

ASPIRE Community Hub

3 January 2015 to 31 January 2017

Ann Jardine, University of New South Wales

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Modifications: Changed to meet WCAG 2.0 accessibility requirements.
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Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP)

2014 National Priorities Pool FINAL REPORT

ASPIRE Community Hub

3 January 2015 to 31 January 2017

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In accordance with the Conditions of Grant, you must submit to the Department a **Final Report** (Clause 6.1 of Part A) and an **Acquittal Report** (clause 6.4 of Part A).

To meet this obligation, please submit:

- the completed **Final Report** template, in Word and PDF
- the completed and signed **Declaration** form, in PDF
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All documents must be submitted to equity@education.gov.au by 6 April 2017.

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1. PROJECT SUMMARY (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2(a)-(e) of Part A)

Objectives

Table 1: Project objectives

IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVE	EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVE WAS MET
D) To examine the potential of a university led community based model for widening participation within the Australian context.	Potential demonstrated through participation in a variety of activities and initial positive feedback from the community. Feedback shows the ability to increase awareness of university as a career path. Programs have been positively accepted by community stakeholders as effectively filling gaps in current higher education initiatives across both Community Hubs.
E) To examine the effectiveness of the provision of academic support and enrichment to students from low SES neighbourhoods using this model.	The Community Hub has shown to be an effective model, acting as an anchor institution between multiple education stakeholders and assessing what is currently available. Greater knowledge of what exists within the community leads to bespoke academic support programs which assist schools in demonstrating that academic requirements are within reach of the target student base and also giving context to the curriculum and demonstrating a pathway from school to degree to career.
F) To examine a model that builds on the concept of a homework club in providing a number of value-added academic and personal development experiences.	Homework clubs were already in place within the schools and community centres and as a result it was assessed that there was no need for duplication. However a significant ongoing need was identified through stakeholder engagement to build on academic engagement in both after-school and in-school programs, shifting focus to build academic skills such as: problem solving, public presentation, confidence and time management.

Project Activities, Milestones and Key Performance Indicators

Table 2: Project Activities, Milestones and Key Performance Indicators

TIME FRAME	ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
<i>Include all those listed up to the due date of second progress report</i>	<i>List project Activities and Milestones specified in the Conditions of Grant for this project</i>		<i>List KPIs for this project specified in the Conditions of Grant</i>	<i>NOTE: Please state progress to date against milestones and each KPI and whether it was met and give reasons for any significant delays.</i>
End Jan 2015	Recruitment of staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recruited and in place • Community space agreed 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Identification of appropriate space completed. The pre-existing presence of a Community Hub for parents and pre-schoolchildren on the grounds of Chester Hill Public school provided an invaluable opportunity to utilise this resource. Concept of Hub scoped. Appointment of Project Officer delayed due to lack of robust pool after initial advertisement. This resulted in readvertisement of position.</p>
End Feb 2015	Identification of community space		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment purchased • Schools and community groups contacted • Students invited to take part 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Stakeholders in Chester Hill region identified. These included teachers, Principals, Deputy Principals, Community Liaison Officers, Careers Advisors, Youth Workers, Intensive English Centre workers and parents. Initially not easy to engage parents groups however initial meetings with all stakeholders took place. Appropriate space in community agreed.</p>
March 2015	Establishment of ASPIRE Hub		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities being offered on at least 4 occasions a week 	<p>Completed and ongoing</p> <p>Initially there was a delay in activities being run due to engagement of a Hub Project Officer.</p>

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				Potential timetable of activities scoped and calendar of events discussed with stakeholders. Once engagement had occurred the Community Hub activities commenced and have continued to grow.
End February 2016	Operation of ASPIRE Hub	<p>Range of activities run across the Chester Hill community in 2015 involving UNSW staff and students. Activities based on feedback from stakeholders. In the initial phases these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacation care workshops during NAIDOC week • Subject specific support provided to Chester Hill High School • Homework support provided to Chester Hill High School • Information sessions on university application process for Chester Hill High School • Engagement with parent nights at the Chester Hill schools • Facilitated visit for parents and senior students to UNSW Open Day at UNSW • Academic enrichment workshops and activities in schools including Engineering, Performing Arts, Music, and Design Thinking • Information night for parents held at Chester Hill Library • Parent workshops at Chester Hill Public school • Academic enrichment activity at Centennial Parklands for primary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of enrichment and support activities in place for both primary and high school students. • At least one activity for parents being offered 	Completed and ongoing Total participation in programs 1,028 which including students, community members and parents.
From February 2016	Operation and further development of ASPIRE Hub	Delays in recruiting staff in 2015 led to funding being available to set up a second Community Hub in 2016. After Consultation the second hub was set up in Macquarie Fields where ASPIRE was already	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing development of activities. At least 	Completed and ongoing Delays in recruiting staff in 2015 led to funding being available to set up a second Community Hub in 2016.

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		working with the local High School (one of the most disadvantaged schools in NSW) and where the Principal was a strong supporter of the program, Activities are described in detail under each Hub below.	<p>two further parent activities in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two academic enrichment activities involving UNSW staff in place. 	Described in detail under each Hub below
Chester Hill Community Hub				
March - Ongoing	On Campus events with Community Hub schools	<p>Year 8 Uni for a Day A range of workshops provided to students giving a university experience</p> <p>Year 10 Connect Workshops and industry experiences demonstrating clear connections of degrees to industry.</p> <p>Year 9 Taster Day A range of workshops provided to students giving a university experience</p> <p>Year 10 Design Day Year 10 students involved in a design thinking workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities being offered on at least 4 occasions a week Range of enrichment activities and support activities in place for both primary and high school students Ongoing development of Hub activities. At least two academic enrichment activities involving UNSW staff in place. 	<p>Completed and ongoing 52 students visited the UNSW campus All students could identify 3 pathways to university</p> <p>Qualitative feedback <i>"Students were really engaged, actively participating"</i> – Industry Visit Feedback <i>"Having access to the Ambassadors (was very important)"</i> – Teacher <i>"It was a great experience and opened my mind to many more options"</i> – Student</p>
March – Ongoing	In-school workshops	<p>Year 7 Tree of Life/dream boxes activities Students are asked to self-reflect on their support systems and think about life goals. Tree of Life/dream boxes activities.</p> <p>Year 8 Design Thinking Students work on a problem using design thinking skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	<p>209 students participated in workshops on schools grounds. 14 University student volunteers shared their own experiences These workshop improved access to university, through the workshop visits focusing on advice and information about university. Provided</p>

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		<p>Demystifying university.</p> <p>Year 9 Jobs & Careers Students look at a range of jobs and careers, many which they may not have previously considered. Students also research and evaluate career paths.</p> <p>Year 10 Courage to question Students learn about finding information through asking questions. Learning to build their own social capital.</p>		<p>formally from workshop content but also informally through students' integration with volunteer university students assisting in the workshops. Workshops also focussed on elements on personal development. These programs have been completed and are ongoing.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback <i>"I found out a little more about university life and lectures. My subject selection was made clearer"</i> - Year 10 student Chester Hill <i>"[Ambassadors] shared their experiences which are quite relatable"</i> – Year 10 student Chester Hill</p>
May – Ongoing	Academic Enrichment Activities- Supporting student learning	<p>Year 11 Study Skills Workshop Chester Hill High School Students look at how to manage time, reduce stress and other skill to assist in study.</p> <p>Year 12 Goal Setting Chester Hill High School Students self-reflect on where they are at and try and map realistic goals for their future</p> <p>Year 12 Stress Management and Goal Setting Chester Hill High School Students look at a range of scenarios that commonly occur and reflect how they would react in each situation.</p> <p>2-unit Mathematics Study Session Chester Hill High School Students are taken through a past exam paper with university students who contextualise the concepts for students to better remember and understand.</p> <p>Competition Day - Tournament of the Minds Chester Hill North Primary and Chester Hill Primary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above 	<p>299 students in total from Chester Hill participated in a range of academic workshops.</p> <p>35 students were involved in a session where most found they learnt something new in regards to how to manage time and better deal with stress with all students learning new skills.</p> <p>75 students evaluated how well they were doing, just after their trial exams and made concrete and realistic goals. Teachers were extremely positive about the interaction from students.</p> <p>85 students were mentored by currently enrolled university students in their area of study.</p> <p>14 Students took part in an inner school competition and workshopped their presentation skills.</p> <p>19 students who had already shown interest in hip-hop took part in a session run by a university society.</p> <p>Students explored interesting careers and options in science.</p>

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		<p>A team from each school practices for the south-west region problem solving competition. The team was also to work on the science and technology question.</p> <p>English Study Session Chester Hill High School Students are taken through a past exam paper with university students who contextualise the concepts for student to better remember and understand.</p> <p>Luminocity Built Environment event at UNSW Chester Hill High School Students attend an on campus event showcasing student work in the Built Environment Faculty.</p> <p>“Go for Gold Day” Hip Hop workshop Chester Hill North Students in year 4-5 do a fast workshop in hip hop before performing in front of the school during their fair day. This event was aimed at building self confidence.</p> <p>Kindergarten Transition Chester Hill North Assisting teachers to identify academic and social-emotional levels of incoming Kindergarten students to assist in class design. Also introduced ASPIRE Project Officer to students.</p> <p>L’Oréal Australia ‘Girls in Science’ forum - UNSW Science event for female students on-campus</p> <p>4 workshops for Student Representative Council Transition Project Chester Hill High School Students work on a short video and handbook for all new year 7 students incoming in 2017 in partnership with the Woodville Alliance</p>		<p>11 students reflected upon high school changes and got to be involved in a project that would help others. Raising confidence and learning new skills. 65 primary students increased science vocabulary. The year 5 teacher also commented <i>“following the workshop there was increased enthusiasm for science”</i></p> <p>15 students created a piece of artwork that would be seen by all students and parents. Also extended the relationship of the primary to high school. 28 students gained an understanding into the arts. Teacher also felt students had a greater understanding of the creative process.</p> <p>7 UNSW staff involved across the program. All workshops were designed and created to support schools within the Community Hub. Workshops were run in both the primary and high schools where we had limited resources for individualised programs to meet the needs of the schools. However regular interactions with students were made to increase academic enrichment (particularly in STEM). Support was provided to assist students to better understand themselves and university.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback: <i>“The math [university] students are excellent and very helpful”</i>- Year 12 Chester Hill High Student <i>“[I learnt] what to expect in an English exam and how to structure an essay”</i> - Year 12 Chester Hill High Student <i>“Mentor was very knowledgeable”</i> - Year 12 Chester Hill High Student</p>

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		<p>At risk student transition presentation introduction to students Chester Hill High School Introduced Project Officer to students and overall ASPIRE goals</p> <p>Year 5 Science Incursion Chester Hill North Students understand the term variables, in groups create water rockets and test their theory</p> <p>Mural Project with Chester Hill Primary Chester Hill High School and Chester Hill Primary A partnered project joining high school to primary school to create a mural at the entrance of the primary school</p> <p>Centennial Parklands excursion Chester Hill North and Chester Hill Primary Excursion to Centennial Parklands Education Centre focused on science enrichment.</p> <p>Sydney Observatory visit Excursion to Sydney Observatory</p> <p>NIDA and Belvoir St excursion Chester Hill High School Excursion focused on the dramatic arts seeing the play "Girl Asleep" and doing the NIDA workshop to understand the link to degrees</p> <p>Goal Setting on Campus- Roundabout Youth Centre Youth Centre holiday excursion offered prior to term 1 as an on-campus tour and to engage in self-reflection and goal setting.</p>		<p><i>"I very much appreciate having the ASPIRE program at [ASPIRE School]. I am always very open to support the program as much as I can, as it truly affords opportunities and experiences to a school community that has so much potential."</i> - Teacher</p>
May - Ongoing	Community Activities	<p>Bankstown Community Showcase Chester Hill Primary</p>		<p>1,085 community contacts made. 45 children completed colouring in or drawing for a competition.</p>

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		<p>Community-based fair run by Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre. ASPIRE had a stall and colouring competition aimed at engaging primary students</p> <p>School Staff Meetings Chester Hill Primary, Chester Hill High, Chester Hill North Primary Introduction to new ASPIRE Project Officer and presentation of goals at 3 staff meetings (1 at each school)</p> <p>Positive Behaviour For Learning at Home Chester Hill North Primary Helping parents understand the concept of PBL and how they can bring these strategies in the home environment.</p> <p>Positive Behaviour for Learning at Home follow-up Chester Hill North Primary Parents who attended the previous workshop requested a follow-up after using this method in their homes.</p> <p>Skate night attendance at Chester Hill Neighbourhood Youth Centre - Roundabout Youth Centre ASPIRE brought university students to a regular skate night in Chester Hill to assist advertising the upcoming UNSW Open Day.</p> <p>School Ready, Pre-School Reading Chester Hill North Primary Fortnightly reading to pre-schoolers, stories focusing on careers. A follow-up craft activity was also prepared.</p> <p>Teacher Professional Learning on Mentoring</p>		<p>91 school staff were addressed on the Community Hub values and how we can assist, which lead to programs and excursions being created.</p> <p>15 parents attended a session helping them understand a new behaviour policy in their school with 8 parents returning to a following workshop.</p> <p>91 pre-school children accompanied by their parents to enjoy the story time about careers.</p> <p>27 teachers attended 3 sessions on how to increase their ability to mentor teaching staff.</p> <p>28 students and parents came to the university for open day.</p> <p>54 parents came to a stand to collect information on attending university</p> <p>72 parents were shown healthy foods for lunchboxes.</p> <p>1 school will now be buying a class set of Chrome books and the 3 teachers have also now set up a learning community to continue sharing new ideas when introducing IT into the classroom.</p> <p>12 parents gained new skills for parents at home using encouragement rather than punishment.</p> <p>8 parents came to understand how to set goals and encourage their child.</p> <p>6 parents said that they had learnt vital information about their children using technology, in particular social media.</p> <p>21 parents learnt how to make their children's transition easier to high school.</p> <p>25 teachers and School Executive members worked on their goals as a community group.</p> <p>Currently as this process is still ongoing the aim for</p>

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		<p>Chester Hill Primary, Chester Hill High, Chester Hill North Primary Teachers from across the schools engaged in a BOSTES-endorsed course to increase the own abilities.</p> <p>Open Day at UNSW A free bus, and on campus drop-in area provided to Chester Hill Community members</p> <p>“Go For Gold Day” Information Stand Chester Hill North Primary A stand available with UNSW information at the schools normal fair day.</p> <p>Kindergarten Transition: Healthy Lunchboxes Chester Hill North ASPIRE morning tea focussing on appropriate items for a ‘healthy’ school lunchbox</p> <p>Google workshop A teacher from Chester Hill, Chester North and Chester Hill High came to training at Google on software and educational uses.</p> <p>Chester Square (Shopping Centre) advertising A stand was established for 3 days in the local shopping centre to advertise the upcoming parent workshops and also had ASPIRE and UNSW general information available.</p> <p>Positive Behaviour for Learning at Home Roundabout Youth Centre In partnership with the Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre the first of three workshops for parents was conducted.</p> <p>Goal Setting with Your Teen Roundabout Youth Centre</p>		<p>the group is “All students are engaged learners throughout their schooling life and beyond.” 204 parents and students viewed a video of transition changes that can assist them when coming to high school. 5 UNSW staff involved across the programs. Parental and community guidance supporting student’s study was given to assist demystifying university. The Project Officer also increased marketing in the local area to assist raising awareness of the Community Hub. 63 Federal Department of Education employees attended presentation on our HEPP and OLT grant partnership. 35 conference attendees listened to our hub findings in a presentation.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback: <i>“[I learnt] ideas and resources in how to be a good mentor. How to use student work samples, videos, lesson plans to discuss GROW model.”- Teacher</i> <i>“... running parenting sessions are very important to the Chester Hill Community.” - Teacher</i> <i>“...we are very fortunate to have the Hub in our school as it opens up new opportunities for our students and parents.” – School Executive Staff</i> <i>“It is an amazing service and great help to students and their parents. All the guidance and information available is phenomenal. I have nothing but praise to all of you for putting on this amazing day; the transport and food is the icing on the cake. Thank you so very much for your time and attention today.” - Parent response from UNSW Open Day visit</i></p>

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		<p>In partnership with the Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre this is second of 3 workshops for parents.</p> <p>Kindergarten Transition Chester Hill North Introduction of the ASPIRE program to new incoming parents at one of the kindergarten transition days.</p> <p>Cyber Safety Roundabout Youth Centre In partnership with the Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre this is the first of three workshops for parents.</p> <p>At risk student transition presentation to parents Chester Hill High (in partnership with Woodville Alliance) Presentation of key points to help with transition to high school, presented to the parents of identified kids coming from the community of primary schools.</p> <p>Theory of Change with the Community of Schools Chester Hill High Workshop with community of Schools committee and some additional staff to work on the future goal setting of the committee.</p> <p>Kindergarten Transition Chester Hill Primary Transition talk to parents introducing them to ASPIRE</p> <p>Transition presentation Chester Hill High Transition presentation including video prepared by student group to students and parents at the high school orientation day. Also included give-away packs for students.</p>		<p><i>"I was very interested to listen to Jennifer and Rosie from ASPIRE UNSW. I am not yet sure how this might work professionally for us but I am giving it all serious thought. Jennifer did say that she would be happy to come and talk to my group at UTS and so I am now talking to one of our group leaders about the feasibility of this." – Survey Respondent from First in Family Conference</i></p>

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		<p>HERI Bite-Size Seminar – First-in-Family University Students: Innovative Approaches to Student Success Presented at Federal Department of Education in Canberra highlighting the findings of the Hub partnership with the first-in-family learning and teaching fellowship</p> <p>‘First in Family Conference’ at the University of Wollongong Presented (with the Hub Project Officer from Macquarie Fields) on the two Community Hub activities and reflections.</p>		
End January 2017	Evaluation of ASPIRE Hub	Reports written for each Community Hub	Report completed and ready for dissemination to stakeholders	Completed (attached) and ongoing
Macquarie Fields Community Hub				
April 2016 – September	On Campus events with Community Hub schools	<p>Year 11 Big Day Out A range of workshops and activities provided to students giving a university experience</p> <p>Year 10 Connect Workshops and industry experiences focusing on showing clear connections of degrees to industry.</p> <p>Year 9 Taster Day A range of workshops provided to students giving a university experience</p> <p>Design Thinking Event The design thinking workshop at the Michael Crouch Innovation Centre was comprised of STEM subjects and enriched learning. There was also a tour the university providing access to low SES students and widening their aspirations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As Above 	<p>UNSW on-campus workshops This workshop supported access to university through information provision and demystifying university. 33 students had direct access to volunteer student Ambassadors and experienced being on campus. Students engaged in personal reflection of skills and values. ASPIRE university student ambassadors shared their own experiences with the students. The students were further equipped with study skills and developed skills for working as a team.</p> <p>Design Thinking Event 47 students 3 teachers 5 UNSW staff</p>

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				<p>Students demonstrated effectiveness in working in groups with problem solving activities using a range of technologies.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback: <i>"I think it's a great opportunity because a lot of people don't really know university life might be like and without these opportunities around you wouldn't exactly know."</i> - Student <i>"Honestly it was completely amazing I loved being around there and I knew it's a place I want to be. ASPIRE made me think about my future and university is definitely a big part of that."</i> - Student <i>"The ASPIRE excursions, the whole day is great. At the university the students are met by the ASPIRE Ambassadors .They take the kids and show them around the uni, make them feel comfortable, create a really lovely environment for the kids, to the point where they a desperate to be involved in the program the next year. It becomes less threatening it's interesting, it's exciting."</i> –Teacher <i>"I liked the laser cutters because I had never seen one of those before."</i> – Student <i>"I think what's more important watching them come back, there's a buzz about them, they come back and they think, you know what I could do this."</i> – Teacher</p>
March – Ongoing	In-school workshops	<p>Workshops Workshops for years 7-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting • Design thinking • University pathways • Transition 		<p>Workshops After being organised these workshops were cancelled due to challenges with the high school due to a change of leadership and the subsequent barriers in communication. Workshops were approved by the outgoing Principal, however,</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress management • Time management • Exam preparations • Study skills 		<p>these were postponed due to this change in leadership.</p> <p>It should be noted that considerable effort has been put into building up the relationship with the incoming leadership team and the high school is now fully engaged (as of 2017).</p>
June 2016 – Ongoing	Academic enrichment activities supporting student learning	<p>Future Problem Solvers Academic enrichment particularly in the STEM subjects through activities such as master classes across focussing on problem solving in Australia and internationally. ASPIRE provided University access visits, advice, and support for the program for both students and parents.</p> <p>School Open Day Open Day for past and current students at a key high school. This created awareness about the ASPIRE partnership with this school and awareness of university and relevant pathways to access university.</p> <p>Centennial Parklands Excursion Engagement in a science and geography program that is an academic enrichment activity for students from low SES backgrounds.</p> <p>HSC Headstart Provision of academic program for groups of senior students from low SES backgrounds focussing on key stages of the curriculum. Weekly support to HSC students with a focus on assessments, study skills and exam techniques.</p> <p>HSC mentoring This one-on-one program supported the academic and personal development of students through mentoring focussing on assessments and linking the</p>		<p>Future Problem Solvers 52 students (Primary and High School) 2 teachers 67 parents One of our partner schools became the national winner of the Future Problem Solving Competition and placed third in the international competition. Students were exposed to university in America and gained access and information about tertiary education Students put their project into action and worked with the community centre to run the Start Well program. Students engaged both pre-school students and parents.</p> <p>School Open Day Through this involvement parents were engaged to support the students in the program and this partnership helped to demystify some of the concerns regarding university. 4 ASPIRE Ambassadors 15 teachers 63 students 21 parents 1 former school student Parents were engaged and gained information on their child’s education which aided demystifying university. High school students reported that</p>

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		relevance of subjects to university subjects and degrees, and tracking HSC performance to access university and identify pathways.		<p>enjoyed interacting with university ambassadors and making those informal connections to university, whilst broadening their understanding about process for university.</p> <p>Centennial Parklands Excursion 39 Students engaged in environmental workshops that involved practical activities and developed skills such as calculating distance and using a compass. Students also developed problem-solving skills to complete activities.</p> <p>HSC Headstart 11 students participated – group program. Students initially constructed a portfolio for organising and tracking progress and attended tutorials. However, the program ceased due to challenges that occurred with this school.</p> <p>HSC mentoring 4 students – individual monitoring Students demonstrated an understanding of the ATAR and set realistic goals. Evidence was shown that students had increased self-efficacy regarding personal access to university.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback: <i>“Student aspiration to university increased and Year 6 identified that they want to go to university and become teachers and lawyers” – Teacher</i> <i>“I am actually very thankful that I was involved in the ASPIRE because without ASPIRE would probably never consider university” – Student</i> <i>“The students really loved it, especially the boys.” – Teacher</i></p>
June 2016 – ongoing	Community Activities	Parents as Partners		Parents as Partners

TIME FRAME	ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
		<p>Parents from the community centre formed a partnership with the Primary School and ASPIRE. Focus was placed on child development and learning, improving parent understanding of early childhood education, and the development of a transition from pre-school to kindergarten program.</p> <p>Start Well Resources and support provided for this program, facilitated by the Hub and the Community Centre to support entry to Kindergarten and early student progress.</p> <p>Aquarium Excursion Students visited the aquarium and completed relevant literacy, numeracy and creative arts activities to support their learning. Ambassadors attended the day which enabled parents to connect with the university and to demystify some perceptions about university.</p> <p>Transition Program Pre-School to Kindergarten School transition support to low SES backgrounds as they prepare to move from preschool to primary school. Preschool students benefitted from personal development from this process. Parents were also more informed and better able to support their child in starting primary school and to support their learning at home.</p> <p>HERI Bite-Size Seminar – First-in-Family University Students: Innovative Approaches to Student Success Presented at Federal Department of Education in Canberra highlighting the findings of the Hub</p>		<p>Survey results from 22 parents highlighted an increased understanding of educational development and increased interaction in their child’s learning.</p> <p>Start Well Kindergarten assessment results weighted against the Start Well early assessment results revealed a 25% increase in fine motor skills, behaviour improvement, literacy and numeracy. The NSW Best Start assessment of students from one of the primary schools illustrated an increase in results from 28% below state average in 2016, to only 4% below the state average in 2017. 100% of parents agreed that the Start Well program run from the Hub improved their child’s education and social development skills. 94% of families agreed that children were more engaged since they started coming in May. 97% of parents agreed that the Hub helped their children become familiar with the school, feel comfortable in the school environment and develop a positive attitude towards school.</p> <p>Aquarium Excursion 42 students 38 parents 4 teachers 8 Ambassadors The Aquarium visit provided pre-school students with the opportunity to enrich their early learning experiences. Parents who attended reported an increased understanding of methods for guiding their child’s academic engagement and future.</p> <p>Transition Program Pre-School to Kindergarten</p>

TIME FRAME	ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
		<p>partnership with the first-in-family learning and teaching fellowship</p> <p>'First in Family Conference' at the University of Wollongong</p> <p>Presented with the Hub Project Officer from Macquarie Fields on our Community Hub activities and reflections.</p>		<p>35 preschool students 51 primary school students 4 teachers 3 community workers 27 parents</p> <p>Parents reported that they were more confident with their children starting kindergarten and that they had seen improvement in their child's confidence about starting school.</p> <p>Teachers felt that this group were more ready for kindergarten than last year's group from the same Community Centre where the program was developed the previous year.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback:</p> <p><i>"I think very much for the community it raises their expectations that these young people can do well"</i> - Teacher</p> <p><i>"I saw what the program did last year for my nephew and neighbour and I wish I had put my daughter in it last year which is why I'm bringing my son this year. I didn't even think to do the things that they do like cutting along the line and tracing the line. Now I do it at home with him."</i> - Parent</p> <p><i>"We want ASPIRE to be our partner."</i> – Parent</p> <p><i>"These kids have got so much out of it."</i> – Parent</p> <p><i>"This wouldn't have been possible without ASPIRE."</i> – Parent</p> <p><i>"This is such a great opportunity for our kids."</i> – Parent</p> <p><i>"The program has really improved my child's speech. Six months ago she was barely saying anything."</i> – Primary School Parent</p>

TIME FRAME	ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
				<p><i>"My daughter used to cry and not want to leave my side. Now she is off and doesn't even notice that I'm there half the time." – Parent</i></p> <p><i>"My child's behaviour is still not great, but we are getting there. He isn't having as many tantrums." – Parent</i></p> <p><i>"I was very interested to listen to Jennifer and Rosie from ASPIRE UNSW. I am not yet sure how this might work professionally for us but I am giving it all serious thought. Jennifer did say that she would be happy to come and talk to my group at UTS and so I am now talking to one of our group leaders about the feasibility of this." – Survey Respondent from First in Family Conference</i></p>

Highlights and Issues

Highlights included:

- The expansion in the depth and breadth of relationships including the formation of partnerships with local schools not previously part of the ASPIRE program. A strong partnership was formed with a key feeder primary school in Macquarie Fields and with a community stakeholder to collectively strengthen the objectives of the Hub. Together this partnership ran a pre-school early education program. It was an extensive three term preparation program for kindergarten, with the last term running as a pre-school to kindergarten transition. This particular program led to the development of two other projects, working to engage parents and students as learners. The highlight of this program was increasing parent engagement and access to education, and raising academic attainment and aspiration.
- The established across both Hubs of Improved primary to high school connections. This was demonstrated by the large number of students and families that were able to recognise the Chester Hill Project Officer. It also led to many informal conversations going on between the Project Officers, parents and students.
- Having the opportunity and scope to work with groups that go beyond the normal scope of ASPIRE: primary schools, parents, pre-school groups, teachers and community stakeholders has enabled greater flexibility and creativeness in the approaches that have been taken. Working beyond our scope means that we have a greater ability to tackle issues that can affect students than we would have been able to influence otherwise.
- At the Chester Hill Hub, introducing and working with the 'theory of change' process provided an opportunity to work with the school executive to align the goals for the school community. This process helped the program to get greater reach and also acts as a resource for the Hub for communication, advice, marketing and referral to connect to the target student population.
- Having external validation for the legitimacy of the Community Hubs through working with First-in-Family teaching and learning fellowship academic at the University of Wollongong enabled an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program. This was also seen in positive informal feedback from both presentations at the First-in-Family conference and the HERBI Bite size presentation.
- UNSW has recognised the value of pursuing the Community Hib concept by providing funding for both Hubs across 2017.

Challenges included:

- A key challenge across both Hubs was the time and commitment necessary for key relationship building with stakeholders. In the Macquarie Fields Hub a change of leadership occurred at one of the central schools. This change made it difficult to gain traction with the program and required more time on relationship building. However significant progress has since been made. There were also challenges stemming from existing barriers in communication and collaboration between some of the schools. The ASPIRE Community Hubs have assisted in breaking barriers but it does require time and effort. When relationship building is positive it can help boost

the entire program, In Chester Hill local businesses have actively supported the ASPIRE Community Hub adding to the legitimacy of the program.

Did you undertake an evaluation of your project?

Yes No

The evaluation reports undertaken by the ASPIRE Community Hub Projects Officers are attached.

Table 3: Project numbers

	Chester Hill	Macquarie Fields	Total
Student contacts	1,126	137	1,263
Parent, teacher or community contact	1,341	224	1,565
Journal (or other publication) submissions	N/A	N/A	N/A
Conference Presentations	2	2	4
Websites developed	1	1	2 http://www.aspire.unsw.edu.au/our-work/community-aspire
Educational or marketing campaigns	4	0	4
Community organisations engaged	5	8	13
Schools engaged	10	3	13

2. OTHER PROJECT MATERIAL (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2 (b)-(e) of Part A)

Table 4: Additional materials produced over the course of the project

TYPE	AUTHOR	DATE OF PUBLICATION	PUBLICATION DETAILS
Brochure of Community Hub for the Public	ASPIRE		Brochure
2 x Community Hub Pull-Up Banners	ASPIRE		Pull-Up Banners
ASPIRE Chester Hill Community Hub Instagram Page @aspirechesterhillcommunityhub	ASPIRE		Instagram Page
ASPIRE website http://www.aspire.unsw.edu.au/ourwork/community-aspire	ASPIRE		Website
ASPIRE Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/www.ASPIRE/	ASPIRE		Facebook
Macquarie Fields video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkvcuMnzybY	ASPIRE		Video

3. ACQUITTAL REPORT (Conditions of Grant, clause 6.4(e), clause 6.7-8 of Part A)

Have you fully expended the Grant Funds provided under the Conditions of Grant?

Yes No

The underspend is \$9,798. The underspend is as a result of savings that occurred from the Community Hubs being part of the overall ASPIRE program which enables some sharing of resources (rather than the purchase of separate resources).

The acquittal report is attached.

DECLARATION

I declare that:

- I am authorised by the university to sign this Declaration on its behalf, and
- to the best of my knowledge, the information that I have provided in the **Final Report** and **Acquittal Report** for the HEPPP 2014 National Priorities Pool project *ASPIRE Community Hub* is true, correct and accurate in all particulars.

I understand that:

- The provision of false or misleading information or the making of false or misleading statements to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*.
- If any actual or potential conflict of interest arises, I must notify the Commonwealth immediately in writing of the facts giving rise to the actual or potential conflict of interest and to take such steps as the Commonwealth may require so as to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest that may arise.

Title	President and Vice-Chancellor, University of New South Wales, Sydney
Name	Professor Ian Jacobs
Position	Chief Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor)
Signature	

APPENDIX 1: Chester Hill ASPIRE Community Hub Report

Introduction

In 2016, the ASPIRE Community Hub at Chester Hill, based in the Chester Hill Primary School, focused primarily on academic and personal enrichment programs for the community following on from the successful implementation of the 2015 program of activities. The ASPIRE Hub also endeavoured to engage with students and their families outside of the school to build effective working relationships.

All programs taking place in the Hub focused on academic and personal enrichment to achieve the following objectives:

- A. Academic support, both individual and group, to primary and high school students from identified low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds through homework support, tutoring and specific support for key stages of the curriculum;
- B. Academic enrichment, particularly in the STEM subjects, through activities such as master classes and holiday programs;
- C. University access support through visits, advice and specific support on subject choice and application processes;
- D. Personal development through activities such as mentoring and coaching in, for example, presentation skills;
- E. Parent information and guidance on supporting students' study and demystifying university.

Main Stakeholders

Our main stakeholders are two primary schools (one where the ASPIRE Hub is located), one high school and a partnership with a local Neighbourhood Centre, a local Youth Centre and a Non-Government Organisation. The ASPIRE Community Hub is also part of a group of local school executive coordinating bodies which includes the school that hosts the ASPIRE Chester Hill Community Hub and four additional local primary schools.

Contextual Information

The participating Chester Hill schools generally have a high numbers of refugees, students with non-English speaking backgrounds and higher unemployment rates of parents (30.3% unemployment for both parents in couple families, ABS, 2011), and many parents have not attended any form of higher education in Australia (based on student surveys at workshops). Discussions with students revealed that, while most students had aspirations to go further than their parents, there were many issues influencing the decision to transition to higher education. These include, but are not limited to, a lack of understanding of the application processes, gaps in education, lack of support from home, work/family commitments, inability to meet entry qualifications and failure to understand different pathways of entry to higher education (refer to Annex 1 for further information).

Issues that affected student achievement were also identified during discussions, including low parent engagement (from community liaison discussions), high numbers of early career

teachers (from school executive comments), lack of resources, lack of support and a lack of visible mentors from careers requiring a higher education. Many students also had confidence issues which inhibited them from seeking further help and/or support from those around them.

The consultation process also identified some issues between stakeholder organisations, namely that there is some level of competition between the local primary schools and lack of agreement on the approach that should be taken in the transition to high school. Observations suggested that schools and community groups tended to largely operate on a transactional basis or did not communicate at all. From our understanding, there was a lack of knowledge between schools and community groups as to what other stakeholders provided, causing some replication and gaps in services.

Program Objectives Evaluation

The programs put in place by the ASPIRE Community Hub aimed to assist where academic achievement was either most at risk or could be boosted by filling a gap in what was being provided by the community.

A. Academic support, both individual and group, to primary and high school students from identified low SES backgrounds through homework support, tutoring and specific support for key stages of the curriculum

Based on our experience, the transition from pre-school to kindergarten, as well as the transition from primary to high school, is a critical time in which student attendance and academic performance can be severely interrupted. While there are a number of factors that contribute to this, there is considerable potential to increase the collaboration and coordination between community groups and schools to better manage this transition.

The transition of students to kindergarten was supported in a number of ways by the ASPIRE Hub, including, but not limited to, assisting existing school readiness programs in the schools and community groups with programs and resources. The program also provided parent programs to help understand the transition, as well as providing each new kindergarten student with a 'School Ready' backpack.

For high school transition, the Community Hub supported this transition by working across schools, community organisations and groups, and broadened the reach of transition programs by keeping students engaged in education as they make the significant move from primary school to high school. A highlight, acknowledged by the high school principal, was evident in the initiative to plan, organise, create and present the '*Survival to High School*' video and handing out of a booklet to over 160 students containing useful information for parents. The materials contained in the '*School Ready*' packs were created by students from the high school Student Representative Council who themselves benefited from taking part in a project where they could reflect and build on their own recent personal experience in making this transition.

Working closely with community liaisons in the primary schools and with kindergarten teachers, we were able to ensure parents were given additional support and resources during this critical period. A teacher at school who managed kindergarten transition noted that an important benefit was the increased communication and information provision with parents who were unable to attend the orientation and transition days.

B. Academic enrichment, particularly in the STEM subjects, through activities such as master classes and holiday programs

Academic enrichment and support were provided in both high school and primary settings to increase academic aspirations and support students. The ASPIRE Hub entered a team from each primary school in a problem solving competition, the Tournament of the Minds, as well as arranging science incursions and excursions for stage 3 students (years 5 and 6) and provided support to the existing mentoring program.

Homework programs originally planned by the ASPIRE Hub were amended after recognising that students needed to develop skills that would enable them to do homework successfully and independently, rather than direct tutoring, and to ensure that these programs did not duplicate others offered in the community.

Based on feedback, it is apparent that the value of individual programs varied, for example:

- *‘Our Tournament of the Minds program would not have gone ahead without the support of the ASPIRE program. In a school community such as ours we need to be able to offer these Gifted & Talented opportunities to be aspirational to all student needs.’* – Principal
- *‘In the context of beginning the conversation with parents in a K-6 setting it has been invaluable. My Year 6 students now openly aspire to tertiary education whereas it was never a conscious option.’* – Teacher
- *‘It was a great experience and opened my mind to many more options.’* – Student

C. University access support through visits, advice and specific support on subject choice and application processes

The ASPIRE Community Hub tried to bridge the physical gap (37km or 1.5 hours by public transport) to the UNSW campus, but also help students experience campus life and visit faculties that demonstrated the careers that can be pursued with a higher education. These programs were mainly targeted to high school students who participated in ASPIRE on-campus events, tours, open day or workshops, and provided transport and support. However the program was extended to primary schools with visits taking place to the University of Western Sydney to participate in a competition and also visit Centennial Parklands Education Centre to see ‘science in action.’

Throughout our programs, current UNSW university students’ volunteer as ‘ASPIRE Ambassadors.’ They are an asset to the workshops and events either in formal or informal discussions and help students gain insight to university lifestyles, tips for current study and enable the high school students to recognise that people ‘just like them’ attend university. Many stakeholders found that having access to Ambassadors was a highlight of the ASPIRE program. Positive feedback from stakeholders has included:

- *“I very much appreciate having the ASPIRE program at [ASPIRE School]. I am always very open to support the program as much as I can, as it truly affords opportunities and experiences to a school community that has so much potential.”* – Teacher

D. Personal development through activities such as mentoring and coaching in, for example, presentation skills

At the high school level the focus was on goal setting, study skills, stress and time management but also involved supporting Year 12 students by providing practice exams and sessions with university students to review answers. The ASPIRE Hub also ran a variety of workshops across the year focused on increasing awareness of higher education opportunities.

At the primary schools we were involved in activities at local fair days to boost enthusiasm and personal awareness of pathways to a variety of different careers. The Hub also conducted a number of extra-curricular activities that aimed to increase confidence in public settings through cultural performance as well as giving lower-age students the opportunity to interact one-on-one with university students during a school fair day.

Some of the statements that were taken during these sessions highlighted the benefits of having student Ambassadors available, including:

- *“Having access to the ambassadors”. – Teacher*
- *“It was a great experience and opened my mind to many more options.” – Student*

E. Parent information and guidance on supporting students’ study and demystifying university

Parent outreach and supporting the community were highlighted as major issues for schools (see Annex 1 for further information). Our consultation with the parents within schools and community centres has shown that many parents feel as though they are unable to support their children’s goals for higher education, understand the various pathways involved and the commitment involved, as well as effective ways of raising awareness of community support. Despite attempts made by the ASPIRE Hub, participation in these programs remained low. However, it is recognised that this is an area which needs time to build trust and we anticipate increased participation in forthcoming workshops. Feedback received from parents and stakeholders included:

- *“... running parenting sessions is very important to the Chester Hill Community.” – Teacher*
- *“...we are very fortunate to have the Hub in our school as it opens up new opportunities for our students and parents.” – School Executive Staff*
- *“It is an amazing service and great help to students and their parents. All the guidance and information available is phenomenal. I have nothing but praise to all of you for putting on this amazing day; the transport and food is the icing on the cake. Thank you so very much for your time and attention today.” - Parent response from UNSW Open Day visit*

External Acknowledgement

The ASPIRE Community Hub has made various attempts to develop linkages and networks outside of the ASPIRE program. Over the course of the previous year, the Community Hub Project Officer built connections with Dr Sarah O’Shea, who has a Learning and Teaching Fellowship at the University of Wollongong. Dr O’Shea provided advice on effective ways of engaging more students from first-in-family families and advised on how to approach the

Hub model based on current best practice. Over time a partnership has been built that enables information and advice to be shared amongst both parties.

Other activities also included our involvement in a “HERI Bite-Size Seminar – First-in-Family University Students: Innovative Approaches to Student Success” at Federal Department of Education in Canberra highlighting the findings of both projects through partnership. The Chester Hill Community Hub Project Officer in partnership with the Macquarie Fields Project Officer presented at the “First in Family Conference” at the University of Wollongong in November 2017. This partnership creates a stronger learning community that spreads awareness beyond our normal reach for best practice in first-in-family and community hub models.

Lessons Learned

Table 5: Survey of 12 parents’ and caregivers’ attitude towards the ASPIRE Community Hub

Survey responses	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A	Total
Helped raise academic awareness in families and students within the community	42%	50%	8%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Encouraged STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) with their programs	8%	50%	17%	0%	0%	25%	100%
Helped students access support through visits, advice and specific support on subject choice and application processes	25%	75%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Assisted students’ personal development through activities such as mentoring and coaching	25%	58%	8%	0%	0%	9%	100%
Gave parent information and guidance on supporting students’ study and demystifying university	36%	36%	19%	0%	0%	9%	100%
Has assisted in engagement of family and students and schools for the benefit of the community	64%	27%	9%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Is helping students become more independent learners	45%	55%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

The overall ASPIRE Community Hub goal was to examine the potential of a university led community-based model for widening participation within the Australian context. On entering the community, the Project Officer found stakeholders were focused on “this is the program” not “what do you need?” from outside organisations. It took time for people to understand that ASPIRE was not providing a course or a program, and as a result it took time to build relationships and build trust with stakeholders to enable honest conversations about what was needed in the area. One of the most beneficial activities was taking a group of teachers and school executives through a strategic planning process using the “The Theory of Change” model (please see Annex 1 for illustration). This piece of work is still in progress but as it stands, staff have identified barriers to progress and are developing strategies on how the organisations can work together to remove these barriers. This is an example of how the ASPIRE Community Hub has endeavoured to go beyond direct student contact and act as an agent to drive change in the local community.

Other qualitative feedback from stakeholders returned from the survey results:

- *“Having a ‘real person’ external to the school who has time, expertise and funding enables a complete community approach.” – Anonymous Respondent*
- *“I like that their program is flexible (and) that they are able to work to what the local schools and community need.” – Community Worker*
- *“There is a positive relationship between the school and ASPIRE.” – Teacher*
- *“...creates a more personal link towards University where, if left up to the school only to promote to the students and parents, I feel we would not engage as readily.” – Teacher*
- *“A person on the ground is critical.” – Principal*
- *“Keep up the good work, we need the staff involved within school to keep promoting. There are a lot of families where the parents have not attended University and their children will be the first to attend and parents cannot give advice as they have not had the experience. All the exposure in Primary School and through High School is vital to assist them with career choices.” – Principal*
- *“ASPIRE programs are definitely having an impact in shifting mindsets and promoting the possibility of tertiary education in our community.” – Teacher*
- *“A huge THANK YOU to UNSW for this program and the creation of the Hub. It has provided our community with invaluable support and access to resources that our students and families wouldn't otherwise have access to. Thank you also to [Project Officer] for her assistance, support of the school, enthusiasm and proactive nature. She makes the Chester Hill Hub successful.” – Deputy Principal*

Overall, the ASPIRE Community Hub model appears to be effective and welcomed in the community, however as the Hub is still in the initial stages of development, it is too early to compare the model's effectiveness compared with the outreach model that has been employed by ASPIRE and other university equity programs. A clear positive for the model is the acceptance into the community of the locally-based Project Officer who identifies with the objectives of the wider ASPIRE program. This provides a direct connection for the students with the University and a sense of belonging to the education chain from primary to tertiary. It is apparent that the long-term commitment and continuity of personnel is essential due to the nature of relationship building and the need to hold institutional knowledge which is difficult to be replaced by data. This initiative has the real potential to go beyond the reach of the normal university programs targeting high school students, while the work with younger students in primary and pre-school also shows great promise. The ASPIRE Hub model offers long-term viability through its direct and personal support for schools and community organisations.

With the above in mind, to some extent there have been some challenges in building trust and respect within the schools and having the appropriate level of 'buy-in' from school leadership. Meetings and conversations with stakeholders in school and community organisations take time to become honest exchanges about the 'real' issues of the school. The School Executive has a tendency to be suspicious of outsiders or giving you the positive perception to their situations, however as trust builds it has been easy to get to the centre of the schools' problems and find appropriate means to remedy these. Additionally, with the possible expansion of the ASPIRE Community Hub model in other locations, the ASPIRE program has recognised that there is a need to embed the Community Hub project officers more within the ASPIRE team to avoid a sense of isolation that can occur when working singly in an outpost. To this end the Hub officers will connect with the rest of the team

more regularly and be supported further in their activities by the rest of the team. This also will ensure stability when staff changes occur so 'corporate knowledge' is not lost.

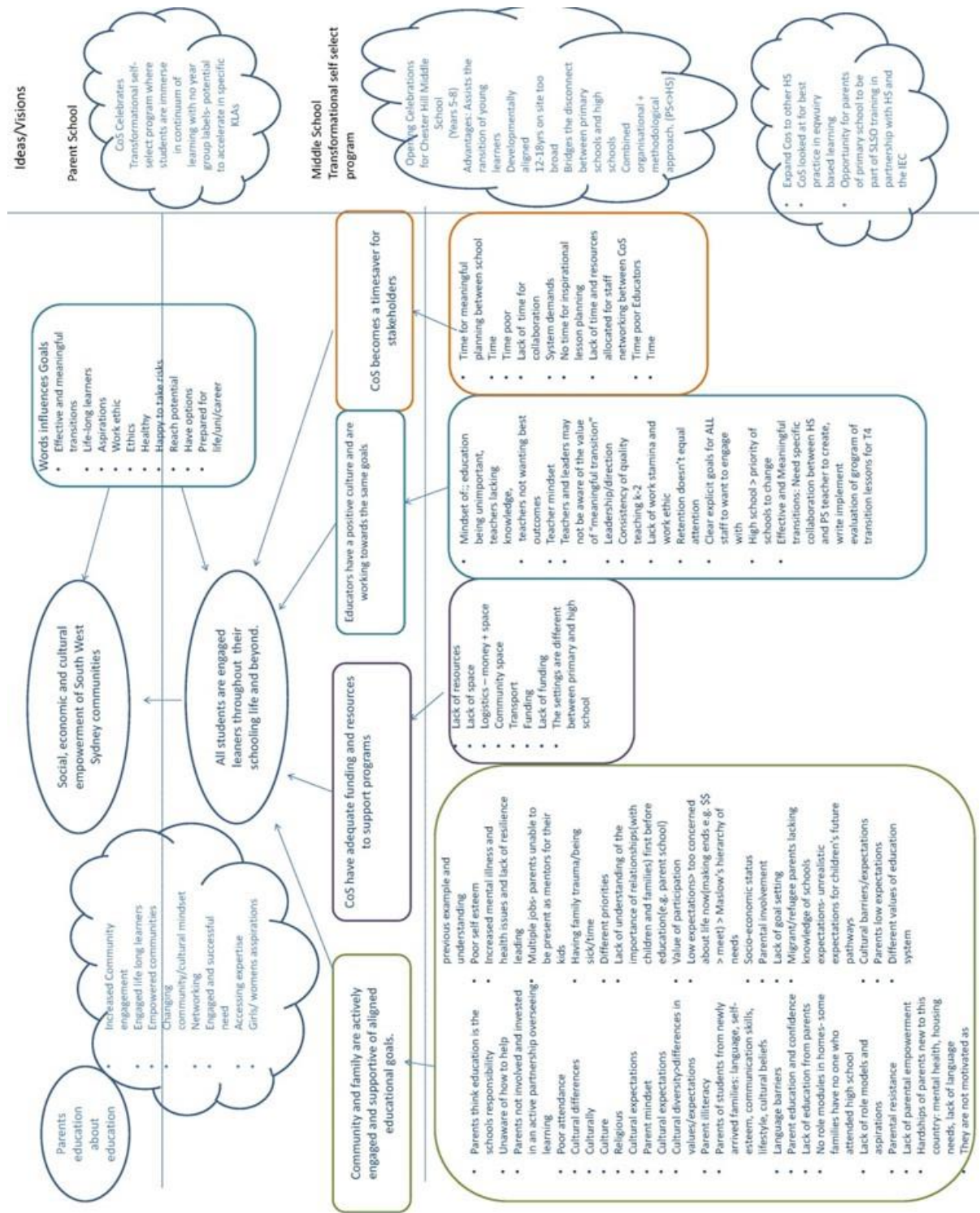
While there is no doubt of the value of this community hub model of working, a challenge in the implementation of such a model is how to scale up significantly while being sustainable in terms of resources. This may be assisted by having an agreement with the community that the Hub will operate for a set period of time before moving on. To this end moving forward, consideration will be given on whether such a model can be embedded into other community organisations or through the schools.

Forward Planning

With the funding received from UNSW to maintain the ASPIRE Hub going forward, the Hub plans to maintain all programs commenced in 2016 based on evidence of their success. However, increased priority will be placed on improving knowledge of ATAR and pathways to higher education for high school students and parents. The need to strengthen this area of knowledge became apparent after a visit to the UNSW Open Day. Based on student evaluations completed on the day, there was an overall drop in students' desire to go to university, while our in-school workshops usually show an increase in aspirations. After informal discussion between the Project Officer and students in attendance, it appeared that the reason for the drop in interest was the discovery that ATAR entrance marks were high for the course of their choice and students did not believe they could achieve these. Already there is a parent information series planned at the high school that will explain the various pathways to university and demystifying some of the misinformation regarding entrance marks.

Additionally, the schedule of Mathematics and English practice exams that were run by the Hub were extremely well received by students, particularly as a result of the fact that university students assisted in reviewing and correcting the exams. The students responded well to the session and the head teacher mathematics wishes to continue more regular contact with university students as tutors. In 2017 the ASPIRE Hub will be running online tutoring in Mathematics and English for senior students and will make opportunities for the UNSW students to visit the Hub face-to-face. Our evaluation has shown that students liked taking advice from university students with recent similar experiences and they gain further understanding of degrees that fit with their preferred subject areas and passions.

Annex 1: Chester Hill Community Hub — Theory of Change



APPENDIX 2: Macquarie Fields ASPIRE Community Hub Report

Introduction

The ASPIRE Community Hub at Macquarie Fields was established in April 2016 and focused primarily on academic and personal enrichment programs for the community following the successful piloting of a similar Community Hub in the Chester Hill region. The ASPIRE Hub also endeavoured to engage with students and their families outside the school environment to support the Hub and build relationships.

All programs taking place in the Hub focused on academic and personal enrichment to achieve the following objectives:

- A. Academic support, both individual and group, to primary and high school students from identified low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds through homework support, tutoring and specific support for key stages of the curriculum;
- B. Academic enrichment, particularly in the STEM subjects, through activities such as master classes and holiday programs;
- C. University access support through visits, advice and specific support on subject choice and application processes;
- D. Personal development through activities such as mentoring and coaching (for example, presentation skills);
- E. Parent information and guidance on supporting students' study and demystifying university.

Main Stakeholders

Our main stakeholders are two primary schools and one high school who have themselves developed external partnerships with the Schools as Community Centres (SaCC), Western Sydney University, Beacon Foundation, the Salvation Army and Junction Works. This has enabled the ASPIRE Community Hub to share resources and institutional knowledge. Additionally, the Hub has developed relationships with adjunct community services such as the Council Library, the Koch Centre and the local Rotary Club.

Due to a variety of reasons, there has been a lack of coordination between the three schools and strong relationships have dissipated somewhat in the past, but are now redeveloping. This lack of coordination is mainly reflected in the current approach to managing the transition between primary and high school. The High School has 352 students enrolled, whilst the Primary Schools have 214 students and 157 students respectively.

Context

Macquarie Fields is situated in the outer south-west of Sydney with a population of approximately 23,612 with 40% of the population born overseas, indicating a diverse cultural community. The current real unemployment rate in Macquarie Fields is 5.8%, compared with the NSW unemployment rate of 5.2%. Tertiary education levels of this population are approximately 10%. The median income is \$425 per week. Residential

statistics show that 10% of housing in the community is public housing. Given these statistics, Macquarie Fields is considered as an area of significant disadvantage.

Objectives

The pilot evaluation of the Community Hub model was to determine how well the ASPIRE pilot achieved its objectives and the ability of this model to be able to be scaled up in similar regions. The Hub also sought to find out if at community level a preliminary connection can be made towards the progress of providing awareness, aspiration and widening participation to higher education.

The specific aims of the ASPIRE Community Hub were to engage with students and their families outside the school environment to provide:

- A. Academic support, both individual and group, to primary and high school students from identified low SES backgrounds through homework support, tutoring and specific support for key stages of the curriculum;
- B. Academic enrichment, particularly in the STEM subjects, through activities such as master classes and holiday programs;
- C. University access support through visits, advice and specific support on subject choice and application processes;
- D. Personal development through activities such as mentoring and coaching (for example, presentation skills);
- E. Parent information and guidance on supporting students' study and demystifying university.

Findings from Evaluation

The findings from this evaluation revealed that the resources and assistance provided by the ASPIRE Hub has had a significant impact on parent and caregiver engagement. The ASPIRE Community Hub is providing and participating in approximately four activities per week and has provided other incursions and excursions on a regular basis.

A. Academic support, both individual and group, to primary and high school students from identified low SES backgrounds through homework support, tutoring and specific support for key stages of the curriculum

Evidence from a variety of assessments has shown that the Hub had an impact on the academic outcomes of young children in early education programs and transition to Kindergarten. Kindergarten assessment results weighted against the *Start Well* early assessment results revealed a 25% increase in fine motor skills, behaviour improvement, literacy and numeracy. The *Start Well* assessment has been developed by the schools and Community Centre and has been used as a means of assessing a range of skills that should be developed by the stage that students reach primary school. Furthermore, when compared with the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) *Best Start* assessment, students from one primary school illustrated an increase in results from 28% below state average in 2016, to only 4% below the state average in 2017.

Following consultation with the High School it was found that it would be much easier to provide academic support through the existing programs that had been established by other

stakeholders. This enabled greater collaboration between the partners and an identification of where the ASPIRE program was able to provide the most effective and efficient support.

Table 6: Comparison of ongoing programs for collaboration

School as Community Centre Program	ASPIRE Community Hub Programs	Joint Hub Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgroup • Healthy Lifestyle Masterchef • Child Development Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Thinking Workshops • Science Festival • Centennial Parklands Visit • HSC Headstart Mentoring • Year 9 Taster Day • Year 10 Connect • Year 11 visit to the UNSW Campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start Well • Community Engagement Program • Homework Club • UNSW Open Day • Rotary Day • Visit to the Aquarium • Future Problem Solvers • STEM Activities • Integrated Environment Project

Qualitative data taken from a survey conducted with parents and caregivers from the schools and the School as Community Centre suggests that the transition program instituted by the ASPIRE Hub is making a difference to children’s development and their engagement with early learning in schools, school readiness, and parent engagement and participation.

- ‘This wouldn’t have been possible without ASPIRE.’ – Parent
- ‘This is such a great opportunity for our kids.’ – Parent
- ‘We want ASPIRE to be our partner.’ – Parent
- ‘These kids have got so much out of it.’ – Parent

B. Academic enrichment, particularly in the STEM subjects, through activities such as master classes and holiday programs

Academic enrichment, particularly in the STEM subjects, is becoming increasingly important in Australia and internationally and this has been a focus of the ASPIRE Hub through activities such as master classes focusing on problem solving. ASPIRE provided university access visits, advice and support for the program for both students and parents on the types of STEM-related careers that can be pursued through a university education. The students from one of the primary schools were national winners of the *Future Problem Solving Competition* and placed third in the international competition. The successful students utilised their experience from the competition by working with the School as Community Centre to assist in the implementation of the *Start Well* program by engaging both pre-school students and parents.

Furthermore, the ASPIRE Community Hub facilitated a design thinking workshop at UNSW’s Michael Crouch Innovation Centre that was comprised of STEM subjects and enriched learning. There was also a tour of the university providing access for participating students to widen their aspirations. Students demonstrated effectiveness in working in groups with problem solving activities using a range of different technologies. The design thinking

workshop enabled the project to meet the target of providing master classes in STEM-related subjects.

C. University access support through visits, advice and specific support on subject choice and application processes

The UNSW campus visits had the highest rates of participation from students, parents and caregivers. This fulfilled a key objective of providing access to university through visits and advice, laying the foundation for the ongoing objective of widening participation and has indicated success in terms of reaching a wide variety of community members from the ASPIRE Hub.

The *Start Well* program which was co-facilitated by the Hub and the School as Community Centre had the highest rates of parent participation, whereas previous parent activities had only attracted approximately five participants. In collaboration with the Community Centre, the Hub organised a visit for parents and students to visit the Sydney Aquarium. This visit not only provided an opportunity to build relationships with the Community Hub and the partner schools and parents, but also provided opportunities for participants to gain a broader understanding of some of the careers that can be pursued through a tertiary education (such as Marine Biology).

D. Personal development through activities such as mentoring and coaching (for example, presentation skills)

The ASPIRE Community Hub provided the *HSC Headstart Program* to the High School, providing participating students with the opportunity to receive one-to-one mentoring for two sessions per week. The personal development program was for senior students to focus on assessments and study skills that will assist them in their latter years of schooling. Participating students initially constructed a portfolio for organising and tracking progress and attending tutorials, and demonstrated an understanding of the ATAR and were able to establish realistic goals. Based on observations, it was apparent that the participating students demonstrated increased personal ability to access university, demonstrated by the fact that students showed increased confidence in applying for the Universities Admission Centre process, however the short-term nature of this particular program made it difficult to evaluate its overall effectiveness.

E. Parent information and guidance on supporting students' study and demystifying university

An Open Day was held at the High School for past and current students. This created awareness about the ASPIRE partnership with this school and awareness of, and relevant pathways to, accessing university. Parents were engaged and gained information on their child's education which aided in demystifying some of the misconceptions about university. High school students enjoyed interacting with the ASPIRE Ambassadors (current UNSW students) and making informal connections, while broadening their understanding about the process for accessing university.

Parent information and guidance improved the perceptions that parents held of the school and resulted in more positive engagement and relationships with the school staff. Moreover, the ASPIRE Hub enabled parents to connect within their own community and enjoy a communal supportive and social space.

The Hub aided parents from the Community Centre to form a partnership with the primary schools and ASPIRE. This program focused on child development and learning, improving parents' understanding of early childhood education, and the development of a transition from pre-school to Kindergarten program. Most families reported that there was increased enjoyment and increased participation of their child in the early education transition program through the *Start Well* assessment. Teachers and facilitator assessment results recorded an increase in literacy levels and social skills, while occupational therapy assessments indicated increased concentration and improvements in behaviour and fine motor skills. A parent from one of the primary schools observed that:

- *'The program has really improved my child's speech. Six months ago she was barely saying anything.'* – Primary School Parent

The results also demonstrated increased school readiness from the beginning of the program to the end of the program. The readiness of this cohort is also improved when measured against the previous cohort that came through the first year of the program according to the *Start Well* assessment. School readiness has also been observed by teachers of Kindergarten during the formal transition and orientation run at the primary school as demonstrated by the statements below.

- *'My daughter used to cry and not want to leave my side. Now she is off and doesn't even notice that I'm there half the time.'* – Parent
- *'Levi's behaviour is still not great, but we are getting there. He isn't having as many tantrums.'* – Parent

Participation

The evaluation completed involved participants (parents/caregivers and students) from the three schools as well as participants from the Community Centre. In total, feedback was received from 89 people either through survey, interviews or informal qualitative 'stories' that were captured, with permission, by the Community Hub Project Officer. Although the response rate was not as high as initially hoped, the responses and feedback is encouraging as is the commitment by key leaders to the evaluation process.

Table 7: Summary of respondents in the pilot evaluation

Respondent / Technique	Survey	Interview	Informal Stories	Total
Students	47	4	4	55
Family	2	0	1	3
School staff	9	3	5	17
Principal	2	2	3	7
Community service	3	1	3	7
Total	63	10	16	89

Table 8: Participants attending ASPIRE Community Hub activities

Activity / Participant	Students	Parents	School Staff	Community Workers	UNSW	ASPIRE Ambassadors
Playgroup	15	15	0	4	Staff	0
Start Well transition	50	48	3	5	1	5
Healthy Lifestyle Masterchef	0	12	0	1	1	0
Community Engagement Project	0	9	0	1	1	0
Homework Club	28	0	4	0	1	0
HSC Headstart	7	0	1	0	1	0
Child Development Workshops	0	15	1	2	1	0
UNSW Open Day	37	27	23	1	1	4
Design Thinking	26	0	3	0	1	6
Science Festival	49	0	3	0	5	6
Centennial Parklands	32	0	2	2	1	4
Tutoring	4	0	1	0	2	0
On-Campus 'Big Day Out'	18	1	3	0	1	0
Rotary Day	17	17	0	8	0	0
Aquarium	44	46	4	2	1	6
Total	327	190	48	26	1	31

It is important to note that the figures represent individual participants across the schedule of activities in the Hub for one year. This essentially means that the one adult / one child may have attended the transition program each week, however they are only represented in this data once.

The key findings from this process include:

- 100% of parents agreed that the *Start Well* program run by the ASPIRE Hub improved their child's education and social development skills
- 94% of families agreed that children were more engaged in learning from the beginning of the year
- 97% of parents agreed that the ASPIRE Hub helped their children become familiar with the school, feel comfortable in the school environment and develop a positive attitude towards school

External Acknowledgement

The ASPIRE Community Hub has made various attempts to develop linkages and networks outside of the ASPIRE program. Over the course of the previous year, the Community Hub Project Officer built connections with Dr Sarah O'Shea, who has a Learning and Teaching Fellowship at the University of Wollongong. Dr O'Shea provided advice on effective ways of engaging more students from first-in-family families and advised on how to approach the Hub model based on current best practice. Over time a partnership has been built that enables information and advice to be shared amongst both parties.

Other activities also included our involvement in a "HERI Bite-Size Seminar – First-in-Family University Students: Innovative Approaches to Student Success" at Federal Department of Education in Canberra highlighting the findings of both projects through partnership. The Macquarie Fields Project Officer in partnership with the Chester Hill Project Officer

presented at the “First in Family Conference” at the University of Wollongong in November 2017. This partnership creates a stronger learning community that spreads awareness beyond our normal reach for best practice in first-in-family and community hub models.

Lessons Learned

What activities were effective?

Placing the Community Hub in one of the primary schools has been particularly effective as it has meant that most activities have taken place in close proximity to community members and has enabled strong relationships to be developed with participating schools.

Additionally, the location of the Hub has meant that external activities that would not otherwise have been offered have been made available for the community to participate, and the ASPIRE program has been able to extend its reach by engaging with schools that had not been part of the main ASPIRE program. The *Start Well* program which was run out of the Hub had the highest participation numbers from parents, and the impact of the early learning and transition to Kindergarten program is evident in the statements made by families, noting that their involvement in the personal development programs offered at the Hub have improved their children’s overall attitude towards school. Parents also spoke about how they benefited from the tailored approach that was taken in providing parent information and guidance regarding the transition to school and in developing their own skills in engaging in their child’s education.

Parents also observed increased literacy, numeracy and fine motor skills of their children over the duration of the program. Parents have become more involved with the school and regularly interact with the Principal which is something that only occurred with 2% of parents prior to the establishment of the ASPIRE Hub.

The activities and programs which focused on STEM were successful because of their specialisation and garnered a relatively good number of participants for a pilot program. It is recommended that these programs are refined to grow with the direction of this cohort and their educational progression. STEM education is an important foundation for contemporary educational success and will assist in widening participation when those students are ready to enter university.

There were several factors that contributed to the successful facilitation of the ASPIRE Community Hub. The most central element was working with the facilitator of the Schools as Community Centres. This facilitator had a deep understanding of the community and has played an important role in working to improve the ways in which the ASPIRE Hub engages with the local community.

What would you have done differently?

Upon reflection, there were some challenges experienced in coordinating activities between the participating schools. This was largely a result of the fact that there has not previously been any collective project between the participating three schools. The three schools have students which feed into other schools and it would make sense that a common project would enable long-term support for students throughout their entire school years. Clearer communication from ASPIRE to each of the schools individually at the beginning of the program would be something that could have been improved, followed by a round table

meeting bringing all stakeholders together. This may have made the communication between schools more effective.

Another challenge was the importance and time that went into relationship building with stakeholders. In the Macquarie Fields Hub a change of leadership occurred at one of the participating schools. This change made it difficult to gain traction in the school and necessitated beginning the relationship building process again in the school. However significant progress has since been made with this school.

The evaluation process was an area that was difficult across the duration of the pilot scheme. The ASPIRE Community Hub has taken a holistic approach and this has consequently meant that it has been difficult to quantitatively measure overall community benefit. Because the pilot was embryotic and the design changed significantly over time, it was difficult to maintain consistency in the type of methodologies and data that was being collected. This is an area that requires improvement in the following year and will be much easier now that the Hub has a robust evaluation framework.

While there is no doubt of the value of this community hub model of working, a challenge in the implementation of such a model is how to scale up significantly while being sustainable in terms of resources. This may be assisted by having an agreement with the community that the Hub will operate for a set period of time before moving on. To this end moving forward, consideration will be given on whether such a model can be embedded into other community organisations or through the schools.

Forward Planning

With the funding received from UNSW to maintain the Hub going forward, the Hub plans to maintain all programs commenced in 2016 based on evidence of their success. The results from this evaluation process are encouraging. Although the data obtained is not comprehensive, it provides a broad understanding of the success and necessity of the ASPIRE Community Hub. The Hub is working toward the achievement of its goals and is placing the foundations to achieve the longer term goals of widening participation at Australian higher education institutions. Based on the responses provided by community members, it is apparent that the Hub is making a positive impact on the social and educational outcomes across a wide range of community members and stakeholders.

A further overview of the findings reveals:

- Improved literacy and numeracy achievement of pre-school students entering primary school;
- Improved perceptions of the school from new parents;
- More convenience in accessing services from one site that were previously challenging for parents to access due to distance and transport limitations;
- More parents participating in school activities;
- More parents participating in pre-school education and developing their child's skills at home;
- Students that are eligible to undertake the ATAR have aspirations for higher education, however they lack confidence and support to reach the level of academic attainment necessary to meet the course entry requirements.

It is evident through observation, survey and anecdotal evidence that the ASPIRE Community Hub is successful in building cohesion and community engagement. Strong connections from the Hub are being made with stakeholders who are aiding the community to achieve its objectives. The ASPIRE Community Hub has also enabled ASPIRE to increase its depth and reach within the communities in which they have been placed. It is recommended that the Hub continues to utilise the existing programs while searching for additional programs that will continue to improve results in areas that have not yet been measured. Through the increased use of qualitative methodologies, such as case studies, these will be useful in tracking gradual improvements over a longer period of time.