

## University of Sydney submission to the Evaluation of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP)

---

The University of Sydney welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP). It is important to us that this evaluation takes place in the context of the current broader higher education policy debate, particularly in the context of discussion around the success and limitations of the Demand Driven System (DDS) of funding for universities in Australia.

While the DDS has helped expand participation in higher education across the full range of socioeconomic groups, it has not proved as effective at lifting the proportion of students recruited from traditionally under-represented backgrounds.<sup>1</sup> This makes sense in the context of the multiple social and economic factors that may prevent higher education participation for these groups. While the DDS opens the pathway to higher education to all students, HEPPP remain a crucial policy platform for the actual realisation of participation targets. Now is the time to build upon and refine the HEPPP, stabilise its funding, improve monitoring and evaluation, and avoiding costly and wasteful wholesale reform of targeted higher education access schemes.

At the University of Sydney, the HEPPP has been essential in funding outreach activities for Low Socio-Economic Status (LSES), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and regional and remote students, and has allowed the University to pilot and trial new initiatives to permit greater access to these traditionally under-represented students. It has ensured that there is a sustained University-wide dialogue and strategic engagement with issues of inclusion and exclusion. The establishment of HEPPP funded projects and their demonstrated successful outcomes for students have attracted funding for relevant access scholarships and outreach focused programs from individuals and foundations external to the University.

Arguably, there are lessons to be learned from the monitoring and evaluation of HEPPP programs to date as well as more general improvements that could be made to implementation. We believe that HEPPP funding should be restored and extended, but that it should occur in the context of a robust evaluation framework that will be implemented consistently for a minimum 3 year period. A longer term funding model would also allow resource allocation to be more stable and effective. A single unique student number across the education system, as proposed by COAG, would allow for more effective monitoring of impact. Duplication of projects across the sector could be avoided by an open and collaborative central monitoring system.

HEPPP funding has done much to drive change across the University, however the contraction of funding has meant that resourcing new University-wide initiatives in the area of first year transition for LSES students has not been possible as resources have been used to maintain outreach activities. In addition, and importantly, HEPPP programs begun in 2011 which target high school students (years 6-12) are yet to come to complete fruition, and the success of HEPPP cannot be evaluated without an understanding of the outcomes of those programs.

It is important to once again reiterate the importance of the DDS and HEPPP working together to improve participation of under-represented groups in higher education. The value of participation lies both in the equity of access of all Australians to similar educational opportunities, and the social and financial benefits of utilising all of Australia's talent in the growing knowledge economy.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide comments to this evaluation. Our more detailed responses to the consultation questions are in the following pages

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.go8.edu.au/article/group-eight-priority-directions-time-action-not-activity>

## HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP, PARTICIPATION & NATIONAL PRIORITIES POOL – 2016 EVALUATION

**What is the range of HEPPP projects at your university across the three components of the program (Partnership, Participation and National Priorities Pool)?**

### **PARTNERSHIP: SCHOOLS and COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The University's flagship partnership program is Compass. Each year Compass negotiates partnerships with a select group of schools to deliver a program of activities which correlate with NSW and National Curriculum outcomes but also meet the particular requirements of a school and its students.

Compass works with young people - their teachers, parents and community - to build their confidence and motivation to succeed through education and make informed decisions about their post-school options. The program also supports the academic and personal preparation of students who are generally under-represented in higher education: Low Socio-Economic Status (Low SES), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and regional and remote students. Our primary goal is widening the participation of these groups in higher education. Since launching in 2009 Compass has engaged over 100,000 students, teachers and parents in their schools, communities and on campus.

### **ENGAGEMENTS 2009-2015**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
Student engagements	3920	5443	11,608	17,583	19,995	24,538	30,033	113,120
Parents	12	776	408	439	549	333	371	2888
Schools	18	18	103	224	212	123	174	872
Professional learning	73	228	213	434	142	212	186	1,488
Volunteers in schools	0	172	652	753	702	481	125	2,885
<b>Total</b>	<b>4023</b>	<b>6637</b>	<b>12984</b>	<b>19433</b>	<b>21600</b>	<b>25687</b>	<b>30889</b>	<b>121,253</b>

### **SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

INITIATIVE	OVERVIEW
Schools Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 26 curriculum linked Year K-12 programs</li> <li>- skills enrichment and development: occupational therapy, speech pathology, numeracy and literacy tutoring, film production and editing, stop motion animation, homework clubs</li> <li>- science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) focus: iScience, Mad Maker, Spectacular Science, Kickstart Science</li> <li>- senior preparation workshops: Year 9 Goal Setting, Year 10 Preparation for Senior Study, Year 11 Thinking Ahead, Year 12 Promote Yourself, HSC academic enrichment</li> <li>- high intensity partnership model with 24 high schools and eight primary schools</li> <li>- broader low intensity engagement with 114 high schools</li> <li>- professional learning opportunities for teachers</li> <li>- parent information evenings.</li> </ul>

INITIATIVE	OVERVIEW
Regional and Remote Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- occupational therapy</li> <li>- Kickstart Science workshops</li> <li>- HSC English enrichment</li> <li>- Preparation for Senior Study, scholarship development and application skills.</li> </ul>
University, Community and Industry Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- partnerships with peak organisations: The Smith Family, AIME, Belvoir, and Fairfield City Council and Open Libraries</li> <li>- collaboration with industry partners to deliver unique student experiences.</li> <li>- University partnerships and collaborations: Bridges to Higher Education and Make Your Mark.</li> </ul>

#### CAMPUS ENGAGEMENTS

INITIATIVE	OVERVIEW
Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 7 and 8 Experience Uni</li> <li>- Year 9-12 Summer Residential Program</li> <li>- Year 12 Winter Residential Academic Enrichment Program</li> <li>- Making Tomorrow Forum for school and community staff working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.</li> </ul>
Campus Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 4 Museum Visits – Nicholson and Macleay Museums, and University Art Gallery</li> <li>- Year 5 Enter Stage Right, Seymour Centre</li> <li>- Year 6 Discover Uni</li> <li>- Year 8 Investig8</li> <li>- Year 9 STEM Day of Inquiry</li> <li>- Year 11 Life at Sydney - two day residential program</li> <li>- Year 10, 11 and 12 Open Day – skills enrichment workshops</li> <li>- Parents' day – student transition and preparation.</li> </ul>
Volunteering and Service Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- annual recruitment</li> <li>- cultural competence, working with children, mentoring and leadership training</li> <li>- practical knowledge and skills in workplace environments</li> <li>- approximately 140 volunteers, 60 student leaders, 45 service learning students engaged annually.</li> </ul>
Widening Participation Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- partnership with Educational Innovation, University of Sydney</li> <li>- managed Widening Participation Grants to seed faculty based social inclusion initiatives</li> <li>- flagship project implementation for first year University students.</li> </ul>

## DIGITAL OUTREACH

INITIATIVE	OVERVIEW
A★STAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- builds an active online community of young people</li> <li>- a portal for resources in key learning areas linked to campus and school learning experiences</li> <li>- broader access to cultural capital</li> <li>- provides opportunities to be active, not passive, participants</li> <li>- parent and teacher facing component enrichment, extension and a platform to showcase the work of students</li> <li>- academic resources.</li> </ul>
YourTutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provides online, on demand academic support</li> <li>- personalised support for revision and problem practice with subject experts</li> <li>- free to students who attend a government-identified Educational Access Schemes (EAS) school and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students.</li> </ul>
Widening Participation and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- school resource to improve links between the school sector and tertiary education and provide a platform for enriched and extension learning</li> <li>- extend reach of audience to increase profile of program achievements and engender support from donor and alumni.</li> </ul>

## PARTICIPATION

### E12 Early Offer Scheme - Equity based scholarships for first year students

- Awarded scholarships have grown from 109 students in 2013 to 309 students in 2015.
- E12 students are outperforming their peers and are awarded double the number of distinctions and high distinctions across their courses.
- Unconditional offers have increased by 5% and conditional offers have increased by 10%
- In 2016, 34 or 12.5% of scholarship students are from Compass partner schools
- Five of the six students who applied for the E12 scholarship from Compass regional partner school, Dubbo Senior College were successful.

### Academic support for students transitioning to University and early orientation programs

- In 2016, Compass delivered scholarship development and application skills workshops - Thinking Ahead and Promote Yourself - in sixty five schools to a total of eight hundred and thirty nine students
- The Transition to Uni partnership between Compass and Education & Training Out West delivered Thinking Ahead and Promote Yourself workshops at the Dubbo Senior College. Five of the six students from Dubbo Senior College who applied for E12 scholarships were offered places.
- Feedback confirms the practical exercises and interaction with Compass facilitators is highly valued; provides an understanding of the different types of scholarship available with particular reference to the E12 scholarship application process.

- In 2016 Year 9 and Year 10 students participated in Goal Setting and Preparation for Senior Study workshops
- Year 10 students and their parents attended presentations covering subject selection, ATARs
- Year 11 & 12 students and their parents attended presentations covering University support services, mental health and resilience and the ATAR, as well as university applications, admission, scholarships and alternative pathways.

#### **University research on student equity and diversity – Widening Participation Network (WPSN) & Grants Program**

- Builds the University's research agenda on social inclusion/exclusion and promotes the development of teaching and learning activities that support student engagement and cultural competence.
- Awards grants to support academic and professional staff to present research at relevant domestic and international conferences.
- Faculty funded initiatives that focus on curriculum renewal, first year transition and mentoring programs, and faculty developed schools outreach programs.
- These grants ensured that the university had a robust dialogue amongst academic and professional staff on student equity. Interdisciplinary curriculum renewal, teaching and learning projects that included work integrated learning and service learning were established and have benefitted whole cohorts of first year students year on year, this component cannot be measured by individual student in the data collection request.

### **NATIONAL PRIORITIES POOL**

Funding was used to establish the following:

- Programs focused on the early engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, delivering the pre-tertiary outreach components of the University wide [Wingara-Mura Bunga Barrabugu \(WMBB\) strategy](#).
- Through Widening Participation and Outreach, the University offers a multi-layered approach to support the academic and personal preparation of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for higher education. This includes opportunities for students to experience university life, build social connections, both peer to peer and with current university students, and participate in an educational program linked to degrees and career pathways.
- In a supportive and inclusive environment we deliver on-campus events, regional engagements and week-long summer and winter residentials. We also organise professional learning opportunities and build cultural competence training into all of our training for academic and faculty based staff involved in delivering components of the program.

#### **Experience Uni**

Held during Reconciliation Week each year, *Experience Uni* is an on-campus event for Year 8 & Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who participate in a range of experiential learning workshops with Faculties with the objective of developing positive associations between their individual interests and higher education and a sense of confidence in the university environment. Students are introduced to the A\*STAR online magazine, YourTutor and the Career Finder app and Year 9 students are encouraged to apply for the Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu Summer Program. In 2016, 182 students attended this event from 11 schools across NSW.

#### **Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu Summer Program**

The Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu Summer Program is a week-long residential which allows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to explore their futures in an authentic, real-world setting.

- Wingara Mura for Year 9 and 10 students focuses on promoting tertiary study and demystifying university.
- Bunga Barrabugu for Year 11 and 12 students offers discipline choices, commences preparation for senior study, and exposes potential students to the University of Sydney experience.

#### **WMBB Summer Program - Attendance by Year**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Offers</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Year 12 Attendees</b>
2014	363	254	191	52
2015	319	234	177	43
2016	364	256	200	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>1046</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>147</b>

#### **Bunga Barrabugu Winter Program**

The Bunga Barrabugu Winter Program is an invitational week-long residential program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 12. This program promotes academic preparedness for students' final Year 12 exams and provides information regarding opportunities and pathways to university. Students are given an introduction to university life, attend subject-specific workshops, receive tailored one-to-one academic tutoring and have time allocated for independent study. There are also a number of extra-curricular activities undertaken outside of the work day. Student participants experience valuable and memorable peer-to-peer support, not only with each other, but also current University students and staff.

#### **Impact on enrolments at University**

In the first two years of operations (2014 and 2015), sixty-four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students were invited to participate in the Winter Program. Thirteen or 20% of the students who participated enrolled to the University of Sydney. The remainder of students went on to enroll at other universities.

#### **Which of these projects have the most strategic importance, as far as your university is concerned?**

The Bridges to Higher Education partnership brought together the collective resources and experience of the widening participation, equity and social inclusion programs at Western Sydney University, the University of Sydney, the University of Technology Sydney, Macquarie University, and the Australian Catholic University. The partnership extended to include NSW DEC, TAFE NSW, the Universities Admissions Centre (NSW & ACU) Pty Ltd, local government organisations, education offices, Indigenous organisations and other community, philanthropic and social enterprise organisations. This coordinated and targeted approach allowed Universities to identify gaps and coordinate an approach to outreach activities. The Partnerships component is integral to our strategy for widening participation and we have established successful partnerships with NGO's such as AIME and The Smith Family ensuring the broad delivery of HEPPP programs.

Widening participation and outreach activities conducted through school and community outreach and on-campus engagements are crucial to widening the pool of potential students for Higher Education and for diversifying our student cohort. It is essential to include activities that enable an early engagement with the University. For example Compass delivers service learning to kindergarten students and our first on-campus engagement commences with year 3.

Integrated processes and support for primary and high school students through this program are essential to diversify the cohort. The outreach and partnership activities are part of an integrated approach for students from year 7 through to year 12, linked with academic skills development, curriculum based learning, subject selection and pre-

requisite information, career choices and degree information, university pathways for students and first year start-up scholarship packages (E12.) Where possible we have utilised digital platforms as a tool to deliver the program, allowing for greater access beyond our partner schools.

**To what extent have HEPPP activities been incorporated into your university's standard systems and activities?**

HEPPP activities have been substantially incorporated into the University's standard systems and activities. Some examples include:

- The University funding E12 scholarships following the pilot of this scheme in 2011-2013, incorporating it into the core business of recruitment and student support and retention activities of the University. Additional faculty based support structures were also established for students, which included mentoring programs and regular meetings with course directors and coordinators.
- A number of programs have been embedded within Faculty teaching models or contributed to Faculty and School individualised outreach programs.
- Service learning and work integrated learning has been established through HEPPP initiatives.

Examples include:

- Faculty of Education pre-service teaching in English and Science. Pre-service teachers participate in structured school outreach programs providing vital support to LSES schools which is integrated into their unit of study.
  - Provision of school based placements for Occupational Therapy students within the Faculty of Health Sciences. Pre-service OT students complete placements providing invaluable support to regional and metro LSES primary schools.
  - Faculty based school outreach programs initially supported by HEPPP funded Widening Participation grants have sustained via Faculty funds or other outreach funding sources (for example, English and History school outreach programs, Business, Faculty of Arts and Social Science)
- Widening participation grants to faculties from 2011-2013. Research, outreach, transition and curriculum renewal projects saw the establishment of faculty wide mentoring schemes for first year students, greater awareness of student needs in the transition to university and cohort based programs that improved outcomes for all first year students.
  - Many of these projects continue and have been integrated into faculty core business and support teaching and learning in an ongoing way. Some faculties have developed their own widening participation strategies and work in unison with WPO.
  - The Widening Participation Network continues to deliver equity focused forums and sustain a dialogue for the university community in the area of inclusion and exclusion and student equity and promote faculty based outreach and Widening Participation initiatives.

In addition to these highlighted areas of HEPPP program integration, organisational changes have been made that allow for a greater integration of outreach activities alongside recruitment targets for L-SES and Aboriginal and Torres Islander students. Widening Participation and Outreach sits within Australia and New Zealand Undergraduate Recruitment and continues to deliver university-wide initiatives and broader HEPPP focused activities with the added support and resources of a core business unit.

**What has been your university's approach to using its HEPPP funding?**

Primarily Outreach activities and Participation and the provision of scholarships in the early establishment of E12. HEPPP funding is no longer used to fund E12 scholarships; the University has made a long-term commitment to this access pathway for L-SES students.

HEPPP funding allowed the University to develop and pilot what is now its primary access pathway for L-SES students. The establishment of this pathway was accompanied by a suite of transition initiatives that were also initially piloted through HEPPP funding and are now part of Faculties' core business.

**How important is HEPPP funding to your university and why?**

HEPPP funding is essential in funding outreach activities and allowing the University to pilot and trial new initiatives to permit greater access to L-SES students. It also ensures that there is a sustained University-wide dialogue and strategic engagement with issues of inclusion and exclusion.

**How important is it for universities to work in partnership with schools or other organisations to deliver HEPPP projects?**

Partnerships are an essential component of HEPPP programs for the following reasons:

- Some partner organisations have national reach. This goes well beyond the immediate targets of the funded program, allowing resources to be shared and applied nationally. Program development is not limited to the immediate pool of participating schools, but has national application through the partnerships and the resources and community engagement of the partner organisation.
- Partner organisations can have access to funding that allows for a longer-term commitment to the schools, students and communities that HEPPP projects are delivering to, this allows Universities to deliver a program that compliments a suite of other initiatives.

**What types of HEPPP projects run by your university have been most effective and why do you think this is? Which HEPPP projects have been less successful?**

In terms of partnership programs for pre-tertiary students and in schools outreach, a number of project have been successful at supporting and encouraging students from low socio-economics and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds into higher education.

From our evaluation processes, some examples of successful programs include:

- Wingara Mura Bunga Barrabugu Summer and Winter Programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students (Years 9-12).

As a result of the summer program 83% of students reported greater confidence in their academic abilities. 98% of students reported a greater awareness of what university offers and 82% of students self-reported and improved motivation to continue to study at university.

One participant commented that “[I learnt] that university may seem like a scary place, but with all the help and support available to students, it seems easier.”

Of the year 11&12 cohort surveys indicated that as a result of the program 100% of students agreed they had more knowledge about pathways to university as well as more knowledge about university life. The week long intensive had a high impact on students being able to link their interests with a career, and with 89% of participants indicating they were more confident in applying for university it indicates that students are feeling empowered to navigate application processes.

Intensive school based partnerships have seen a considerable shift in school culture around university progression. A number of school communities report a greater awareness of university amongst their students, and a higher level of aspiration.

– The Year 10 Preparation for Senior Study program

The Year 10 Preparation for Senior Study program provides an example of a program which has been embedded within the University and effectively supports LSES schools and teachers in becoming better prepared for University. Pre-service teachers within the Faculty of Education prepare and deliver short study skills lessons to Year 10 students from selected target schools, as part of a unit of study for their undergraduate course.

In 2014 this program reached 50 teachers and 1492 Year 10 students, with 90% of the participants agreeing that they learnt more about university and entry and pathways by participating in the program.

**What have been the key outcomes or impacts achieved by the HEPPP projects?**

For a comprehensive, independent analysis of the outcomes and impacts of university led projects made possible by HEPPP funding, please refer to KPMG's [Bridges to Higher Education Final Report](#) released in April 2015. The University of Sydney was one of five NSW universities that joined forces to develop and implement a suite of projects to influence knowledge and awareness of higher education, enhance educational attainment and achievement, and build educational aspirations among students from LSES backgrounds.

KPMG considered a range of quantitative and qualitative data arising from some 96 projects led by the University of Sydney and the other university partners, concluding that even though Bridges had only been running for a relatively short period of time the program was 'clearly contributing to its objectives and promoting outcomes for students, parents and teachers alike'<sup>2</sup>. For example, in relation to Bridge's four key objectives the KPMG evaluation found :

**Improving students' academic preparedness and outcomes**

91% of students surveyed self-reported they had better study skills as result of participating in Bridges.  
92% said they felt better prepared for university as a result of participation.  
99% of participating teachers surveyed note improvements in the academic performance of participating students' relative to prior to Bridges.  
94% of parents surveyed said they had a better capacity to support their child/children with higher education goals.<sup>3</sup>

**Increasing students' awareness, confidence and motivation toward higher education**

90% of students had greater awareness of what university offers.  
89% of students had greater awareness of their potential career paths.  
79% parents indicated that they knew more about their child's university options.  
90% had better understanding of the benefits associated with higher education.<sup>4</sup>

**Building school and community capacity**

97% of teachers who participated in Bridges professional development and learning activities reported that it had helped them to expand their teaching practices.  
95% of teachers who participated in Bridges professional development and learning activities could better apply their learning to their teaching practices.  
98% of teachers who participated in Bridges professional development and learning activities improved knowledge in their discipline of focus.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> KPMG, *Evaluation of Bridges to Higher Education – Final Report*, April 2015, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.,

**Increasing capacity to access higher education**

- Credit transfers and articulation arrangement between TAFE and universities increased to 186 in 2014, from nil in 2012
- 87% of participants in alternative pathways projects noted improvement in awareness of alternative pathways to higher education.<sup>6</sup>

University acceptance rates among schools in low socio-economic areas were improved by the Bridges program. The average increase in rates of Bridges applicants receiving an offer was significantly higher than that of non-Bridges schools. The size of the difference (5.13 per cent) is substantial and supports the conclusion of a Bridges specific effect among schools in low socio-economic areas for this indicator.<sup>7</sup>

**Compass Preparation for Senior Study Program**

96% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the Mathematics Preparation session informed their students about how to improve their performance in mathematics exams.

93% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the English Exam Preparation session informed their students about how to improve their performance in English exams.

91% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they learnt how to develop good study habits.

90% strongly agreed or agreed that they learnt more about university entry and pathways.<sup>8</sup>

**Wingara Mura Bunga Barrabugu Residential Programs**

Participating students reported having a strong motivation to participate in the program as they saw it as providing them with the opportunity to change their circumstances, increase their chances of being one of the first in the families to study at university, and to contribute to their communities.

Most appealing aspects of the program included the opportunity to familiarise themselves with a university campus, increase their understanding of potential academic and career opportunities and to learn about financial and support services available to improve access to higher education.

98% of participants reported greater awareness of what courses are offered at university.

82% of participants reported being more motivated to continue studying at university.

Results from year 9 and 10 students indicated that the program provided them with a greater understanding of the importance of achieving in the final years of high school and had changed their long term academic goals.

83% of year 11 and 12 students reported having greater confidence in their academic abilities.

100% agreed that the program gave them more knowledge about the pathways to university and life at university.

89% indicated they had increase confidence in apply for university.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 101-102

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.155

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.172

**How effective have HEPPP outreach or partnership project/s been? (Outcomes could include increased awareness of higher education, raised aspirations for higher education, increased applications for university)**

Students and parents are more aware of university, and students' self-confidence and motivation to attend university has improved post-participation in HEPPP outreach programs. HEPPP outreach projects have contributed to parents' awareness of university and altered their attitudes and preconceived ideas.

79% of parents indicated that they knew more about their child's university options

90% had a better understanding of the benefits associated with higher education

92% students who participated in Bridges programs felt better prepared for university as an outcome of their participation in Bridges.<sup>10</sup>

**Are schools changing practices, or embedding new practices, as a result of the HEPPP project/s? (Including knowledgeability/attitudes of school staff, changed relationships between schools and universities.)**

Through HEPPP funding, the Compass program model of forming intensive partnerships with selected low socio-economic primary and high schools has successfully engaged students, parents, teachers and the broader school community in order to create a cultural shift in awareness and perception of higher education. The program has successfully engaged and informed the whole school community and expectations around students' capacity to achieve and access higher education opportunities. As schools engage in a variety of projects on offer through the University's HEPPP funded programs, the capacity to influence the whole school community is much greater.

"Compass is part of the whole school culture. It has certainly changed student aspiration and there is an increased willingness among students to achieve well."

*School Principal, Compass report 2009-2011 conducted by Erebus International*

"Teachers are more likely to discuss university. It has sparked discussion. It's becoming part of the school's everyday language and culture."

*Primary teacher, Compass report 2009-2011 conducted by Erebus International*

**Have the HEPPP project/s impacted attitudes or behaviours of low SES parents or communities?**

Whilst a challenging part of Schools outreach, reaching parents and the broader school community has significant gains in terms of shifting perceptions around higher education access. Parent engagements activities have proven highly successful in changing parents' expectations of the accessibility of higher education. Activities and resources have raised the confidence and skills of parents when discussing higher education and there is also evidence that highlights shifts in parental aspirations for their children.

The Bridges to Higher Education collaborative Parents Engagement Project group organised a series of events for parents in LSES communities to gain information about University. The program engaged 590 parents across two years, with 96.3% reporting that the experience had increased their expectations of their child to do well at school, and 98.5% agreeing that the information session will help them to support their child with their future education and career goals.

"It has encouraged me to encourage my kids to continue to go uni. It has helped me understand the enrolment process much more clearly." – Parent activity participant

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.7

**Is the current funding structure effective? Are there any modifications that could be made to the way universities are funded under HEPPP?**

Consideration should be given to providing a longer term funding model that allows resource allocation to be more stable and effective.

**What are the administrative costs of HEPPP projects? How do these compare to similar programs at your university?**

See program costs as per KPMG report previously referenced.

**Has HEPPP funding helped your university to acquire other funding sources for equity initiatives?**

The establishment HEPPP funded projects and their demonstrated successful outcomes for students have attracted funding for relevant access scholarships and outreach focused programs from individuals and foundations external to the University.

**To what extent does the HEPPP funding formula direct funding to universities that require it most in order to achieve the HEPPP objectives?**

Funding calculations should not only include student access rates, but also student success, retention and completion data.

**To what extent is HEPPP funding driving change across your university, as opposed to sustaining efforts that are already being undertaken?**

HEPPP funding has done much to drive change across the University, however the contraction of funding has meant that resourcing new University-wide initiatives in the area of first year transition for LSES students has not been possible as resources have been used to maintain outreach activities.

The removal of incentive funding and targets have also impacted upon University wide engagement and substantial changes to pathways to address participation rates since the implementation of E12 in 2012.

**Are there alternative program approaches that could be considered to better meet the needs of disadvantaged individuals/students?**

Improvements to HEPPP:

- Funding model that guarantees funding allocation for three years and longer.
- Increased funding pool for new initiatives with broad criteria to allow Universities to focus on projects that are aligned with their own strategic objectives.
- Expansion of National Priorities Pool funding.
- Comprehensive review of program evaluation and cross-institutional resource sharing in this area.
- Promotion of best practice within the funding areas to allow universities and DEC to develop a longer-term trajectory for increased student access and participation based on programs with successful outcomes.
- Focus on innovative approaches in program development for the engagement of students from identified cohorts.
- Funding for longitudinal research on HEPPP programs

**Outreach**

- Implementation of a unique student identifier to allow the tracking of student outcomes and destinations in relation to higher education and HEPPP program outcomes.
- Data analysis of student learning outcomes and access to higher education, starting with tracking of student performance from standardised testing in primary school. This should be part of longitudinal research undertaken by both DEC and Universities.

**Participation**

- Cap the amount of HEPPP funding that can be utilised for scholarships.  
Continue to allow Universities to apply for funding with flexibility and to use funding for whole cohort based initiatives that impact upon the retention and success of I-SES students.

- Have different evaluation tools/templates to be applied consistently to the different types of projects undertaken. For example when measuring the success of a whole cohort based activity and reporting on the outcomes this should be significantly different to schools outreach based activity.
- Duplication of projects across all components of HEPPP

One significant issue which hasn't been given much attention is the duplication of projects across the sector. This is taking place where panels assessing NPP projects for instance are not aware of work that has already been successfully completed and has national application.

- Improved link between Universities HEPPP directors/management and DEC- to ensure programs are linked to curriculum.

A sustained collaboration between DEC and universities should be encouraged, where there are agreed long-term objectives and new initiatives such as STEM based learning, coding in schools, and literacy are easily prioritised and identified.