



How the education sectors resource and  
react to student health and wellbeing  
issues in Western Australia

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## Introduction

The importance of providing a comprehensive education that supports the needs of the whole child is acknowledged by the Department of Education (DoE), Catholic Education WA (CEWA) and the Association of Independent Schools (AISWA). All students are entitled to a positive educational experience and this includes schools managing the educational experience to support students' health and wellbeing.

The Commissioner's office has developed a framework comprising three domains in order to comprehensively understand wellbeing for children and young people.

- **Learning and participating:** children and young people are engaged in learning and have the skills and supports needed for successful learning
- **Healthy and connected:** children and young people have positive physical and mental health, engage in positive health behaviours, and feel connected and respected in their culture and community.
- **Safe and supported:** children and young people are supported by safe and healthy relationships, experience physical and emotional safety in the home and their community, engage in safe behaviours, and are supported to have their needs met.

Schools can and do make a difference in this area but also require sufficient resources and support to ensure children and young people are healthy and remain engaged in education.

## Purpose of the project

The purpose of the project is to determine the extent of financial resources available to address student health and wellbeing needs, and how these resources are distributed to support individual students in government, catholic and independent schools throughout Western Australia.

## Background to the project

The 2015 ***Our Children Can't Wait Report: Review of the Inquiry into the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in Western Australia*** reviewed the 2011 Report and found that while there has been some progress on the implementation of recommendations, significant gaps still remained. The 2015 Review made 12 new recommendations after considering the progress made on the original 54 recommendations from the 2011 Inquiry Report.

This project is linked to two recommendations in the 2015 Review

- **Recommendation 5:** The State and Commonwealth Governments work collaboratively to improve planning and increase resources for mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention services for children and young people, to ensure children and young people across the State have access to the full continuum of services and programs they require.
- **Recommendation 7:** Schools be resourced to provide whole-of-school approaches that have been demonstrated to be effective in promoting resilience and supporting social and emotional learning.

Schools are well placed to recognise the need for early intervention, as issues arise, and provide advice as to the best way forward. However, they require sufficient resources to ensure this occurs.

This project is also mindful of the findings and recommendations in the 2018 report, ***Speaking Out About School and Learning***.

Particularly:

- Finding 4: Students recognised that those students who do not have supportive families needed extra assistance provided through the school to address their disadvantage.
- Finding 5: More than half of the participating students reported 'at least some of the time' not getting the help they need to complete their school work and this has a significant influence on their indicators of engagement.
- Finding 6: Students with disability or long-term health conditions were more likely to report feeling unsafe at school and worried about issues such as bullying.
- Finding 7: All students with a physical or mental health issue should have access to appropriate levels of support from schools to identify and manage the issue and reduce the impact of the issue on their engagement with school and learning.

## Methodology of the project

Information request to the Department of Education, Catholic Education WA and the Association of Independent Schools requesting the following:

- An outline of targeted government funding to support student health and wellbeing.
- The proportion of the Sector's global budget that is allocated to support student health and wellbeing.
- The distribution of funding to system programs and projects.
- The allocation of funding to schools and individual students, including how this allocation is determined.

Visitation to six schools, two nominated by each sector. Case study vignettes to develop a deeper understanding on how individual schools utilise the resources allocated to them to support student health and wellbeing. A guided discussion question format was used for each visitation.

Information search and review to obtain additional relevant information and verify information provided.

## Evidence review

One of education's most difficult and hotly debated issues is school funding. Given the differing school Sectors in Western Australia, with a different funding model for schools applied to each, the issue is further complicated.

The 2011 Review of Funding for Schooling, led by Mr David Gonski AC (Gonski Report) identified some concerning trends relating to school achievement, in identifying an unacceptable link between low levels of achievement and educational disadvantage. Given that countries with high performing education systems combine equity with quality, the Gonski Report stresses the need for an equitable funding system. The capacity to address student's health and wellbeing needs reflects directly on the amount of resources available.

### **Schooling Resource Standard**

The Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) is based on recommendations from the Gonski Report. The SRS is an estimate of how much public funding a school needs to meet the educational needs of its students. The SRS is a base amount of \$11,343 for primary school students and \$14,254 for secondary students. The base amount may be discounted dependent upon the school's 'capacity to contribute'. Decisions relating to this are based on the socio-economic status (SES) score. Capacity to contribute does not apply to government schools, non-government special schools, special assistance schools, non-government majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools and non-government sole-provider schools.

By 2029 all schools will be funded on a fair share of the Commonwealth SRS, in line with states having full constitutional responsibility for schools.

Loadings were developed by looking at how much additional funding was required to help students facing different types of disadvantage. Loadings are provided for disability, low English language proficiency, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, socio-educational disadvantage, school location, and school size.

Some adjustments over the 2023 – 2029 period will be required in order for schools to be funded on a fair share of the Commonwealth SRS by 2029.

### **Disability Funding NCCD**

The Quality Schools funding arrangements focus on student need with a SRS, as recommended by the Gonski Report. A base amount is provided for every student with additional loadings for disadvantage, including students with a disability.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) gives us a national definition of a student with a disability or educational adjustment. The NCCD also groups school students with disability by the level of support they need to access and participate in learning.

According to the Australian Government Department of Education – *What is the Government doing to support students with a disability*, from 2018, funding is informed by the NCCD and based on a per student amount at each of the three levels of additional support needed by a student with disability – supplementary, substantive and extensive.

This funding is provided directly to the school in the case of independent schools, provided to CEWA for distribution to catholic schools and provided to Department for distribution to public schools.

The Department of Education distributes \$29.2 million to AISWA and CEWA to support students with special education needs, encompassing \$22.3 million under the *Special Education Supplementary Grant (SE grant)* and \$6.9 million of funding under the *High Support Needs Grant (HSN grant)*. SE grants and HSN grants can only be used to support the students in respect of whom that funding is paid, either individually or collectively. Source: Department of Education paper to the Commissioner for Children and Young People 2019.

### **Student Enrolment**

In 2019 460,035 students were enrolled in schools in Western Australia, of these 311,199 students were enrolled in public schools and 148,836 students in non-government schools. Thus approximately 67.6% of students are enrolled in public schools.

## Department of Education

The following information was provided by the Department of Education, Western Australia in response to a request by the Commissioner. The majority of their response has been included.

*To provide you with an outline of the funding allocated to public schools, the Commonwealth's funding contribution is combined with the State's funding contribution and allocated to public schools through the State's Student-Centred Funding Model (SCFM). As a result, the specific State funding cannot be determined for individual public schools. In the 2019 calendar year, over \$3.5 billion was allocated to schools as at 25 March 2019, representing 69% of the Department's total annual budget. The remainder of the Department of Education's (the Department's) budget supports schools through the management of centralised services, specialised resources to deliver system-wide programs, the regulation of non-government schools, and other functions such as the School Curriculum and Standards Authority.*

*The SCFM allocates funds for each student enrolled in a public school with different funding amounts allocated depending on the year level of the student. The model also provides targeted funding allocations for schools with eligible students to meet the specific learning needs of Aboriginal students, students facing social disadvantage, students with English as an Additional Language and students with a disability. Additional funding may be provided to specified schools for strategic programs and services, through a range of targeted initiatives.*

*The SCFM supports greater local control and decision making by principals and their school communities in determining how funds are spent. Schools operate with a one-line budget, which provides greater flexibility to develop educational programs and staffing profiles that best suit the needs of the school communities within the school's budget parameters.*

*On a system level, the support for the wellbeing of students is a multi-tiered approach:*

- intervention and support is managed locally at the school including student support services, schools may seek further support from regional offices as required,*
- schools may access support from specialised services such as the Schools of Special Educational Needs (SSEN) for students with complex needs; and*
- schools are provided with targeted funding for system wide programs and services.*

*Schools have access to support services within the Department in order to develop appropriate strategies to strengthen student wellbeing. The following are examples of key supports available to schools:*

### **School Psychology Service**

*School Psychologists play a key role in supporting students, parents, teachers and school administrators in a wide range of areas, from mental health issues to complex behaviour, learning difficulties and disability, and emergency and critical incident management. More than 440 school psychologists work in metropolitan, country and remote public schools, making the Department one of the largest employers of psychologists in Western Australia. Schools are provided an allocation of school psychologist time and have the flexibility to access additional time through their one-line budget. The value of school psychology services in 2019 is \$43.4 million. It is important to note that the allocation of school psychologists to students is at a maximum ratio of 1:2000. School psychologists also perform other roles within the Department.*

### **Schools of Special Education Needs (SSEN)**

*The schools provide services and targeted support to schools and students system-wide in the areas of Disability, Medical and Mental Health, Sensory, Behaviour and Engagement. The schools are allocated funding through TIORRAs. As at 25 March 2019 the SSEN schools were allocated \$48.2 million. The targeted services provided by the SSEN include:*

**School of Special Educational Needs: Disability** The school provides state-wide support to schools for students with disabilities and learning disabilities, contextualised and evidence-based professional learning courses, seminars to support schools and online research, information and resources. The allocation to this school as at 25 March 2019 was \$12 million.

**School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health** Support is available to both public and private school students. Referrals received are through the Department of Health with parent consent. Home and Hospital teaching referrals can be made by schools with parent consent and an appropriate medical certificate. The allocation to this school as at 25 March 2019 was \$6.4 million.

**School of Special Educational Needs: Sensory** provides educational support for children with vision impairment and/or hearing loss. Schools that enrol students with vision impairment and/or hearing loss are supported to provide fully accessible learning environments, curriculum, and school communities. This support is available to both public and non-government school students throughout the state. The allocation to this school as at 25 March 2019 was \$13.4 million.

**School of Special Educational Needs: Behaviour and Engagement** provides educational support and services for students with extreme, complex and challenging behaviours. Support is available across the public school system. Intensive support to students and consultative support to schools is delivered through 13 engagement centres and the Midland Learning Academy. The allocation to this school as at 25 March 2019 was \$18.7 million.

The Department of Education also tabled a range of system wide programs and projects targeting student wellbeing. The funding received by schools is in the form of a Targeted Initiative allocation. These include:

<i>Additional support for delivering mental health programs in schools</i>	<i>\$3.8m</i>
<i>Alternative Learning Settings Funding</i>	<i>\$1.9m</i>
<i>Early Intervention Program Autism</i>	<i>\$2.1m</i>
<i>Exceptional Needs</i>	<i>\$0.5m</i>
<i>Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy</i>	<i>\$0.25m</i>
<i>School Chaplaincy Program</i>	<i>\$11.5m</i>
<i>Specialist Learning Programs for Autism Spectrum Disorder</i>	<i>\$6.9m</i>

Note: Whilst this is a comprehensive list of funding support for schools, not all schools receive Targeted Initiative Funding thus not all students are supported.

*All of the funding provided to schools is dedicated to supporting student wellbeing. Schools are empowered by the Classroom First initiative and the SCFM to make local decisions in developing appropriate strategies to support student wellbeing. Developing such a school culture, benefits students in developing academic potential, as well as a strong sense of personal wellbeing. Each public school is committed to building this culture in a way that takes account of its own students, community and staff.*

*The importance of engaging every student in Western Australian is paramount. However, no one formulae works in every school and the strategies for intervention vary according to student need. With this in mind measuring the impact of funding related to the engagement of children and young people in school and learning presents some inherent difficulties and complexity as you may appreciate.*

## Non-government schools

The following information on non-government school funding to support student health and wellbeing has been provided by DoE.

*Registered NGS in Western Australia receive recurrent financial assistance from the State and Commonwealth Governments, as well as private fee revenue. The Commonwealth Government is the majority funder of NGS, contributing around 56% of total revenue. A further 27% is obtained from fee revenue and the remaining 17% from the State Government.*

*Historically, Western Australia has provided the highest level of average funding for students in NGS of any State. Based on the most recent nationally comparable data for 2016-17, Western Australia's average rate of funding was \$3 335 compared to the average of \$2 461 for the same period for other States (source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services, 2019).*

*In Western Australia, differential rates of funding are provided to NGS which are dependent on the year level of the students and the funding category of the school. Funding categories are generally commensurate with a particular school's level of need. High-fee schools receive lower rates, whilst schools in remote or agricultural areas receive higher rates.*

*Through the Special Education Supplementary Grant (SE) grant, loadings are provided for students with special learning needs based on the severity of the disability (e.g. 110% of the relevant funding rate for mild disabilities, 210% of the relevant funding rate for moderate disabilities and 360% of the relevant funding rate for severe disabilities).*

*A High Support Needs Grant (HSN) is also provided for the most severely disabled NGS students in the state.*

*A summary of recurrent payments made by the State Government to Western Australian NGS and sector bodies in the 2018-19 financial year, to support the health and wellbeing of students, is as follows:*

- \$29.2 million to support students with special education needs encompassing \$22.3 million under the SE Grant and \$6.9 million of funding under the HSN grant. SE and HSN grants can only be used to support the students in respect of whom that funding is paid, either individually or collectively.*
- \$10 million, in addition to SE and HSN funding, to the 13 Curriculum and Re-Engagement in Education (CARE) schools in Western Australia. CARE schools specialise in providing a learning environment and educational program for students disengaged from mainstream education. Students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, who are considered to be at severe educational risk, constitute the majority of the enrolment.*
- \$2.65 million to Telethon Speech & Hearing (TSH), who support children with hearing loss, speech and language difficulties. This included approximately \$0.5 million for its Talkabout Program which focuses on supporting Kindergarten and Pre-Primary students who are experiencing a speech and language delay or disorder.*
- \$4.6 million to Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) and the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) to administer the State Government's Non-Government School Psychology Service.*
- \$1.27 million to CEWA and AISWA to support the re-engagement of students at educational risk.*

*In addition to the above, the State Government provided over \$397 million in recurrent financial assistance to NGS (excluding the CARE and TSH amounts listed above) in the 2018-19 financial year for the general purposes of school education.*

*As you may appreciate, Catholic and Independent schools manage student wellbeing with various internal strategies at the school level. The Department of Education is responsible for administering the payments to non-government schools through their governing body, however other than requiring governing bodies to annually acquit the funds expended at their school, the Department is not directly responsible for the delivery of educational programs at an individual school level.*

As outlined in the Department of Education Annual Report 2019 it provided more than \$439 million in recurrent financial assistance for 146,796 students in non-government schools, including \$29.7 million to support students with special educational needs. DoE also provided \$4.6 million to CEWA and the AISWA to administer the State Government's Non-Government School Psychology Service and \$1.27 million to support the re-engagement of students at educational risk.

### ***Association of Independent Schools***

The following information on non-government school funding to support student health and wellbeing has been provided by the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA).

*Independent Schools are not a system, so while AISWA has draft policies and procedures for schools, we are not the body that ensures compliance with these. All independent schools are registered with the Department of Education and there are clear standards that must be met. All Independent schools go through the registration process every one to five years with the length of registration determined by the extent to which they meet the registration standards. In addition, schools have their own school based policies and frameworks which reflect the context of their school, their school community and the students they work with.*

*Independent schools receive recurrent funding from both State and Federal Government and the per capita amount varies by the need of the school. From the federal government, a school with a high socio economic status (SES) would receive only 20% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) while a low SES school could receive 90% of that figure and for CARE and MATSI schools they technically receive 100%. However, almost all schools are in transition so very few actually receive that. The aim is that by 2023 most schools will receive 80% of that figure from the federal government and the other 20% from the state. The base 2018 SRS per student amount is \$10,953 for primary students and \$13,764 for secondary students.*

*To this figure are added loadings for level of disability dependent upon the level of adjustment needed so that amount varies each year dependent upon the cohort of students and their needs. There are also loadings for the percentage of students in low SEA quartiles, indigeneity, ESL and small and geographically isolated schools.*

*From the state government, the schools receive a much lower amount but in addition there are loadings for Students with Disabilities (SWD) dependent upon the assessment of need.*

*It is then up to the schools to best allocate their resources.*

*AISWA does not manage any grants that go to schools but on behalf of the federal government we do administer the school chaplaincy program which again has a focus on low SES schools. At AISWA we have a team of Inclusive Education Consultants (4.8 FTE), and state funded psychologists (about 9 FTE) and these work in supporting student health and wellbeing, supporting students with disabilities, mental and emotional issues.*

### ***Catholic Education Western Australia***

The Financial Report published by Catholic Education WA (CEWA) outlines the following:

- ❖ The system received: \$605.7 million in Federal Funding,
- ❖ \$238.9 million in State Funding,
- ❖ \$10 million in Federal and State Funding and
- ❖ \$266.9 million in contribution from parents.

A total of \$1,121.5 million received and 100% government funding expended.

The following information on non-government school funding to support student health and wellbeing has been provided by CEWA. The majority of their response has been included.

*For the purpose of this report, the scope or definition of 'student health and wellbeing' is deliberately very broad. It covers a suite of policies and programs/activities which help to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing both centrally provided and within schools.*

*CEWA has elected to provide information across five broad areas, which impact directly on supporting students' health and well-being. These five areas are:*

- 1. Support for students with disability*
- 2. Support for Curriculum and Re-engagement Education (CARE) schools*
- 3. Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students*
- 4. Support for students through the school psychology service*
- 5. Other CEWA central and school-based initiatives*

*In outlining details of support for the above initiatives and programs, it is important to understand the broad nature of the Catholic Education system in Western Australia in terms of broad school funding and support and how this 'system-ness' impacts on the five areas identified above. CEWA consists of four dioceses – Perth; Bunbury; Geraldton; and Broome which are broadly governed by one overarching body – the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA). The Executive Director of CEWA has delegated authority from CECWA (in line with CECWA policies) to make decisions and enact programs for the 162 schools across the system.*

*CEWA receives funding from the Australian Government and State Government as well as private incomes and uses system-wide allocation methods to reflect the needs of individual schools and students. The allocation mechanisms enable CEWA to cross subsidise certain groups of students where needs are higher; this relates also to health and wellbeing.*

*As a system, CEWA also directs funds to central and regional office activities and support. In the specific case of student health and wellbeing, this usually involves centrally employed specialist consultants and other staff. The roles of these consultants and other staff include but are not limited to; school support visits for staff, leadership and students; attending to reporting, funding acquittals and regulatory frameworks; running professional learning activities; liaison with stakeholders, including parents and caregivers; and broader advocacy.*

*The model of support outlined above ensures that efforts are appropriately targeted; are more sustainable; are high quality and evidence-based; and most importantly, reflect the principles of equity and support to the more vulnerable, which is a cornerstone foundation of Catholic education. This model helps to differentiate CEWA from other education systems in Western Australia.*

### **Support for students with disability**

From 2018, the NCCD was used to calculate the Students with Disability (SWD) Loading in recurrent funding for schools provided by the Commonwealth to states and territories. Funding is informed by the NCCD and provided on a per student amount, based upon student support requirements at each of the three funded Levels of Adjustment - Supplementary, Substantial and Extensive. Funding is not provided for students recorded as being provided adjustments

Nationally 19.3% of all students enrolled in all schools in Australia were reported as having a disability in 2018 NCCD. Catholic Education WA 2018 NCCD declared 18.25%

Total specifically provided by Australian Government to CEWA

- Through the CECWA Funding Allocation model, approximately \$25.4M was allocated to the SWD Loading for distribution to schools and run programs in 2019.

Total specifically provided by State Government to CEWA.

- 2018 State Government Funding for Students with Disability is paid directly to schools: \$9,364,539.41; - 2019 State Funding not yet available
- 2018 High Support Needs Funding: \$6,290,559.50

c. Total provided from CEOWA funds – NIL – refers to specific allocations to schools only. There are other support costs supported by CEWA

### **Support for Curriculum and Re-engagement Education (CARE) schools**

Students at CARE schools attract a higher level of Commonwealth recurrent funding but no extra State per capita funding. CEWA heavily subsidises CARE schools in terms of capital costs associated with site purchase, capital and resources and also in recurrent costs. Staffing is a significant cost due to the small ratio of staff to students compared to mainstream classes.

CARE schools are very costly to establish and run. CEWA is responsible for capital costs of property purchase and refurbishment plus equipment. This creates debt servicing commitments for schools and the system.

The annual recurrent costs for St Clare's School; Clontarf Aboriginal College; St Francis' School; and the Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre are just over \$10.7 million or around \$30,000 per student which is about two times that for most mainstream secondary schools. Additional to these costs are capital costs such as building and equipment costs. Income includes about \$10.2 million from State and Australian government sources. Additional funding is provided by CEWA to cover other recurrent and capital costs. Fees contribute a very small proportion of recurrent income.

### **Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**

CEWA has always had a strong commitment to supporting Aboriginal students and their families for over 150 years of Catholic education. In 2019, 2,913 Aboriginal students – 1,413 males and 1,500 females - are enrolled in CEWA schools. The balance between primary and secondary schools is about 55%:45%.

CEWA supports Aboriginal students across the State and maintains a strong presence in the Kimberley region with 13 schools including 7 sole provider schools.

## ***How the education sectors resource and react to student health and wellbeing issues in Western Australia***

*CEWA uses a percentage of Commonwealth and State funding to support a range of initiatives to specifically support Aboriginal students. This includes CEWA consultants' salaries, related costs etc; administrative support; professional learning support including teacher relief, travel etc. CEWA also funds the following initiatives, all of which impact significantly on the overall health and wellbeing of students.*

Other Initiatives to support Aboriginal students include:

Scholarships – supporting students	\$225,000
Cadetships	\$44,000
Traineeships	\$140,000
School allocation to Aboriginal teaching assistants	\$5,120,100
Djooraminda community students	\$30,000
Clontarf Aboriginal Academy Basketball - engagement	\$100,000
Clontarf Aboriginal Academy Football - engagement	\$150,000
St Mary's Football Academy – engagement	\$137,000

### ***Support for students through the school psychology service***

*The Catholic Education WA Psychology Team's focus is on providing direct service to schools who do not have their own psychologist as part of their school-based support staff. These are classed as "contact" schools. Those schools who employ their own psychologist are provided with an indirect service primarily in the form of support and consultation to the school-based support staff as well as the school's leadership team. These schools are classed as "liaison" schools. All schools are provided with direct service when required in critical incident response and support. There are 162 Catholic schools in Western Australia. Of these, there were 42 liaison schools and 107 contact schools. The majority of contact schools are primary schools. The remaining 13 schools are located in the Kimberley and serviced by Department of Education (DoE) Psychologists under a service agreement between DoE and Catholic Education Western Australia.*

*Funding is received from the State government through an Agreement with the Department of Education. The annual amount is \$2,568,735.*

### ***Other CEWA central and school-based initiatives***

Four broad areas of CEWA support in areas of student health and wellbeing have been discussed above. Following are a number of initiatives in place in school-based programs and the CEWA system:

- *Child protection procedures*
- *Anti-bullying policies and procedures*
- *The Keeping Safe Curriculum is being taught across 144 schools.*
- *Online safety*
- *Pastoral support*
- *Preference to the poor and vulnerable*
- *Child Safe Framework*

## Case Studies

Each sector was requested to provide two Case Study Schools that exemplified a strong focus on the health and wellbeing of their students. A total of six very different schools have been included in this Project, all have been de-identified. No rural or remote schools were studied.

### School A

School A is a K-6 Catholic School with about 332 students. The school is predicted to grow to 370 students in 2020. The school has an Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 1053 and the student population is diverse with 50% of students with a Caucasian background, 44% of students from an ESL background and 6% of students are Aboriginal. The school is preparing to enrol one special needs autistic student in 2020. The school has undergone a critical cultural and academic transformation over the past three years. This has occurred alongside a building upgrade and rebuild of the majority of the facilities. The school was originally built in 1958. The final phase of the transformation is the development of a relatively new, young staff who are enthusiastic and dedicated. Class sizes range from 18 – 25 students.

The school strives to develop the whole person within a family atmosphere of love, peace and justice. A strong emphasis on the pastoral needs of children is foremost in the school. This is supported by a high level of community involvement in all facets of school life. The school has developed a Strategic Plan for Wellbeing with a strong social emotional support program, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies embedded in the school culture. A student wellbeing officer has been appointed and she is using the Kids Matter / Be You Framework to gather data about students. There is also a focus on keeping children safe. Learning strategies related to Trauma Informed Practice has been a focus for staff professional development in 2019. A student wellbeing survey tool and the Catholic Education School Climate survey have been administered; both have been used to focus on areas requiring support.

A three-tiered approach is used for health and wellbeing intervention. All students are supported in tier one through the Mindfulness program, a caring and supportive school environment and staff who know the students and their families well. A range of de-escalating strategies are used at the second tier of intervention and support, including creativity and art therapy. Tier three support is provided through small groups and focusses on self-regulation.

The school operates a one-line budget with funds from the Australian government and the state government delivered through CEWA. The school is allocated about \$10 000 per student with a lesser amount for kindergarten students who do not attend school full time. School fees are low, \$1 700 per year and there are some hardship wavers. CEWA is supporting the school currently through the extensive building renovation program and providing some system support as the school grows to two class streams. The school receives one day per month support from the CEWA psychology service and can make additional requests. The Commonwealth Government provides \$20 000 through the school chaplaincy program and this funds the student welfare coordination position. The My School Website indicates that \$ per student recurrent income was \$14 985.

A play group / kindergarten pilot program Aboriginal Families as First Educators is supported by CEWA and \$100,000 is provided to the school for this early support. The school also runs out of school hours care for the children.

The culture of the school supports the health and wellbeing of children and for this to occur, significant resources are strategically committed to a range of practices, programs and projects.

## School B

School B is a K–6 government primary school with about 814 students situated in a growth area of Perth. The school has an ICSEA of 980 and the student population is diverse with 48% of students from an ESL background, 70 Aboriginal students, and 150 students with disability. Many of the parents find it very difficult to facilitate a diagnosis for disability funding for their child. There is a long waiting list, they are working and can't take leave, or they do not have a car, which makes it difficult given the location of the school. A further complication is the cost involved in seeing an appropriate health professional. The school commented that: *“When a child needs support it is essential for them to get it now rather than wait 18 months.”*

The school has had a strong focus on the development of a positive school culture through a strategic transformation program which includes consistency of expectation and sequenced learning. The curriculum focus is on the core areas of Literacy, Numeracy, **Health and Wellbeing**. The school works closely with families, and home-school partnerships are a vital ingredient to success, with clear and regular lines for communication established. New families are given the care and attention required to settle into the new environment. The principal has a high expectation that all staff ensure the primacy of student health and wellbeing within their classrooms. The deputy principals both take on a pastoral role and coordinate Students at Educational Risk (SAER) for specific year groups. The school has ensured all staff are well trained and updated in Classroom Management Strategies (CMS) which has led to a reduction in negative behaviour in the school and a happy, calm environment.

As part of the school transformation, the whole school and community participated in a data gathering survey ‘Tell them from me’. A range of very positive programs have been implemented including music, band, sports, running club, recycled art, dress-up club, netball, jump-jam, reading clubs and maths after school. The focus has been to develop a sense of belonging, critical to improving wellbeing. This has been done through staff volunteering their time and commitment. Of special note is the Excellence Program for Boys targeting a multi-age group of high needs boys. The assistant director of Game of Thrones is working with these students in multimedia experience.

The school has adopted a strategic approach to parent involvement and has used a range of community supports and networks. Wanslea is supporting students whose parents have mental health issues, Community Link and Network (CLAN) has provided a parenting support and family therapy program for eight weeks, Fast works provides connections for families, and a coffee room has been set up for mothers group. The school ensures the children have access to a range of community services and support. There are many families struggling financially within the area and it has been organised for fruit, vegetables, bread and other food supplies to be available for families through the school. Breakfast is supplied to many students.

The school operates a ‘one-line’ budget with funds delivered through the State’s SCF model, along with the requirement that these funds be used for staff salaries and the overall provision of an educational program. Schools are allocated an amount per year dependent upon the year level of each student with schools receiving \$4,849 per student in Kindergarten, \$8,311 per student in Pre-Primary to Year 3 and \$6,926 per student in Years 4 to 6. The school also receives a small level of voluntary contributions from parents. DoE provides additional funding of \$118,445 to meet the specific learning needs of Aboriginal students, \$626,500 to cater for the needs of students with a Disability, and \$227,425 to address the level of social disadvantage. The school accesses support services within DoE such as the School Psychology Service and the Schools of Special Education Needs. Additionally, DoE provides the school with \$11,300 for a Level 3 teacher to coordinate the delivery of mental health programs. The government provides \$22,000 to fund the school’s chaplaincy program with

the school employing a chaplain for 2 days per week. My School website indicates that \$ per student recurrent income was \$10,547.

## School C

School C is a small independent Curriculum and Re-engagement in Education (CARE) School with 130 students in years 8-12 and, there is a growing wait list. The focus of the school is the health and wellbeing of the students, as it specialises in working with adolescents at extreme social and educational risk. Classes are structured on ability and capacity rather than age. Students are referred to the school after encountering serious problems in a mainstream school or when they are experiencing significant health issues. Many students are referred by health professionals and hospitals or are referred through government or non-government agencies. The school has an ICSEA of 987. Of the student population, 80% are supported by NCCD funding, and 55% receive funding for diagnosed mental illness' such as severe anxiety and depression, including school refusal. The majority of students have a minimum four year learning deficit.

Curriculum and staffing support student needs, especially health and wellbeing needs with all staff taking on a mentoring role. All students have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) as all the student's needs are complex and variable. All classes are multi-aged grouping and small. The majority of students (70) are enrolled in the senior school program that caters for students aged 15 to 18 years. The aim is to transition students to further study or work, with a range of pathways available. The school has developed a registered Early Learning Centre (ELC) on site through the purchase of a building next to the school. The aim for this program is to ensure young mothers, approximately 20, can continue with their education while their babies receive care in the ELC. A number of the adolescent mothers are setting their sights on a university program.

The middle school comprises one class of about 15 students aged between 12 and 15. This class is structured like a primary classroom with a focus on core literacy and numeracy, and they are taught explicitly. They also undertake a range of classes in Science, HASS, The Arts, Design and Technology, Health and Physical Education. The school operates a 'Mobile Classroom' program for a group of Aboriginal students who are unable to cope in a traditional classroom setting. The students are collected at nominated 'pick up spots' in the morning and taken to a range of places where they can engage in basic literacy and numeracy programs. They then make some lunch for themselves and participate in engaging activities in the afternoon such as indigenous language with elders, Indigenous radio and sporting activities. Another program offered is the 'Outreach Program', a unique program for students who cannot attend school as a result of mental health issues. A teacher works with them in their home for one day per week and they are then set tasks that can be completed on-line. The NCCD funding supports this program as it is very expensive to maintain.

Critical care of students extends to food provision, attending to health needs, assistance with housing and assistance with applications for basic entitlements such as Medicare, a bank application and government support.

The school operates its budget with funds from the Commonwealth Government and the State Government. As it is a high need school, they receive about \$13,000 from the Commonwealth Government and \$6,000 from the State Government per student. They are also in receipt of additional Commonwealth funds for NCCD and inclusive education support from AISWA. The school is conservative in applying for support, however 80% of students receive NCCD funding and 50% receive funding support for mental health issues. Full fees are \$2,500 with subsidised fees at \$550, the bulk of students require subsidised fee support. The My School Website indicates that \$ per student recurrent income was \$29,503.

Appropriate staff are critical due to the nature of the school, with a current staff of 40, comprising teachers, youth workers, teaching assistants, school psychologists, counsellors and administration staff. AISWA support the school in the provision of a clinical psychologist 1 day per week with additional clinical psychologist time purchased by the school.

## School D

School D is a Catholic, coeducational, independent, single site K-12 school, with 1,500 students, the school has limited its enrolments to this number. The school has an ICSEA of 1170. The school has no Aboriginal students and 14% of students are from an English as an Additional Language background. It is an inclusive site and supports a program for 20 students with a range of physical and intellectual disabilities. The school is not academically selective and offers a comprehensive curriculum with pastoral care embedded into all aspects of school life. A broad range of extracurricular experiences are offered, especially in the areas of The Arts and Sports, with Christian Service an integral aspect of life in the school.

A strong structure has been established within the school to support the health and wellbeing of students. The House System operates both vertically and horizontally. The House Coordinator has a positive affirming role and there are a range of year coordinators, home room teachers and class teachers who know and understand the student's needs as they progress through the school. There are 2.8 FTE school psychologists employed through the school and the chaplain is a catholic priest.

Health and wellbeing is a key focus and the school operates within the CEWA Child Safe Framework. Life skills classes occur at all year levels and include mental health and wellbeing. A special program that runs in the school to support wellbeing is the 'Rite of Passage program' which includes a range of school activities, mentoring and excursions. The concepts of both gratitude and giving are key pillars within the school culture. The school also has an extensive program that reflects its Christian ethos and provides students with a strong 'sense of belonging'. This Faith dimension encourages students to consider the Head, the Heart and the Hands to many aspects of school life.

The school directly receives funding, from both State and Commonwealth Government, per capita grants, fees, parental contributions and fundraising. The school receives about \$8,000 per student in a combined contribution from the State (30%) and Commonwealth (70%) Government, with up to about \$11,000 per student from fees, charges and parent contributions. These amounts vary according to year group. The school also receives government funding for students with disabilities (SWD). My School Website indicates that \$ per student recurrent income was \$21,851. The 2018 Annual Report for the School indicates 47% income from Commonwealth grants, 17% of income from State grants, 29% income from school fees and 7% other. The program for students with disabilities is subsidised by the school by about \$600,000.

## School E

School E is a large multi campus, coeducational, Anglican independent K-12 school with 1,450 students and is experiencing growth predominately in the primary schooling years. The school has an ICSEA of 1085. There are two campuses; one campus is K-12 (550 primary & 900 secondary) and the other K-6 (165 students). Approximately 12% of the students come from an English as an Additional Language background, there are approximately 20 special needs students, predominantly with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis, who are catered for in the primary year groups; and no Aboriginal students enrolled in the school.

Pastoral care and wellbeing is a focus and the school has a broad based curriculum and a holistic approach to education supported by its Mission Statement: *To provide a quality, inclusive, Christian education which encourages students to fulfil their potential.* The primary

school has implemented Walker Learning, a play-based pedagogy with the aim of developing the whole child. No extrinsic rewards are given and there is a focus on self-regulation and restorative practices. Pastoral care of students is a priority and the support structures within the school reflect this focus. House groupings that are vertical ensure a higher level of peer support, with Heads of House and Assistant Heads of House playing a key role. Other staff have a specialised role throughout the school to support wellbeing including School Psychologists, Chaplain and Nurse. The pastoral care team continually work with students and facilitate ongoing referrals to Headspace, Youth Focus, Medical Services, CAMHS and Allambee Counselling. Professional development of staff has been extensive.

The school has chosen the Child Safe Framework *Child Safe Organisations* to wrap around its policies, procedures and practices. Nine domains are already implemented, and existing practices mapped to the framework. A Protective Behaviours Curriculum has been implemented at the school, *Holding Hands* for primary students, and *Keeping Safe* for secondary students. The *Friendly Schools* program is taught in primary school to support the teaching of social / emotional skills. In addition, the introduction of the “*Be You*” framework for mental health support across the school has been implemented. Brain Ambulance commenced a partnership with the school promoting the value of reflecting and prioritising wellbeing. Additionally, an Intranet site has been developed for students to submit reports of bullying, concerns and complaints. These reports are emailed to senior members of staff, and in the case of urgent help for assistance, sent to a select group of senior staff vis SMS. During school time there is a button that sends an immediate SMS message to a range of senior staff and they will come immediately. Students bring their own devices to school.

The school directly receives funding, from both the State and Commonwealth Governments, fees, parental contributions and fundraising. The school receives about \$3,000 per student from the State Government; about \$8,000 per student from the Commonwealth Government and about \$6,000 per student from fees, charges and parent contributions. These amounts vary according to year groups. The school also receives government funding for students with disabilities (SWD). My School Website indicates that \$ per student recurrent income was \$17,583, included in this average is the funding the school receives from government for the students with disabilities. The school’s 2018 Annual Report indicates 47% income from Commonwealth grants, 17% of income from State grants, 29% income from school fees and 7% other.

## School F

School F is a 7-12 government secondary school with about 750 students and has experienced growth over the past few years due to its positive and inclusive culture and range of programs. The school has a low ICSEA of 889 and is an Independent Public School. There are currently 52 students in receipt of an Individual Disability Allocation and 35 students in the care of Department of Communities. Approximately 25% of students are Aboriginal. Of note, is the significant number of students, 50%, with a learning disorder. The school has enrolled 55 students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis to commence in 2020.

Health and wellbeing support for students is strong, this is embedded within the culture of the school: *“The school provides every student with the support needed in order to learn, maintain positive relationships and be safe. It is the wellbeing of students and staff that underpins the actions and behaviours of our staff, where all efforts are aligned to keeping safe.”*

The Student Services structure at the school is comprehensive. The structure has four key areas each led by a level 3 Manager; the areas are Transition, Behaviour, Mental Health and Educational Needs. The school ensures the Student Services area is well resourced, of particular note are the 35 voluntary mentors that support individual students.

There are three tiers of student support. Tier 1 supports all students through forming and maintaining positive student relations. The school has targeted student wellbeing, implementing both Restorative Practices and Positive Behaviour Support and has been very strategic in implementing these programs. Other school wide programs include RUOK – mental health promotion; Bullying No Way! ; School Community Connections and a school wide Reward Program. Tier 2 student support includes Transition planning, Restorative Practices, the “Zones of Regulation” program, Academic Student Support programs, Re-engagement programs and short activity programs. Student support at Tier 3 is a wholistic case formulation approach. Both on-site and off-site support is accessed. Student on-site counselling and support is available at set times throughout the week.

The school operates a ‘one-line’ budget with funds delivered through the State’s SCF model, along with the requirement that these funds be used for staff salaries and the overall provision of an educational program. Schools are allocated an amount per year dependent upon the year level of each student with schools receiving \$9,211 per student in Years 7 to 10 and \$9,903 per student in Years 11 & 12 plus VET funding. There is low collection rate of fees, charges and voluntary contributions from parents. DoE provides additional funding of \$445,000 to meet the specific learning needs of Aboriginal students, \$1,617,341 to cater for the needs of students with a disability which includes individual per student allocation for eligible students depending on the student’s level of disability, plus an allocation for students eligible for educational adjustment funding and \$487,357 to address the significantly high level of social disadvantage with 504 students provided with support. There are also a range of targeted initiatives funded by the Australian and State Governments. The school accesses support services within DoE such as the School Psychology Service and the Schools of Special Education Needs. Additionally, DoE provides the school with \$11,300 for the delivery of mental health programs. The Commonwealth Government provides \$20,000 to support the school’s chaplaincy program with the local churches raising an additional \$23,000 to support this program. The My School Website indicates that \$ per student recurrent income was \$16,561.

The support of student health and wellbeing is a top priority within the school and the leadership team has committed resources, strategically selected staff and implemented a range of programs and initiatives to provide maximum impact. Critical care of students extends to food provision, attending to health needs, assistance with housing and assistance with applications for basic entitlements such as Medicare, a bank application and government support. To complement the budget, it has been essential for the school to develop a network of support from government, non-government, not for profit and voluntary organisations. This has entailed significant investigation and time but has been essential for the support and referral of students. The school has a range of services that can be relied on to provide support to students in the areas of medical assistance, counselling, advocacy and practical support with food and housing. The school has negotiated for a number of these services to operate on the school site.

## Conclusion

The Purpose of this Project was to determine the extent of financial resources available to address student health and wellbeing needs, and how these resources are distributed to support individual students in government, catholic and independent schools throughout Western Australia.

Note: This was a light touch study with only six schools participating, and a brief overview of funding.

## **Findings**

- All sectors and case study schools believe it is important to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- There appears to be no significant visible, targeted funding to schools to specifically support the health and wellbeing of all children and young people.
- Schools have the budgetary autonomy to determine the provision of support for student health and wellbeing based on the needs of students, however, resources are limited. For schools to target funding in this area, results in less funding for other highly accountable curriculum priorities.
- Schools receive funding from both Commonwealth and State Government sources, in varying proportions and through varying delivery models. This differential approach to the access of funding and the differing accountability requirements is problematic.
- Further financial investigation is required in order to provide a transparent comparison of school funding from both Commonwealth and State Government sources across the three sectors.
- Despite attempts to ensure equitable resourcing, significant school funding variance appears to exist over the six case study schools. In a number of instances this is not providing resourcing where it is needed.
- While health and wellbeing issues are not necessarily defined by the SES or ICSEA of the school, it is noticeable that some schools must deal with a higher proportion of students with health and wellbeing issues, particularly mental health and disability.
- There appears to be little direction to schools regarding suitable programs and a comprehensive resource to support student health and wellbeing. Systems have policies and frameworks, but at the school level, more 'grass roots' assistance is required.
- To address the health and wellbeing needs of young people, schools that are resourceful are relying on the support of government agencies, non-government organisations, as well as not for profit and community agencies.

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