**CARRUM DOWNS SECONDARY COLLEGE**  
**Secondary Southern Metropolitan**

**Objectives**
- Investigate innovative and sustainable models of workforce organisation to increase workforce capacity by increasing the number of ES staff and paraprofessionals in the classroom and decreasing the amount of administrative duties undertaken by teachers.
- Provide a structure to shift the focus from ‘wellbeing’ to ‘learning support’ using ES staff, agency support and community members working together with teachers to address issues of wellbeing, literacy, numeracy and special needs.

**Classification/Rating**
- Changing roles: ES staff  
  Nature: Incremental  
  Stage: Implementing  
  Scope: All schools
- Expanding workforce: paraprofessionals

**Actions**

**Models of workforce organisation**
- Develop and implement a middle sub school structure involving four sub school teaching and learning teams comprised of a leading teacher, pastoral/classroom teachers and an ES staff member. The whole team is responsible for all curriculum planning and delivery and student management in their sub schools. Community mentors were allocated to work within teams on a volunteer basis.
- Conduct a skills audit of existing staff to ensure best fit for new roles, with ES staff taking on many administrative jobs currently done by teachers. Recruit staff and provide professional development (one recruit had been a teaching assistant in England and was given a special payment to mentor other assistants). Allot time for administrative tasks in the mornings so that a teacher assistant role could be undertaken in the classroom in the afternoons. Expand assistants’ role to include ‘cover supervisor’ (as in the UK). With more than one teacher per team, trialed ES staff as CRT when one teacher was absent.
- **Learning support**
  - Relocate all wellbeing and special needs staff under one roof (the ‘Ranch’) to ensure appropriate ‘case management’, decrease the number of students ‘falling through the net’ and also over servicing due to a lack of communication and documented referral processes for staff.
  - Hire new ES staff (i.e. coordinator, psychologist) and a leading teacher to join existing ‘learning support staff’ (special needs coordinator, 4 x integration aides, 2 paraprofessionals, psychologist, chaplain increased to full time).
  - Streamline referral process and increase community links.

**Impact**

**Models of workforce organisation**
- This approach significantly decreased work and stress levels of sub school leaders and teachers. The ES staff member was for the first time involved in all planning and meetings with the sub schools, which significantly lifted the profile of the ES staff and made the school look more closely at career paths and professional development plans for non-teaching staff.
- Students are oblivious to the difference between teaching and non-teaching staff and have embraced the new ES position, welcoming the *positive relationships* that have been established. Students commented on improved classroom behaviour and increased opportunity to get learning time with the teachers. Student absence and lateness levels have reduced.
- **Learning support**
  - Student Engagement Guidelines have been the enabler for a team approach to individual student needs. Housing all the staff together and timetabling regular meetings has led to a more cohesive team, meant that staged learning support plans and responses are developed for at risk students, and appropriate referral and learning support is provided. It has created greater role clarity around where the teacher support/pastoral role begins and ends. It also freed up time for development of new programs.
  - The new approach increased the numbers of students being supported and shifted the focus from wellbeing to *learning support*. The ‘centre has created a ‘safe’ place for students who are experiencing difficulty.
  - This model has lifted the *profile of ES staff* and paraprofessionals in the school. Most learning support staff are non-teaching staff, but with a leading teacher overseeing operations, program and curriculum development and delivery now form part of their duties.
  - This approach has allowed for a more structured approach to fostering relationships with community based services providers, resulting in more efficient and effective referral. It provided impetus for the school to form a **partnership** with Frankston Council which now supplies two youth workers and one counsellor to work in the centre on a regular basis.

**Future**
- The school will continue its workforce initiatives, seeking to get the mix and balance of teaching and non-teaching staff right and financially sustainable. Future activities will involve creating a career path that enables the school to employ the best people and pay them what they are worth, and attract more community partnerships to address the needs of students and families.