

# youthwise

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Autumn 2026

In this issue

## Tennis Australia

FEATURED

Law In Schools

FEATURED

*St Johns*

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*Tracksafe*

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# A letter from the Editor

**W**ELCOME to the latest Autumn edition of Youthwise.

As usual, a mixed bag of subject matter, which we hope our readers will find interesting, educative and informative!

I would like to focus my editorial on our teachers, because currently the teaching workforce in Australia is facing a "critical" shortage, with many educators reporting extreme burnout, high workloads and significant mental health challenges. As of late 2025 and early 2026 this situation has persisted for several years, causing "en masse" resignations and a diabolical shortage of teachers in both the public and private school system.

Australian teacher shortages are amongst the worst in the OECD with over half of the countries secondary school principals reporting that a lack of teachers hinders instruction. Over 83% of schools reported teacher shortages in 2024, and it continues to this day. Some of this can be attributed to the following:

## HIGH BURNOUT AND STRESS

Well over half of Australian teachers experience high levels of stress and over 80% of teachers report negative impacts on mental health.

## WORKING CONDITIONS AND WORKLOAD

Key factors for leaving include excessive administrative work marking and curriculum changes.

## SAFETY

Safety is also a major concern with reports of daily physical violence, especially in Victorian and Queensland schools.

## RENUMERATION AND INDUSTRIAL ACTION.

Teachers are taking action to demand better pay and conditions which I wholly support.

Teaching is a valued profession. Teachers serve a vital role in our society—they act as mentors, educators, experts and role models for future generations.

During my stay in America (where my son went to school and my best friend was a high school teacher) I was impressed with the respect that teachers were afforded. They are held in very high esteem, and rightly so.

According to a 2022 national survey of over 5000 Australian teachers, 7 out of 10 teachers did not feel respected by the Australian public.

Further alarming stats are that 1 in 4 teachers do

not feel safe at work and less than 14% reported their workload as manageable.

Teachers play a critical and important role in shaping our shared future—they deserve the utmost respect and appreciation. These are the people we entrust our children to.

As a parent, you have MY utmost respect and appreciation. I call you my unsung heroes!

Our usual heartfelt thanks go to our wonderful supporters and contributors—Youthwise exists because of you.

We wish you good mental health.

Leigh Mary Leonard

Editor  
Youthwise

## POSTSCRIPT

Nov 25 marked the first anniversary of the deaths of Holly Bowles and Bianca Jones—two precious girls from MY local schools who died as a result of methanol poisoning in Laos whilst on their dream gap year getaway. We honor your memory. Forever in our hearts and prayers.

## DISCLAIMER

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Information and opinion articles in this magazine do not constitute, nor are meant to constitute, advice of any kind. If you require advice relating to any of the issues covered in this publication or other issues which could be covered in this publication, you should consult an appropriate health professional.

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# RAIL SAFETY IS A SKILL FOR LIFE.

TrackSAFE  
Foundation

AS TEENS GAIN INDEPENDENCE, THESE SIMPLE SAFETY TIPS HELP GUIDE THEM WHEN YOU CAN'T. SHARE THE LESSONS + LET'S STAY RAIL SAFE TOGETHER.

## PHONE DOWN. LOOK AROUND.



PAUSE YOUR TUNES.  
LISTEN FOR TRAINS + TRAMS.

## NO PLACE FOR GAMES AROUND TRAINS!



NEVER RETRIEVE DROPPED ITEMS.  
STAY BEHIND THE YELLOW LINE.

## GET A GRIP! HOLD ONTO HANDRAILS.



ALWAYS HOLD HANDRAILS ON TRAINS, TRAMS, ESCALATORS + STAIRS.

## STOP. LOOK. LISTEN. THINK.



USE CORRECT CROSSINGS AROUND TRAIN + TRAM TRACKS.

# EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE TRAINING



Emotional Resilience



Dr Jane Foster

[jane@emotionalresiliencetraining.com.au](mailto:jane@emotionalresiliencetraining.com.au)

Are you driving under the influence of someone else's emotion?

Do you feel that you're failing if you're not happy?

Emotions aren't inherently good or bad; they're like rough and smooth roads.

It's the rough roads that help us improve our driving skills and build resilience, and yet we keep removing people from the rough roads and placing them on smooth ones, assuming it's for their benefit. It's no surprise that many struggle or crash when they're suddenly left alone on difficult roads without support.

Ultimately, success does not mean you have to be on a smooth, happy road. And who made sadness an illness rather than an emotion to experience? Depression is totally different. It IS an illness. And what about grief? Anxiety? These are emotions that we need to experience.

Life is like a pulse readout. It rises and falls to indicate you're alive. What happens when it flatlines? You're dead, and yet so many of us are trying to live a smooth life. No wonder we feel that we are failing, as we're all trying to attain the unattainable.

Your life will always be filled with valuable rough and smooth roads, all of which teach you something (rough roads build resilience, and the smooth roads build health) – but only if you are in control. The trick is to learn how to regain and maintain control on any road, without judgement.

The ER definition of being out of control is when you: harm yourself or others (physically or emotionally), blame others/circumstances, refuse to listen, swear/shout, won't slow down, judge, and complain. How many people do you know who exhibit these? The majority!

## TEPs and PETs

Two main concepts that help you regain and maintain control on any road are TEPs (Trigger Extra Precautions) and PETs (Personal Emotional Tools). TEPs represent people or circumstances that influence you to drive onto a rough road or lose control on either road. You must be aware of your minor TEPs, as they can slowly accumulate, filling your glass of stress and leaving you feeling overwhelmed and out of control.

## Examples of TEPs

- Family/friend annoyances
- Work stress
- Financial concerns
- Feeling alone
- IT glitches
- The government
- Feeling a failure
- Your health
- Change
- Body image
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling overwhelmed

PETs are the tools that will help you regain and maintain control on any road. They allow you to detach from the TEP and access a creative response. This enables you to regain control by continually emptying your glass so it never fills or overflows.

You don't have to leave the rough road. Now that you are in control, you can build your resilience and increase your emotional intelligence. This is when your levels of emotional resilience and driving skills really improve.

(Disclaimer: It's important to note that I created ER to be preventative and specifically designed to cope with everyday circumstances, not extremely traumatic ones that are often out of our control.)

## Examples of PETs

- Breathing
- Having ONE beer/wine. (Remember, when you overdo a PET, it becomes a TEP!)
- ONE row of dark chocolate
- Music
- Nature – eg, watching the sunset, birds
- Connecting with a friend
- Animals
- Going for a walk
- Having a shower
- Reading
- Drawing
- Using your senses
- Listen to a podcast

Don't judge yourself for not always being on a smooth road. Life is meant to be up and down. You just need to know how to regain control on all roads and empty that glass of stress daily.

You may not be able to change the people and circumstances in your life, but you can always choose how you respond to them. That is the power of controlling your own steering wheel.

Dr Jane Foster  
Emotional Resilience Training  
[www.emotionalresiliencetraining.com.au](http://www.emotionalresiliencetraining.com.au)

You are not the emotion.

It is simply a road you drive down.



Emotional Resilience



## Resolving Impacts of Disruptive Behaviour in the Classroom with the Behaviour Help App

By Dolly Bhargava

When our young people are learning in the classroom, disruptive behaviours of concern affects everyone. Learning outcomes suffer in the short and long term when teaching is interrupted by disruptive classroom behaviour.

There are many reasons why a student's behaviour may become disruptive and escalate and these underlying causes include mental health.

With diagnosis of Autism and ADHD on the rise, additional support is needed for addressing behaviours of concern on a day to day basis in education so we can limit classroom disruptions and promote positive learning outcomes for all.

We have developed a tool that is effective at managing behaviours in partnership with teaching staff, family members and other students. It begins by recording the observed behaviour, in what's known as a Functional Behaviour Assessment, and it ends with practical guidelines for managing the challenging behaviours leading to meaningful reductions in disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

Let's dive in and learn more about behaviours of concern and the underlying causes of disruptive student conduct, but first, my name is Dolly Bhargava and I support children, adolescents, and adults with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD).

My work has focused on providing support across a variety of settings, including family homes, childcare centres, schools, respite care, post-school options, employment services, and corrective services for more than 25 years.

I am a practicing behaviour therapist, author, the founder of [behaviourhelp.com](http://behaviourhelp.com) and more recently the Behaviour Help App.

### Disruptive Behaviour Warning Signs

Most behaviours of concern have warning signs or 'antecedents'. The student involved may have come to school feeling fine but through a combination of environmental factors, mental illness or misunderstood social cues the student might start to dysregulate and become at risk of displaying challenging behaviours.

For teachers reading, it is probably quite normal to experience stress in the classroom and normal to spend time addressing the disruptive behaviour.

Even seemingly minor disruptions can be problematic causing teaching staff to spend their teaching hours managing disruptions when they should be supporting students with learning but it is possible to address the disruptive behaviour in a systematic way and it all starts by noticing the antecedents.

### Functional Behaviour Assessments

Functional behaviour Assessment (FBA) is an evidence-based and systematic assessment process of collecting and analysing information from various sources that helps to gain insights into the factors contributing the behaviour and identify why a behaviour is occurring i.e., the "function/s" of the behaviour.

Specifically, in regards to the FBA the Behaviour Help App guides you step by step through the following:



- Individual's profile: Gather information about the individual to create a comprehensive picture of the individual, their context and systems of support.

- Behaviour data collection forms: The app allows multiple team members to record by inputting measurable details (e.g. frequency, intensity, duration) about the behaviours of concern by observing the individual in different settings. The app then collates the metric data, analyses and captures patterns.

- A-B-C analysis: The app allows multiple team members to systematically input incident details by recording the antecedents (what preceded the behaviour and the environment including where the behaviour occurred), behaviours (describing the observable actions as they occurred) and the consequences (what happened after the behaviour). The app then collates all the incidents into an incident register system for easy analysis.

- Hypothesis: By reflecting on both the qualitative and quantitative data the most likely purpose (i.e., function) that the behaviour of concern serves for the individual and what reinforces that behaviour to occur again can be determined.

The Behaviour Help app then generates a downloadable functional behaviour assessment report that can be printed or saved as a PDF to be shared with the individual's support team.

### Examples of Behaviours of Concern

In the classroom, behaviours of concern can take many forms, from calling out, interrupting, or refusing instructions, to more disruptive actions like leaving the room without permission, throwing objects, or using verbal or physical aggression.

Some students may display self-injurious behaviour, withdraw completely, engage in teasing or mocking others, or produce repetitive noises that disrupt the learning environment. While some behaviours are overt and others more subtle, all can impact learning and signal underlying needs such as anxiety, sensory overload, trauma, or difficulties with communication.

Recognising and responding to these behaviours effectively starts with understanding their root causes—something the Behaviour Help App is designed to support.

### Positive Behaviour, Positive Learning Outcomes

As a health professional I understand the complex role of mental health in overall well being, particularly for young people. Schools play a crucial

role in child development delivering not only the practical skills needed for life but essential role modelling for social interactions and learning to cope with the expectations of the world.

When disruptive behaviour threatens these outcomes, it threatens the life chances, physical and mental wellbeing of the individual and those around them in the classroom. Left unaddressed disruptive behaviours can lead to social isolation with an elevated risk of depression and violence later in life.

The Behaviour Help app is being used by schools in class across Australia (and beyond) as a tool to manage and support individuals in reducing classroom disruptions.

Building stronger relationships between the student, their teachers, parents and other stake holders to assess, manage and prevent behaviours of concern.

The Behaviour Help App can help implement practical solutions to manage behaviours effectively. With the power of AI embedded into the app, the process of conducting a Functional Behaviour Assessment has never been easier—streamlining data collection, analysis, and intervention planning.

One simple, evidence-based strategy the app may help identify is the role of physical activity in reducing disruptive behaviour.

Incorporating short movement breaks, access to outdoor play, or structured physical tasks into the daily routine can help students regulate their energy, reduce anxiety, and improve focus.

For many students, particularly those with ADHD, autism, or sensory needs, physical activity acts as a natural reset button—calming the nervous system and making it easier to re-engage with learning.

### Learn More about the Behaviour Help App and Website

To learn more, visit our home page, blog or factsheet pages where you'll find a wealth of resources, professional guides, and access to the Behaviour Help App.

Whether you're a teacher, school leader, or allied health professional, the app can help you gather behaviour data, conduct Functional Behaviour Assessments, and implement tailored support plans that reduce disruptions and promote positive learning outcomes.

Together, we can create calmer classrooms where every student has the chance to thrive.

### Dolly Bhargava

NDIS Registered Specialist Behaviour Support Practitioner and Speech Pathologist  
Bachelor of Applied Science (Speech Pathology)  
Masters in Special Education (Sensory Disability)

[www.behaviourhelp.com](http://www.behaviourhelp.com)



## When Strength Speaks: Why Vulnerability Matters in Schools

**W**hen Adelaide Crows ruckman Reilly O’Brien stands in front of a group of students and speaks about anxiety, it disrupts an assumption many young people carry quietly — that strong people don’t struggle.

When he tells students that tough times are normal — and that being skilled in managing them is something we can learn — the room shifts.

In a culture that still often equates resilience with toughness, that message matters.

Through my work as a clinical psychologist partnering with schools — and previously in private practice — I’ve seen how many young people come to believe they should cope alone. They may not have the language for anxiety, shame, grief or overwhelm, but they learn early that keeping it hidden feels safer than admitting it.

That is why role modelling vulnerability is so powerful.

Anxiety is a normal human response. Feeling overwhelmed, uncertain or self-critical is part of being human. The difficulty isn’t that we feel these emotions. It’s that we’re rarely taught what to do with them.

That is where prevention matters.

After years of working with young people and schools, it became clear to me that we needed something more structured. That became Open Parachute — a preventative mental health program designed to equip students with practical psychological skills before challenges escalate.

### BEYOND WELLBEING

In schools, we often talk about wellbeing — breathing exercises, positive thinking, strategies to calm down. These are important. I think of them

as a map and a compass: everyday tools that help us navigate ordinary stress.

But young people will inevitably face bigger challenges. Friendship breakdowns. Identity struggles. Social exclusion. Grief. Failure. Moments that shake their sense of self.

For those times, they need something more robust: mental health skills — what I think of as an emergency beacon for life’s harder moments.

By mental health skills, I mean the ability to understand their stress response, work through emotions, recognise patterns in their thinking, and respond with strategies rather than react by shutting down or lashing out. These are the deeper capabilities that allow a young person to navigate significant adversity, not just everyday stress.

Through Open Parachute, schools are provided with structured classroom lessons that combine psychological tools with storytelling. Teachers facilitate the learning, and students practise these skills over time — not just hear about them once. In partnership with the Adelaide Crows Foundation, players complement this classroom work by visiting schools and speaking openly about their own experiences — reinforcing the same language and skills students are learning week to week.

A defining feature of the program is the integration of peer lived experience. Students engage with documentary-style stories of other young people speaking openly about navigating anxiety, friendship challenges, identity, and adversity. The intention is not to present perfect examples, but relatable and authentic ones — voices that feel “just like me.”

These skills are not crisis intervention. They are preventative — practised repeatedly, like any other capability we want young people to develop.

Scaling this kind of preventative work requires collaboration.

Open Parachute works alongside the Adelaide Crows Foundation and The Sebastian Foundation, founded by Guy and Jules Sebastian — united in the belief that young people should be equipped when it comes to mental health.

As Guy Sebastian has said, we need to equip young people with a coat of armour to face what life throws at them.

The language of equipping is important. We are not trying to remove hardship from students’ lives. That would be impossible. We are helping them build the internal capacity to meet hardship differently.

### WHAT CHANGES IN A CLASSROOM

Athlete visits create powerful moments — they open the door.

But sustainable change happens when vulnerability is reinforced week after week through structured skill-building.

Teachers often describe a shift in empathy over time. Students become more aware of the line between banter and harm — particularly among students navigating identity and belonging. Instead of dismissing something as “just a joke,” they begin to recognise how their words might land for someone else.

That shift is cultural.

When young people are given language for their emotions and opportunities to practise regulation skills, peer dynamics begin to change. Conflicts still happen — they always will — but students are more able to pause, reflect, and repair.

Recently, I spoke to a student who had just moved to Australia. She described feeling worried and confused in her new environment — unsure of the language, unsure of the social rules, unsure of where she fit. After engaging in the program, she told me she felt more confident and more connected. She had words for what she was feeling. She understood that other students experienced uncertainty too.

Belonging is one of the most protective factors in mental health. When young people feel understood and able to express themselves, their nervous systems settle. And when they feel safe, they are more ready to learn.

One of the ways belonging is built is through recognition — seeing parts of yourself reflected in someone else’s story.

Athletes can create that recognition. But they are not the only ones who model vulnerability. Peer voices do as well.

When students hear authentic stories from other young people — stories that feel close to their own — they respond differently.

When asked what resonates most, many say the same thing: “They’re just like me.” That sense of similarity matters. When a young person sees someone their own age name a feeling they recognise — and describe a way through it — something shifts internally. They feel less alone. More capable. More willing to try. And when they see a hero athlete in the flesh, reinforcing the same message, their confidence grows even further.

Vulnerability doesn’t just inspire. It transfers.

### THE ROLE OF ADULTS

One of the most encouraging patterns schools report is growth in students feeling they have an important adult at school.

That does not happen by accident.

When teachers are supported with a structured framework for talking about emotions — one that is trauma-informed and practical — it reduces uncertainty. Instead of feeling they must ‘fix’ distress, they can guide students in practising skills.

In our culture, we often label emotions as good or bad. But emotions are signals. When young people learn how to work with those signals rather than suppress them, growth becomes possible.

Classrooms become calmer — not because students stop feeling anxious or frustrated, but because they know what to do when those feelings arise.

### A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The partnership between the Adelaide Crows Foundation, The Sebastian Foundation, and Open Parachute reflects a broader truth: mental health education is a shared responsibility.

Sport has influence. Music has influence. Education has influence. When those forces align around prevention and skill-building, the message to young people becomes clear: your emotional life matters.

Resilience is not built through slogans or one-off talks. It is built through repeated practice, shared language, and modelling from the adults and peers young people relate to and look up to.

When admired athletes speak honestly, it opens a door. When peers echo that honesty, it normalises the experience. When teachers sustain the learning week after week, culture begins to shift.

Hard things will always happen. We cannot promise young people otherwise — nor should we.

What we can offer is something steadier: skills, connection, and the reassurance that they are not alone in learning how to navigate both the ordinary stresses and the bigger challenges of life.

That, ultimately, is what resilience looks like.



Dr Hayley Watson  
Open Parachute Founder and Clinical Psychologist

[www.openparachute.com.au](http://www.openparachute.com.au)  
[www.crowsfoundation.com.au](http://www.crowsfoundation.com.au)  
<https://thesebastianfoundation.org/>



## AusIdentities

### Introduction

AusIdentities is a colourful, innovative and uniquely Australian alternative to systems such as Myers-Briggs, HBDI and DISC. Using personality profiling to generate awareness of innate differences, we help transform organisations and schools, delivering improved outcomes, reducing conflict, increasing retention and promoting greater mental and emotional well-being, all the way from the boardroom to the classroom

### Celebrating Diversity

Established in 2005, AusIdentities presents a fresh and uniquely Australian alternative to contemporary models of type. It works by linking people's core values and innate behavioural traits to the characteristics of four well-known Australian animals, a model that has already been embraced by over 350 schools, several universities, TAFE, QASSP, Queensland state and local governments, and dozens of individual business organisations and community groups.

Celebrating diversity is a well-established practice that adds value to leadership, teams and communities. Yet diversity in personality in schools is often overlooked, even though it has the potential to generate tremendous value for principals and teachers looking to improve outcomes and the emotional health of the students. To date more than 30,000 students have been introduced to the AusIdentities program, both at primary and high school levels.

AusIdentities is dedicated to helping you achieve optimum levels of performance through the delivery of a series of customisable training programs that impact the following areas:

### Communication

Personality has a direct impact on how individuals communicate, how they interpret what others say, and how others perceive what they say. Personality driven biases in communication mean that a message delivered is not automatically a message understood. As George Bernard Shaw once said, "The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place".

Recognising and embracing diversity makes it easier to engage and interact with the people around us. Understanding diversity also enables us to craft more effective communication.

### Education

Schools are part of a rapidly expanding knowledge economy. Accurate and efficient processing of information is now a critical element in almost every position and role. By aligning information-processing tasks with personality can only help schools to achieve progress by keeping students motivated and engaged, and minimising the causes of stress among teachers.

### Teams

Celebrating diversity in personality also helps teams plan and delegate at a higher level.

American author and Myers-Briggs professional Sandra Hirsh, in 'Introduction to Type and Teams', states that valuing diversity in team members' personality types helps teams to identify areas of strength and potential weakness, match assignments to personality, manage and resolve conflict and reach more useful and insightful conclusions.

### Leadership

Psychologist Dr. David Keirse, author of 'Please Understand Me', argues that effective leadership requires both understanding and a deep appreciation of the innate strengths and challenges of diverse personalities.

Celebrating diversity in personality makes the principal's role of running a school more effective and rewarding. It helps identify different perspectives and the most favourable methods of leadership, communication and team building.

To find out more about the work we do, please visit our website at: [www.ausidentities.com.au](http://www.ausidentities.com.au)



## Badminton... Let's Play!

By Michael White

Did you know badminton is the fastest racket sport in the world? Most people don't, but the Guinness World Record set in 2023 recorded a smash speed of 565 km/h!

At a high level of performance, the sport demands excellent all-round fitness, aerobic stamina, agility, strength, speed, and precision. As a starting point, badminton is one of the most accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable sports for young people and adults. Played by millions around the world and an estimated half a million people in Australia, it offers a unique combination of physical activity, skill development, and social connection. Whether picked up for fun or pursued as a competitive pathway, there are opportunities for young people to get involved, grow, and succeed in the sport with many lifelong benefits.

### PHYSICAL AND MENTAL BENEFITS

Badminton is an excellent way to stay active and healthy. The sport develops fundamental movement skills such as agility, balance, coordination and reaction time and requires good motor skills for racket and shuttle control. Because it involves short bursts rather than continuous running, it is suitable for all fitness levels and can easily be tailored to different ages and abilities and perfect for disabilities using adaptive equipment. Beyond the physical, playing regularly is proven to help with focus, decision-making, memory and confidence. Learning new techniques, mastering rallies, and progressive improvement encourages a positive and resilient mindset.

### INCLUSIVE, FUN, AND SOCIAL

One of badminton's greatest strengths is its inclusivity; boys and girls can play together and the sport is accessible for all abilities and backgrounds. It can be played competitively or socially, individually or doubles, making it easy for everyone to find a way to enjoy the game. Through partnership and team challenges, young people learn to work together to problem solve and strategize, encouraging interaction, leadership, communication and teamwork. These social benefits are especially important for building friendships and a sense of belonging within their school, community and activities.

### NO COURT? NO PROBLEM

Unlike many sports, badminton requires minimal equipment and space. A racket, shuttle, and enough space is all that's needed. You can play it indoors or outdoors, making it ideal for schools, community venues, and clubs looking to introduce a fun and engaging activity without high costs

or complex setup. Badminton can be adapted for younger children, those with additional needs, or those with limited hand-eye co-ordination, using balloons, bean bags and chiffon scarves as alternative options to a shuttle, slowing down the reaction time and ensuring early experiences are positive, enjoyable, and developmentally appropriate.

### PATHWAYS INTO BADMINTON

Shuttle Smash is Badminton Australia's badminton basics program for communities. Packed with fun, game-based activities for beginners, building racket skills, movement and co-ordination, using modified equipment to support progression. Expect to see energising warm-ups, rallies that build teamwork and challenges that develop persistence. Inclusive to disabilities and with traditional Indigenous games incorporated into the content, it provides a good base level for continued involvement in the sport. Leaders just need to be passionate, no badminton experience necessary as all the training and resources are provided for free.

Shuttle Time is Badminton Australia's schools program, designed for students of all levels and ages. It introduces young people to badminton through fun, engaging activities that develop basic movement and racket skills. The programme focuses on enjoyment, inclusion, and confidence, making it ideal for children who may be new to sport or physical activity. In 2025, there were 400 badminton Sporting Schools programs delivered and many more through direct teacher delivery. Shuttle Time resources and online training supports teachers and sports leader with the knowledge, regardless of experience, with access to simple session plans and activities, helping badminton become part of regular school sport.

### FROM GRASSROOTS TO LIFELONG PARTICIPATION

For those who wish to progress further, young people can join one of 400 (and growing) clubs and associations nationally or participate in school competitions. However just as importantly, badminton can be enjoyed for life. Many young people continue playing socially or recreationally well into adulthood, benefiting from an active lifestyle and ongoing social connections.

### More Information

participation@badminton.org.au | [www.shuttlesmash.org.au](http://www.shuttlesmash.org.au)  
<https://shuttletime.bwfbadminton.com/>  
[@badmintonaustralia](https://www.ausport.gov.au/schools/schools/sports/badminton)



## Bullying Has Changed. So Must We

*At Bully Zero, we've spent years working with schools, families and communities to prevent bullying and build safer environments for young people. It's no surprise that bullying has evolved. And our response must evolve with it.*

**W**hile traditional face-to-face bullying remains a serious issue in our schools, it no longer ends when the bell rings. Today, bullying follows young people home through devices, social media and gaming platforms. The playground is no longer confined to a physical space. It exists online, 24 hours a day.

National research shows that nearly one in four Year 4 to Year 9 students report being bullied during their schooling. The eSafety Commissioner's recent survey found that 21% of young people reported being socially excluded, threatened, or abused online. These statistics reflect a growing challenge that demands proactive, informed action.

Cyberbullying can be relentless. A single post can be shared widely within seconds. Screens can create distance and reduce empathy, making it easier for someone to type words they would never say face-to-face. For the young person on the receiving end, the impact can be significant. It can lead to anxiety, social withdrawal, reduced school engagement, declining mental wellbeing and in extreme instances, suicide.

The reality is simple: Words Matter. What we say and what we post, has power - it can uplift or it can harm. At Bully Zero, our 'Words Matter' message is central to everything we do. We help young people understand that digital actions carry real world consequences, and that kindness online is not optional. It is essential.

We deliver evidence-based programs tailored to primary and secondary schools across Australia, equipping students with practical strategies to recognise bullying, respond safely and act as upstanders. We teach digital citizenship – encouraging critical thinking, empathy and responsible decision-making. We support educators with professional learning and provide parents with tools to reinforce respectful behaviours at home.

Australia's evolving online safety landscape, including new regulations aimed at protecting young people, reflects a growing awareness of the risks in digital environments. However, legislation alone cannot shift behaviour. Education, modelling and consistent messaging are what truly create change.

We have seen firsthand that when schools commit to proactive prevention, positive outcomes follow. Students feel empowered to speak up. Harmful behaviours are addressed earlier. Respect becomes the norm, not the exception. When schools adopt a whole-community approach and embed bullying prevention into everyday culture, that's where real change happens.

When we empower young people to understand that their choices matter and their voices carry influence, we strengthen safer, more respectful environments for all. Because online or offline: Words Matter.



Katie Govic  
Bully Zero  
[bullyzero.org.au/schools](https://bullyzero.org.au/schools)



# RULE OUT BULLYING IN 2026!

Bully Zero is Australia's leading organisation delivering face to face and online programs by qualified facilitators. From cyber safety to bullying prevention, our programs make an impact in schools, community groups, sporting clubs and workplaces.

Practical, effective, and always evolving, our presentations are designed to empower everyone within the school system - including students, teachers, guardians, principals, counsellors, young people, parents, chaplains, sports coaches and more - with the tools to prevent bullying.

- ✔ **Cutting Edge**
- ✔ **Backed by research**
- ✔ **Government endorsed**
- ✔ **Flexible delivery**



**Book Now**  
**Save**  
**26%**  
**in 2026**

when you book a full day of Bully Zero presentations (4 sessions)

**Let's build a world where everyone feels safe, respected and empowered to be themselves.**

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## Science, Education, and the Anxious Generation's Search for Meaning

*Young people today are asking a barrage of existential questions:*

- What matters? Am I important?
- What is my true identity? How should I live?
- Is social media helping or hurting me?
- Does my life have a purpose or value beyond what I achieve?
- Why should I think about the long-term if the world is doomed?
- What relationships really matter? And how do I find them?

These questions reveal the angst of what Jonathan Haidt calls “the anxious generation”: youth living with the urgency of social media while facing a global “doom horizon.” Yet, in a world dominated by technological wizardry, not one of these existential questions that Gen Z’ers are asking can be answered by science.

### The Extraordinary Power—and Limits—of Science

Science is one of humanity’s greatest achievements. It provides reliable knowledge of the natural world and trains us in evidence-based thinking. We need more scientific literacy, not less. However, science is designed to answer “how” questions: how cells divide, how climate systems work, how the brain processes information.

What science cannot do is answer questions of meaning, purpose, and ethics. It cannot answer

the “why” or “should” questions. It can tell us what drugs do to the brain, but not whether a person should take them. It can explain how motivation works, but not what is worth being motivated for. Science can tell us that there are more stars in the universe than there are grains of sand on all the beaches and deserts of planet Earth. But it can’t tell us if we should spend money on inhabiting Mars or on mitigating earthly global warming. Nor can science explain the awe and wonder we sense when we gaze at the night sky.

In a world where science is the go-to place for truth or sure answers, we need to be clear about the limits as well as the amazing reach of science itself. Confusion creeps in when we expect science to provide answers it is not equipped to give. When this happens, young people are left with impressive technical knowledge but few resources for finding value. Traditionally, religious or philosophical frameworks offered these answers—such as the Judeo-Christian understanding of human dignity, which cannot be derived from evolution or neuroscience.

### The Conflict Narrative

I lead ISCAST, an organisation of science lovers and scientists—including Prime Minister’s Prize winners—who are also religious believers. We often visit schools to discuss the intersection of science and worldview. Our surveys show that around 60% of students believe science and Christian faith are in conflict.

This statistic is revealing. For many students, “science” has come to mean all reliable knowledge, while “religion” is reduced to private feelings. In this framework, conflict is inevitable:

if science explains everything, then there are no answers to existential questions because they are not “scientific.”

Historically, science and religion were not competitors. They addressed different domains. While there are famous flashpoints like Galileo or Darwin, a deeper look shows that Galileo saw no conflict, and many believers embraced Darwin’s evolution from the start.

But if students assume science is the only source of truth, they are bound to feel directionless—not because science has failed, but because it has been asked to do the wrong job.

### Why Meaning Matters

Consider the question: Why should I take school seriously?

Science can correlate education with economic outcomes, but it doesn’t answer why effort matters if life feels arbitrary. Motivation is about purpose, not just information. When students ask if they are important, they aren’t looking for a brain scan; they are asking if their lives have value beyond productivity or popularity.

If we provide the tools of technology without a vision for what those tools are for, we should not be surprised by student apathy or anxiety.

### A More Holistic Picture

Recognising the limits of science does not diminish it; it allows science its proper place within a larger human story. A holistic education should draw on philosophy, ethics, literature, and religious traditions. These fields do not



## Human Biohacking: Gene Editing and Techno-utopianism

Chris Mulherin  
Executive Director, ISCAST

Year 12 Religion and Ethics  
Loreto Mandeville Hall  
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replace science; they complement it.

Religious traditions have long functioned as “meaning-making systems,” asking: What is a good life? Why do justice and truth matter? You do not have to be religious to recognise that these questions cannot be outsourced to laboratories. We don’t need to force a specific religion on young people, but we must help them understand that science does not hold the answers to life’s biggest questions.

### The Role of Schools

When schools focus mostly on technical competence, students may succeed academically while quietly imploding existentially—a struggle which often manifests as mental health challenges or a lack of direction.

Creating space for discussions about meaning alongside science is not indoctrination; it is good education. At ISCAST, as we affirm a love of science, we also aim to show that questions of meaning are also important and that they have been taken seriously throughout history. The goal is to expand horizons and help young people see that reducing reality to what can be measured leaves out the most important parts of being human.

Young people deserve better than being subtly

forced to choose between science and meaning, between facts and values, between knowledge and purpose.

The real challenge is not whether science and religion or philosophy are enemies, but whether we are willing to give students a richer intellectual and moral toolkit — one that respects science’s power while acknowledging its limits. Because questions like How should I live? and What matters? are not distractions from education; they are at its heart.

*Dr Chris Mulherin is the Executive Director of ISCAST—Christianity and Science in Conversation. For more about ISCAST or to invite a scientist to speak in your school, visit [www.iscast.org](http://www.iscast.org) or email [contact@iscast.org](mailto:contact@iscast.org).*



## Hope, Health and the Environment: Empowering Young People Through Sustainability

Research into the connection between nature and human health has been developing since the 1980s, but has gained strong momentum over the past decade. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, natural spaces were widely recognised as vital to mental and physical wellbeing, offering places of refuge, restoration and connection. This renewed focus reinforced what research has long shown: regular contact with nature is fundamental to human health.

A growing body of evidence links time in nature with reduced stress and anxiety, improved mood, stronger cognitive function, better physical health and improved sleep (Shanahan et al., 2015; White et al., 2019; Jimenez et al., 2021). For educators, this presents both an opportunity and a responsibility. Schools are uniquely positioned to provide equitable access to nature and foster meaningful environmental relationships. At Environment Education Victoria (EEV), we see this in action through the Victorian Government's ResourceSmart Schools program, our support for VCE Environmental Science, and sustainability resources for teachers and students across all year levels.

### SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION AS A PATHWAY TO CONNECTION AND CARE

Through our work with schools, we consistently observe that teaching about sustainability naturally leads students - and their teachers - outdoors. Biodiversity audits, school garden projects, waste assessments, energy and water monitoring, citizen science, and outdoor inquiry learning bring students into direct contact with the natural world.

This connection is transformative. Learning becomes experiential rather than abstract. Students notice seasonal change, recognise local flora and fauna, understand resource flows, and investigate the impacts of human

activity on ecosystems. These experiences build scientific literacy, critical thinking, empathy and a strong sense of place.

A structured program like ResourceSmart Schools ensures sustainability education is whole-school, consistent and embedded rather than ad hoc. The program supports schools to reduce waste, save energy and water, enhance biodiversity and integrate sustainability into curriculum planning. Over time, sustainable thinking becomes part of everyday school culture, influencing students, staff and families.

Beyond environmental improvements, this approach supports three key student outcomes:

1. Stronger problem-solving and critical thinking, enabling students to respond to complex environmental challenges.
2. Reduced climate anxiety, replaced with agency, competence and hope.
3. Improved wellbeing, supported by nature connection, collaboration and purposeful action.

These outcomes are vital not only for wellbeing and a sense of purpose, but also for future employment. The expanding circular economy, for example, is creating opportunities well suited to young people who understand systems thinking, resource management and sustainable design.

### RECONNECTING TEACHERS TO PURPOSE AND POSSIBILITY

Despite sustainability being a cross-curriculum priority for F-10, many teachers still feel uncertain about how to teach it confidently. Some feel overwhelmed by environmental challenges, while others feel disconnected from the deeper purpose behind their sustainability teaching.

At EEV, we know effective sustainability education is rooted in personal purpose. Teachers need time and space to reconnect with their

environmental "why". In response, we developed an interactive, reflective professional learning workshop that guides teachers to explore their experiences, values, concerns and hopes for the future. Teachers create a Sustainability Vision - a personal reflection that clarifies the future they want to help shape and their role within it. This supports a shift from content delivery to meaningful, intentional teaching. When teachers reconnect with their purpose, they feel more confident, and this renewed energy flows directly into the classroom.

(Only include these quotes below if there is enough room):

Feedback has been very positive:

"I found this to be of great value and to have the space and time to think about my personal sustainability vision."

"I questioned myself and thought about the future a lot."

"Now I have greater knowledge to power on."

ResourceSmart Schools and VCE Environmental Science: expressions of 'Active Hope'

The concept of Active Hope, developed by ecophilosopher Joanna Macy and resilience specialist Dr Chris Johnstone, offers a powerful lens for sustainability education. Active Hope is not passive optimism - it is a deliberate practice that involves seeing the world clearly, identifying the future we hope for, and taking purposeful steps towards it.

ResourceSmart Schools and VCE Environmental Science embody Active Hope in practice. They support students to engage honestly with environmental realities - climate change, biodiversity loss and resource depletion - while equipping them with practical tools to act. Through ResourceSmart Schools, students:

- Conduct audits and interpret real-world data
- Design and lead sustainability initiatives
- Advocate for change in their school and community
- Participate in habitat restoration and citizen science
- Develop systems-thinking and collaborative problem-solving skills

At VCE level, Environmental Science students explore Earth's systems,

human impacts, conservation science, and climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. This solutions-focused learning builds scientific understanding while supporting emotional resilience. Through these experiences, students shift from passive observers of the environmental crisis to active contributors to solutions - the essence of Active Hope.

### SCHOOLS AS CENTRES OF HOPE, LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE

Schools are more than places of academic learning - they are vibrant communities and powerful drivers of cultural change. By embedding sustainability across curriculum and operations, schools develop informed, capable young people who understand environmental challenges and see themselves as part of the solution. At the same time, the wellbeing benefits of nature connection ripple across the school community. Staff and students experience reduced stress, improved focus, stronger social connections and more meaningful, place-based learning. Families often become involved, strengthening community engagement.

EEV is proud to support schools on this journey. Through ResourceSmart Schools delivery in the Western Metropolitan Region, VCE Environmental Science support, professional learning opportunities, and curriculum-aligned resources, we work alongside educators to build knowledge, confidence, agency and hope. In a time of environmental and social uncertainty, sustainability education is not optional - it is essential. When grounded in connection, purpose and Active Hope, it becomes a powerful force for restoring environmental health while also supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of students, educators and school communities.

By Verity McLucas, Communications Manager, [eev.vic.edu.au](mailto:eev.vic.edu.au)  
Join our next Sustainability Vision workshop: [eev.tidyhq.com](http://eev.tidyhq.com)

10% discount on EEV School Memberships for YouthWise readers. Email [memberships@eev.vic.edu.au](mailto:memberships@eev.vic.edu.au) with codeword YOUTHWISE.

Photos provided by Sustainability Victoria's ResourceSmart Schools program.



## AI and Your Amazing Brain

Have you ever sat down to study for a test, only to find that the facts you memorized last night seem to have vanished the next morning? Or maybe you've had that strange feeling where you know a name is "on the tip of your tongue," but you just can't recall it? These moments can be frustrating, but they're also part of what makes our brains so fascinating.

Here's the cool part: the way our brains work isn't so different from how Artificial Intelligence (AI) learns. And by exploring that connection, we can actually get better at understanding how we learn, why we sometimes forget, and what we can do to improve.

### Your Brain: A Super-Computer with Feelings

When you learn something new, your brain builds connections between its billions of neurons. Think of these as pathways—like new roads forming on a map. The more often you travel that road (by practicing or revising), the stronger it becomes.

But if you don't use that road often enough, your brain decides it's not important and lets it fade. That's why you forget things you don't practice. Sleep, exercise, and even emotions also play a huge role in whether those "roads" stay open or get closed.

### How AI Mirrors the Brain

AI is inspired by this process. When we train an AI, we feed it data again and again until it gets better at recognizing patterns—like spotting cats in photos or predicting the weather. Just like us, if the AI isn't "trained" enough, it forgets or makes mistakes.

Here's the twist: AI doesn't feel pressure, boredom, or stress. But we do. And those feelings change how well we learn. That's why learning about your own brain—your mental "hardware"—is so powerful.

### Learning Smarter: Lessons from AI

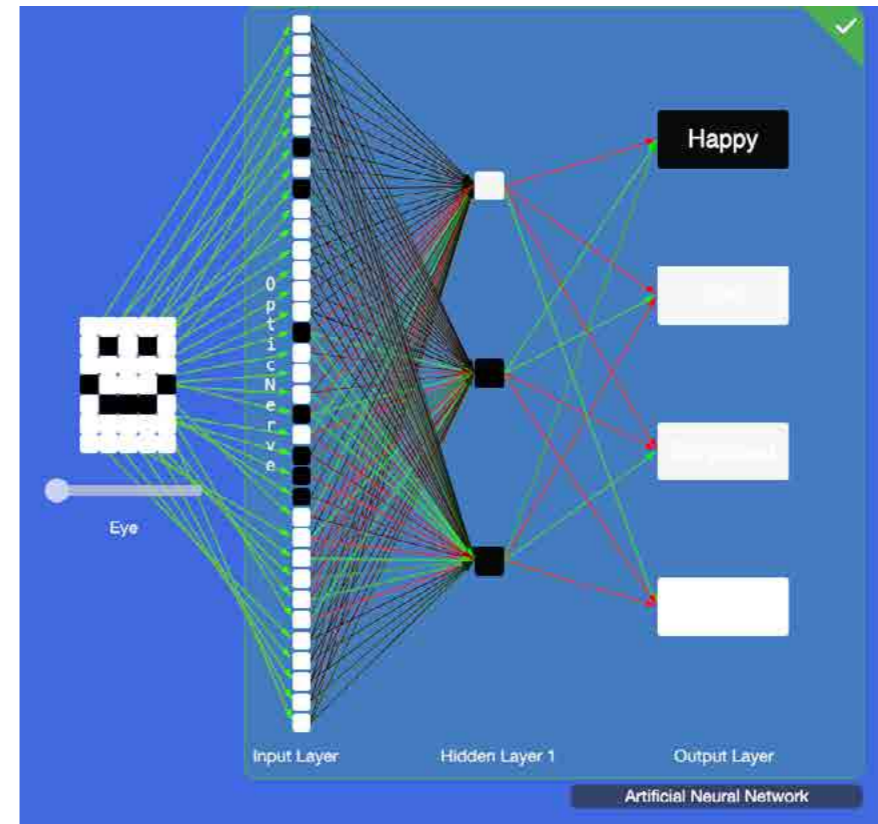
Back in Year 9, I struggled badly with learning vocabulary. My method was simple but ineffective: I read word pairs again and again, hoping the words would stick. They did, but only in the order I read them in. Unfortunately, in exams, words came entirely out of order!

Then a teacher introduced me to the Leitner system—a box of flashcards where the ones you know get pushed further back, while the ones you forget come up more often. Importantly, the cards get reshuffled, so you can't rely on the order.

This simple system changed everything for me. And when I look at it now, I see how closely it mirrors the way AI is trained.

- Spaced Practice – The Leitner box forced me to return to words at intervals, instead of cramming them all at once. That spacing made the knowledge stronger, just like repeated AI training cycles.
- Active Learning – Instead of passively re-reading, the flashcards made me test myself. Success or failure mattered, and that active engagement rewired my brain.
- Good Inputs = Good Outputs – The box eliminated the "order bias" from my lists. By shuffling and reordering, it gave my brain cleaner "data." AI systems also learn best when the data is varied and free of bias.
- Feedback Matters – Every time I got a card wrong, it came back sooner. That mistake wasn't a failure—it was feedback. AI learns the same way: by adjusting after each error.

The Leitner system showed me that the right method can transform how the brain learns. And just like AI, the trick is not brute force but smart training.



### Brains, AI, and Mental Health

Many young people feel anxious when they forget things or when learning feels hard. It's easy to think, "I'm just not good at this." But the truth is: forgetting is a natural part of how the brain works. Each time we recall something, especially after making a mistake, we strengthen the connection. That's why the flashcards I used in the Leitner system were so powerful—the mistakes weren't failures, they were the moments my brain learned the most.

Surprisingly, AI works in the same way. Machines don't actually learn from getting things right—they learn only from their errors. Every wrong answer gives them the signal to adjust and improve. In that sense, mistakes aren't the end of learning; they are learning.

Understanding this can take away a lot of the pressure. Instead of being discouraged by errors, we can see them as steps forward—both for our brains and for AI. And that mindset doesn't just help with study, it also supports mental wellbeing by reducing the stress that comes with aiming for perfection.

### The Takeaway

Your brain is an amazing, living super-computer. Every day, it adapts, grows, and changes depending on what you feed it and how you train it. If you think like an AI trainer—patient, consistent, and willing to learn from mistakes—you'll be amazed at what your brain can achieve.

So, next time you're revising for that test or trying to pick up a new skill, remember: you're not just "cramming facts." You're literally re-wiring your brain and unlocking more of its potential.



Dr. Karsten Schulz

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## Developing the Leaders of Tomorrow

Why student leadership needs more than a “good day out”

By Pip Scott-Allen, Founder, Premier Team Building

When I was a teenager, I was labelled a “student at risk”. I had missed over 100 classes, the chance of dropping out was real, and I genuinely couldn’t see where school fit in my future.

What changed everything wasn’t luck. It was being pulled into leadership development and wrapped in the right support: the kind that builds confidence through responsibility, shapes behaviour through belonging, and teaches the skills you don’t always learn in class. Over time, I went from disengaged to dependable — supporting my mates at school, and now working with not only schools but multi-national companies to develop powerful leaders for today and tomorrow.

That “turning point” taught me something simple: when young people are included well, they rise. Not because they’re suddenly different people, but because when you improve the environment, it shifts those within it and grows better leaders.

It’s also why Premier Team Building doesn’t sit in a youth-only bubble. Alongside schools, we support leadership and team culture with world-class organisations like Google, Rio Tinto, Amazon, Adobe and the RAAF. Different settings, same human dynamics: trust, communication, accountability, pressure, belonging. The benefit for schools is real—we get to bring proven tools from high-performing teams and translate them into language and experiences that make sense for teenagers.

### What schools are really preparing students for

Between ages 12 and 18, students are learning content, but they’re also learning who they are, how they fit, and how they influence others. Post-school life rewards the students who can:

- communicate clearly under pressure
- work with different personalities
- handle feedback without shutting down
- navigate conflict without it becoming personal
- show initiative and follow-through
- contribute to a team, not just be in one

When these skills improve, teachers feel it in the classroom. Parents see it at home. Peer groups become healthier, and student leaders become more than badge-holders. Developing these skills sets our future leaders up for success, making them more desirable future employees and team members.

### Team bonding vs team building (and why it matters)

A lot of schools run a “team day” to lift morale, have fun, or reward a year group. That’s team bonding—and it has value. Students need positive shared experiences.

But bonding alone doesn’t reliably change behaviour.

At Premier Team Building, we call the quick-

fix version team Band-Aiding: activities that feel great on the day, but don’t shift what happens when pressure hits. Cliques remain, communication habits don’t change, conflict isn’t resolved, and everything reverts to how it was a day before. A Band-Aid effect of fun for a moment.

Team building is different. It’s structured and intentional. It builds repeatable skills students can actually use back at school and in their future career:

- clear, respectful communication
- trust-building behaviours (and repair when trust breaks)
- decision-making as a group
- accountability without shame
- leadership that includes, not controls
- cultural habits and building

“Bowling is fun and all, but it doesn’t prepare me for working in a team” – Jason yr11 student

### The Premier Team Building approach: a team-building ecosystem

Culture isn’t created by one workshop or a single team day. It’s shaped by what gets modelled, reinforced, and repeated. That’s why our programs use an ecosystem approach:

#### 1) Shared language

Students learn a simple way to name what’s

happening—trust, pressure, inclusion, leadership—so it doesn’t turn into blame or drama.

#### 2) Experience with purpose

We use high-engagement challenges where students must collaborate, negotiate roles, manage frustration, and solve problems under time pressure. It’s “learning through play”, but not fluff—real behaviour shows up, and we coach it in the moment.

#### 3) Reflection that sticks

We debrief properly and translate the experience into practical commitments students can practise on Monday: in class, sport, leadership groups, and friendship circles.

This is how you move from “that was fun” to “that changed how we operate”.

#### Onsite, offsite, or camps: what works best?

Schools choose different formats depending on what they need:

- Onsite: build a shared leadership language that staff can reinforce daily
- Offsite: break patterns and reset group dynamics in a fresh environment
- Camps / immersive programs: accelerate growth through repeated practice, reflection, and stronger peer standards

#### The outcome schools actually want

The goal isn’t louder students or shinier badges. It’s young people who can lead themselves, lift others, and contribute with maturity.

If we want leaders of tomorrow, we can’t leave leadership to chance. We need programs that build real capability—backed by experience, and reinforced in the school environment where behaviour is shaped every day.

Premier Team Building supports schools with student leadership and culture programs for ages 12–18, delivered nationwide, on campus or while away at camp.

### Team Building Programs | Leadership Keynotes | Leadership & Culture Workshops

Contact our Leadership Experts to discuss your next Student Leadership Program

Pip Scott-Allen  
Director & Lead Facilitator Of Awesome Premier Team Building  
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info@premierteambuilding.com.au

# FROM SURVIVING TO LEARNING:

In Australian classrooms, we are increasingly seeing that when a student struggles to focus, disrupts a lesson, or withdraws entirely, these actions are often protective trauma responses rather than intentional defiance or character flaws. By shifting our perspective from "what is wrong with you" to "what happened to you," we recognize that behaviors triggered by instability—such as family violence, poverty, or displacement—are natural human reactions to a perceived lack of safety. To truly support these young people, we must move past labels of "bad behavior" and instead focus on creating the predictable, secure environments they need to regulate their stress and successfully engage in learning.



**“A STUDENT CAN HAVE ADHD AND TRAUMA. A STUDENT CAN BE NEURODIVERGENT AND ALSO LIVING IN CHRONIC STRESS. A STUDENT CAN BE BRIGHT, CAPABLE, AND STILL DYSREGULATED.”**  
JENNA OAKLEY



**Our approach is non-clinical—we don't turn teachers into therapists. We equip your workforce with practical, evidence-based strategies that fit real classrooms and real workloads.**

We work with:

- Early childhood centres
- School administrators and leadership teams
- Teachers and educators
- Teacher aides and support staff
- Students (age-appropriate sessions)
- Parents and carers

Our workshops are built for immediate implementation and consistent whole-school practice. Topics can include:

- Trauma responses in learning environments (what they look like, what they mean)
- ADHD vs trauma presentation: overlap, differences, and safer assumptions
- Nervous system-informed communication (what to say in the moment)
- Co-regulation strategies that work in classrooms and playgrounds
- De-escalation that protects safety without power struggles
- Sensory and transition supports for neurodivergent students
- Reducing shame-based discipline and increasing restorative capacity
- Staff wellbeing and burnout prevention (because dysregulated adults can't co-regulate kids)
- Parent engagement strategies that reduce blame and increase collaboration

If your school is seeing increasing dysregulation, escalating incidents, staff fatigue, or students who are being misunderstood—this is your sign to strengthen the foundation.

Peer Motivation has a tailored and dedicated team ready to deliver high-impact, trauma-informed, ADHD-aware workshops Australia-wide.



## WHAT SCHOOLS NEED IS A PATHWAY THAT REDUCES MISINTERPRETATION AND PREVENTS HARM.

A pathway that helps educators ask:

• What patterns show up around transitions, sensory load, and perceived rejection?

- What happens before the behaviour—what are the triggers?
- What does the student's body do under stress?
- What supports help them return to learning without shame?
- What is within school scope, and what requires referral?

### Most importantly:

How do we respond in a way that doesn't add more trauma?

Peer Motivation delivers trauma-informed professional development and practical workshops designed to support schools before judgement, before escalation, and before a child's story becomes "a life destined for mental health challenges."



## WE CAN TAILOR DELIVERY FOR:

- Staff-only professional development days
- Leadership and wellbeing teams
- Whole-school rollouts
- Targeted cohorts (e.g., prep/early years, middle school, senior school)
- Parent evenings and community sessions

Early childhood settings and primary/secondary classrooms are where patterns become pathways.

To discuss a tailored workshop plan for your early childhood center or school staff, students, and parent sessions

Reach out via email [admin@peermotivationqld.com](mailto:admin@peermotivationqld.com) or our website [www.peermotivation.org](http://www.peermotivation.org) and we'll help your team map the best next steps for your community.



# PICKLEBALL IN SCHOOLS

**P**ICKLEBALL has a way of meeting kids where they're at. Some arrive bursting with confidence ready to compete and prove themselves.

Others step onto a court like it's a spotlight—unsure, guarded, and quietly hoping they won't be embarrassed. What I've come to love about coaching in schools is that pickleball doesn't demand perfection to be fun. It invites kids in gently. It gives them quick wins. And, in the process, it helps them build the kind of confidence that doesn't just stay on the court.

Through Pickleball in Schools, I've seen something remarkable: the same student who was hesitant to even hold a paddle can end a session laughing, calling out encouragement, and asking, "Can we play again?" That shift is why this work is so rewarding. You're not just teaching a sport—you're helping children experience success, connection, and joy.

A big part of it is how accessible pickleball is. The paddle is manageable, the court is smaller, and rallies can happen quickly—even for beginners. In a school environment, that matters. Kids get more touches, more chances, and more moments where they think, "Wait... I actually did that." Those small moments stack up. They become confidence.

But the most heartwarming moments I've witnessed haven't been about points or winning. Some of the most meaningful sessions I've had the privilege of running were with children within the foster care system—kids who didn't have much confidence in sport, and in many cases, didn't feel comfortable taking risks in front of others. What stood out wasn't just their starting point, but how quickly the environment changed when the focus shifted away from performance and onto play.

Those sessions weren't built around strict rules or point play. They were built around fun and repeated success—less pressure, more movement, more laughter, and more opportunity to feel capable. Instead of stopping play constantly to correct every little detail, we created games that naturally taught the skills: rally challenges, target hits, cooperative partner activities, and group-based energy games where everyone had a role. It was sport, but it felt like play—safe, light, and welcoming.

And something beautiful happened: they started encouraging each other. You could hear it. "Nice one!" "Good try!" "You were so close!" Kids who might normally stay quiet began to celebrate other people's wins. They started to connect—not just as individuals on a court, but as a team. The growth in confidence wasn't loud at first, but it was real. The child who wouldn't volunteer became the one calling out the next game. The student who avoided being watched started stepping forward. It was a pleasure to witness.

That experience, is directly aligned with what I bring into pickleball coaching—especially in schools. The principle is the same: when kids feel safe, supported, and successful, their confidence grows. When the environment is play-based and inclusive, they engage more. And when they engage more, they improve without even realising how much they're learning.

What made those sessions even more special was the whole-group energy. We ran games where everyone collaborated together, and the vibe became infectious—students cheering for students, teammates high-fiving after rallies, and groups working together to beat a shared challenge. Even the teachers jumped in. That's one of the underrated joys of school sport: when staff get involved, the session becomes a community moment, not just a lesson. Teachers were laughing, participating, and genuinely seemed to look forward to each week—not only as a chance to have a laugh, but to see the students they care about experiencing joy in a different setting.

That's what I want Pickleball in Schools to be known for: sessions where children feel included, where movement is fun, where confidence is built steadily, and where the school community gets to share in something positive.

Of course, we still teach real skills. Pickleball is a fantastic vehicle for developing coordination, agility, reaction speed, and spatial awareness. Students learn the fundamentals—grip, ready position, forehand and backhand control, serving, and movement patterns. But the way those skills are taught matters. In our program, skill development is delivered through simple progressions and engaging games, so students stay active and motivated rather than stuck



waiting in lines. The goal is for kids to learn while they play—and to leave the court feeling like they've achieved something.

#### **Pickleball in Schools provides:**

- School-ready sessions tailored for primary and secondary students
- Play-based coaching that prioritises fun, confidence, and participation
- Structured progressions from basic skills to rallies and game scenarios
- Team-building activities that promote encouragement, communication, and connection
- Flexible delivery (one-off clinics, multi-week programs, PE integrations, lunchtime sessions)
- An inclusive environment where students of all abilities can succeed

The most rewarding part of this work is seeing what sport can do when it's delivered in the right spirit. When it's not just about who's the best, but about creating a place where kids can belong. Where they can try, miss, laugh, try again, and improve. Where they can be part of something bigger than themselves.

Because sometimes the biggest win isn't a point scored—it's a child who walks off the court feeling proud, capable, and connected. And if a program can do that week after week, in a school setting, you're not just teaching pickleball.

You're building confidence. You're building community. And you're giving kids an experience of joy that can stay with them long after the session ends.

Gerard Martin  
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## Supporting Young Minds: Why Early Mental Health Education Matters



*Margo Blacklaw is passionate about mental health and the importance of early intervention, especially for young people. The earlier we understand mental health, the better equipped we are to reduce stigma, build resilience and support one another when life becomes challenging.*

Young people today face growing pressures: academic expectations, social media, family stress, peer relationships and uncertainty about the future. Anxiety, depression and burnout are increasingly common in school communities. Parents play one of the most important roles in a young person's mental health—often without realising just how powerful their influence can be. One message comes through clearly: early support from parents can prevent long-term mental health challenges.

I am the owner of Mental Health Awareness, a training and education business focused on helping people understand mental health, recognise early warning signs in themselves and others, and know what to do when those signs appear.

With more than 30 years' experience as a trainer and prior to that an high school Economics teacher, I understand the importance of creating learning environments that feel relevant and engaging. I have seen how powerful it is when young people feel safe at home to talk about what's going on for them. Parents don't need to be experts or have all the answers. What children need most is to feel listened to, believed and supported.

Many parents worry about saying the wrong thing, but silence can be far more damaging than an imperfect conversation. Simple

responses such as "That sounds really hard" or "I'm glad you told me" can make a huge difference. Validation always comes before solutions.

Parents are often the first to notice changes—withdrawal, irritability, changes in sleep, motivation or friendships. Trust your instincts. Early conversations and early help matter. You don't have to fix everything, but you can open the door to support.

### My Path Into Mental Health Education

I began my career as an Economics teacher after studying Economics, Psychology and Sociology at university. After 12 years of teaching and publishing two economics dictionaries for HSC students I joined the NSW Government and moved into corporate training.

I later established my own training business, which I ran for 11 years. At its peak, we delivered around 300 courses annually with a team of nine trainers and marketers. I sold that business in 2019, recognising that my true passion lay in supporting people experiencing mental health challenges.

That same year, I founded Mental Health Awareness and travelled to Perth to become an accredited Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) instructor. It remains one of the most impactful courses I have ever completed. On a personal level, I have supported people living with anxiety, psychosis, bipolar disorder and addiction, experiences that shaped my belief in compassion and early intervention.

I also completed a two-year counselling course with Aurora Hammond, which deeply influenced my approach. I learned the value of vulnerability and genuine connection—qualities that are especially important when supporting young people who may feel misunderstood or isolated.

### Why Mental Health Education Belongs in Schools

Since becoming an MHFA instructor, I have delivered courses across Perth, Canberra and Sydney to corporate and community groups. What stands out most are the conversations that occur when people feel safe enough to share.

Schools are uniquely placed to support early intervention. Teachers see students daily, and

parents are on the frontline at home. When both groups are informed and confident, young people are far more likely to receive support early before problems escalate.

Parents, in particular, are often an under-utilised resource. Many want to help but are unsure how. Education empowers parents to listen without judgement, respond with empathy and stay connected during the challenging teenage years. I feel my best experience is bringing up my 3 children. They have taught me so much over the years.

### Key things parents should know

1. Early intervention matters. Don't ignore changes in behaviour or mood. Encourage young people to speak to you or someone they trust.
2. Listen before advising. Teenagers often want to be heard, not fixed.
3. Validation comes first. Saying "that sounds really hard" is often more powerful than trying to fix the problem.
4. You can't force readiness. Support people where they are and keep the door open.
5. Avoid minimising or comparing. Their experience is real to them.
6. Stay connected. Regular check-ins, shared meals and genuine interest help young people feel less alone.

Mental health is not a destination—it's a journey. Every young person will struggle at times, and having supportive, informed parents can make all the difference.

Mental health education for parents is not optional—it is essential. When parents feel confident and informed, young people are far more likely to reach out early and get the help they need.

To book a mental health course, please contact:

Margo Blacklaw  
Margo@mhawareness.com.au  
**0448 991 076**

*Dolly's  
Dream*

# SPEAK, EVEN IF YOUR VOICE SHAKES.

### At Dolly's Dream, we won't stop until the bullying stops.

Dolly Everett's story, and the heartbreak of losing her at just 14 years old after sustained bullying and cyber-bullying, inspires everything we do. Her legacy motivates us to protect young people across Australia and ensure no one ever feels alone.

**"This is a movement we wish we never had to start, but we are committed to seeing it through. Thank you for standing with us. Together, we are making Dolly's own dream of a kinder world a reality."**

—Kate Everett, Dolly's Mum

We work with schools and communities nationwide, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas, to create safer, kinder places for young people.

Through school workshops, education programs and Youth Mental Health First Aid training, kids learn to recognise bullying, understand its impact, support their mates, and build resilience and kindness.

We also equip teachers, carers and parents with practical tools to respond confidently, strengthen school cultures, and support kids both online and offline.

### Get involved with Dolly's Dream and be part of the solution.

Every May, communities across Australia come together for 'Do It For Dolly Day', a national day of action where people 'Go Blue to End Bullying' and show young people they are supported and never alone.

Through education and prevention, we empower young people to speak up, be kind, and build a safer future for everyone. Speak, even if your voice shakes.

**Help & Support.** Please remember, you're not alone.



Call: **13 DOLLY**  
Bullying Support Line



Resources & Support:  
[dollysdream.org.au](http://dollysdream.org.au)

Download our **FREE** Cyber Safety App

**beacon**





### Why Teachers Are Viewed Favourably by Lenders



**Stable Profession**



**Predictable Income**



**Policy Differences Matter**

# Beyond the Staffroom: What Teachers Should Know About Today's Lending Landscape

By Quinto White – Q Financial

On any given afternoon, a staffroom conversation might move from curriculum planning to playground duty, to rising rents and property prices, often within minutes.

**F**or many teachers, owning a home feels like something that should be achievable, yet somehow sits just out of reach.

Over the past decade working in finance, and specialising in lending for teachers across Australia, I've noticed something interesting. Having worked with a significant number of educators, I can say with confidence that many are far better positioned than they realise. In fact, one of the biggest barriers I see isn't income, it's assumption. The challenge isn't usually income. It's understanding how the lending landscape actually views teachers and how differently lenders can assess the same applicant.

From the outside, banks appear uniform. Interest rates are advertised publicly. Loan products look similar. But behind the scenes, lending policy varies more than most people expect.

Teaching, as a profession, is generally seen as stable and essential. Communities depend on it. Employment demand remains strong. Income is structured and predictable. Lenders recognise that. However, this is where nuance matters. Not all lenders interpret a teacher's employment profile in the same way.

One bank may assess a temporary contract conservatively. Another may



treat it as ongoing employment if there is a demonstrated history. One lender may disregard casual income. Another may accept it with the right documentation. Some offer profession specific policies or reduced deposit pathways, many do not.

This policy variation is rarely discussed publicly, but it can significantly affect outcomes. Two teachers earning the same wage can receive very different answers simply based on where they apply.

I often meet teachers who assume they need to wait until they are permanently employed before applying. Others believe casual status automatically excludes them. If you have ever told yourself "I'll wait until things are more secure," it may be worth questioning what "secure" actually means in lending terms. In reality, employment continuity, not just contract type, is what many lenders are assessing. A broker who understands how school contracts work, how terms roll over, and how income flows through the year can present an application very differently from a standard branch submission.

And sometimes that presentation makes all the difference.

There are also targeted advantages available to educators, but they are not universal. Certain lenders provide reduced or waived Lenders Mortgage Insurance for specific professions. Others may allow smaller deposits or apply flexible income assessment. Some states offer first home buyer concessions or key worker initiatives that teachers may qualify for.

The key point is this. These opportunities typically sit with a select group of lenders. They are policy specific, not market wide. Without knowing where those policies exist, many teachers simply proceed under standard

terms and never realise alternatives were available.

Beyond policy perks, there is another advantage educators often underestimate, structure.

The broader lending environment through 2025 and into 2026 remains measured and policy driven. Assessment buffers remain in place. Living expenses are examined carefully. Borrowing capacity continues to be sensitive to debt levels and documentation.

Two teachers earning the same income can receive very different borrowing outcomes depending on lender selection, application presentation and loan structure.

This is why preparation matters.

Pre approval before auction, for example, is not simply a formality. It provides clarity around budget limits and strengthens confidence in competitive markets. Refinancing is not just about chasing a lower rate. It can involve restructuring facilities to reduce long term financial pressure. Even aligning finance with personal values, such as choosing lenders committed to ethical lending, has become part of the conversation for some educators.

Over the years, I have worked around school timetables, term schedules and reporting periods because real life does not pause for finance applications. Teachers juggle enough already. The lending process should feel organised and strategic, not chaotic.

Ultimately, property ownership is not about speculation or headlines. It is about stability. Teachers understand long term thinking better than

most professions. Education itself is an investment in gradual progress. Property works similarly.

The lending landscape is not simple, but it is not impenetrable either. If it has ever felt confusing, that is not a reflection of your capability. It is a reflection of how little transparency exists around lender policy differences. It is a system of policies, interpretation and structure. When understood properly, it can work in your favour.

For educators considering buying or refinancing, a few clear principles stand out:

- Do not assume casual or temporary status automatically disqualifies you
- Recognise that lenders assess teacher income differently and policy matters
- Explore profession specific benefits, but understand they are limited to certain lenders
- Seek clarity early through borrowing assessments rather than guessing
- Focus on long term structure, not just headline rates

Teachers spend their careers building foundations for others.

It is worth building one for yourself as well.

## When Behaviour Is a Signal: Trauma, Substance Use, and the Role of Education, Wellbeing, and Youth Work

# SASY

**ACROSS SCHOOLS**, wellbeing services, and youth programs, practitioners are working with young people whose behaviours can feel intense, confusing, and at times overwhelming. Aggression, withdrawal, substance use, emotional dysregulation, or disengagement are often interpreted as non-compliance. Yet for many young people, these behaviours are not a refusal to engage—they are a reflection of what their nervous system has learned in order to survive.

Trauma does not present neatly. It shows up in behaviour, relationships, learning, and regulation. For educators and youth workers, understanding this is not an optional extra—it is foundational to safe and effective practice. One of the clearest places trauma reveals itself is in the use of substances.

### TRAUMA AND SUBSTANCE USE: WHAT PRACTITIONERS NEED TO UNDERSTAND

A significant proportion of young people have experienced adversity before entering classrooms or youth services. Abuse, neglect, family violence, parental substance use, housing instability, and chronic stress shape how young people perceive safety and connection.

Research consistently shows that young people with trauma histories are far more likely to engage in substance use—not for pleasure, but for relief. Substances can temporarily dampen hypervigilance, numb emotional pain, or create a sense of control where none has existed.

From a developmental perspective, adolescence is already a period of heightened risk-taking. When trauma is layered on top, young people often lack the internal regulation skills required to manage distress safely. Substances become a coping strategy in the absence of healthier alternatives.

### WHEN SYSTEMS RESPOND WITH CONTROL INSTEAD OF CARE

Many education and youth systems continue to rely on punitive responses to substance use and trauma-related behaviours—suspension, exclusion, program exit, or escalation to external authorities. While often intended to protect safety, these responses frequently have the opposite effect.

For a young person with a trauma history, exclusion can replicate earlier experiences of rejection and abandonment. The message received is not “this behaviour is unsafe” but “you are unsafe to have here.”

Research shows that exclusionary practices increase disengagement, substance use, and contact with the justice system. When systems prioritise control over connection, they risk becoming another source of harm.

### THE PROTECTIVE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

Across education, wellbeing, and youth work research, one protective factor consistently stands out: a stable, caring relationship with at least one trusted adult.

Young people who feel known, respected, and emotionally safe are less likely to engage in substance use and more likely to seek help when struggling. Relationships do not remove accountability—they make accountability possible.

Trauma-informed practitioners learn to view behaviour as communication. The shift from “What’s wrong with you?” to “What has happened to you?” is not about lowering expectations—it is about responding in ways that actually create change.

### WHAT TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

Trauma-informed education and youth work focus on creating environments that reduce risk rather than simply reacting to it. These environments prioritise predictability, emotional safety, explicit teaching of regulation skills, and access to creative and relational outlets.

Practices such as mindfulness, movement, art, music, and storytelling are evidence-based ways of supporting nervous system regulation and reducing reliance on substances as coping mechanisms.

Importantly, trauma-informed systems also care for staff. Without supervision, reflective practice, and wellbeing supports, educators and youth workers are at risk of burnout and secondary trauma.

### RECLAIMING THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH WORK

At its core, education and youth work are relational professions. When schools and youth services respond to trauma-related behaviour with understanding rather than exclusion, they interrupt cycles of harm and change trajectories.

Sometimes the most powerful intervention is not a program or a policy—but a consistent adult who stays, listens, and believes that a young person is more than their behaviour.

*For a list of references please contact the editor.*

SASY  
Dr. Maria La Pietra  
Founding Director and Head of Wellbeing



## Financial Control An Invisible Pillar Of Wellbeing

**MONEY IS LIKE OXYGEN** – it’s easy to take it for granted until we find ourselves in a situation where it’s difficult to access or we don’t have enough. It’s also a synonym for opportunity because it unlocks access to most of the things we value in our lives.

**F**inancial literacy then seems like an important foundation for our wellbeing, yet there is little emphasis on, or space given to, this set of knowledge and skills in the journey toward adulthood for young Australians.

Most people understand financial literacy to be the knowledge and skills needed to confidently handle money on a day-to-day basis, invest wisely and plan for their future. If I cast my mind back to my own financial literacy journey, I see a jumble of on-the-spot learning that included role modelling (both good and bad), blunders, late starts, the odd lucky break and a golden economic era that furnished Boomers like me with improvements in standards of living that could only have been dreamt of a generation earlier.

I managed to navigate through the maze relatively unscathed, but I was also lucky to have grown up in the era of tangible cash and this, as it turns out, was one of the most significant factors to shape the way I have handled and managed money throughout my life.

The excitement of picking up my first pay packet at the age of 15 was real. It was a small, orangey-yellow, rectangular envelope with the amount I had earned written on the front (a pittance!) and the corresponding notes and coins inside – fat with notes was what you wanted, heavy with coins was not. Spending that money involved a physical transfer of those earnings that visibly reduced the cash in my hand, and saving it

involved a trip to the bank accompanied by a little dopamine hit as the notes I handed over tangibly morphed into an investment in my future.

Fast forward from the Jurassic era to consider what that process looks like today. It’s a breeze! My salary is invisibly transferred directly into my bank account, direct debits automatically send savings to separate accounts, I can spend with the tilt of my phone or my watch and paying bills and international transfers can take place in the blink of an eye – woohoo!! Do I miss not going to the bank to make my deposits and payments? – I do not.

Do I miss having to go to a hole in the wall to withdraw more cash to spend? – I absolutely do not. But do I find it as easy to control my spending? No, I don’t, and, with very few exceptions, this digital world is the only money management space our young people are ever likely to know.

I’m certainly not spruiking a return to the past – I’m truly grateful for the ease with which I can manage my money today – but, by removing our physical connection with cash we have also removed the slight wince that used to accompany unnecessary spending and have softened the discomfort of watching our hard earned, and generally finite, cash resources dwindle in front of our eyes as a result of our choices.

We’ve also opened the door to scammers in ways that simply weren’t possible when cash was king and have made ourselves vulnerable to the slow leaks associated with online subscriptions and charges that can easily go unnoticed in our increasingly busy lives. In short, our tap-and-go economy has enabled

us to avoid the negative emotions we might have felt by having to administer our spending choices more tangibly and has enabled us to just enjoy the spoils of our spending. It’s a lovely feeling – until it’s not – and the financial stress reported by so many Australians today suggests that Pleasantville may have a darker side.

All this makes the explicit teaching of financial literacy more important than ever.

For many students, the thought of formal financial education is akin to an anaesthetic. Troubling thoughts of some boring old codger trying to ram home the importance of budgeting or grappling with yet more usernames and passwords so as to access another well-intentioned online learning module is enough to send even the most open-minded youth running fast in the opposite direction – fair enough. Mercifully, just as our money systems have evolved, so too has our ability to transfer knowledge and skill.

Far from boring, financial literacy metered out in the right way can energise and activate young people to take control of their financial futures, but, as with all education, it’s the timing and delivery that matter.

The key things we want our young people to know before they leave school include how to make, spend, save and manage money (budget) to maximise life’s opportunities; how to ensure they’re not being ripped off while they add value in the workplace; an understanding of taxes, super and levies; the real cost of owning stuff (read cars and pets here – young people typically have a quaint idea of these costs before getting a reality check); how to use debt to advantage rather than being trapped by



it; how to financially protect themselves and their assets as they move through life; and how and when to invest in order to open up life's opportunities.

I often hear people say that kids should start learning about money as early as possible and to an extent I agree. Using cash with young kids to help them understand the concept of opportunity cost – ie what I spend now I can't spend later – is, for example, a great idea; talking to Year 9 students about the real cost of owning a car or how to use debt effectively or how to protect themselves and their assets, is not - students aged 14 feel a universe away from being able to relate to, or use, this information.

Scaffolding the delivery of financial literacy so that it hits the mark at the right time in a young person's life is essential to its effectiveness. Year 9 students are interested in spending money, so this is a good time to talk to them about where that money comes from and how to keep track of it easily.

Many Year 10 students are entering the workplace for the first time so, workplace rights & responsibilities, as well as where to go for help and support, hits the mark for 15 – 16 year olds. Year 11 students are getting behind the wheel of a car and being drawn headfirst into the vortex of the consumer world, so looking at the real cost of owning stuff as well as avoiding the debt trap is well timed for these students.

And for our emerging young adults in Year 12, financial protection that helps them avoid the snakes and make the most of the ladders in life, as well as learning how investing early could open up a world of opportunity completes a

strong foundation of financial literacy as they step out into the world at large. Of course, not overbeating the drum is crucial – there is nothing more guaranteed to turn a young person off than a laboured point – they live in a world of sound bites - short, sharp and relevant is what they love and remember.

In today's laser fast, global economy where money is invisible, debt is freely available and two thirds of Australians over the age of 15 were exposed to a scam in 2022, we need now, more than ever to help our young people become financially literate. A handful of schools have recognised this and have incorporated financial literacy into their Wellbeing programs providing a point of difference that is generating extraordinarily positive feedback from students, parents, and staff alike. For students, however, it's still very much potluck as to whether they will finish school equipped to deal with even the most fundamental financial matters. The question we as educators might ask is, 'Are we setting these young people up for success well enough if we don't equip them with these essential life skills?' It's certainly worth considering the cost if we don't.

Alexandra Larkey  
Speaking of Money  
[www.speakingofmoney.com.au](http://www.speakingofmoney.com.au)

## Program For Years 9-12



# Party Ready

Empowering young Victorians to keep each other safe

Risk-taking at parties and social gatherings is part of growing up – but it comes with danger. Young people are often the first responders when their mates are injured, unwell, or in distress.

Equipping students in years 9-12 with first aid skills that save lives.

### Our Solution? The Party Ready program.

- Practical first aid skills like CPR & DRSABCD
- Mental health crisis support
- Drug & alcohol education
- Decision-making practice

Limited funded spots available for Victorian government schools in 2026!

### Key Objectives

- Build resilience in young people & communities
- Reduce risks linked to drugs & alcohol
- Provides practical skills for life
- Strengthens community safety & health outcomes



### Program Reach

- Delivered to schools across Victoria
- Supports Victorian Health & Physical Education Curriculum
- Backed by national data (NDSHS 2022–23; ASSAD 2023)
- Affordable delivery cost of \$17 per student



Party Ready is the proud recipient of the Community Award for the 2025 Resilient Australia Awards.

Book In your class today

[PartyReady@stjohnvic.com.au](mailto:PartyReady@stjohnvic.com.au)

(03) 8588 8885



[www.stjohnvic.com.au/party](http://www.stjohnvic.com.au/party)

Program For Years 9-12



# Party Ready

## Students love the program.

“The activities were fun and it wasn't boring at all. The slides on drugs were really interesting and overall they raise awareness and it's really important to keep doing this in schools”

**Glen Eira Student Student**

“The activities were engaging and let us put them into work either through problem solving or physically. The content and the practicals are essential to learn, and I learnt a lot in the workshop”

**Braemar College Student**

“The slides were good paired with the booklet to consolidate understanding. The activities were interesting and fun. Thank you for doing this program”

**Belmont High School Student**

“Today was definitely worth not skipping school”

**Epping Secondary College Student**

## ✔ Lifetime Statistics

- 5092 students trained
- 108 schools visited
- 98% student agreement “these activities will help me help others at parties”
- 99% student agreement “it’s important to learn hands-on CPR”

Limited funded spots available for Victorian government schools in 2026!



**Book In your class today**

[PartyReady@stjohnvic.com.au](mailto:PartyReady@stjohnvic.com.au)

(03) 8588 8885



[www.stjohnvic.com.au/party](http://www.stjohnvic.com.au/party)

Proudly delivered by St John Ambulance Victoria – trusted by Victorians for over 140 years

## How St John Ambulance Empowers Young Australians to Keep Each Other Safe



*For many young Australians, socialising is an important part of growing up. Parties, school celebrations and festivals offer opportunities for fostering connection, belonging, and independence. Yet, these same environments can also present a variety of risks when mixed with drugs and alcohol.*

**W**HILE some approaches focus on prevention and abstinence, far less attention is given to the reality that young people may find themselves supporting a friend who is unwell, injured, or in serious distress - as a result of drugs and alcohol - with no idea what to do.

Party Ready, a drug- and alcohol-contextualised first aid education program from St John Ambulance Victoria, was developed to address this issue and potential gap in learning. Designed specifically for Australian youth and backed by national data such as the National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23, the program equips young people with the practical skills, confidence, and knowledge to respond safely and effectively to physical and mental health emergencies involving alcohol and other drugs, without judgement or fear.

### 1. Program Details: The importance of first aid in context

First aid is traditionally taught in clinical or workplace contexts that don't always reflect the situations young people are most likely to encounter. In reality, many emergencies involving youth occur in party settings, where uncertainty, panic, and peer pressure can interfere with - or even prevent- appropriate interventions.

Party Ready meets students where they are, acknowledging that most are new to first aid and may not know what to expect. Rather than assuming prior knowledge, the program provides clear explanations and practical context, giving students the reasoning behind each step without overwhelming them with

detail. By embedding first aid education within realistic, age-appropriate scenarios, Party Ready also recognises that substance use exists in youth social environments and emphasises harm minimisation. This approach encourages curiosity, normalises uncertainty, and creates a safe space for learners to try, make mistakes, and build confidence at their own pace.

Some of the core program components include:

- Alcohol, drug, and mental health trends for young people
- Recognising overdose signs and symptoms
- Harm minimisation tools such as Naloxone nasal spray administration
- Injury assessment and treatment including recovery position, CPR, and bandaging
- De-escalation of mental health emergencies

One of the biggest barriers to effective first aid response among young people is hesitation. Fear of “getting someone in trouble,” uncertainty about the severity of the situation, or simply not knowing what to do can all lead to dangerous delays in life-saving action. Party Ready addresses this hesitation, using the familiar first aid action plan as a framework - not as a checklist, but as a tool to build clarity, confidence, and decision-making. The program walks students through each step in a way that is accessible, supportive, and grounded in real-world scenarios:

- **Danger** – Students learn about risks faced by the casualty and also bystanders and first aiders. Many are surprised to discover that recognising personal limits and stepping back when a situation escalates is responsible and appropriate. This empowers students to seek help early, rather than feeling pressured to manage situations beyond their scope.
- **Response** – Students are introduced to practical strategies for gaining a response and apply these skills through hands-on action by placing a casualty in the recovery position. Practising repeatedly in a safe environment reinforces confidence and normalises physical

intervention when required.

- **Send for Help** – Fear of calling emergency services is a major barrier for young people, and Party Ready demystifies the process of contacting 000. Students learn what a typical call involves, what information is helpful to provide, and why honesty is critical. The program normalises the stress of making an emergency call, reinforcing that emergency services exist to provide support, not judgement.

- **Airway and Breathing** – Students learn to recognise and respond to potential airway obstructions and assess the quality of breathing through factors such as sound, rhythm, and timing.

- **CPR** – Using a simplified, compression-only approach, Party Ready helps students focus on effective chest compressions while reducing cognitive overload. Practising in pairs encourages teamwork and prepares students for real-life situations where sharing responsibility can reduce fatigue and stress.

- **Defibrillation** – Students learn how defibrillators function, how to operate them safely, and why early use is critical to survival. By highlighting where defibrillators are commonly located and encouraging students to notice them in their environments, the program fosters awareness that extends well beyond the classroom.

These lessons are reinforced through interactive workbooks and realistic scenario-based activities. Students reflect on what they might do in different emergencies, discuss options with peers, and practise responses in a collaborative environment. By repeatedly applying the skills they have learned, students build confidence not only in performing first aid, but also in making decisions under pressure, recognising warning signs, and taking timely action. Whether at a party, at school, or in the wider community, first aid is transformed from abstract knowledge into practical capability, empowering students to act when it matters most.



## 2. Program Impact: How Party Ready builds confidence and capability

Party Ready also shifts attitudes and behaviours and empowers young Australians towards confident, timely action. By practising in realistic, supportive scenarios, students gain hands-on experience that builds both competence and self-assurance. Many participants report feeling more prepared to look after friends, more comfortable contacting emergency services, and more knowledgeable about the risks associated with alcohol and other drugs.

A key feature of Party Ready is measuring impact through pre- and post-program self-assessment surveys. In 2025, students' self-rated confidence increased substantially over the course of the program, with confidence in responding to physical health emergencies rising by over 65%, and confidence for mental health emergencies increasing by nearly 60%. These improvements highlight the program's effectiveness in giving young people the reassurance and skills they need to take action when it matters most.

The program also has a transformative effect on mindset. Many students enter workshops anxious about making mistakes or unsure whether they could handle a real emergency. Party Ready normalises first-time learning, emphasising that hesitation is common, mistakes are expected, and asking for help is always appropriate. As one Braemar College student reflected:

"The activities were engaging and let us put them into work either through problem solving or physically. The content and the practicals are essential to learn, and I learnt a lot in the workshop."

By creating this safe learning environment, students develop the confidence to act decisively in real-life situations, knowing they

are supported by knowledge, practice, and a clear action framework.

The impact extends beyond individual skill development, contributing to broader community resilience. In 2025 alone, Party Ready reached approximately 1900 students, demonstrating the program's scale and sustainability. When young people are equipped to respond effectively to emergencies, the benefits ripple through their peer groups, families, and wider communities. Early intervention can reduce the severity of harm, improve outcomes for peers experiencing medical crises, and foster a culture of care and responsibility within social networks.

By combining evidence-informed teaching, scenario-based practice, a novice-friendly approach, and ongoing evaluation through self-assessment, Party Ready transforms first aid education from a theoretical set of skills into real-world capability, preparing young people to act safely, confidently, and effectively whenever emergencies occur.

## 3. Program Strength: How Party Ready supports community resilience

St John is committed to building safer, more resilient communities by equipping Australians with practical skills they can use in everyday life. While accredited first aid courses provide essential qualifications for professionals, a central pillar of St John's mission is community education - programs that teach people of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences how to recognise emergencies, respond appropriately, and support each other safely. Community education focuses on accessible, practical learning that empowers individuals to act confidently in real-world situations.

By targeting young Australians in secondary schools, the program also fosters a culture of preparedness and care. Students leave

workshops with increased confidence, practical knowledge, and the ability to make timely decisions under pressure. Collectively, these outcomes extend far beyond individual capability: communities become more resilient, emergency responses are faster and more effective, and health outcomes improve.

Across the program's lifespan, Party Ready reached over 5,000 students, with pre- and post-program self-assessments showing significant increases in confidence to respond to both physical and mental health emergencies.

The significance of this approach has been formally recognised. In 2025, Party Ready received a Resilient Australia Award in Victoria in the Community category, acknowledging its contribution to strengthening community safety, preparedness, and resilience. As a national finalist, the program's model for youth-focused, preventative first aid education was highlighted as a best-practice example for other communities.

In addition, the program has been awarded a grant by the Victorian Department of Education for delivery to government schools in 2026, making the program free to access this year for public secondary schools. This recognition helps St John continue to deliver reflects its broader mission: equipping Australians with practical skills, confidence, and promoting resilient communities capable of responding in emergencies.

## Game, Set, Learn: How Tennis Is Thriving in Australian Schools



From modified nets on primary school ovals to state level competitions for teenagers, tennis is firmly back at the heart of Australian school sport and it's growing fast.

With flexible programs, curriculum aligned resources and strong community links, Tennis Australia is helping schools serve up more than just rallies; they're delivering lifelong skills, confidence and connection.

In the past 12 months alone, more than 567,000 students across 3,168 schools have participated in school based tennis programs - a 5 per cent increase on the previous year. Behind those numbers is a simple but powerful idea: tennis should be accessible to every student, regardless of location, ability or experience level.

"Schools are one of the most important entry points into sport," says Rebecca McDonald, Head of Programs at Tennis Australia. "When tennis is delivered well in a school environment, it not only builds physical literacy, it opens the door for students to stay active and connected to their community long after the bell rings."

### Designed for Teachers, Built for Students

Tennis Australia's school programming offers a range of options to suit every learning environment. Schools can choose teacher delivered or coach delivered programs, depending on their needs, timetable and confidence levels. For those wanting to embed tennis directly into their Health and Physical Education (HPE or PDHPE) curriculum, the School Partner Program is a gamechanger.

Linked to the Australian Curriculum, the Partner Program provides a comprehensive set of digital and hardcopy resources covering Prep/Foundation through to Year 10. With more than 300 activities, the program helps teachers deliver engaging, age and skill appropriate lessons that build movement skills, coordination and tactical understanding.

"We know teachers are time poor," McDonald explains. "That's why our resources are practical, flexible and ready to use. Whether it's a single PE lesson or a full unit of work, teachers can pick up the resources and feel confident straight away."

Both the Tennis for Primary Schools (underpinned by Hot Shots Tennis) and Tennis for Secondary Schools resources include

assessment options aligned to achievement standards, helping teachers assess learning alongside movement. Sample lesson plans are also available online, giving educators a clear starting point.

To support delivery even further, schools can access heavily discounted equipment, including modified racquets, balls, nets and teaching aids ensuring tennis is safe, inclusive and fun for all ability levels.

### Linking Schools to the Community

For Tennis Australia, participation doesn't stop at the school gate. A crucial part of the School Partner Program is connecting schools with local tennis clubs and coaches, creating a seamless pathway for students who want to keep playing.

"Eighty two per cent of teachers tell us they see it as their responsibility to link students with community sport," says McDonald. "We support that by building strong connections between schools and local clubs, so students can continue their tennis journey outside of school."

This approach is particularly valuable for students who may not otherwise see themselves as 'sporty'. Tennis' flexible formats from red ball play to social competition allow students to progress at their own pace.

### Backing Teachers Through Professional Learning

Confidence in delivering sport makes all the difference, and Tennis Australia invests heavily in teacher development. Through Bounce, Tennis Australia's online learning hub, teachers can access tutorials, videos and two dedicated workshops - one for primary schools and one for secondary schools.

### From School Courts to Competition

For students ready to test their skills, tennis offers a clear and inclusive competition pathway. Every state and territory provides local school competitions, ranging from introductory red ball carnivals to prestigious state representative events like the Bruce and Pizzey Cups.

Whether it's a one day carnival or a multi week competition, these opportunities help students build teamwork, resilience and sportsmanship all while having fun.

### Funding That Makes It Possible

Tennis in schools is also supported by a wide range of funding opportunities. Schools can apply for Sporting Schools grants, receiving between \$1,000 and \$4,150 per term to deliver programs, coaching and equipment. For identified remote and very remote schools, Remote Sporting Schools funding can provide up to \$10,000 annually.

Additional support includes Australian Tennis Foundation grants of up to \$3,500, as well as inclusive initiatives such as the All Abilities Schools Cup, which brings students living with disability together for fun, team based tennis experiences.

Inspiring the Next Generation: The Ash Barty Schools Challenge

One of the standout highlights of school tennis in 2025 was the launch of the Ash Barty Schools Challenge - a national initiative designed to inspire young people to pick up a racquet and engage with tennis.

Named after Australian tennis legend and sporting role model, the challenge encouraged schools to showcase their tennis skills, providing one lucky school a winning visit from Barty.

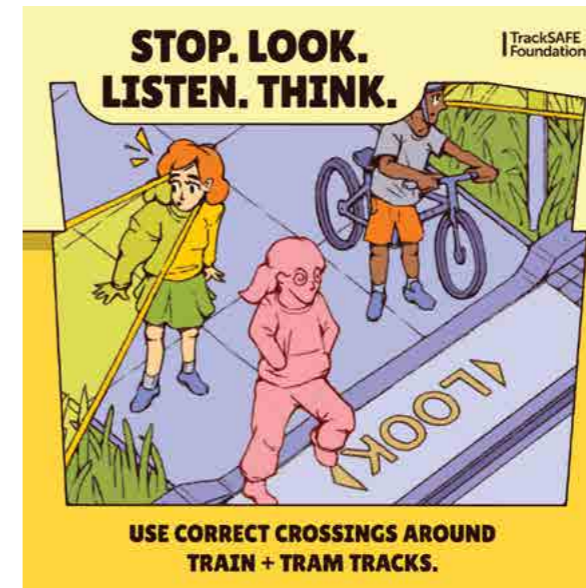
A Growing Game for the Next Generation

The impact is clear. In 2024-25, primary school participation grew by 4 per cent, while secondary school participation rose by an impressive 12 per cent - a crucial gain in keeping teenagers engaged in sport. Tennis was also the third most requested sport nationally through the Australian Sports Commission's Sporting Schools program, with a 13 per cent increase in requests compared to 2023.

"These numbers tell us two things," McDonald says. "Students love tennis, and schools see the value it brings - not just physically, but socially and emotionally. Our goal is to keep building on that momentum."

With strong partnerships, adaptable programs and a clear pathway from the classroom to the court, tennis is proving it can meet students where they are and inspire them to keep playing.

**TENNIS AUSTRALIA**



# TRACKSAFE FOUNDATION

**F**rom a young age, we're taught how to cross the road safely 'look left, look right and look left again' and have the regular reminder of 'don't forget your helmet' when heading out to ride our bike.

If you catch the bus to school, you're well versed on bus etiquette including sitting down if you can, holding on and keeping feet and bags off seats. If you catch the train or tram, the same applies, and while waiting at the station, don't forget to 'stand behind the yellow line' (or white line in South Australia).

If you are an adult with a young person in your life, you would have had lots of conversations about road safety. Have you ever had conversations about staying safe on and around rail? Rail safety is a life skill needing to be progressively developed over the schooling years and reinforced through community information and awareness campaigns throughout adulthood.

Australia has the sixth largest rail network in the world with around 33,000km of rail track, 20,000 railway crossings as well as having tram/light rail services in a Sydney, Adelaide, Canberra, Newcastle, Gold Coast and in Melbourne, which has 250km of tracks and is the largest tram network in the world. And because of this, the potential exposure to trains, trams and their tracks is high.

## KNOW THE RISKS!

Some upper primary and secondary school students, regularly take risks near platform edges, at railway crossings, near moving trams and trains and trespass in the corridor and/or depots.

Many of these unsafe behaviours are due to distraction, complacency, peer pressure and not understanding the risk, including:

- looking down and being distracted by mobile phones and headphones
- not holding on to handrails
- rushing for trains and trams
- forcing open tram and train doors

- using balls, skateboards, bikes, electric scooters on platforms
- not following the signals and signs at railway crossings
- taking a short cut across rail tracks.

There is also a smaller portion of young people who deliberately take risks for example;

- Illegally entering in the rail corridor train and tram depots to apply graffiti or vandalise property
- train surfing and stunts and sharing on social media platforms such as TikTok
- using rail bridges, overpasses and space around the tracks for hanging around, bike riding and jumping
- not paying the trip fare including jumping over gates
- mob-like activities on trains, trams and stations intimidating other passengers or station staff.

These behaviours are often undertaken without a realistic understanding of the risks and an attitude that the potential lifelong negative consequences of these actions and impact on their parents and friends 'won't happen to them'.

In 2024, research by Bastion on youth and rail safety concluded that:

"Risks involving personal safety are generally not done deliberately. However, what does occur is risk taking due to inattention, lack of awareness or knowledge or simply 'by accident'.

Teens are generally both less conservative and less experienced in assessing risk than adults and therefore may end up taking risks unwittingly around public transport because they haven't necessarily thought about it, don't think it is dangerous, or feel they are able to judge/manage the risk for themselves.

There is a need to communicate risks that are not as top of mind and obvious (wearing headphones while crossing tracks is an example) so that teens can reflect and reassess the risk and their behaviours"

Regardless of the intent, the consequences of an incident on the rail network can be catastrophic, involving permanent injuries or a fatality, in addition to causing trauma for train/tram drivers, other rail staff and first responders.

Staying safe on and around trains, trams and railway tracks is a skill for life.

As teens grow more independent, you can't be everywhere - but these safety tips can!

Share lessons that grow with them.

And together, let's stay rail safe.

## CAN I DRIVE?

Along with using rail safely to and from school, on the weekends and during school holidays, navigating a car safely around rail as a learner driver is just as important!

Learner driver testing and training varies between state and territories with safety largely focused on supervised driving experiences to build competence, including night driving, heavy traffic, and adverse weather.

Learning to drive safely around train and tram tracks needs to be part of this learning to drive experience, including knowing what signs and symbols at railway crossings mean and following these instructions, and how to drive on roads that share space with trams.

Remember, trains can't swerve and they can't stop quickly. It can take up to 14 football fields or a couple of kilometres for a train to come to a complete stop. And while we might not learn to drive in an area that has railway crossings or trams, we may very well face this driving environment in the future.

Consider how rail forms part of the learner driver training experience in

your household. Building knowledge and awareness of the road rules when sharing the road with a tram or at railway crossings is an essential part of the driving process.

We're never too young (or old) to learn how to stay safe on and around rail.

Hope Steele  
Tracksafe Foundation  
[www.tracksafefoundation.com.au](http://www.tracksafefoundation.com.au)



# Work shouldn't make you unwell

## Knowing your rights and getting help for problems at work.

Starting your first job, or any new job, can bring a mix of feelings. It can be a blend of excitement, nerves, and 'I hope I'm doing this right' You're learning new systems, adjusting to different personalities while trying to keep things balanced while managing school, friends, and everything else life throws at you. When something doesn't seem quite right at work, it's easy to doubt yourself or brush it off as part of being new.

However, you have rights at work. You don't have to wait until you're overwhelmed or stressed out to get support.

At Victoria Law Foundation, we know that addressing these issues early helps people feel confident, informed, and supported as they start out in the workforce. Understanding your rights can make a big difference to your wellbeing, safety, and experience of work. Our goal is to make legal information easier to understand and to connect people with the support they need, when they need it.

## Young people experience more work problems

Studies of young people's workplace experiences show that those aged 18-24 are more likely than any other age group to face employment problems. These can include underpayment, bullying, unsafe conditions, or being threatened with losing their job or shifts. Nearly half of young people who reported a workplace issue said they'd experienced bullying, mistreatment, or harassment. Many others said they'd been unfairly dismissed or not paid correctly.

Plenty of young people are navigating these challenges. So, if you've ever been unsure whether something is normal or whether you're overreacting, you are not alone.

## What are your rights?

No matter your role, if it's casual, part time, or full time, you're entitled to basic protections at work, including:

- receiving a payslip every time you're paid
- being paid correctly for every hour you work
- getting superannuation if you're eligible
- having fair and safe working conditions
- working in an environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination
- having job security that matches your employment type.

These aren't nice extras, they're rights. If they're missing, unclear, or being ignored, that's a sign something needs attention.

## Spotting early signs that something isn't okay

Sometimes issues start small. It might be a confusing payslip, a shift removed without explanation, a comment that crosses a line or feeling pressured to work unpaid time.

Pay attention to anything that doesn't feel right, such as missing or unusual payslips, sudden changes to your shifts or hours, not being paid correctly (or at all), bullying, intimidation or unwanted behaviour, and feeling unsafe, mocked, or dismissed when you raise concerns.

If something makes you uncomfortable, trust that feeling. You don't need to wait until it becomes a major problem.

## A simple plan for handling tough workplace situations

Workplace issues can take a heavy mental toll. When you're stressed, it can be hard to think clearly or decide what to do next.

This step-by-step plan can help you regain control:

### 1. Pause and take a breath.

If you feel unsafe or upset, step outside or put some space between you and the situation. Reach out to someone you trust.

### 2. Write down what happened.

Notes, dates, screenshots, photos of rosters, and copies of messages can be incredibly helpful later.

### 3. Check your rights.

Compare your experiences with what you're entitled to. If something doesn't add up, make a note of it.

### 4. Talk to someone you trust.

A friend, family member, teacher, or counsellor can help you make sense of what's happening.

### 5. Reach out for advice early.

Don't wait for things to become overwhelming. There are free, youth-friendly services that help with workplace issues every day.

## Where to go for support

You're not expected to navigate workplace problems alone, especially not when you're young and still learning how work should function. You can access a range of free and confidential support services to help with workplace issues. Search online for these organisations to get started solving workplace problems.

- **The Young Workers Centre** provides information about your rights and personalised advice on problems like underpayment, bullying, harassment, and unfair treatment.
- **JobWatch** offers telephone information, legal assistance, and practical fact sheets to help workers understand and address employment problems.
- **Youthlaw Victoria** supports people aged 25 and under with workplace concerns alongside other legal issues, and provides useful resources tailored to young workers.
- **Youth Law Australia** also offers free, confidential legal advice online, available 24/7, where young people can submit questions anonymously and receive guidance specific to their situation.

## Taking care while you sort things out

Work can affect your wellbeing more than you realise. Issues like harassment, underpayment, or conflict often lead to feeling stressed, anxious, angry, or unsure. It's important to take care of yourself if work is causing stress. Try to notice and name how you're feeling and reach out to people you trust. It could be friends, family, teachers, or other support networks.

If you need to have a tricky conversation, practising what you want to say can help. Remember to set healthy boundaries and take breaks when you need them. If things feel too much, seeking support from mental health professionals or wellbeing services can make a big difference.

## You deserve safety, fairness, and respect

Work is a part of life, but it should never damage your wellbeing. Speaking up or seeking help isn't being difficult, it's protecting your rights and your future self. You're allowed to ask questions and seek support. You're allowed to feel safe.

If something doesn't feel right at work, trust that instinct. Help is available, you are not alone, and you deserve better.

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Mention this ad and we will provide your school with a Free Seminar (Valued at \$2000+)  
\*conditions apply

Voted 5 Stars by tens of thousands of High School students and teachers

The Life Choices Foundation is dedicated to empowering young people to navigate the complexities of life and make informed choices. We deliver evidence-based programs that equip students with the knowledge, skills and critical thinking abilities they need to overcome past limitations, challenge societal pressures and become the best versions of themselves.

**IS THIS FOR REAL?**  
Year 7 Digital Program

**LIFE CHOICES PROGRAM**  
Year 10

**MAKE BULLYING HISTORY**  
Years 7-12

Early legal knowledge?

# GAME CHANGER.

## WHY YOUNG PEOPLE NEED THE LAW, NOW.

### A PRIVILEGE WE SHOULD ALL HAVE

We are all under the law. The age of criminal responsibility in Victoria is 12. This means students from Year 7 and above can be charged, found guilty and sentenced for a criminal offence. The concern is students do not fully comprehend what it means to enter the legal system before making a decision which jeopardises their future.

Law and lawyers have historically been associated with the wealthy, educated class, an elite profession, with exclusive benefits.

Understanding the legal system is a privilege few have. Without basic knowledge, one is more vulnerable against another who has the benefit of knowledge or access to resources.

Most students will have online interactions, work a job, purchase goods, use a phone, have an employer and colleagues, get paid (or not), and have relationships.

Laws apply now, not on reaching 18 years of age. These are a few instances where legal information should precede or be available before students engage in behaviours regulated by law or that trigger legal and non-legal consequences.

The law is everything and everywhere. But what do students do when they find themselves in a sticky situation? Would they know where to start?

**Define: (noun) legal literacy**  
To have sufficient understanding of the law to make informed decisions.

### WHY IN SCHOOL?

Schools are positioned to provide education that equips students to navigate and impact the world they live in.

Laws are one pillar influencing the values, ethics and boundaries students are exploring in their school years.

Law in Schools seeks to fill the gap in legal literacy by delivering legal concepts in plain language within a familiar context to encourage discussion which translates legal themes into a powerful reality.

Proactive approaches support students to grow into contributing members of society and not be held back by unnecessary barriers.

Basic legal literacy should be afforded to everyone and not delayed until the time a lawyer is needed.

Not every person will know where to look for help or have the luxury of a lawyer in their family or social network.

The question should be 'why wait?'

### 1 IN 2 AUSTRALIANS HAVE A LEGAL PROBLEM.

Those working with young people know this statistic is not just for adults. Most things we do day to day are governed by laws and carry legal implications. We live in a legal world.

Legal literacy is a life skill. A skill that needs to be taught at a students level.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T?

Students in this age bracket experience sexual harassment at 47% compared to the rest of the population which sits at 33%.



This warrants a closer look at how students are equipped to respond and act when an incident arises.

The Australia wide legal needs survey suggested legal problems resulted in two major outcomes, impact on well-being and financial hardship. There are the numerous stories of years of underpayment or workplace harassment, all because people did not know it was harassment or that an industry award applied.

Now, consider a student whom was dealt a socio-economic disadvantage and further runs into trouble. Add to that a legal language barrier and the poverty cycle is exacerbated by lack of knowledge. We know education is key and legal literacy is part of the solution.

Many students are surprised when they realise they may be doing something illegal or are experiencing something unlawful.

Legal literacy gives students the confidence needed to identify a legal problem and navigate the next steps.

### What are the essentials?

Law in Schools covers topics such as:

1. Digital Citizenship and cybercrime
2. It's just sexual harassment
3. There's no such thing as bullying
4. First Jobs 101
5. True crime and consequences

We have identified where the law and students have the most interactions and use that gateway



to build a knowledge base. Content is tailored to school needs and designed to supplement curriculum and school obligations.

### ORIGIN STORY

Every dream has a back story. For Law in Schools this began with two young people arriving as refugees in Australia. They were resilient, hard working parents, but at the same time faced discrimination and exploitation due to cultural and language barriers. One type of language barrier was the legal language barrier. They were unable to understand laws that regulated, protected, provided complaint pathways, and underpinned contracts that affected their every day lives. A small amount of legal literacy could have made such a big difference for them and for their children.



**Danielle Nguyen Deroon**

Danielle established Law in Schools to make a difference by equalising the playing field, particularly for those who come from minority groups and challenging circumstances.

She has lived experience and observed firsthand the disadvantage and unfairness that comes with not understanding the laws applicable and pathways available when a problem is encountered in everyday life. These same problems are often solvable with a small amount of legal understanding.

Danielle is a qualified lawyer with wide experience in different industries from criminal law to human resources and telecommunications. She is ready to share with a perfect concoction of anecdotes and to inform young people on common life experiences in a way that makes sense to them now.

[www.lawinschools.com.au](http://www.lawinschools.com.au)



## THE WORDS THAT SHAPE US

Remember when we were kids and the world was alive with wonder? Every day was filled with possibility and we knew wholeheartedly that magic is very much real.

These are the states of being I seek to restore.

My name's Adam, and I grew up in London working on street markets with my dad. The lessons and consequences from these formative years paved the way for a successful career as a magician and poet, using words and wonder as tools to awaken minds to the infinite potential in every moment.

During these years I've been blessed to perform for people around the globe, from refugees to royalty. My poetry has won awards on the Opera House stage, and my viral illusions have captured the minds of millions. From the stage, and through interactive workshop sessions, I design awe-driven experiences that shift perspectives and inspire meaningful change.

By restoring our connection with the magic within, we are able to reclaim authorship of our story and create the future we dream of.

But here's what I've come to understand over years of performing in schools: the most important audience in the room isn't always the students.

It's the staff.

Because while I may create a moment of awe, you create the atmosphere in which identity forms.

Students don't just learn content in classrooms. They absorb tone. They internalise labels. They build their sense of self from micro-moments — the offhand comments, the raised eyebrow, the encouragement given quietly after class.

When I was a kid on the markets in London, language was survival. My dad taught me how to speak with conviction, how to read a room, how to hold attention. But I also learned how quickly words can define you. "Troublemaker." "Cheeky." "Bright but distracted."

Those phrases stick.

Young people begin to live up to — or down to — the stories they believe about themselves.

In schools, we are constantly narrating. We narrate effort. We narrate behaviour. We narrate potential.

And narrative shapes identity.

Students who see themselves as capable, adaptable, someone who can improve, behave differently from those who internalise fixed labels. Identity drives action more powerfully than instruction ever will.

A small shift in language can create a profound shift in trajectory.

Instead of "You're not focused,"

"What would help you focus right now?"

Instead of "You're behind,"

"What's the next small step forward?"

Instead of "That's not good enough,"

"Let's refine this together."

These are not soft alternatives. They are strategic ones.

They communicate agency.

They preserve dignity.

They model problem-solving instead of reinforcing shame.

And beyond the words themselves is something even deeper — regulation. Students borrow our nervous systems. When we respond with calm curiosity instead of frustration, they internalise that emotional blueprint. When we model composure, they learn composure.

The language climate of a school becomes its invisible curriculum.

In my workshops, I often speak about "magic



words" — not in a mystical sense, but in a neurological one. Words alter perception. Perception alters behaviour. Behaviour alters outcomes.

The real magic is not the illusion on stage. It is the collective decision of adults to become intentional architects of identity.

When staff shift from correcting behaviour to constructing belief, classrooms transform. When language moves from labelling to liberating, belonging strengthens.

Remember that childhood sense of wonder — the belief that possibility was everywhere? That state isn't naive. It's powerful. It fuels creativity, resilience and hope.

Young people don't lose wonder because they grow older. They lose it when environments stop reflecting possibility back to them.

As educators, you are mirrors.

You reflect who students believe they can become.

And when you choose words that expand rather than confine, you don't just manage a classroom.

You shape a future.

That's the magic that lasts.



Adam Axford

Turning awe into action  
[www.adamaxford.com.au](http://www.adamaxford.com.au)

*I'm Adam Axford, Magician & Wordsmith. I design awe-driven experiences that shift perspectives and inspire meaningful change. Discover how I challenge ...*



All Together Now is an **award-winning charity** dedicated to preventing all forms of racism in Australia. Our mission is to **educate Australians about racism and hate**, and to mobilise systemic change.

We do this by imagining and delivering innovative and evidence-based projects that promote **racial equity**. We are community driven, utilise partnered approaches and all our work is intersectional.



We have several resources and programs available for social workers, youth workers, counsellors, teachers and parents focusing on issues such as racism, divisive misinformation, online hate and extremism.

### Challenging Hateful Misinformation Workshop

Evidence-based workshop aimed at building your skills to recognise and respond to people who are engaging with hateful mis/disinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories. This workshop is specifically designed for frontline workers and teachers.

### Countering Far-right Extremism Workshops

Young people are routinely targeted online by far-right extremists promoting hate and violence. Our interactive workshops are designed to provide participants with a nuanced understanding of far-right extremism and guidance on how to respond to young people in the early stages of engagement with hateful ideas.

### Bespoke Anti-Racism Training

Our program aims to raise anti-racism awareness and enhance understanding of the different forms of racism and discrimination and their impacts on the workplace.

### Anti-Racism Resources

Visit our website to learn about what racism is, how it continues to shape our world, and the impacts of racism in Australia today. You'll also discover tips you can do to actively challenge racism and guidance on how to address racism.

### Discussing Racism with Children - Free Resource

As a parent or caregiver, it's likely that at some point you'll need to navigate conversations about race and racism with children. To make this easier and more effective, we partnered with the ABC series The School That Tried To End Racism to create a guide for adults to have better conversations with children about racism.

### Everyday Racism App

A world-first mobile app designed to challenge your understanding of racism. Designed by All Together Now in partnership with Australian universities, the app has won several international awards, including from the United Nations.

### STAY UPDATED WITH OUR ANTI-RACISM PROJECTS

Sign up to receive our newsletter and get the latest news about our anti-racism programs. Our regular newsletter will help you unlearn racism, discover tips you can do to actively challenge racism and create a positive social change. Subscribe to our newsletter at [bit.ly/ATN-Newsletter](https://bit.ly/ATN-Newsletter)

Visit [alltogethernow.org.au](https://alltogethernow.org.au) to learn more about our anti-racism programs.

All of our work at All Together Now is imagined, designed and conducted on unceded Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and that Australia was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

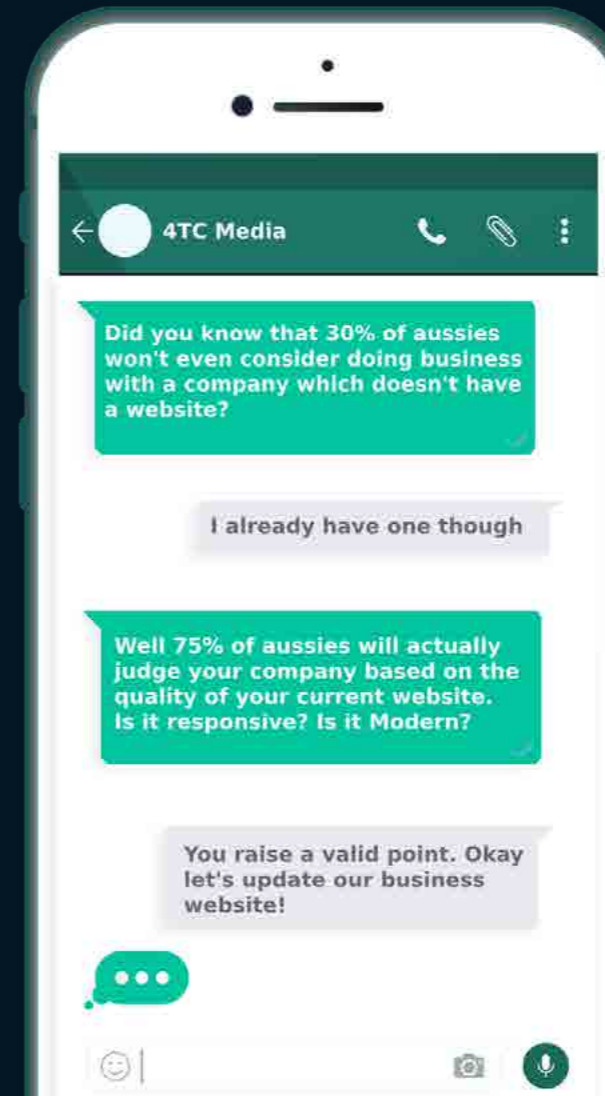


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# become a b kinder school in 2026

Creating kinder, more compassionate and resilient students.



Rather than a band-aid fix for mental health, the b kinder foundation provides schools with strategies to nurture wellbeing, belonging, and self-esteem.



The b kinder school program is inspired by kindness and led by your student leadership team who will:

- 1 Create a culture of kindness throughout your whole school community
- 2 Access positive resources and unique workshops
- 3 Build leadership skills and inspire role modelling
- 4 Connect with other b kinder schools
- 5 Participate in our annual b kinder summit



## Get Help

### Nationwide

<b>The National Cannabis Information &amp; Helpline</b> <a href="https://ncpic.org.au/helpline/">https://ncpic.org.au/helpline/</a> <b>1800 30 40 50</b>	<b>Headspace Chat Online</b> <a href="https://eheadspace.org.au/">https://eheadspace.org.au/</a> <b>Online chat available</b> <b>1800 650 890 (9AM -1AM)</b>	<b>1800RESPECT</b> <a href="https://www.1800respect.org.au/">https://www.1800respect.org.au/</a> <b>1800 737 732</b>	<b>Blue Knot Foundation Helpline</b> <a href="http://www.blueknot.org.au/Helpline">http://www.blueknot.org.au/Helpline</a> <b>1300 657 380</b>	<b>Lifeline</b> <a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au/">http://www.lifeline.org.au/</a> <b>13 11 14</b>	<b>The Butterfly Foundation</b> <a href="http://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/">http://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/</a> <b>1800 33 4673</b>
<b>Kids Help Line</b> <a href="http://www.kidshelp.com.au/">http://www.kidshelp.com.au/</a> <b>1800 55 18 00</b>	<b>Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS)</b> <a href="http://www.dva.gov.au/">http://www.dva.gov.au/</a> <b>1800 011 046</b>	<b>PANDA - National Perinatal Depression Helpline</b> <a href="http://www.panda.org.au/">http://www.panda.org.au/</a> <b>1300 726 306</b>	<b>Australian Government: AIHW MHSa</b> <a href="http://mhsa.aihw.gov.au/home">http://mhsa.aihw.gov.au/home</a>	<b>SANE Australia</b> <a href="http://www.sane.org/">http://www.sane.org/</a> <b>1800 187 263</b>	<b>Gambling Helpline</b> <a href="http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/">http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/</a> <b>Online chat available</b> <b>1800 858 858</b>
<b>Suicide Call Back Service</b> <a href="https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au">https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au</a> <b>Online chat available</b> <b>1300 659 467</b>	<b>Family Drug Support</b> <a href="http://www.fds.org.au/">http://www.fds.org.au/</a> <b>1300 368 186</b>	<b>Al-Anon</b> <a href="http://www.al-anon.org.au/contact">http://www.al-anon.org.au/contact</a> <b>1300 ALANON (1300 252 666)</b>	<b>Alcoholics Anonymous</b> <a href="http://www.aa.org.au/">http://www.aa.org.au/</a> <b>1300 222 222</b>	<b>Quit Line</b> <a href="http://www.quit.org.au/">http://www.quit.org.au/</a> <b>13 78 48</b>	<b>Mind Connect</b> <a href="https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/contact-us.html">https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/contact-us.html</a> <b>1300 286 463</b>
					<b>Mensline Australia</b> <a href="http://www.mensline.org.au/">http://www.mensline.org.au/</a> <b>1300 78 99 78</b>

### Victoria

<b>Youth Drug and Alcohol Advice (YoDAA)</b> <a href="https://www.ysas.org.au">https://www.ysas.org.au</a>	<b>Pharmacotherapy, Advocacy, Mediation &amp; Support (PAMS)</b> Advice for anyone experiencing trouble with their pharmacotherapy program (Methadone, Suboxone etc...) <b>1800 443 844</b>	<b>1800 ICE ADVICE</b> Advice and support for people who use ice, their families and health professionals. <b>1800 423 238</b>	<b>DirectLine</b> Confidential alcohol and drug counselling and referral line. <b>1800 888 236</b>	<b>Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)</b> A 24-hour confidential information, advice and referral telephone service. <b>1800 151 045</b>	<b>Ted Noffs Foundation help line</b> Counselling and support for young people and their families.
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### New South Wales

### Queensland

<b>Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)</b> Telephone information, counselling and referral. <b>1800 177 833</b>	<b>Counselling Online</b> If you prefer to speak to someone <b>1800 177 833 (Regional)</b> <b>07 3837 5989 (metro)</b>	<b>Alcohol and Drug Support Line</b> 24/7, state-wide counselling, information, referral and support <b>Metro: (08) 9442 5050</b> <b>Country: 1800 653 203</b>	<b>Parent and Family Drug Support Line</b> 24/7, state-wide counselling, information, referral and support. <b>1800 721 997</b>	<b>Meth Helpline</b> 24/7, state-wide counselling, information, referral and support. <b>1800 874 878</b>	<b>Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)</b> Telephone information, counselling, and referral service. <b>1300 131 340</b>
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### Western Australia

### South Australia

### ACT

<b>Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)</b> 24-hour telephone service offering information, advice, referral, intake, assessment and support. <b>02 6207 9977</b>	<b>Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)</b> 24-hour Alcohol and Drug Telephone Information and counselling service. <b>1800 131 350</b>	<b>Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)</b> A 24-hour telephone information and counselling line. <b>1800 811 994</b>
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### Northern Territory

### Tasmania

If you are in an emergency, or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000



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This is an initiative of the Daniel Morcombe Foundation.