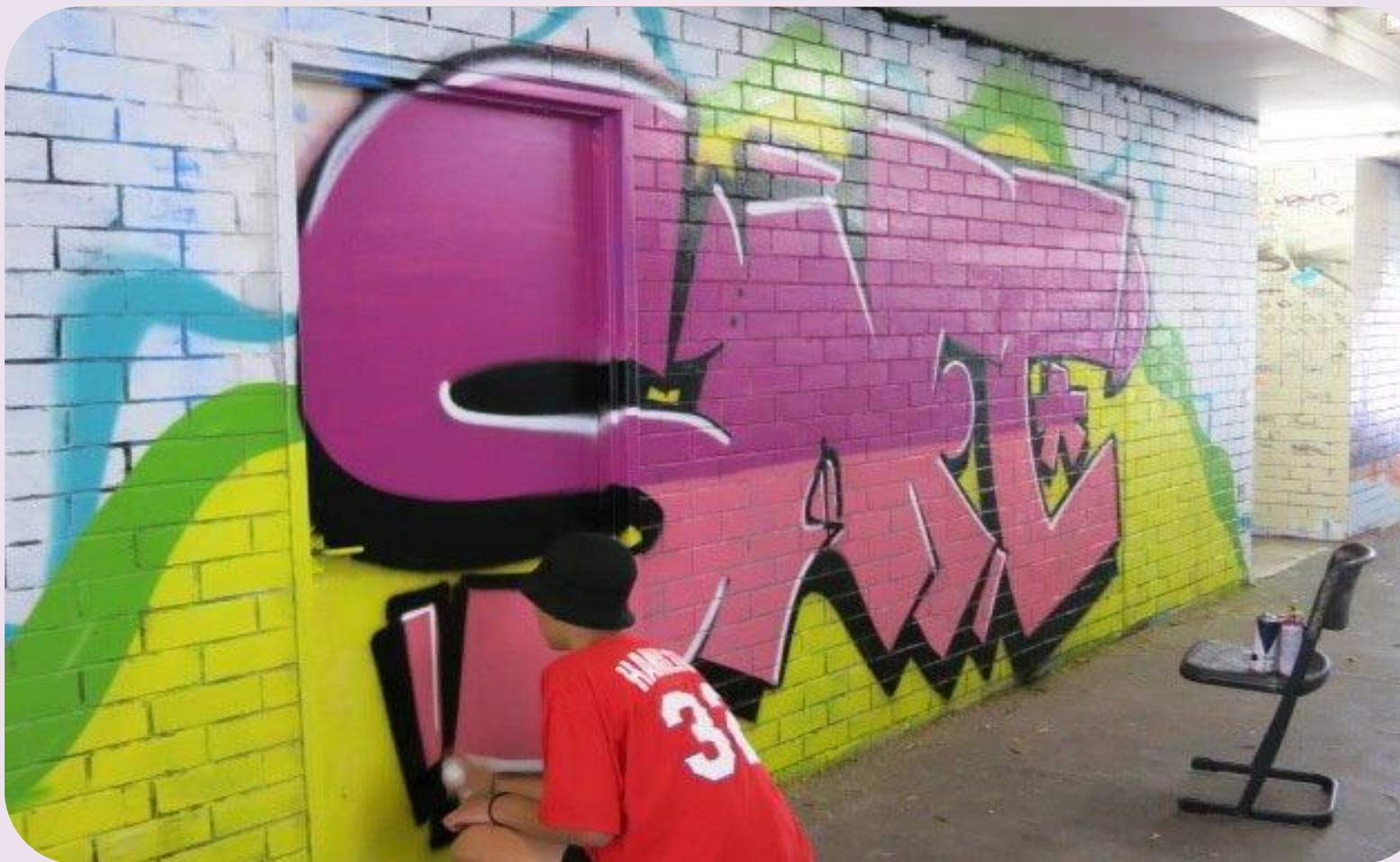


# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT to the School Community



St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre  
385 Queensberry Street, North  
Melbourne

REGISTERED SCHOOL NUMBER: 2079



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## Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Dale Murray, attest that St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre is compliant with all of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Vic), except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA.

23 May 2014

## Youth + Foundation Statement

Youth+ seeks to respond to the needs of young people disenfranchised and disengaged from education. Youth+ provides a place and an opportunity to re-engage in a suitable, flexible learning environment.

Youth+ seeks to build honest and authentic relationships with young people, their families and communities, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each person.

Youth+ is guided by the vision of Edmund Rice about the empowering service of education, to achieve personal and community liberation through educational experiences that enable transformation.

## St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre Overview

The St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre (SJFLC), is a registered Catholic Specialist Secondary School within the Diocese of Melbourne. SJFLC operates within the policy and compliance framework of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM), the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Edmund Rice Education Australia. St. Joseph's FLC is a part of Edmund Rice Education Australia Youth + and is conducted in accordance with the Youth + philosophy and principles. SJFLC commenced operation as a registered school in 2012 and forms part of a national association (EREA) of forty schools which includes, in 2012, thirteen flexible learning centres.

St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre is a co-educational Catholic School in the Edmund Rice tradition. The philosophy of SJFLC draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education Australia. It has a clear commitment to social justice and stands in solidarity with disenfranchised young people of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds. The philosophy also has a practical focus, based in the application of four core principles of; Respect (self, others and environment), 'Safe and Legal', 'Participation (have a go) and 'Honesty' (being fair dinkum) among all participants of the Flexible Learning Centre. This is evident in the ways the organisational culture and practices are shaped through the application of these principles. In essence, the principles establish a 'common ground' among staff, young people and parents, a collective forum, where the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences are modelled and explored, both within the group and individually and as members of the broader community.

The 2008 Melbourne Declaration on the Education Goals for Young Australians states that "Australian Governments commit to working with all school sectors to

- Close the gap for young indigenous Australians
- Provide targeted support to disadvantaged students
- Focus on school improvement in low socioeconomic areas"

St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre works with young people who are vulnerable and experience a complexity of inter-related needs. As discussed above, participation and retention are key elements in the philosophy of SJ Flexible Learning Centre, and the development of moral reasoning through the application of the four principles prepares students for responsible citizenship. The learning experiences also build self-confidence and esteem in students; promotes an optimistic view of their potential and future, and assist them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life.

St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are disenfranchised from mainstream education. Young people are enrolled from both genders, from a variety of language, cultural and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous and from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage. Young people are exposed to learning experiences that develop understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural values that constitute Australian Society. Learning is focused around the individual needs of students and progress is carefully documented and monitored. Young people, in conjunction with their teachers, youth workers and program coordinator, draft learning plans with articulated education pathways.

## Principal's Report

St. Joseph's is a Catholic Secondary School in the Edmund Rice tradition that works in partnership with the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM), Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and EREA Youth + ([www.youthplus.edu.au](http://www.youthplus.edu.au)) to provide an inclusive and holistic learning environment.

The philosophy of the St Joseph's FLC draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education Australia and is grounded in the Edmund Rice Education Australia Charter document. (see [www.erea.edu.au](http://www.erea.edu.au)) The document has a clear commitment to social justice and stands in solidarity with disenfranchised young people of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, inclusive communities, liberating education and gospel spirituality.

2013 saw the dedicated staff at the Flexible Learning Centre continue the work that was started in 2012 to establish a culture and educational pathways in the Catholic Spirit of Edmund Rice- the Founder of the Christian Brothers ([www.erea.edu.au](http://www.erea.edu.au))

Some significant highlights for 2013 have again been the increasing growth in enrolments and attendance, our registration as a provider of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), and our strengthened relationships with community organisations and families. It was in this year that the most common source of referrals to our school was through young people themselves. This is a testament to the commitment of these young people to returning to education.

The site has an ongoing partnership with The River Nile Learning Centre, an education program offering the VCAL to young African women. In 2013 we also established a formal relationship with the Inner Melbourne Vet Cluster (IMVC). The IMVC are now located on site and have established a Barista, and other certificates, training facility and they also have opened the i-lounge on site which is a service that supports young people who need assistance in re-engaging with education and/ or community.

During this year we have had ongoing refurbishments including the creation of more usable learning spaces and an indoor/ outdoor gym.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the young people who have made the choice to commit to education, some who have now been with us for two years. I offer my thanks to the dedicated staff at the Centre and those from Youth + who work tirelessly in developing this school. I would like to also extend my thanks to the Leadership of the CEOM, DEECD and EREA Council, Board and Leadership Group for their continued support, encouragement and confidence in our newly established Flexible Learning Centre.

I am sure that 2014 will bring new challenges and opportunities for the young people and staff at SJFLC however I am sure that the faith and compassion of all who attend will continue to provide a learning community grounded in compassion, liberation and justice.

Dale Murray  
**Director**

**EREA Youth+**

## Best Practice Guidelines

St Joseph's identifies a number of best practice guidelines supportive of meaningful socially inclusive educational experiences. While not exhaustive, the following provide a basis for programming and young person support.

### **Individualised Education Program**

Education programs need to be attuned to the individual young person by an assessment of need and delivery within a supportive environment that will re-engage the young person with learning and encourage a sense of community. Personal Learning Plans are developed and negotiated with young people and form an integral part of daily learning programs.

### **Negotiated and Articulated Goals**

Education programs will negotiate goals and the methods of achieving those goals. Such goals will be tailored to the identified needs of the individual.

### **Professional and Community Driven**

Education programs should be characterised by a high degree of professionalism, and supported by a close relationship with communities in which they are located.

### **Young Person Support**

Young People are encouraged to make a commitment to the program and its principles. Young Person achievement is valued and celebrated with appropriate recognition given to the uniqueness of adolescent development.

### **Family/Carer Involvement**

Families are viewed as partners in their children's educational experience. While family circumstances may be related to student alienation, the importance of building positive family relationships is a priority.

### **Learning Choices**

Diagnostic assessment is important to provide guidance in planning individualised programs. Effective programs will engage young people in learning toward defined literacy and numeracy outcomes and other areas of knowledge relevant to real life situations. Young people experiencing risk will be provided with programs that cater for their spiritual, physical, social, psychological and intellectual development. As well, they will be provided with learning choices both in and beyond the school and with programs that are effectively linked to community agencies and vocational pathways.

### **Multi Professional and Multi Disciplinary Teams**

Team members use a multidisciplinary, multi-professional approach to provide health, educational, cultural, social and emotional support for young people. Multi professionals are encouraged to develop supportive relationships with young people, and assist them with their basic life needs. Multiprofessionals are encouraged to develop links with external support agencies (e.g. Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Drug & Alcohol services, accommodation services, counselling services).

Staff selection processes should identify staff members who are flexible, are able to relate to young people, are willing to negotiate, be clear about operation by principles, as well as being clear about the responsibilities and the rights of all.

## School Partnerships/ Value Added Programs

The Wellbeing Coordinator, Youth Workers and Teachers provide support to young people often linking young people to outside agencies for appropriate and professional support. A key initiative of 2013 was to invite agencies to partner with us in the development and delivery of wellbeing and learning choices programs at St Joseph's thus making their services more accessible to our young people. A number of these are outlined as follows:

**The Venny- Veggies Alive Program:** This project, run in partnership with The Venny, a community backyard in Kensington that is funded by the City of Melbourne and the Federal Government, was funded by a successful application to the School Focused Youth Services. This program was a weekly 'hands on' garden and interactive session.

This was a 15 week program run by staff from St. Joseph's and volunteers and staff from The Venny that aimed to teach our young people skills and knowledge through experiential learning. The program also had a mentoring component as it worked with young people from both our Whelan and our McCarthy programs.

During this program our young people not only built a sustainable food forest and vegetable garden they also had the opportunity to play, 'hang out' in a positive way with peers, cook and develop positive relationships with school workers and other adults in the community.

**Doutta Galla Community Health- Basketball Program:** St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre has an ongoing relationship with Doutta Galla Community Health that started with a Drumbeat Program that we ran together in 2012. It was through this partnership that we developed the idea of running a basketball program with the overall goal being that our young people had the opportunity to work towards playing a game against another school. Doutta Galla was able to secure funding for a coach for the semester long program as well as for some uniforms to help increase connectedness to the team. The St. Joseph's Possums met on a weekly basis to train at a stadium off site with the coach and then trained regularly at school during the week.

At the end of the program the St. Joseph's Possums reached their goal of playing against another Edmund Rice School. It was a very successful game and we hope to repeat the program again in 2014.

**Community BBQ Program:** During 2013 we implemented our Community BBQ program. This program has helped us to build the culture of the school through class groups planning and preparing a meal for the rest of the school each Friday. Each meal has a theme that may be focused around place, culture, sport. Some of the meals that we have shared have focused on Asian culture and American Sports. This program also involved a basketball game which was usually staff vs students.

This activity has provided a vast amount of opportunities for young people to achieve success, praise from other adults and their peers and has helped to build positive relationships between young people and adults. It has also given people a chance to showcase their culture and other aspects of their life that are important and special to them.

## Student Learning

Each young person at St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre has two workers that are attached to them and have the role of 'checking in on them'. This team generally includes a teacher and a youth worker. The role of these people is to establish a close relationship to the young person, to monitor their progress, to advocate on their behalf, to provide advice, direction and support during difficult personal issues, and overall to support the young person to achieve their stated personal and educational goals. The role of this team is broad in scope, in-depth in its substance, and long-term in relationship. It includes:

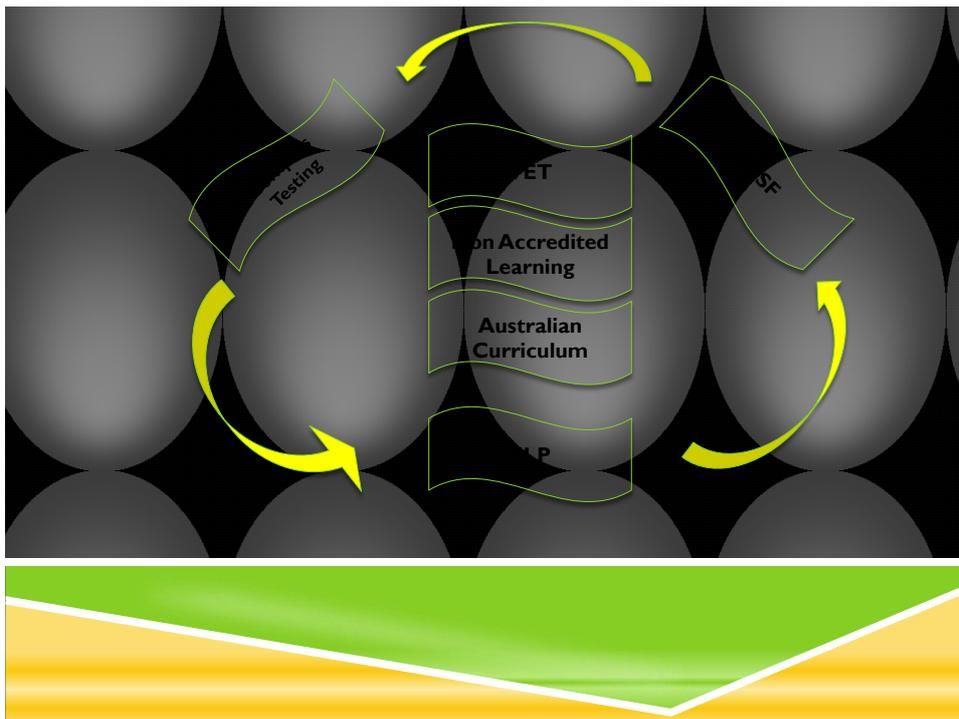
- In-house mentoring and advocacy
- Supporting the young person and their families in times of emotional crisis or practical need
- Maintaining the close partnership between school, student and parent/carer
- Working in partnership with other agencies who are involved with students e.g. DHS, Youth Justice, Health services, Community Agencies etc
- Supporting and mentoring young people who live independently
- Helping students to build capacity and resilience in social and emotional aspects of their lives
- Informally helping young people develop positive self-concept
- Supporting young people with issues of drug misuse and self harm.

## Curriculum

### Relevant and Responsive Learning Choices

Learning begins with awareness of people's circumstances and an ability to create a learning framework which is relevant and responsive. As well, a responsive learning framework will incorporate the necessary challenge for transformation and development of the person. Learning Choices within a Flexible Learning Centre are constructed. It emerges from openness, negotiation, experimentation and the interaction of mindsets which seek the common good of the young person within a context of individual skills and potential. Learning Choices are designed and implemented not to disadvantage young people but to build upon and pay respect to the capitals young people bring to the learning community. The Learning Choice framework must also be congruent with professional practice and community expectations. Learning Choices encompass literacy and numeracy skills, rich humanity key learning areas, vocational and employment focused outcomes, sport and recreation activities, relationship development and community participation. Therefore an appropriate skill base to enable the individual to take part meaningfully with social and employment situations will be fostered. This model correlates with the Australian Core Skills Framework where content covers key learning areas and is credentialed against National VET standards. The following diagram illustrates the model used in the planning and delivery of learning.

There is an interconnection between Compass testing literacy/numeracy screening; Personal Learning Plans (PLP); The Australian Core Skills Framework (ASCF) and curriculum delivery – accredited (VET) and non-accredited learning and the Australian Curriculum. Young people receive two Outcomes based reports utilising the Australian Core Skills Framework at the completion of Terms 2 and 4. All workers keep in regular contact with families and caregivers about how they are doing in terms of their wellbeing and their learning choices programs.



**Naplan Data-** families chose to withdraw from Naplan so we have no data from this or comparative data from previous years.

## Enrolments by year level (based upon August census data 2013)

Gender/Year	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Male	2	9	13	9	39	0	72
Female	2	4	7	7	25	0	45
Total	4	13	20	16	64	0	117
Indigenous	0	0	5	0	4	0	0
SWD	0	2	0	5	1	0	8

**Census:** 117

**Full time equivalent enrolments:** 117

**Language Background other than English:** 22

**Indigenous Students:** 9

**Students with Disability:** 8

**Student Attendance Rate (Attendance = attendance on school site/program):** 76%

**Non-attendance:**

Short periods of non-attendance are followed up by the classroom teacher and youth worker. This will involve phone calls or dropping by the young person's house during the bus run. Longer periods are followed up the youth workers, Wellbeing Coordinator and/or Teacher-in-charge and will usually involve a home visit.

**Post school destinations**-We did not have any young people complete Year 12 in 2013.

TERTIARY STUDY	0%
TAFE / VET	0%
APPRENTICESHIP / TRAINEESHIP	0%
DEFERRED	0%
EMPLOYMENT	0%

## Staffing/ Professional Learning

### EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

#### DESCRIPTION OF PL UNDERTAKEN IN 2012

Staff Member	In-service/Course/Conference	Date:	Support/ Funding
All	Work practice reflection and planning day – each term with the support of the Youth+ National Team	Various	Youth+ National team
Teachers	Asthma Australia Staff Training	Various	Asthma Foundation Victoria
Teachers/ Youth Workers	Diabetes in school seminar	Various	Diabetes Australia- Victoria
All	Whole Staff Days – All FLC staff across the nation come together for professional development specific to this cohort of young people	9,10 &11 July	Youth +
Administration	OARS Webinar	25 <sup>th</sup> July	ACER
Teachers/ Youth Workers	Coping with obsessive-compulsive disorder	6 <sup>th</sup> August	Mental Health Foundation of Australia- Victoria
Teacher	I pad Learning Conference	26 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> August	My Learning
Teacher	Really Understanding Student Behaviour	30 <sup>th</sup> August	Real Schools
All	What's, Why's and How's of Autism	13 <sup>th</sup> October	Autism Aligned
Teachers/ Youth Workers	CPR Refresher	22 <sup>nd</sup> October	St. John's Ambulance

Teachers/ Youth Workers	First Aid	22 <sup>nd</sup> / 29 <sup>th</sup> October	St. John's Ambulance
Teachers/ Youth Worker	Addressing Adult Language and Literacy and Numeracy Skills (LLN)	22 <sup>nd</sup> November	Youth +
Teachers	Teacher Coaching	Various Dates	Education Consultant- Huong Tran
All	High Prevalence Mental Health Disorders	15 <sup>th</sup> November	Orygen Youth Health
All	Feedback in the classroom/ Circle Time	19 <sup>th</sup> December	Educational Consultant- Huong Tran
<b>NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL</b>			<b>11</b>
<b>AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL</b>			<b>\$ 1300</b>

## Teacher Standards and Qualifications

Qualification	Staff
MA	2
Post Graduate Diploma	2
Bachelor Degree	11
Other	3

Title	Number of Staff	FTE
Head of Campus (Teacher)	1	1
Teachers	8	8
Youth Workers/Social Worker	6	5
Other support	1	0.6

Canteen Worker	1	1
Administration Officer	1	16.6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>

## School Community Life

As a newly established school the St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre has intentionally developed a culture of compassionate care which is evident in the daily practices of the school.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakfast and lunch program – staff and young people share meals together – good community building time.</li> <li>• Morning meeting – all staff and young people meet to start the day and be present to each other. Young people are starting to speak out more in the meetings with the aim being that young people will run the meetings.</li> <li>• Range of engaging activities offered including surfing, sewing, trampolining, dance, snorkelling, skateboarding, art and wellbeing activities.</li> <li>• Strong relationships with core group of young people</li> <li>• Operation by principles – no school rules – young people and staff all operate within a common ground framework which breaks down traditional power – authority paradigms. This approach gives young people a voice and a responsibility for their actions and this culture is starting to build.</li> <li>• New learning spaces supporting the needs of new students allow opportunity for new relationships to form.</li> <li>• Working closely with other agencies – Catholic Education Office Melbourne, MacKillop Family Services, DHS, Doutta Galla Community Health, Inner Melbourne Vet Cluster (IMVC)</li> <li>• Developing personal learning plans with young people which focus on high interest areas</li> <li>• Building relationships with young people and families fundamental to the success of the school</li> <li>• Regular follow up with families/ guardians</li> <li>• Daily follow up of non-attendance</li> <li>• Celebration of achievements e.g. attendance, participation, learning outcomes</li> </ul>
<p><b>New initiatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully started running our Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning Program</li> <li>• Separation of programs with the long term aim to be able to cater to the needs of more young people</li> <li>• Successfully developed a relationship with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to assist with funding for young people with a diagnosed disability</li> <li>• Positive expansion of our program to enable us to work effectively with a larger group of disenfranchised young people</li> </ul>

## Stakeholder Engagement

The Head of Campus, teachers and youth workers have indicated the following indicators of stakeholder satisfaction.

Increased engagement demonstrated by young people who are:

- participating in morning meetings,
- young people negotiating their behavior and attendance using the language of the four principles: Respect, Safe and Legal, Honesty and Participation
- young people making contact with workers to let them know where to pick them up or if they are not attending
- young people identifying as a member of the SJFLC Community
- young people making more positive choices as they do not want to leave school early
- young people engaging in sporting and other elective activities
- young people engaging in both formal and informal learning opportunities
- young people being supportive and welcoming when a new young person starts
- young people starting to mentor and support one another

Parents have made comments such as “..having the motivation that he gets to come back to SJFLC has helped my son get through his time in Juvenile detention. He has never had any connection to a program like this before’.

Program managers, case workers and Judges have all noted the incredible opportunity that they, and the young people, feel that SJFLC is for them. Workers are constantly surprised when their clients present at school and complete their own referral form to enrol in SJFLC.

## Strategies used to involve Parents/ Carers in the education of their young person

St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre recognizes that parents/carers/family/community members are the primary educators of their young people. Some young people live independently. The work of the school is most successful when it collaborates effectively with parents / carers. The Flexible Learning Centre supports and encourages this role through:

☒ Newsletters, emails, phone calls, text messages and home visits

☒ Parents and carer meetings,

☒ Social celebrations, and

☒ The voluntary contribution of distinctive skills and enthusiasm of parents and community members. These are gratefully acknowledged and celebrated.

## Financial Performance

REPORTING FRAMEWORK	MODIFIED CASH \$
<b>Recurrent income</b>	<b>Tuition</b>
School fees	
Other fee income	
Private income	278,784.12
State government recurrent grants	827,428.04
Australian government recurrent grants	1,370,347.11
<b>Total recurrent income</b>	<b>2,476,559.27</b>
<b>Recurrent Expenditure</b>	<b>Tuition</b>
Salaries; allowances and related expenses	1,390,861.40
Non salary expenses	707,882.80
<b>Total recurrent expenditure</b>	<b>2,098,744.20</b>
<b>Capital income and expenditure</b>	<b>Tuition</b>
Government capital grants	245,000.00
Capital fees and levies	
Other capital income	
<b>Total capital income</b>	<b>245,000.00</b>
<b>Total capital expenditure</b>	<b>716,827.75</b>
Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)	
<b>Total opening balance</b>	
<b>Total closing balance</b>	

Note that the information provided above does not include the following items:

System levies charged to individual schools, intra-systemic transfers and diocesan supplementary capital fund (SCF) supported borrowings for primary schools. The information provided is not comparable with other educational sectors. This VRQA template is not comparable to the ACARA school-level income reporting requirements which are to be reported on the MySchool website. ACARA school level reporting requirements will require system level income from Government grants and some private income to be allocated by school. This will be a small adjustment in relation to the total level of school resources. At this stage, recurrent income from Government sources, school generated income and capital expenditure are to be reported by schools. Additionally when assessing the private income of the school include both recurrent and capital school fees.

## Future Directions

St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre has established itself as an educational community in North Melbourne. St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre is looking forward to building on the successes of 2012 and 2013 by providing and enhancing educational and social inclusion provision for young people.

In 2014 emphasis will be given to:

- To focus on continuing to building a positive and safe school culture
- To increase enrolments.
- To focus on successful attendance strategies
- To offer increased opportunities for young people to engage in accredited learning
- To continue to offer the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
- To further develop the capacity of our staff members to offer accredited learning opportunities and to work within the Philosophy of our school through professional development opportunities
- To further develop learning spaces within the FLC.
- To extend our partnerships and to nurture existing partnerships for our community.
- To increase our connections with families and caregivers
- To continue to ensure that we are working with the most disenfranchised members of our community
- To increase staff numbers to include complementary services as well as to ensure that we have a team that is representative of the many cultures within our cohort of young people
- To offer an increased selection of group and individual professional learning opportunities