

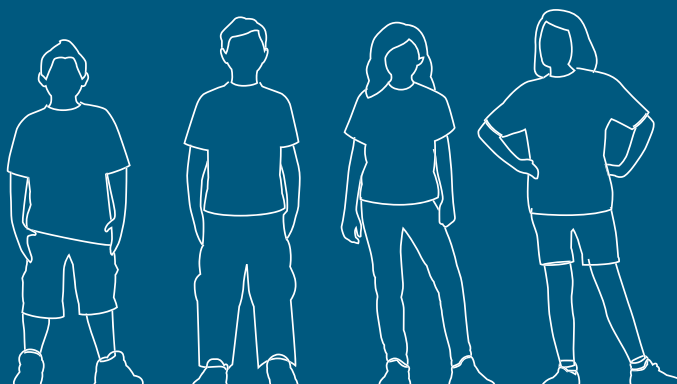
# Middle Years Matter... in Hume



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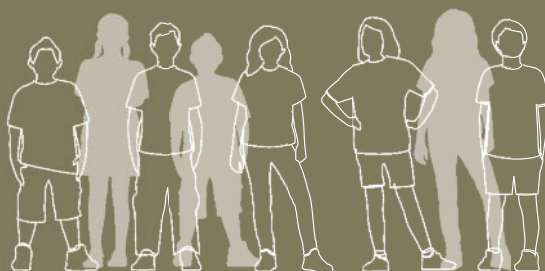


Hume Youth Commitment



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We would also like to acknowledge partners of the Hume Early Years Partnership (HEYP) and Hume Youth Commitment (HYC) for their ongoing commitment to this work in Hume.

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Kathryn Fraser – HWLLEN  
Nicky Leitch – HWLLEN  
Meryl O'Neill – Uniting  
Neoma Carey – Uniting  
Kevin Pope – HWLLEN  
Maria Axarlis-Coulter – Critical friend to Hume

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Date: August 2018



## Foreward

Since 2010 there has been significant and quite targeted work on the middle years in Hume. The HWLLEN would like to acknowledge all previous partners who have worked in and contributed to shine a spotlight on the middle years in Hume.

In partnership with community members & networks the HWLLEN has commissioned the following Reports:

The Hume Under 16 Project – “*Out of School – Out of Sight*” June 2012

“Our Tweenies: Are they flying along or falling through the cracks?”  
September 20th 2013

“Realising the next wave: Reflections & lessons from the Hume Middle Years Working Group” June 2014.

“Broadening our Horizons – Collective Impact for a Stronger Hume Now and into the Future” June 2015

There have also been numerous conferences, discussions, professional development opportunities and several active versions of the Middle Years Action Plan and the DET Transition NET.

Despite our best efforts middle years still remains a time of concern and is often missed as it sits between work in both the early years and youth work spaces.

We have however also had significant successes and the fact that Hume service providers overwhelmingly have a commitment to work collaboratively is also a significant strength. There will always be challenges and concerns, but as stated in this Report it is important that we also celebrate the work we do well.

Bearing that in mind we present the following response to previous Reports:

## "Our Tweenies Report: Are they flying along or Falling through the Cracks?" September 2013

### Recommendations:

- Regular collection of clear & consistent data on school attendance
- Strengthen transition points
- Collaboration
- Increase parent empowerment & engagement
- Increase student empowerment & engagement
- Build the capacity of schools to respond effectively to school disengagement

### Achievements:

- Middle Years Work – remains focused on transition points
- Collaboration – schools are part of the Hume Youth Commitment (HYC) and are still involved in HWLLEN activity
- Resources for students and parents have been developed
- Hands on Learning is running in some schools
- Trade Taster events still run
- Finding MY Place was being run by Hume City Council (HCC) Library
- We have a significant increase in Year 12 completions since 2008 - current Year 12 completion for 20-24 years is 72.7% (HCC Data)
- Hume has alternative learning settings in place now – The Gateway School, Project REAL, along with support programs such as Navigator and targeted programs under the Youth Justice Alliance for recidivist offenders who are 10 – 14 years

### Challenges:

- Consistent data collection still remains an issue
- More Schools could be actively participating in HYC & HEYP

- Middle Years is still a gap in local service systems. What works best is quite specific targeted interventions in action plans, strategies and frameworks
- There is no municipal response to middle years in Hume – however the 0- 24 years framework currently being developed by Hume City Council presents a significant opportunity for middle years to be targeted
- Cessation of the Hume Middle Years Working Group (HMYWG)
- Student attendance is still an issue in some primary schools & secondary schools - Data from 2017 obtained from DET reveals that in 66% of Hume public primary schools students in Yr 6 are missing more than 15 days of school a year. And, in 75% of Hume public secondary schools students in Year 7 are missing more than 15 days of school per year
- We could strengthen a local response to school disengagement
- We could strengthen a local response to parent engagement

## Realising the next Wave – Reflections & lessons from the Hume Middle Years Working Group

### June 2014

Middle Years - Identified as grade 4 to year 8 in Hume City.

This Report identified that there is currently a profound gap in policy, service provision and supports for middle years, which sits between the frameworks of early childhood and youth services.

This Report called for a municipal approach to middle years planning and highlighted good practice examples where that had taken place. ie: City of Whittlesea.

## Knowing our community

Hume City is a large and rapidly developing municipality with a rich cultural and social fabric. Hume is more disadvantaged than state and national average, with lower than state average levels of education and employment, however locally we are also having some success in these areas.

## Valuing education as a path to social inclusion

The Hume community comes together with a shared commitment to social inclusion, recognising the importance of education in building social capital and preventing and breaking cycles of inequality. This link between inclusion, educational attainment and economic wellbeing engages and connects our work in middle years. Our previous work identifies strongly the importance of parent engagement in relation to improved student outcomes, learning, attendance, and behaviour. Engagement in learning is a key predictor of student success and staying in school.

## Recognising the need for targeted planning and programs that address the needs of this age group in a developmentally appropriate way.

Unfortunately in 2018 there still remains a profound gap in policy, service provision and supports for middle years which was highlighted in this report in 2014. That is not to say that there isn't collective effort to advocate for a life-course approach to policy and program development. We continue to do this to help prevent young people from falling between the gaps that currently exist between the early years and youth services. We still strongly believe that access to age appropriate services should be available for all community members.

## Call for an “all of Hume” municipal approach

This Report called for a municipal approach to middle years planning in 2014. Through various networks, the Hume Middle Years Working Group and other quite targeted work- funded through various state and federal programs - we have made significant headway into

shining a spotlight on the importance of middle years. We believe that from a sustainability point of view however, a municipal response is still the best way to move forward.

From the middle years foundations of this past work, the HWLLEN is still confident that there is an exciting future for middle years. The Hume community is coming together for sound reasons and have been successful in demonstrating positive outcomes in the middle years space before and over a relatively short period of time. We need to be mindful that the work is never done though.

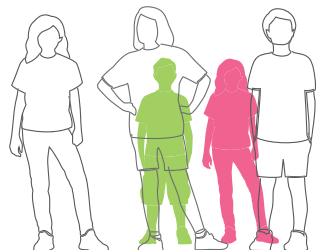
We would also like to highlight that the HWLLEN in Hume is a small independent broker that continues to advocate for, and evaluate the success, challenges and connection points in our community for young people and their families; education providers; industry partners; community agencies and government. This work is extremely important but we cannot work in isolation.

This document is a call to action and a call for support for more strategic partnerships - relationships that are cluster based and community relevant that respond to the points of need and allow for the sum of our parts to come together and work in concert to improve the outcomes for those in the middle years.

We hope that having read this report you will respond with a renewed commitment to a collaborative and community response to actions taken in the middle years. Who will join with us to express and define the place of middle years in our collective strategic intent and who wants to help lead the response and action plans for this work? What response can you have to move this conversation forward?

**Nicky Leitch**

Executive Officer – Hume  
HWLLEN



## Hume fast facts

Hume residents come from 156 Countries

Hume residents speak 153 languages

37% or 77,179 of Hume's population are aged 0-24 years of age

20% or 15,531 of this figure are aged 5 to 9 years of age

18% or 14,107 of this figure are 10 -14 years of age

19% or 14,709 of this figure are 15 -19 years of age

23.7% of children aged less than 15 years live with jobless parents.

Some major differences between Hume and Greater Melbourne

57% of households have children in them in Hume – the average for Greater Melbourne is 44%

Hume has a larger % of primary schoolers (aged 5 to 11) 10.3% compared to 8.5% in Greater Melbourne

Hume has a larger percentage of secondary schoolers (aged 12 to 17) 8.3% compared to 6.7% in Greater Melbourne

Source: Hume City Council website



## Introduction

### The Middle Years in Hume

As stated in the foreword there has been much discussed and reviewed by the community in Hume pertaining to those in the middle years. Research projects; The Hume Middle Years Working Group; The Hume Middle Years Conference; Broadening Our Horizons with Maggie Farrar; Professional Development opportunities for schools and the broader community; Forums; Student Voice conversations; the Transition Net - all have provided the framework for our Hume community to acknowledge the work being done for those in the middle years and to determine gaps and what was needed next. Originally this work was all responding to the data that was collated in schools and particularly through the "Hume under 16 Project: out of school out of sight" Report in 2012 and the "Our Tweenies - are they flying along or are they falling through the cracks" report in 2013. The data told us 8% of children in Hume were attending school irregularly and that a quarter of those with one day non-attendance per week were aged 6-8 years – young people were disengaging from school at an earlier age.

In the last two years educators and allied health workers have highlighted concerns about mental health issues particularly anxiety and the impact of that on school attendance and successful transitions from primary to secondary school - a critical time in the life of those in the Middle Years – cognitively, emotionally and socially. It has not escaped us that these findings are supported nationally through data being collected by ARACY and their research into how young people are faring.

- How are we responding to the mental health needs of those in the middle years in Hume?
- Do we know how our young people feel about gender equality?
- Do young people know how to access services and opportunities to learn new skills or help them to solve a problem or discuss a concern?



Since 2012, the Hume community has responded to these questions with capacity building for schools and advocacy of the issues that those in the middle years face. Lifelong learners who are part of a community that is hopeful of a better future and tolerant and respectful of the community in which they live seem to be the general gist of the calls to action and buzzwords used. Parents are aspirational for their children regardless of circumstance or postcode – they all want the “next generation to have the opportunity for a brighter future than the one that they or their parents inherited”.

In preparing this report we wanted a document that addresses not only what we have done but what we need to continue to advocate for – In Middle Years our **“Tweenies”** are our future – they deserve to have the spotlight shone on them at this critical time in their development.

## We want to explore what kind of future we are setting our Tweenies up for?

In writing this report the HWLLEN present what we have learnt to be true. We hope this report will ensure the conversation continues and that the needs of those in the middle years continues to be advocated for and that we respond collectively to ensure better outcomes for our young people in Hume.

### School lead

Hume, because of its diversity and transient population, is often behind the State averages for school attainment and completion rates. We would suggest it is often better to compare local data to local data, rather than State averages, as considerable gains have been made in both attainment and year 12 completion locally. This constant place based challenge has attracted significant funding opportunities and investment from both local, state and federal governments. This investment has encouraged our schools to collaborate and cluster

together. The Broadmeadows school regeneration program is an example of this. As are the 12 primary schools who are supported by Community Hubs which allow for greater capacity to respond to and support the needs of that local school community. These hubs have a focus specifically on the early years and work with families in the community. The Hub model has also been replicated in a couple of local secondary schools with great success. It is our sense that schools need to work collectively or certainly within their clusters of feeder primary schools and secondary schools to lead the response to issues faced by our young people in their middle years.

Much of the focus of work in the middle years has revolved around transition and trying to promote capacity building within the schools. Questionnaires and audits of current practice have been attempted as a means to assess what is happening and what could improve.

Since 2010 the HWLLEN in partnership with the Australian Government Funded CFC (Communities for Children) and Better Futures Local Solutions funding and more recently the DET funded SFYS (school focused youth services), have been involved in many programs that have responded to the needs of those in the middle years in Hume. These include:

**Lasting Gifts** - a career conversation tool for families;

**Imagineering** – an aspirational programme that allowed students and their families to look to what their future might look like with extra study at a tertiary institution.



**Ready for Roxy** – a transition and well-being program that supports young people at risk of poor transition to secondary school at Roxburgh College;

**The Middle Year's conference in 2014** which showcased the amazing work of these programs and other efforts that schools were driving.

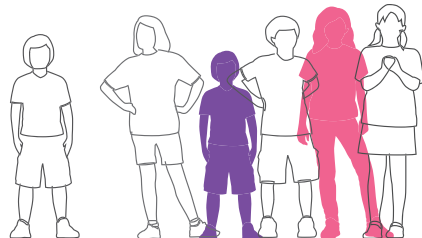


More recently the HWLLEN has worked with Headspace Craigieburn and SFYS on the **Cool 4 School** program and a research project around the early identification of grade 6 students with anxiety who are at risk of poor transition from primary to secondary school. The schools involved were from Craigieburn with 4 feeder primary schools and a secondary school participating. The HWLLEN was responsible for an audit of the transition practice and processes in both settings. This is currently being written up as a research project.

The success of these programs has been largely due to the identification of a problem/concern and the consequent design of a response that sits within the strategic plan and values of the school. It is also dependent on the school valuing the engagement and involvement of the whole family as fundamental to a students success.

As an organisation that sits outside the education system, but one committed to working with schools, we have made these observations.

- Both leadership and teaching staff need to be engaged in and agree to the purpose and focus of the project to ensure it is supported and benefits the school and its identified need. For example we often found transition co-ordinators would accept the invitation to come to the Transition Net but would then be asked to do some other function at the time of the meeting. Equally transition staff would want to come to Professional Development opportunities but would not be given approval to attend due to teaching conflicts. It has been a comment heard regularly from transition staff that they just want time to meet other transition co-ordinators and have time to get together and talk through ways to improve or manage the transfer of information and preparation for students as they move from Grade 6 to Year 7.
- We are also aware that the links between cross sectoral schools needs to be improved and the transition processes for Independent schools to be highlighted as an area that could be improved with greater focus on joint transition policy and shared practice with clearly identified processes and means to share information.
- Another concern is that funding of programs is often cyclical - when a program is set up and works it often then loses its funding stream which means it cannot be expanded or continued and promoted.



We suggest that sharing this best practice is powerful and provides endorsement and critical review of what worked and what didn't so that at its' core it is action research. Often the unexpected impact and power of these programs is the impact on family and parent engagement in a very powerful and positive way. The whole family starts to learn about new ideas and builds stronger ways to communicate and learn together and feel a sense of belonging in the school community. Without an improved model of funding the sustainability of programs that can support young people and their families is questionable in many cases.

An example of this is the **Imagineering** project which was designed around raising career aspirations and highlighting possible tertiary pathways with primary school students and their families. While the project was created using seed funding it was not extended beyond the original project date, despite having a positive impact on the students, their families and the schools involved. While the schools had been encouraged to embed the project practices, it really does require a dedicated staff member to drive this kind of work forward. In July this year the Mitchell Institute released a report "Connecting the worlds of learning and work" highlighting that career aspirations are formed from around 10 years of age and there is a real gap in opportunities for young people to explore and discover what career options are available. If **Imagineering** had continued funding, combined with support from the schools, the program could have continued to meet the aspirational needs of young people in Hume whilst further developing school and industry partnerships and parent engagement opportunities.



## Capacity Building

The HWLLEN has been involved in creating professional development opportunities that reflected the needs of the community in regards to middle years particularly in relation to transition and parent engagement and adolescent development. With our partners we have also produced a range of resources and materials such as the **“In Transit” DVD, parent fact sheets and “Getting Ready for Secondary School” resource.**

In working with the local schools there is nothing more exciting than hearing of an idea or conversation at one of our PD sessions being implemented in a school such as Passports for students transitioning to Year 7 or taking up Student Voice ideas. We believe that the resources created have been well utilized and have had a direct impact on transition practice in schools in Hume.

The **Transition Net** has also been another vehicle for sharing and promoting good practise. The feedback from teachers has been that any opportunity to have some time to talk, engage and share experiences with fellow transition coordinators is invaluable – why reinvent the wheel? Why outsource learning opportunities when by coming together there can be robust and lived experience shared? And yet these opportunities are generally not available to these teachers.

Angela Pollock, Jonathon Sargeant, Roger Holdsworth and Angie Wilcox have all come into our community to share their evidence based knowledge and experience. We know that some great relationships were formed during these opportunities to explore ideas around stopping the “dip” in learning that happens in transition from primary to secondary school; understanding the brain function of adolescents; ways to work better in supporting young people during transition from primary to secondary schools through student voice, as well as ways to manage behaviour in a positive way.





The Department of Education (DET) have introduced to schools the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework which is promoting effective student learning and a positive school climate as part of the Education State, this is starting to having a dramatic effect on student engagement in schools in Hume.

Equally, a cluster approach is a fantastic way to work in the transition Space, as it means strong relationships can be built and a collective approach to transition can be achieved. It is our observation that often schools manage the administrative side of transition extremely well however we think it is time to extend transition practice to have a greater focus on teaching and learning. In a Voice Box session with Mt Ridley, Roxburgh College and Craigieburn Secondary we held an opportunity for Year 7 students in the first term of secondary school to come together to reflect on what had been scary, fun, difficult, and easy in regards to their transition. It was great to see that the anticipated fears of lockers, getting lost and not making friends was really very far from their consciousness by Term 2 however the expectations around homework and having work that was more challenging was not being met.

Whilst it is important that we manage the needs of students who are vulnerable to poor transition we think it is also extremely important to ensure we are offering opportunities for students to learn new ideas and subjects and to be challenged by their studies.

## Cultural Diversity and Understanding

Hume is a diverse and incredibly fast growing part of Melbourne and we have many different cultures and backgrounds to support. Critical to the success of our community will be the capacity to communicate with and understand the needs of different cultures; attitudes to education and school. Parent engagement is critical to the improved success of young people. A range of experiences and opportunities to feel a sense of belonging, acceptance and pride in our local Hume community is also important.



How are we as a community supporting this to ensure we are meeting the needs and understanding of people from different cultural backgrounds?

Our sense is there needs to be greater access to translation services and translated information for parents and students for whom English is their second language. Particularly information and knowledge about transition from primary to secondary school.

The HWLLEN was excited to support a **student voice forum** organised through the secondary school hub. Three cross sectoral schools - Penola Catholic College, Mt Ridley College and Ilim College worked together to discuss and produce recommendations for Hume City Council about what their students wanted for young people in Hume. This type of work is critical to strengthening understanding and allowing our young people to meet and work with many different people. What emerged from the exercise was knowledge that:

We are all people with similar ideas and thoughts, concerns and wants - that just because we attend a certain school, or speak a different language, we are all people wanting similar things.



Community celebrations and the importance of young people sharing their narrative and talents -

**Do we give our young people in their middle years opportunities to do this in Hume?**

### **Individuals can have a massive impact**

Identifying our informal leaders in the Hume community and ensuring that they have an opportunity to share their understandings and ideas can be invaluable. Equally Principals; teachers; careers teachers; allied health staff and leaders in our clubs and extracurricular activities all have a role to play.

**What messages are our young people getting?**

**Who are the significant “extra” people in our young people’s lives?**

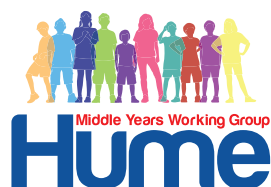
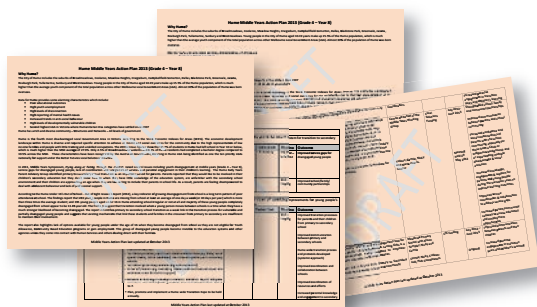
At our most recent Real Industry Job Interviews (RIJI) with our Craigieburn schools, it was wonderful to hear young people talk of their interest in a particular field being borne out of a conversation/s with a “mentor” and their lived experience with teachers, careers counsellors or family friends.

Of concern however, for young people in the middle years, is the amount of turnover of people in roles at schools at critical times. The transition process works so much more smoothly when there is continuity of transition co-ordinators and “friendly” faces that have been part of the process during transition. Equally this continuity can impact the engagement of parents and families and allows for better opportunities for communication between home and school.

## Local Government Leadership

Hume City Council has spent a lot of time and effort in producing both an early year's framework and youth strategy, but this only mentions the middle years very briefly. Typically the “early years” and the area of “youth” have been given a focus rather than recognising the need for specific work in the “middle years” space.


In 2011 the Hume Early Years Partnership (HEYP) and the Hume Youth Commitment (HYC) undertook a significant amount of work to develop a formal terms of reference (TOR) between the networks, with a focus on seamless servicing to families in Hume. The TOR adopted in Nov 2011 allowed some targeted work on middle years to take place and led to the formation of the Hume Middle Years Working Group (HMYWG) which produced a Middle Years Action Plan in 2012. This Action Plan and the Working Group remained active until the end of 2015. Unfortunately as already highlighted when funding finished so did some of that targeted work for the middle years.




In June 2015 Hume City Council and HWLLEN also co-hosted a 3 day event with Maggie Farrar around Collective Impact – “Broadening our Horizons” ( a report about this is available on the HWLLEN website) , while there was lots of energy and enthusiasm at the time for this work and a number of schools have pursued a community approach to working with families, it would be very powerful to have some targeted work again within the middle years space.

At the time of producing this report Hume City Council are undertaking a consultation process on a dedicated framework for young people aged 0-24 years. It is hoped that middle years will feature prominently in this framework. While both the Hume Early Years Partnership (HEYPP) and Hume Youth Commitment (HYC ) continue to highlight the need for specific work in middle years, the greatest success happens when there is dedicated action to the space.

Our neighbouring local government areas such as Whittlesea and Yarra have developed a specific middle years focus written into frameworks and strategic intent allowing for evidence rich, strategic partnerships to be formed. The MDI in Whittlesea is a powerful data tool that helps identify crucial needs of those in the middle years to then inform school and community response which is then evaluated.





*Middle Years in Whittlesea:*  
**A COLLECTIVE RESPONSE**  
A municipal middle years strategy for the City of Whittlesea  
**SUMMARY**

**The middle years – transition, risk and opportunity**

*The middle years, the period of development between 9 and 14 years, can be characterised as a time of significant transition, risk and opportunity.*

Children and young people in the middle years experience a number of physical changes, with a shift in the way they think, feel and behave. This is a time when children's lived experiences, young people's and experiences of their communities and support systems in the community, educational and social systems of their lives. Research describes the significance of this development during this time.

It is a time when physical risk factors can emerge. These include the ability and challenge of dealing with self, parents and peers, as well as mental and physical health conditions and external factors such as bullying, trauma, anxiety, depression and substance use.

The middle years provide an opportunity for young people to develop their skills, resilience and coping strategies in their lives. It is a time when young people begin to be independent and learn to take responsibility for their own actions and decisions. It is a time when young people begin to be independent and learn to take responsibility for their own actions and decisions.

By the City of Whittlesea, we have a rich and diverse network of stakeholders, each with a role to play in supporting the development of children and young people in the middle years. These include parents, carers, educators, service providers, local business, government and community leaders.

**OUR CONCEPTUAL AND PRACTICE APPROACH**

Our practice and programs are responsive and designed to support the needs of children and young people in the middle years.

By the City of Whittlesea, we have a rich and diverse network of stakeholders, each with a role to play in supporting the development of children and young people in the middle years. These include parents, carers, educators, service providers, local business, government and community leaders.

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**Significant population growth**

The estimated population of children and young people in the middle years aged 9 to 14 years old in 2011 was 15,282. This is forecast to grow to 20,000 by 2017. Significant growth is anticipated in the population of children and young people in the middle years by 2017, particularly in the districts of Warrack, Kyneton, Northcote, and Dookie.

## What are the issues that are constantly being highlighted in relation to those in the Middle Years?

### Transition from primary to secondary school

Following the Victorian Auditor General's report into Transition in 2016 that highlighted many deficiencies and areas for an improved response to transition from primary to secondary school within our education system, the HWLLEN again undertook significant advocacy work to Hume schools about the importance of good transition practice and the value of working in clusters; to ensure better outcomes for those children transitioning.

The Department of Education (DET) as a response to the poor report card produced a resource for schools to use during transition called "START". Designed by Andrew Fuller a prominent Clinical Psychologist, this has a suite of relevant, easy to use tasks and activities for teachers and schools to use. Focused on helping students to reflect and have conversations on their transition experience while identifying who they are and what their expectations and concerns are, the HWLLEN has found that many schools were completely unaware of this resource. Since its launch we have been actively promoting this to both primary and secondary schools and feedback from schools that have implemented the resource has been very positive, particularly in creating a sense of student belonging and schools being better prepared for the incoming cohort to year 7.

The frequent turnover of transition staff, particularly within a secondary school setting, continues to be a concern and doesn't allow for continuity of understanding of the role and the value that it has in the success of the transition experience for students, administrators, parents and fellow staff. We believe that this turnover makes transition an administrative function only, instead of ensuring it can impact across the social engagement, education and parent engagement realms. It also leads to a huge drain of knowledge about transition processes, as often information and important knowledge is not passed on or tracked.

## The gap for those children at risk of transitioning poorly is also a continued concern in Hume.

Feedback from Year 7 coordinators highlights the lack of preparedness they have for some students who would benefit from specialist supports when they enter Year 7. Whilst CASES public school DET reporting system allows for information about students to be transferred, there can be a lack of relevant information for planning and equally Catholic and Independent schools do not have access to CASES so if transferring to the public secondary system they often come to the school with limited information shared.

The ability to prepare for those additional needs which enable the secondary school to put in place supports for students at risk of poor transition is critical. Unfortunately there are many examples of students who arrive in Year 7 where the school had no knowledge of a range of needs and supports required whether they be cognitive, social or emotional. The capacity for schools to create a common "form" as a tool to communicate potential issues or highlight beneficial supports is recommended to improve this gap.

**HWLLEN would advocate for a transition process that ensures the information about each student is communicated early, appropriately and in a clear and concise manner from the primary school to the secondary school.**

Where this happens it allows the student to have the best start to secondary school a young person can have with the direct outcome being improved student attendance and learning outcomes.

HWLLEN would like to advocate for:-

- closer relationships between feeder primary schools and secondary schools;
- improved support for the Transition Net or
- an alternative model for transition staff and school leadership to come together to share initiatives, practice and brainstorm solutions.
- All schools strategic plan and policies have a specific reference to transition practice – which reflects and assesses the impact of their transition practice & student success.
- Inclusion of parent engagement and student voice in school policies and practice.

## Quality of learning and teaching

### Reflections from the Craigieburn Transition Cluster

A morning of reflection with Year 7 students from Craigieburn Secondary, Roxburgh College and Mt Ridley College called “Voice Box” allowed feedback and reflection from a group of students who were in the midst of Transition. When asked to consider what was of concern prior to starting Year 7 many of the 36 students felt that they would find the homework and school work in secondary school too hard.

Students were surprised when these expectations had not been met – the work was significantly easier than expected and the homework requirements were easily met.



This concerns us in 2 ways:-

Are we challenging and engaging our secondary students well enough? Can we increase and challenge their knowledge, while building critical thinking skills? Are we developing aspirations and skills for 21st Century capabilities? Do parents and carers have a sense of what and how students in secondary school are taught? What does assessment look like? Is there a strong sense of what a career might look like in the future for our young people?

We should also consider what processes we can put in place to ensure pedagogical alignment from primary to secondary schools? How can we get schools to engage, so that students can perhaps trial secondary school assignments whilst at primary school? Are secondary teachers aware of how different the setting is at primary school?

Another question we think needs assessing further is related to technology and how well primary students are prepared for the technology that will be used in secondary school? What ICT skills do primary students have and what sort of support may they need when they enter the secondary environment?



## Community involvement and engagement

The longer we work in this space the more we recognise and want to shout from the rooftops

### “ENGAGE YOUR PARENTS IN THEIR CHILD’S LEARNING”

- Set up expectations
- strengthen relationships with school and home
- make schools welcoming and positive environments for people to come into

Parent engagement is critical for the ongoing success and development of the student and its effect can be extremely significant on their learning outcomes.

What does parent engagement look like in Hume Schools?  
Do we have strong home – school links?



## Issues that are affecting young people in the middle years

At the ACWP (Australian Child Wellbeing Project)) launch of the first National Study into the Middle Years in 2016 these were the issues that presented most strongly in the research group. Interestingly in Hume we have identified anxiety as an issue that is having a significant effect on young people.

- Gender equality ( concerns that there are still big gaps in gender equality)
- Self-harm (in 15 year olds 11% of boys Self Harm and 32% of girls)
- Sleep (or rather lack of sleep)
- Cyberbullying
- School pressure ( perceived and actual)
- Risk behaviours (drinking/smoking) are decreasing but prevalence of poor emotional wellbeing is extremely noticeable.

Interestingly the Protective Factors to ward against these issues were identified as;

- Support networks
- Physical activity
- School Belonging
- Teacher Connectedness
- Family Interest in the young person.



## What then are the implications of this National Research for Hume?

- Focus on middle years in frameworks and action plans - name it and respond to it across our Hume community. Ensure we have linked up service and action plans that allow external partners to support schools in the delivery of programs and knowledge.
- We have local data – let's use it effectively - review, evaluate and hear the voice of our young people.
- Parent engagement is critical to establishing stronger relationships and partnerships between school and other services. Does our reporting system allow for student progress to be understood by families? Do parents feel comfortable in approaching their child's school and are they able to communicate with people in the school? Do our teachers have the skills needed to engage in conversations with parents?
- Do we share good practice? e.g. the work of the hubs; great learning experiences and projects in schools; the power of breakfast clubs; do we link services? and do we remember the history of this work?
- Do we learn from each other and value being experts by experience equally as qualified practitioners with skills and knowledge?
- There is also a level of need because of intergenerational disadvantage; poverty, domestic violence and not having basic needs met. Are we ensuring that services and supports are being given to the people most in need? Recent research by Foodbank suggests that 1 in 5 children experienced food insecurity in the past year in Australia. Equally access to shelter and affordable accommodation are becoming a concern for families.
- Population Growth – our Hume community is growing significantly – are we planning well enough for the increase in number of students and their families?

## In Summing Up:

As an overriding theme to all the work that has happened in middle years in Hume and communities beyond - the thing that speaks loudest is:

### RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

We want our young people to flourish and be able to respond to challenges, navigate and adjust to issues they are presented with as they go through their entire life. Potentially their work life will be very different to that which anyone has seen before – how are we equipping them for this?

We need to continue to work together – articulate a clear vision that allows us to share the narrative of our needs & wants and make sure that youth voice is included.

Are we preparing our young people in the middle years for the careers of the future? Are we offering them opportunities to extend their knowledge of what's available locally and globally? Do parents and carers know what opportunities are available for their young people? Are we developing the skills and knowledge that will support their aspirations as they progress through secondary school?



We need to again create a plan of actions and stay accountable to the achievement of that plan.

There needs to be more celebrating of the great work within the middle years space that happens – where are we closing the gaps? What work is having an impact? Can we encourage and support action research in schools and share the fabulous work done in the hubs and schools every day.

Communicating, listening and hearing are such important skills to develop and promote in all the work that is done & has been done in the middle years. A collective response that allows for a supported and combined response to assisting schools in improving parent engagement and family belonging in community.

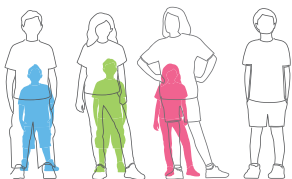
What guarantee do we want to offer to our young people in their middle years in Hume? What do we as a community value as non-negotiables for our young people in the middle years?

## Middle Years Matter in Hume - we need action NOW!





In quoting Maggie Farrar: "How do we make the Middle Years in Hume... even better if.....?"





## Appendix

### Middle Years Timeline in Hume

Facilitated by the HWLLEN and enabled through different funding sources

#### 2011

Transition to High School Workshop

Development of "In Transit" DVD

#### 2012

Hume Middle Years Working Group (HMYWG) launched

Action Plan developed by the HMYWG

#### 2013

Release of the report

"Our Tweenies; Are they flying along or falling through the cracks"  
(in Conjunction with Murdoch Childrens Research Institute)

Forums - Various forums exploring issues impacting the middle years

#### 2014

##### April

Middle Years Conference "Scaffolding our Tweenies: What now and What next?"

##### June

Launch of the "Realising the Next Wave - Reflections from the Hume Middle Years Working Group" Report

Launch of the Middle Years Logo

Secondary Schools Hub Project with Mt Ridley , Ilim College and Penola Catholic College

**2015**

“Broadening our Horizons - Collective impact for a stronger Hume now and into the future” 3 day event with Maggie Farrar

Professional Development - “Student Led Initiatives” – Roger Holdsworth

**2016**

Transition Net revival in terms 2,3 and 4

**April**

Voice Box – reflections on Transition with year 7 students from Mt Ridley, Roxburgh College and Craigieburn Secondary.

Professional Development Opportunities

Angela Pollock – “Improving Transition Practice – a cluster approach”

Jonathon Sargeant – “Voice Inclusive Practice”

Production of Resource “Getting Ready for Secondary School” for use by parents/carers with a child transitioning to secondary school

**2017**

Transition Net meetings in terms 2 and 3

Cool 4 School Research Project around anxiety and transition with Headspace and SFYS

Capacity Building with schools around cluster based approach to Transition

**2018**

September

Launch of “Middle Years Matter in Hume” report

## Resources

### **Hume Whittlesea LLEN website**

[www.hwllen.com.au](http://www.hwllen.com.au)

Please note there is the Maggie Farrar Report on the website as well as the Transition resources

### **Department of Education website**

Student Transition and Resilience Training - START resource Year 6 -7

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/professionals/learning/Transition%20to%20School%20Resource%20Kit%202017%20FINAL.pdf>

### **VCOSS Report**

Creating Engaging Schools for all young children and young people:  
What works

December 2016

See Principle 3; Manage successful Transitions pages 21-23

<http://vcoss.org.au/document/creating-engaging-schools-for-all-children-and-young-people/>

Important information regarding teenagers and anxiety

### **OECD Report**

<https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/most-teenagers-happy-with-their-lives-but-schoolwork-anxiety-and-bullying-an-issue.htm>

Mitchell Institute July 2018 Report Connecting the worlds of learning and work

<http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au/reports/connecting-the-worlds-of-learning-and-work/>

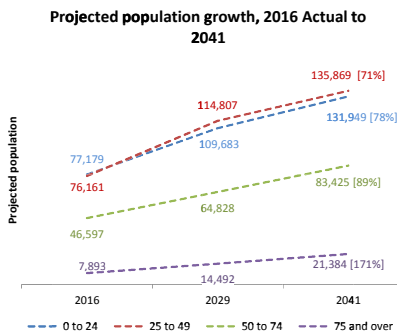
### **Australian Child Wellbeing Project 2016**

<http://www.australianchildwellbeing.com.au/>

## HUME COMMUNITY PROFILE

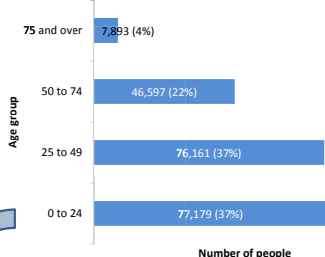
### DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2016, around three-quarters of Hume residents were younger than 50. Growth projections over a 25 year period estimate strong population growth, particularly for the 75+ age group (171%), as the population ages over time.



Percentages in parentheses denote projected total growth from 2016 to 2041. Source: Population and household forecasts prepared by .id, the population experts, Nov 2017

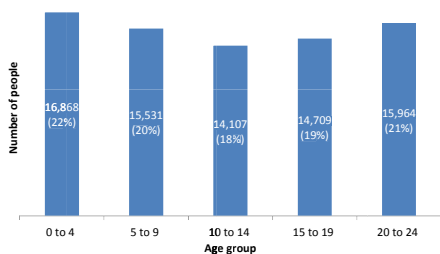
### Hume's population by age group, 2016



Source: Census 2016

The number of people within each 5-year age group category was relatively evenly spread.

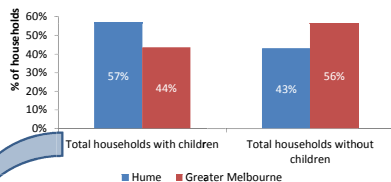
### Detailed age group breakdown for 0 to 24 years for Hume, 2016



Source: Census 2016

There are around 63,000 households in Hume and the majority of these households have children (57%) - compared to only 44% for Greater Melbourne.

### Households with children, 2016



Source: Census 2016

Of the 36,000 Hume households with children, around one in four are single parent households.

### Parenthood type for Hume households with children, 2016



Number of Hume households with children

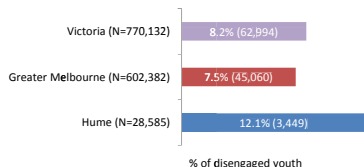
Source: Census 2016

### SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE

According to Census 2016 data on Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), Hume is the third most disadvantaged local government area in Greater Melbourne.

Hume has a higher proportion of disengaged youth than Greater Melbourne and Victoria.

### Proportion of disengaged youth, 2016

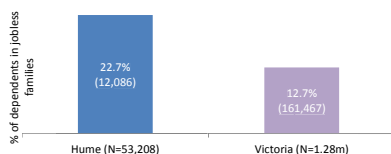


Definition: Young people aged 15-24 who are not employed or undertaking formal education

Source: Census 2016

Hume also has a higher rate of dependents in families with jobless parents compared to state figures.

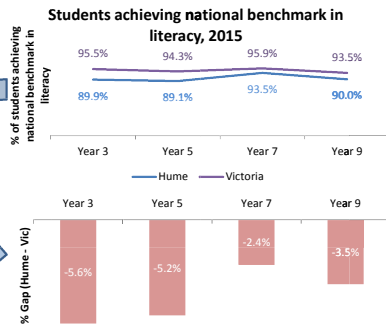
### Proportion of 0-24 year old dependent children in families with jobless parents, 2016



Source: Census 2016

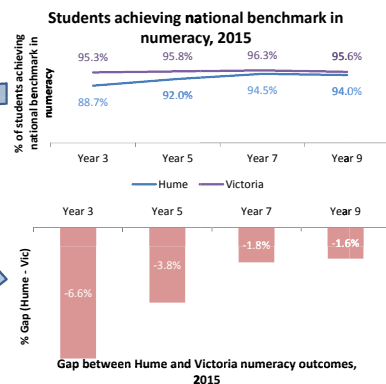
## EDUCATION

Literacy outcomes for students in Year 3 to 9 fell below state levels. The difference was most pronounced for those in Year 3 and 5.



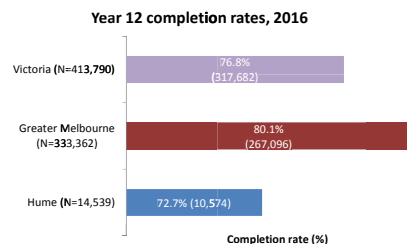
Source: NAPLAN Results, 2015

Hume students fared better on the numeracy relative to the literacy test with a higher proportion of the former achieving the benchmark. The gap between Hume and Victoria outcomes was also less pronounced on this test – with the exception of Year 3 students for which there was a 6.6% gap in achievement rates.



Source: NAPLAN Results, 2015

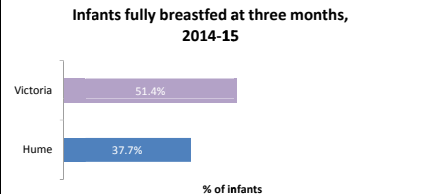
Year 12 completion rates are lower for Hume residents than both Greater Melbourne and the state overall.



Source: Census 2016

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

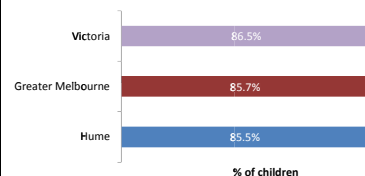
The proportion of infants that were fully breastfed at three months was markedly lower for Hume than state levels (-13.7%).



Source: VCAMS portal data, 2014-15

Hume's outcomes for the reported quality of children's health were overall consistent with that for Greater Melbourne and state outcomes.

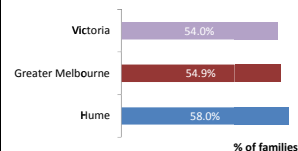
**Children reported to be in excellent or very good health, 2016**



Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire 2016

Compared to Greater Melbourne and Victoria, Hume residents had a higher rate of families experiencing high or very high stress in the month prior to the administration of the School Entrant Health Questionnaire.

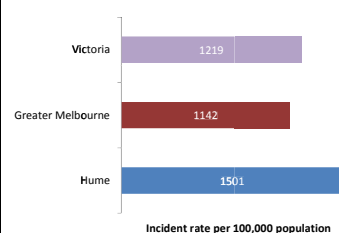
**Families experiencing high or very high stress during the month prior to the survey, 2016**



Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire 2016

Hume had a higher family violence incident rate compared to both Greater Melbourne and the state overall. Hume also has the third highest rate of family violence in Victoria relative to other local government areas.

**Family violence incident rates**



Source: Victorian Police Crime Statistics, 2016-17

"Together we do it Better..."







