4.12.1 **School Focused Youth Service**

The School Focused Youth Service is a joint initiative between the Department and the Department of Human Services. The focus of the initiative is the coordination of preventative and early intervention strategies for young people, to be delivered through school and community clusters.

The School Focused Youth Service is designed to support effective links between the primary prevention work done by school-based support services within the education sector and the early intervention provided by the community sector.

Forty-one school community clusters have been established across the State to ensure that services are coordinated and responsive to the needs of young people.

The forty-one service models are consistent around the State, each with a coordinator, and brokerage capacity to respond to gaps in service availability as identified by schools and community. The School Focused Youth Service will link closely to schools and relevant community agencies within each cluster.

The School Focused Youth Service is required to develop close linkages with school support personnel located in government schools as well as with independent and Catholic schools, and community agencies in contact with young people who are no longer connected to the school system. Developing these linkages enables identification of service gaps, development of strategies to respond to those gaps, and the provision of a continuum of service intervention.

4.12.2 **Target group**

The service will assist in the development of cohesive and effective support services within/across schools and agencies with groups of young people aged between ten and eighteen years of age with a focus on those between ten and fourteen years of age.

4.12.3 **Core components**

The core components of the School Focused Youth Service are:

- The development of linkages/coordination between youth services (in schools and in the community) to enhance responsiveness to the needs of young people. This is undertaken by community mapping, development of services, enhancement of effectiveness of existing services, provision of information about service availability, and the establishment of protocols between services and schools.
- The capacity to purchase services as a result of identification, by the School Focused Youth Service, of current gaps in service availability. This involves the purchase of services through brokerage funds to address current gaps in service availability as identified by the schools.
and community clusters. Gaps will vary from cluster to cluster according to both the available service mix and the needs for various service types. These funds are limited and will generally be used to support group programs or strategies, rather than individual students. They are not meant to replace the provision of any existing services.

4.12.4 Major objectives and outcomes

The major objectives of the School Focused Youth Service are to:

- facilitate and strengthen collaborative structures and mechanisms between schools and the relevant youth services and community services which support young people, including welfare, health and mental health agencies
- provide linkages for agencies and schools which have a client base of young people and which directly support young people
- improve linkages, cohesiveness and integration of service provision for young people displaying 'at risk' behaviours who require support and intervention, and
- purchase services to meet the gaps in the current service system as identified at the local level.

The desired outcomes of the School Focused Youth Service are:

- a significant improvement in addressing the needs of 'at risk' young people as a result of effective collaborative structures and mechanisms between schools and relevant community agencies, and
- a significant improvement of the current service system as a result of the identification of gaps and subsequent service purchase.

Resources

Website

For further information about the School Focused Youth Service visit the following website:

http://www.sfys.infoxchange.net.au/