



AUTUMN 2019

# Brighter Futures

*A start in life*  
a brighter future for young australians



## © PROGRAM PERSONALISATION

# Alternative pathways

No two students are the same!

Our Student Support Team works towards understanding each individual, listening to the students and their parents, their challenges and goals, and then providing the most appropriate resources and support. For some, this can be as simple as ensuring they have the same school uniform as their peers; for others, it's about maximising their use of resources and maintaining engagement in their studies. Still others benefit from new opportunities and finding goals and pathways that motivate them – occasionally in totally new directions.

Years 10 & 11 are risk points for many students struggling to find motivation and a pathway as they look to the future. Our mentoring, in collaboration with parents and teachers, can be invaluable in helping them move forward.

Stephanie's end of Year 10 results indicated she was struggling. She received Cs across the board and failed English. As we talked with her about approaches to Year 11, it became clear that she had a passion for art and illustration; a passion that may best be fulfilled through following a non traditional path. Stephanie continued her education by pursuing a Certificate III in Visual Arts. Her motivation has soared and she's made fantastic use

of resources provided. We agreed with Stephanie goals for her to gain exposure for her artwork, and to develop her skills in the Adobe Suite (vital illustration software). Her progress over three months indicates a resolute engagement with study and a much brighter future.

Last year we began working with Rob, a Year 10 student increasingly disengaging from his schooling. Extra-curricular opportunities came to the rescue with his local Cadets program proving a turning point, inspiring Rob to set his sights on a future in the Army Engineering Corps. We sought advice on the requirements for such a career and spoke with Rob's parents and school counsellor – the study required is not for the fainthearted! Undaunted, and with his enthusiasm ignited, Rob was determined to catch up in his studies and forge ahead. In 2019, Rob is combining his core schoolwork with the completion of a Certificate I in Construction and Certificate II in Engineering. He also attends lunchtime tutoring. Rob is motivated by the pursuit of his dream.

*A Start in Life's* support extends beyond the provision of resources; we strive to understand each student, to recognise their individual talents and challenges and help guide them into positive change and achievement.



# Skills for the future

The WA Department of Education stated in 2018: *'STEM empowers individuals with the skills to succeed and adapt to this changing world.'*



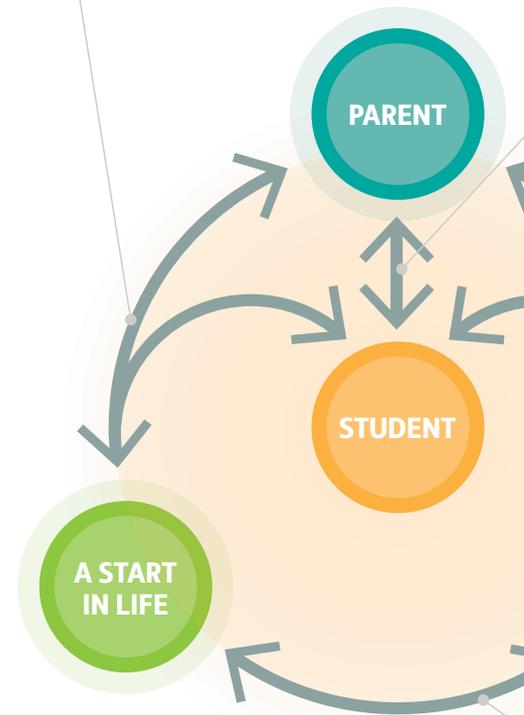
**A** *Start in Life's* charitable work centres on encouraging students to pursue higher education, develop into well-rounded community members and prepare for the workforce. There is a growing emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in the Australian school curriculum and in future possible career paths eg. environmental studies, technology development and medicine. *A Start in Life* has identified the need to ensure our support continues to facilitate STEM studies and the many benefits that flow from this. These benefits include developing the skills to succeed and adapt to this changing world, independent and critical thinking, digital literacy, analytical assessment, creativity in problem solving, and

communication. Our assistance began with supporting 'bring your own technology device' programs & extended to providing remedial tuition in STEM related areas. Now, with many of our students showing an increased interest in STEM-related extra-curricular activities, *A Start in Life* support has again been extended to facilitate participation in 'coding camps' out of school hours, learning the principles of coding and encouraging this interest long after the conclusion of the camp.

Our goal is to build students who not only strive to achieve academically, but who succeed in life after school. Nurturing students' interest in growing fields is an important part of this work and STEM is a vital piece of the jigsaw. With your help we will continue to encourage and support our students as they move forward into the future.

[www.education.wa.edu.au/what-is-stem-](http://www.education.wa.edu.au/what-is-stem-)  
[www.education.wa.edu.au/stem-in-public-schools](http://www.education.wa.edu.au/stem-in-public-schools)  
[www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/stem](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/stem)

- **Greater understanding** of parent involvement in after school study
- **Increased dialogue** on learning strategy and skill development
- **Insight** into challenges in home life and living situation



## © SUPPORT NETWORK

# Commun the key

We know that students achieve their best when, in addition to the appropriate resources, they have an **involved, empowered support community** behind them.



# All kinds of support

Our 96-year history would not be possible without a community committed to the education of young Australians.

Support we receive ranges from \$2 donations through corporate sponsorship to essential advocacy work – all play a vital role in building a better future through education for some 200 students each year.

Some of our quietest donors are our biggest supporters. Each and every month, for the last ten years, we have been roused by the receipt of a donation and a handwritten note from Mr Wilson. While Mr Wilson's donation may vary each month, from \$2 to \$40, we are always humbled to read within Mr Wilson's note of his commitment to give whatever he can. This commitment speaks volumes to his advocacy for young Australians and his belief in our students. We are honoured to receive such support.

For over ten years, Lowes have gone beyond the call in corporate

fundraising with their efforts extending to the well-known Father's Day and Christmas Card campaigns launched nationally each year. Their store teams and office staff have contributed significantly and they continue to align fundraising with advocacy for *A Start in Life*. Their understanding of our work spreads the word further among their customers and communities – essential in helping families find us and in recommending like-minded supporters to the program.

The community support we receive is often more than 'dollar value'. Every individual has a role and makes an impact. All shapes and sizes, great or small, your advocacy and fundraising matter. It is this support that has driven *A Start in Life* for 96 years and will allow it to continue beyond our rapidly approaching centenary.

This enhanced collaboration and communication, initiated by *A Start in Life*, together with a focus on each individual has created a shared and much expanded rapport and understanding. Our Student Support Team has benefitted from greater insight of student progress both at home and in the classroom, and is therefore able to create more dynamic plans for each student. Teachers have focus areas to better encourage parents in their support of students outside the classroom;

parents have improved tools to understand their children's education and discuss progress with school staff; and students are more active participants in their own education.

This active, committed support and communication between parents, students and teachers has never been more important and is a resource in which *A Start in Life* will invest for many years to come, enabling a brighter future for nearly 200 young Australians each year.

- Goals created a **framework** for home discussion
- **Parents engaged** in the detail of student work are better equipped to support study at home

- **Increased discussion** on development areas and progress
- Consistent **understanding** of student expectations between home and school

TEACHER

- **Alignment** of learning goals
- **Improved** tailoring of **support** plans to suit classroom resource needs

## ication is

Throughout 2018, *A Start in Life* focused on each element of the support network and achieved our goals of increasing student and parent engagement and widening communication with teachers.

Greater discussion with teachers enabled improved alignment of our learning goals with classroom goals, thus maximising the impact of support and resources provided. We gained additional input from parents to better understand their children's home study needs and challenges. We increased our focus on student engagement, going beyond resource requirements to the establishment of good study habits and relevant milestones.



Louise was determined!

A disability pensioner in a rural town, at 59 years of age Louise became sole carer of grandson Nathan, aged 14.

# Generations who persevere

**N**athan had endured a challenging childhood, having battled mental health issues, and was not engaged with his schooling. Undaunted, Louise was determined to understand his challenges and help him build resilience.

Access to education was limited in her rural area and Louise made the difficult decision to enrol Nathan in a public boarding school four hours from their home, where more support would be available. Initially he struggled, received poor marks for all his classwork and withdrew into himself. Ever determined, Louise drove alone to his school and requested meetings with teachers, the principal and the head of the boarding house. Together they explored the issues he faced and put in place structures to resolve bullying, help build his confidence and support his academic challenges.

Louise also contacted our Student Support Team to seek advice and resources to enable Nathan to move ahead and overcome the barriers he was facing. In the four years *A Start in Life* has worked with Nathan and Louise, we have witnessed the exceptional strength and diligence Louise has applied to her demanding role.

Nathan responded to his grandmother's devoted support and to the knowledge of a community rallying behind him. Now in Year 12, his school report notes fantastic engagement with classwork and commends him on his B average. He is thriving academically, contributing to his school community and has reported an increased confidence and ability to make friends. One mother of a young student commended him on his championing of her son who was also struggling with bullying.

Nathan has found part-time work for himself and is now the top staff member at a local restaurant, fitting shifts around his school schedule.

As with so many young people, committed support from family and community wanting the very best for them, enabled Nathan to overcome his challenges and move forward. His boarding school achievements are outstanding and a credit to Louise's unfailing determination and perseverance. Louise has not been alone in her journey and all supporters of *A Start in Life* should be proud of the role they played. As Nathan prepares for the future, Louise will be behind him every step of the way and, with your help, *A Start in Life* will continue offering the support that will give Nathan a sound foundation for the future.