



School Focused Youth Service

Discussion Paper Response

Loddon Mallee Region - Summary

October 2006

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A. Introduction - SFYS Regional Consultations

Regional Consultations have been conducted as part of the SFYS Development Process. This process involved the circulation of the SFYS Discussion Paper and Response Template to key stakeholders and Regional Consultations.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Regional Consultations was to maximise opportunity for stakeholder input into the SFYS Development Process

2. Process

Discussion Paper

The SFYS Discussion Paper pulls together issues identified by the SFYS Statewide Advisory Group (SAG) as key issues to address as part of the SFYS development process. The SAG referred the development of this paper to its Future Directions Working Group. The Working Group membership includes representatives of Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Education and Training (DE&T), Catholic Education Office (CEO), SFYS Auspice Organisations, SFYS Coordinators, and Department of Victorian Communities (DVC), Office for Youth.

The Discussion Paper consists of three parts. Part 1 provides background; outlining SFYS program information and program and policy developments since 1998.

Part 2 outlines the issues for consideration under topics that are consistent with those being examined by the external evaluation contracted to the Australian Institute of Primary Care (AIPC). The topics are:

- A. Introduction
- B. Program objectives, outcomes and target population
- C. Partnerships
- D. Community development
- E. Program design
- F. Communication
- G. Broad reflection

Response Template

The Response Template is Part 3 of the Discussion Paper. The Response Template was used at the Regional Consultations to record discussion and responses to stated questions. The Response Template was also used to inform the development of SFYS Discussion Paper Regional Response Summaries (Regional Summaries) and a SFYS Discussion Paper State-wide Response Summary (State-wide Summary).

Stakeholders unable to attend the Regional Consultations were also encouraged to contribute their comments via the Response Template, which could be obtained from the DHS SFYS Regional Advisers. Stakeholders only needed to provide comment on the areas of the Discussion Paper that were of most interest to them. They were also able to comment on aspects of the program not mentioned in the Discussion Paper by providing comment in the broad reflections section of the document.

Consultation Sessions

Regional Consultations were conducted in all regions during August and September 2006. DHS Central introduced a consistent consultation process for all regions using the 'World Café' consultation process. The 'World Café' consultation process involved participants discussing an allocated topic from the Discussion Paper in small groups. A chairperson facilitated each small group discussion and recorded all participant comments. Participants moved to the next table and topic from the Discussion Paper after approximately 20 minutes of discussion.

DHS SFYS Regional Advisers were responsible for co-ordinating and documenting consultation sessions in partnership with SFYS Coordinators, SFYS Auspice Agency Managers and representatives of DE&T, CEO and DHS Central. DHS Central developed 'World Café' resources and attended all consultation sessions.

3. Participants

Metropolitan Regional Consultations involved from 35 to 56 participants and Rural Regional Consultations involved from 28 to 39 participants. Across the State, participants included representation from key stakeholder groups including DHS, DE&T, DVC, CEO, Community Service Sector including Local Government, community health and community organisations, and Government, Catholic and Independent secondary and primary schools. Some participants attended as representatives of larger stakeholder groups e.g. local networks. The key role of chairperson involved DHS central, regional DE&T, CEO and auspice agency managers.

The following table details the number of consultation participants from key stakeholder groups.

Key Stakeholder Group Representation at SFYS Consultations	
Key Stakeholder Group	Number of participants
Education	117
DHS	58
Community Sector	63
DVC	4
Police	1
Local Government	8
SFYS Co-ordinators, Agency Managers LAG, RAG, SAG	70
TOTAL	321

Further details on stakeholder participation are provided in the *SFYS Consultation Stakeholder Participation Table (Attachment A)*, available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/youthservices>.

Participant Feedback

The feedback from participants about the consultation process and opportunity to provide comment was overwhelmingly positive. Participants indicated that the Regional Consultations were a good use of their time, beneficial for networking, and a great opportunity to learn more about SFYS. Participants appreciated the opportunity to contribute to issues for consideration in the development of SFYS. Participants also provided positive feedback on the SFYS Discussion Paper. A summary of participant feedback is provided in the *Stakeholder feedback table* available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/youthservices>.

4. Documentation of stakeholder comments

The DHS Regional Advisers reported stakeholder comments in the Regional Summaries. These Regional Summaries were submitted to DHS Central in September – October 2006. The Regional Summaries are available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/youthservices>.

The State-wide Summary is a compilation of key themes emerging from Regional Summaries. This data will be analysed in accordance with the aims of the Consultation Process:

1. SFYS achievements (i.e. what is SFYS doing well?)
2. SFYS areas for improvement (i.e. what can SFYS do better?)
3. Suggestions for improvement/changes (i.e. how can SFYS be improved?)

Outcomes from the SFYS Development process and external evaluation will be considered in the development of a SFYS Strategic Development Plan. This document is expected to be available in early 2007.

5. Additional Stakeholder Comments

Information gathered from regional consultations is recorded in regional consultation summaries and the identified key themes are noted below.

SFYS RAGs and regional consultation participants are invited to review the summarised regional consultation comments and identified key themes. SFYS RAGs are welcome to submit additional comments using Additional Comments Template (available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/youthservices>) Additional Comments received will be forwarded to the SFYS Future Directions Working Group for consideration.

The additional comments template is structured in accordance with the aim of consultations and therefore requests the following information:

1. SFYS achievements (i.e. what is SFYS doing well?)
2. SFYS areas for improvement (i.e. what can SFYS do better?)
3. Suggestions for improvement/changes (i.e. how can SFYS be improved?)

Please note: We are seeking additional comments only. There is no need to repeat or reinforce comments already noted in response summaries.

Please email the completed Additional Comments Table to sara.lane@dhs.vic.gov.au by 24 November 2006.

The SFYS Regional Consultation conducted in Loddon Mallee resulted in the following stakeholder comments.

B. Consultation Response Summary

1. Program objectives

1. Are the SFYS objectives still the most relevant/appropriate?

- Local Government not specifically mentioned but practically included so profile could be raised for this work – Councils increasingly looking for ways to support and involve young people.
- The ability to purchase services where gaps exist is an important Objective.
- Objectives currently all about systems, not kids.
 - has the work around the current Objectives been achieved? If so, a whole new set of Objectives are required.
 - where are the young people in the Objectives? What are the philosophical underpinnings of SFYS?
- Primary prevention focus is the work of Coordinators. Tension between needs of young person/need as identified by school.
- The first Objective is not measurable as it is written for the young person. Can measure systems development/change, but systems/individual very difficult to develop measures as is.
- Danger if strength based – need to remember why SFYS was established – to address issues.
- Young people have opportunities to contribute to decisions about SFYS programs and activities.
- Need to consolidate the existing Objectives.
- Strong Objectives as they are.
 - Support for mental health and well-being focus. Early intervention focus for directing.
- Need to better capture the role/involvement of community and family.
- Support for the underpinning around mental health and well being.
- Community groups not currently included.

2. Can stakeholders readily understand SFYS objectives in their present form?

- Current Objectives a little deficit based as they are stated – could be differently worded.
- Strength focused Objective could be added to enable/encourage an advocacy role and a more inclusive or normalised approach to young people's activities – reducing stigma, improving image.
- Now at a stage to add an Objective for young people in relation to their input into identifying needs/contributing to directions of SFYS.
- Need to consider involving parents in outcomes to support young people.
- Objectives as they are, are fine. Keep them simple/ensure they are clear and well understood. Support for inclusion of advocacy role/objective. Structures in place support young people's involvement – consultation.
- Strong Objectives as they are. Support for some advocacy role for young people.
- Insufficient attention in Objectives to mental health and wellbeing focus of SFYS. Is there a need to clearly identify primary objective of "...is early intervention and prevention of youth suicide and self harm by building resilience and positive mental health" as primary focus – don't need youth suicide etc. Mind Matters one great example.
- Suggest School Communities develop and implement school community well being plans (where local agencies and schools collaborate to identify ways to address well being).
- Teacher for mental well being needs to be skilled and supported in knowledge and understanding of these issues.
- Issues around use of "at risk" language. Negative connotations. What does this terminology mean to difference people/professionals.
- The Objectives could be written with a solution focus, should include mental health, include prevention/resilience.

- Nothing which identifies resilience or families.
- Issues around use of “at risk” language. Negative connotations. What does this terminology mean to different people/professionals?
- Solutions rather than aim could be re-written to replace the first objective, mental health second, prevention/resilience the third, and gaps the fourth objective.
- Need to consolidate existing objectives.

3. Do they comprehensively reflect the diversity of current SFYS practice?

- Appropriately reflect diversity of practice as they are.
- View that we’ve moved on from Objectives as they are written – not sufficiently positive view of what SFYS does and is on about – “To create strong and resilient young people, families, schools, and communities”. Connectedness.
- Insufficient attention in Objectives to mental health and well being focus of SFYS.
- Issues around use of “at risk” language. Negative connotations. What does this terminology mean to different people/professionals?
- Due to being linked with our Local Government we have an operational budget not just brokerage, which means we are able to be open to community needs; reactive and responsive; provide community development education, eg John Tudor presentation, and “Parenting for Dad’s Workshop”.

2. Program outcomes

4. Are the SFYS outcomes still the most relevant/appropriate?

- Don’t necessarily relate to the “school focused” component of the work. The outcomes are systems outcomes.
- Measurement – VicHealth Partnership Analysis Tools.
- The second Outcome cannot be greatly influenced by SFYS Coordinators – Government decisions which can only hope to be influenced by service development work through SFYS.
- Services available in regional centres are not necessarily available further out.
- Every person can be “at risk” at some stage of their lives. Language needs to be changed.
- “At Risk” not supported as appropriate language.
- Yes

5. Are the SFYS outcomes measurable? Why/why not?

- The Objectives are fine – measuring outcomes is more difficult.
- Need to measure impact - SFYS evaluation forms. Hard part is identifying “at risk”.
- “Spot on” – one is about partnership and working together, the other is about the service systems.
- Improvement measures to be identified around the partnerships between schools and agencies. Schools need support in building the relationships with agencies.
- Measurement of relationships/partnerships needs to be explored in ways which will reflect the quality of relationships – schools to agencies and agencies to agencies.
- Outcomes very far out of reach – SFYS can contribute to Outcome 2.
- Linkages between Objectives and Outcomes not clear as written – could be much more clearly defined as “collaborative structures have been strengthened by.....”
- Facilitation/promotion role of SFYS needs to be more clearly measured as a key component of the work.
- Improvement in reporting has occurred but not much opportunity to reflect agency related work
- Split outcome number 1 into two or three parts: Improvement in addressing needs of young people; Schools and community agency relationships; Improvement of relationships between DE&T and DHS
- Look at re-wording outcome number 2 – “Current measures of quarterly reports:

- Brokerage Projects; Demographics of young people involved
- Greater involvement of SFYS Coordinators in planning and development of projects, etc would assist with being able to measure outcomes (including evaluation).
 - What about linking measures such as improvement in school attendance with specific projects/activities run? What measures/tools are we using which link school activity/objectives with this work?
 - Yes

6. How do we measure progress towards the SFYS outcomes?

No comment provided.

7. Do the SFYS outcomes capture the full range of impacts of SFYS practice?

No comment provided.

8. Which SFYS impacts are not captured by the SFYS outcomes?

- Community education – integral link for partnerships and networks

9. Can the uncaptured SFYS impacts be described as measurable outcomes? Please provide examples.

No comment provided.

3. Target population

10. Is this target group still the most relevant/appropriate? Please give reasons.

- Most requests for assistance are for 10-18 year olds. Some younger, very few older – these mainly for brokerage.
- In primary school – grades 4, 5, & 6. Some under 10 years. Focus on 8-10 year olds (specific focus for this group)
- For higher age group (14-16, or 12-16) possibly extend this focus because of school leaving age at 15 years. Outside the school system very important.
- Gap for primary school students – small schools – what model to support them in rural/remote areas? NOTE – primary schools do not have welfare staff.
- Shift from focus on ages of young people to transition stages – structurally (eg Grade 6 – Year 7, lower to upper secondary school), and developmentally.

11. Does this target group reflect current SFYS programs practice? If not, please state why.

Priority Ranking:

- Attendance including not enrolled or enrolled in non-mainstream schools
- Socialising (connectedness, self esteem, bullying)
- Drug and alcohol, mental health and sexual health (need to have stronger focus – add 'wellbeing' focus).
- Rurality (noted in brokerage guidelines – keep it there)
- Parents and teachers as secondary levels of support are critical. Not reflected, but very interesting is teacher/staff health and wellbeing. Nominated by schools as one of four main issues in regard to School Focused services
- Not many individual requests regarding offending (Juvenile Justice) and violence, or CALD communities (Bendigo)
- Young people have developmental transition points other than the traditional transition points, eg Grade 6 – Year 7, work needs to be undertaken with children under 10 years of age.

12. How can we best describe the target group that currently accesses SFYS program?

- Young people outside school are hard to engage and generally do not access SFYS. Schools drive SFYS, deemed enrolment can address this. Note also those outside mainstream schools, ie home schooling, religious and cultural schools, need a focus.
- SFYS is an important gauge of capacity (teachers/parents) need a strategy around these. Family connection for young people and/or schools very important context.
- Service sectors “children” and “youth” are different – problem for SFYS working under 12 years – suggest separate service which enables earlier diversion from issues.

4. Service response

13. Which definition best describes the service provided by the SFYS Program?

- Early intervention ⇒ intervention. Not much re primary prevention (more whole school)
- Primary prevention ⇒ early intervention.
- Note primary prevention – whole population, not one on one relationship with caring adult.

14. Where does SFYS fit on the service continuum?

- More at the primary prevention end in the primary schools because challenges escalate at secondary school
- Brokerage spans all stages. None-brokerage work is at primary prevention end.

15. Which service response should SFYS offer and why?

- Flexible service needs as identified by the community so that restoring well-being for the community (including SFYS) eg suicide responses, young adult violence to parents.
- If SFYS moves to intervention (especially if there are no services to respond), the risk is to primary prevention and early intervention. NOTE Some doubt about SFYS and primary prevention – doubt re spiritual and community wellbeing and family relationships
- Schools as first crisis response – debriefing support, crisis response as a SFYS role here

16. Is there a shared understanding amongst key stakeholders of what is meant by the various ‘stages’ along the continuum?

- Not with teachers – very limited understanding “schools would not know what was meant to be done”
- Note language is a barrier; “schools wouldn’t understand” primary/secondary distinction
- People identify gaps by example/individual experiences
- Mental health promotion as part of overall strategy
- Depends on how auspice agency interprets SFYS – Development of SFYS awareness in the community – Boundaries eg Kyabram/Shepparton re funding

5. Partnerships

17. What improvements, if any, would you suggest to the current partnership arrangements?

- If no representative groups large numbers of stakeholders would have no voice.
- Recognition of all stakeholders (DE&T, auspice agencies, and community) within a young person's life
- Is role of SFYS Coordinator as a meeting attendee? Consolidation of meeting with broader forums
- Important to keep local "knowledge/expertise"
- Notice for meetings
- Overly managed program

18. In what ways, if any, could partnerships be improved/expanded?

No comment provided.

19. What should the advisory structure for SFYS be in the future?

No comment provided.

SFYS Advisory Structure - LAG, RAG and SAG

Local Advisory Group (LAG)

20. What is the current role of the LAG?

- LAG – Continue to look at membership – Essential, accountable, representative group – Working well – Assist to develop direction
- Advisory Structure Future – Possible rural advisory group – larger representation than RAG – would be able to look at rural issues
- LAG, RAG, SAG and Schools – not much interaction or knowledge of. Support for Coordinator – membership OK but needs to be broadened, more community
- Wider representation – work within current network arrangements
- Brokerage Guidelines (review support statements)
- Rigorous discussion of merit
- Assessors of brokerage applications
- Advisors of ways to maximise resources
- Convenor of lead agency get together
- Risk management advisors

21. What are the strengths of the LAG?

- Rigorous discussion of merit
- An opportunity to discuss issues
- Essential, accountable, representative group – Working well – Assist to develop direction
- Flexibility to adapt to local issues and circumstances
- Concentration of expertise
- Networking and fostering partnerships

22. In what way can the LAG be improved?

- LAG, RAG, SAG and Schools – not much interaction or knowledge of the levels of decision making and communication flow
- More diversity of membership

23. What would be the impact of no LAG on SFYS?

- Lack of Regional Direction
- Decision making would be localised and not take into account broader views
- Disastrous. The purpose of SFYS would be lost. No working knowledge available.

24. What is the ideal LAG composition?

- Wider representation – work within current network arrangements

25. What is the role of the ideal LAG?

- Advice and communication dissemination of State and Regional directions
- issues based

Regional Advisory Group (RAG)

26. What is the current role of the RAG?

- RAG – Should have one meeting per year – issues based, SFYS, CEO, auspice agency, Education
- Not relevant

27. What are the strengths of the RAG?

- Representation between sectors

28. In what way can the RAG be improved?

- Need strategic direction – issues based

29. What would be the impact of no RAG on SFYS?

- Less administrative need

30. What is the ideal RAG composition?

- Representation between sectors

31. What is the role of the ideal RAG?

No comment provided.

State Advisory Group (SAG)

32. What is the current role of the SAG?

- SAG – Broader circulation of minutes - What is their brief? - Direction setting
- Not sure of direction

33. What are the strengths of the SAG?

- Not been relevant for a number of years
- Most Agencies & staff don't know what SAG does

34. In what way can the SAG be improved?

- Communication
- Issue based discussions
- Set some strategic directions

35. What would be the impact of no SAG on SFYS?

- Little impact except for funding for SFYS service

36. What is the ideal SAG composition?

- Not applicable

37. What is the role of the ideal SAG?

- Communication
- Issue based discussions
- Set some strategic directions

Relationship between SFYS and schools

38. What are the strengths of existing relationships between SFYS and Schools networks?

- Legitimate role of SFYS in community agencies/schools
- Capacity to develop/organise initiatives
- Use of communication media
- Valued by agencies/schools
- Relevant relationship ie discussion of resources
- Cluster initiatives
- Ability to create initiatives
- Communication of activities
- Lot of effort made to develop partnership
- In my experience/work, SFYS Coordinators (along with school nurses) are, in the vast majority of areas, the best contact people to gain advice and information about local schools, networks and agencies as well as a history of what initiatives have been undertaken. This includes important details such as who are the key contact individuals within schools. Further, they have in many cases, facilitated an introduction to the local school and/or organised for our project (same sex attracted young people) to deliver information sessions for staff and students (such contact may not have otherwise occurred between our project and the school).
- Awareness of service system needs for young people
- Provision of information
- Communication
- Young people have access to a 'whole' service
- Links between areas accessible
- Traditional barriers broken down
- Negotiable

39. What would be the impact of no relationship between SFYS and schools on SFYS?

- Service delivery would be disjointed and not meet broader education priorities
- Disastrous. SFYS would not exist.

40. In what way can relationships between SFYS, schools and school networks be improved?

- Quarterly meeting in health/wellbeing of young people rather than just SFYS ie drug and alcohol
- Too narrow in focus – too inclusive
- Use focus groups
- Utilise resources/communication strategies
- Maintain status quo.
- Diversification

41. How would you define the 'ideal' relationship between SFYS, schools and school networks?

- Dependent on personality of Coordinator
- Potential to be key link between agencies/schools
- Improved communication in some areas
- Respect of others cultures – teaching/education – Community auspice agency
- LAG – Move from Advisory to Action Group for clarity of purpose overhauled
- RAG – Not understood – necessary? Just a meeting of Coordinators.
- SAG – Not understood.
- Communication – via newsletter
- Where is the voice of young people?
- SAG – nebulous – no impact
- RAG – minimal impact
- LAG – Working party
- Area for improvement setting regional SFYS direction
- Matrix for SFYS brokerage across region
- Need to develop school understanding of partnership and how to implement.
- Trust
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Links
- Networks/partnerships
- Communication
- All the strengths that currently exist between SFYS and School Networks

42. What are the key components of this ideal relationship?

- Relationships are made by visual representation (newsletter, attendance, etc)
- Trust
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Links
- Networks/partnerships
- Communication
- All the strengths that currently exist between SFYS and School Networks
- See Mind Matters

6. Community development

43. What evidence should be used to demonstrate service gaps?

- A lack of access to a service by more than one school
- Comparative service assessment
- Services not delivering accessible services in their catchments on leaving – positions vacant long term create a service gap. SFYS should advocate to change this situation rather than use brokerage funds to fill this gap.
- Data

44. In what way could the method of allocating or using brokerage funds be improved?

- New guidelines requiring partnerships have strengthened brokerage as a tool to foster relationships (there is no guarantee that the partnership will be long term as project may be one off - minority)
- Brokerage could be best used through wellbeing networks or clusters of schools. This would make the program more sustainable as all schools contribute funds to the project
- Linking brokerage project to the overall school wellbeing plan or wellbeing network plan
- Brokerage could be used as an incentive for all schools to have a wellbeing plan
- Need to reconsider the level of brokerage funding allocated as it was set many years ago – increased costs should be considered.
- Brokerage funds should focus on community development projects rather than individual needs of “at risk” young people. However some believed a limited amount of individual brokerage funds should be made available.
- Helpful having target areas, not essential though – good to have options for applications outside of these areas also.
- More partnerships
- SFYS brokerage budget available at meetings

45. What would be the impact of applying a consistent method of identifying and responding to service gaps??

No comment provided.

46. Are there any partners required who do not participate in existing networks?

No comment provided.

7. Program design

Consistency

47. What are the factors that have positively contributed to SFYS operating as a consistently identifiable service that reflects flexibility and local responsiveness to emerging issues?

- Attending network meetings
- SFYS prepared to attend, contribute, and be involved
- SFYS Coordinators are very local and very approachable
- Good relationship between schools
- Statewide themes but very flexible to the vastly different needs in different parts of regions
- Regionally relevant
- SFYS has built a bridge between schools and community agencies
- SFYS promotes enough
- Important to be local and flexible
- Coordinators remaining in the job for a long time
- Agency giving the Coordinator freedom and flexibility

48. What are the factors that have negatively impacted on SFYS operating as a consistently identifiable service that reflects flexibility and local responsiveness to emerging issues?

- Coordinators only have time to deal with school contact.
- Schools not knowing what SFYS can do and what it has to offer.
- Schools don't have the time to seek out SFYS services because they're so busy.
- Its not clear what SFYS does
- Schools are multi-focused – SFYS single focus
- SFYS coordinators have just too much work to be flexible and as responsive as they'd like
- A lot of inconsistencies in how different regions funded eg staff professional development not available in this region
- Inconsistencies within region eg facilitation and resources
- Difficult to balance consistency with flexibility
- Difficulty when people find out about regions doing things differently

49. What are the guiding principles that would enable SFYS to better operate as a consistently identifiable service that reflects flexibility and local responsiveness to emerging issues?

- Needs to be promoted to schools – improved use of newsletters
- Involvement with Youth Advisory Groups
- SFYS go to welfare meetings
- SFYS need to be clearer in what brokerage is for
- Aims and objectives constantly reinforced
- SFYS present in schools, promote their services
- Linking up what all the agencies do
- Coordinators meeting and maintaining links with Advisers DE&T and DHS

Boundaries

50. How do we best describe the area in which a SFYS operates –cluster, catchment, network?

- Very diverse so no point creating a new term
- School networks
- Important for schools to know who they have access to
- Important to promote services in that area
- Region
- Network

51. What would an ideal area look like in terms of size/geographic spread?

- Boundaries need to make sense
- Using DE&T boundaries to fit in with their networks but DE&T boundaries can be quite inequitable
- They are what schools work under, but are they relevant?
- Balance between area size and number of schools
- Less different, arbitrary, boundaries
- Need to look at schools - level of disadvantage
- The overlay of different boundaries is difficulty
- Linked by community
- DE&T and DHS boundaries matching is very positive – appears to be working well for past 18 months
- Boundaries need to be fairly well balanced between size and number of schools
- Very limited contact with more remote areas – areas outside core region
- Need to check and possibly re-allocate schools now boundaries have changed
- Need to involve whole clusters of schools – area should not break up clusters

Alignment with research and policy developments

52. Do the SFYS objectives reflect current government policy? If so, how are SFYS objectives aligned and linked to existing policy directions?

- SFYS connect with and find invaluable especially school nurses, national safe schools, mind matters - Compliment each other
- VELs, healthy community – policy is aligning more closely with SFYS
- Needs to be more closely aligned – school and community need to be brought closer
- Wellbeing brought into curriculum is positive
- Policies are moving to primary and early intervention, which is what SFYS is about
- Policies and initiatives are not being properly resourced, services not reaching, especially in outlying schools
- Community development is coming back and SFYS has always done it

53. In what way are the SFYS objectives linked with initiatives developed since SFYS inception? Eg. LLEN, School Nursing, Neighbourhood Renewal, Primary Welfare Officers, Student Support Service Officers, Attendance Officers.

- Student support officers – involved in intervention so doesn't link with SFYS
- School Nursing - very good links
- Form relationships with SFYS – not much contact with LLEN and Primary Welfare Officers in this region – depends on personal relationships, real opportunity, but it doesn't happen
- Takes time to build relationships and changeover in staff has had a big impact
- Welfare staff not trained in counselling

54. How do we ensure that the program reflects and is congruent with current policy initiatives?

- SFYS can drive policy
- Share best practice
- Represent region, area, cluster, feedback
- Strategic use of research
- Central Communication to SFYS workers
- Has SFYS been targeted with education of new policies and legislation?
- Are SFYS involved in development of new policies and legislation?
- Links with Office For Youth, Youth Liaison Officer, is really important
- Invite SFYS to be in communities and communicated with

55. How do we ensure that the program is responsive to emerging research and demographic trends?

- Build reflection and development into roles
- Local government capture demographic trends well – SFYS needs to access this
- Agency teams are involved in research and this needs to be taken into SFYS – SFYS not a solo program, can draw on teams and resources. SFYS not making decisions in a vacuum
- Accessing community groups – LLEN, linking into these agencies – everyone linking
- Communication of research
- DHS organised statewide forums – experts and speaker

8. Communication

Vertical Communication

- Communication through the three different advisory group levels (i.e. from LAG to RAG, SAG, Executive Committee and vice-versa.)
- Communication from Central DHS & DE&T to Regional DHS & DE&T Advisors to Auspice Organisation Managers and SFYS Co-ordinators and vice-versa.

56. What factors positively impact upon vertical communication within the SFYS program?

- School cluster welfare committee meetings held regularly
- SFYS Coordinator actively participating in local network meetings
- Communication between SFYS Coordinators through meetings, discussions, and sharing of information

57. What factors negatively impact upon vertical communication within the SFYS program?

No comment provided.

58. In what way can vertical communication within the SFYS program be improved?

- Need a communication strategy to raise the awareness of the program and services within: Community groups, eg Koori groups, schools, community service organisations, by way of pamphlets and newsletters
- Non-successful brokerage applicants should be provided feedback and information on alternative funding options (as one-on-one process)
- Communicate to communities in schools and community sector, the outcomes of brokerage funding round.
- Promotional material – be careful to not lock out sections of the community re brokerage funds; make it relevant to targeted groups ie cultural groups; be clear about the purpose of brokerage funds and eligibility for funds and conditions
- Communication is more successful when a personal relationship has been developed with key stakeholders (ie schools)
- Marketing messages of a kit
- Promote a common understanding for schools and community service organisations around particular issues which provide best practice ideas. This could be provided via a resource kit or rearrangement of the RAG or SAG or strategic plan.
- SFYS to have access to communication from DE&T eg “Education Times”
- Need a communication strategy to promote SFYS program services to community groups, schools, community service sector
- SFYS Coordinators need to be included in the DE&T central mailing list and e:mail list (as are school nurses). This will enable regional DE&T and schools to easily access SFYS Coordinators
- Rural region based SFYS Coordinators need to be accessible via a mobile phone
- SFYS Newsletters and promotional materials to be distributed more widely to community organisations, schools, and community service organisations.
- More forums to promote SFYS projects or travelling exhibitions
- Searchable website on brokerage projects is currently being developed
- Using LLEN to distribute information – LLEN developing a web resource around demographics. SFYS web should link to this website.

Horizontal Communication

- Communication within each advisory group (ie. within each LAG, RAG or SAG)
- Communication between each advisory group level (i.e. between LAGs and between RAGs)

59. What factors positively impact upon horizontal communication within the SFYS program?

No comment provided.

60. What factors negatively impact upon horizontal communication within the SFYS program?

No comment provided.

61. In what way can horizontal communication within the SFYS program be improved?

No comment provided.

External Communication

- Communication from SAG, and/or RAGs and or LAGS to key stakeholders outside the SFYS advisory structure and vice-versa. (i.e. from LAG to local schools and local community services.)

62. What factors positively impact upon external communication within the SFYS program?

No comment provided.

63. What factors negatively impact upon external communication within the SFYS program?

No comment provided.

64. In what way can external communication within the SFYS program be improved?

No comment provided.

9. Broad reflection

The discussion paper aims to facilitate comments on the major aspects of SFYS program as identified by the SFYS SAG, Future Directions Working Group. The external evaluation will examine in more detail some of the aspects not covered in this discussion paper. However, we acknowledge that stakeholders may wish to comment on aspects of SFYS that are not raised in this discussion paper and have therefore allocated this section for that purpose.

65. What are the main components of the SFYS model or operation that would need to continue?

- Main components of SFYS to continue: Model is basically a good one but needs to be made more efficient; Too much discussion/not enough action (in terms of three tiers – LAGS, RAGS, SAGS); Discussion around role of LAGS; Brokerage time/effort – could funding be used to target one major project rather than numerous small projects?
- Continue SFYS statewide Coordinators meetings
- Maintain minimum budget and increase operating budget for rural and remote SFYS
- Maintain LAGs
- Maintain Agency hosting arrangement
- Develop mechanism for sub-regional brokerage joint brokerage applications
- Discretionary funding (limited) to support professional development of agencies/teachers
- Maintain early intervention/prevention model
- Partnership between DE&T and DHS with a shared vision
- SFYS should remain as is with better communication
- The responsiveness of SFYS to issues in schools and assistance requested
- Focus on mental health and wellbeing and young people
- Flexibility for responsiveness to community
- Coordinators being part of a team – peer support
- Brokerage adds bones to the program – very engaging and needed to achieve outcomes
- Use of local knowledge
- Stick to core work – target group
- Collective decision making regarding successful applicants.

66. What are the main components of the SFYS model or operation that would need to change and how?

- Look at changing the way brokerage is used (see above)
- Potential to look at cluster projects rather than individual schools
- Change name of LAG to ACTION rather than advisory – tedious/time consuming processes for funding allocation; Difficulties in accessing people to contribute to processes; Target group should target all Primary School children and have a preventative focus.
- Major policy changes need to be better communicated to ensure greater understanding and synergy in the work with similar client groups/communities
- Level of funding an issue – particularly to support specific professional development opportunities
- Quarterly report needs to be more succinct
- SFYS host agency needs to have accountability – don't automatically rollover funding
- Need consistent band of rate of pay for Coordinators ie Band 4 (\$42,000 - \$61,000)
- Need infrastructure for SFYS Coordinators to share information/professional development across state, eg School Nurse State Network
- Need orientation for new SFYS Coordinators
- Need clarity and longer term contracts for SFYS to maintain Coordinators in Program – at present low retention rate
- Program continuation – uncertainty of program is really bad
- Local strategic planning instead of regional and not just ad hoc
- Coordinators and agencies need to be more strategic about responding to need
- SAG needs to better influence government policy, ministers ie local knowledge fed up in a more strategic manner; LAG and RAG clearer on where information will go and why it is needed; Advocacy
- Show-casing best practice in forums etc – SFYS be committed to this
- While some SFYS projects seem to take on a role in terms of the development and implementation of regional service coordination, this is not consistent. Accordingly, in some areas, projects have few links with adjoining projects and evidence of longer term strategic planning at a regional area is limited. This can lead to a series of 'one hit wonders' being funded through brokerage.
- Not all projects seem to link in a productive way with their DE&T regional office – this is

an issue for DE&T as much as for SFYS to consider.

- Whilst it is important that local SFYS projects and schools have room to develop in response to local contexts and needs, many SFYS workers seem to regularly express challenges in engaging with schools as a standard part of the school system, ie in terms of welfare planning and coordination, policy development, student wellbeing initiatives etc. Sadly, SFYS often only actively engaged when a school needs to line up a series of speakers for Year 9/10 health day. It would be good for DE&T to look at ways that SFYS could be allocated official status/positions on all relevant school committees etc.
- Reduced reporting requirements may make people more likely to submit brokerage applications.

67. What additional comments would you like to make about the SFYS Program?

- Sufficient demonstration of its worth to warrant continuing to fund
- Communication of training opportunities across sectors to be better done.
- SFYS need to help schools understand the SFYS program better so that the program can be better utilised
- SFYS needs to breakdown and define the jargon/culture of SFYS for all stakeholders
- Make demographic data available to LAGs so brokerage applications can be considered in this context.
- Strengthen SFYS role as part of the school system.
- Important program that needs to be strengthened
- Nothing else like SFYS
- Pioneering cross sectorial
- DE&T should back the program up with funding
- Building profile of program so people know what services they can get. In many areas across the state, the SFYS has been the first and only project to fund initiatives targeting same sex attracted young people. Such important work may not have otherwise occurred and in this respect the SFYS enables a service response to be made to a high risk target group that would not necessarily be picked up by schools or agencies, particularly in rural areas.
- Alignment of DE&T boundaries with DHS boundaries – new arrangements need to be negotiated with service providers
- Excellent newsletter – broad and regular circulation of it should continue (Bendigo based program)
- Very valuable program.
- SFYS situated under Local Government = positive, unbiased, attitude.