

## 2008 Annual School Report Matthew Hogan College

### Principal's message

Matthew Hogan College provides education for young people with challenging behaviours and complex needs who are residing in our Southern Highlands medium-long term residential programs. Several students travel to school daily from neighbouring towns. Young people are taught in a classroom situation according to their educational level and are supervised by specialist teachers, psychologist, caseworkers and family workers.

The Staff of dedicated professionals is particularly generous with their time and excels in catering for the students' unique and individual needs. They are responsive and endeavour to allow the child to grow socially, academically and physically.

This report was prepared with the assistance of Suzi Kenney – School Co-ordinator, Melinda Daher – Administration, and Joanna Vasiliadis – Finance Manager.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development.

### Lou Single

Principal  
Educational Services Manager

### Students

Matthew Hogan College prides itself in being accepting of all cultures and ethnicities.

The welfare of every student is important with a key value being that every student has a right to be educated

Students who attend Matthew Hogan invariably have significant emotional and behavioural issues. The Staff seeks to address the needs of students by providing the following fully integrated and supportive programs:

Anti-bullying Program, Drug and Alcohol Education, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education, Music Therapy and a variety of Service Learning Programs.

Socialisation is an important part of a students' experience at Matthew Hogan College with many activities created to help students with this important aspect of everyday life. Teamwork is always encouraged.



Each site welcomes students from all denominations and cultural groups.

The programs are implemented consistently and have been embedded into the school setting. All teaching staff and ancillary are trained and competent in the programs.

All students had access to the full curriculum.

This year there were 25 placements in total. Males dominate the enrolments at Matthew Hogan College.

Of the 25, 9 are enrolled for 2009. Eight of these students will begin Year 9, one will commence Year 8.

## Student Discipline

Our aim is to provide the highest standard of support to our students to promote growth, stability, safety, welfare and general well being. We endeavour to use Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) rather than punishment to facilitate learning and behavioural change. The use of corporal punishment does not exist at Youth Off The Streets.

Individuals may also have Individual Behaviour Management Plans to outline strategies for preventing and responding to challenging behaviours.

Serious incident reporting has been reviewed over the past year and a collaborative approach is now taken involving the young person, the clinical team and teaching staff. The basis for our incident reporting is now TCI, which involves an analysis as to the behaviour of the young person and staff response.

TCI involves de-escalation techniques and a plan for alternative behaviours, rehearsal for those behaviours and re-entry into the group.

At all times consultation includes the student and all stakeholders so that a consistent, supportive and coordinated approach is taken towards the well-being of every student at the school.

We firmly believe that as far as possible a student should be presented with options and choices, to empower them in decision-making over their own lives and circumstances. At all opportunities we support and encourage them.

## Grievance Procedure

During 2008 all referral packs had "What can I do if I'm Unhappy" attachment. Students are encouraged to use the references mentioned. A close relationship between child and staff is fostered and allows flexibility of being referred on if they wish to discuss their complaint with the teacher, co-ordinator, youth workers, Principal or Fr. Riley. External agencies are also readily available i.e. CREATE, Community Services Commission, Children's Guardian, DoCS, NSW Ombudsman etc. A copy is available in the Youth Off The Streets referral pack.

## Student Message

*"I am 15 years old and I am in year 9 at Matthew Hogan College. I would like to tell you about our school and what we do there and how much support we get not only out in the playground but also in the classes too. There are so many nice teachers. They are not too hard on us, but they are so eager to teach us. We do so much stuff here. They're not all fun things, like Maths, English, History and so on, but we do so much fun stuff too like Art, Woodwork, Sport and so on.*

*The one thing that I really like at Matthew Hogan College and the same with the other kids here and the teacher, is Gloria and her wonderful food that she makes, like muffins, soup, chicken and rice and so many other things that are so wonderful.*

*Well, my favourite subject, which I have three, is Maths, Art and Sport. Even though I sometimes hate getting up in the morning and hate coming to school, I have to because I need an education so I can do what I want to do when I grow up a bit more and get a really nice job so I can support not only myself but when I have a family too.*

*On Thursdays we learn about how anything and people need help in life, so we go to places called Landcare, Tangara Special School and Aged Day Care. They are really good places to go when you really think about it and they are so much fun. My favourite is Tangara because I get to look after kids with disabilities and they are so helpful and so nice to you and very playful too. We also go horse riding, plus we make cookies.*

*I would just like to say this, it's pretty cool when you think about it and how much fun it is. Even though no kid likes to come to*

*school, sometimes you just have to, not for anyone else but you."*

Student RK, 15 years.

## **Parent and Caregiver Involvement and Participation**

The school encourages and welcomes parent participation in all aspects of school life.

Many of the students at Matthew Hogan College are involved with the Department of Community and Family Services. A large majority of the students at Matthew Hogan College will have an individual caseworker with the Department. The school is committed to working closely with these caseworkers to ensure the welfare of the students.

Guardians/Caregivers/parents are required to attend initial intake interviews and subsequent case conferences. There is ongoing parental contact to discuss issues of concern and to inform parents of positive behavioural changes. Parents are invited to attend school excursions, case conferences, and presentation days and participate in fundraising activities.

Monthly case reviews are attended by the student, parents, DoCS or other caregivers, residential carers and caseworkers and school representatives.

Parent satisfaction is evident in their support in attending and contributing to these planned meetings.

*"May I take this opportunity to thank you for what you have done for not only L., and G., but the assistance you have given to C., as he began the difficult task of caring for these boys early this year without the assistance or support from DoCS. It has been a long journey for Craig and the boys, but with the persistence in advocating for C., with DoCS from myself, Bowral Hospital and your school and C., himself. We now see these boys in a secure situation that twelve months ago was quite horrendous.*

*After being in the foster care arena for forty years it is commitment from careers such as Craig and Jacqui that assist in stabilising children and young people. If there were not any establishments such as*

*YOTS, where would these boys go for their education?*

*Thank you for being there for the boys and so many others.*

Ambassador for Foster Carers Association.  
- JD

## **Staff information, attendance and retention**

All teaching staff meets the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools. Additionally one teacher has qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution and is completing post graduate studies in Special Education.

1 Principal  
1 School Coordinator  
3 Teachers  
2 Auxiliary staff (part time)

Two new staff members commenced. There were two staff changes throughout the year. The average rate of days attended per staff member is 95%.

Every staff member's work ethic reflects their dedication to their position and this is evident in staff absenteeism/leave being minimal. Staff willingly travel to Matthew Hogan's remote location each day, often engage in overnight or weekend camps with students and other extra-curricular activities.

Staff members are encouraged to discuss further training and development with their Manager and/or the Principal.

## **Professional Learning**

In 2008 staff attended the following internal and external training:

Senior First Aid – Safety Solutions,  
Reportable Conduct with NSW Ombudsman,  
Trauma –informed care with Howard Bath,  
Rock and Water– The Gadaku Institute,  
Maths Teacher training with Chevalier,  
Cognitive Behaviour Therapy,  
Salesian Practice,  
Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and  
Educational Staff Training with Youth Off  
The Streets.

## **Staff Comment:**

*2008 at Matthew Hogan College was a year filled with challenges and opportunities. The highs and lows of working in Special Education with some of Australia's most disadvantaged youth come thick and fast.*

*The highs of a successful lesson, a fun filled excursion, a joke shared with a student, the flash of understanding on a young person's face as a concept long struggled with is finally mastered and the most special of all: the genuine smile given freely by one of our kids that says, 'I trust you. I know you won't harm me'.*

*And then the lows, sometimes one after the other until you wonder why on earth you bother: a carefully planned excursion that goes wrong because one or two students run amuck, a lesson that is a disaster from start to finish, a mouthful of verbal abuse complete with the vilest of language and the very real possibility of physical harm from an angry young man who sees everything as a challenge and everyone as a potential enemy.*

*2008 saw another group of students do very well in the School Certificate. Most of our kids come from so far behind that to be even able to sit for the exam is a triumph. The Walking In My Shoes camp was a delight, with a week of fun and companionship with volunteers, corporate sponsors, other YOTS staff, our students and the children with disabilities who were the purpose of the whole exercise. The Aboriginal Culture camp at Gilgandra with Uncle Ralph and his family was highlight, very, very tiring and challenging but also so rewarding. YOTS on yachts as always was brilliant, exciting and so reaffirming of the goodness of so many people who open their hearts to our kids and do everything they can to give them a special evening.*

*2008 was a great year for Service Learning, doing bush regeneration work with the caring staff from the Wingecarribee Shire Council and the Nepean Conservation and Land Management Authority gave us lots of time outdoors doing something worthwhile and healthy, helping out at the aged daycare centre in Bowral and at Tangara the Special School in Mittagong who we have a very strong relationship with. The Kite Flying Picnic and our combined sports day were a great example how enriching SL is for all involved and how much fun can be had doing simple things with good people. And how could we leave out the very popular 'YOTS Cookies by YOTS Kids' with Gloria in the school canteen and sold by YOTS volunteers on their stall.*

*There were some young people who we couldn't help, we couldn't give them what they needed, and for that we take responsibility and try to learn more skills and find more ways to reach all of our very special charges. 2008 - A wonderful year, I wouldn't have missed it for quids!*

Paul Roodenrys.

## **Curriculum**

Most students at Matthew Hogan have a common need to up-skill basic language, literacy and numeracy strategies due to a range of circumstances including greatly interrupted schooling, family breakdowns, drug and alcohol problems and cultural factors. Students' literacy levels range from critical loss to near average. The students with critical needs perform up to 8 or 9 years below their chronological level. These needs are consistently addressed.

In order to meet student needs and program criteria, highly individualised and flexibly delivered teaching programs are designed by teachers with specific focus upon remediation and strengthening of language, literacy and numeracy skills to cater for severely disadvantaged students whose education has been significantly interrupted and who generally present with exceptionally challenging trauma-based behaviours. Teachers often team teach to assist students in concentrating and remaining on task whilst maintaining a flexible approach, maximising or minimising periods to cater for student achievement.

A range of assessment tools have been used during the year including the S.A. Spelling, GAP, Burt Word Test, Neale Analysis and PAT Maths Assessment.

School Certificate offered: English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, PDHPE, Creative Arts, TAS and Work Education.

Programs are designed to have relevance to the lives of our students within a social context. We provide Service Learning opportunities which are designed to engage young people in projects that are designed to help others and stimulate social conscience. These activities are then integrated into English, History, Work Education and PDHPE. We also provide various leisure activities which provide opportunity for fitness, health, better relationships with adults and peers, social inclusion, appropriate social behaviours and skill development for application in the wider community.

## **Student enrolment profile**

Our students are enrolled in Years 7 to 10 and may stay from 3 weeks to 3 years.

Students are enrolled by way of a referral package, liaison and staged meetings with key stakeholders. Enrolment is generally of a voluntary basis. A referral package is available upon request.

### **Class sizes and structure**

There were three class groups this year: One Year 10 class, one Year 9/8 composite class and one Year 8/7 composite class.

These groups were created taking into account group dynamics as well as the social and academic needs of individuals within those groups.

### **Student attendance and retention profile**

Day students had a better attendance than residential students this year. They require an element of motivation to attend school each day and therefore demonstrated fewer absences.

Residential students transitioned in and out of the program throughout the year resulting in peer/social instability and lower attendance than in past years.

Students who attend the school generally stay on for the duration of their placement because the school environment is often a positive change to the chaotic nature of the home environments. Some student placements are due to having run away from home or become involved in the juvenile justice system.

### **Student Welfare**

Gender equity themes and student welfare initiatives were constantly reinforced through the curriculum. Concerns such as harassment, body image, conflict resolution, puberty and hygiene were addressed through ongoing programs.

Students are encouraged to attend regular one-on-one counselling sessions with an external counsellor who visits the school weekly, and students who are under the care of YOTS residential programs engage in regular individual and group counselling with YOTS clinical team.

### **Academic**

The National Assessment Program for years 7 and 9 in literacy and numeracy are reported on a scale from Band 1 to 10.

In overall literacy 100% of students achieved Band 6.

In literacy, reading 50% of students achieved Band 5, 50% of students achieved Band 7,

In literacy, writing 50% of students achieved Band 5 and 50% of students achieved Band 6.

Numeracy non-applicable.



### **School performance 2008**

#### **Significant programs and initiatives**

#### **Student engagement in:**

Intensive language, literacy and numeracy support.

#### **Anti-Bullying Program - Residential & Day Care.**

Many of the students who attend Matthew Hogan have faced significant levels of violence both in the family environment and on the streets. It is this culture of violence that Matthew Hogan has attempted to address by implementing an anti-bullying plan that deals with all aspects of bullying in the school environment. This is a whole school initiative that is supported by key learning areas in PDHPE, and therapeutic group work.

Students appear to feel more confident about raising issues of bullying with staff, and there is less passive/aggressive bystander behaviour. We state clearly that this culture of this behaviour is unacceptable at any level. This is recognised by all students.

There is greater interaction between the residential units and the school in terms of addressing bullying behaviour on a daily basis if necessary. Matthew Hogan aims to continue to build consistency and positive interactions with residential units in order to keep addressing any form of bullying behaviour.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Support** program - meeting needs through the delivery of curriculum, that recognises any deficits due to lack of opportunity to access education, respects their cultural heritage, exploring culture through art and interaction with Aboriginal role models.

**Work Education** program with Student Workplace Learning Program and Youth Pathways. Four Year 10 students successfully participated in work experience placements.

**Personal Health and Development** program, including drug and alcohol education and sex education.

**Music Therapy** - Music therapy is a value added component to our curriculum which builds on the knowledge learned in traditional subjects such as History and English. The music therapist develops programs reflecting interests and issues identified by young people. Students are encouraged to demonstrate or share that knowledge through music therapy. One of the key outcomes of musical expression is to increase participant's confidence by providing with opportunities to perform for the public. It also complements our Values Education Service Learning curriculum.

**Bronze Medallion** – Students achieved Bronze Medallion, Bronze Rescue and Swimming Certificates.

**First Aid** – Students achieved First Aid Certificates.

**Duke of Edinburgh** – Senior students achieved Bronze Award.

### **Service Learning Programs**

Service Learning opportunities are structured to engage young people in

projects designed to help others and stimulate social conscience.

Values Education is an integral part of the program.

### **Brumby Camp** (working with wild horses).

Five students participated in Brumby Camp, a partnership between MHC and the Kalandan Foundation, where YP have an opportunity to explore their strengths, build self-confidence and learn to communicate assertively without aggression through building a relationship of trust and respect with the Brumbies.



### **“Walking In My Shoes”** Camp for Children with Disabilities.

Four students participated in this program, organised and run by Youth Off The Streets students and staff. Students were assigned to care for a child with disabilities with responsibility for the welfare of the child during a four day camp. They were feeding, dressing, supervising and entertaining their new friends. This was a wonderful opportunity for our students to link their values of compassion, responsibility, patience and team spirit to a very worthy cause. Each young person involved in this camp has requested to attend the next camp. Parent feedback has also been very positive.

### **Aged Adult Day Care** .

Students and staff regularly visit the Wingecarribee Adult Aged Day Care Centre where they have developed an ongoing maintenance program for the centre including gardening, gutter clearing, painting rooms whilst communicating with residents. This has been a rewarding opportunity for some of our young people. They have taken

real ownership of their contributions to the service.

#### **Landcare/Bushcare** Environment project.

In conjunction with the Wingecarribee Shire Council and The Department of Conservation and Land Management, we have been involved in the development and maintenance of re-vegetation areas, bank stabilisation, exotic weed control and removal along the banks of the Wingecarribee River. The purpose of this activity is to improve management of natural resources, raise awareness of the importance of sustainable natural resource management, teach youth about environmental issues, develop environmental awareness, develop community awareness, gain skills, learn about teamwork, cooperation and communication.

#### **Volunteering** time at Tangara SSP to assist children with disabilities.

Tangara SSP is a school which provides programs to support the development of students with intellectual disabilities and moderate to high support needs. Each week a group of four students volunteer their services to assist in the classrooms and with recreational activities in the playground. This program provides our students with an opportunity to support the local community, build relationships with children of different needs, and develop empathy, understanding, and compassion while learning to communicate with individuals different to themselves.



## **Special Programs to Support Students**

### **Aftercare**

Aftercare involves the development of an individualised case plan catering for the extra-curricular needs of each young person. This network of support is organised in consultation with Youth Off The Streets Welfare personnel.

### **Student achievement in 2008**

#### **School Certificate**

Four students achieved the School Certificate meeting competencies in English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Work Education, PDHPE, Art and Industrial Technology. Results ranged from Band 1 to Band 4.

#### **Post-school destinations**

- Two students returned to mainstream school.
- One student linked in to Disability Services.
- Two students remanded in custody.
- Six students transferred to alternative youth services, including semi-independent living programs.
- Five students restored family relationships and returned home.
- Nine students remained at YOTS and continued their education at MHC.
- One student gained apprenticeship.
- One student engaged in ongoing life skills program including work experience.
- One student accepted into TAFE course.
- One student employed in family business.

## Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

### Youth Off The Streets Limited

#### Matthew Hogan School

#### Income & Expenditure Statement

1 December 2007 to 30 November 2008

Opening Balance as at 1 December 2007	(247,502)
<b>Income</b>	
School Grants & Other Donations	236,838
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>236,838</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Staffing	481,456
Student Costs	22,953
Educational Supplies & Materials	5,153
Premises	66,663
Transport	34,524
Communication & Office	16,287
Depreciation	84,360
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>711,396</b>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>(474,558)</b>

A full copy of the school's 2008 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the Youth Off The Streets Management. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

## Progress on 2008 targets

Our achievements include:

### Target 1: To increase enrolments and improve attendance.

Our success was measured by:

- Increased day student enrolments. We were able to enrol students from the local community who had not previously succeeded in mainstream schooling.
- Retention of enrolments improved as a result of day students attending, but residential enrolments continued to have a transitory nature.

- Attendance improved with day students, but the high and complex needs of residential students continued to impact overall attendance.

### Target 2: To further develop transition programs.

Our success was measured by:

- Several students making successful transition from school to work or further education upon completion of School Certificate. One student engages in an ongoing work experience placement.
- Increase in community partnerships for resources and work opportunities.
- Successful engagement by students in work experience opportunities.
- Four students successfully gained work experience placements in areas of interest to them, with one going on to gain an apprenticeship, and one continuing on his placement while he completes his therapeutic program with YOTS.

### Target 3: To increase opportunities for better health for all students.

Our success was measured by:

- Achievement and participation in outdoor education activities. Students engaged in a variety of outdoor activities including swimming, Bronze Medallion, bushwalking, horse riding, community soccer competition, organising sports activities for children with disabilities
- Improvement in skill level, sportsmanship and team skills of participating students through participation in interschool Futsal soccer competition.
- Increase in variety of healthy foods consumed by students through nutritious menu provided by school canteen, student involvement in menu planning, cooking and food handling. All students regularly eating fruit and vegetables and unprocessed foods.

## Targets for 2009

### Target 1:

#### To create more effective learning opportunities

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Uniform set of expectation of staff and students at School/Camps/Excursions.
- Further expansion of integrated units of Learning.
- Increase in enrolments.
- Increase in active engagement.
- Seeking learning opportunities to meet individual needs.

Our success will be measure by:

- Smooth transfer of staff/resources across sites.
- Each staff member competency in implementing integrated learning.
- Eligible students listed on the census.
- Reflection/measurement in Reading Ages/Attendance/Duration and external exam results.
- Student participation in learning opportunities in/out of the classroom.

### Target 2:

#### Provide a more appropriate environment.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Greater lobbying with funding bodies/corporate sponsorship.
- Increase allocations of intern psychologists on site.
- A more streamlined evaluation process.
- Enlist volunteers to specifically meet individual student needs.

Our success will be measured by:

- Increase of funding for the schools.
- Improvement in the physical environment and resources.
- Marked increase in counselling opportunities for students and their families.
- Monthly reports to include more specific statistics.
- Minimum of 2 volunteers to assist weekly on each site.

### Target 3:

#### Raise awareness and maintain community relationships.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Explicit promotion of Youth Off The Streets (YOTS for YOTS).
- Increase networking and community/organisational/Corporate/University relationships.
- Partnerships to increase young peoples opportunities in Work Experience.
- Raise public profile of what we do.

Our success will be measured by:

- All students equipped in skills in "Leadership for Life".
- Students and staff representing our schools in public forums.
- 4 days per year students and staff actively engage in Community partnerships activity.

### Target 4:

#### To further expand the full Integrated Curriculum in to all subjects, and stages 4 & 5 Syllabus.

Strategies to achieve this target are:

- Continued staff allocation for building up resources.
- External guidance sought to assist staff for Professional Development.
- Staff to be released to research best practice with ATSI students.
- All support staff to experience 'Service Learning' projects.

Our success will be measured by:

- All syllabus outcomes cross matched with Integrated Topics
- Sharing of resources with other schools/learning centres
- Dissemination of research to staff, students, parents and the greater community.
- Promotion of Integrated Learning and Service Learning as 'Best Practice'.