and universities ... as places 'where people have meetings' or ' a boring place where people only do study.' Student responses following the excursions reflected a growing understanding of the difference between TAFE and university. Students commented on TAFE as 'a place where I can do an apprenticeship or traineeship when I finish school' or ' I can study and get practical experience at TAFE.'

Students were in awe of the range of courses available at both TAFE and university although the preference was to attend university. Notable observations included the size of campuses, the number of cafes and restaurants, and La Trobe Universities Wildlife Sanctuary while students from Holy Trinity Catholic College in Sunbury noted the availability of public transport and therefore access to TAFE.

The excursions were a pivotal and significant learning experience for students which was clearly revealed in the Module 5 Student Presentations articulating who they wish to be in the future.



 $^{^{19}}$ Appendix 4 – Sample Itineraries for La Trobe University and Kangan Institute Excursions, pp. 45–48 this document

Term 3 – Module 5 – Student Presentations

In Term 3, the student presentations highlighted their learning and inspirations in stark contrast to the earlier experiences in Term 4, 2022 as students were returning to be in a face-to-face learning environment.

Exposure to different industries, educational pathways combined with many and varied fun activities led to deep learning with visions of what students might dare to dream, to become. This was reinforced by the many statements students made during their presentations but also as part of their post session reflections.

Students demonstrated their learning but also a different way to engage, and bond with friends and family through this learning process....

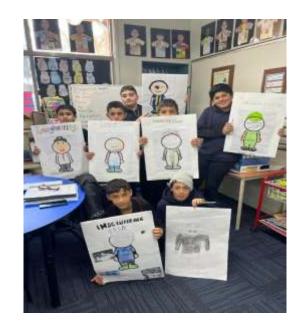
'I learnt that anyone can work at any job [and] *they don't need to be a certain gender*. There are *many jobs at university* and *you can change jobs overtime*'

'I learnt some facts about the job I want to be when I am older. My favourite part of the program was when the guest speakers came because it was lots of fun and educational at the same time. *I also had fun with my mum there doing the stop motion video'*

'One thing I liked about this program is where *we were with friends and talking about the jobs we wanna be and supporting each other'*

'My favourite part of Imagineering was when people showed us there jobs and how interesting it was because I am thinking of being a tradey.'

'My favourite part was writing my dream job on a label and talking about it.'



Parents too commented that

'The Imagineering program gives students a vision of what they want to be in the future.'

'There any many people in my son's life who he looks up to. This process has led him to ask more questions about what exactly their job entails.'

'One of the guest speakers has influenced my daughters career choice. After hearing the paramedic's story she loved the idea of being a paramedic'

Term 4 – Module 6 – Transition

Module 6 'Transition' was markedly different from its earlier iteration in 2022. Students who had participated in the Imagineering Program throughout the year were positive, engaged and responsive to the many and varied activities Sofie and Cynthia provided. They not only showed their confidence and growing understanding of the content, their capacity to work with their peers, to reflect more deeply on the activities definitely highlighted a maturation process. Teachers too were far more encouraging, supporting students answers as they too became more familiar with the content of the program.

Dallas Community Primary School participated in one session focusing on transition which again, was a vastly different experience from 2022 but highlighted student growth and social skills.

On the rare occasion when students were not participating, it suggests again that the contextual issues continue to be an important consideration. Sofie was able to refine many of the activities to ensure student engagement but for students who struggle with their sense of self and a potential future, these activities may also become confronting.

Another variation too is when students have come from largely negative educational experiences, moving schools multiple times due to behavioural issues. For these students, the Imagineering Plus Program, its activities, its capacity for inclusion also allowed students opportunities to provide unexpected, and welcome contributions. The program had tapped into students' passion and purpose, helping students to think deeply about who they are, their futures and why education is such an important component of their future journey. It may have been one of the first occasions when students felt connected to important life lessons and contextualised learning as a continuous process.

Students' discussions about friendships was notably different from the 2022 experience. While students appeared to struggle with their social connections 12 months earlier, students now relished the opportunity to work with their peers

and openly discussed the concept of 'healthy and unhealthy friendships.' However, amidst the same discussions, they struggled with identifying positive qualities about themselves and found it difficult to accept compliments when their peers identified and shared positive characteristics.

Another powerful activity within the Transition Module was the engagement of Year 7 students from Sunbury Downs Secondary College speaking with Grade 6 students about their experience of the transition. Better still, the Year 7 students had participated in the Imagineering Plus Program from 2022.

Throughout the Transition Module, teachers regularly commented that the students looked forward to the Imagineering Program each week which led to further, deeper conversations in the classroom. This too ensured connectivity between the curriculum and its purpose.

This Transition Module also allowed Hume City Council staff responsible for primary to secondary school transition to be present, support and engage with schools, students and families. The Imagineering Program became an acupuncture point for other key stakeholders in the community due to the strength of its relationships with schools.

There is no question that as Sofie and Cynthia continued to adapt the program, built relationships with schools, teachers, students and families, that meaningful growth occurred. The impact on students and families is reflected in the number of schools, students and families attending the many and varied activities including industry guest speakers and excursions to La Trobe University and Kangan TAFE. This holistic, socially inclusive approach to enabling career aspirations and future planning has led to numerous calls for the Imagineering Plus program to continue and in some cases, become imbedded within school curriculum.

Above all, the Imagineering Plus Program has been a catalyst for change within a community severely impacted by COVID and in turn, has collectively devised an astounding innovation for the greater benefit of all.

Imagineering Plus Project Case Studies



HWLLEN Imagineering Plus Program Evaluation – 2022–2023

Meadow Heights Primary School, 7 September 2023

The following discussion was undertaken on-line with the Principal of Meadow Heights Primary School, Margaret Leach and two Year 5 & 6 teachers, Pina Caruso and Michael Pace on 7 September 2023 following the Imagineering Modules from 1-4 and prior to the Student Presentations in Module 5.

Background Context for Meadow Heights Primary School



Situated within Hume-Moreland network in North-Western Victorian region, Meadow Heights Primary is located 4 kilometres north of Broadmeadows Melbourne and approximately 27 kilometres from the Melbourne Central Business District. The school was founded in 1991. Situated on over three hectares, the school grounds feature several designated grass play areas, two basketball courts, large, open courtyard and covered age-appropriate playground areas. The school is equipped with a modern Early Learning Centre. There is a Performing Arts Room, Visual Arts Room, Library, Gymnasium, Media Centre and fully furnished and equipped Community Hub.

Meadow Heights Primary School (MHPS) believes that a secure learning environment inspires and challenges students to reach their full potential. The school aims to enable students to grow as responsible and respectful individuals who strive for excellence, take pride in all they do to make a positive contribution to their community. The school's current vision reflects its values of pride, respect, responsibility and excellence as its mantra suggests, 'Achieving the potential of all learners'.

In 2022, the school had 47.8 equivalent full-time staff: 3.0 principal class, 27.9 teachers and 19.9 Non-teaching Support Staff. The school had an enrolment of 380 students, 195 female and 190 males. The school services a multicultural community which adds cultural capital to the school. 291 (75.98%) students speak a language other than English at home and 220 (57.44%) of these were born in Australia. There are 12.5% students who are refugees, 2.4% are at risk and 6.5% who have a disability. 3.13% of students (12) have an indigenous background. While 22 different linguistic backgrounds are represented, the top three languages spoken at home are Arabic, Turkish and Assyrian. 58% of our students are eligible for EAL (English As Additional Language) funding.

The school has had increasingly many students from disadvantaged backgrounds with High Student Family Occupation and Education (SFOE) Index level of 0.6335 in 2022. 60% of our students are equity funded. There are 13 students with access alerts in place and no students are in Out of Home Care.



Imagineering Program Impact on Meadow Heights Primary School

The Imagineering Plus project has been highly valued by Meadow Heights Primary School, from its principal class through to its teachers, students and parents. The Principal, Margaret Leach and Leading Teacher, Pina commented that the impact of COVID was significant as it 'killed parental engagement' and that this program had been able to 'bring back the spirit of community' and that it made 'a big difference.' It was reiterated throughout the focus group discussion that 'it was a really valuable and worthwhile program.'

Both Michael and Pina commented on the noticeable spike in anti-social behaviours on students return to school after lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 including parents genuine concern about their children being on social media until the early hours of the morning. The Imagineering Plus Program, in many ways became a 'reset' opportunity and was able to positively shift students to becoming aspirational and future focused.

Pina commented that...

'Sofie (Imagineering Coach) did a really good job of developing a good rapport with students.'

... and that students looked forward to Sofie's classes every Thursday during the course of the program.

Margaret, Pina and Michael all echoed the same sentiment – that the Imagineering Plus Program 'resonates with what we need' and that it was respectfully and sensitively planned for 2023 in collaboration with teachers, appreciative of the school's competing priorities.

Another key factor in parent and student participation in the program was that it was offered free of charge which is exceptionally important to families experiencing financial difficulties.

Modules 3 & 4 had a significant impact on both families and students as they learned about different occupations from guest speaker incursions and visits to La Trobe University and Kangan Institute.



Module 3 – Guest Speaker Incursions And The Impact on Student Aspirations

The Imagineering Program not only offered meaningful connections to imagine potential futures; the program outlined accurate pathways and a diverse and engaging range of opportunities.

Prior to the Imagineering Program being offered at Meadow Heights Primary School, large numbers of students frequently expressed interest in 'being famous' as YouTubers. The Imagineering Program allowed students to engage with real world work opportunities and outside gender stereotypes. This was especially evident during students' participation in Module 3²⁰. Almost 50% of students believed that information they received had taught them information they believed would be important for a successful career and likewise, that finding out about different types of jobs was interesting...

'It doesn't matter what gender you are; you can do anything.'

'I learnt that I could do anything if I'm determined. The last speaker told us that she didn't like a subject and still got a job as a paramedic. I feel like I'm able to do that as well.'

For example, other students noted the young woman who became a construction worker. Parents were exceptionally interested, especially when the physio and paramedic presented to students with 20 parents attending the session. This was an outstanding response and again testament to the programs strengths in not only providing relevant material to envisage other futures but also as a social connector. The incursions also spiked the interest of one mother participating in the program as she realised that she could acquire a qualification through TAFE to become a physio.

Pina and Michael also noted that families' employment and educational experiences significantly influenced student choice. Students observed their parents or older siblings either attending university or becoming a trades person while other students, one in particular, had wanted to be a gamer and through the program, decided to become a detective. While this may not actually occur, it demonstrated the student's willingness to consider other options

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²⁰ Module 3 – Guest Speaker Incursions, 18 May 2023, 22 Grade 5 & 6 students.

La Trobe University, 22 June 2023, 21 Students in Grades 5 & 6,

'It was great to have a program with different aspects and opportunities [including the] opportunity to go to university (La Trobe University).'

Meadow Heights Primary School Teacher, Pina

Students and parents were inspired by La Trobe University and the fact that the Imagineering Program tied it to Education Week. Eight parents attended the tour to La Trobe University and were encouraged to go to as a result of their relationship with the Community Hub²¹.

Student surveys indicated that about 48% of students were surprised by the range of 'things to study', by the size of the university and the 'the number of classes you had to go to.' The 18 out of the 21 students agreed that they would like to go to university when finishing secondary school with ideas such as...

'I would like to go university to study science...teaching...aviation...engineering.'

Others responded enthusiastically to the experience but were unclear of what they wanted to do or even 'that's not for me' which indicates a telling sense of self awareness and strength to suggest this.

Kangan Institute, 27 July 2023, 22 Students In Grades 5 & 6 Students

The impact of the excursion to Kangan Institute had a similar effect on student responses including the surprise to the number of subjects available and

understood the different nature of vocational education and that 'it was a place to do an apprenticeship or a trade.'

However, the excursion also elicited an interesting and inverse response to the excursion to La Trobe University. The majority of students (14 out of 22) believed that they would not attend a TAFE while the remaining 8 students believed it was a viable option. Vocations of interest mentioned by the students included becoming an automotive mechanic, working in building and construction, carpentry or hairdressing.

However, the general consensus was that the excursion to Kangan Institute was less inspirational as the students commented that they would have liked...

"...more actual activities, not just a quiz. Seeing people do the activity like bricklaying."

This will be a critical consideration for future iterations of the Imagineering Program and how to encourage TAFE to promote more hands-on activities during the excursion.

The positive impact ... on our students [is demonstrated by the fact] that they are still talking about it. It was a fun way of learning about 'real life stuff'. It was.... inclusive of all students regardless of gender, race.... Everyone would walk away empowered by each session and by what they each learnt.

(Pina Caruso, Year 6 Teacher)

²¹ Appendix 5 – Meadow Heights Primary School Community Hub, p. 49 this document

Holy Trinity Catholic College, November 28, 2023

Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School is a new primary school located in Sunbury, bordering a new estate within Sunbury's existing infrastructure. The school opened in 2019, prior to the onset on COVID with an enrolment of 47 children in Prep to Year 5. Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School is a member of the Sunbury Catholic Learning Community 'working together strategically to support, challenge and extend all members of our learning communities by embedding a shared pedagogical understanding and practice that meets students' individual needs.'²²

It recognised that as a new school to the area, it was essential to demonstrate its values and commitment to social inclusion resulting in a different school demographic than many of the surrounding Sunbury schools. Holy Trinity Catholic College is home to significantly diverse population, most noticeably from African, Indian and Filippino communities now moving into the Sunbury region. The school's executive team acknowledged that for many of the students attending the school it was often their second or third school, many with negative educational experiences. Holy Trinity offered a 'second chance' for genuine engagement in their learning.

Driven by its principal, Krystine Hocking, the school has fully embraced opportunities to connect with the wider community which was powerfully demonstrated in its relationship to the Imagineering Plus Program in 2022 until the end of 2023. It's learning community is 'committed to providing an innovative education that will inspire and empower all to achieve beyond expectations.'²³ This value too was evident in its commitment and support of the program and especially its Year 6 teacher, Peter Cashen.

Peter commented on Sofie's rapport with his students and the fact that the program extended over the year which enabled him to view his students learning from a different perspective. He acknowledged that while students relished the

opportunity to learn about different careers, he observed that it wasn't so much about the different jobs but that they began to understand the nature of the career pathway and that students realised that there were almost 'building blocks or steps' in the development of that pathway. He noted that students asked the bigger questions such as 'How do I get there? What would that look like?' Peter commented that it was...

'Not so much specifics but more to understand if I want this particular job, what do I need to get qualifications and then learn about the different ways to go about that.'

The sorts of questions the students asked often led Peter to extending the learning with an additional 5 to 6 hours of class time, offering a deeper inquiry process which the Imagineering Program had triggered.

Peter also noted that the highlight of the program was, without doubt, the excursions to the La Trobe University and Kangan TAFE (Module 4). Peter believed the 'University visit was brilliant with a mixture of group work and hands-on activities allowing for different learning styles.' TAFE too offered a clear point of difference with a strong interest in the veterinary clinic and the agricultural activities. In other words, while the entire Imagineering Program was impressive, the visits were a 'shining light' and 'impactful.'

Stories of Change

Peter continued to describe the journey of two academic students who were clearly inspired by the university visits. They independently made the connection between the subjects they needed to elect in high school in order to progress to their chosen field and were excited by this self-evident line of sight.

Other students struggled to connect with their future but recognised the excursions allowed for exploratory conversations. Likewise, the excursions, were

²² Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School (2024), <u>School History</u>, Holy Trinity Sunbury, accessed December, 2023

²³ Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School (2024), <u>School History</u>, Holy Trinity Sunbury, accessed December, 2023

complemented via parental engagement strategies – from the ongoing communications from the beginning of the year through to the attendance at excursions and presentations (Module 5) which also led to further discussions at home.

Peter was deeply appreciative of Sofie's capacity to diversify her content delivery and it was especially powerful. Peter recalled a student who was believed to be non-verbal but over the course of the year, began to speak and with growing confidence, began to participate in a variety of activities which became part of the students Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

At the end of 2023 and from its inception in late 2022, Peter was able to map the progression of student understanding and increased engagement over a 15-month period.

Parental Engagement – 'Fathering Project'

Holy Trinity's Catholic College was also successful in securing funds from the City of Hume to deliver a 'Fathering Project' as part of their community engagement strategy. Like Meadow Heights Primary School's Community Hub, the school ran sessions inviting fathers to participate in a social inclusion program through the school. It is now known as 'Dads of Holy Trinity' and has 20 fathers attending regularly but has attracted up to 60 families. This reinforces the importance of innovative community connection in the City of Hume post COVID and with a growing cultural diversity in its peri-urban fringe.

Combined, the Imagineering Plus Program and the Fathering Project has contributed to a sense of community, greater social cohesion and support for

children and families in securing their economic participation. Above all, the Imagineering Plus Program inspired children to become curious learners about their potential futures, the steps in their career journey and create purpose for within the wider educational context.



Findings

- That the Imagineering Plus Program offered students and families a greater awareness of career options through the many and varied opportunities within the program.
- The Imagineering Team, Sofie Cross and Cynthia Petridis were able to adapt the modules and sessions as required.
- Increasing numbers of parents over the course of the project demonstrated its growing impact and engagement for their children and themselves.
- Increased involvement of teachers in sessions consolidated students learning with ongoing conversations in class and between Imagineering sessions.
- A whole-of-community, inclusive approach allowed for deeper connections with other local stakeholders including Hume City Council.
- The design of the Imagineering Plus Program allowed for adaptation and flexibility in its delivery and was a clear benefit for schools.
- The Imagineering Plus Program design was especially relevant to schools who wished to deliver the Transition Module as a stand-alone program.

Recommendations

Future iterations of the Imagineering Plus Program must ensure that there is adequate resourcing of the program if it is to work at its current scale and/or cover the entire City of Hume region. This should include:

Imagineering Plus Staffing

- 1 EFT Staff and 0.5 Support Staff
- Administrative support for the Parent Pack Portal including translations
- A whole of community communications strategy

- The Imagineering Plus Program evolved over a 15-month period allowing for continuity and strong relationships with schools, teachers, students and parents.
- Parents' reflections on their children's growth and ongoing conversations have been supported by regular communications strategy including the Parent Pack Portal.
- Students demonstrated an increased sophistication and understanding of career pathways as a direct result of their participation in the Imagineering Program.
- Students who may not have role models for career aspirations and pathways were accommodated by building self-esteem and tapping into the student's purpose and passion.
- Guest speakers had a powerful impact on children with hands-on activities and presentations and student's willingness to contribute and discuss the different industry options presented.
- Excursions to Kangan Institute and La Trobe University were highlights of the program for children, parents, staff and the tertiary sector.

Schools, Professional Development

- Opportunities to Share Process within Communities of Practice
- Creation of Imagineering Plus Student and Teacher Guides
- Professional Development Induction Process
- Opportunities to Share Process within Communities of Practice
- Creation of Imagineering Plus Student and Teacher Guides

Formal Evaluation For Ongoing, Cross Sectoral Impact Assessment and Evidence Base

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Parent Pack Resources



Appendix 2 – Parent Invitation to Morning Teas



PARENT INFORMATION SESSION

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

The Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (HWLLEN) are thrilled to have this opportunity to meet with families to talk about your child's involvement in our Imagineering Plus Program.

We welcome you to come and meet Sofie and the team, view some of your child's work and experience first hand our **Imagineering Plus Parent Pack** which will give families the tools and resources to continue these career conversations at home.

Join us for some delicious morning tea and refreshments and automatically go into the draw to win a prize!

We welcome families with young children to bring them along also.

We are located at: HWLLEN Office - 46-48 Katrina Drive, Gladstone Park 3043.

We have aff street parking for about 15 cars, then street parking is available. Look for the community building right next to John Coutts Reserve,



Appendix 3 – Imagineering Promotional Flyer







School	Meadow Heights PS	Year Level	5/6
Event Name	HW LLEN Campus Visit	Number of Students	92
Date	Thursday 22 June	Venue	LTU
Times	10am–2pm	LTU Contact	Belinda D'Angelo
School Contact	-	LTU Staff Meeting Point	-

Time	Activity		
	Pupils are met at Thomas Cherry Bus stop.		
10:00 10:00 - 10:10	Pupils are escorted to Lecture Theatre		
10:10 - 10:30	Lecture Theatre – ELT 3 Welcome Expectations on campus Outline of the day Treasure Hunt booklets distributed Teachers split group into 3 groups 		
10:30 - 10:40	GROUP 1 Walk to Agora for recess.	GROUP 2 Walk to Agora for recess.	GROUP 3 Walk to Agora for recess.
10:40 - 11:00	RECESS: ALL GROUPS		
11:00 - 11:10	GROUP 1 Pupils will be collected from the Agora.	GROUP 2 Pupils will be collected from the Agora.	GROUP 3 Pupils will be collected from the Agora.
11:10 - 11:40	GROUP 1 – DRY LAB Campus Treasure Hunt	GROUP 2 – MENZIES THEATRE Graduate Game	GROUP 3 – TLC 213 Pizza Smarts
11:40 - 11:50	GROUP 1 Pupils will be escorted to their next session.	GROUP 2 Pupils will be escorted to their next session.	GROUP 3 Pupils will be escorted to their next session.

11:50 - 12:20	GROUP 1 – MENZIES	GROUP 2 – TLC 213 Pizza	GROUP 3 – DRY LAB
	THEATRE	Smarts	Campus Treasure Hunt
	Graduate Game		
12:20 - 12:30	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
	Walk to Agora for lunch.	Walk to Agora for lunch.	Walk to Agora for lunch.
12:30 - 1:10	LUNCH: ALL GROUPS		
1:10 - 1:20	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
	Pupils will be collected from	Pupils will be collected from	Pupils will be collected from
	the Agora.	the Agora.	the Agora
1:20 - 1:50	GROUP 1– TLC 213 Pizza	GROUP 2 – DRY LAB	GROUP 3 – MENZIES
	Smarts	Campus Treasure Hunt	THEATRE
			Graduate Game
1:50 - 2:00	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
	Walk to Thomas Cherry.	Walk to Thomas Cherry.	Walk to Thomas Cherry.

Appendix 4 continued – Sample Itinerary for Kangan Institute

Imagineering Plus Program 2022-2023

Kangan Institute Broadmeadows Campus – Aitken Hill Primary School

Itinerary – Excursion for year 5 & 6 Students, teachers, parents/carers

Students/teachers/parents 9:05am	Buses depart from the school	
Students/teachers/parents arrive 9.45am Introduction 9.45-10.00am	Arrive at Kangan Institute Broadmeadows Main Entrance off Pearcedale Parade (Building A). Bus enter from Coleraine St entrance Greeted by Skills and Jobs Centre Manager in Building A, Room 146 Boardroom 1- Intro to TAFE Courses, tour	
10.00-10.20am	Students/Parent/Guardians commence Tour Food & Fibre Centre- Animal studies e.g., VET Nursing, Laboratory Technician, Horticulture, Landscaping, Conservation & Land Management, Agriculture Food and Fibre staff intro, tour and Q&A	
10.20-11.00am	Students/ Parents/Guardians tour Hospitality/ Commercial Cookery/ Baking (Bread and Pastry)/ Richards Restaurant Hospitality Staff intro and Q&A	
11.00-11.15am	Snack and Toilet break- courtyard near Restaurant or canteen (Student / families bring snacks)	
11.15 -11.35am	Students/Parents/ Guardians Tour Horticulture (Orchard and Student Gardens) Tafe Staff intro and Q&A	
11.35 -12.00pm	Students/Parents/ Guardians Tour Security/ Engineering/Welding/Carpentry/Plumbing/Electrical TAFE Staff intro and Q&A	
12.00pm – 1.00pm	Buses Depart Students/teachers/parents – Arrive Back At School	

Session 1: Starting at 10am

Group 2- 5/6B and remaining 5/6C students

Students/teachers/parents	Buses depart from the school
9:05am	
Students/teachers/parents	Arrive at Kangan Institute Broadmeadows
arrive 9.45am	Main Entrance off Pearcedale Parade (Building A). Bus enter from Coleraine St
	entrance
Introduction 9.45-10.00am	Greeted by Skills and Jobs Centre Manager in Building A, Room 146 Boardroom 1-
	Intro to TAFE Courses, tour
10.00-10.20am	Students/Parent/Guardians commence Tour
	Security/ Engineering/Welding/Carpentry/Plumbing/Electrical
	TAFE Staff intro and Q&A
10.20-11.00am	Students/ Parents/Guardians tour
	Horticulture (Orchard and Student Gardens)
	Staff intro and Q&A

11.00-11.15am	Snack and Toilet break- courtyard near Restaurant or canteen (Student / families bring snacks)	
	Students/Parents/ Guardians Tour	
11.15 -11.35am	Hospitality/ Commercial Cookery/ Baking (Bread and Pastry)/ Richards Restaurant	
	Tafe Staff intro and Q&A	
	Students/Parents/ Guardians Tour	
11.35 -12.00pm	Food & Fibre Centre- Animal studies e.g., VET Nursing, Laboratory Technician,	
	Horticulture, Landscaping, Conservation & Land Management, Agriculture	
	Staff intro, tour and Q&A	
12.00pm – 1.00pm	Buses Depart Students/teachers/parents – Arrive Back At School	

Appendix 5 – Meadow Heights Community Hub



Hume Community Hubs²⁴ were established in Hume City over eight years ago and were expanded to nine Hubs under the Supporting Parents Developing Children Project which ran from 2011-2014. There are now 15 Community Hubs located in Hume schools and they are part of the National Community Hubs Program.

- The Hubs are based in primary schools and are planned around local needs.
- The Hubs support families in their children's learning and development and provide knowledge and training opportunities for parents.
- The Hubs act as a gateway to services, information and learning and increases connection with their community and the broader networks in Hume City.

Each Hub has a Hub Coordinator who offers a warm, supportive environment and helps parents and community members to create vocational pathways and move through volunteering, training, education and employment. The Hubs are open to families in the local community as well as school families.





References

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About Viv Sercombe

Viv Sercombe has researched and implemented innovative real world curriculum opportunities for young people in marginalised communities, linking education systems, young people's passion and purpose, guided by their communities for close to 30 years. Following extensive research into the New Economy in local economies, Viv developed a framework for real world learning with and for senior secondary teachers and students which was then implemented in pilot schools across Melbourne's inner north. Teachers and students became familiar with the New Economy and the required capabilities for social inclusion and environmental responsibility utilizing the existing Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning. This approach received state, national and international recognition. Viv's holistic and innovative approaches have led to a Churchill Fellowship Award, becoming an Ashoka Fellowship nominee (USA) and invited into the international social innovation platform, Catalyst 2030. Viv's 2022 report for Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network – Hume's Youth Driven Innovation – drew on the aforementioned framework, influencing key decisions and outcomes within Hume City Council.

Viv Sercombe

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