

MEDIA RELEASE

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Bayside Schools promote Good Mental Health

Bayside schools have successfully embarked on a program to build students' resilience to life stresses with the aim of improving mental health and reducing corresponding social problems.

The Resiliency in Bayside Schools (RIBS) Project has been promoting good mental health in Bayside schools for the past two and a half years. All six state high schools involved have chosen to utilise the MindMatters framework for whole of school promotion of mental health and wellbeing.

Project Coordinator, Olivia Fisher, said the RIBS project aimed to change the culture of school communities to provide a long-term solution to a major issue in the area.

"The project was in response to identified youth mental health issues in this community. The key focus was to promote resilience of students and staff to support them to be better able to deal with life's ups and downs. Evidence has shown that young people who are more resilient are less likely to turn to destructive and unhelpful behaviours such as misusing drugs and alcohol," she said.

"As a group we've moved from just talking about mental illness to talking about how we can promote mental health resilience and wellbeing, which I think is a very important cultural shift."

The partnership between Queensland Health, Education Queensland, South East Alliance of General Practice (Brisbane) and non-government organisations was funded by Queensland Health through the Southside Partnership Council as part of the Connecting Healthcare in Communities initiative.

All schools involved in the Project, have worked with MindMatters (www.mindmatters.edu.au), the largest national mental health initiative for secondary schools, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. Throughout this time, Victoria Point State High School has been developing their whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing and have achieved recognition as a MindMatters school.

MindMatters congratulates Victoria Point State High School on their ongoing commitment to the health and wellbeing of their school community and looks forward to their continued involvement with this national initiative and improved outcomes for their students.

Victoria Point State High School Principal, John Corbett, said the school's MindMatters journey began in 2009. "Our aim was to implement a whole school approach to mental health and well being for students and staff, with a specific focus on positive and supportive class room environments," he said.

"In reviewing our policies and procedures and embedding a health and well being focus across all curriculum areas, we have achieved improved student results and student engagement. Our strengthened community partnerships have produced excellent student support networking for students and parents, and individual learning pathways for students."

Nearly 250 staff of local state high schools and partner organisations attended professional development in mental health and wellbeing as part of the project, and all RIBS schools have made a commitment to ongoing mental health promotion after completion of this project in June 2010.

The Bayside Youth directory, developed as part of this project, can be found at www.bayyouth.com.au.

A breakfast will be held on 4th June 2010 in order to thank all the partners involved, launch the directory, and present Victoria Point with recognition as a MindMatters school.

Media is welcome to attend as there will be an interview and photo opportunity.

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FROM THE CITY TO THE SEA