

## Case Study

# Woodridge State High School

**Commissioned by**

**Community Hubs and Partnerships**

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# Case Study 12: Woodridge State High School

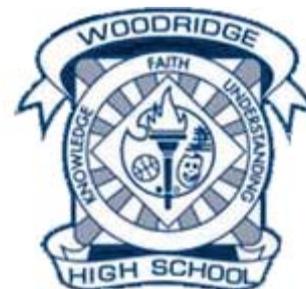
Queensland, Australia



## Overview

The Woodridge community is highly disadvantaged, with low levels of educational attainment and high unemployment. The community is diverse, with a large proportion of the population identified as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)<sup>3</sup>.

The Woodridge State High School Community Hub seeks to promote the engagement of 'at risk' members of the community through connecting them with activities to improve educational and employment outcomes<sup>1</sup>. It further aims to breakdown the generational issue of unemployment for CALD populations, who make up 84% of the clients across year 12 students and the community more broadly<sup>2</sup>.



Source: Woodridge State High School

Note that no consultation has been undertaken for this case study, and therefore the information contained in this case study is based on desktop research.

## Context/setting



## Service mix



**Education**, including a state high school<sup>1,2</sup>.

**Community services**, including individualised case management for students and community clients, outreach services including training institutions, job seeking workshops, resume writing, and referrals to other relevant services<sup>1,2</sup>

## Level of integration

*Unable to be confirmed through desk top research*

## Site characteristics



**Brownfield**, use of existing infrastructure

**Urban**

## Funding



**Public**, Federal Department of Human Services Better Futures, Local Solutions Fund<sup>1</sup>

## Partners (inc. lead agency)

**Lead agency:** *Unable to be confirmed through desk top research*

**Partners:** BoysTown, Queensland Department of Education, external service providers (such as Centrelink)

## Foundations for success

This hub exhibits two key success factors that were identified in the literature review.



Measurement



Governance and culture

## Measurement

As part of the funding requirement, two evaluations of the program were carried out by BoysTown in 2014, and 2016. For both evaluations, a mixed method approach was taken including surveys (pre and post) across various stakeholder groups, as well as data that was made available from the case manager and school.

## Governance

A reference committee was formed to govern the program. Regular meetings were held, but with a variable level of attendance. It was noted that more input from the reference committee would have been desirable, however, feedback from the group did indicate satisfaction, with reports of perceptions of positive contributions to the process<sup>1</sup>.

## Outcomes

### Service awareness and access

Through the individualised case management, there was an increased awareness of services to help connect students and unemployed community members to study and employment opportunities, including training institutions, job seeking workshops and resume writing<sup>1</sup>. There was also a referral process, where clients were referred to relevant services to achieve their educational and employment goals. The school often acts as a hub for external services to provide a range of services including employment information, support and training services.

### Educational outcomes

While there were some reports that the case management could be improved, there were a large number of clients who articulated positive perceptions of the activity in helping them 'achieve their goals'. More specifically, there is strong evidence of improved education achievements, with Queensland Certificates of Education increasing from 56% to 97% over three years<sup>1</sup>. As well, Year 12 school completion rates increased from 77% to 89% over the same period<sup>2</sup>.

There is a partnership with the local Centrelink to help connect students and unemployed community members to job services provider, holding sessions to register at the school<sup>1</sup>. While the evaluation found that 57% of clients gained sustainable employment, the program fell short of the levels achieved in the first year, and its overall target of 70%<sup>2</sup>. This was likely related to the reported decrease in satisfaction of the case management due to staffing constraints.

## Lessons

- Higher demand for case work and staffing constraints limited the opportunity to engage closely with all clients and saw the level of case work across clients decrease in the second year of the program. Further, there were reports that the services offered by the case management was varied, ranging from 'almost no activity' to 'some activity', and some clients reported perceptions of inadequate support and response to their needs. It was identified that caseloads could be capped at levels that still allow time to build relationships with clients, and thus adequately service their needs
- Some clients require more services than others, based on their relative disadvantage and needs. This should be recognised and services should be tailored appropriately, targeting and spending more time with highly disadvantaged and at risk clients
- Services need to be specific to the needs of the community and should be adaptive to evolving or changing needs

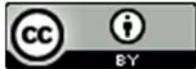
## References

1. BoysTown, 2014, Woodridge State High School Community Hub, Year 1 Evaluation Report
2. BoysTown, 2016, Woodridge State High School Community Hub, Final Evaluation Report
3. Local Stats, 2017, Woodridge Demographics, <http://woodridge.localstats.com.au/demographics/qld/brisbane/southern-suburbs/woodridge>

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