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# Catholic Education Office Mental Wellbeing Project: review of 2006 funding round

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# Centre for Children and Young People



research, education & advocacy



## **CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE**

### *Mental Wellbeing Project*

## Review of 2006 Funding Round

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# CONTENTS

PROJECT OVERVIEW .....	1
ABOUT THE <i>MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT</i> .....	1
AIMS OF THE <i>MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT</i> .....	1
HOW THE <i>MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT</i> WAS ADMINISTERED .....	1
THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT .....	2
2006 REVIEW RESULTS.....	2
SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS .....	2
Primary Schools .....	2
Secondary Schools .....	2
SCHOOL PROJECT AIMS & OVERVIEWS .....	3
Primary Schools .....	3
Secondary Schools .....	7
PRINCIPALS' KEY LEARNINGS .....	9
Primary Schools .....	9
Secondary Schools .....	11
PRINCIPALS' RATINGS OF KEY OUTCOMES .....	12
Staff Awareness about Issues that Impact on Students' Mental Wellbeing .....	12
Staff Skills at Dealing with Issues Affecting Students' Mental Wellbeing .....	13
Staff Confidence at Dealing with Issues Affecting Students' Mental Wellbeing .....	13
Students' General Level of Mental Wellbeing .....	14
Students' Awareness about Issues that Impact on their Mental Wellbeing .....	14
SUMMARY .....	15
APPENDICES .....	16
APPENDIX A: SCHOOLS IN THE LISMORE DIOCESE .....	16
Primary Schools .....	16
Secondary Schools .....	16
APPENDIX B: <i>MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT</i> APPLICATION FORM .....	17
APPENDIX C: <i>MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT</i> REVIEW FORM .....	25

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### ABOUT THE MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT

The Catholic Education Office, Lismore Diocese, established the *Mental Wellbeing Project* with the aim of helping their school communities to better respond to and support the emotional and social wellbeing needs of their students and families. In 2006, almost \$850,000 were distributed between the 44 schools in the Lismore Diocese. Acknowledging that students' mental wellbeing can be enhanced through a wide variety of ways, schools were encouraged to review the needs and strengths of their students, families and staff to decide the best way to invest their *Mental Wellbeing Project* funding.

### AIMS OF THE MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT

More specifically, the *Mental Wellbeing Project* aimed to improve:

- Students' general level of mental wellbeing;
- Students' awareness about issues that impact on their mental wellbeing;
- School staff's awareness about issues that impact on students' mental wellbeing;
- School staff's skills at dealing with issues affecting students' mental wellbeing; and
- School staff's confidence at dealing with issues affecting students' mental wellbeing.

### HOW THE MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT WAS ADMINISTERED

Early in 2006, the 34 primary and 10 secondary schools in the Lismore Diocese (see Appendix A) were advised about the amount of their allocated funding and invited to complete a basic needs assessment and project plan for expending this funding. To assist schools with completing these tasks, the *Centre for Children & Young People* prepared a structured application process (see Appendix B) comprising:

- **A brief overview entitled *Why Mental Wellbeing in Schools?*** – describing what mental wellbeing is, how it impacts on students' development and learning and ways in which it can be enhanced;
- **A brief overview entitled *Assessing Students' Wellbeing Needs in Your School*** – describing how to conduct a basic needs assessment to identify current levels and ways in which students' wellbeing could be improved within the school;
- **A Needs Assessment Form** – to guide and record the processes and results of their needs assessment activities; and
- **A Funding Application Form** – to guide and record their planning and evaluation of a mental wellbeing project for their school, building on the results of their needs assessment activities.

Late in 2006, each school (usually the principal) completed a comprehensive reporting template, developed by the *Centre for Children & Young People* (see Appendix C). This template included relevant information from the school's application and encouraged them to reflect on how their 2006 funds were used, how well they contributed to improving students' mental wellbeing and about any changes planned for their 2007 funds.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report provides a summary of some of the information provided in the application and reporting forms described above – within the modest funding available. However, both sets of forms include much additional information – particularly in relation to how the schools implemented and monitored their projects.

## 2006 REVIEW RESULTS

### SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

As summarised in the tables below, the 34 primary and 10 secondary schools varied considerably in size and, accordingly, in their *Mental Wellbeing Project* funding allocations.

#### *Primary Schools*

Number of Students (Mean = 268)		
50 – 100	4	12%
101 – 200	10	29%
201 – 300	8	24%
301 – 500	9	26%
501 – 652	3	9%

#### *Secondary Schools*

Number of Students (Mean = 744)		
305 – 565	5	50%
714 – 1043	4	40%
1665	1	10%

Number of Staff (Mean = 23)		
6 – 10	5	15%
11 – 20	13	38%
21 – 30	6	18%
31 – 40	8	24%
41 – 52	2	6%

Number of Staff (Mean = 74)		
43 – 60	6	60%
85 – 88	2	20%
100 – 150	2	20%

Mental Wellbeing Funds Received (Mean = \$14,300)		
\$3,400 – \$4,900	3	9%
\$7,300 – \$10,000	10	29%
\$10,500 – \$20,000	13	38%
\$20,500 – \$26,200	6	18%
\$31,000 – \$33,300	2	6%

Mental Wellbeing Funds Received (Mean = \$36,000)		
\$20,000 – \$29,600	5	50%
\$36,300 – \$42,400	3	30%
\$52,300 – \$65,000	2	20%

## SCHOOL PROJECT AIMS & OVERVIEWS

### Primary Schools

As shown in the following tables, schools used their *Mental Wellbeing Project* funding in a variety of ways, with:

- 19 schools using their funding **to employ professional therapists to provide direct support services** to their children, families &/or staff:

Information from Primary Schools' Initial Application Forms		
Project Titles	Project Aims	Project Overviews
Student Welfare (Counsellor)	To develop a community of mentally well-balanced students.	Employ an outside agent (counsellor) to work with children at risk – educationally, emotionally, socially, physically – in small groups, individually & class groups.
School Counsellor	To provide the school with the services of a school counsellor each week.	To employ 2 counsellors (as we had done in 2005) to each work for 4 hours over 2 days each week to cater for the student needs within the school.
Employing a part-time School Counsellor	To support the wellbeing needs of the children.	School counsellor providing assessment, consultation, parent interviews and designing school-based programs / professional development and followup services.
School Counsellor	To support children, families & staff	The employment of a school counsellor (½-1 day per week).
Wellbeing Project	To provide wellbeing support to all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychologist employed (needs basis) to provide counselling to parents &amp; students where a child's behaviour impacts on the school community;</li> <li>• Counsellor employed (needs basis) for senior students for bullying, a death in the family, low self-esteem or other needs that arise;</li> <li>• Sandplay therapist employed (needs basis), for infants &amp; junior students, for self-esteem, bullying, family trauma &amp; other social issues;</li> <li>• Music therapist employed (2 hours per week) to work with children diagnosed with anxiety disorders and other children with issues in the classroom where this type of therapy would be effective;</li> <li>• Payments to cover assessments, such as psychological assessments, where the family is suffering financial hardship;</li> <li>• Aide employed (1 hour per week) to work individually with children who need a personal development program, such as Me or You &amp; Me; and</li> <li>• To assist with transition programs to high school in Terms 3 &amp; 4, where transport is needed.</li> </ul>
Mental Wellbeing Project	To improve & maintain the mental wellbeing of our students & families through targeted specific intervention processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment of clinical psychologist (8 hours per week) to be located onsite during terms 2-4 to work with teachers, families &amp; students; and</li> <li>• Casual employment of educational psychologist to complete various required psychometric student educational assessments to financially support our impoverished families who could not otherwise afford them.</li> </ul>
Wellbeing Project	To enhance the mental wellbeing of students at our school.	Continue to employ a school counsellor (1 day per week) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train staff &amp; implement Seasons program;</li> <li>• Train staff &amp; implement Rock &amp; Water program;</li> <li>• Coordinate preventive strategies through all classes;</li> <li>• Work with Parent Assembly to run program on bullying &amp; self-esteem;</li> <li>• Introduce buddy program;</li> <li>• Continue peer support program;</li> <li>• Update resources as necessary &amp; investigate sand therapy;</li> <li>• Implement behaviour tracking software through school; and</li> <li>• Run social skills from Games Factory.</li> </ul>
School Counsellor	To provide a counselling service to children & their families identified with diminished mental wellbeing.	Employment of a qualified child psychologist (1 day per week) to work with children who have been identified through a structured referral program within the school. The role will focus on counselling rather than assessment and involve all parties – ie: child, parents & staff.
Student Wellbeing	To provide wellbeing counselling for students identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Followup counselling for those students &amp; their families involved in the Seasons for Growth program; and</li> <li>• Sandplay therapy for students with emotional &amp; wellbeing needs.</li> </ul>

**Information from Primary Schools' Initial Application Forms**

<b>Project Titles</b>	<b>Project Aims</b>	<b>Project Overviews</b>
Employment of Student Welfare Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To enhance students' confidence in relationship issues with peers &amp; within family;</li> <li>Give students greater chance of finding school a positive place to be;</li> <li>Provide a contact person for staff &amp; parents worried about students' mental wellbeing; and</li> <li>Provide in-class support through proactive strategies to support student wellbeing – eg: program support &amp; mentoring.</li> </ul>	Employment of a counsellor (2 days per week) providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time for students &amp; parents to have consultations – either 1-1 or in groups;</li> <li>Visiting classrooms to participate in programs aimed at enhancing mental wellbeing; and</li> <li>Conducting mentoring programs with students.</li> </ul>
School Counsellor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counselling students / parents / staff; and</li> <li>Supporting liaison with learning support and specialists.</li> </ul>	Weekly visits to enable targeted students & families access to psychologist.
Family Counselling Support	To support families whose children are experiencing trauma, emotional or behaviour challenges.	This project will involve employing a counsellor (1 day per week) to work with families experiencing difficulties including family break-up, domestic violence, death, poverty, etc. This therapy will include sandplay, art therapy, etc.
School Counsellor / Support	To give children & staff a confidential support person to listen to their concerns in a non-threatening manner and to give them support by providing strategies to assist them with their learning, socialisation or dealing with critical incidents in their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timetabled 1-1 sessions with the counsellor;</li> <li>Small group work for children with similar needs to be able to learn together &amp; support each other;</li> <li>Opportunity for sessions off-site if warranted and with parental support; and</li> <li>Be a visible person in the school for children who require support – at a regular time each week.</li> </ul>
School Counsellor	To provide a counselling service to the children & their families who are identified with diminished mental wellbeing.	Employment of a qualified child psychologist to work with children who have been identified through a structured referral program within the school. The role will focus on counselling rather than assessment and involve all parties – ie: child, parents & staff.
Counselling & Crisis Support, Better Outcomes for Boys & Out There Somewhere	To provide support for students & families through counselling and specific programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employing school counsellor (7 hours per week);</li> <li>Running the Rock &amp; Water program – in small groups targeting boys; and</li> <li>Employing a specialist teacher to run a Gifted &amp; Talented program.</li> </ul>
Wellbeing & Counselling	To effectively add the tier of psychosocial interventions & referral / treatment for some of the 30% of students needing additional help at school and additional mental health intervention.	Accessing 2 counsellors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One for 3 hours per week – dealing with legal, mediation, separation, custody &amp; violence; and</li> <li>An Emotional Release counsellor – using sandplay therapy dealing with anxiety, depression, anger, frustration, grief, self-esteem, motivation and emotional &amp; social wellbeing.</li> </ul>
School Counsellor	To provide a counselling service to the children & their families who are identified with diminished mental wellbeing.	Employment of a qualified child psychologist to work with children who have been identified through a structured referral program within the school. The role will focus on counselling rather than assessment and involve all parties – ie: child, parents & staff.
Counselling & High Expectations Support	To provide direct interventions for children needing mental wellbeing support.	Access through employment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School counsellor – 1½ days per week; and</li> <li>Occupational therapist – 3 staff meetings &amp; 9 weeks of child intervention.</li> </ul>
School Psychologist	To respond appropriately to needs of students, families & staff in order to maintain & support their mental wellbeing. By promoting positive social & emotional wellbeing, we endeavour to minimise challenging behaviours & those learning difficulties caused by an inability to attend, due to stress & anxiety from mental health issues.	Employment of a school psychologist for 2 days per week.

- 9 schools using it **to develop or enhance their in-house mental wellbeing promotion** and support programs:

Information from Primary Schools' Initial Application Forms		
Project Titles	Project Aims	Project Overviews
Wellbeing Management Project	To enhance & improve the wellbeing of children & families.	Identification & management of children & families whose wellbeing is at risk, through the efforts of teachers, Special Education Adviser, families & their children. Using the expertise of a psychologist to assist children & families where possible. This will be supported by teaching staff, Special Education support & consultation with children & families
Wellbeing Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage senior students in activities designed to increase personal interactive skills, aiding in the development of positive relationships;</li> <li>• To have avenues for professional counselling on a needs basis; and</li> <li>• To further develop Seasons program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theatre workshops for senior boys;</li> <li>• Social skills workshops for senior girls;</li> <li>• Purchasing resources for Seasons program, focusing on resilience;</li> <li>• Liaising with local psychologist for referrals; and</li> <li>• One-off donation for Smith-Megenis camp.</li> </ul>
Student Welfare	Resource student welfare by meeting their educational and social needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund individual, group or class services – eg: counsellor, teacher mediation sessions;</li> <li>• Access professional services; and</li> <li>• Purchase resources.</li> </ul>
MINDPLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote &amp; value the mental, emotional &amp; social wellbeing of all students;</li> <li>• To teach the knowledge, understandings, skills, strategies, values &amp; attitudes of mental and emotional wellbeing; and</li> <li>• To develop a comprehensive network of support services.</li> </ul>	<p>The MINDPLAN project will target each student by implementing or sustaining school-based programs that actively promote resilience &amp; wellbeing. These programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious education syllabus;</li> <li>• Rock &amp; Water program;</li> <li>• Bounce Back program;</li> <li>• Mind Matters program;</li> <li>• National Safe Schools project;</li> <li>• Success 4 Boys program;</li> <li>• Anxiety Disorder Association parent information sessions;</li> <li>• BAPS project – gender education initiative;</li> <li>• Partnership through early contact with parents;</li> <li>• PDHPE syllabus;</li> <li>• School counsellor;</li> <li>• Sandplay therapist;</li> <li>• Seasons program;</li> <li>• LAP program; and</li> <li>• PAL program.</li> </ul>
Surviving Life at Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To build resilience in students;</li> <li>• To build skills to manage bullying; and</li> <li>• To support families experiencing crisis situations.</li> </ul>	All children will be involved in Bounce Back lessons and go through the peer support module on bullying. Families experiencing crisis will be offered either the Seasons for Growth program or counselling services, whichever is more appropriate.
Wellbeing Project	To meet the needs of parents & students in the area of wellbeing.	Offer of a parenting program & individual therapy for children in need.
Wellbeing Plus	To improve the social & emotional wellbeing of students and, therefore, teachers & parents at our school.	<p>In consultation with teachers, advisors, parents &amp; experts, selected students will attend sessions of wellbeing involving the following programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child psychologist;</li> <li>• Bounce Back;</li> <li>• LAP;</li> <li>• WAK;</li> <li>• Dare to Lead; and</li> <li>• Music therapy.</li> </ul> <p>Suggested categories will be incorporated classroom management and teaching &amp; learning. These programs may run as a whole class or, sometimes, as individual consultations &amp; sessions, depending on student needs.</p>
Mental Wellbeing Project	To provide a range of programs targeting various aspects of students' mental wellbeing – in response to suggestions received during consultations with students, parents & staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue existing school programs for all children (ie: Bounce Back program, You Can Do It program, Developing Positive Behaviour program, SRC, leadership training &amp; kindergarten induction program);</li> <li>• Run Seasons for Growth – for middle &amp; senior students;</li> <li>• Run Social Cruelty Workshops – for Year 2 students &amp; families;</li> <li>• Run Friendship Circle (for girls) &amp; Boys Shed (for boys);</li> <li>• Run Parenting Today programs – for families; and</li> <li>• Provide crisis counselling services, as needed.</li> </ul>

### Information from Primary Schools' Initial Application Forms

Project Titles	Project Aims	Project Overviews
Wellbeing Program	To cater for the wellbeing of students in a variety of situations, through counselling, music therapy & by taking part in the Seasons program.	Children who have counselling needs are identified by their parents or teachers and referred to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music therapy – through the Wrap Around Kids program; or</li> <li>• Seasons program.</li> </ul>

- And 6 schools using it **to develop or enhance more whole-of-school approaches** to enhancing students' mental wellbeing:

### Information from Primary Schools' Initial Application Forms

Project Titles	Project Aims	Project Overviews
Building a Better Base for Enjoying Life	To build layers of support for students (and their families) to teach life & social competence skills and assist them through difficult situations.	A layered effect. Based on whole school, group & individual interventions to make contributions to the emotional wellbeing of students. In doing so, to skill teachers in some areas to assist them in working to meets students' emotional needs. And to assist parents in dealing with emotional difficulties of their children.
Wellbeing Committee – A Coordinated Approach	Movement towards a more contemporary developmental counselling approach that focuses on prevention with a wellness approach / orientation.	A whole school coordinated approach. To establish a Special Needs / Wellbeing Committee that meets weekly to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate a multidisciplinary approach;</li> <li>• Accept / process referrals;</li> <li>• Review;</li> <li>• Inform all stakeholders; and</li> <li>• Provide staff and parent training.</li> </ul>
Wellbeing Project	By supporting students' emotional development at their point of need using Maslow's hierarchy as a scaffold to develop an environment conducive to promoting social / emotional wellbeing with mental health education perspectives embedded across the curriculum.	Using Maslow's hierarchy as a scaffold, deliver programs across the whole school that support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physiological needs – nutrition program, stage 3-4 catering enterprise program;</li> <li>• Safety needs – You Can Do It, Jannawi domestic violence, Rock &amp; Water, anger management, behaviour management program, pastoral care;</li> <li>• Love needs – circle time, You Can Do It, Gumbaynggir language &amp; culture, pastoral care, Home School Liaison Officer, religious education; and</li> <li>• Esteem needs - Gumbaynggir language &amp; culture, scaffolded learning, Bounce Back.</li> </ul>
Community Wellbeing Project	To enhance & improve the wellbeing of students & their families in our school community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification &amp; management of students &amp; families whose mental &amp; social wellbeing is at risk;</li> <li>• Intervention provided by a psychologist / counsellor;</li> <li>• Provision of social skills program to individual &amp; identified small groups of students through withdrawal &amp; 1-1 interaction;</li> <li>• Create a positive climate throughout the school by promoting &amp; displaying positive messages; and</li> <li>• Providing a parent help program.</li> </ul>
Mental Wellbeing Project	To enhance & improve the mental wellbeing of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification &amp; management of children &amp; families whose wellbeing is at risk, through the efforts of teachers, Special Education Adviser &amp; Coordinator. Using the expertise of a psychologist to assist children &amp; families where possible. This will be supported by teaching staff, Special Education support &amp; consultation with children &amp; families;</li> <li>• Ensuring students safety, through the management of grounds, buildings &amp; equipment; and</li> <li>• Providing an inclusive curriculum with modification for students with special needs.</li> </ul>
Making the Grade	To empower children in the management of their social context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-faceted strategy targeting classroom communication technique;</li> <li>• The playground as a safe haven;</li> <li>• Engaging marginalised groups in targeted activities;</li> <li>• Providing individual specialist support; and</li> <li>• Development of leadership via specific leadership programs.</li> </ul>

## Secondary Schools

As shown in the following tables, the 10 secondary schools also used their *Mental Wellbeing Project* funding in a similar variety of ways, with:

- 4 schools using their funding **to employ professional therapists to provide direct support services** to their children, families &/or staff:

Information from Secondary Schools' Initial Application Forms		
Project Titles	Project Aims	Project Overviews
Counselling	Specialist counsellors as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual counselling;</li> <li>• Family counselling;</li> <li>• Group counselling; and</li> <li>• Pastoral care assistance.</li> </ul>
Student Counsellor	Provide a student counsellor on-site.	Providing a student counsellor at school for students – 3 days per week.
School Counsellor – Mental Wellbeing	Provide professional service for kids' & families' needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have on staff a school counsellor with relevant qualifications;</li> <li>• Opportunity to bring in other health professional as needs arise; and</li> <li>• In-service of staff.</li> </ul>
Wellbeing	To ensure every child can realise their own potential, cope with the normal stress of life, work collaboratively with teachers & peers and make a positive contribution to the college community.	<p>The employment of a counsellor to work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 1-1 basis with members of the college community – assessment &amp; primary level prevention, intervention of emotional &amp; behavioural issues / concerns, assisting in interpretation of neuropsych intellectual reports and developing a behaviour modification program; and</li> <li>• Workshops that involve a whole school approach – eg: bullying, resilience support of the Welfare Coordinator.</li> </ul>

- 3 schools using it **to develop or enhance their in-house mental wellbeing promotion and support programs**:

Information from Secondary Schools' Initial Application Forms		
Project Titles	Project Aims	Project Overviews
Counselling & Behaviour Modification Program	Assist students, parents & staff deal with a wide range of family & mental health issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual counselling;</li> <li>• Workshops on anger management, family therapy &amp; HSC stress; and</li> <li>• Mentoring.</li> </ul>
Counselling & Behaviour Modification Program	Assist students, parents & staff deal with a wide range of family & mental health issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual counselling;</li> <li>• Workshops on anger management, family therapy &amp; HSC stress; and</li> <li>• Mentoring.</li> </ul>
Student Wellbeing	To support parents / caregivers, staff & college administration by providing information & consultation on mental health matters.	The funding enables the college to release the college counsellor from classroom teaching to enable her to provide a more complete service to the college community.

- And 3 schools using it **to develop or enhance more whole-of-school approaches** to enhancing students' mental wellbeing:

Information from Secondary Schools' Initial Application Forms		
Project Titles	Project Aims	Project Overviews
Mental Wellbeing Project	To provide strategies & services which target students at-risk within the framework of whole-school pastoral care policies & procedures that characterise this school.	<p>A 3-tiered project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of restorative justice strategies &amp; procedures across the school within the context of the Pastoral Care Policy. This is occurring through workshops with all staff, middle management, student leaders and parents – throughout the year;</li> <li>• Counselling provision (16 hours per week over 3 days); and</li> <li>• Individual student mentoring, in conjunction with St Joseph Cowper Homes Inc. – on specified days and targeting students with behavioural &amp; relationship needs.</li> </ul>
Resilience / Reflection / Referral	To provide formal structures for students to develop resilience, reflect on behaviour & be referred for further help, if required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling;</li> <li>• Mind Matters facilitated during homeroom; and</li> <li>• Year coordinators overseeing student welfare.</li> </ul>
Welfare & Pastoral Program	Create resilience, personal achievement & self worth in each student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertical homerooms in houses;</li> <li>• Welfare coordinator to program, train staff &amp; energise focus;</li> <li>• Access to confidential qualified school counsellor;</li> <li>• Have a Chat volunteer program; and</li> <li>• Integrated Year group appropriate camps &amp; retreat.</li> </ul>

## PRINCIPALS' KEY LEARNINGS

Within the reporting template, principals were asked to share any key learnings from their experiences with their school's *Mental Wellbeing Project* funding.

### *Primary Schools*

Of the 34 primary school principals, 27 (79%) shared 57 reflections about their *Mental Wellbeing Project* experiences. These comments covered a number of key themes:

<b>Key Learnings Primary School Principals Wanted to Share</b>	
<b>Key Themes</b>	<b>Principals' Comments</b>
<p>The importance &amp;/or benefits of a <b>whole school approach / good systems</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We believe that when a whole school adopts the Bounce Back program, it does make a difference to the ability of children to cope with minor bullying.</li> <li>• A multidisciplinary approach is essential.</li> <li>• "Case" approach shares the problem and eases the burden on individual teachers.</li> <li>• Bringing all school "wellbeing" agencies under one umbrella increases effectiveness and promotes confidence &amp; awareness of all staff.</li> <li>• Sharing wisdom, skill, initiative of group of education professionals produces amazing results.</li> <li>• The counsellor has become an integral member of staff – supporting development of school policies in student pastoral care and development of class programs aimed at enhancing students' resilience.</li> <li>• The counsellor has had individual sessions with students &amp; staff, attended case conferences with parents &amp; teachers, conducted group sessions for children, written individual programs around families' circumstances, prepared referrals to other health professionals &amp; contributed to behaviour &amp; OHS policies within the school.</li> <li>• Effective intervention, clear communication guidelines with school &amp; parents help with developing trust.</li> <li>• That a counsellor should not be seen in isolation but as an integral part of the special education area – along with everyday classroom needs – part of a well-rounded team approach.</li> <li>• Relationships are the key – student-parent, student-student, student-teacher, parent-teacher, parent-school.</li> <li>• The involvement of a psychologist in appropriate IEP meetings has been beneficial in terms of advocacy for both parents &amp; staff in future planning and school decisions.</li> <li>• Weekly routine timetabling of psychologist is an excellent mode of delivery.</li> <li>• The importance of implementing a procedure for staff to follow when requiring counselling for a student.</li> <li>• All the documentation has been beneficial for the counsellor to have prior to meeting with the student.</li> </ul>
<p>A perception that the <i>Mental Wellbeing Project</i> activities had <b>engaged / benefited students, families &amp;/or staff</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff in place can really assist in "emergency" response.</li> <li>• Children are not fazed to leave class to speak with the child psychologist.</li> <li>• Being able to offer support for parents, students &amp; staff who seemingly have no where to go.</li> <li>• Access to &amp; knowledge of support service networks are developing &amp; becoming more comprehensive.</li> <li>• Educational &amp; pastoral significance of utilising this money (where appropriate) to fund psychometric, psychological &amp; psychiatric assessments for "poor" families who could otherwise never afford to access these services for their little ones.</li> <li>• It has made a difference to the ability of some children to be able to cope in the school settings and it gives them strategies to cope in the home as well.</li> <li>• The funding was instrumental in our being able to meet students' needs more effectively then ever.</li> <li>• Thank you so much.</li> <li>• Management of students in crisis / crisis behaviour management.</li> <li>• We have found that outsourcing therapists has been beneficial as children do not have such a long wait to see psychologists, etc.</li> <li>• The children feel confident dealing with someone they regularly see at school.</li> <li>• Pleasing improvement with the above scales [key outcome ratings detailed in the next section].</li> </ul>

### Key Learnings Primary School Principals Wanted to Share

Key Themes	Principals' Comments
<p>The importance &amp;/or benefits of <b>engaging qualified, experienced, competent specialists</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a child psychologist available to talk with families has been very beneficial.</li> <li>• The advantage of having a counsellor who is also an educational psychologist has been extremely beneficial.</li> <li>• It is important to source specialists who are available when the school requires them.</li> <li>• It is most important having a professional counsellor available to assist students, parents &amp; staff.</li> <li>• Sandplay therapy has been very beneficial.</li> <li>• The use of an OT has had tremendous benefits to many children.</li> <li>• Use of a counsellor has been a great benefit to the school community.</li> <li>• The educational psychologist has been excellent.</li> <li>• The value of music therapy &amp; the value that this has been to the children involved and their parents.</li> </ul>
<p>Awareness of the <b>importance of promoting &amp;/or monitoring students' mental wellbeing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General awareness of the importance of wellbeing &amp; early intervention are becoming embedded within the school culture.</li> <li>• Students' mental wellbeing does need to be monitored.</li> <li>• Mental wellbeing is crucial for effective teaching &amp; learning.</li> <li>• Counselling has been a vital factor in the life of this school over a number of years.</li> <li>• Students seem to spiral in low times and then normal times throughout the year.</li> </ul>
<p>The importance &amp;/or benefits of <b>teachers' involvement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing the staff's awareness, understanding, skills &amp; confidence are fundamental to the process – student change will occur only when these have been achieved.</li> <li>• Teachers have been able to speak with the psychologist and outline their concerns.</li> <li>• Non-confidential feedback assists teachers with ascertaining the next steps to take in class.</li> <li>• It is also important to have good communication between the specialists and the classroom teachers.</li> <li>• Professional development of staff is important and will be a focus next year.</li> </ul>
<p>The importance &amp;/or benefits of <b>families' involvement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The psychologist has visited families which ensures mutual trust.</li> <li>• Parent support &amp; feedback on the school forms has been mandatory.</li> <li>• Parents are seeking advice &amp; information – so the opportunity to share parental fears &amp; concerns needs to be provided at the school.</li> <li>• Counselling with families has worked really well.</li> </ul>
<p>Suggestions for <b>further improvements</b> or projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to see us work on a database of helpers for critical incidents.</li> <li>• Most students respond to these programs – however, there are always individuals who will need more.</li> <li>• We will change our model for next year – from a counsellor who uses a withdrawal model – to one who sits in classrooms with children, works with groups and is here for 2-3 days in the week.</li> <li>• There is a need for more trained counsellors to work with children in our area – if I could find another counsellor, I would have them in as well – the counsellor we use can only come to the school one day per fortnight and some of our children need counselling more often than this.</li> <li>• Looking to extend further into developing cooperative &amp; other social skills.</li> </ul>

## Secondary Schools

Of the 10 secondary school principals, 5 (50%) shared 13 reflections about their *Mental Wellbeing Project* experiences. These comments covered similar themes:

Key Learnings Secondary School Principals Wanted to Share	
Key Themes	Principals' Comments
The importance &/or benefits of <b>teachers' involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff lack confidence but really do a great job.</li> <li>• Reinforce that there are no magical solutions but that what they are doing is the right thing.</li> <li>• Staff confidence &amp; skills will always be a work-in-progress – just when things seem to be going well, issues arise where staff lose confidence in dealing with them. We constantly have to re-visit Restorative Justice philosophy as a basis for ongoing discussion about student management. Practices also need consistent reinforcing, particularly those to do with "affective questioning".</li> <li>• Some staff will never feel confident enough to adopt RJ practices while others leapt at the idea.</li> <li>• Documentation made available, as is appropriate, to key staff has been extremely helpful in working with students at risk.</li> </ul>
A perception that the <i>Mental Wellbeing Project</i> activities had <b>engaged / benefited students, families &amp;/or staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoroughly recommend the Restorative Justice program – it has been used in this school to deal with bullying issues, student resilience, racial comments, staff-staff &amp; student-staff relationships.</li> <li>• The Mind Matters program has been an outstanding success.</li> <li>• The setting up of pastoral teams in Year groups, led by Year coordinators, is working well – however, we need to reassess the process.</li> </ul>
The importance &/or benefits of a <b>whole school approach / good systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of a team approach to dealing with mental health issues – students need accurate information &amp; many avenues to turn to (peers, teachers, Year coords, counsellors, etc).</li> <li>• You need a variety of strategies &amp; programs to complement 1-1 counselling.</li> </ul>
The importance &/or benefits of <b>engaging qualified, experienced, competent specialists</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our counsellor has helped enormously in assisting both staff &amp; students in managing student wellbeing. It is important that this interaction continue.</li> <li>• The One-on-One mentoring program through St Joseph's Cowper Homes has been very helpful – activities, apart from set schoolwork, ensure student interest, connection &amp; relevance in their daily life. A day's respite from school involving productive &amp; creative activities often helps to re-focus particular students who are having difficulties. This mentoring has proven to be one of the major bonuses for the individual students who have been targeted.</li> </ul>
Suggestions for <b>further improvements</b> or projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would like the opportunity to talk to relevant staff in other schools about their mental wellbeing initiatives &amp; projects.</li> </ul>

## PRINCIPALS' RATINGS OF KEY OUTCOMES

Within both the initial application form and the later reporting template, principals were asked to rate their schools (using a 1-10 scale where 1=low, 5=average and 10=high) in relation to five key outcome areas, based on the project's main aims:

- School staff's awareness about issues that impact on students' mental wellbeing;
- School staff's skills at dealing with issues affecting students' mental wellbeing;
- School staff's confidence at dealing with issues affecting students' mental wellbeing;
- Students' general level of mental wellbeing, on average; and
- Students' awareness about issues that impact on their mental wellbeing.

The following sections compare these initial and review ratings for each of these outcomes – for the 37 principals providing both sets of ratings.

### *Staff Awareness about Issues that Impact on Students' Mental Wellbeing*

As shown in the table below, both primary and secondary school principals rated highly their staff's awareness in this area – in both their initial application and their later review. Consequently, little change was seen between the initial and review ratings.

	Primary School Principals (N = 28)			Secondary School Principals (N = 9)		
	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings
<b>Rated at 1-4/10</b>	1 (4%)	1 (4%)		0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Rated at 5-7/10</b>	8 (29%)	6 (21%)		1 (11%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Rated at 8-10/10</b>	19 (68%)	21 (75%)		8 (89%)	9 (100%)	
<b>Range</b>	4 – 10 points	3 – 10 points	+5 to -5 points	7 – 10 points	8 – 10 points	+2 to -2 points
<b>Mean</b>	<b>7.66 points</b>	<b>7.82 points</b>	<b>+0.16 points</b>	<b>8.78 points</b>	<b>8.78 points</b>	<b>0 points</b>
<b>Median</b>	8 points	8 points	0 points	9 points	9 points	0 points
<b>Rating improved</b>			11 (39%)			3 (33%)
<b>Rating unchanged</b>			7 (25%)			3 (33%)
<b>Rating reduced</b>			10 (36%)			3 (33%)

### ***Staff Skills at Dealing with Issues Affecting Students' Mental Wellbeing***

As shown in the table below, most primary and secondary school principals rated their staff's skills in this area more highly in their later review than in their initial application – primary principals by about ½ point and secondary principals by almost 1½ points.

	Primary School Principals (N = 27)			Secondary School Principals (N = 9)		
	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings
Rated at 1-4/10	5 (19%)	1 (4%)		0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Rated at 5-7/10	17 (63%)	18 (67%)		9 (100%)	4 (44%)	
Rated at 8-10/10	5 (19%)	8 (30%)		0 (0%)	5 (56%)	
Range	3½ – 10 points	3 – 9 points	+5½ to -4 points	5 – 7 points	6½ – 10 points	+5 to -½ points
Mean	<b>6.43 points</b>	<b>6.89 points</b>	<b>+0.46 points</b>	<b>6.44 points</b>	<b>7.83 points</b>	<b>+1.39 points</b>
Median	7 points	7 points	+1 point	7 points	8 points	+1 point
Rating improved			14 (52%)			5 (56%)
Rating unchanged			6 (22%)			3 (33%)
Rating reduced			7 (26%)			1 (11%)

### ***Staff Confidence at Dealing with Issues Affecting Students' Mental Wellbeing***

As shown in the table below, most primary and secondary school principals rated their staff's confidence in this area more highly in their later review than in their initial application – both by an average of about ¾ point.

	Primary School Principals (N = 28)			Secondary School Principals (N = 9)		
	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings
Rated at 1-4/10	5 (18%)	2 (7%)		0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Rated at 5-7/10	20 (71%)	16 (57%)		9 (100%)	7 (78%)	
Rated at 8-10/10	3 (11%)	10 (36%)		0 (0%)	2 (22%)	
Range	3 – 10 points	3 – 9 points	+6 to -4 points	5 – 7 points	5 – 8 points	+3 to -½ points
Mean	<b>6.07 points</b>	<b>6.79 points</b>	<b>+0.71 points</b>	<b>5.83 points</b>	<b>6.61 points</b>	<b>+0.78 points</b>
Median	6 points	7 points	+1 point	6 points	6½ points	+1 point
Rating improved			16 (57%)			5 (56%)
Rating unchanged			6 (21%)			3 (33%)
Rating reduced			6 (21%)			1 (11%)

### *Students' General Level of Mental Wellbeing*

As shown in the table below, more primary and secondary school principals rated their students' general mental wellbeing at the higher end of the scale in their later review than in their initial application. However, the range and averages suggest little overall change in student mental wellbeing levels.

	Primary School Principals (N = 28)			Secondary School Principals (N = 9)		
	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings
Rated at 1-4/10	1 (4%)	3 (11%)		0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Rated at 5-7/10	22 (79%)	13 (46%)		6 (67%)	4 (44%)	
Rated at 8-10/10	5 (18%)	12 (43%)		3 (33%)	5 (56%)	
Range	3 – 8 points	3 – 9 points	+3½ to -4 points	5 – 9 points	5 – 8½ points	+1 to -2 points
Mean	<b>6.66 points</b>	<b>6.75 points</b>	<b>+0.09 points</b>	<b>7.17 points</b>	<b>7.17 points</b>	<b>0 points</b>
Median	7 points	7 points	0 points	7 points	8 points	1 point
Rating improved			11 (39%)			5 (56%)
Rating unchanged			10 (36%)			1 (11%)
Rating reduced			7 (25%)			3 (33%)

### *Students' Awareness about Issues that Impact on their Mental Wellbeing*

As shown in the table below, most primary and many secondary school principals rated their students' awareness in this area more highly in their later review than in their initial application – primary principals by an average of 1.2 points and secondary principals by an average of 1/3 points.

	Primary School Principals (N = 28)			Secondary School Principals (N = 9)		
	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings	Initial Ratings	Review Ratings	Change in Ratings
Rated at 1-4/10	13 (46%)	4 (14%)		0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Rated at 5-7/10	13 (46%)	20 (71%)		6 (67%)	4 (44%)	
Rated at 8-10/10	2 (7%)	4 (14%)		3 (33%)	5 (56%)	
Range	2 – 8 points	3 – 8 points	+4 to -3 points	6 – 9 points	6 – 9½ points	+2 to -2 points
Mean	<b>4.57 points</b>	<b>5.77 points</b>	<b>+1.20 points</b>	<b>7.22 points</b>	<b>7.56 points</b>	<b>+0.33 points</b>
Median	5 points	6 points	+1 point	7 points	8 points	0 points
Rating improved			22 (79%)			4 (44%)
Rating unchanged			3 (11%)			4 (44%)
Rating reduced			3 (11%)			1 (11%)

## SUMMARY

In 2006, the Catholic Education Office, Lismore Diocese, made a large investment (almost \$850,000) with the aim of improving primary and secondary school students' mental wellbeing. They aimed to achieve this by offering schools in the Diocese additional funding to be used on projects to improve students' and school staff's awareness about the many and varied issues that can affect students' mental wellbeing and to improve school staff's skills and confidence at dealing with those issues.

Depending on their size, primary schools received between \$3,400 and \$33,300 and secondary schools received between \$20,000 and \$65,000 – to be used on projects developed within each school, in response to strengths, needs and preferences identified by their students, families &/or staff.

These local development processes resulted in schools' *Mental Wellbeing Project* funds being used in a variety of ways:

- About half the schools chose to employ external professional therapists to provide direct training or support services to their children, families &/or staff;
- About one third chose to develop or enhance their school's existing in-house mental wellbeing promotion &/or support activities; and
- About one fifth chose to develop or enhance whole-of-school approaches to improving students' mental wellbeing.

At the end of the school year, principals' reflections on their *Mental Wellbeing Project* activities suggested improved awareness of the importance of student wellbeing issues and a perception that their school's activities had successfully engaged and benefited students, families &/or school staff in a number of ways. These reflections also acknowledged the importance of and the benefits arising from a whole-of-school approach, good management systems, involving appropriate professionals and of involving families and school staff in activities to support & enhance students' mental wellbeing.

Comparisons of principals ratings of their staff and students across 5 key outcomes, at the beginning and end of the school year, suggest some improvements in their staff's skills and confidence (especially in secondary schools) at dealing with issues affecting students' mental wellbeing and in their students' awareness of such issues (especially in primary schools). Little change was suggested in school staff's awareness of these issues – with levels already quite high in principals' initial ratings. While little change was also suggested in the average ratings of students' general levels of mental wellbeing, more principals rated it at the higher end of the scale in their review ratings.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A: SCHOOLS IN THE LISMORE DIOCESE**

#### ***Primary Schools***

Holy Family, Skennars Head  
Mary Help of Christians, Sawtell  
Our Lady Help of Christians, South Lismore  
Our Lady of Lourdes, East Lismore  
St Agnes, Port Macquarie  
St Anthony's, Kingscliff  
St Augustine's, Coffs Harbour  
St Brigid's, Kyogle  
St Carthage's, Lismore  
St Finbarr's, Byron Bay  
St Francis Xavier, Ballina  
St Francis Xavier, Woolgoolga  
St James, Banora Point  
St James, Yamba  
St John's, Dorrigo  
St John's, Mullumbimby  
St Joseph's, Alstonville  
St Joseph's, Coraki  
St Joseph's, Kempsey  
St Joseph's, Laurieton  
St Joseph's, Maclean  
St Joseph's, Port Macquarie  
St Joseph's, South Grafton  
St Joseph's, South Murwillumbah  
St Joseph's, Tweed Heads  
St Joseph's, Wauchope  
St Joseph's, Woodburn  
St Mary's, Bellingen  
St Mary's, Bowraville  
St Mary's, Casino  
St Mary's, Grafton  
St Patrick's, Macksville  
St Patrick's, Murwillumbah  
St Peter's, Port Macquarie

#### ***Secondary Schools***

Australian Technical College, Port Macquarie  
John Paul College, Coffs Harbour  
McAuley Catholic College, Grafton  
St John's College, Woodlawn  
St Joseph's High School, Banora Point  
St Joseph's High School, Port Macquarie  
St Mary's High School, Casino  
St Patrick's College, Murwillumbah  
St Paul's, West Kempsey  
Xavier Catholic College, Ballina

**MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT**

**2006 FUNDING APPLICATION PROCESS & FORMS**

**What is the Mental Wellbeing Project?**

The Mental Wellbeing Project aims to help school communities respond to the needs of students and their families, to maintain and support their emotional and social wellbeing. Total funding of \$700,000 has been allocated across all schools within our Diocese, on a per capita basis.

As shown in the above diagram, students' wellbeing can be enhanced through a wide variety of both universal and targeted strategies and policies. Therefore, schools are encouraged to review the needs and strengths of their own students, families and staff to decide the best way to invest their Mental Wellbeing Project funding. The questions included in this application form are designed to help schools consider relevant issues in deciding how and where to target their Mental Wellbeing Project funds.

**How to apply for your school's Mental Wellbeing Project funds**

- Step 1:** Read the section entitled *Why Mental Wellbeing in Schools?* – which gives a brief overview of what mental wellbeing is, how it impacts on students' development and learning and ways in which it can be enhanced.
- Step 2:** Read the section entitled *Assessing Students' Wellbeing Needs in Your School* – which gives a brief overview of how to conduct a basic needs assessment to identify ways in which students' wellbeing could be improved within your school.
- Step 3:** Complete a basic needs assessment for your school – record your processes and results on the *2006 Mental Wellbeing Project: Needs Assessment Form*.
- Step 4:** Develop a mental wellbeing project plan for your school – building on the results of your needs assessment processes – by completing and submitting the *2006 Mental Wellbeing Project: Funding Application Form*

**What happens after you submit your application?**

- Securing the funding:**
- The CEO reviews the completed application forms
  - Schools and the CEO agree a project plan

- Monitoring expenditure:**
- Schools keep a clear record of how the allocated funds are spent, in accordance with their project plan

- Monitoring implementation:**
- Schools monitor their project's implementation, in accordance with their project plan

- Reporting outcomes:** Late in 2006, schools will be asked to complete a brief report detailing:
- How their funds were spent
  - How successfully their project was implemented
  - How their project has impacted on student mental wellbeing and other relevant outcomes

## WHY MENTAL WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS?

*Schools have a profound influence on children, their families and the community. Young peoples' ability and motivation to stay in school, to learn and utilise what they learn is profoundly affected by their mental health. Schools are crucial in building or undermining self esteem and a sense of confidence. (World Health Organisation, 1995)*

*There is a strong link between students' sense of self-worth, their emotional and social wellbeing, their enthusiasm for learning and their optimism for the future. (MCEETYA, 1999)*

In recent years, schools have voiced concern about the increasing need for support of students in the area of mental health. In particular, schools often refer to the need to promote positive social and emotional wellbeing so that challenging behaviours and learning difficulties are potentially minimised.

Life events that may contribute to diminished social and emotional wellbeing and, hence, have an impact on academic performance and/or classroom behaviour include:

- Family transitions – e.g. moving house, unemployment, etc
- Family break-up – separation, divorce
- Domestic violence – including abuse or neglect of any kind
- Death – e.g. a family member or friend
- Illness or impairment – their own or someone close to them
- Poverty – the socioeconomic circumstances of their family

Factors at school that may influence social and emotional wellbeing include:

- Bullying
- Peer rejection
- Behaviour problems
- Deviant peers
- School failure

A key aim in promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of students is ensuring every child or young person can realise their own potential abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work collaboratively with teachers and peers and make a positive contribution, both within and outside the classroom.

There are several known categories of 'protective factors' or 'protective processes' that promote the mental health of children and young people:

- **Caring and supportive relationships.** The presence of at least one caring person - someone who conveys an attitude of compassion and provides support for healthy development and learning. Often children see their teachers in this way.
- **Positive and high expectations.** Schools that establish high expectations for all students and give them the support necessary to achieve them have high rates of academic success and lower rates of problem behaviour. Through relationships that convey high expectations, students learn to believe in themselves and their futures, developing critical resilience traits of self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy and optimism.
- **Opportunities for meaningful participation.** Suggestions include asking questions that encourage critical thinking and dialogue (especially around current social issues), making learning more hands-on, involving students in curriculum planning, using participatory evaluation strategies, letting students create the governing rules of the classroom and employing cooperative approaches to teaching and learning.

# **ASSESSING STUDENTS' WELLBEING NEEDS IN YOUR SCHOOL**

## **What is a needs assessment?**

Needs assessment is the first step in any best-practice program planning process. It involves gathering information from a variety of sources (eg: previous research, surveys of your school's students, parents, teachers) – in order to identify and prioritise the range of needs on any given topic – in this case, what your school can do to improve your students' mental wellbeing.

## **Why do you need to do a needs assessment?**

Doing a needs assessment is a great first step towards getting all the interested parties (eg: students, parents, teachers) involved in any ultimately-agreed project. It helps you understand what will be important for the different groups in designing your project – and makes it more likely to achieve what you want it to.

## **How do you do a needs assessment?**

As needs assessment involves gathering information from a variety of sources, you may need to use a few different methods – including:

- Consulting with students about the factors they feel impact on their mental wellbeing and about ways they feel it could be improved – through surveys, class discussions, etc.
- Consulting with parents about the factors they feel impact on their children's mental wellbeing and about school-based strategies they feel could help improve it – through surveys, parent meetings, etc.
- Consulting with school staff about the factors they feel impact on students' mental wellbeing and about school-based strategies they feel could help improve it – through surveys, staff meetings, etc.
- Seeking input from any relevant and accessible external experts.
- Checking out any relevant data available to you about students' mental wellbeing in your school – from your own school-collected information & statistics or others available from local agencies – to see which of the factors identified in the consultation processes are more or less common among your students.
- Checking out any relevant existing literature about programs which have tried to improve students' mental wellbeing – in journals, government reports or on the internet – to identify whether there are strategies which have been found to improve the factors identified in the consultation processes.

## **How do you use the information gathered in the needs assessment?**

Although the different consultations within your needs assessment process will often suggest varying answers to your initial question of: ***What can our school do to improve students' mental wellbeing?***, there will usually be a reasonable degree of overlap – which helps you narrow down where to prioritise your efforts.

You can use the information collected in the other needs assessment processes to further prioritise where you think you will be able to have the most beneficial impact from your efforts – by thinking through questions like: Which groups have the most need? Are there strategies that have been found effective? What strategies will benefit the most students? What strategies will have the most lasting impacts? What strategies are feasible, given our current resources? What strategies can be sustained over time? What strategies have support from students / parents / staff?

## 2006 MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT: NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM

### Overview of Consultations Conducted

	Numbers consulted, by group?	How were they consulted?	What were their main ideas for improving students' mental wellbeing?
Students			
Parents			
Teachers			
Other staff			
External experts			

### Overview of Other Data Gathered

What data did you find about your students' mental wellbeing?	
Did it suggest any priorities to focus on?	
Where did you look for information about relevant existing programs?	
What useful information did you find?	

# 2006 MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT: FUNDING APPLICATION FORM

## Contact Information

School Name:

School Address:

School Phone Number:

Contact Person's name:

Contact Person's position:

## School Information

Number of students, by Year:    **K**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **6**    **7**    **8**    **9**    **10**    **11**    **12**

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Total number of students:

Total number of staff:

Project funding available: \$

## Application Overview

Project Title:

Project Aim:

Brief description of what your project will involve:

Total Funds Requested: \$

	Students	Families	Teachers	Other staff
Number of people expected to benefit, by group:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>			

How do you expect they will benefit?

**Project Implementation** (NB: All questions may not be relevant for your project)

Overview of how the project will be implemented:

Which staff will be involved – and how?

Which students will be involved – and how?

Who else will be involved – and how?

What existing school resources will be involved – and how?

What new resources will be involved – and how?

How will the requested funds be spent?

**Project Monitoring & Evaluation** (NB: All items may not be relevant for your project)

How will you monitor how well your project is implemented?

How will you monitor how the project funds are expended?

How will you monitor staff reactions to your project?

How will you monitor students' reactions to your project?

How will you monitor families' reactions to your project?

How will you evaluate your project's impact on students' mental wellbeing?

How will you evaluate your project's impact on staff awareness about issues affecting students' mental wellbeing?

How will you evaluate your project's impact on staff confidence in dealing with students' mental wellbeing?

## Principal's Comments

How useful do you feel this project will be for your school?

--

How likely do you think it is to achieve its aim?

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**On a 1-10 scale, where 1 = low, 5 = average and 10 = high, how would you rate the following:**

Your staff's awareness about issues that impact on students' mental wellbeing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Your staff's skills at dealing with issues affecting students' mental wellbeing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Your staff's confidence at dealing with issues affecting students' mental wellbeing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Your students' general level of mental wellbeing, on average

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Your students' awareness about issues that impact on their mental wellbeing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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## APPENDIX C: MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT REVIEW FORM

### MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT

#### **2006 FUNDING APPLICATION PROCESS & FORMS**

##### **What is the Mental Wellbeing Project?**

The Mental Wellbeing Project aims to help school communities respond to the needs of students, and their families, to support and enhance their social and emotional wellbeing. Ongoing annual funding of \$852,000 has been allocated across all schools within the Diocese, on a per capita basis.

As we are nearing the end of the 2006 school year, it is timely for schools to review how they expended their 2006 Mental Wellbeing Project funds and to plan how they will expend their 2007 funds. It is an opportunity to reflect on how efficiently the funds were used and how well they contributed to improving students' social and emotional wellbeing – and how both of these may be able to be improved next year.

The attached form has been developed to assist with this process and to provide the CEO with information about the overall benefits resulting from this funding initiative.

The form represents an extension of the application form completed prior to receiving the 2006 funds and asks schools to:

- Report about how the 2006 funds were expended – and how closely this reflected the expectations reflected in schools' initial applications;
- Reflect and report on the reasons for any variations in implementation – in comparison to the expectations reflected in schools' initial applications;
- Assess and report on the funds' impact – against the aims indicated in schools' initial applications;
- Consider any ways in which they will manage or use their 2007 funds differently.

#### **PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM TO:**

**Anne Wenham, Assistant Director, Education Services**

**Catholic Education Office**

**Corner Keen & Orion Streets, Lismore NSW 2480**

**Email: [awenham@lism.catholic.edu.au](mailto:awenham@lism.catholic.edu.au) or Fax: 02 6622 0990**

**– BY 17 NOVEMBER 2006**

## WHY MENTAL WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS?

*Schools have a profound influence on children, their families and the community. Young peoples' ability and motivation to stay in school, to learn and utilise what they learn is profoundly affected by their mental health. Schools are crucial in building or undermining self esteem and a sense of confidence. (World Health Organisation, 1995)*

*There is a strong link between students' sense of self-worth, their emotional and social wellbeing, their enthusiasm for learning and their optimism for the future. (MCEETYA, 1999)*

In recent years, schools have voiced concern about the increasing need for support of students in the area of mental health. In particular, schools often refer to the need to promote positive social and emotional wellbeing so that challenging behaviours and learning difficulties are potentially minimised.

**Life events that may contribute to diminished social and emotional wellbeing** and, hence, have an impact on academic performance and/or classroom behaviour include:

- Family transitions – e.g. moving house, unemployment, etc
- Family break-up – separation, divorce
- Domestic violence – including abuse or neglect of any kind
- Death – e.g. a family member or friend
- Illness or impairment – their own or someone close to them
- Poverty – the socioeconomic circumstances of their family

**Factors at school that may influence social and emotional wellbeing** include:

- Bullying
- Peer rejection
- Behaviour problems
- Deviant peers
- School failure

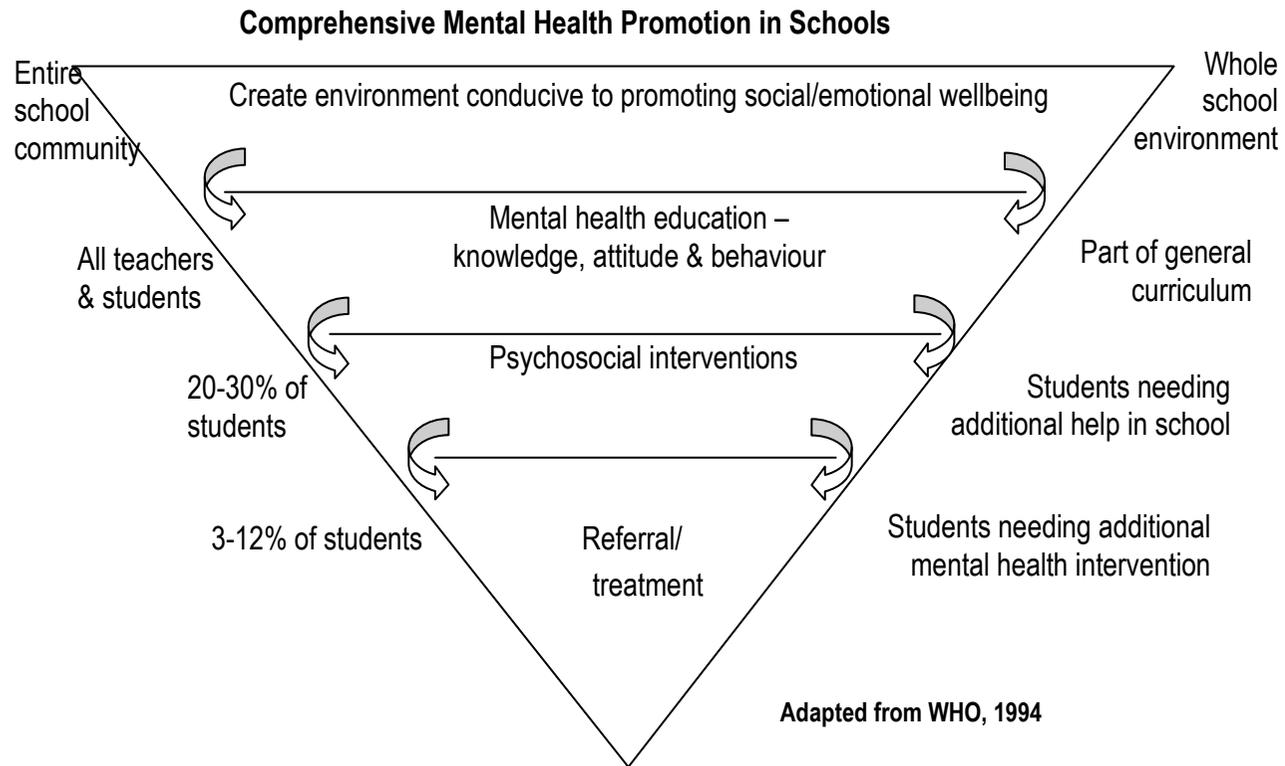
A key aim in promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of students is ensuring every child or young person can realise their own potential abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work collaboratively with teachers and peers and make a positive contribution, both within and outside the classroom.

There are several known categories of '**protective factors**' or '**protective processes**' that promote the mental health of children and young people:

- **Caring and supportive relationships.** The presence of at least one caring person - someone who conveys an attitude of compassion and provides support for healthy development and learning. Often children see their teachers in this way.
- **Positive and high expectations.** Schools that establish high expectations for all students and give them the support necessary to achieve them have high rates of academic success and lower rates of problem behaviour. Through relationships that convey high expectations, students learn to believe in themselves and their futures, developing critical resilience traits of self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy and optimism.

**Opportunities for meaningful participation.** Suggestions include asking questions that encourage critical thinking and dialogue (especially around current social issues), making learning more hands-on, involving students in curriculum planning, using participatory evaluation strategies, letting students create the governing rules of the classroom and employing cooperative approaches to teaching and learning.

The following diagram is well known for its illustration of the mental health issues present in all schools and of strategies schools can implement in order to optimise students' mental wellbeing – at a number of different levels:



Implied in this diagram is the importance of strong mental health promotion at a number of levels throughout the school community. Integral to each level is a culture, programs, activities and (where needed) referrals that emphasise the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that build resilience – where resilience is defined as: *Capacities within a person that promote positive outcomes, such as mental health and wellbeing, and provide protection from factors that might otherwise place that person at risk of adverse health outcomes. Factors that contribute to resilience include personal coping skills and strategies for dealing with adversity, such as problem-solving, good communication and social skills, optimistic thinking, and help-seeking.* (CDHAC, 2000, p.130)

Programs or interventions used in schools should, therefore, show some evidence they contribute to the development of attributes such as:

- social competence
- autonomy
- problem solving skills
- a sense of purpose and future
- communication skills
-

## MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT: REVIEWING 2006 & PLANNING 2007

<u>Contact Information</u>	<b>2006 APPLICATION INFORMATION</b> <small>Each section included the relevant information from each school's application form</small>	<b>2006 REVIEW</b> (Tick if same, Detail any variations)	<b>2007 PLAN</b> (Tick if same, Detail any variations)
School Name:			
School Address:			
School Phone Number:			
Contact Person's name:			
Contact Person's position:			

<u>School Information</u>	<b>2006 APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>	<b>2006 REVIEW</b> (Tick if same, Detail any variations)	<b>2007 PLAN</b> (Tick if same, Detail any variations)																										
Number of students, by Year:	<table style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">K</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">5</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">6</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">7</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">8</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">9</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">10</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">11</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12															
K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12																	
Total number of students:																													
Total number of staff:																													
Project funding available:	\$																												

**Application Overview**

**2006 APPLICATION INFORMATION**  
 Each section included the relevant information from each school's application form

**2006 REVIEW**  
 (Tick if same, Detail any variations)

**2007 PLAN**  
 (Tick if same, Detail any variations)

Project Title:				
Project Aim:				
Brief description of what your project will involve:				
Total Funds Requested:	\$			
Number of people expected to benefit, by group:	<b>Students</b>	<b>Families</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Other staff</b>
How do you expect they will benefit?				

**Project Implementation**

**2006 APPLICATION INFORMATION**

Each section included the relevant information from each school's application form

**2006 REVIEW**  
(Tick if same, Detail any variations)

**2007 PLAN**  
(Tick if same, Detail any variations)

Overview of how the project will be implemented:			
Which staff will be involved – and how?			
Which students will be involved – and how?			
Who else will be involved – and how?			
What existing school resources will be involved – and how?			
What new resources will be involved – and how?			
How will the requested funds be spent?			

**Project Monitoring & Evaluation**

**2006 APPLICATION INFORMATION**  
*Each section included the relevant information from each school's application form*

**2006 REVIEW**  
 (Tick if same, Detail any variations and results)

**2007 PLAN**  
 (Tick if same, Detail any variations)

How will you monitor how well your project is implemented?			
How will you monitor how the project funds are expended?			
How will you monitor staff reactions to your project?			
How will you monitor students' reactions to your project?			
How will you monitor families' reactions to your project?			
How will you evaluate your project's impact on students' mental wellbeing?			
How will you evaluate your project's impact on staff awareness about issues affecting students' mental wellbeing?			
How will you evaluate your project's impact on staff confidence in dealing with students' mental wellbeing?			

**Principal's Comments**

**2006 APPLICATION INFORMATION**

Each section included the relevant information from each school's application form

**2006 REVIEW**  
(Tick if same, Detail any variations)

**2007 PLAN**  
(Tick if same, Detail any variations)

How useful do you feel this project will be for your school?			
How likely do you think it is to achieve its aim?			

On a 1-10 scale, where 1 = low, 5 = average and 10 = high, how would you rate the following:

Your staff's awareness about issues that impact on students' mental wellbeing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your staff's skills at dealing with issues affecting students' mental wellbeing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your staff's confidence at dealing with issues affecting students' mental wellbeing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your students' general level of mental wellbeing, on average	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your students' awareness about issues that impact on their mental wellbeing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What key learnings would you like to share with other schools?	
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What other strategies does your schools employ to enhance student's mental wellbeing?		How have you found the process of completing this form?
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