Wellbeing in schools: research project: improving approaches to wellbeing in schools: what role does recognition play? Final report: volume four

Anne Graham  
*Southern Cross University*

Robyn Fitzgerald

Mary Ann Powell  
*Southern Cross University*

Nigel Thomas  
*Southern Cross University*

Donnah L. Anderson  
*Southern Cross University*

*See next page for additional authors*

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RESEARCH PROJECT

IMPROVING APPROACHES TO WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS: WHAT ROLE DOES RECOGNITION PLAY?

Volume Four

Centre for Children and Young People
Southern Cross University
August 2014
This report is Volume Four of the Final Report for the Australian Research Council Linkage Project 'Improving approaches to wellbeing in schools: What role does recognition play?' (LP 110200656). This Volume is to be read in conjunction with Volumes One, Two and Three of the Final Report. The four Volumes of the Final Report are:

Final Report: Volume One – Overview, Methodology, Research Design, Phase 1 Policy Analysis Results

Final Report: Volume Two – Phase 2 Qualitative Interviews and Focus Groups Results

Final Report: Volume Three – Phase 3 Quantitative Survey Results

Final Report: Volume Four – Discussion of Findings, Recommendations, References and Appendices

Additionally, the Executive Summary Report is available online.

Additional copies of all Volumes of the Final Report can be accessed at:

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Or contact:

Centre for Children and Young People
Southern Cross University
PO Box 157 Lismore NSW 2480 AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 (0)2 6620 3605
Fax: +61 (0)2 6620 3243
Email: ccyp@scu.edu.au

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Wellbeing in Schools Final Report: Volume Four

Research Team

Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University
Chief Investigators: Professor Anne Graham, Dr Robyn Fitzgerald
Research Team: Dr Mary Ann Powell (Postdoctoral Research Fellow), Dr Donnah Anderson, Dr Catharine Simmons (Research Associates); Nadine White, Alison Moss (Project Officers/Research Assistants)

University of Central Lancashire
Partner Investigator: Professor Nigel Thomas

Catholic Schools Office, Lismore
Partner Investigator: Dr Paul Thornton

Good Grief
Partner Investigator: Sr Mary-Ellen O'Donoghue

Interrelate Family Centres
Partner Investigator: Robyn Parker

Contact for follow up:
Professor Anne Graham, Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University, Lismore NSW 2480, Phone: +61 (0)2 6620 3605, anne.graham@scu.edu.au
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1 Wellbeing, relationships and recognition: Where to from here?

This document is Volume 4 of a major research report for an Australian Research Council (ARC) funded project titled, Improving Approaches to Wellbeing in Schools: What Role Does Recognition Play? It is recommended that Volume 4 be read in conjunction with Volumes 1, 2 and 3.

Volume 1 provides an overview of the research and details the background, significance, research design and methodology for each of the four phases of the study. Volume 1 also includes the findings from Phase 1 of the research, which is an analysis of relevant national, state and system level policy and policy-related documentation pertaining to wellbeing in schools. Volume 2 reports the findings from Phase 2 of the research, which is an analysis of qualitative data from in-depth semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group interviews with primary and secondary school students. Volume 3 reports the findings from Phase 3 of the research, which is an analysis of the quantitative data from online surveys with principals, teachers and primary and secondary school students. Volume 4 (the current volume) provides a synthesised discussion of the findings across the above three phases in relation to the stated aim and objectives of the research, as well as outlining a number of recommendations arising from these findings. Importantly, Volume 4 also includes a number of resources to assist schools and other project partners in providing professional development for staff in relation to the research findings (see Appendices E and J). A separate Executive Summary Report is also available.

To assist reader engagement with the current culminating volume of the research report (Volume 4), the key elements of the overall study are briefly recapped below before critically discussing key findings across all three phases of the research in light of the overall research aim and objectives.

Project Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is to generate new knowledge about ‘wellbeing’ in schools. Drawing upon insights from principals, teachers, students and existing policies, together with key ideas offered through recognition theory and Childhood Studies, the research:

1. Develops a detailed understanding of how ‘wellbeing’ in schools is currently understood by students, teachers and educational policy makers;
2. Investigates the potential of recognition theory for advancing understanding and improvements in relation to student wellbeing;
3.Generates new knowledge about how educational policy, programs and practices in schools could more positively impact on student wellbeing.

Methodological Approach

A major intent of this project has been to produce extensive, systematic policy and practice-relevant evidence to advance the way children’s ‘wellbeing’ is understood and approached in schools. A mixed methods research design has been utilised, generating important descriptive and thematically coded qualitative and quantitative data. The views and perspectives of students, principals and teachers, which are central to the research, have been sought through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and an online survey instrument. An extensive analysis of policy and policy-related documentation laid firm foundations for identifying current policy emphases related to wellbeing in schools. Key understandings from Childhood Studies and recognition theory guided the analysis of data.
The research was conducted in four phases – with each phase informed by findings from the previous:

**Phase 1 – Policy Analysis:** Analysis of key relevant local (system), state and Commonwealth policy and policy-related documentation regarding wellbeing ($N = 80$)

**Phase 2 - Qualitative:** Semi-structured interviews with teachers and principals ($N = 89$); focus group interviews with primary and secondary students ($N = 606$)

**Phase 3 - Quantitative:** Online survey with primary students ($N = 3906$), secondary students ($N = 5362$) and staff ($N = 707$ comprised of principals, teachers and non-teaching staff) across three Catholic school regions

**Phase 4: Synthesis of findings** and professional development for schools

Interview, focus group and survey data were collected across three Catholic school regions, in three Australian states (New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria), selected on the basis that each of the three regions offered contrasting approaches to the implementation of wellbeing policy and programs in schools.

The data collected in Phase 1 were analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA) principles. The interview and focus group discussion data collected in Phase 2 were transcribed, coded and analysed for recurring themes to identify patterns in the data using the NVivo software program. The students’ drawings and/or lists of school improvements gathered in the Phase 2 focus groups were analysed manually for repeated images or words and cross-checked with related transcribed discussions. The data collected in Phase 3 were cleaned and analysed using IBM-SPSS quantitative analysis software.

This study is the largest in Australia to date to invite students’ views about wellbeing in schools and, importantly, to identify similarities and differences between teacher and student views, and how these broadly align with current policy perspectives. Including student perspectives is especially significant given evidence that they are rarely consulted about their wellbeing or other key issues at school (Redmond, Skattebol, & Saunders, 2013). Accessing the views of teachers remains important because teachers are integral to children’s lives (Bingham, 2001). Incorporating an exhaustive review of current system, state and national policy and policy-related documentation linked with wellbeing in schools adds a further critically important perspective in identifying current and possible future emphases in policy designed to support the wellbeing of children and young people. Hence, underpinning this research is the assumption that educational policy and practice around wellbeing in schools will be significantly more responsive if it reflects the views and perspectives of principals, teachers and students, while taking account of the strengths and limitations of the current policy environment.

The research integrates two distinctive theoretical interests. The first relates to the way in which children and childhood are theorised and draws on understandings from the field of Childhood Studies. The interdisciplinary approach of Childhood Studies (James & James, 2008) is important for this research because it provokes a conceptual shift from seeing children as the passive recipients of life experiences to social actors with their own views and strategies for actively coping with and

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1 We acknowledge the key role that parents play in children’s wellbeing in the context of schools but project funding constraints precluded involving them in this research.
responding to challenges in their lives. The emphasis in Childhood Studies on notions of ‘childcentred’ scholarship accords well with research that locates children and young people’s agency, including the way this takes shape in and through their relationships, as central to their wellbeing.

A further distinctive element of this research is the use of recognition theory, as this potentially offers an alternative framework for conceptualising how wellbeing is understood and practiced in schools. Grounded in critical theory, the work of recognition scholars is largely interested in selfactualisation, social inequality and social justice. This research draws particularly on the work of Axel Honneth (Honneth, 1995, 2001, 2004) who focused especially on the role and importance of human interaction in the formation of individual and social identity. Honneth proposes three patterns of intersubjective recognition — love, which refers to the emotional concern for the wellbeing and needs of an actual person; rights, which refers to respect for the equal moral accountability of the legal person; and solidarity, which refers to esteem for others’ contributions to shared societal values (Honneth, 1995). For this study, the language of the three dimensions has been adapted in ways that are consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of Honneth’s work but also intelligible in school settings (thus ‘love’; ‘rights’; ‘solidarity’ are conceptualised as ‘cared for’; ‘respected’; ‘valued’ respectively).

To date there has been no research in Australia that empirically tests recognition theory, nor that investigates its potential in the context of wellbeing. When combined with key understandings about children and childhood offered through Childhood Studies, the theoretical (as well as applied) contribution of this research is highly significant.

We turn now to explore the significant findings in light of the research aim and objectives outlined above. While some of the key findings are relevant across more than one of the research objectives, we will address each of the three research objectives in turn, drawing attention to the distinctive contribution of this research to advancing the way children’s wellbeing is understood and approached in schools.

Central to this synthesis has been a detailed mapping that compares teacher, student and policy perspectives (as revealed through Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the research) particularly with respect to wellbeing, relationships, recognition and struggles over recognition. In a study of the scope undertaken here, this mapping (see Appendix K) has played a critically important role in bringing the different stakeholder views into dialogue, in itself a particular and distinctive contribution of the research.

2 Understanding Wellbeing

Research Objective 1: To develop a detailed understanding of how ‘wellbeing’ in schools is currently understood by students, teachers and educational policy makers.

By incorporating three distinct data collection phases, this research has developed a rich picture of how wellbeing is currently understood by students and teachers (Phases 2 and 3), and by educational policy makers (Phase 1). Briefly, this picture was generated from students’ multidimensional conceptions of wellbeing as: being — happy, loved, trusted, healthy; having — equality, voice, confidence; and doing — self-care, self-acceptance, good decisions, acts of generosity. Students conceptualised wellbeing through positive relationships, defined as trust, care, equality and respect across three dimensions of life: social and emotional, physical, and spiritual. Alongside these student perspectives, teachers’ understandings were primarily linked to notions of
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wellbeing as multidimensional, with an emphasis on the importance of being connected to people and place, being mentally or psychologically healthy and, to a lesser extent, being happy and being safe. In terms of policy, wellbeing appeared to be mostly articulated in relation to safety, mental health and, to a lesser extent, a more universal, multidimensional perspective. The domains for implementation of approaches to wellbeing evident in the policy-related documentation are systems and structures, relationships, teaching and learning, and environment.

There are a number of similarities in the student and teacher data regarding conceptualisations of wellbeing. Key amongst these is the multidimensional character of wellbeing and the way in which relationships are explicitly and implicitly identified with wellbeing. However, beyond these broader connections there are also nuanced differences specific to primary students, secondary students and teachers and demographic differences, as discussed in Volumes 2 and 3.

Wellbeing, for students and teachers, was understood as a multidimensional concept which was experienced physically, socially, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. In the Phase 2 qualitative data, both teachers and students described the interrelated nature of these dimensions, pointing to how wellbeing is bound up with these in ways that are not easy to articulate. Notwithstanding this, both students and teachers tended to foreground the socio-emotional dimension of wellbeing. This was expressed by students in terms of emotions and feelings, such as being happy and loved, frequently contextualised as existing within trusting relationships. For teachers, this dimension tended to be conflated with concerns about student ‘mental health’. Irrespective, the central role of relationships for social and emotional wellbeing was the focus of explicit, sustained emphasis from both students and teachers in Phase 2, and an impetus for further exploration in Phase 3 of the study.

While wellbeing tends not to be specifically defined in most education policy-related documentation, three broad constructions of wellbeing were evident, explicitly or implicitly. Although least common, a broad universal conception of wellbeing that might be applied to all children, rather than a particular targeted group or issue, was apparent in some documents, particularly those from the state of Victoria and the Catholic education sector. The other two more common constructions were problem-focused, associating wellbeing with safety, most evident in education policy, and mental health, most evident in the health sector. While it is the universal understanding which is most consistent overall with the multidimensional student and teacher conceptualisations, which tended to be framed holistically, there were resonances in the data with the latter two constructions. The relationship between policy-related discourses and the student and teacher data, in terms of the extent to which students’ and teachers’ conceptualisations might be influenced by the embedding of terminology and practices from policy and policy-related documentation, is an area of ambiguity. However, it seems plausible that conceptualisations around safety, for example, are informed to some extent by dominant discourses apparent in forms such as anti-bullying media campaigns or the well-publicised National Safe Schools Framework.

Although it was not emphasised to the same extent as other aspects, some conceptualising of wellbeing in relation to safety was reflected in the student data. In Phase 2, being physically safe was differentiated by students from physical health, with safety identified in the majority of focus groups as integral to wellbeing across all three dimensions of ‘being’ (social and emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing). An emphasis on safety was apparent, with both primary and secondary students in Phase 3 including ‘being safe’ as the second most frequent concept following ‘being happy’.
The concept of happiness was commonly the starting point for defining wellbeing in Phase 2 student and teacher data, but it was evident that happiness tended to be a concept that required further definition and explanation. Some students, for example, also stated that happiness was not essential for wellbeing and that you could be ‘sad happy’. Despite the emphasis on happiness in the interview and focus group data, teachers in Phase 3, in contrast with students, placed less emphasis on both ‘being happy’ and ‘being safe’ than other concepts. They mostly emphasised the importance of ‘being connected’ to people and to place, a notion raised by both students and teachers in the Phase 2 focus groups and interviews, and ‘being mentally or psychologically healthy’. Clearly, the latter resonates with mental health discourses, while the former points to the central role of relationships in conceptualising wellbeing.

‘Being healthy’ was also a strong response for both primary and secondary students, although, like happiness, this is a broad concept. Other definitions that were ranked highly by primary students in Phase 3 included ‘being loved’ and ‘helping others’. When further analysed, teachers placed far greater emphasis on mental or psychological health than physical health. When wellbeing was thought of as physical and mental health, or academic success, teachers rated relationships as less important for student wellbeing than did teachers who thought of wellbeing in terms of affect, spirituality and connections with other people and places. However, teachers who conceptualised wellbeing as being psychologically or mentally healthy differed from those who conceptualised wellbeing in other ways, including being more aware of the impact on student wellbeing of students being abusive towards each other and of teachers humiliating students. These (former group of) teachers also desired greater support from policy to guide their facilitation of wellbeing.

The discussion above highlights ideas expressed by students in the Phase 2 focus groups around wellbeing as ‘being’ within multidimensional contexts, including those primarily in the social-emotional domain such as happy, safe, healthy, loved and so forth. In addition, students’ understandings also clustered around notions of ‘having’ and ‘doing’. Having equality, voice, respect, support from significant others, privacy and rights were regarded as important for wellbeing. Similarly, students’ actions such as seeking out personal wellbeing through looking after and caring for oneself, self-acceptance, making good decisions, and acts of kindness and generosity for others were also perceived as constituting wellbeing. These understandings of wellbeing, in contexts of being, having and doing articulated in Phase 2, were also endorsed in the Phase 3 exploration of definitions of wellbeing and the dimensions of recognition.

The Phase 2 teacher data indicated that student wellbeing is embedded in the culture of the school. The domain of environment, which includes the school culture and ethos, was referred to least of all four domains in the policy-related documents analysed (occurring in only 28 documents). However, environment is arguably implicitly incorporated in aspects of the other domains. For Phase 2 teachers, the school culture was shaped by Christian values and Catholic identity. The majority of teachers agreed in the Phase 3 surveys that the Christian values at a Catholic school help both student wellbeing and their own wellbeing. This is in keeping with the policy-related documentation from the Catholic education sector, in which the Catholic context was strongly emphasised in pastoral care documents. However, for students in the Phase 2 focus groups, Catholic values were rarely discussed and when they were discussed they were a source of contest. Although most primary and secondary students agreed in Phase 3 that being at a Catholic school helped their wellbeing, there were many secondary students who did not agree.
The ways in which teachers perceived their role in relation to wellbeing also revealed much about how it is understood in schools. The findings across both phases indicate that teachers and schools have an important role to play in student wellbeing. The majority of teachers participating in Phase 3 surveys agreed that student wellbeing is central to the work of teachers and also that their school supports student wellbeing. Teaching and leadership staff report spending more of their time on student wellbeing matters than non-teaching staff. This is recognised by both primary and secondary students in Phase 3, who strongly agreed that their wellbeing is important to their teachers. Similarly, in Phase 2, students placed great emphasis on the important role that teachers play in student wellbeing, particularly in the relational domain. The perceived pivotal role of teachers in relation to student wellbeing again draws attention to where and how relationships are positioned within wellbeing discourse.

While relationships were a constant reference point for students and teachers when defining and describing their understandings of wellbeing and wellbeing practices, this was somewhat at odds with the dominant discourses apparent in the policy-related documentation. Here, as indicated previously, wellbeing was constructed mostly in relation to safety, mental health and, less frequently, in universal terms. In the policy context, the area of relationships is not the leading domain for implementation of approaches to wellbeing. Further, the implicit relationship focus apparent throughout the teacher and student data is somewhat at odds with the foregrounding of wellbeing as multidimensional at the commencement of Phase 2 interviews. This might be partly attributed to teachers initially trying to establish their expertise in relation to wellbeing, and students demonstrating and clarifying their understandings (hence providing a more general, all-encompassing definition) of the ‘what’ of wellbeing. Once the Phase 2 interviews and focus groups moved onto the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of wellbeing, teachers and students generally implicitly or explicitly focused on the importance of relationships. The results of the Phase 3 surveys confirmed the central role of relationships for wellbeing at school.

The following section examines more closely where and how relationships are located in the Phase 1, 2 and 3 findings.

2.1 Relationships and Wellbeing

The strong emphasis in the findings on relationships provides a significant connection between teacher and student understandings of wellbeing, as evidenced in both Phase 2 and Phase 3. As indicated above, the emphasis on relationships was reflected to a lesser degree in the policy-related documentation. Of the four identified domains for implementing approaches to wellbeing, relationships was the second most emphasised domain (referred to in only 36 out of 80 documents). It followed the most frequently emphasised domain of systems and structures (referred to in 56 documents). The relationships domain was particularly evident in national education documentation, with all of these including reference to relationships of one type or another, and in Catholic education documentation.

Relationships are explicitly and implicitly identified as integral to wellbeing by students and teachers, with the Phase 2 findings firmly situating student wellbeing within a range of relationships with significant others. These were identified by students and teachers with varying degrees of emphasis. Students, for example, identified friends as a major source of support for wellbeing, whereas teachers made little reference to this particular relationship. However, both students and teachers made extensive reference to the student-teacher relationship. Students focused on the importance
of being ‘known’ by teachers and each other, and teachers focused on the importance of ‘knowing’ students. Students’ needs and desires to be known in relationship were described in terms of having their presence acknowledged - being ‘noticed’, ‘visible’, ‘everybody knowing you’, ‘everybody knowing you are there’ and ‘people not forgetting about you’. Similarly, teachers were keenly aware of the importance of students being known and feeling that they are cared for. Teachers spoke in Phase 2 interviews about the importance of good communication, ‘attentive noticing’ (as discussed in Volume 2) and being proactive in supporting and facilitating good relationships in schools. They described working hard to build rapport and develop effective relationships, at times using specific strategies to help, and a sense of mutuality was evident in teachers’ awareness of students’ responses to their actions. Exploring this further in Phase 3, students and staff endorsed a number of actions, in which teachers engaged respectfully in knowing, helping and noticing students, as important for student wellbeing. For example, the majority of primary students, secondary students and staff agreed that teachers speaking kindly to students affects student wellbeing at school ‘very much’.

While both students and teachers spoke in Phase 2 of important aspects such as trust, respect, love, equality and acceptance, students also provided examples of how partners in the relationship support each other to grow in confidence, to make good decisions and to care for themselves. This is also relevant to students’ relationship with the self, involving the negotiation of ‘the self’, which featured in the Phase 2 student data. This was seen to help wellbeing in terms of setting goals, taking care of yourself, being confident, being positive, choosing who you will allow to influence you and making responsible decisions.

Students identified a range of significant others as important for their wellbeing in Phases 2 and 3. Similarly, teachers also pointed to a range of relationships in the Phase 2 interviews, further endorsing all relationships as important for student wellbeing in the Phase 3 results. In the Phase 2 data, students identify conversation and dialogue with significant others, including friends and peers, teachers, principals, counsellors, parents and others in the community as integral to facilitating relationships between them and foundational to their wellbeing. They did not want ‘one-off’ conversations, but rather conversation grounded in an authentic experience of relationship and ongoing opportunities to build this. The importance of conversation was also evident in the teacher interview data, in particular regarding the student-teacher relationship, with teachers especially profiling the need for listening to and hearing students. The Phase 3 data further confirmed this finding with, on average, primary and secondary students and staff endorsing ‘My teacher enjoying talking with me’ and ‘My teacher taking notice of what I have to say’ as important for student wellbeing. While the policy context doesn’t feature conversation as a key element of wellbeing, it is arguably signalled through emphases on issues such as communication. For example, one education wellbeing document states, “partnerships are fostered through reciprocal communication and sharing of information” (Government of South Australia Department of Education and Children's Services, 2007, p. 10).

Pedagogy features in the Phase 2 student and teacher data as both an opportunity and a challenge regarding student wellbeing. The students’ ‘imaginary schools’ data relating to pedagogy across all age groups indicated that students were making a direct link between their wellbeing and the kind of teaching and learning processes they were engaged in or exposed to. Since teaching and learning is considered the core business of schools, pedagogy is a potential site for supporting wellbeing. For teachers this was primarily around whether pedagogical approaches were built upon positive
relationships with students. The teacher data highlights that limitations in teacher training, questionable attitudes to children, young people and education, and failure to understand the links between pedagogy, relationships and wellbeing can shape teaching and learning in ways that impact negatively on student wellbeing. For students, the link between pedagogy, relationships and wellbeing is evident in their emphasis on the importance of teachers speaking kindly to them and on creative teaching approaches that encourage students to inquire, to learn imaginatively and to have fun.

While it is clear both students and teachers understand wellbeing and relationship as inextricably bound together, both Phase 2 and Phase 3 data reveal that students and teachers vary in some ways in regard to this. One area of difference is the emphasis they placed on particular aspects of relationships between students and teachers. For example, while both students and teachers spoke of wanting students to have trusting, respectful, warm relationships with teachers, students placed a stronger and more explicit emphasis on reciprocity and wanting to be treated equally. Students also reported how they wanted relationships with teachers who valued listening, supporting students to make good decisions and enabling them to contribute to the life of the school and the broader community. These aspects were mentioned to a lesser degree by teachers, who were interested in the relational conditions (as distinct from actions) required for trust to be cultivated, while some also raised the issue of ensuring that a ‘balance’ be maintained between ‘good’ communication with students whilst avoiding overfamiliarity.

A further area of contrast between teachers and students concerning relationships is that students seemed more attuned to the actual experience of not being known, for example citing instances in Phase 2 of teachers making incorrect assumptions about students and their friendship groups. Teachers did not explicitly draw out the significance of this, but rather described conditions in which knowing students does not happen. At times, it was apparent that teachers’ understandings regarding the importance of students feeling known and cared for were tacit rather than explicit and hence were not always supported by concrete examples about how to address the absence of this.

There are also some important differences between students and teachers in terms of which relationships are considered significant for student wellbeing in school settings. This was apparent in the Phase 2 data and confirmed by the Phase 3 results. In the early discussion in the focus groups, while students identified a diverse number of significant people in their lives outside of school (family members, community members, role models, bus drivers, mentors and so forth), it was friends, parents and teachers who were ultimately identified as the most significant relationships for students with others in relation to their wellbeing. These findings were mostly confirmed in the Phase 3 data. Both primary and secondary students placed greatest importance on relationships with parents/carers and close friends. While primary students then went on to rate student relationships with teachers as the next most important for their wellbeing, secondary students placed greater importance on relationships with other students who are not close friends than those with their home group/pastoral care teacher and other teachers. In contrast, teachers identified student-teacher relationships as significant in Phase 2 interviews, and placed primary importance on these in the Phase 3 data.

While feeling included by friends at school was reported as important for student wellbeing by students and staff in Phase 3, relationships with friends were generally not prioritised as highly by teachers as students. Teachers did not focus attention on peer friendships for student wellbeing in
the Phase 2 interviews, a finding somewhat reinforced by Phase 3 results in which teachers rated students’ relationships with close friends third, following relationships with teachers and parents. In contrast, students rated relationships with friends as the second most important relationship for their wellbeing, following their relationships with their parents/carers.

The underestimation of students’ relationships with their friends by teachers, indicated in the findings, resonates with the lack of weight given to this in the policy-related documentation. Relationships between students was only specifically referred to in three education documents, by way of reference to positive, respectful and/or reciprocal relationships with peers. Two of these documents have a universal multidimensional conceptualisation of wellbeing, in relation to learner wellbeing, and one has a safety focus.

Teachers and students agree that parents play a crucial role in supporting and facilitating student wellbeing. In the Phase 2 focus group discussions, students appeared to make implicit assumptions about parents and their importance for their wellbeing in terms of providing care, love, protection and encouragement. This was further reinforced by the Phase 3 finding that students rated relationships with their parents as most important for their wellbeing at school.

Teachers also rated students’ relationships with their parents as important for wellbeing in Phase 3, second only to student-teacher relationships. However, students’ relationships with their parents did not feature in the Phase 2 teacher interview data. Rather, teachers tended to discuss parents in relation to themselves and the school, rather than with regard to students. They spoke explicitly about their own partnership with parents, which they considered a significant factor impacting on student wellbeing. In doing so, they conveyed that teachers and parents were ‘working with’ and supporting each other, to support the children, in what one teacher described as a ‘culture of communication’. Communication with parents about ‘things that matter’ was seen to increase understanding with regard to children’s lives, and further add to ‘knowing’ the students. Building and strengthening relationships with parents was perceived as contributing to supporting student wellbeing. Given the dominance of this topic in the Phase 2 interviews with teachers, it is worthy of note that in the Phase 3 results, while staff rated all relationships as important for wellbeing and those between teachers and parents as moderate to very important for student wellbeing, on average, staff rated teacher-parent relationships as sixth (out of 11) in regard to importance for student wellbeing.

Teacher and school partnership with parents, families and wider communities feature widely in the policy-related documentation. This is most apparent in documents focusing on pastoral care in the Catholic education sector, and student behaviour and management, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students in the state government sector. The latter documentation highlights the importance of partnership and engagement with the wider Indigenous community, alongside cultural and linguistic identity.

The significance of relationship was also embedded in the emphasis placed on leadership as integral to student wellbeing. The Phase 2 teacher data strongly indicated that leadership impacts on relationships, school culture and, consequently, student wellbeing. While students in Phase 2 expressed some ambivalence regarding the role of principals in supporting wellbeing, leadership was clearly perceived as influential in terms of fostering relationships. For example, the significance of the principal knowing the names of students and engaging respectfully and equally with them was highlighted in the Phase 2 data. In the Phase 3 results the primary students and staff indicated that
the principal using students’ names affects student wellbeing ‘very much’. However, this was only the case for approximately half the secondary students who were surveyed.

The relationship between students and principals did not feature in the policy-related documentation. Only one education document, which focuses on mental health, noted this particular relationship. Other references made in the documentation to principals regarding student wellbeing tended to be around supporting teachers through provision of mentoring and professional development opportunities.

Consideration of the role of counsellors is also important in the context of relationships and wellbeing at school. However, a clear difference exists in the respective importance teachers and students place on the role of counsellors in supporting student wellbeing. In Phase 2 findings both groups acknowledged the importance of student counsellors generally for student wellbeing, but students identified the role of counsellors in more limited terms than teachers did. Students emphasised their need and desire to be cared for and known by their teachers, and expressed reservations about privacy with, and choice about seeing, counsellors and that counsellors may give poor advice. Phase 3 results further reinforced this with secondary students rating a relationship with the counsellor as unimportant for their wellbeing and of least importance compared to other relationships. Students, especially males, endorsed having a say about ‘whether I see the school counsellor’ as very important for their wellbeing. Most teachers, however, saw counsellors as potentially playing an integral role in supporting student wellbeing. In Phase 2, teachers commented on recognising that when students need counselling assistance it is not their role to provide this. In Phase 3, staff rated the relationship between students and counsellors as 7th out of 11, compared to other relationships, but they also thought it important that students have a say in whether they see a counsellor. Counselling was referred to only infrequently in policy-related documentation, in relation to services to support student welfare and mental health.

Teachers indicated in the Phase 2 interviews that pastoral care programs, and roles such as pastoral care coordinators and home room teachers, provide opportunities for teachers and students to develop positive relationships and engage in conversation. Relationships were particularly emphasised in pastoral care documentation in Catholic education, with reference made in all pastoral care documents to supportive, caring, inclusive and/or positive relationships (usually in the context of a whole school approach, and including relationships with parents and the wider community). This is particularly important when considering that pastoral care is a central focus in Catholic education documentation, with approximately equal numbers of documents focusing on pastoral care and on wellbeing. Within the documentation, wellbeing is conceptualised as an outcome of pastoral care, with pastoral care being the action/s taken to promote student wellbeing. Pastoral care was not mentioned by students in the Phase 2 focus groups. However, the Phase 3 findings indicated that pastoral care programs were particularly important for secondary student minority groups, such as those who speak a language other than English. In addition, relationships between students and pastoral care teachers were rated higher by secondary students than relationships with class room teachers, indicating the importance of this relationship for some students.

Demographic differences concerning the importance of relationships for wellbeing were apparent in the Phase 3 results. On average, relationships with a broader range of people were of particular importance for boys at primary and secondary school, compared to girls. Relationships with all
school staff were especially important for ATSI and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) primary students. Relationships with close friends, parents and home group teachers were especially important for secondary students who spoke a language other than English. Students in earlier years of both primary school and secondary school rated relationships as significantly more important for their wellbeing, than students in later years.

Female staff and primary school staff rated many relationships as more important for student wellbeing than male and secondary staff. Overall, staff from larger secondary schools had worked in schools for less time than staff at smaller schools, and they rated the importance of relationships for student wellbeing lower than staff from smaller secondary schools.

We turn now to examining some of the implications of the above findings concerning student, teacher and policy conceptualisations of wellbeing, including the very strong emphasis on the important role of relationships in the student and teacher data in Phases 2 and 3. In particular, we focus on a central interest of this research, which is to explore the potential of recognition theory for progressing understandings and practices of wellbeing in schools.

3 Recognition and Wellbeing

Research Objective 2: To investigate the potential of recognition theory for advancing understanding and improvements in relation to student wellbeing.

Establishing existing conceptualisations of wellbeing was the first major task of this research. As reported above, understandings across student, teacher and policy perspectives were broad (insofar as wellbeing is clearly understood as multidimensional) while also being nuanced (in the ways in which wellbeing is experienced in schools). In terms of the latter, relationships feature centrally. The student data clearly points to relationships as being critical for happiness and wellbeing at school. Similarly, the relationship sphere is the most dominant in the teacher data. Phase 3 data further reinforces this with primary and secondary students and staff endorsing relationships as important for wellbeing. The significance of this cannot be understated in light of one of our key research interests, investigating the potential of recognition theory for advancing understanding and improvements in relation to student wellbeing. Relationships are central to recognition, with acts of recognition and misrecognition, as well as struggles over recognition, occurring in relational spaces. Further, conversation, identified as a key feature of authentic relationship (particularly in the Phase 2 data), draws our attention to the nature of the relationship, not only to its importance, and to the potential or otherwise for recognition that is inherent in this.

In earlier discussion (and in Volume 1 of this report) we highlighted that this research draws particularly on the work of Axel Honneth (Honneth, 1995, 2001, 2004) who focused especially on the role and importance of human interaction in the formation of individual and social identity. In analysing the data, we have closely examined whether and how Honneth’s three patterns of intersubjective recognition – love, rights and solidarity (adapted for this research as cared for, respected and valued respectively) – are present, distorted and/or absent in discussions of wellbeing at school.

There is a high resonance across all three dimensions of recognition, evident in the Phase 2 student and teacher data regarding how wellbeing is understood and facilitated in schools. This resonance is clearly evident prior to these dimensions being explicitly raised by the researcher later in the interviews and focus groups as part of exploring their relevance to wellbeing. The extensive data
concerning the importance of relationships for wellbeing laid firm foundations for inquiring into what it is that these relationships provide by way of experiencing being cared for, respected and valued, or at least creating the conditions for such experiences of recognition to occur. Although primarily evident in the relationship sphere, recognition is gestured to throughout the teacher data, within all eleven themes. Primary students, secondary students and staff also endorsed the dimensions of recognition, being *cared for, respected and valued*, as important for student wellbeing in Phase 3. Survey findings for both students and staff show the three aspects of recognition were significantly and positively correlated with each other, and all three aspects were said to be important for wellbeing. Across Phase 2 and 3 data, the interconnected nature of the dimensions is evident.

The concept of recognition, as explicated by Honneth, is not evident in any of the policy-related education documentation. However, there is some evidence of recognition interests reflected in the emphasis on positive, respectful relationships in two documents (one of which is focused on staff wellbeing). The language of cared for, respected and valued is also present in some documentation, although not simultaneously. The education documentation pertaining to the relationships domain (that is, 36 out of the total 80 documents analysed) does all include specific reference to at least one of the three dimensions of recognition. All of the national education documents, the vast majority of the Catholic education documents (7 out of 8), and just over half of the state government education documents (11 out of 20) made reference to one or more recognition aspect.

As discussed above, students and teachers emphasised the importance of relationships with self and a range of significant others, both inside and outside of the school environment, including with teachers, peers, parents and principals. While there were differences between the two groups concerning these, it is important to keep them in mind, as such significant relationships are sites of recognition, as well as for misrecognition and non-recognition. This is because, as recognition theory points out, significant relationships are not simply places of harmony and love, but are fraught with tension through which the identity of each person is shaped, changed and developed. Some relationships were given greater emphasis by teachers than by students. Teachers pointed out the role of *principals* in relation to student wellbeing, for example, while students expressed some ambivalence about this. Similarly, teachers spoke of the important role of *counsellors*, which did not receive as much attention in the student data. A notable difference between students and teachers was with regard to relationships with parents. Students placed a great deal of importance on relationships between students and parents for student wellbeing, but not on the broader context of parent-teacher or parent-school relationships which was only relevant for teachers.

We turn now to examining how Honneth’s three dimensions of being *cared for, respected* and *valued* were viewed by teachers and students across Phases 2 and 3 of the study. While some of the language of recognition is evident, and the concepts of cared for and respect are prominent in the policy-related documentation emphasising relationships, a key contribution of this study are the findings in relation to the meaning of these dimensions in everyday life in school settings.

### 3.1  **Cared for**

The dimension of *cared for* was very evident in the Phase 2 student and teacher data. For students, ‘being loved’ was the most constant theme (after happiness) in the *being* data on wellbeing. Students attested to love as being foundational to their wellbeing when they described wellbeing as ‘feeling loved’, ‘having people tell you they love you’ and ‘loving others and yourself’. Having
support from significant others at school was also identified as important for students’ wellbeing. The Phase 2 findings were partially verified by the Phase 3 results. ‘Being loved’ was the fourth most frequent choice defining wellbeing for primary students, and the sixth most frequent response for secondary students. On average, students strongly endorsed being cared for by students and staff as important for their wellbeing.

The *cared for* dimension was also the most evident of the three dimensions in the Phase 2 teacher data, with teachers appearing more comfortable and conversant with this dimension than the others. Teachers used a range of related terms and concepts such as: love, care for, support, connectedness or connection, knowing, acknowledging, interest and comfort. Like students, teachers emphasised the importance of students having a sense of belonging and connectedness. This was further emphasised in the Phase 3 result that ‘being connected to people’ was the most frequent response chosen by staff to define wellbeing. On average, staff strongly endorsed being cared for as important for student wellbeing.

The dimension of *cared for* was also the most evident in the policy-related documentation across all sectors. Reference to this tended to be in regard to: caring, supportive relationships for students (mostly within school communities); support networks; establishing a sense of connection and belonging for students within the school context; and developing a caring culture. Further, connectedness was a component in defining wellbeing in a range of documents including in the contexts of health promotion and ATSI education, with the latter documentation specifying connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry, family and community.

Within the *cared for* dimension, emphasis was placed by both students and teachers in the Phase 2 focus groups and interviews on the importance of the care from teachers as being genuine, over and above the ‘job description’. Students identified the key role of teachers in schools to be to care for students, through such means as communicating their concerns for students, being worried for student wellbeing, noticing when things are not going well for students, facilitating opportunities for caring between students, supporting and encouraging students, and having conversations with students. Examples such as these are aligned with teachers’ comments in which an implicit understanding is conveyed that teachers’ approach to caring needs to be proactive. Teachers made aspirational statements (using the language identified above) with regard to ensuring that students feel safe, supported and connected, through proactive, genuine actions. Consistent with this is the reference made to developing supportive, caring, inclusive and/or positive relationships in schools in all the Catholic education pastoral care documentation, and nearly half the state government education documents that emphasise relationships domain.

Central to the discussion of being cared for in relationships, for both groups, is the concept of trust. Student data from the Phase 2 focus groups underlined the importance for wellbeing of students having sufficient confidence to express themselves, including communicating their needs and asking for these to be met. In the Phase 3 survey students endorsed the importance of students feeling safe at school and feeling that it is okay to tell their teacher what they need, as important for student wellbeing. This is particularly important when considering that having opportunities to have a say about their personal needs/preferences (such as who they sit near), was rated as most important for their wellbeing by secondary students, even compared to having a say about more public/political aspects of school life.
Similarly, the concept of trust in relationships and the school environment was frequently intimated by teachers in interviews as being of importance, and was aligned with students feeling supported and comfortable in relationships with teachers and others. Teachers perceived students feeling comfortable (as a consequence of acts of being cared for) as contributing to them having the confidence to approach teachers. This was further validated in the Phase 3 findings that staff endorsed ‘students feeling safe at school’ and ‘students feeling it’s ok to tell me what they need’ as important for student wellbeing. Core to good relationships, acknowledged by some teachers in Phase 2, is a sense of reparation apparent in the comments that there is the space to get things wrong and for it to still be okay. Trust in relationships is central to the first dimension of ‘cared for’ and evidenced by students having the confidence to reach out and express their needs and desires, without fear of retribution or abandonment (Honneth, 1995).

A small number of policy-related documents specifically mentioned ‘trust’ or ‘trusting relationships’ or implied these. The Northern Territory document *Building relationships and school well-being* (Northern Territory Government Department of Employment, n.d.), for example, states that an outcome of a ‘best practice’ approach for building relationships and school wellbeing is that “All members of the school community are connected and achieve a sense of belonging through participating in active, trusting relationships”. Similarly, issues of trust are intimated in the South Australian Learner Wellbeing Framework which states that “in positive relationships, learners will interact with others; participate; ask questions; seek help; take risks; and be reassured of their capabilities and worth” (Government of South Australia Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2007, p. 10).

Alongside the convergent aspects outlined above between the student and teacher data relevant to being cared for, several divergent aspects were apparent. One of these is that while both students and teachers were aligned in endorsing the importance of trust and students being able to communicate their needs to teachers, the Phase 3 data revealed an incongruity in understandings and expectations regarding this.

A further area in which there appears to be some divergence is with regard to friends and peer relationships. For students, friends providing support, encouragement, constancy, guidance and understanding were all important experiences of being cared for. In the Phase 3 survey, students rated caring for and being cared for by other students as important for their wellbeing. Likewise, staff also rated students caring for and being cared for by other students as important for student wellbeing. However, in Phase 2 interviews the teachers made minimal reference to students’ relationships with their friends. The only reference of note made was in the context of communication between teachers and students’ friends at times, regarding concerns around a particular student.

Another aspect of being cared for which was raised by students in Phase 2 focus groups, and not by teachers, was explicit recognition that wellbeing necessarily starts with physical care and physical needs being met. However, this ‘taken for granted’ assumption was followed largely by silence in relation to physical wellbeing. The references made by teachers to physical wellbeing tended to center around safety and identifying schools as safe places, rather than contextualised as part of caring for students.

Another aspect raised by teachers in the Phase 2 data, which was not echoed in the student data, was a specific connection between the Catholic ethos, wellbeing and the dimension of cared for.
This connection included the importance of recognition at the individual and the group/social level. Although most primary and secondary students agreed in the Phase 3 survey that being at a Catholic school helped their wellbeing, there were many secondary students who did not agree. This reinforced the Phase 2 findings that Catholic values were a source of contest for students in focus groups, with little connection being made between the Catholic context and the dimension of cared for. The connection made by teachers resonates with the Catholic education policy-related documentation, in which strategic plans made more reference to relationships than any other sector and pastoral care documents emphasise the Catholic context, Christ’s teachings and the gospels.

3.2 Respected

In Phase 2, the dimension of recognition concerning being respected was of core importance for the students, but was discussed less by the teachers. However, on average, students and staff both strongly endorsed being respected by students and staff as important for students’ wellbeing in the Phase 3 survey.

Phase 2 data indicated that, as a general principle, respect is understood by many students as something everyone deserves and which should be exercised equally, although this was not always evident in practice or shared by all students. The issue of respect was implicit in primary students’ ‘imaginary schools’ drawings and narratives, and identified more explicitly in secondary students’ expressed desire for relationships with teachers and other students to be understanding and respectful. Students articulated self-respect and respect for others as central to student wellbeing. Students’ emphasis on active and informed decision-making is linked to self-respect. They identified acts of self-acceptance, self-care, generosity and the desire to be ‘active’ and ‘good’ decision makers as aspects of ‘doing’ wellbeing. Respect for others was also often expressed by students in highly conditional terms (such as, ‘I will not give respect to a person who does not respect me’), as well as expressions containing more mutuality (‘I will respect another person regardless of whether they respect me’). Students who identified respect as mutual provided an understanding that is core to the recognition of human dignity, whereby having and giving respect are bound up together. The mutual nature of respect was also acknowledged by the majority of students and staff in the Phase 3 survey.

For teachers, respect was most evident in Phase 2 interviews in understandings about the importance of consistently treating students well, regardless of their individual differences. Language and concepts of respect for teachers included having fair expectations, being fair and just, ‘following through’ and being consistent. Similarly, students identified inconsistencies in the treatment of students by teachers, principals and schools as a key causal factor for diminishing respect between students and teachers and impacting negatively on their wellbeing. Students provided many examples readily identifying the conditions for misrecognition evident in inconsistent and poor treatment of students, including being ‘yelled at’ by teachers and spoken to disrespectfully. However, staff as well as students in Phase 3 surveys endorsed, as important for wellbeing, students being treated fairly at school and being respected irrespective of age or behaviour and seeing teachers care for, respect and value other students who need extra support.

The concept of respect was apparent in policy-related documents emphasising the relationships domain for implementation of approaches to wellbeing, in the contexts of student behaviour, pastoral care, and early childhood. The primary contexts for reference to aspects of respect were regarding respectful relationships, active participation in school activities and processes, and staff
having respect for students. The national and Catholic education policy-related documentation included proportionately more reference to aspects related to respect of students than the state education documentation. Comparing the proportion of references to different dimensions of recognition, the national education documents had the same proportion of references to respect as to cared for, the Catholic education documents had nearly the same amount, however the state documentation had only half as much. Thus, respect featured most strongly in the national and Catholic education documentation, to a similar extent as ‘cared for’.

Against this policy backdrop a key contribution of this study is looking at the meaning of respect in everyday life for students in school settings. An important aspect of respect apparent in the data is around students ‘having a say’. Having opportunities for student participation and student voice indicates respect for children and young people in exercising their rights. Students in the Phase 2 focus groups placed considerable importance on having a say for their wellbeing, including identifying it as important for student wellbeing during the ‘imaginary schools’ activity. Teachers also emphasised that students having a say, expressing themselves and actively participating was a key aspect of a sense of belonging in the school community. However, when this was further explored in Phase 3, tensions were evident in the different emphases that students and staff put on various aspects of students having a say at school. The most important aspect for secondary students was ‘who I sit near’, whereas this was the least important aspect from the teachers’ perspective. Secondary students also rated having a say about seeing the counsellor, another personal preference, as third out of five topics listed. The survey results emphasise that meaningful participation requires students (particularly secondary students) to have a say in privacy-related decisions about their personal welfare (for example, whether or not they see the school counsellor) and their close relationships with peers (who they sit near), as well as the public or political domain of school life.

Students and teachers in Phase 2 acknowledged that school culture, and the structures within it, provide conditions for students to be respected, or conversely for non-recognition in regard to respect. As noted above, both students and teachers emphasised that students having a say, expressing themselves and actively participating was a key aspect of a sense of belonging in the school community. Students in Phase 2 also identified that the experience of not having their views respected, valued or acted on resulted in them feeling as though they are not respected in school. This attests to both the centrality of conversation, which is the vehicle through which student voices are heard and responded to, and the cultural or structural conditions necessary for facilitating it.

The language of ‘student voice’ or ‘having a say’ was not evident in the policy-related documentation. There was also little in the way of reference to participation, although some was found in relation to learner wellbeing, student engagement and retention, and in aspirational national strategy statements for children and young people. In addition, one child protection focused policy document highlighted children’s right to be heard regarding decisions affecting their lives and encourages their participation.

### 3.3 Valued

On average, students and staff strongly endorsed being valued as important for student wellbeing in the Phase 3 surveys. They also endorsed the mutual nature of being valued. Aspects relevant to being valued were marginally more apparent (proportionally) in the Catholic education documents than documents from other sectors. However, it is important to note that the idea of being valued in
contemporary understandings contrasts to an extent with the conceptualisation of valued in terms of recognition theory. In Honneth’s theory, solidarity (which is conceptualised as being valued in our study) refers to esteem for others’ contributions to shared societal values. The ways in which being valued is reflected in policy-related documents and in the recognition of students’ contributions in schools, primarily through rewards, differs from Honneth’s conceptualisation.

Notably, being valued was less evident in the Phase 2 student data than the other dimensions when considering links between wellbeing and recognition. This may in part reflect the different conceptualisation of the term valued, as described above. However, students did emphasise the importance of accepting themselves and others ‘for who they are’. An element of being valued then, which overlaps with the dimension of respected, is the importance of conversation or dialogue with oneself, expressed by students in terms of ‘looking after yourself’, not being too self-critical and making good decisions. This finding was verified in the Phase 3 findings for secondary students, for whom the description of wellbeing as being predominantly about ‘looking after myself’ was the fifth most frequent conceptualisation (out of twelve). Only four policy-related documents included student positive self-regard, positive self-esteem, and satisfaction with self as components of student wellbeing, although these were not specifically identified in regard to implementation of approaches to wellbeing.

Students also identified the role of significant others in facilitating and strengthening student wellbeing through valuing their particular gifts, strengths and competencies. In a similar vein, teachers spoke in interviews of valuing students’ contributions. They also raised the importance of flexibility and adaptability concerning the uniqueness of individual children and their needs. This resonates with the policy-related documentation in which valuing students is primarily expressed in relation to diversity and recognising unique individual attributes. The examples teachers provided of this included pedagogical approaches and signalled inclusion of all dimensions of recognition, not just being valued.

Teachers described structures within the school in which students were acknowledged, encouraged and supported in relation to their own individual differences, abilities and skills. Celebrating differences and what individual students have to offer can occur, for example, through school activities and ‘house’ systems. Importantly though, Phase 3 student data showed that outward and public signs of recognition, such as giving awards and writing reports, were not as strongly linked with feeling valued as were more implicit ways of showing recognition, such as the teacher spending time with a student, listening to the student, knowing the student well, and helping with school work. Rewarding exemplary and improving behaviour was specifically referred to in only a few education policy-related documents; one in the context of whole school approach and one in the context of student behaviour.

The connections between and the layering across the three dimensions of recognition in both the students’ and teachers’ data was particularly evident in discussions of students being valued. Students, for example, alluded to a collective valuing, of students as a whole, when they experience all students as being treated equally and respectfully. In another example, teachers emphasised the importance for the wellbeing of individual students of being cared for in having a sense of belonging and connectedness, as well as feeling valued as members of the group.

A number of findings from the Phase 3 survey endorse the importance of mutual recognition for student wellbeing. Recognition of staff was associated with their relationships with, and recognition
of students. Links were established between relationships, student wellbeing and mutual recognition. These applied to relationships between students and teachers, students and non-teaching staff, leadership and staff, parents and staff, parents and leadership. Conditional recognition (only giving recognition if a recipient of it) and lower endorsement of mutuality by staff was associated with those reporting lower subjective recognition, that is staff feeling less cared for, respected and valued. These findings underline the reciprocal nature of recognition, and show that the experience of recognition and understanding it are positively associated. Phase 3 results also linked mutual recognition with school cultures, in which the school is perceived to support student and staff wellbeing, see student wellbeing as central to the work of teachers, and understand the Christian values in a Catholic school as helping student and staff wellbeing.

Again in Phase 3, the importance placed on mutual recognition for promoting wellbeing varied for primary students, secondary students and staff in accordance with their conceptualisations of wellbeing. For example, primary students who described wellbeing as ‘looking after myself’, secondary students who described wellbeing as ‘having privacy’, and staff for whom wellbeing meant ‘being successful at school’ viewed mutual recognition as least important for promoting wellbeing at school. Male staff and secondary staff endorsed mutual recognition less than female staff and primary staff, respectively. Staff from larger schools tended to place less emphasis on mutual recognition than those from smaller schools.

3.4 Struggles over recognition and misrecognition

The idea of struggle is central to Honneth’s account of recognition. Indeed, as we have outlined in Volume 1, struggle is integral to the act of recognition, with such struggles moving an individual and a society to the realisation of undistorted relations of recognition. Thus, by looking at struggles over recognition, and the direction in which they point, we can begin to understand what full recognition would look like (Anderson, 1995). For Honneth, the starting point for examining struggles over recognition is ordinary human experience and the ‘hurt feelings’ that characterise daily human relationship (Thompson, 2006). Feelings like shame, humiliation, anger and indignation are recognised by Honneth as important for telling us where the implicit rules of recognition have been violated.

In Phase 2, students named direct experiences of misrecognition, whereas teachers name the conditions under which struggles over recognition might occur. Students identified a range of actions by teachers that hinder student wellbeing, with the most frequently cited negative experience that of ‘being yelled at’. There was little data from teachers and principals which directly referenced misrecognition or struggles over recognition. Recognition theory points to the three distinctive forms of misrecognition, that is being maltreated, excluded and denigrated, as evidence of injustice pointing to the sources of where recognition is being denied. Such denial of recognition has profound negative impact on student wellbeing, as Thompson (2006) outlines:

If I am maltreated, I will feel humiliated, and my self confidence will be damaged. If I am excluded from citizenship, and denied rights to which I am entitled, then my self respect will suffer. If the way of life with which I associate myself is denigrated, then my self esteem is at risk (p. 162).

Students in the early stages of the Phase 2 focus groups described aspects of school life which they identified as having a negative impact on their wellbeing. Most of this data coalesced around the
second dimension, respect, in the form of disrespect, and included actions taken predominantly by teachers, such as not listening, making incorrect assumptions about students and their friendship groups, unequal treatment, disrespectful mode of delivery of negative feedback, inconsistent application of rules, lack of confidentiality and privacy from adults, and valuing of some gifts/competencies above others. Forms of disrespect from others included friends or peers putting students down or degrading them, gossiping and criticising, and parents having too high expectations or treating students ‘as a child’.

The prevalence in the student data of yelling as having a negative impact on student wellbeing, contrasts with the absence of this in the teacher data. However, the absence of the term does not imply that the teachers condoned yelling or speaking harshly to students. In fact, the emphasis on communication with students and their awareness of negative actions, such as for example the consequences of not listening by teachers in Phase 2, appeared to underlie a tacit disapproval of such diminishing or degrading approaches and understandings. Further, most staff in Phase 3 were very aware of the impact of negative actions on student wellbeing (such as, teachers humiliating students; teachers speaking harshly to students, and students being abusive towards each other). However, the data clearly highlights the negative impact on students and importance of this particular issue for student wellbeing in schools.

Conditions in which misrecognition or non-recognition of students was possible, or even likely, were alluded to by teachers in Phase 2, in the space between the aspirational (what they believed should happen in relation to supporting and enhancing student wellbeing) and the actual (what actually happens). However, direct discussion of misrecognition and non-recognition of students was largely absent from the teacher data. When it was addressed, it was primarily regarding systemic conditions related to systems and structures or the school environment, or in relation to teachers’ personal issues or personality, and expectations and pressure from parents.

Teachers were aware of the importance of structures that schools may have in place that contribute to facilitating relationships and provide opportunities for conversation and acts of recognition, for example home room time, vertical forms, or pastoral care time. However, in the Phase 2 data there was clearly tension for teachers in using these structures for conversation and relationship-building in the light of the pressures they work under and the time required in attending to other ‘housekeeping’ issues. In addition, the rules can ‘get in the way’ as regulatory processes are followed at the expense of gaining a deeper understanding of a given situation.

Opportunities for recognition, misrecognition and non-recognition lie in the conversational spaces, talking, listening and hearing, which are fundamental to relationships and a vehicle for recognition. Both students and teachers indicated in Phase 2 focus groups and interviews that conditions for conversation (and recognition via conversation) are not consistent, or even always evident. Students identified ways in which the lack of opportunity for conversation diminished their wellbeing, such as the experience of not being given a say, being yelled at, not being treated as an individual and being spoken to disrespectfully by teachers and friends. Similarly, teachers talked of how they ‘forget sometimes to listen or just be’ and of having to ‘force myself’ or ‘make the effort’ to listen to students. Constraints on the acts of conversation were apparent in teachers’ accounts of their busy schedules, time pressure and stressful workloads.

The matter of whether and how teacher wellbeing impacts on student wellbeing was very evident in the Phase 2 teacher data but did not feature as a strong theme in the student data. Teachers were
unambiguous in their views about the impact of increased expectations and accountability on their own wellbeing. They expressed concerns about other teachers who are unable or unwilling to ‘walk the extra mile’ for their students. Teachers indicated an awareness of how students respond to their actions when they are not engaging with them in ways that characterise care, respect and being valued. They also believed that students are very tuned in to when teachers are having a bad day or things are not well for them, which was echoed in some students’ comments expressing empathy or reports that a teachers’ bad day impacts on them too.

Teachers’ own experiences of recognition and misrecognition by colleagues and those in leadership, discussed extensively in the Phase 2 theme of teacher wellbeing, potentially provide a bridge to understanding students’ struggles over recognition and experiences of misrecognition. Students placed importance on receiving love and care from significant others: on having needs met, rights respected, having equality and voice, being cared for, being listened to and having someone to talk to. In an almost parallel way, teachers discussed the importance for themselves of collegial support and supportive leadership, and feeling appreciated and valued for the contribution they make at school. Further, these findings provide some insight into the reciprocal nature of recognition, in that recognition is a two way process within an intersubjective context, with one both giving and receiving recognition to/from another.

The wellbeing and/or recognition of teachers are not addressed in much of the policy-related documentation. Staff wellbeing was addressed in some documents in the context of meeting professional development needs; mentoring teachers; and participation of ATSI at all levels of the education system. Only one brief document (Catholic Education South Australia, 2012) focused specifically on the wellbeing of employees.

4 Implications of the student-teacher-policy findings

Research objective 3: To generate new knowledge about how educational policy, programs and practices in schools could more positively impact on student wellbeing.

Schools are clearly important sites for addressing, promoting and enhancing student wellbeing. The key findings indicate that teachers and students consider that schools have an important role to play in student wellbeing. Most teachers agreed, for example, that student wellbeing is central to their work, and students strongly agree that their wellbeing is important to their teachers. This lends further weight to the identification of schools, in policy and practice discussions, as key places for promoting the wellbeing of children and young people (Masters, 2004; Wyn, 2007). Of key importance, therefore, is looking at how educational policy, programs and practices in schools could more positively impact on student wellbeing, using the new knowledge generated through the study. The potential of this knowledge for generating change and improvement will now be discussed. The Recommendations that follow this section provide further concrete direction.

The ways in which wellbeing is conceptualised in policy and practice clearly have implications for the way in which it is approached in schools. Wellbeing was perceived as multidimensional and relationship-based by teachers, principals, students and in a small amount of policy-related documentation. However, the wellbeing policy landscape (albeit sparse and ad hoc) is currently dominated by problem-focussed risk discourses of safety/harm and mental health. Such narrow foci suggest that resources and effort will be necessarily limited and directed toward targeted student groups.
Findings show that when staff defined wellbeing as multidimensional, including affective, safety, psychological, social, relational and environmental aspects, there was greater endorsement of the importance of caring for, respecting and valuing students. In contrast, primarily focusing on a single aspect, for example, academic or other performance at school, was associated with less emphasis on teachers caring for, respecting and valuing students at school. Such findings signal the need to ensure wellbeing is foregrounded and explicitly considered in all aspects of school life.

The findings supporting the multidimensional conceptualisations of wellbeing, and incorporating a relationship focus, signal the need to move the wellbeing agenda away from more narrowly focused to broader, holistic and universal approaches. This is consistent with other research in which whole school approaches, where wellbeing is embedded in the culture as well as the curriculum of the school, have been identified as the most likely to be effective in realising the determinants of wellbeing (Noble, McGrath, Wyatt, Carbines, & Robb, 2008; Rowe, Stewart, & Patterson, 2007; Wells, Barlow, & Stewart-Brown, 2003).

This has implications for both policy and practice. It is critically important to broaden definitions and understandings of wellbeing, beyond a singular focus on outcomes such as students’ success or meeting mental health needs. In doing so, the understandings need to be conceptually grounded in relational, environmental and personal spheres, with the primary emphasis on relationships. This requires clearer defining of the term wellbeing at policy and practice levels. School staff need to be familiar with the myriad ways in which wellbeing is integrated throughout the above spheres, in order to identify and engage confidently with priority actions and concerns.

As well as increasing understanding regarding wellbeing and wellbeing practices in schools, the findings also provide some critical insight, generating new knowledge, into the means by which these might be better addressed. The ‘imaginary schools’ produced in the Phase 2 student focus groups, for example, had strong grounding in communal values, such as sharing, respect, cooperation, participation and equality, which were reflected across the four major themes that emerged, specifically concerning improvements to pedagogy, school environment, relationships and opportunities to have a say. In emphasising these themes, the students’ imaginary schools were not ostensibly in conflict with the aspirations of much current educational policy. These and other findings from the imaginary schools activities make a significant contribution to gaining a better understanding of students’ perspectives and experiences. They reinforce notions from Childhood Studies regarding the importance of capturing the views of children and young people, recognising their agency and respecting the valuable contribution they have to make to social and political life (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010).

Importantly, the findings indicate the potential of recognition theory for elucidating core priorities in efforts to better support student wellbeing. This theory grounds wellbeing in relationships and acknowledges that inherent intersubjective tensions and struggles over recognition are essential and necessary drivers of individual identity development and broader social change. While some dimensions of recognition are implied in certain policy related documents, the explicit use of a recognition lens has not featured in policy to date.

Students and teachers strongly endorse the dimensions of recognition (being cared for, respected and valued) as important for student wellbeing. They are aware of the conditions required for acts of recognition to occur, as evidenced by the aspirations and tacit understandings expressed by teachers around wellbeing, the student focus group discussions and imaginary schools for wellbeing.
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developed by the students. They are also aware of the impact of misrecognition and non-recognition, and identify sites in which struggles over recognition are played out.

The insights and new knowledge generated by these findings suggest a number of avenues for improvement of schools’ approaches to wellbeing, through policy and practice, in all the domains of implementation identified in the policy analysis. These are in the contexts of relationship, primarily student-teacher relationships but also other important relationships, systems and structures, teaching and learning and environment. We now turn to discuss the implications of the findings for how educational policy, programs and practices in schools could more positively impact on student wellbeing, in these contexts.

4.1 Implications of the findings for relationships

**Student-teacher relationships**

As extensively discussed, the findings show that student wellbeing is grounded in the multiple relationships that make up students’ social world, both inside and outside of school. Student-teacher relationships are key to student wellbeing. However, in the routine everyday practice of schools, the subliminal nature of relationships mean they are often eclipsed by concerns about crowded curriculum, teaching and learning, testing and assessment, behaviour, compliance and accountability. Hence, students tend to be attuned to experiences of not being known, and teachers’ views about the importance of relationships often infer a gap between the aspirational and the actual, sometimes exacerbated by their own ongoing, stressful work experiences. These findings draw attention to the ways in which children and childhood may be constructed within school settings. A key theoretical contribution from Childhood Studies is the application of a critical lens to the conventional discourses of the “innocent child, the irrational and sinful child, and the developing child” (Woodhead, 2009, p. 23) and subsequent shift toward new discourses of the child as a rights-bearing citizen. Implicit in the conventional discourses is a perception of children as passive recipients of experience, who require protection and moulding by adults. This construction of children may, in part, explain some of the intersubjective tensions in school settings, whereby student-teacher relationships are bound by notions of adults having control and power over children, by virtue of their age and authority, and students being positioned as dependent, passive objects.

At the policy level, relationships do not feature strongly. An emphasis on relationships appears mostly in the largely aspirational national education documentation and the Catholic education documentation, but only sporadically across the State/Territory government education wellbeing-related policy efforts. The sporadic nature of any emphasis on relationships is further highlighted when taking into account that wellbeing-related documentation was not identified in all States and Territories, across Catholic or government education. Hence, whilst students and teachers express clear understandings about the centrality of relationships, this is not reflected in wider educational policy and practice. The implications of this are potentially significant if policy is to be considered a lever for change.

Notions of being cared for, respected and valued, as conceptualised within recognition theory, provide a framework for examining relationships more closely, including the student-teacher relationship. However, while the findings highlight that recognition and misrecognition play a key role in relation to wellbeing, the links should not be oversimplified. While recognition theory holds
potential for student wellbeing in relation to a wide range of relationships, here we focus first on the student-teacher relationship given the primacy of this in the school context.

The dimension of cared for is particularly emphasised by teachers and occurs most frequently in policy-related education documentation that references relationships. It is also the most fundamental dimension, providing a foundation for relationships. It encompasses social, emotional and physical aspects of caring and although more usually associated with private settings, in many respects it is the most socially sanctioned dimension to relationships with children and young people. Indeed, the preamble to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child specifically recognises that “the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care”. However, the recognition dimension of cared for extends beyond the ‘duty of care’ which teachers and others working with children are well familiar with, to an appreciation of the love and care which refers to the emotional concern for the wellbeing and needs of an actual person (Honneth, 1995). As discussed in Volume 1 of this report, love is conceptualised by Honneth as a positive affect, directed toward concrete significant others in the context of a strong emotional attachment as revealed in the self confidence to approach another for help and support. It is also the site of the most complex emotional interactions. Therefore, routinely dispensing care and attention is not sufficient to meet the requirements for this aspect of recognition. What is implied theoretically is the need for a positive emotional investment in the wellbeing of the other person. Pre-service teacher training and professional development provide opportunities for drawing attention to and further exploring the ramifications of this.

The findings indicate that the dimension of respect is of core importance to students, who perceive this as including both self-respect and mutual respect for/with others. However, while being strongly endorsed in the Phase 3 teacher data this dimension was not emphasised by teachers in Phase 2 interviews. Further, students provided examples of being disrespected by teachers. Respect is not very visible in the education policy-related documents. It is linked to rights, with individuals’ entitlement to be treated with respect and dignity a basic human right and essential for wellbeing. The affective dimension of rights, according to Honneth, is evidenced in how an individual experiences a sense of their dignity and rights as a person (Anderson, 1995). The gap between students’ and teachers’ understandings of respect has implications. When practice and policy do not reflect the importance students place on being respected, their sense of dignity is compromised, along with their experience of self-respect and capacity to participate in decision-making processes. Ultimately, as Honneth believes, exclusion from respect and denial of rights to which every person, including children and young people, are entitled results in the self respect of the individual suffering.

While respect is generally more salient in more public settings, and love in more private settings, for students respect includes ‘having a say’ in regard to matters in both the personal and the public domain, consistent with participation rights articulated in Articles 12 to 16 of the UNCRC. Having a say, not being yelled at or spoken to disrespectfully, and being treated as an individual, require recognition of children’s human rights. Children are rights bearers, therefore entitled to respect, just as much as adults are (Thomas, 2012). While the findings indicate that students and staff consider that student voice and meaningful participation at school are important for student wellbeing there is a discrepancy between staff and student views of which aspects of student voice are most important. Secondary students, for example, rated who they sit near as the most important aspect of having a say, while staff rated this as least important. This discrepancy likely has an impact on
decisions that are made, to the disadvantage of students, as well as suggesting that staff may undervalue the importance of secondary students’ friendships at school for their wellbeing.

Respect also includes students ‘having privacy’, an unanticipated finding of importance to some students in this study. Secondary students who defined wellbeing as having privacy rated several relationships as less important for their wellbeing than other students. The implications of this finding are not immediately clear. However, the importance to some students of having privacy likely has manifest reasons, ranging from the individual student’s disposition and experiences to broader social movements where there is a sharp distinction between private and public life. It may indicate a response to experiences of misrecognition and impingement, with the subsequent affective response of hurt feelings and withdrawal indicating a preference for less visibility (and thus less risk of being impinged upon). Some students may also find that their values do not accord with the values of the school and prefer a retreat to find their own personal meaning and/or identity outside of the school structure. Conversely, it may reflect that students feel sufficiently well recognised already, be it in school or other areas of their life, and so have more immediate requirements for other forms of fulfilment. Having privacy may also be associated with solitude, which research indicates is viewed increasingly positively by young people in their teenage years (Galanaki, 2013). Clearly, this is an area that warrants further exploration. For some students, clumsy obligations for compulsory participation in certain matters or having their phones or laptops checked, may be experienced as intrusive and an infringement on their rights. What is evident is that this description of wellbeing as ‘having privacy’, which might superficially appear to fly in the face of our emphasis on relationship, actually indicates sites of struggle over recognition.

The dimension of valued was strongly endorsed in the findings regarding the teacher-student relationship, but less explicitly than other dimensions. Recognition theory according to Honneth posits that individuals are esteemed (valued) because they possess features which distinguish them as individuals, rather than because they are associated with a particular culture or because they have a particular social identity (Thompson, 2006). Thus, it is the esteeming of their distinctive contributions to the general good (in relation to which Honneth uses the term ‘solidarity’) that provides the sense of being valued. The findings suggest that outward public signs of recognition, such as giving awards and writing reports, were not typically experienced by students as an expression of being valued. Such signs were not as strongly linked with feeling cared for, valued and respected as were more tacit ways of showing recognition, such as the teacher spending time with a student, listening to the student, knowing the student well, and helping with school work. These findings imply greater attention to ways of facilitating the experience of genuinely being cared for, respected (with opportunities for having a say and having privacy), and valued (via contributions that are routinely and authentically validated). Pre-service teacher education, teacher professional learning and policy development provide opportunities for drawing attention to and further exploring the implications of greater attention on relationships as foundational to wellbeing at school.

The three aspects of recognition are interconnected as evidenced in the findings of our study. Further to this, particular aspects can be dominant in specific conditions. The ‘imaginary schools’ findings indicated, for example, that younger students placed greater emphasis on feeling loved, safe, happy and cared for, and that respect, understanding and consultation became increasingly important as children progressed through school. By Year 11 students were emphasising more equality in relationships with their teachers.
Other relationships

While student-teacher relationships are centrally important, other relationships with significant people (such as friends, parents, principals, peers, counsellors, other school staff) also play a key role. Further, recognition theory draws attention to the significant role played by such people in the formation of the identity of the student. Importance is placed by students on receiving love and care from significant others, and feeling valued by them. Similarly, experiences of misrecognition and non-recognition in these relationships carry a great deal of weight in the ongoing struggles over recognition. The discrepancies evident in the findings, with regard to students’ and teachers’ views of the importance of relationships with particular people, imply that important opportunities for recognition are being missed or denied. In particular, the demographic differences, which show that particular relationships hold special importance for certain students, ultimately indicate the potential value of all relationships. This implies that respecting and attending to the multiple relationships in children’s lives can have positive ramifications for all children and, in particular, those who are marginalised. The findings suggest the need for increased awareness in schools of the benefits of supportive relationships and better understanding of some of the sites of struggle over recognition.

Relationships with parents are particularly worth noting, as they were flagged as being important in two key ways. First, students rated highly the importance of their relationship with parents for their wellbeing at school. This is an area that would benefit from further exploration, from the perspectives of students, parents and teachers. Of particular interest is what underlies the primary importance placed on this relationship for students in the school context and the implications for this regarding parents’ engagement with school, and teachers’ engagement with students. The importance of children’s relationships with their parents and primary carers in the home/family environments, for example in the context of attachment, has been well researched and documented (Davies, 2011). Theoretical conceptualisations of internalised models for understanding self, and self in relation to others, based on the primary attachment relationship(s), offer a way of looking at children’s relationships across different contexts. Further, some developmental theories, such as attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980), and those developed by Winnicott (1958); (Winnicott, 1965) and drawn on by Honneth, have resonances with recognition theory, particularly in the dimension of love and cared for. However, the importance of parents for student wellbeing in the school context in which they are primarily not present is an area worth further exploration. It may offer another route to further understanding these multiple relationships and sites of transition and potential struggle over recognition, effectively helping to bridge the social emotional traverse, contributing to teachers’ and parents’ capacity to more effectively pass the baton of care, and students’ sense of recognition across the multiple contexts in which they live their lives.

Second, the emphasis placed by teachers and principals on parent partnership and greater parental involvement raises the question of how schools can best facilitate parent partnership and be welcoming places to parents. As teachers’ primary area of skill is working with children rather than with parents, an implication of this finding might be that parental partnerships and the development of skills for working with parents need to feature more strongly in pre-service teacher training programs for all age groups (Amatea, Mixon, & McCarthy, 2013; Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Jacobbe, Ross, & Hensberry, 2012).
The findings indicate discrepancies in student and staff views regarding the importance of students’ relationships with friends and with other students. Such mismatches in perceptions suggest that these are sites of potential misrecognition and, consequently, struggles over recognition. With teachers having less regard for issues that are important for students, such as having a say over who they sit near, the likelihood of a negative affective response for students is high.

It is also notable that secondary students rated relationships with other students who are not close friends as more important than any of their relationships with school staff. Whether this finding reflects the unrecognised importance of peers or an entrenched disregard for staff, the discrepancy between students and staff views may mean that staff overlook and/or dismiss tensions and conflicts, or conversely, friendships and attachments, between students.

Students’ relationships with school counsellors is another area in which there was a discrepancy between student and teacher perspectives. School counsellors were largely overlooked by students as having a role in facilitating wellbeing, unless students had no one else to turn to. Students also indicated that they wanted a relationship with teachers (‘someone who knows me’) rather than seeking help from someone they do not know or trust, and to which there may be stigma attached. Potentially then, this is a point of misrecognition for students, in that students want to be recognised (loved/cared for) by the teacher, not a relatively unknown third party. For teachers, on the other hand, this might be an act of recognition, noticing that the student is dealing with difficult emotional, social or behavioural issues, which a counsellor might be appropriately skilled in helping with. Alternately, the discrepancy may simply reflect that the majority of students do not ever see the school counsellor while from teachers’ perspectives a major role of the counsellor is to foster the wellbeing or mental health of students.

The discrepancy in the findings suggests the need for clarity regarding the role of school counsellors in supporting wellbeing. A main area for clarification is whether school counsellors have a more generic role in relation to all students’ wellbeing or a more specialist role with regard only to students who have particular challenges with emotional, social or mental health needs. Accessing specialised support does not necessarily diminish the need for ongoing support from others. Harris (1993, cited in Gilligan, 2005) provides a useful metaphor; “help may be more valuable coming in the form of a ‘milk van’ (low key, nurturing, regular, reliable, long term) rather than a ‘fire brigade’ (sudden, one-off, invasive, crisis driven, hyped)” (p.8). For some children and young people, in some situations, it may be that both are required. The implications of the findings vary depending on the role assigned to counsellors, and consequently further clarification at both the policy and practice level is required.

4.2 Implications of the findings for systems and structures

Given that education structures and systems appear to be the dominant domain for implementing approaches to wellbeing in the education policy-related documentation, the findings have major implications. In short, the embedding of an emphasis on relationship is essential for successful implementation of structures and systems to support student wellbeing. Certain structures invite opportunities for conversation and the strengthening of relationships. The pastoral care/home room structure, for example, provides opportunities for student-teacher and student-student relationships in a less formal classroom context. As such, these structures can facilitate or impede opportunities for recognition. This is underlined in the finding that pastoral care/home room teachers in secondary schools are particularly important for students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Thus, students
who are potentially marginalised may benefit from a home room structure in their school, particularly if it is approached as a forum for conversation and an opportunity for building relationships. Conversely, home room time without conversation between students and teachers may become a site for hurtful or damaging experiences of misrecognition and non-recognition, that is, where students don’t experience being cared for, respected and valued. Integrating conversation and dimensions of recognition into ‘routine’ school activities is essential for maximising the opportunities that are available rather than adding anything to teachers’ already heavy workloads.

A number of documents identified in the policy analysis outline protocols and procedures related to students’ safety, abuse, mental health and so on. These are areas which can be distressing and anxiety-provoking for students and teachers alike. Regardless of the documented procedures to be followed, the nature of the concerns are such that a degree of interpersonal care and skill is required on the teacher or staff member’s part. The skills required to respond to children and young people’s needs at difficult times are, in the first instance, effectively relationship and communication skills (Powell, 2014).

The findings indicate that wellbeing-related programs also need to be accommodated within existing systems and structures. Some students reported that they had participated in wellbeing programs and some teachers had been involved in facilitating programs. Both students and teachers spoke positively about such programs in schools and the potential benefits for student wellbeing.

Regarding policy itself, teachers emphasised, in their final ‘take home’ messages, the need for policy that recognises current realities in schools, conveys simply and clearly to teachers what is required, and is tailored to meet students’ needs. While most staff mildly agreed that existing policy was sufficient for guiding and supporting them in facilitating student wellbeing, they further agreed that it would be helpful to have more guidance. This apparent contradiction perhaps reflects ambivalence, in that teachers want clear policy that is relevant and helpful, and do not want ineffectual policy that further adds to their already high workloads. Teachers are well aware of the limitations of policy and difficulties in applying these. Key points they identified include that wellbeing policy should not be too prescriptive, but that it needs to be sufficiently detailed to provide structure, flexible enough to adapt to local needs, and applicable to practice. Teachers and principals also highlighted the importance of policy makers consulting closely with the profession and drawing on the experience of teachers in developing policy, since some policy is perceived as ‘hit and miss’ in terms of applicability.

4.3 Implications of the findings for teaching and learning

The findings signal a dichotomy in how teachers conceptualise their role in relation to wellbeing, with some teachers viewing this in a more instrumentalist way (focusing on narrower student outcomes) and others have a broader, more relational perspective on wellbeing. This has implications for staff training and policy development, managing conflict and identifying struggles over recognition.

The recently introduced National Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011) point to some important possibilities for a more explicit emphasis on relationships in professional learning at both pre-service and post-service levels. While the Standards are not specifically wellbeing related (and hence did not meet the selection criteria for inclusion in our policy analysis), there are features within all three of the standard domains
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(Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement) that align with the student and teacher findings concerning relationships. Professional Knowledge, for example, focuses on knowing students in relation to how they learn, while Professional Engagement extends teachers’ role beyond the classroom to professional engagement with colleagues, parents/carers and the community. Thus, although not directly linking with student wellbeing, the Standards address the relationships which our study has found to be fundamental, potentially aligning with approaches to supporting student wellbeing that are linked with the recognition of students.

While students did not perceive that they had much influence over pedagogical processes, they made a direct link in the imaginary schools data between their wellbeing and the kind of teaching and learning processes they had experienced. Further, they articulated the pedagogical improvements they felt needed to be made to improve wellbeing. Students and teachers provided examples of these in both informal and formal contexts, such as classroom conversation and inclusion of students in teacher-parent meetings. The imaginary school data highlighted approaches to pedagogy and school structures that help facilitate relationships, the importance of feeling safe and secure, the capacity to have fun, the desire for understanding, better communication, equality and respect, and more opportunities for students to be heard and involved in school life. The depth and scope of dialogue that took place highlighted the value students placed on being consulted and having a say in relation to their wellbeing. These findings align particularly with focus areas within the Professional Practice domain of the Standards, including: 3.5 Use effective classroom communication; and 4.1 Support student participation, again indicating links between the Standards and relational aspects of teaching and learning for supporting student wellbeing.

4.4 Implications of the findings for the school environment

The school culture and environment are critically important for student wellbeing, providing a context within which systems and structures, teaching and learning, and relationships are enacted. Acknowledging student diversity within the broader environmental contexts of schools is increasingly recognised in the education policy-related documentation. Our findings demonstrate that recognition is important for all students’ wellbeing, but is particularly important for some, primarily ethnic minority students and boys. The significant differences between groups may reflect the struggle over recognition at school emerging in different contexts, such as being male, Indigenous and from diverse cultural backgrounds. While further exploration is required to fully interpret these findings, including looking at the ways in which contexts outside of school may be shaping these results, the differences between groups highlight the importance of schools critically engaging with the ways in which children and childhood are conceptualised, as this contributes significantly to the environmental and cultural tone of the school.

A core tenet of Childhood Studies (a theoretical interest underpinning this study) is that childhood is socially constructed. Rather than generalising about the nature of children and young people’s experiences and realities, a wide range of diverse experiences has to be taken into account (Woodhead, 2009). Consequently, childhood is not a single, universal phenomenon but exists in a variety of forms (James & Prout, 1990). The implication of this for policy and practice concerning student wellbeing in schools is clear; there cannot be a ‘one-size-fits-all’, policy-ordained approach to relationship, which will engender improved wellbeing. However, one of the critically important aspects of recognition theory is that it centres on recognising the individual (who is cared for, respected and valued) in their own right, as well as being a member of a social group. For all
students to thrive, the school environment needs to be sensitive to differences in terms of personality, gender, racial and cultural diversity.

Recognition theory is potentially useful in this regard as it allows for individual and social recognition, and also for student (and staff) development, through awareness of struggles over recognition and the ways these are routinely manifested in everyday practices in schools. These struggles are a given, in any context, and provide the impetus for identity development and social change. Such a lens provokes attention not only on relationship and the conversations that support these, but also on sites of struggle and awareness of the deleterious effects of persistent misrecognition.

Hence, school culture guides the conditions under which students are cared for, valued and respected, or conversely for non-recognition or misrecognition. A key implication of this research is the importance schools place on developing a culture of inclusion, connection and recognition, incorporating processes and structures that support conversation and also reparation. Underpinning this is respect for the dignity and wellbeing of children and young people. Drawing again on Childhood Studies, children and young people are recognised as social actors with agency, who are interactive, creative and capable of both influencing and being influenced by their environment (Alderson, 2013; Corsaro, 2005; Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 1998; James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; Oswell, 2013).

In addition, children are bearers of rights, with all the entitlements this implies. The preamble to the UNCRC includes the statement “that the child should be brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity”. More specifically, Article 29 defines the goals of education as being to develop each child’s personality, talents and abilities to the fullest; encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures; and help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. As a signatory to the UNCRC, Australia has an obligation to incorporate the principles of the Convention in policy and practice. More importantly, the Convention provides aspirational ideals, of specific relevance to children and education, and conveys the spirit in which such ideals may be met.

Our findings indicate the need for the school environment to be flexible in accordance with children’s evolving capacities, changing requirements and situational contexts. A number of findings point to changes over time and space. Students’ relationships with principals for example, are important to students in primary school but less so to secondary students. To give another example, students’ relationships with school staff are particularly important when students are making the transition to a new level at school, such as Year 3 or Year 7.

An improved school environment that engendered feelings of happiness, fun and safety emerged across all cohorts in the Phase 2 imaginary schools activities but was especially evident in the drawings and discussions of primary students. These younger students placed a strong emphasis on the existing physical structures in the school environment as being important for their wellbeing, such as offices, classrooms, the principal’s office, sick bays and churches. The desire for natural space was also evident across all participants, and especially for primary students, who viewed nature as integral to ‘having fun’ in their wellbeing school. Secondary students also perceived the school environment to be important for their wellbeing, and tended to emphasise the physical more than the emotional environment. The range of ideas and concepts that emerged from the students
across all cohorts highlights the importance of space and the nuanced ways they link the aesthetic and physical environment with their social and emotional needs at school.

Further, the findings point to the importance of schools being places that foster wellbeing for all members of the community, given some teachers identified that when their own wellbeing is compromised their ability to attend to students’ wellbeing is diminished. These teachers candidly point to a lack of resources, time and support as contributing factors. Further, it is clear that recognition of teachers, through collegial support and supportive leadership, is linked with recognition of students. Conversely, less recognition of teachers is linked with their conditional recognition of students. That is, staff who feel less cared for, respected and valued at school, are more likely to practice conditional recognition of students.

These findings have significant implications for pre-service teacher training, professional development and for fostering a school climate based on mutual recognition of staff, students and the community. Professional learning that fosters an understanding and practice of mutual recognition is likely to improve staff’s feelings of being recognised and their capacity to recognise students and others. In addition, teacher burnout and attrition may be alleviated when mutual recognition is practised in schools because staff report feeling more recognised themselves when they have greater understanding of the importance of relationships and recognition for student wellbeing. Alongside support and appreciation, particularly from leadership, appropriate resourcing and attention to workloads is critical, not only for staff retention but for staff capacity to engage proactively, genuinely and meaningfully in relationships and mutual recognition with students.

4.5 Summary

Drawing on the above discussion of findings in relation to the research objectives, schools and school systems have in place a range of policies, understandings, programs and practices to support wellbeing. However, the new knowledge generated through this research has highlighted several important issues that merit closer attention in the future. These are now framed below in terms of recommendations from the research.

5 Recommendations

This project has produced extensive systematic policy and practice-relevant evidence to advance the way wellbeing is understood and approached in schools. The detailed knowledge about student wellbeing gained through the research, including the key role that relationships play, enabled deeper investigation of the potential of recognition theory for informing approaches to wellbeing in schools. The new knowledge generated can usefully inform educational policy, programs and practice in schools, as well as future research, as outlined in the following recommendations.

Recommendations for policy

1. That specific national, state and/or system-level policy guidance is developed in relation to wellbeing in schools and that this incorporates clear definitions, priorities for implementation and links to related policy imperatives. The policy guidance should emphasise a person-centred approach that underlines the central role of relationships in all aspects of school-life and the crucial importance of mutual recognition understood as caring, respecting and valuing each other’s contribution.
2. That wellbeing is positioned as integral to the overall policy framework, structures and processes of schools and school systems. All key operating areas of education – administrative, educational and religious – need to clearly articulate and delineate roles and responsibilities in relation to wellbeing. This may necessitate a review of existing central arrangements, including wellbeing governance, coordination, communication and accountability with schools.

3. Appropriate resourcing should be allocated to coordinate and support the implementation of wellbeing policy and programs. Existing criteria for the funding of wellbeing initiatives, including counselling, should be reviewed to ensure these adequately address the findings of this research and the priorities identified.

4. That the philosophical and conceptual links between pastoral care and wellbeing be clarified given their distinctive character within the Catholic education context. Clarifying these links will be a critically important element in mobilising pastoral care initiatives to ensure these are effective in enhancing student wellbeing.

5. That consideration is given to developing a Charter for Wellbeing in Schools, to be advanced in conjunction with students, teachers, principals, other relevant staff and parents. This would be an aspirational statement that represents broad, collaborative agreement about the value of children and the collective commitment of schools and school systems to supporting them to realise their full potential as human persons of dignity and worth.

**Recommendations for practice**

6. That targeted intervention programs introduced into schools to specifically support wellbeing are adequately resourced, monitored and evaluated to ensure these deliver intended outcomes. Further consideration should be given to the potential of such programs for extending the knowledge, understandings and skills of teachers and parents, as well as students, around key issues that impact on the wellbeing of children and young people.

7. That teacher wellbeing, including its impact on student wellbeing, is explicitly acknowledged and that current approaches to addressing this (both formal and informal) are reviewed and further developed. Principals and teachers should be closely consulted to ensure a comprehensive, respectful approach to supporting teacher wellbeing is planned, implemented and evaluated.

8. That close consideration be given to the cultures, processes and methods required for affording students more opportunity to ‘have a say’ in matters concerning them at school, including relationships, systems and structures, environment, and teaching and learning. Such opportunities to have a say should be meaningful, routine and available to all students using appropriate verbal, written and visual means. Consulting with students should include feedback and follow-up where relevant, enabling students to learn and develop through their participation, as well as to have their contributions appropriately acknowledged and affirmed.
9. That a flexible program of professional development is made available to schools to help enrich principals’, teachers’, students’ and parents’ understandings and practice around wellbeing. Drawing on recognition theory, childhood studies and the findings of this research, the professional development should include a core focus on the important role of relationships, and of being cared for, valued and respected, in facilitating wellbeing in schools. This professional development should also explicitly highlight the likely negative impact of misrecognition or non-recognition on student and teacher wellbeing.

10. That such professional development for teachers around wellbeing is explicitly aligned with all seven of the recently implemented National Professional Standards for Teachers. Particular emphasis should be placed on the ways in which these standards - knowing students, knowing how to teach, effective teaching and learning, safe and supportive learning environments, providing feedback to students, professional learning and engaging professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community - are intrinsically linked to the recognition of students and hence to their wellbeing. Pre-service teacher education should also ensure that the foundational elements of being a quality teacher are explicitly linked to understandings of children and childhood, particularly in relation to their need to be cared for, valued and respected in all aspects of their education.

11. That professional development for principals around wellbeing is explicitly aligned with the Australian Professional Standard for Principals in relation to leadership requirements: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills.

Recommendations for research

12. That the concept of ‘recognition’, with its focus on the importance of being cared for, respected and valued, be further explored within the context of wellbeing in schools, and that a flexible and appropriate measurement tool be developed to assist schools in monitoring the ways in which these dimensions of recognition are routinely practised and experienced.

13. That further research be undertaken to extend understandings of parent and carer roles in supporting the wellbeing of their children at school, with a view to making further recommendations for more effective engagement with parents and for strengthening partnerships between family and school.

The above recommendations reflect the key findings of this research, including the ‘recognition’ interests that have been found to have particular salience in extending the existing knowledge base and potentially improving policy and practice concerning wellbeing in schools. Importantly, these recommendations also support the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008), which describes aspirations for all young Australians for the next decade. This commits state and federal Ministers to shared educational goals and to ensuring that schooling provides an environment in which all children and young people will not only become successful learners, but also confident, creative and contributing individuals.
Appendices

Appendix A: Phase 1 Scripted Interview Questions – Catholic Education Offices

“The Centre for Children and Young People, at Southern Cross University is currently conducting an Australian Research Council funded project looking at student wellbeing in schools. As part of this project we are analysing local, state and national education policies that involve aspects of wellbeing. To date we have looked through the relevant websites of the different education departments to see what is readily available, but want to make contact with someone in your department to make sure there isn’t anything we’ve missed. I have been advised that student wellbeing would fall under your area and am hoping you’d be able to spend 5-10mins answering a few quick questions about wellbeing policy. If your role doesn’t cover this area, it would be appreciated if you could advise us who the best person to contact might be.”

Preliminary Questions:

1. Name:
2. Department:
3. Job title:
4. What area(s) does your role cover?

Policy Questions:

1) Does your department/education system have a specific wellbeing policy?
   (If No, please go to Questions 2)
   a) What is it called?
   b) Who is it intended for?
   c) Is it available electronically?
      i) If No, how can people access it?
      ii) If Yes, are you able to send it to me?

2) Are aspects of wellbeing covered in other policies?
   (If No, please go to Questions 3)
   a) What is it called?
   b) Who is it intended for?
   c) Is it available electronically?
      i) If No, how can people access it?
      ii) If Yes, are you able to send it to me?

3) Is there other documentation that guides wellbeing in schools?
   (If No, please go to Questions 4)
   a) What is it called?
   b) Who is it intended for?
   c) Is it available electronically?
      i) If No, how can people access it?
      ii) If Yes, are you able to send it to me?
4) Is there a requirement or expectation that the diocese develop their own policies or guidelines in relation to wellbeing?
   (If Yes, please proceed)
   a) Is this a written requirement?
      (If Yes, please proceed)
   b) Who is it intended for?
   c) Is it available electronically?
      i) If Yes, are you able to send it to me?
Phase 1: Scripted Interview Questions – Government Departments

“The Centre for Children and Young People, at Southern Cross University is currently conducting an Australian Research Council funded project looking at student wellbeing in schools. As part of this project we are analysing local, state and national education policies that involve aspects of wellbeing. To date we have looked through the relevant websites of the different education departments to see what is readily available, but want to make contact with someone in your department to make sure there isn’t anything we’ve missed. I have been advised that student wellbeing would fall under your area and am hoping you’d be able to spend 5-10mins answering a few quick questions about wellbeing policy. If your role doesn’t cover this area, it would be appreciated if you could advise us who the best person to contact might be.”

Preliminary Questions:

1. Name:
2. Department:
3. Job title:
4. What area(s) does your role cover?

Policy Questions:

1) Does your department/education system have a specific wellbeing policy?
   (If No, please go to Questions 2)
   a) What is it called?
   b) Who is it intended for?
   c) Is it available electronically?
      i) If No, how can people access it?
      ii) If Yes, are you able to send it to me?

5) Are aspects of wellbeing covered in other policies?
   (If No, please go to Questions 3)
   a) What is it called?
   b) Who is it intended for?
   c) Is it available electronically?
      i) If No, how can people access it?
      ii) If Yes, are you able to send it to me?

6) Is there other documentation that guides wellbeing in schools?
   (If No, please go to Questions 4)
   a) What is it called?
   b) Who is it intended for?
   c) Is it available electronically?
      i) If No, how can people access it?
      ii) If Yes, are you able to send it to me?

7) Is there a requirement or expectation that schools develop their own policies or guidelines in relation to wellbeing?
(If Yes, please proceed)
a) Is this a written requirement?
   (If Yes, please proceed)
b) Who is it intended for?
c) Is it available electronically?
   i) If Yes, are you able to send it to me?
Appendix B: Phase 2 Information letters and consent forms for teachers, parents and students

Phase 2: Participation Invitation for Primary School Principals

[Date]

Dear Principal

The Centre for Children & Young People (CCYP) at Southern Cross University is partnering with Catholic Schools Office Lismore, Interrelate Family Centres and Good Grief Inc to undertake a research project about how ‘wellbeing’ is understood and approached in schools. The project is supported by funding from the Australian Research Council. Stage 1 of the research involves interviews and focus groups with principals, teachers and students. Stage 2 involves an online survey that will be informed by findings from Stage 1.

If you agree for your school to participate in Stage 1 of the research this will involve:

1. Interviews with **you and 4 teachers** about your perspectives on wellbeing in schools and the best approaches to facilitating and supporting this. Interviews are expected to take about 45 minutes.

2. Focus group discussions with **4 groups x 10 students** in your school (2 groups from Years 1/2 and 2 groups from Years 5/6). The discussions will explore students’ perspectives on wellbeing in schools and the best approaches to facilitating and supporting this. Focus group discussions are expected to take about 40 minutes for Years 1/2 and 60 minutes for Years 5/6.

To assist your school’s involvement, we are able to fund a casual relief day to enable teachers to participate. We are also able to fund one additional release day for a nominated staff member to assist us in scheduling the interviews and focus groups. To minimise disruption, we are intending to complete interviews and focus groups during a one-day visit to your school.

At the conclusion of the project, we are offering a professional development workshop to discuss the findings of the project. Principals from all schools involved in Stage 1 of the research will be funded to attend the workshop in Lismore on the NSW North Coast.

I will contact you in the next few days to discuss the research, answer any questions you may have and seek an indication as to whether you agree for your school to participate in the study.

I will look forward to speaking with you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Anne Graham

Director, Centre for Children & Young People
Phase 2: Participation Invitation for Secondary School Principals

[Date]

Dear Principal

The Centre for Children & Young People (CCYP) at Southern Cross University is partnering with Catholic Schools Office Lismore, Interrelate Family Centres and Good Grief Inc to undertake a research project about how ‘wellbeing’ is understood and approached in schools. The project is supported by funding from the Australian Research Council. Stage 1 of the research involves interviews and focus groups with principals, teachers and students. Stage 2 involves an online survey that will be informed by findings from Stage 1.

If you agree for your school to participate in Stage 1 of the research this will involve:

1. Interviews with you and 4 teachers about your perspectives on wellbeing in schools and the best approaches to facilitating and supporting this. Interviews are expected to take about 45 minutes.
2. Focus group discussions with 4 groups x 10 students in your school (2 groups from Year 8 and 2 groups from Year 11). The discussions will explore students’ perspectives on wellbeing in schools and the best approaches to facilitating and supporting this. Focus group discussions are expected to take about 90 minutes.

To assist your school’s involvement, we are able to fund a casual relief day to enable teachers to participate. We are also able to fund one additional release day for a nominated staff member to assist us in scheduling the interviews and focus groups. To minimise disruption, we are intending to complete interviews and focus groups during a one-day visit to your school.

At the conclusion of the project, we are offering a professional development workshop to discuss the findings of the project. Principals from all schools involved in Stage 1 of the research will be funded to attend the workshop in Lismore on the NSW North Coast.

I will contact you in the next few days to discuss the research, answer any questions you may have and seek an indication as to whether you agree for your school to participate in the study.

I will look forward to speaking with you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Anne Graham

Director, Centre for Children & Young People
Phase 2: Parent Information and Consent Form (Primary)

[Date]

Dear Parent

Improving student wellbeing

Your child has been invited to participate in an exciting research project about student wellbeing in schools. The project is being undertaken by the Centre for Children and Young People (CCYP) at Southern Cross University in partnership with the Catholic Schools Office, Lismore.

One of the most important aspects of the research is that students, as well as teachers and Principals, will have the opportunity to tell us about how schools can help with their wellbeing.

We would very much welcome your child’s participation in this research.

If you agree, your child will be invited to contribute to a focus group discussion with approximately 8-10 other students. It is expected that these discussions will take approximately 40 minutes for students in Years 1 & 2 and 60 minutes for Years 5 & 6. Focus group discussions will explore the meaning of wellbeing and how schools can best support this.

Information shared in the focus groups will be private and confidential. No child will be identified in any report from the project.

If your child agrees to be part of the focus group discussions, s/he has the right to withdraw at any time.

If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of this research, you may contact Sue Kelly at Southern Cross University on: sue.kelly@scu.edu.au (ethics approval number: ECN-12-072)

If you agree for your child to participate in the focus group discussions, we would be grateful if you could complete the attached consent form.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Professor Anne Graham

Director, Centre for Children & Young People

Tel: 02 6620 3613    Fax: 02 6620 3243    Email: anne.graham@scu.edu
Consent Form

I, ........................................ have read and understood the attached information. I agree for my child to participate in this research which I understand involves a focus group discussion that will last for approximately 40-90 minutes, and that this will be recorded. I am also aware my child can withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that in all written work associated with this research my child will not be identified by name.

I know that the aim of the research is to improve approaches to wellbeing in schools. I know that I can contact Anne Graham on 02 66 203613 during work hours with any questions that I have.

Signed:.................................................................

Date:.................................................................
Phase 2: Parent Information and Consent Form (Secondary)

[Date]

Dear Parent

Improving student wellbeing

Your child has been invited to participate in an exciting research project about student wellbeing in schools. The project is being undertaken by the Centre for Children and Young People (CCYP) at Southern Cross University in partnership with the Catholic Schools Office, Lismore.

One of the most important aspects of the research is that students, as well as teachers and principals, will have the opportunity to tell us about how schools can help with their wellbeing.

We would very much welcome your child’s participation in this research.

If you agree, your child will be invited to contribute to a focus group discussion with approximately 8-10 other students. It is expected that these discussions will take approximately 80 minutes. Focus group discussions will explore the meaning of wellbeing and how schools can best support this.

Information shared in the focus groups will be private and confidential. No child will be identified in any report from the project.

If your child agrees to be part of the focus group discussions, s/he has the right to withdraw at any time.

If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of this research, you may contact Sue Kelly at Southern Cross University on: sue.kelly@scu.edu.au (ethics approval number: ECN-12-072)

If you agree for your child to participate in the focus group discussions, we would be grateful if you could complete the attached consent form.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Anne Graham

Director, Centre for Children & Young People

Tel: 02 6620 3613   Fax: 02 6620 3243   Email: anne.graham@scu.edu
Consent Form

I, .......................................................................................... have read and understood the attached information. I agree for my child to participate in this research which I understand involves a focus group discussion that will last for approximately 40-90 minutes, and that this will be recorded. I am also aware my child can withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that in all written work associated with this research my child will not be identified by name.

I know that the aim of the research is to improve approaches to wellbeing in schools. I know that I can contact Anne Graham on 02 66 203613 during work hours with any questions that I have.

Signed:..................................................................................

Date:..................................................................................
Phase 2: Student Information and Consent Form (Primary)

[Date]

Dear Student

Have your say!

You are invited to participate in an exciting research project that will help us to learn about how schools can support you to feel happy, safe and cared for.

We would like you to be involved because students don’t often get to have a say about how schools can help them. What you have to tell us may help people who make important decisions about improving schools.

Researchers from the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University will visit your school and talk with you and other students in a small group called a ‘focus group’.

The focus group discussion will take about 40 minutes for Years 1/2 and 60 minutes for Years 5/6. We want to hear what you have to say but your name will not be used.

If you decide you do not like being part of the discussion you can stop whenever you want.

If you agree to be part of the focus group please fill out the form.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Graham

Director, Centre for Children & Young People

Tel: 02 6620 3613  Fax: 02 6620 3243  Email: anne.graham@scu.edu.au
Consent Form

I, .......................................................... agree to join this focus group discussion with other students. If I don’t enjoy being involved I can leave at any time.

I understand you will not tell others what I have said and that you won’t use my name.

I know that this research is about how schools can help students feel happy, safe and cared for.

I know that I can contact Anne Graham and she will answer any questions I have. Anne’s email is: anne.graham@scu.edu.au

Signed:..................................................................................

Date:..................................................................................
Dear Student

Have your say!

You are invited to participate in an exciting research project that will help us to learn about how schools can support you to feel happy, safe and cared for.

We would like you to be involved because students don’t often get to have a say about how schools can help them. What you have to tell us may help people who make important decisions about improving schools.

Researchers from the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University will visit your school and talk with you and other students in a small group called a ‘focus group’.

The focus group discussion will take about 80 minutes. We want to hear what you have to say but your name will not be used.

If you decide you do not like being part of the discussion you can stop whenever you want.

If you agree to be part of the focus group please fill out the form.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Graham

Director, Centre for Children & Young People

Tel: 02 6620 3613  Fax: 02 6620 3243  Email: anne.graham@scu.edu.au
Consent Form

I, .......................................................... agree to join this focus group discussion with other students. If I don’t enjoy being involved I can leave at any time.

I understand you will not tell others what I have said and that you won’t use my name.

I know that this research is about how schools can help students feel happy, safe and cared for.

I know that I can contact Anne Graham and she will answer any questions I have. Anne’s email is: anne.graham@scu.edu.au

Signed: ..........................................................................................

Date: ...........................................................................................
Phase 2: Teacher Information and Consent Form

[Date]

Dear Principal/Teacher

**Improving approaches to wellbeing in schools**

You are invited to participate in an exciting research project on student wellbeing in schools, undertaken by the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University. This project, supported by funding from the Australian Research Council and three other partner organisations aims to *improve what we know and do* in our schools in relation to student wellbeing. No research project in Australia to date has sought the views of principals, teachers and students about student wellbeing.

Your participation in the study is highly valued and will involve an interview of approximately 40 minutes to hear your views on the meaning of wellbeing in schools – what it is and what role schools play in supporting wellbeing.

The interview will be audio-taped with your consent for later transcribing and coding. Interviews will be private and confidential. We will not ask for any information that could be used to identify you or your school.

The information from interviews will be coded and reviewed in conjunction with that from other principals, teachers and students. This information will then inform the development of an online survey for Stage 2 of the study. The findings will also be summarised into a report (which will be made available to all participants).

This research has been approved by Southern Cross University’s Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: ECN-12-072), as well as the Catholic Education Office [insert region]. If you have any questions about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact: Ms Sue Kelly, tel- (02)66269139, fax-(02)66269145, email-sue.kelly@scu.edu.au, mail- PO Box 157 Lismore NSW 2480.

We look forward to your involvement in the research. If you agree to participate, we would be grateful if you could complete the attached consent form.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Anne Graham

Director, Centre for Children & Young People

Tel: 02 6620 3613   Fax: 02 6620 3243   Email: anne.graham@scu.edu.au
Consent Form

I, .......................................................... have read and understood the attached information and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research which I understand involves an interview that will last for approximately 40 minutes, and that it will be digitally recorded. I am also aware I can withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that in all written work associated with this research my privacy and confidentiality are ensured. I give permission to researchers at the Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University, to listen to and transcribe the digital recordings.

I know that the aim of the research project is to explore how wellbeing is understood and practiced in schools. I’m aware I can contact Anne Graham on 02 66 203613 during work hours with any queries that I have.

Signed:..........................................................................................

Date:.............................................................................................
Appendix C: Phase 2 Interview schedule for teachers and principals

| Introduction | Overview of the project – aim, why it is important, what we will be doing, what difference we think the project will make and where the teacher/principal interview fits in. Re-confirm consent to record interview and clarify that no school or individual will be identified.  
*Turn recorder on...*  
Can you tell me a little about yourself – no. of years teaching, no. of schools, grade/stage you currently teach, major teaching interests etc. [note if principal you might want to acknowledge no. of years in Exec role and the experience this brings]. |
| --- | --- |
| Meaning of wellbeing | We seem to hear a lot these days about ‘wellbeing’ but we’re not always sure we know what it means!  
Can you describe for me what you understand by the word ‘wellbeing’?  
Given wellbeing is focused on [refer to what participant has said] do you think it’s the role of schools to develop and support this?  
Do you think teachers see ‘wellbeing’ as part of their role? Are there any tensions? |
| Exploring the influence of the policy environment | Given the increasing emphasis on wellbeing in schools can you identify any policies – at the local, system, state or national level – that you think shape your understanding and practice around wellbeing?  
Is there room for improvement in wellbeing related policy and procedures? In what ways? |
| ‘Dimensions’ of wellbeing | Thinking about the way in which you’ve described/defined wellbeing, what do you think helps and hinders this at school?  
*If necessary, prompt discussion of different ‘sites’ of wellbeing, e.g. the role of relationships, pedagogy, curriculum, culture, resourcing, spaces, programs, counselling etc*  
We’ve focused mainly on student wellbeing. What about teacher wellbeing? Is this important and do you think there’s a relationship between the two (student and teacher wellbeing)? In what ways?  
And what about parents? What do they expect from schools in relation to their child’s wellbeing? Is it the role of schools to run programs to help parents with their child’s wellbeing? What priorities would you suggest? Would parents attend? How important is leadership in relation to wellbeing in schools? |
| Exploring Recognition Theory | It’s interesting to hear you talk about wellbeing in terms of [acknowledge key ideas emerging from the discussion so far]. This has resonance with the theoretical interests of our research, which are around the idea of ‘recognition’. The recognition theorist whose work we’re drawing on suggests 3 important aspects to recognition – being loved and cared for; being respected; being |
Can you tell me a little more about whether and how you see these 3 aspects at work in schools? Do you think there is a relationship between recognition and wellbeing? In what ways is this evident? Are schools better at one or other of these aspects of recognition? What might it require to progress the recognition of students in schools in the way we have discussed?

**Closing**

We’ve covered a lot of territory and you’ve provided some very rich insights – thank you. If there was one key ‘headline’ or ‘take home’ message about wellbeing in schools that you would want to make sure this research captures what would it be? *Conclude by explaining we will be analysing the data from the interviews (with teachers/principals/students) and providing schools with a ‘snapshot’ of the key findings across the 3 Diocese so they have the option of continuing the conversation within the school. Explain the next stage of the research (development of interactive online survey), encourage their involvement and indicate the project will culminate in the development of a PD package for interested schools so staff and students can benefit from the research findings.*
### Appendix D: Phase 2 Interview schedule for student focus groups

**PRIMARY SCHOOL: Year 1 and 2 (6-7yrs)**

**Focus group – 40 minutes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry point</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Prompts for facilitators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Icebreaker (5 minutes)        | Introductions and icebreaker game (favourite food)                       | Age-appropriate explanation of the project:                             | - Why are we here? (I am a researcher, what research is, important project, have fun talking about being happy)  
<pre><code>|                               |                                                                          | - What do we want? (We think you have something important to say because you are the experts, everything is confidential) |
</code></pre>
<p>|                               |                                                                           | Ethics: This isn’t school if you want to leave you can, if someone they were being hurt – not private anymore     |                                                                                                 |
| Why do people come to school? | <strong>Group Activity</strong>                                                        |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
| (10 minutes)                  | <strong>1. Why do you come to school?</strong>                                         |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | <strong>2. Do you like coming to school?</strong>                                      |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | <strong>3. Why/ Why not (write this down in two columns)</strong>                      |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | <strong>4. How does this make you feel?</strong>                                       |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | <strong>Name of the project is ‘Wellbeing in Schools Project’</strong>                 |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | <strong>What do you think wellbeing is?</strong>                                       |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | - Discuss                                                                 |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
| How do schools help you be a | <strong>Brainstorm /Sticker Activity</strong>                                         |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
| happy person? (5 minutes)     | How do schools help children to be happy, safe and cared (get wellbeing)  |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               |                                                                         |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | Is there anything that schools could do better?                           |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
| Imagining great schools       | <strong>Group Drawing Activity</strong>                                                |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
| (20 minutes)                  | <strong>1. Imagine what the best school would look like?</strong>                     |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | PROMPTS                                                                  |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | i. Who would be in charge?                                                |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | ii. Who would be at school with you?                                     |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | iii. What kinds of things would you be doing?                             |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | iv. What would it look, feel, sound like?                                |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |
|                               | <strong>Of all of the things we have discussed, what do you think is the most important to know about how schools can help people to be happy?</strong> |                                                                         |                                                                                                 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry point</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Prompts for facilitators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Icebreaker (5 minutes)</td>
<td>Introductions and icebreaker game (relevant to this stage) Overview of the project – what the aim of the project is, why it is important, what we will be doing, what difference we think the project will make and where the focus group fits in Reiterate our ethical responsibilities for the study</td>
<td>Brief group discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of wellbeing (10 minutes)</td>
<td>Have you come across the word ‘wellbeing’?</td>
<td>Post it notes activity. 1. Individual definitions on post it notes. Facilitator posts up on whiteboard 2. Read over the post it notes and invite children and young people to add further thoughts 3. If necessary..... add to the discussion things children in other studies have said. [Read out statements and post on board]. How do these connect with anything that has been said so far?</td>
<td>What are the words that make up wellbeing? What other word/words have you heard that have been used to describe wellbeing? Is wellbeing something you think all young people have a right to? Is child/youth wellbeing different/similar to student wellbeing? N.B. Identify any words that may act as a proxy for wellbeing. Reiterate that in the following discussion that reference to these words will be assumed to be as a proxy for wellbeing, unless specifically stated to be otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exploring dimensions of wellbeing in schools (15 minutes)</td>
<td>Who helps us with our wellbeing?</td>
<td>Brainstorm activity: Discussion in pairs and share with group (i) As a group, identify, ‘who’ helps students to ‘get/have’ wellbeing: e.g. parents, teachers, friends, self, family</td>
<td>Focus discussion now on school settings – what aspects of school help you to ‘get’ wellbeing [Resources, curriculum, learning, playground spaces, people etc]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exploring Recognition (10 minutes)</td>
<td>Some people think that to achieve wellbeing we need three things: We need to be cared for.... We need to be respected.... We need to be valued.......</td>
<td>Mindmapping</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do these people help us to get wellbeing?</td>
<td>Say a little bit about the distinctions between the three modes of recognition......</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you agree?</td>
<td>Cared for ourselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. How does being “___” make you feel?</td>
<td>Respected as people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking back to what you said about wellbeing.....</td>
<td>Valued for what we contribute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How does “___” help your wellbeing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do these things all happen in schools?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you give me some examples of where they do? Where they don’t?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Imagining great schools</td>
<td>So, given what we have just talked about......how could schools be better?</td>
<td>Brainstorm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20 minutes)</td>
<td>What would your dream school for wellbeing be like?</td>
<td>Think about.......</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum up and closing</td>
<td>-Spaces – physical spaces, community/public spaces/ classroom spaces/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-If schools were to take on board these insights, how would they be different to schools now?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Is there anything else you would change?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Who would be in charge?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Wellbeing in Schools FINAL REPORT: VOLUME FOUR

### HIGH SCHOOL: YEAR 8 (13yrs) and 11 (17yrs)
Focus group – 80 minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry point</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Prompts for facilitators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Icebreaker (5 minutes)</td>
<td>Introductions and icebreaker game (relevant to Years 8 and 11) Overview of the project – what the aim of the project is, why it is important, what we will be doing, what difference we think the project will make and where the focus group fits in Reiterate our ethical responsibilities for the study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of wellbeing (5 minutes)</td>
<td>Have you come across the word ‘wellbeing’?</td>
<td><strong>Brief group discussion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you think it might mean?</td>
<td><strong>Post it notes activity.</strong> 1. Individual definitions on post it notes. 2. Read over the post it notes and invite students to add further thoughts [WHITE PAPER]</td>
<td>What are the words that make up wellbeing? What other word/words have you heard that have been used to describe wellbeing? Is wellbeing something you think all young people have a right to? N.B. Identify any words that may act as a proxy for wellbeing. Reiterate that in the following discussion reference to these words will be assumed to be as a proxy for wellbeing, unless specifically stated to be otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2. Exploring dimensions of wellbeing in schools (10 minutes)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Brainstorm activity: Thinking about wellbeing in schools....</strong> Discussion in as a group (i) ‘Who’ helps students to gain wellbeing: e.g. parents, teachers, friends, self, family member etc (ii) How/what do these people help us with our wellbeing?</td>
<td>Focus discussion now on school settings – what aspects of school help you to improve wellbeing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Exploring the inter-subjective space of wellbeing (20 minutes)

In the discussion above we have heard the following things are important in helping with your wellbeing:

- Being/not being cared for....
- Being/not being respected.....
- Being/not being valued......

In addition to what you have identified, we are interested in talking with you about three themes that have been identified in other research to be important to wellbeing:

1. How does being “__” make you feel?

**FIRST Activity: EXPLORING RECOGNITION**

**Mindmapping**

*Divide into three groups.*

Give each group one of the following three themes [on a laminated A4 sheet]:

- Being/not being cared for....
- Being/not being respected.....
- Being/not being valued......

Thinking back to what you said about wellbeing.....

**SECOND Activity: EXPLORING RECOGNITION AND WELLBEING**

**Brainstorm**

Thinking about what you have said about “_____”

1. Does “__” help your wellbeing?
2. If so....in what ways?

### 4. Imagining great schools (20 minutes)

What can we learn from our discussion about how to make schools a better place?

- Being/not being cared for....
- Being/not being respected.....
- Being/not being valued......

What would your dream school for improving wellbeing be like?

Creating an ideal school for wellbeing.

You have told me what wellbeing is.

We have talked about how you ‘get’ wellbeing and who is significant here....

We have also discussed your ideas about whether, and to what extent, being respected, cared for and valued impact on wellbeing

**FINAL ACTIVITY IS TO IMAGINE WHAT A “WELLBEING SCHOOL’ MIGHT LOOK LIKE.....**

**CONSIDER...**

If schools were to take on board these insights, how would they be different to schools now?

What would it look/ feel/ sound like?

Think about all that makes up school life....

### 5. Sum up and closing

*Thank you*

*Further work – Stage 2 and dissemination....*
Appendix E: Phases 1, 2 and 3 findings summaries


**Phase 1 Summary:** Summarises the findings from Phase 1 of the research, which is an analysis of relevant national, state and system level policy pertaining to wellbeing in schools.

**Phase 2 Summaries:** Three summaries were created for primary school students, secondary school students, and teachers and principals. These summaries include findings from Phase 2 of the research, which consisted of in-depth semi-structured interviews with principals and teachers and focus group interviews with students.

**Phase 3 Summaries:** Three summaries were created for primary school students, secondary school students, and teachers and principals and other school staff. These summaries include key findings from online surveys with principals and teachers, primary school students and secondary school students.
Appendix F: Phase 1 References for wellbeing policies / policy-related documents


Parliament of Victoria Education and Training Committee. (2010). *Inquiry into the potential for developing opportunities for schools to become a focus for promoting healthy community living: Final
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Appendix G: Phase 3 Wellbeing in schools surveys

The primary student and secondary student surveys began with the statement: “In the box below, type your school code given to you by your teacher”. The staff version began with the statement: “In the box below, please type your school code”. Participants typed a 4 digit school code, consisting of two letters and two numbers (e.g., LP01, MS03) provided by the researcher for data analysis purposes only. The first letter of the code identified the geographic region, the second letter of the code identified whether the school was primary or secondary level, and the two numerals were an arbitrary school number.

After clicking of the forward arrow button participants then read the introduction to the survey, as follows:

**Primary students:**

“Wellbeing in Schools Survey.

Hi! In this survey we are going to ask you lots of different questions. Only the researchers will know your answers. There are no right or wrong answers. We want you to help us, but you don’t have to do this survey if you don’t want to. Would you like to do this survey?”

**Secondary students:**

“Wellbeing in Schools Survey

Hi! This survey is part of a very important research project about ‘Wellbeing in Schools’. Wellbeing is about feeling good at school. In this survey we are going to ask you lots of different questions. Your answers will be ‘anonymous’ which means that only the researchers will know what answers you gave. This isn’t a test and there are no right or wrong answers. We need you to help us find out what students think about wellbeing in schools. Your answers are really important to us, but you don’t have to do this survey if you don’t want to. Would you like to do this survey?”

**Staff:**

“Wellbeing in Schools Survey

Welcome to this Wellbeing in Schools online survey, conducted by the Centre for Children and Young People (CCYP) at Southern Cross University. Your participation will involve answering questions about wellbeing in schools. The survey will take about 20 minutes and will not ask for any identifying information. Your anonymous responses will only be seen by the CCYP research team. Please be assured that there is no obligation for you to participate in this survey. The results from the surveys across all schools and dioceses will be collated and your school will receive a summary of the research findings. No particular school or individual will be identified in the findings. This survey has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Southern Cross University. The approval number is ECN-13-138. If you have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research please email ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au. Should you have any other queries about the project please email me at anne.graham@scu.edu.au or Donnah Anderson at donnah.anderson@scu.edu.au

Yours sincerely, Professor Anne Graham, Centre for Children and Young People

Would you like to continue with the survey?”
All participants then selected ‘yes’ or ‘no’. If ‘no’ was selected the survey automatically skipped to the end of the survey. If ‘yes’ was selected the survey progressed to the next page, which read: “Thank you! If you want to skip a question click (image of forward arrow button). If you need to change your answers you can click (image of backwards arrow button) to go back.” All versions of the survey then proceeded with the actual survey content as follows.

**Survey Content**

The primary and secondary student versions of the online survey consisted of six sections in the following order: demographics, wellbeing conceptualisation, wellbeing at school, relationships, recognition, and survey evaluation.

The staff version of the online survey consisted of seven sections in the following order: demographics, wellbeing conceptualisation, wellbeing at school, relationships, policy and programs, recognition, and survey evaluation.

Each section of the survey began on a new page.

*Demographic questions*

The primary and secondary version of the survey asked about gender, age, Year at school, language spoken at home, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. The staff survey also asked about number of years working in schools, approximately how many students attended their school, whether staff worked in a primary or secondary school or both, what Years were currently taught, the staff member’s main role at school, and for secondary staff only, their current curriculum or specialist teaching areas, and whether this was their preferred teaching area(s). If staff selected ‘home group teacher’ for their role they were asked whether their home group had a vertical structure. On the next page, all staff were asked what percentage of their time involves student wellbeing, before moving to the next section of the survey. Staff selected a percentage of time that involves student wellbeing on a sliding horizontal bar on a scale that ranged from 0% to 100%, with labels at every 10-point increment.

*Wellbeing Conceptualisations*

The primary and secondary versions of the survey asked the following question: “Wellbeing can mean different things to different people. Choose 2 things from the list that best describe what wellbeing means to you. Type ‘1’ next to the answer you think is best and ‘2’ next to the answer you think is second best.”

Primary students chose from the following list of ten wellbeing conceptualisations, which were presented in counterbalanced order: Being happy; Being safe; Being loved, Being trusted; Being respected; Being listened to; Being healthy; Looking after myself; Helping others; Having a great environment.

In addition to the above list of conceptualisations of wellbeing, secondary students chose from Having privacy, and Having a say (12 concepts in total, in counterbalanced order).

The staff survey asked the following question: “When you think about wellbeing in schools, what do you consider this to be mainly about? Please rank from 1 to 2 the two that you think best define wellbeing. Staff chose from ten categories of wellbeing conceptualisations which were presented in counterbalanced order: Being happy; Being satisfied with life; Being successful at school; Being safe; Being physically healthy; Being psychologically/mentally healthy; Being spiritually healthy; Being
connected to people - good relationships with others; Being connected to place - feeling like you belong; Other.

Wellbeing at School

Student surveys: Both primary and secondary surveys asked the following questions, all of which used 7-point Likert scales in which participants selected their response by sliding an arrow along a horizontal scale which had the numbers 1 to 7 at equal increments, but only the end-points (i.e., numbers 1 and 7) were labelled (see below). Only the end-points were labelled, rather than each interval, to create continuously scaled data rather than ordinal scaled data. The instructions for primary and secondary student versions of the survey were as follows:

“These questions ask you whether you agree or disagree with sentences. Slide the arrow along the line to show your answer. Choose anywhere between 1 and 7. ‘1’ means you Strongly Disagree, ‘7’ means you Strongly Agree. ‘4’ means you can’t decide whether you agree or disagree. How much do you agree with these sentences?

My wellbeing is important to my teacher; Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing (Region C only); Being at a Catholic school helps my wellbeing.

On the next page of the survey, primary and secondary surveys asked the following:

“Slide the bar along the number line to choose your answer. How much do the following affect your wellbeing at school?” (‘1’ represented ‘not at all’, 7 represented ‘very much’): Teachers speaking kindly to me; The principal using my name; Friends making me feel included at school

Staff survey: The staff survey asked the following questions, all using 7-point Likert scales as described below:

“Overall, how well does your school support teachers' and students' wellbeing? Please slide the arrow along the line to select your answer: Students' wellbeing; Teachers' wellbeing (1 represented ‘Not at all well’, 7 represented ‘Extremely well’).

On the next page the staff survey asked: “Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (where 1 represented ‘Strongly Disagree’ and 7 represented 'Strongly Agree'): Student wellbeing is central to the work of teachers; The Christian values in a Catholic school help student wellbeing; The Christian values in a Catholic school help my wellbeing.

In Region C, the survey had three additional questions relating to their meditation programs as follows: “Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (where 1 represented ‘Strongly Disagree’ and 7 represented ‘Strongly Agree’): Doing meditation at school helps student wellbeing; Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing; I feel confident facilitating the meditation program with students at my school.

On the next page staff surveys in all diocese then asked the following: “How much do you think the following affect student wellbeing at school? (where 1 represented ‘Not at all’ and 7 represented ‘Very much’): Teachers speaking kindly to students; Teachers speaking harshly to students; Students' friends making them feel included at school; Students being abusive towards each other; The principal using students' names; Teachers humiliating students.
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Relationships

All questions on relationships were 7-point Likert scales in the format of 7 stars that changed from white to yellow in colour when clicked on. Participants clicked on the number of stars to choose their response.

The primary student version of the survey asked:

“For the next questions click on the number of stars to give your answer. The more stars you choose the more important you think something is. 1 star = Not important, 7 stars = Very important.

How important are the following relationships for your wellbeing at school? (Relationships are about how you get along with other people, and being connected with people). (1) Your relationship with your teacher; (2) Your relationship with close friends at your school; (3) Your relationship with the principal at your school; (4) Your relationship with other adults that work at your school, such as in the school office; (5) Your relationship with your parent(s) /carer(s)” (These items were presented in counterbalanced order).

The secondary student version of the survey asked:

“The next question asks you to click on the number of stars. You can choose any number of stars between 1 and 7. The more stars you choose the more important you think something is. 1 star = Not at all important, 7 stars = Extremely important.

Other students have told us that relationships are important to their wellbeing. By this they mean how they get along with other people and being connected with people. How important are the following relationships for your wellbeing at school?

(1) Your relationship with your teachers; (2) Your relationship with close friends at school; (3) Your relationship with other students in your school; (4) Your relationship with your school principal; (5) Your relationship with the school counsellor; (6) Your relationship with your home group teacher/pastoral care teacher; (7) Your relationship with other adults who work at your school, such as in the school office; (8) Your relationship with your parent(s)/ carer(s)” (These items were presented in counterbalanced order).

The staff version of the survey asked:

“For this question choose the number of stars to provide your answers. 1 star = Not very important, 7 stars = Very important. How important are the following relationships for student wellbeing at school?

(1) Relationships between principals and teachers; (2) Relationships between teachers and students; (3) Relationships between parents and teachers; (4) Relationships between students and their close friends; (5) Relationships between students and other students (not close friends); (6) Relationships between principals and students; (7) Relationships between counsellors and students; (8) Relationships between students and home group teachers/ pastoral care teachers; (9) Relationships between non-teaching staff and students; (10) Relationships between teachers and other teachers; (11) Relationships between students and their parents/carers.” (These items were presented in counterbalanced order).
Policy and programs (staff survey only)

On the next page of the staff survey, three questions were asked: “Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (1) Existing policy is sufficient to guide and support the way I facilitate student wellbeing; (2) It would be helpful to have more guidance with student wellbeing; (3) Additional programs related to student wellbeing are helpful in schools”. 1 represented ‘Strongly Disagree’, 7 represented ‘Strongly Agree’.

Recognition

Primary and Secondary Student Surveys:

The following instructions were presented on the next page of the survey: “We are interested to know whether being cared for, being respected and being valued help with your wellbeing. We are now going to ask you important questions about these very different things. It might seem like the questions are the same, but they’re not! Please think about your answers and hang in there!”

Each dimension of recognition was presented on a separate page, in counterbalanced order to control for fatigue or other order effects. Students clicked the forward arrow button to move to the next page and were presented with one of three sections on being ‘cared for’, ‘being respected’ or ‘being valued’.

For each dimension of recognition, first, a brief definition of being cared for, respected or valued was provided, followed by a single question measuring subjective recognition, then multiple items asked students to rate the importance of indicators of recognition for student wellbeing (cared for: 12 items; respected, 11 items; valued, 11 items). Note that in the ‘Respected’ section, students also answered questions about ‘having a say’ at school (primary survey: 4 items, secondary survey: 5 items). In the primary version of the survey phrasing was singular for “teacher”, while for the secondary survey phrasing was plural “teachers” to reflect the students’ circumstances.

Details of each section are provided below:

Cared for:

“The next questions are about being cared for. Being cared for is about how we are there for each other. When we are cared for we know and trust someone enough to ask them for help.

Slide the bar along the number line to show your answer: How often do you feel cared for at school?” (Both primary and secondary surveys: 1 = ‘Never’, 7 = ‘All the time’)

“How important are the following for your wellbeing at school?” (Primary survey: 1 star = ‘Not important’, 7 stars = ‘Very important’; secondary survey: 1 star = ‘Not at all important’, 7 stars = Extremely important’).

(1) My teacher knowing me well; (2) Feeling that other students like me; (3) My teacher/s enjoying talking with me; (4) Feeling it’s OK to tell my teacher/s what I need; (5) My teacher/s helping me when I can’t do my school work; (6) Feeling safe at school; (7) Feeling cared for by my teacher/s; (8) Feeling cared for by other students; (9) Caring for my teacher/s; (10) Caring for other students; (11) Seeing my teacher/s caring for other students who need extra support; (12) My teacher/s knowing whether I care for them.

“Hang in there!”
Respected:

“The next questions are about being respected. Respect is about the way we treat each other. For example, it means that we should respect each other’s rights to be listened to and treated fairly. Slide the bar along the number line to show your answer. How often do you feel respected at school?” (Both primary and secondary surveys: 1 = ‘Never’, 7 = ‘All the time’).

“How important are the following for your wellbeing at school?” (Primary students: 1 star = ‘Not important’, 7 stars = ‘Very important’; secondary students: 1 star = ‘Not at all important’, 7 stars = ‘Extremely important’):

Having a say about: (1) school rules; (2) punishments for breaking school rules; (3) what we learn at school; (4) who I sit near; (5) Whether I see the school counsellor (secondary survey only).

(1) My teacher/s taking notice of what I have to say; (2) Being treated fairly at school; (3) Every student at my school getting respect no matter how old they are; (4) Every student at my school getting respect no matter how they behave; (5) Feeling respected by other students; (6) Respecting other students; (7) Seeing my teacher/s respecting other students who need extra support; (8) My teacher/s respecting my views about religion/spirituality; (9) Feeling respected by my teacher/s; (10) My teacher/s knowing whether I respect them; (11) Respecting my teacher/s.

“Hang in there!”

Valued:

“The next questions are about being valued. Being valued is about our contribution being noticed by people important to us. When we are valued we feel encouraged to work together to make things better.

Slide the bar along the number line to show your answer. How often do you feel valued at school?” (Both primary and secondary surveys: 1 = ‘Never’, 7 = ‘All the time’).

“How important are the following for your wellbeing at school?” (Primary students: 1 star = ‘Not important’, 7 stars = ‘Very important’; secondary students: 1 star = ‘Not at all important’, 7 stars = ‘Extremely important’):
(1) My teacher making time to help me; (2) My teacher telling me when I’m doing well; (3) My teacher giving me an award; (4) My teacher writing a report that says nice things about me; (5) My teacher giving me a job that I like doing; (6) Feeling that my teacher values me; (7) Feeling that other students value me; (8) Valuing my teacher; (9) Valuing other students; (10) My teacher knowing whether I value them; (11) Seeing my teacher value other students who need extra support.

“Hang in there!”

Staff survey:

The following instructions were presented on the next page of the staff survey: “We are also interested in the role that ‘recognition’ plays in relation to wellbeing. Recognition has 3 parts. These are: Being cared for (my needs and feelings are important to others), Being respected (being treated as a person who is worthwhile), Being valued (my unique contributions are important to others). The next section of the survey asks you about these 3 parts of recognition. While the questions may seem repetitive, it is very important that you answer each question carefully. We appreciate your time and effort very much!”

Each dimension of recognition was presented on a separate page, in counterbalanced order to control for fatigue or other order effects. Staff clicked the forward arrow button to move to the next page and were presented with one of three sections on being ‘cared for’, ‘being respected’ or ‘being valued’.

For each dimension of recognition, first, a brief definition of being cared for, respected or valued was provided, followed by four questions that asked staff to rate their subjective feelings of being cared for, respected and valued, then multiple items asked staff to rate the importance of indicators of recognition for student wellbeing (cared for: 12 items; respected, 11 items; valued, 11 items). Note that in the ‘Respected’ section, staff also answered five items about ‘having a say’ at school.

Details of each section are provided below:

**Cared for:**

“The next questions are about being cared for. Being cared for is about how we are there for each other. When we are cared for we know and trust someone enough to ask them for help.

How often do you feel cared for at school by” (1) Students; (2) The principal (principals skip this question); (3) Other staff; (4) Parents, where 1 = Never, and 7 = All the time.

“How important are the following for student wellbeing at school?” (1 star = Not very important, 7 stars = Very important): (1) Knowing my students well; (2) Students feeling liked by other students; (3) Enjoying talking with my students; (4) Students feeling it is OK to tell me what they need; (5) Helping my students when they can't do their school work; (6) Students feeling safe at school; (7) Caring for my students; (8) Students feeling cared for by other students; (9) Students caring for other
students; (10) Students caring for me; (11) Students knowing whether I care for them; (12) Students seeing teachers care for other students who need extra support.

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree): (1) My students get upset if they are not cared for at school; (2) I am affected negatively if my students do not care for me; (3) Caring for my students is influenced by how much they care for me.

Respected:

“The next questions are about being respected. Respect is about the way we treat each other. It means that we should respect each other’s rights to be listened to and treated fairly.

How often do you feel respected at school by” (1) Students; (2) The principal (principals skip this question); (3) Other staff; (4) Parents (where 1 = Never, and 7 = All the time).

“How important are the following for student wellbeing at school?” (1 star = Not very important, 7 stars = Very important). “Students having a say about” (1) School rules; (2) Punishments for breaking school rules; (3) What they learn at school; (4) Who they sit near; (5) Whether they see the school counsellor.

“How important are the following for student wellbeing at school?” (1 star = Not very important, 7 stars = Very important). (1) Taking notice of what my students have to say; (2) Students being treated fairly at school; (3) Respecting my students’ views about religion/spirituality; (4) Every student at my school being respected no matter how old they are; (5) Every student at my school being respected no matter how they behave; (6) Respecting my students; (7) Students feeling respected by other students; (8) Students respecting me; (9) Students respecting other students, (10) Students knowing that I respect them; (11) Students seeing teachers respect other students who need extra support.

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree): (1) My students get upset if they are not respected at school; (2) I am affected negatively if my students do not respect me; (3) Respecting my students is influenced by how much they respect me.

Valued:

“The next questions are about being valued. Being valued is about our contribution being noticed by people important to us. When we are valued we feel encouraged to work together to make things better.

How often do you feel valued at school by” (1) Students; (2) The principal (principals skip this question); (3) Other staff; (4) Parents (where 1 = Never, and 7 = All the time).

“How important are the following for student wellbeing at school?” (1 star = Not very important, 7 stars = Very important). (1) Making time to help my students; (2) Telling my students when they are doing well; (3) Giving my students awards; (4) Writing reports that say nice things about my students; (5) Giving my students a job that they like doing; (6) Valuing my students; (7) Students feeling valued by other students; (8) Students valuing me; (9) Students valuing other students; (10) Students knowing that I value them; (11) Students seeing teachers value other students who need extra support.
“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree): (1) My students get upset if they are not valued at school; (2) I am affected negatively if my students do not value me; (3) Valuing my students is influenced by how much they value me.

Survey evaluation

On the final page of all versions of the survey the following statement was written: “Finally, we’d like to know what you think about this survey.” There were four questions on the student survey and five questions on the staff survey:

(1) Were the questions easy to understand? Yes/ Maybe-Don’t know/ No
(2) Do you think your answers would change if you did this survey at a different time in the school term? Yes/ Maybe-Don’t know/ No
(3) Staff only- Did the survey help you to reflect on your role in promoting student wellbeing? Yes/ Maybe-Don’t know/ No
(4) How important are the views of children and young people for improving student wellbeing? (1 star = Not very important  7 stars = Very important)
(5) Is a survey like this a good way for children and young people to be heard? Yes/ Maybe-Don’t know/ No

Final page:

Clicking the last forward arrow button automatically submitted participants’ responses. After clicking this button, participants saw the final page of the survey as follows:

Primary survey:

“Thank you! If you would like to talk to someone about your wellbeing please let your teacher know. When our project is finished we will share ideas about how to help wellbeing in schools. Bye!”

Secondary survey:

“Thank you for your time. If you would like to talk to someone about your wellbeing please let your teacher know. When our project is finished we will send the results of our research to your school.

If you have any questions about this survey or this project please email ccyp@scu.edu.au or phone the Centre for Children and Young People on (02) 6620 3605. Thanks again! Bye!”

Staff survey:

“Thank you very much for completing this survey. If you would like to discuss this survey further, please email Donnah Anderson at donnah.anderson@scu.edu.au or phone (02) 6620 3802”
Appendix H: Phase 3 Region C Promoting wellbeing in schools with a meditation program

At the time of conducting the survey, Region C was running a Christian meditation program in their schools. The analyses below report the results of one extra question that pertained to meditation in the student versions of the survey, and three extra questions that pertained to meditation in the staff version of the survey.

The student version of the survey in region C asked participants to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement: ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 represented ‘Strongly Disagree’ and 7 represented ‘Strongly Agree’.

The staff version of the survey had three questions, including the one above. The additional two questions for staff were: ‘Doing meditation at school helps student wellbeing’ and ‘I feel confident facilitating the meditation program with students at my school’.

The outputs from SPSS are presented below, and then the results of the analyses are reported.
SPSS output: Primary Students

Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing

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Missing System

Total 3906 100.0
### SPSS output: Secondary students

#### Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>5362</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing

- **Mean:** 3.38
- **Std. Dev.:** 1.887
- **N:** 442

![Histogram of meditation school wellbeing scores](image-url)
SPSS output: Staff

![Histogram showing distribution of responses to the question: "Doing meditation at school helps student wellbeing."]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1.7</td>
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<td>Missing System</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</table>
### Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.00</td>
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<td>15.4</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<td>5.00</td>
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<td>Missing System</td>
<td>003</td>
<td>85.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>707</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were no significant differences in primary students’ responses nor secondary students’ responses to the question ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ based on their age, $p = .333$ and $p = .087$, respectively.
Gender

There were no significant differences in primary students’ responses to the question ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ in regard to their gender, $p = .081$. Males ($n = 423, M = 4.56, SD = 1.88$) and females ($n = 418, M = 4.31, SD = 2.17$) both mildly agreed that meditation helped their wellbeing.

Similarly, there were no significant differences in secondary students’ responses to the question ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ in regard to their gender, $p = .341$. Males ($n = 297, M = 3.46, SD = 1.83$) and females ($n = 145, M = 3.21, SD = 1.93$) both mildly disagreed that meditation helped their wellbeing.

Language

There were no differences in primary students’ responses to the question ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ in regard to their language spoken at home, $p = .613$.

Mann-Whitney $U$ analysis showed that secondary students who spoke only English at home ($n = 399, Median = 3.00, M = 3.28, SD = 1.84$) mildly disagreed that meditation helped their wellbeing, while those who spoke another language at home mildly agreed that meditation helped their wellbeing ($n = 43, Median = 5.00, M = 4.28, SD = 1.88$). The difference between the groups was significant at $p = .001$.

ATSI

*Primary students:* A one way ANOVA showed that primary students’ responses to the question ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ differed significantly according to their ATSI status, $F(2,514) = 16.82, p < .001$, eta squared = .06. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated as shown by Levene’s test, $p = .016$. Post hoc pairwise comparisons using Games Howell tests due to the unequal variances and samples sizes across groups, showed that primary students who identified as ATSI ($n = 109, M = 5.60, SD = 1.93$) agreed more strongly that meditation helped their wellbeing compared to those who were not ATSI ($n = 187, M = 4.71, SD = 1.90$), $p < .001$, and those who were not sure about their ATSI status ($n = 221, M = 4.24, SD = 2.09$), $p < .001$. Those who were not ATSI mildly agreed that meditation helped their wellbeing and this was significantly greater than those who were not sure of the ATSI status.
Secondary students: There were no significant differences in secondary students’ responses to the question ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’, \( p = .341 \). Students who identified as ATSI (\( n = 31, M = 3.84, SD = 2.02 \)) did not differ from those who were not ATSI (\( n = 391, M = 3.35, SD = 1.85 \)), or those who were unsure of their ATSI status (\( n = 19, M = 3.21, SD = 2.10 \)).

At secondary school level, the extent that meditation at school helped wellbeing was not affected by ATSI status.

Year

Primary students: A one way ANOVA showed that primary students’ responses to the question ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ differed significantly according to their Year/Year at school, \( F(3,836) = 21.29, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07 \). The assumption of homogeneity of variance was met as shown by Levene’s test, \( p = .218 \). Post hoc pairwise comparisons using Tukey’s HSD showed that all Years differed significantly except Year 4 (\( M = 4.80, SD = 1.89 \)) and Year 5 (\( M = 4.40, SD = 2.02 \)), \( p = .140 \), and Year 5 and Year 6 (\( M = 3.99, SD = 1.97 \)), \( p = .075 \). Year 3 (\( M = 5.70, SD = 1.86 \)) rated meditation as helping their wellbeing the most, and this differed significantly from Year 4, \( p = .005 \); Year 5, \( p < .001 \); and Year 6, \( p < .001 \). Year 4 students rated meditation as helping their wellbeing more than Year 6, \( p < .001 \).

In general, primary students from earlier grades agreed more strongly than later grades, that meditation at school helped their wellbeing.

Secondary students: There were no students from Region C who completed the survey who were in Year 10. A one way ANOVA showed that secondary students’ responses to the question ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ differed significantly according to their Year/Year at school, \( F(3,437) = 6.33, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04 \). The assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated as shown by Levene’s test, \( p = .043 \). To accommodate the unequal variance across groups and unequal cell sizes, Games Howell tests were used for post hoc pairwise comparisons. All Year groups’ mean scores were below the mid-point of 4, thus all groups disagreed to some extent that meditation helped their wellbeing. Year 9 scored lowest (\( n = 80, M = 2.61, SD = 1.64 \)) and they differed significantly from Year 8 (\( n = 101, M = 3.63, SD = 1.88 \)), \( p < .001 \), from Year 11 (\( n = 142, M = 3.37, SD = 1.90 \)), \( p = .011 \), and from Year 12 (\( n = 28, M = 3.79, SD = 1.71 \)), \( p = .014 \).

On average, secondary students disagreed that meditation helped their wellbeing. Year 9 thought meditation helped their wellbeing the least, differing significantly from Year 8, Year 11, and Year 12 student responses. (Note Year 10 did not participate in the survey).

Wellbeing conceptualisations and the effect of meditation on student wellbeing

To test whether views of meditation as helpful for wellbeing differed across wellbeing conceptualisations ANOVAs were used. Specifically, one-way between groups ANOVAs tested
whether wellbeing conceptualisations (Rank 1 and Rank 2) differed on student and staff responses to the question ‘Doing meditation at school helps my/student wellbeing’. There was no relationship between conceptualisation of wellbeing and the perceived impact of meditation on students’ wellbeing for primary, secondary and staff samples ($p > .05$).

The way in which wellbeing was described by students or staff had no impact on the extent to which they perceived meditation helped student wellbeing.

Wellbeing conceptualisations and the effect of meditation on staff wellbeing

One-way between groups ANOVAs with wellbeing conceptualisations (Rank 1 and Rank 2) as independent variables and staff responses to ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ as the dependent variable showed no relationship between conceptualisation of wellbeing and meditation for staff ($p > .05$).

There was no relationship between how wellbeing was conceptualised and how much meditation helped staff wellbeing.

Wellbeing conceptualisations and staff confidence with facilitating meditation at school

One-way between groups ANOVAs with wellbeing conceptualisations (Rank 1 and Rank 2) as independent variables and staff responses to ‘I feel confident facilitating the meditation program with students at my school’ as the dependent variable showed no relationship between wellbeing conceptualisation and confidence for staff ($p > .05$).

There was no relationship between how wellbeing was conceptualised and how confident staff felt in facilitating the meditation program.

There were no gender, ATSI, or language differences across the three meditation questions, $p > .05$. However, primary and secondary staff differed across the three meditation questions, with primary staff scoring significantly higher than secondary staff on all three questions. That is, primary staff ($M = 5.64, SD = 1.55$) agreed that meditation at school helps student wellbeing more strongly than secondary staff ($M = 4.47, SD = 1.75$), $F(1,72) = 8.00$, $p = .006$, eta squared = .10. Similarly, primary staff ($M = 5.72, SD = 1.72$) agreed that meditation at school helps their own wellbeing more strongly than secondary staff ($M = 3.92, SD = 1.75$), $F(1,72) = 17.69$, $p < .001$, eta squared = .20. Primary staff ($M = 5.68, SD = 1.44$) were also significantly more confident in facilitating the meditation program at school than secondary staff ($M = 3.98, SD = 2.10$), $F(1,72) = 13.23$, $p < .001$, eta squared = .16. On average, secondary staff mildly disagreed that meditation helped their own wellbeing and they mildly disagreed that they felt confident in facilitating it. In comparison, primary staff mildly agreed that meditation helped their own wellbeing, and they moderately agreed that they felt confident in facilitating meditation at school.
Wellbeing in Schools FINAL REPORT: VOLUME FOUR

Correlations

Pearson’s correlations tested the relationships between continuously scaled demographic variables and staff responses to the three meditation questions for primary \((n = 25)\), secondary \((n = 46)\) and both primary and secondary \((n = 10)\) staff. Significant relationships are reported below.

*Age and Years of Service*

Age and years of service in schools was positively and strongly associated for primary, \(r(23) = .85, p < .001\), secondary, \(r(44) = .73, p < .001\), and both primary and secondary staff, \(r(8) = .81, p = .005\).

Older staff and those who had worked in schools for longer said meditation helped student wellbeing and their own wellbeing more, and they felt more confident facilitating meditation programs in schools than younger and less experienced teachers.

*‘Doing meditation at school helps student wellbeing’ and ‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’*

The impact of meditation for student wellbeing and staff wellbeing were positively and strongly associated for primary staff, \(r(23) = .87, p < .001\), secondary staff, \(r(44) = .80, p < .001\), and staff who worked in both primary and secondary schools, \(r(8) = .88, p = .001\).

Staff who said meditation helped student wellbeing more strongly were also more likely to report meditation helping their own wellbeing to a greater extent.

*‘Doing meditation at school helps student wellbeing’ and ‘I feel confident facilitating the meditation program with students at my school’*

There was no significant relationship between these variables for primary staff, however for secondary staff there was a significant, positive and strong result, \(r(44) = .59, p < .001\), and a very strong positive relationship for staff who worked in both primary and secondary schools, \(r(8) = .87, p < .001\).

Secondary staff and staff who worked in both primary and secondary schools who felt more confident in facilitating meditation programs in school also tended to rate meditation as more helpful for student wellbeing.

*‘Doing meditation at school helps my wellbeing’ and ‘I feel confident facilitating the meditation program with students at my school’*
There were significant positive relationships between these variables for all three staff cohorts: primary, $r(23) = .42, p = .038$; secondary, $r(44) = .63, p < .001$, and staff who worked in both primary and secondary schools, $r(8) = .86, p = .001$.

Staff who felt more confident in facilitating meditation programs in schools also said that meditation helped their wellbeing more.

*Note: also see significant results in the third question on policy and programs - correlations.*
Appendix I: Phase 3 Methodological limitations

As with all studies, there are some methodological limitations to note:

- The design uses a single measurement time and as such individual differences are not measured and accounted for. Such differences may include personality, literacy, and cognitive ability. In order to control for such individual differences a within groups design would be required, or these variables could be measured and used as covariates in between group designs.

- Further, the cross-sectional design of the survey does not allow measurement of how student and staff understandings and beliefs about wellbeing and recognition develop over time. Again, a within groups (repeated measures) or mixed-between within design would be required to allow such research questions to be answered.

- The correlational nature of the survey also does not allow causal statements to be made about the way in which variables are related.

- While some demographic variables were measured in the survey, such as age, Year at school, gender, ATSI status, and CALD status, disability status was not measured. Such third variables may impact on the way students or staff conceptualise wellbeing and the role of recognition in facilitating wellbeing at school.

- Throughout the survey, labelling of Likert scales across cohorts was varied to align with the Phase 2 data and phrasing that the research team thought best suited each cohort. These different labels across cohorts prevented between groups comparisons on these variables. The research team thought that it was more important to use phrasing that aligned with each cohort than to test for differences between cohorts, which was not a research question.

- Some categorical items had numerous categories, which resulted in very small frequencies in some categories (e.g., staff roles at school). This prevented inferential analysis of these categories, due to violation of some statistical assumptions which require a certain number of participants in each cell.

- Some items allowed participants to select more than one option (e.g., staff curriculum specialisation) thus violating the assumption of independence of observations that is required for analyses requiring between groups designs.

- Although we were not interested in analysing data at a school level due to ethical reasons, (such as protecting individual participant’s identity) and avoiding school comparisons, the item used to measure school codes is a methodological limitation of the study. Many children (and some adults) did not type in correct school codes. Instead, if school level analyses are required we suggest the survey include a tick-box question as to which region the school is in, and another question asking whether it is a primary school or secondary school, or both. Then, a one or two digit school code could be requested, which would be shorter and less likely to be mis-typed.
Appendix J: Resources to assist schools and other project partners in providing professional development for staff in relation to the research findings

Appendix K: Findings dialogue table - Bringing wellbeing, relationship and recognition findings from Phases 1, 2 and 3 into dialogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WELLBEING Concepts</th>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Multidimensional</strong></td>
<td>Wellbeing is ... Being: happy, loved, trusted, healthy Having: equality, voice, confidence, Doing: self care, self acceptance, good decisions, acts of caring Agree wellbeing is multidimensional, and share with teachers their focus on social and emotional wellbeing</td>
<td>Primary and secondary students’ conceptualisations of wellbeing were multidimensional. For children in Year 3 to Year 6 the most frequent concepts were: being happy, being safe, being loved, being respected, being healthy and helping others. For secondary students the most frequent concepts were: being happy, being safe, being healthy and being respected.</td>
<td>Student ‘wellbeing’ is... multidimensional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily integrity</td>
<td>‘Taken for granted’ assumptions by students in focus groups that wellbeing necessarily</td>
<td>25.1% of primary students selected ‘being healthy’ as defining wellbeing (rank 1 or 2)</td>
<td>Only 4.1% of staff chose “being physically healthy” as defining wellbeing as either rank 1 or 2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2. Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>starts with physical needs being met was evident in the explicit recognition of this principle followed largely by silence in relation to physical wellbeing.</td>
<td>29.1% of secondary students selected ‘being healthy’ as defining wellbeing (rank 1 or 2) The third most frequent response for both groups</td>
<td>apparent in health sector and national education documentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both students and teachers agree that student wellbeing is grounded in relationships (see additional Relationships section below).

Students emphasise experience of relationships e.g., students have greater emphasis on trust and the dynamics of trusting relationships, while teachers are more interested in the conditions in which trust can be cultivated.

Both students and teachers agree that student wellbeing is... grounded in relationships (see additional Relationships section below).

---

### 3. Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture barely raised Catholic values source of contest</td>
<td>Although most primary and secondary students agreed that being at a Catholic school helped their wellbeing, there were many secondary</td>
<td>Student ‘wellbeing’ is... Embedded in culture, which is shaped by Christian values and Catholic identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The majority of staff agreed that the Christian values at a Catholic school help both student wellbeing and their own wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The domain of environment, which includes the school culture and ethos, was referred to least of all the four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students say ...</td>
<td>Teachers say ...</td>
<td>Policy says ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>students who did not agree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                | 4. Pastoral care | Pastoral care not mentioned | Student ‘wellbeing’ is... Exemplified in pastoral care. | Pastoral care a relevant focus in Catholic education documentation, with roughly equal amounts focusing on pastoral care and on wellbeing.  
Within the documentation, wellbeing is conceptualised as an outcome of pastoral care, with pastoral care posited as action taken to promote student  
Environment a key context in doc focused on ATSI  
The CE pastoral care documentation emphasise the Catholic context  
Catholic Education strategic plans made more reference to relationships than any other sector. |
### 5. Teacher wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Some students mentioned the importance of teacher wellbeing, though not a strong theme in the data. | Student ‘wellbeing’ is... Partly dependent on teacher wellbeing. | There was a minority of staff who perceived their school did not adequately support teacher wellbeing. | Not many docs specifically address recognition and/or wellbeing of teachers. Staff wellbeing was addressed in some docs in the context of:  
  - Meeting PD needs  
  - Mentoring teachers  
  - Participation of ATSI at all levels  
CEOM includes postgrad courses for teachers in student wellbeing.  
One (SA) CEO doc focused solely on wellbeing of employees |

### 6. Pedagogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students agree that pedagogy impacts on wellbeing</td>
<td>Student ‘wellbeing’ is... Impacted on by pedagogy.</td>
<td>The teaching and learning domain for implementing approaches to wellbeing, which primarily includes pedagogy, curriculum and the provision of information, was the third most frequently referred to domain (out of four) in the policy analysed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students say ...</td>
<td>Teachers say ...</td>
<td>Policy says ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>approaches, in which all four domains were referred to – and references were fairly nebulous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Programmes</strong></td>
<td>Some students had participated in programs (e.g. seasons) and spoke positively about them</td>
<td>Student ‘wellbeing’ is... Supplemented by programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Counselling</strong></td>
<td>Little emphasis on counseling from students (role in listening for the ‘few students’ who need their support)</td>
<td>Secondary students, especially males, endorsed having a say about ‘whether I see the school counsellor’ as very important for their wellbeing. <em>(NB See relationship section below)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. Parents</strong></td>
<td>Parents assumed to be important for wellbeing in terms of providing care, love, protection and encouragement</td>
<td>See relationship section below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Leadership relevant to students in terms of leaders knowing students names/approach to discipline</td>
<td>Student ‘wellbeing’ is... Dependent on leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. Policy</strong></td>
<td>Not relevant/commented upon</td>
<td>Student ‘wellbeing’ is... Situated in confused policy environment. Key theme is need for policy makers to consult with and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students say ...</td>
<td>Teachers say ...</td>
<td>Policy says ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>draw on the experience of teachers and principals. Aware of the limitations of policy and difficulties in application. Wellbeing policy needs to be sufficiently detailed to provide structure, flexible enough to adapt to local needs, and applicable to practice. Currently policy is somewhat ‘hit and miss’ in terms of applicability and would benefit greatly from being informed by dialogue with teachers and principals.</td>
<td>Most staff mildly-to-moderately agreed with the statement ‘It would be helpful to have more guidance with student wellbeing’. Most staff moderately-to-strongly agreed with the statement ‘Additional programs related to student wellbeing are helpful in schools’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic differences on the concepts of wellbeing</strong></td>
<td>For primary students, conceptualisation of wellbeing differed according to age, Year at school and CALD. For secondary students, conceptualisation of wellbeing differed according to gender, age, year at school, ATSI and CALD status.</td>
<td>Staff conceptualisation of wellbeing was impacted by gender and age, but was not dependent on whether they worked in primary versus secondary schools, nor their years of service, or school size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher/schools role in student wellbeing</strong></td>
<td>Both primary and secondary students strongly agree that their wellbeing is important</td>
<td>The majority of staff agree their school supports student wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students say ...</td>
<td>Teachers say ...</td>
<td>Policy says ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students say ...</td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• students being ‘known’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• teachers ‘knowing’ students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students describe their needs and desires to be known in relationship:</td>
<td>On average, primary students rated all relationships as important for their wellbeing, in decreasing order: (1) parents/carers, (2) close friends, (3) their teacher, (4) principal, and (5) non-teaching staff. On average, secondary students rated all relationships except their relationships with school counsellors, the principal and non-teaching staff as important for student wellbeing. The importance of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to be ‘noticed’’</td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘visible’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘everybody knowing you’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘everybody knowing you are there’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘people not forgetting about you’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERLAP OF LOVE AND ESTEEMED/VALUED</strong></td>
<td><strong>Attentive noticing</strong> (described below) involves getting to know students through a range of proactive, dynamic practices.</td>
<td><strong>On average, staff rated all relationships as important for student wellbeing, in decreasing order: (1) teachers and students, (2) students and parents/carers, (3) students and close friends, (4) students and their home group/pastoral care teacher, (5) teachers and other teachers, (6) parents and teachers, (7) counsellors and students, (8) principals and teachers,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELATIONSHIP – data grounds wellbeing in relationship</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong>’ aware of importance of student ‘knowing’ or ‘feeling’ that they are loved and cared for</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on:</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Recognition = knowing/being known = visibility

### Students say ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>relationships were rated in the following order: (1) parents/carer, (2) close friends (3) other students who are not close friends, (4) their home group/pastoral care teacher, (5) their teachers, (6) non-teaching staff, (7) their principal, and (8) counsellors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teachers say ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(9) students and other students who are not close friends, (10) principals and students, and (11) students and non-teaching staff.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Policy says ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catholic Education documentation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greatest emphasis in the national education documentation, with all of these including reference to relationships of one type or another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Demographic differences on the importance of relationships for wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender:</th>
<th>ATSI and CALD:</th>
<th>Year level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On average, relationships with a broader range of people were of particular importance for boys at primary and secondary school, compared to girls.</td>
<td>Relationships with all school staff were especially important for primary students from these minority groups. Relationships with close friends, parents and home group teachers were especially important for secondary students who spoke a language other than English.</td>
<td>Earlier Years in both primary school and secondary school rated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| All students’ relationships were rated as more important for student wellbeing by female staff than male staff, except students’ relationships with other students who were not close friends, and their relationships with parents/carers. Primary staff rated many relationships as more important for student wellbeing than secondary staff. When wellbeing was thought of as academic success, or physical and mental health, staff rated relationships as less important for student wellbeing than staff who |

95
### Students say ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>relationships as significantly more important for their wellbeing than later Years Secondary students who defined wellbeing as <strong>having privacy</strong> rated several relationships as less important for their wellbeing than other students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teachers say ...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thought of wellbeing in terms of affect, spirituality and connections with other people and places. There was an inverse association between school size and staff views on the importance of relationships for student wellbeing. Staff from larger secondary schools rated the importance of relationships for student wellbeing lower than staff from smaller secondary schools. Staff from larger schools had worked in schools for less time than staff at smaller schools.</td>
<td></td>
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### Policy says ...

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### Acts of relationship – in student-teacher relationship

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</table>

The majority of primary students, secondary students and staff agreed that teachers speaking kindly to students affects student wellbeing at school ‘very much’. Students and staff endorsed the following actions as important for student wellbeing:
- My teacher enjoying talking with me
- My teacher knowing me

Teachers describe working hard to build rapport and develop effective relationships, through ‘attentive noticing’, at times using specific strategies to help. Examples of how this is achieved include:
- asking questions
- listening carefully
- observing changes or events
- paying attention

The majority of primary students, secondary students and staff agreed that teachers speaking kindly to students affects student wellbeing at school ‘very much’. Students and staff endorsed the following actions as important for student wellbeing:
- My teacher enjoying talking with me
Students say ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher making time to help me when I can’t do my school work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher making time to help me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher taking notice of what I have to say</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher telling me when I’m doing well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher knowing whether I respect them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher respecting my views about religion/spirituality</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Teachers say ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>knowing/saying the student’s name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waving at them when driving past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In describing this, some teachers used the words ‘love’ and ‘caring’ directly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher knowing me well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher making time to help me when I can’t do my school work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher making time to help me</td>
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Policy says ...

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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher knowing me well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher making time to help me when I can’t do my school work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher making time to help me</td>
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<tr>
<td>• My teacher telling me when I’m doing well</td>
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<tr>
<td>• My teacher knowing whether I respect them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My teacher respecting my views about religion/spirituality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student-friend relationships

Students reported that feeling included by friends at school was important for student wellbeing.

Both primary and secondary students rated relationships with their friends as the second most important relationship for their wellbeing, following their relationships with their parents/carers.

Feeling included by friends at school was reported as important for student wellbeing by staff. Staff rated relationships between students and their friends as third most important for their wellbeing following their relationships with their teachers and their parents.

Relationships between students specifically referred to in three docs – 2 with multidimensional conceptualisation of wellbeing (in relation to learner wellbeing) and 1 with safety focus. All 3 docs made reference to positive, respectful and/or reciprocal relationships with peers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Student-principal</td>
<td>While most primary students said the principal using students’ names affects</td>
<td>Most staff said the principal using students’ names affects student wellbeing</td>
<td>Any reference to principals in docs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship</td>
<td>student wellbeing ‘very much’, this was only the case for approximately half the</td>
<td>‘very much’</td>
<td>tended to be regarding teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>secondary students who were surveyed.</td>
<td></td>
<td>mentoring, PD etc. One ref noted to</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>principal-student relationship in</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>doc focusing on mental heath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Parent-teacher</td>
<td>Developing a “culture of conversation”</td>
<td>On average, staff rated relationships between teachers and parents as 6th</td>
<td>Partnerships with families and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships</td>
<td>Communication with parents about ‘things that matter’ increases understanding</td>
<td>out of 11 in regard to importance for student wellbeing, and more</td>
<td>wider communities feature in some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with regard to children’s lives, and thus further adds to ‘knowing’ the students.</td>
<td>important than students’ relationships with other students who are not close</td>
<td>national, state and Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers and parents were ‘working with’ and supporting each other, to support</td>
<td>friends, with principals, and non-teaching staff.</td>
<td>education documentation. Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the children.</td>
<td></td>
<td>are a key domain in documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inclusion of students in the school-parent partnership, signifying respect for</td>
<td></td>
<td>regarding Aboriginal and Torres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>young people.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strait Islander students – highlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building and strengthening relationships, particularly with parents, contributes</td>
<td></td>
<td>the importance of partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to supporting student</td>
<td></td>
<td>and engagement with the wider</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous community, and cultural</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and linguistic identity. Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>with parents and wider communities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>feature in all Catholic Education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pastoral care docs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Also feature in state gov't</td>
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</table>
### Students say ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Counsellors

- Students see counsellors as having more limited role than teachers.
- Students express reservations about privacy and student choice in seeing counsellors.
- Primary students were not asked about counsellors.
- Secondary students, rated their relationship with the counsellor of least importance compared to other relationships and rated it below the mid-point on the scale, thus as unimportant for their wellbeing.
- Some teachers commented they recognise when students need counselling assistance but it is not their role or beyond their scope of expertise to provide.
- Staff rated the relationship between students and counsellors as 7th out of 11, compared to other relationships. Staff may view a major role of the counsellor is to foster the wellbeing or mental health of students. This result for staff aligns with their description of wellbeing, with one third of staff perceiving wellbeing as primarily (i.e., they ranked it as their first or second choice) about psychological or mental health.

### Pastoral care and relationships

- For secondary students, pastoral care programs were particularly important for minority groups, such as those who speak a language other than English.
- Pastoral care programs, and roles such as pastoral care coordinators and home room teachers, provide opportunities for teachers and students to develop positive relationships and engage in conversation.
- Teachers spoke of needing to ‘know’ the children, in order to
- Relationships are particularly emphasised in pastoral care documentation in Catholic Education.
- All pastoral care documentation in policy analysis made reference to supportive, caring, inclusive and/or positive relationships (usually in docs focusing on student behaviour and management.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of recognition</th>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOGNITION</td>
<td>Student data points to relationships as critical for happiness and wellbeing at school</td>
<td>On average, primary and secondary students and staff endorsed relationships as important for wellbeing. They also endorsed recognition (being cared for, respected and valued) as important for student wellbeing.</td>
<td>On average, primary and secondary students and staff endorsed relationships as important for wellbeing. They also endorsed recognition (being cared for, respected and valued) as important for student wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3 findings for both students and staff show the three aspects of recognition are significantly and positively correlated, thus supporting the overlapping nature of the three dimensions as theorised.</td>
<td>Phase 3 findings for both students and staff show the three aspects of recognition are significantly and positively correlated, thus supporting the overlapping nature of the three dimensions as theorised.</td>
<td>Phase 3 findings for both students and staff show the three aspects of recognition are significantly and positively correlated, thus supporting the overlapping nature of the three dimensions as theorised.</td>
<td>Within the education documentation that emphasised the relationships domain most included specific reference to at least one dimension of recognition. All of the national education documents, the vast majority of the Catholic Education documents (7 out of 8), and just over half of the state government education documents (11 out of 20) referred to one or more recognition aspect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students say … | Teachers say … | Policy says ...
---|---|---
**Loved and cared for** | Phase 3 partially corroborates Phase 2. 24.7% of primary students chose ‘being loved’ as defining wellbeing (either rank 1 or 2). This was the 4th most frequent choice following being happy (28.3%), safe (29.5%) and healthy (25.1%). For secondary students 12.6% chose ‘being loved, which was the 6th most frequent response following being happy’ (38%), safe (30.1%), healthy (29.9%), respected (25.8%) and looking after myself (15.5%). | Most evident of the three dimensions in the teacher data. Teachers used terms and concepts such as: • love • care for • support • connectedness or connection • knowing • acknowledging • interest comfort |
Students attested to love as being foundational to their wellbeing when they described wellbeing as: • feeling loved • having people tell you they love you • loving others and yourself | Staff Phase 3: “Being connected to people” was the most frequent response chosen by staff to define wellbeing (56.6% of staff chose it as either rank 1 or 2) | Aspects relevant to the dimension of cared for were the most frequently incorporated in the documentation across all sectors. These tended to be with regard to: • caring, supportive relationships for students (mostly within school communities) • support networks • establishing a sense of connection and belonging for students within the school context • developing caring culture |
**Students identified the key role of teachers in schools to be to care for** | Aspirational statements (using language identified above) with regard to |
**On average, students strongly endorsed being cared for by students and staff as important for their wellbeing.** The majority also acknowledged the mutual nature of being cared for. | Reference is made to developing supportive, caring, inclusive and/or connectedness is a component in defining wellbeing in a range of documents including in the contexts of health promotion; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI includes connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry, family and community). |
## Trust

Data re students ‘having confidence’ to express themselves, including the confidence to ask for what one needs being communicated - falls within the dimension of cared for.

### Students say ...

Phase 2: Students endorsed students feeling safe at school and students feeling it’s ok to tell their teacher what they need, as important for student wellbeing.

Secondary students rated having opportunities to have a say about their personal needs/preferences (such as who they sit near) as most important for their wellbeing compared to having a say

### Teachers say ...

The concept of trust in relationships and the school environment was frequently intimated by teachers as of importance, along with students feeling supported and comfortable in relationships with teachers.

Teachers see students feeling comfortable (as a consequence of acts of recognition in terms of love/cared for), as

### Policy says ...

Phase 3: Staff endorsed “students feeling safe at school” and “students feeling it’s ok to tell me what they need” as important for student wellbeing

Staff rated students having a say about personal needs/preferences, such as who they sit near, as least important for student wellbeing compared to having a say about more
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cared for and friends</strong></td>
<td>Friends providing support, encouragement, constancy, guidance and understanding were all experiences of feeling cared for by friends.</td>
<td>Students rated caring for and being cared for by other students as important for their wellbeing.</td>
<td>Staff rated students caring for and being cared for by other students as important for student wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catholic ethos</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>A connection was indicated specifically between the Catholic ethos, wellbeing and the dimension of love/cared for. Including importance of recognition at the individual and the group/social level.</td>
<td>Catholic Education strategic plans made more reference to relationships than any other sector. The CE pastoral care documentation emphasise the Catholic context, Christ’s teachings and the gospels. For example, all refer to the dignity of the person made in the image of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect</strong></td>
<td>Students articulated self-respect and respect for others as central to student wellbeing.</td>
<td>On average, students strongly endorsed being respected by students and staff as important for their wellbeing.</td>
<td>On average, staff in Phase 3 endorsed being respected as important for student wellbeing. The majority also.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Students say ...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressed in highly conditional terms (I will not give respect a person who does not respect me) AND more mutual expressions of respect (I will respect another person regardless of whether they respect me)</td>
<td>The majority also acknowledged the mutual nature of respect.</td>
</tr>
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### Teachers say ...

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<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>acknowledged the mutual nature of respect</td>
<td>Lower endorsement of mutuality was associated with staff reporting lower subjective recognition.</td>
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### Policy says ...

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and Catholic education policy-related documentation than the state education documentation.</td>
<td>In the national education documents there was the same proportion of references to respect as there were to cared for, with the Catholic documents having nearly the same amount, whereas the state documentation had only half as much.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respect apparent in single docs in the contexts of student behaviour, pastoral care, school employees' wellbeing, and early childhood.

### Respect is understood by students as:

- something everyone deserves
- which should be exercised equally

Students identified inconsistencies in the language and concepts of respect include teachers:

- having fair expectations
- being fair and just
- ‘following through’ being consistent

Students and staff endorsed the following items as important for wellbeing:

- Being treated fairly at school;
- Every student at my school getting respect no matter how they behave;
- Every student at my school getting respect no matter how old

The main aspects of respect referred to were in the context of:

- respectful relationships
- active participation in school activities and processes
- having respect for students
### Students say ...

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>treatment of students by teachers and schools as a key causal factor for diminishing respect between students and teachers and as impacting negatively on their wellbeing.</td>
<td>they are; Seeing my teacher/s care for, respect and value other students who need extra support</td>
<td>how old they are; Seeing my teacher/s care for, respect and value other students who need extra support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective valuation of students as a whole - when they experience all students as being treated equally and respectfully.</td>
<td>See above cell</td>
<td>See above cell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Self respect

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.4% and 15.5% of primary and secondary students, respectively, described wellbeing as predominantly about &quot;looking after myself&quot;. (rank 1 and 2)</td>
<td>13.4% and 15.5% of primary and secondary students, respectively, described wellbeing as predominantly about &quot;looking after myself&quot;. (rank 1 and 2)</td>
<td>13.4% and 15.5% of primary and secondary students, respectively, described wellbeing as predominantly about &quot;looking after myself&quot;. (rank 1 and 2)</td>
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### Valued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students say ...</th>
<th>Teachers say ...</th>
<th>Policy says ...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On average, students and staff strongly endorsed being valued as important for accepting themselves.</td>
<td>Teachers spoke of: • Valuing students’ contributions</td>
<td>On average, students and staff strongly endorsed being valued as important for accepting themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students say ...</td>
<td>Teachers say ...</td>
<td>Policy says ...</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and others ‘for who they are’</td>
<td>Flexibility and adaptation in recognition of the uniqueness of individual children and their needs (in pedagogy) – signaling inclusion of all dimensions of recognition.</td>
<td>for student wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• significant others have role in facilitating and strengthening student wellbeing through valuing their particular gifts, strengths and competencies</td>
<td>Outward and public signs of recognition, such as giving awards and writing reports, were not as strongly linked with feeling valued as were more implicit ways of showing recognition, such as the teacher spending time with a student, listening to the student, knowing the student well, and helping with school work.</td>
<td>Outward signs of recognition, such as giving awards and writing reports, were not as strongly linked with feeling valued as were more implicit ways of showing recognition, such as the teacher spending time with a student, listening to the student, knowing the student well, and helping with school work.</td>
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</table>

**Outward and public signs of being valued**

Outward and public signs of recognition, such as giving awards and writing reports, were not as strongly linked with feeling valued as were more implicit ways of showing recognition, such as the teacher spending time with a student, listening to the student, knowing the student well, and helping with school work.
### Students say ...

**Having a say**
- Emphasis students place on the importance of voice and having a say for their wellbeing attests to the centrality of conversation, which is the vehicle through which student voices are heard and responded to.
- For primary students the most important aspect of having a say was ‘what we learn at school’, followed by ‘school rules’, ‘who I sit near’ and finally, ‘punishments for breaking school rules’.
- For secondary students the most important aspect of having a say was ‘who I sit near’, followed by ‘what we learn in school’, ‘whether I see the school counsellor’, ‘school rules’ and ‘punishments for breaking school rules’.

**Conversation**
- Students identify conversation and dialogue with significant others – friends and peers, teachers, principals and parents - as foundational to their wellbeing.
- Students did not just want

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<th>Phase 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students say ...</td>
<td>Teachers say ...</td>
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</table>

### Teachers say ...

**Having a say**
- The importance of students having a voice, expressing themselves and actively participating was a key aspect of a sense of belonging in the school community.

**Conversation**
- On average, primary and secondary students endorsed ‘My teacher enjoying talking with me’ and ‘My teacher taking notice of what I have to say’ as important for student wellbeing.

### Policy says ...

**Having a say**
- For staff, the most important aspect of students having a say was ‘what they learn at school’, ‘school rules’, ‘punishments about breaking school rules’, ‘whether they see the school counsellor’ and ‘who I sit near’.

**Conversation**
- Conversation specifically mentioned in one learner wellbeing doc: “Partnerships are fostered through reciprocal communication and sharing of information.”

Language of ‘student voice’ or ‘having a say’ not used. Surprisingly little in the way of reference to participation – found in relation to:
- Learner wellbeing;
- Student engagement and retention;
- And aspirational national strategy statements for children and young people.

Also, one child protection focused policy doc highlights children’s right to be heard regarding decisions affecting their lives and encouraged to participate.
Students say … | Teachers say … | Policy says …
---|---|---
**Phase 2** | **Phase 3** | **Phase 2** | **Phase 3**

‘one-off’ conversations but conversation based in relationships and opportunities for conversation *(embedded in school?)* = VALUED?

Students identified ways in which the lack of opportunity for conversation diminished their wellbeing:
- the experience of not being given a say
- being yelled at
- not being treated as an individual
- being spoken to disrespectfully by teachers and friends in themselves

*This is about respect*

Conditions for conversation (or recognition via conversation) are not consistent, or even always evident. Teachers talk of:
- how they ‘forget sometimes to listen or just be’
- having to ‘force myself’ or ‘make the effort’ to listen to students

Constraints on the acts of conversation on account of teachers’ busy schedules, time pressure and stressful workloads.

Students’ emphasise importance of:
- ‘looking after yourself’
- not being too self-critical
- oneself making good decisions

13.4% and 15.5% of primary and secondary students, respectively, described wellbeing as predominantly about “looking after myself”. (rank 1 and 2)

‘positive self-regard’ and ‘satisfaction with self’ mentioned in a few docs taking whole school approach

On average, students and staff endorsed the mutuality

Awareness of students’ responses to teachers

On average, students and staff endorsed the
<table>
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<th>Phase 2</th>
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<th>Policy says ...</th>
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<td>of recognition – being cared for, respected and valued, as important for student wellbeing.</td>
<td>actions (when teachers being proactive in relationship)</td>
<td></td>
<td>mutuality of recognition – being cared for, respected and valued, as important for student wellbeing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary and secondary students who rated student-teacher relationships as more important for promoting student wellbeing also rated the importance of mutual recognition as higher.</td>
<td>Teachers believe that students are aware when they are having a bad day or things are not well for them</td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff who rated students’ relationships with non-teaching staff as more important for promoting student wellbeing also rated the importance of mutual recognition as higher, and thus supported a whole-school approach toward student wellbeing.</td>
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<td>For primary students, secondary students and staff, greater endorsement of the importance of mutual recognition for wellbeing was related to subjectively feeling more cared for, respected and valued at school.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary students who described wellbeing as ‘looking after myself’, secondary students who described wellbeing as ‘having privacy’, and staff for whom wellbeing meant ‘being successful at school’ viewed mutual recognition as least important for promoting</td>
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<td>Primary students who described wellbeing as ‘looking after myself’, secondary students who described wellbeing as ‘having privacy’, and staff</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
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<td>wellbeing at school. In contrast, primary students who described wellbeing as 'being safe', 'being loved', 'being listened to', 'helping others' and 'having a great environment'; secondary students who described wellbeing as 'being loved', and staff who described it as 'being safe', 'being connected to place' and 'being connected to people', viewed mutual recognition as most important for promoting student wellbeing.</td>
<td>for whom wellbeing meant 'being successful at school' viewed mutual recognition as least important for promoting wellbeing at school. In contrast, primary students who described wellbeing as 'being safe', 'being loved', 'being listened to', 'helping others' and 'having a great environment'; secondary students who described wellbeing as 'being loved', and staff who described it as 'being safe', 'being connected to place' and 'being connected to people', viewed mutual recognition as most important for promoting student wellbeing.</td>
<td>Male staff and secondary staff endorsed mutual recognition less than female staff and primary staff, respectively. Staff from larger schools tended to place less emphasis on mutual recognition than those from smaller schools.</td>
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</table>
### Mis-recognition/Non-recognition

The most frequently cited negative experience for student wellbeing is that of ‘being yelled at’.

**Considerable discussion in student focus groups of feelings of misrecognition post-recognition being raised**

The struggle for recognition at school emerged in different contexts (such as being male, Indigenous and from diverse cultural backgrounds).

Secondary students who selected ‘having privacy’ as their main way of thinking about wellbeing may be signalling that their needs for recognition are not met. Having privacy may not only be about seeking a solitary existence, but about wanting to select who to reveal personal information to.

Little data from teachers and principals which directly references misrecognition or struggles over recognition.

Underlying the teachers’ emphasis (above) on communication with students are tacit understandings of the consequences of not listening.

Conditions in which misrecognition or non-recognition of students was possible, or even likely, were alluded to, in the space between the aspirational and the actual.

**Systems and structures:**
- The rules can get in the way e.g. following regulatory processes rather than gaining a deeper understanding

### Phase 2

### Phase 3

### Teachers say ...

Little data from teachers and principals which directly references misrecognition or struggles over recognition.

Underlying the teachers’ emphasis (above) on communication with students are tacit understandings of the consequences of not listening.

Phase 3: Most staff were very aware of the impact of negative actions on student wellbeing (i.e., Teachers humiliating students; teachers speaking harshly to students, and students being abusive towards each other).

The practice of conditional recognition of students by staff was associated with staff feeling less cared for, respected and valued at school, and is an example of non-recognition of staff.
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<td>of a given situation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Not enough time to be able to stop, take a moment and listen - too busy to take the time necessary for listening and ‘dealing with things’.</td>
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<td>• Teachers feeling depleted of energy, tired and stressed.</td>
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<td>Personal or personality factors:</td>
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<td>• Teachers’ attitudes to students and forming relationships with them</td>
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<td>Environmental factors:</td>
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<td>• How teachers do things can also be part of a larger school culture</td>
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<td>Parent-teacher relationships:</td>
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<td>• increased expectations and pressure on teachers from some parents</td>
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<td>• sense of abrogation of parental responsibility referred to in the data</td>
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<td>Recognition of teachers</td>
<td>Students say ...</td>
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<td>On average, students</td>
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<td>endorsed that giving</td>
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<td>recognition (caring for,</td>
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<td>respecting and valuing)</td>
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<td>to their teachers was</td>
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<td>Students say ...</td>
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<td><strong>Recognition of leadership</strong></td>
<td>they felt less respected by students.</td>
<td>Principals were less affected if students did not respect or care for them compared to other staff, but they reported feeling more cared for by students than other staff. They also reported feeling more cared for, respected and valued by parents than all other staff. Compared to other staff, assistant principals felt more cared for, respected and valued by the principal of their school, they felt more cared for by parents, and more respected by students.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7 References


Probst, B., & Berenson, L. (2013). The double arrow: How qualitative social work researchers use reflexivity. *Qualitative Social Work, (Published on-line before print).*


This Volume is to be read in conjunction with Volumes One, Two and Three of the Final Report:

Final Report: Volume One – Overview, Methodology, Research Design, Phase 1 Policy Analysis Results

Final Report: Volume Two – Phase 2 Qualitative Interviews and Focus Groups Results

Final Report: Volume Three – Phase 3 Quantitative Survey Results

Final Report: Volume Four – Discussion of Findings, Recommendations, References and Appendices

Additionally, the Executive Summary is available as a separate document.

Additional copies of all Volumes of the Final Report can be accessed at:

www.ccyp.scu.edu.au
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