



Evidence of impact underpinning Life Education Programs

September 2021



About ACER

Working closely with Life Education Australia, this project was independently undertaken by a team from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

Evaluation team

Dr Katherine Dix: Project Lead and analysis of existing quantitative data
Syeda Kashfee Ahmed: Rapid literature review; synthesis of existing LE evaluations and reports
Toby Carslake: Survey development and data analysis
Dr Shani Sniedze-Gregory: Project management and reporting

ACER is one of the world's leading educational research centres. As an international, independent, non-profit, non-government organisation, ACER generates its entire income through contracted research and development projects, and through developing and distributing products and services, with operating surplus directed back into research and development. ACER works with schools, education departments, ministries of education, higher education institutions, donor organisations, non-government organisations, industry, and other types of organisations around the world.

Contact details

Dr Katherine Dix
The Australian Council for Educational Research
186B Pulteney Street, Adelaide SA 5000
E: katherine.dix@acer.org W: www.acer.org

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned and funded by Life Education Australia. The Australian Council for Educational Research wishes to thank Life Education and the state and territory offices for their support and cooperation throughout the independent rapid review. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Kellie Sloane (CEO) and Jane Lowe (Project Manager) for their guidance and feedback in this milestone project.

Publication details (Final Report)

ISBN 978-1-74286-643-7

© Life Education Australia, 2021

Suite 101, 26 Pirrama Road, Pyrmont, Sydney NSW 2009

<https://www.lifeeducation.org.au/>

ABN 54 593 075 032



This report is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Permission may be granted for derivatives. Contact Life Education lea@lifeeducation.org.au

Recommended citation

Dix, K., Ahmed, S. K., Carslake, T. & Sniedze-Gregory, S. (2021). *Evidence of impact underpinning Life Education Programs*. Report for Life Education Australia. Australian Council for Educational Research.
<https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-643-7>

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Abbreviations and Acronyms | 4 |
| Executive summary | 5 |
| Background..... | 5 |
| Findings from the literature..... | 6 |
| Findings from analysis..... | 7 |
| Recommendations | 8 |
| 1 Introduction..... | 9 |
| 1.1 About the project | 9 |
| 1.2 About Life Education Australia | 9 |
| 1.3 About Life Education programs | 10 |
| 1.4 Theory of Change | 13 |
| 1.5 The rapid impact evaluation approach | 14 |
| 1.6 About this report | 15 |
| 2 Evidence from literature and research | 16 |
| 2.1 Previous evaluation reports..... | 16 |
| 2.2 Research literature | 16 |
| 2.3 Evidence of impact in previous research | 17 |
| 3 Evidence from the front line | 20 |
| 3.1 About Life Education Educators | 20 |
| 3.2 The impact of Educators | 21 |
| 3.3 The most effective Life Education programs | 24 |
| 3.4 Alignment with the Australian Curriculum..... | 26 |
| 3.5 Impact of a unique learning space | 27 |
| 3.6 Opportunities to develop..... | 29 |
| 4 Evidence from teachers | 31 |
| 5 Evidence of student impact..... | 35 |
| 5.1 Students' social skills | 37 |
| 5.2 Students' emotional skills | 37 |
| 5.3 Students' learning skills..... | 38 |
| 5.4 Students' social values | 38 |
| 5.5 Students' wellbeing..... | 39 |
| 5.6 Impact of Life Education on student social-emotional skills and wellbeing..... | 39 |
| 6 Findings, discussion and recommendations..... | 41 |
| 6.1 Findings..... | 41 |
| 6.2 Recommendations | 44 |
| References | 45 |
| Appendix A: Life Education Documents Analysed..... | 48 |
| Appendix B: Synthesis of Results from Previous Systematic Reviews | 55 |
| Appendix C: Educator Survey analysis | 61 |
| Appendix D: Data provided by Life Education..... | 70 |

Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|----------------|--|
| ACARA | The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority |
| ACER | Australian Council for Educational Research |
| ATSI | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders |
| Big Harold | Life Education Australia giraffe mascot |
| COVID-19 | Coronavirus disease pandemic of 2019 |
| DD | Direct delivery to students |
| DoH | Australian Government Department of Health |
| ICSEA | Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage |
| Life Education | Life Education Australia |
| LENSW | Life Education New South Wales |
| LEQ | Life Education Queensland |
| LEV | Life Education Victoria |
| LOTE | Language other than English |
| MLC/bus/van | Life Education’s mobile learning classrooms |
| NAPLAN | The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy |
| PL | Professional Learning |
| SEIFA | Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas of relative advantage and disadvantage |
| SES | Socioeconomic status |
| SEW | Social-emotional wellbeing |
| TAM | Transparent Anatomical Mannequin |
| TAM-e | 3D and augmented reality Transparent Anatomical Mannequin |

Executive summary

The health messages that Life Education covers are more important now than ever, with our modern Australian society plagued by a largely overweight/obese population, domestic violence and drug and alcohol misuse and abuse. Having a modern up-to-date teaching van will enable Life Education to continue to provide a top-class facility for all the schools and students who access their valuable program. Thank you. (Deputy Principal, State School, QLD)

Background

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) responded to a request from Life Education Australia in June 2021, to conduct an independent investigation that demonstrates the evidence base underpinning Life Education programs in primary schools Australia-wide. On the back of previous state-based investigations, this rapid evaluation of core Life Education programs aimed to present a national snapshot by drawing upon existing Life Education-specific evaluation data, existing ACER student wellbeing data, and accepted best practice in the field of student health and wellbeing education.

The project addressed the key evaluation questions:

1. *How are core Life Education programs underpinned by evidence-based best practice?*
2. *How are core Life Education programs impacting primary-aged student wellbeing outcomes that align to the health and physical education Australian and State Curriculums?*

For more than 40 years, Life Education has delivered a range of interactive curriculum-based programs to preschools, primary and secondary schools. The programs cover over 710,000 children every year across Australia to help them achieve the physical, social, and emotional health and wellbeing related outcomes of the Australian Curriculum.

The evaluation focussed on the core Life Education modules broadly categorised into three defined but interrelated streams, delivered to primary-aged students.



The evaluation gathered and consolidated the evidence by undertaking a review and synthesis of the literature to address the first research question, and then analysed new and existing data to address the second. This executive summary presents the findings of the rapid evaluation and makes a number of recommendations to inform future development of the program.

Findings from the literature

Previous Life Education evaluations have demonstrated that the sessions delivered by Life Education Educators play a valuable role in helping schools to strengthen the understanding and behaviour of students towards making safe and healthy choices. The evaluation of literature and previous research demonstrate that the *core Life Education programs are underpinned by evidence-based best practice* in the following ways.

- Life Education program content and structure is based on guidance from the WHO Health Promoting Schools Framework. Research on Health Promoting Schools suggest programs built on this framework can influence students' health and wellbeing. Although the effects reported are quite small, they are potentially important at a population level.
- Life Education practices continuous improvement by establishing structured, ongoing processes to collect and use data to inform site-level and system-level decision-making.
- Life Education promotes social-emotional learning and drug-alcohol awareness for children and young people throughout the curriculum by encouraging the use of contextualised universal and targeted approaches to best meet the needs of communities.
- Schools that are engaging Life Education year after year benefit from an ongoing trusted relationship with expert Life Education Educators. This builds foundational support that guides schools to develop a whole-site approach, tailored to their context.
- Life Education strengthens teacher competencies and capacity when teachers observe sessions as well as through the provision of information sessions, supported classroom modules, and resources for teachers, students, and parents.
- Life Education program modules are largely consistent with the commonly accepted features of effective school-based drug and health programs. Life Education modules are based on a practical theory of change, which is backed by:
 - evidence suggesting that building knowledge and skills is a protective factor
 - the visible outcomes in the limited number of studies that measured outcomes of the Life Education program, and
 - evidence that the Life Education program categorically increased knowledge and skills, leading to reduced problem behaviours and harm.

The review of literature also established that relative to the number of programs designed to promote Mental Health and Wellbeing stream, there were very few programs targeting the Physical Health and Safety streams. One systematic review approximated the ratio at 80% wellbeing-related programs, 15% physical health programs and 5% safety-related programs. This suggests that the Life Education modules, particularly those pertaining to the Physical Health and Safety streams, are filling a significant gap in the child protection curriculum.

Findings from analysis

The analysis of new data from a) Life Education Educators, b) existing data from teacher feedback surveys, and c) ACER's Social Emotional Wellbeing database, provided evidence that ***core Life Education programs are impacting primary-aged student wellbeing outcomes that align to the Australian and State Curriculum health and physical education outcomes***. The findings present a compelling picture of the positive impact Life Education programs are having on students, staff and the wider learning community, in the following ways.

- For a small group of students (3%), their community's engagement in Life Education learning has made them better at managing conflict (social skills, effect size Cohen's $d = 0.41$), more able to calm down when feeling bad (reduction in negative wellbeing, $d = 0.26$) and more considerate of other people (emotional skills, $d = 0.31$). While this empirical evidence indicates improvement in only a small number of students, this shift is significant at a population level.
- For all students, Life Education is instilling vital life-skills and knowledge (e.g. action in emergency, online safety, critical thinking, decision making) that are not widely available in other programs. It appears to also be having collateral impact by being highly inclusive of all students and creates opportunities for student voice.
- For teachers, Life Education programs support their professional development when they observe Educators model best-practice teaching and learning pedagogy. This can lead to improved classroom climate through students' improved interpersonal skills and awareness of mental health, but also through improved teaching and learning.
- For school communities, Life Education is providing support that helps to address real and current issues facing schools (e.g. bushfire, flood, substance abuse, isolation). The on-site visits, which are an increasingly rare feature in educational programs, are highly appreciated by schools, particularly those in low SES and remote communities that often miss out. It builds networks and makes marginalised communities feel connected and valued. Being on-site also allows the Educator to understand each school's unique context and adapt modules and resources, for example, to meet the needs of indigenous and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- For many families, Life Education programs are an inter-generational mainstay of their schooling experience. This builds trust and confidence in the key messaging and opens up opportunity for student-parent discussion at home, further supporting students to take on board important learnings.

Recommendations

Positive findings have emerged from this rapid evaluation, independently undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research during 2021. In a time when there has been unprecedented disruption to education and normal life due to the Covid-19 pandemic, risking the health and wellbeing of Australian children, programs like Life Education seem more important and relevant than ever.

The following recommendations are based on the view that the evaluation findings indicate that Life Education programs provide positive support for schools as an important part of a broader health and wellbeing curriculum, in partnership with families. It also recognises the overall significance of these formative years in children's lives and the need to provide impactful learning moments that can truly galvanise healthier life-long behaviours.

1. Taking into account the evaluation findings and the limitations of the approaches used, the main recommendation is that the broad processes and resources associated with the Life Education program be maintained as the basis for sustaining an effective national health and safety education program for all primary-aged school students in Australia.
2. A notable absence from this national evaluation is evidence from Tasmania. This poses an issue of equity. It is recommended that Life Education Victoria be supported to extend or reallocate resources to have a physical presence (e.g. mobile learning classroom) in Tasmania – to offer island children the same opportunities as mainland children.
3. The preparedness for Life Education to service remote and very remote communities is commendable and provides a highly unique and rich learning opportunity for children who would otherwise completely miss out. Mindful of the higher levels of substance abuse in some remote communities, it is recommended that particular attention be given to tailoring or developing resources that better meet the needs of remote and indigenous communities, and to expand services to reach more of these communities.
4. To maintain or increase program effectiveness, resources need to be kept relevant, current and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of schools and of their students. It is recommended that resources be reviewed or expanded to embrace current issues and to better encompass and reflect the diversity of modern Australia (disability, gender-diverse, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures). There is also opportunity to improve teacher access to resources and the communication around when and how to use them.
5. Life Education state and territory offices are monitoring the quality of program delivery by using teacher, parent and student feedback surveys. However, there is no standardisation of forms or centralisation of data. This limits its use to inform state and national improvement strategies and duplicates data management processes and efforts. It is recommended that Life Education centralise and unify online feedback forms as a centralised service used by state and territory offices, in the same way they provide the website.

1 Introduction

1.1 About the project

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) responded to a request from Life Education Australia in June 2021, to conduct an independent investigation that demonstrates the evidence base underpinning Life Education programs in primary schools Australia-wide. On the back of previous state-based investigations, this rapid evaluation of core Life Education programs aims to present a national snapshot by drawing upon existing Life Education-specific evaluation data, existing ACER student wellbeing data, and accepted best practice in the field of student health and wellbeing education.

The project aims to address the key evaluation questions:

1. *How are core Life Education programs underpinned by evidence-based best practice?*
2. *How are core Life Education programs impacting primary-aged student wellbeing outcomes that align to the health and physical education Australian and State Curriculums?*

1.2 About Life Education Australia

This section briefly introduces and describes the activities and components that comprise Life Education Australia programs.

Life Education delivers a range of interactive curriculum-based programs to preschools, primary and secondary schools. The programs cover over 710,000 children every year across Australia to help them achieve the physical, social, and emotional health and wellbeing related outcomes of the Australian Curriculum.

Life Education started in 1979 with the vision to motivate and enable children so they are capable of drawing on their own knowledge to make safer and healthier choices in life. The Life Education national team in NSW, oversees and supports a federated structure with six independent CEOs in QLD, NSW/ACT, WA, SA, NT and VIC/TAS. Over the last 41 years, Life Education has been Australia's largest provider of health and drug education to schools and empowered more than seven million school children. Today, Life Education continues with this aim of empowering children to make safer and healthier choices through a preventative health education program. A key strategy of Life Education is to "work at scale, delivering unique and impactful learning experiences year on year, directly supporting children, young people, teachers, and parents" (Life Education, 2020, p.8). The rapid evaluation brings together the evidence of impact.

The Life Education program strategy is being significantly supported by a Federal Government commitment of \$4.4 million dollars over 4 years, for the new Program Strategy for 2021 and beyond (Life Education, 2020). Life Education already represents a significant national investment in child and youth wellbeing and this investment has already achieved significant reach and outcomes. However, the evidence of impact is fragmented at the state and program level. Accordingly, it is timely to gather the theoretical and empirical evidence to present a consolidated national snapshot of the possible impact that Life Education is having on Australian children.

1.3 About Life Education programs

The overarching goal for the Life Education program is to educate and empower children and young people to inform and support them to make healthier choices in their lives. Life Education’s holistic, integrated and sustained ‘whole-of-community’ prevention program for reducing the misuse of drugs and alcohol, and increasing the uptake of health-promoting, and wellbeing-oriented behaviours, is aimed at undertaking the following goals:

- Building awareness on health-related topics.
- Encouraging students to reflect on health-related issues that affect them.
- Sharing knowledge students need to make informed decisions.
- Helping students to identify and develop response strategies.
- Supporting students to develop key skills and confidence that they need to apply those strategies on a day-to-day basis.

Life Education modules can be broadly categorised into three defined but interrelated streams (Physical Health, Safety, and Mental Health and Wellbeing), targeting three cohorts of primary-aged students (Junior, Middle, and Upper), as Table 1 summarises.

Table 1. Life Education core primary school programs

| Core Streams | Modules | Year | Focus areas |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Physical health | My Body Matters | Foundation | Hygiene nutrition, physical activity, and safety |
| | Ready Steady Go | Year 1 | Healthy eating, physical activity, how the body reacts to different situations |
| | All Systems Go | Years 2-4 | Body systems, basic body needs, medicine pathways and safety, assertive communication, nutrition, second-hand smoking risks |
| Safety | Safety Rules | Years 1-2 | Emergency response, general safety, supporting friends |
| | bCyberwise | Years 3-5 | Safe and respectful relationships, online and face to face, cyber safety |
| | On the Case | Years 5-6 | Smoking: effects- physical, social, environmental; decline in smoking in the community, laws, refusal skills, normative education, social influences |
| | On the Case - ATSI resource | | Smoking: effects- physical, social, financial, and environmental; decline in smoking in the community, laws, refusal skills, normative education, positive role models |
| | Think Twice | Years 5-7 | Alcohol – effects – physical, social, community, laws, safety, social influences, normative education, communication, and assertiveness skills in situations where others (e.g. adults, designated driver) may be drinking alcohol, help seeking strategies. |
| | Decisions | | Drugs, legal and illegal, effects, impacts, laws, influences, decision making, normative education |
| Mental Health & Wellbeing / Safety | Mind Your Medicine | Years 3-6 | Medicines what they are, how they work, safety, why some people need them, assertive communication |
| Mental Health & Wellbeing | Harold’s Friend Ship | Foundation - Year 1 | Qualities of a good friend, feelings and emotions, early warning signs, safe and unsafe situations |
| | Growing Good Friends | Year 2 | Positive relationships, food advertising, and labelling, nutrition |
| | Relate Respect Connect | Years 5-7 | Skills and strategies to develop positive relationships, online and face to face |

Source: LE Streams Strategy, pp.13-17; Mckinsey 2020

The modules are designed and tailored to meet the needs of the different year levels that focus on areas under the three core streams, ensuring that these modules are aligned to the [Australian Curriculum, Health and Physical Education](#). These core program modules are the focus of this rapid impact evaluation.

Table 2 presents the annual reach of the programs, aligned by the modules for each primary level cohort. It reports the number of students that have participated in each module from 2016 to December 2020. The additions of ‘Safety Rules’ and ‘Harold’s Friend Ship’ in 2017, along with ‘Relate Respect Connect’ in 2018, significantly increased the number of students involved with Life Education.

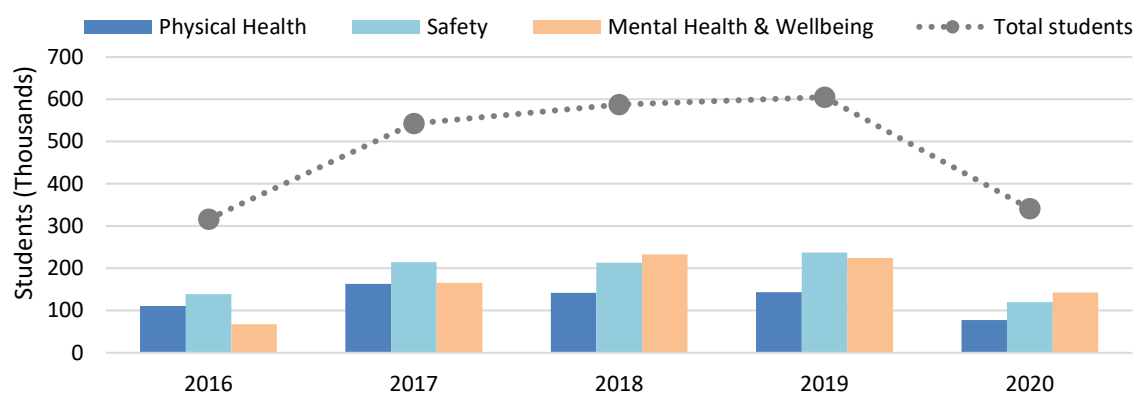
Table 2. National student reach of core primary school Life Education modules 2016-2020

| Focus/Stream | Level | Modules | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Physical Health | Junior Primary | My Body Matters | 30957 | 63114 | 55504 | 53932 | 30716 |
| | | Ready, Steady, Go! | 27133 | 47658 | 38087 | 39117 | 21640 |
| | Middle Primary | All Systems Go | 52101 | 52218 | 48357 | 50257 | 25521 |
| Safety | Junior Primary | Safety Rules | - | 43753 | 50857 | 52558 | 28518 |
| | Middle Primary | bCyberwise | 62781 | 78777 | 78118 | 77502 | 46872 |
| | Upper Primary | On the Case | 40930 | 30429 | 25652 | 23851 | 9359 |
| | | Decisions | 262 | 41050 | 40575 | 59949 | 25660 |
| | | Think Twice | 34865 | 20400 | 17701 | 23599 | 9802 |
| Mental Health & Wellbeing / Safety | Middle Primary | Mind Your Medicine | 40198 | 48495 | 48905 | 50773 | 26945 |
| Mental Health & Wellbeing | Junior Primary | Harold's Friend Ship | - | 50833 | 58659 | 62924 | 37444 |
| | | Growing Good Friends | 27245 | 66203 | 62611 | 65124 | 37893 |
| | Upper Primary | Relate Respect Connect | - | - | 62529 | 45546 | 40752 |
| Total | | | 316472 | 542930 | 587555 | 605132 | 341122 |

Source: Internal: Life Education (2020b)

The results in Table 2 are graphed in Figure 1 to show the upward trend of student engagement, reaching around 600,000 students in 2019, until the impact of COVID-19 was felt through school closures in Australia in 2020. While *Physical Health* engagement remained relatively constant, there was substantial growth in the *Mental Health & Wellbeing* and *Safety* streams due to uptake of the new program offerings.

Figure 1. National Student reach per Primary Focus Stream 2016-2020



Source: Life Education (2020b)

The range of Life Education programs covers the following topics: drugs and alcohol, personal safety, cyber-safety, food and nutrition, physical activity, social and emotional wellbeing, and the human body. The programs are delivered directly to students by a team of trained Life Education educators, assisted by classroom teachers and supported by the Life Education program team through a range of pre- and post-visit resources. Some components are also available online.

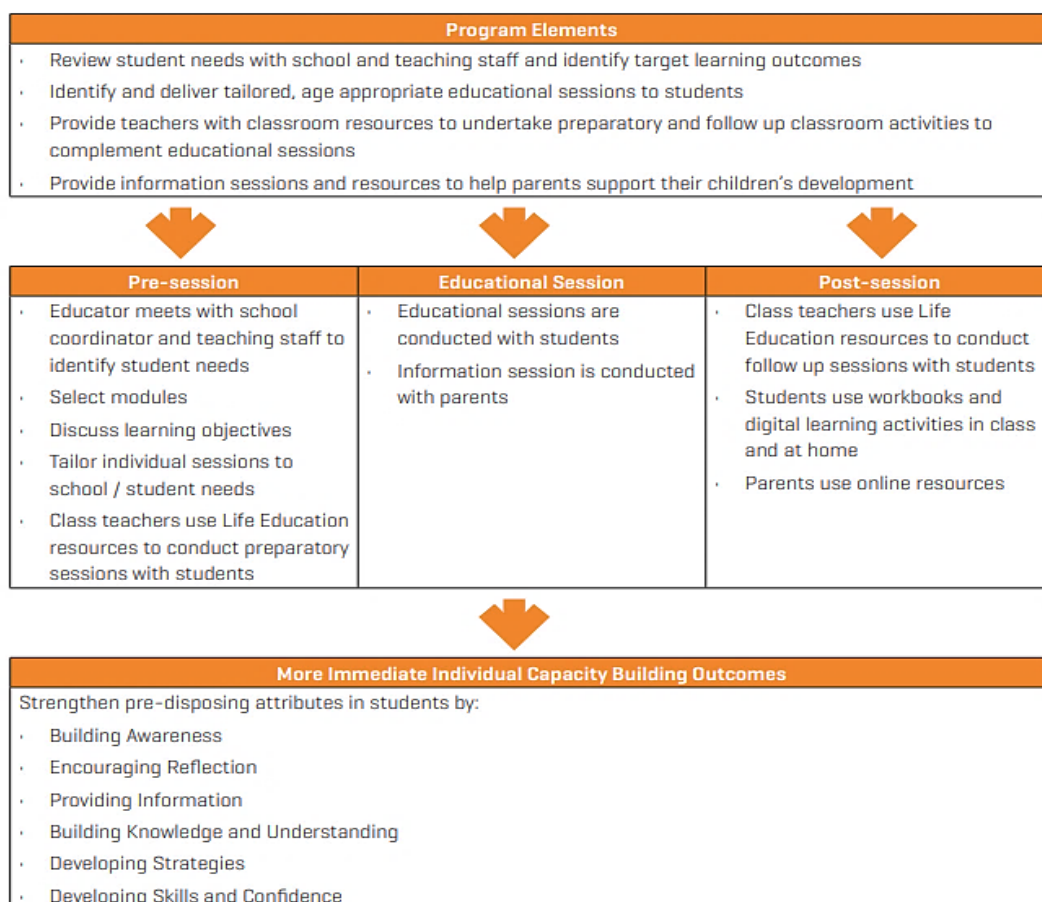
Life Education educators hold a qualification in teaching, childcare or relevant discipline and are trained experts in the delivery of health education. They undertake an extensive initial training program as well as practical in-field experience to refine these skills.

The core programs generally follow a similar approach:

1. Pre-session: School provides preparatory activities, including preparing students and parents
2. Educational session: Life Education educator visits the school and delivers a high-quality, evidence-based, interactive, and age-appropriate program, typically delivered in a Life Education mobile classroom
3. Post-session: Teachers run follow-up activities using materials provided by Life Education.

The intended outcomes of this direct approach are that students build knowledge and understanding of safer and healthier behaviours, as well as skills and confidence about how to make healthy decisions. Figure 2 presents the program logic model (Life Education, 2017: *Our Evidence Base*).

Figure 2. Life Education program logic model



Source: [Life Education](#) (2017,p.3)

The modules consist of a series of activities supported by a set of resources intended to achieve specific outcomes among students, parents, and teachers. These modules empower children and young people with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to make informed decisions about their health and develop their understanding of the various counter influences they will face, such as the ability to recognise these influences, and the skills, the techniques, and the arguments to resist them. Through various delivery modes (mobile-learning centres, school visits from the mascot, etc.) the students are provided the opportunity to practice these skills with their peers, using real life role-playing activities, and receive constructive feedback.

Life Education resources are systematically reviewed and updated to reflect the latest statistics, guidelines and information, and new content is developed through input and guidance from relevant stakeholders from the education and health sectors to maintain program currency.

1.4 Theory of Change

Underpinning the Life Education program logic model is a theory of change that attempts to summarise the key inputs, processes, outcomes and impacts of participating in Life Education modules. It provides a comprehensive description of how and why a desired change is expected to happen and identifies the key factors that should be explored in an evaluation. This section proposes a theory of change for Life Education programs to provide a foundation for the rapid evaluation.

The challenge and rationale

Changes are needed in the way individuals behave as families, communities, and as members of the population to improve the short- and longer-term health and wellbeing of a society. Thus, initiatives aimed at educating and empowering individuals, and supporting them to make healthier choices in life is a critical element of a holistic, integrated and sustained 'whole-of-community' approach to create sufficient behavioural change at a population level.

With this understanding and heightened concerns about the misuse of drugs and alcohol amongst young people in the 1970s, along with the consequences of such poor health behaviours, the Life Education program was established. The program has a focus on preventive strategies for reducing the misuse of drugs and alcohol and encouraging healthy behaviours and wellbeing through the education of children and young people.

Assumptions and external factors

As a response to COVID-19, Life Education teams across the country had to embrace a virtual operation model through e-learning, virtual classrooms, and a range of other remote options to directly support teachers, students, and their parents. As the pandemic continues, this model is expected to grow and lead to further innovations in collaborations and growth, with the following goals:

- The Life Education educators work within a set of standards that must now include their proficiency with various effective and impactful online learning delivery techniques.
- The program team continues to support the Life Education educators and school teachers with resources and modules to upskill them through this journey from physical to virtual program delivery.

Keeping in mind these goals, assumptions and external factors, a proposed theory of change for Life Education programs is presented in Figure 3. The theory of change indicates how program inputs – the societal, environmental, and human context, and program goals – are subjected to mediators, processes, and activities, resulting in program outputs and impacts.

Figure 3. The Proposed Life Education Theory of Change

| Program Inputs | Mediators, processes & activities | Outputs | Impact |
|---|--|---|---|
| Societal challenge and rationale Program goals- physical health, safety, and mental health and wellbeing Assumptions and external factors Participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Parents, caregivers, and the school community • School teachers • School leadership • Wellbeing leaders • Life Education educators Other stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department for Education • The Minister for Education | Information sessions and forums led by Life Education educators . | Teachers, students, and parents/ carers are aware of most health-related topics. | Educated and empowered children and young people who can make healthier choices in their lives, because of their engagement in Life Education’s holistic, integrated and sustained ‘whole-of-community’ preventive program, aimed at reducing the misuse of drugs and alcohol, and increasing the uptake of health-promoting, and wellbeing-oriented behaviours. |
| | School visits, mobile learning centres and follow up support from Life Education educators . | Students have the knowledge to make informed decisions | |
| | The Life Education website and the Healthy Harold mascot | Students can reflect on the health-related issue affects them | |
| | Resources for schoolteachers, parents, and students (through various points of contact – during workshops, info sessions or online) | Teachers can help students identify and develop response strategies to health-related issues | |
| | Online learning modules, and resources for teachers and parents (including games and activities for students) | Students have developed key skills and confidence for applying those strategies on a day-to-day basis | |

1.5 The rapid impact evaluation approach

To address the research questions, this rapid evaluation provides, for the first time, a national synthesis of evidence from available data and documentation. This is being undertaken through four lines of investigation.

1. A synthesis of findings from previous Life Education evaluation reports and impact assessments. This investigation gathers evidence from the numerous program evaluations that have been undertaken over the years by Life Education in its State and Territory Offices to summarise a national snapshot of impact.
2. A synthesis of published systematic reviews of the effectiveness of programs related to the three streams (Physical Health, Safety, and Mental Health and Wellbeing) and their modes of delivery. This investigation gathers evidence from national and international studies, systematic reviews, and evidence-synthesis reports to provide support around the validity of Life Education’s program approach and strategy.
3. National Educators’ Survey. Using a purpose designed online survey, this investigation gathers important insights and reflections from Life Education educators – those who work directly with schools and their students and teachers.

4. Secondary analysis of program feedback and impact data, including a case-control matched analysis using ACER's Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) survey data (2018-2019). This investigation brings together and consolidates operational and feedback data from the State and Territory Offices for secondary analyses at the national level. From this data, the schools participating in Life Education programs (treatment group) are then identified in the national SEW database and a case-matched sample of similar non-participating schools (control group) is identified. Comparing the social-emotional learning and wellbeing outcomes of similar-aged students in the matched groups of schools may provide further evidence of Life Education program impact.

The scope of this rapid impact evaluation is limited to core Life Education programs used with primary school-aged students. Programs delivered in early childhood and secondary school settings, and those delivered in only one or two states are excluded from this evaluation. The focus of data analysis is 2018-2019, prior to COVID-19, which significantly impacted program delivery. ACER were reliant on Life Education to provide all available program and operational data (retrieved from State and Territory Offices) as well as previous Life Education evaluation reports (published and unpublished) and other relevant documents for consideration in this evaluation. The Life Education Educator survey was independently administered by ACER.

A summary of the documentation provided is given in Appendix A: Life Education Documents Analysed.

1.6 About this report

This report for Life Education Australia, presents the finding of a rapid evaluation which undertakes four main lines of investigation to gather and consolidate the evidence.

Chapter 2 presents a synthesis of findings from previous Life Education evaluation reports and impact assessments. It also investigates the broader research literature by synthesising published systematic reviews of the effectiveness of programs related to the three streams (Physical Health, Safety, and Mental Health and Wellbeing) and their modes of delivery.

Chapter 3 presents the results from a survey of Life Education Educators that gathered insights and reflections from those on the front line, who deliver the programs to students in schools.

Chapter 4 presents results from the feedback of teachers (n = 7551), who observed the Life Education sessions that their students engaged in during 2019-2020. This is the first time data has been gathered from Life Education state offices, consolidated and analysed at a national-level.

Chapter 5 uses Life Education booking records from 2018-2019 to identify participating schools and undertake a case-control matched analysis using ACER's Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) survey data from 2019.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings and recommendations that have emerged from this rapid evaluation.

2 Evidence from literature and research

A document review was undertaken to consolidate and synthesise the main findings from individual Life Education reports produced over the last few years, into a clear set of overall findings for Life Education programs. A total of 22 documents, which includes past Life Education program evaluation reports, program documents, internal feedback data reports and such, were thoroughly reviewed and the findings extracted and consolidated. While much of this detail sits in Appendix A, the following summarises the main findings.

2.1 Previous evaluation reports

Previous evaluation reports and other documents demonstrate:

1. Life Education is based on guidance from two key framework documents Health Promoting Schools Framework (WHO, 2000) and Principles for School Drug Education (Meyer, 2004).
2. The Life Education program modules are largely consistent with the commonly accepted features of effective school-based drug and health programs. These are based on a practical theory of change, which is backed by:
 - evidence suggesting that building knowledge and skills is a protective factor,
 - the outcomes are visible in the limited number of studies that measured outcomes of the Life Education program, and
 - there is also evidence that the Life Education program categorically increased knowledge and skills, and this then appeared to reduce harm.
3. Life Education provides very high-quality drug and alcohol education modules that are:
 - evidence-based,
 - have high service standards,
 - show a high level of satisfaction among teachers and students, and
 - have strong educational outcomes.

2.2 Research literature

This section also synthesises relevant literature by drawing findings from existing published systematic reviews and aligns this evidence to the Life Education streams and core program modules. Twenty-three systematic reviews (SRs) were identified as relevant to Life Education's streams. The findings are summarised next.

The mental health and wellbeing domain was identified as a major theme in school programs across most systematic reviews (13). The second most common theme across reviews was physical health (10). A few studies also reviewed interventions related to safety (risky behaviours, tobacco, drug, and alcohol) mostly in conjunction with mental health and wellbeing (4) or physical health (3).

The evidence from literature shows that:

- Health promoting schools can have an impact on students' health and wellbeing by reducing BMI, smoking and incidence of being bullied, and increasing physical activity, fitness, and fruit and vegetable intake. The effects reported are quite small but are potentially important at a population level (Langford et al., 2015).

- The most effective programs on school drug and alcohol education are dependent on social influence concepts (Cuijpers, 2002), the delivery of relevant material at appropriate periods in the development of young people (Lee et al., 2016; McBride, 2003; Soole et al., 2008), and the provision of normative information on drug use to emphasise that use is lower than many young people believe (Lee et al., 2016; Ahmed et al., 2018).
- Students who participate in well-designed, evidence-informed social-emotional (SEL) programs have improved wellbeing, better pro-social and health-related behaviours, and greater academic achievement (Ashdown and Bernard, 2012; Durlak et al., 2011; Puerta et al., 2016; Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017; Dix, et.al., 2020).
- Schools need to collaborate with the community to implement best practice, comprehensive sexual health education, although partnerships must be anchored in the familiar territory of the school (Ollis & Harrison, 2016).
- There are very few programs targeting the Physical Health and Safety streams relative to the number of programs designed to promote Mental Health and Wellbeing stream. Based on quality evaluations of programs in these three streams, one systematic review (Dix et al., 2020) reported the ratio of 87 studies at 77% wellbeing-related, 18% physical health-related and 5% safety-related. If we consider the original 701 studies that were first screened for inclusion in the Dix review, the ratio is even more telling: 84% wellbeing-related programs, 10% physical health programs (which included healthy eating programs), and 6% safety-related programs (preventing harm from alcohol and tobacco).

2.3 Evidence of impact in previous research

Error! Reference source not found. synthesises the findings from the document analysis and the extant literature.

Table 3. Evidence of impact across the three core streams of Life Education

| Physical Health stream | | |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Module | Evidence synthesis from SRs | Facts from Life Education reports and internal surveys |
| My Body Matters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activity interventions can reduce BMI by 0.38 kg/m (Langford, 2015) | <p>Student feedback surveys: QLD 2015 data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64.9% indicated that they would exercise daily • 84.9% of students indicated they would choose healthy food all or most of the time • 90% of students said that they thought that they were more likely to think about what they eat and to eat healthy foods <p>Teacher assessment results: NSW 2021 data</p> <p>Assessment results (using the Student Assessment Tool) by Teachers show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% discussed the effects of physical activity on bodies • 86% identified healthy foods vs sometimes foods • 90% identified that bodies need oxygen, nutrients, and water to stay alive |
| Ready Steady Go | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPS interventions can reduce smoking by 23% and bullying by 17% (Langford, 2015) | |
| All Systems Go | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activity significantly and positively impacts children’s cognitive outcomes and academic achievement (Effect size 0.28) showing a small to medium effect (Fedewa, 2011) • Participation in physical activity is positively associated to academic performance in children (Singh, 2012) • Aerobic physical activities (of at least a moderate intensity) can have the greatest health benefit, while for bone health, high-impact weight bearing activities usually have more impact (Janssen, 2010) • Longer-term nutrition education programs can provide children with tools to achieve a healthy weight status (Price, 2017) | |

| Safety stream | | |
|--|---|--|
| Module | Evidence synthesis from SRs | Facts from Life Education reports and internal surveys |
| Safety Rules bCyberwise On the Case Think Twice Decisions Mind Your Medicine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media literacy education on underage drinking can improve young people's alcohol related cognitions, attitudes, and behavioural intentions. (Hindmarsh, 2015) A school- and community-wide approach is needed for effective intervention strategies to target different types of bullying behaviours (Rawlings, 2019) Multicomponent school-based interventions, for example, including school policy changes, parent involvement, and work with local communities, are effective for promoting sexual health and preventing bullying and smoking. (Shackleton, 2016) | <p>LE NSW evaluation 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On The Case; Think Twice; Decisions modules positively impact student knowledge regarding tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; but no other significant effects were noted. (Hodder et al., 2018) LE sessions (On The Case; Think Twice) are effective in improving students' knowledge and skills for making healthier and safer choices. (Hill, 2015) The Decisions module, based on best-practice principles related to alcohol and drug education, has increased understanding, knowledge, and attitudes, and potentially capability, among students and teachers' ability to deliver the Curriculum; as well as enabling parents to complement the work of LE and the child's teacher (Kantar, 2019; Craig, 2021) <p>Students feedback survey: QLD 2015 data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> over 90% of students indicated they were less likely to smoke 86% of students indicated they would be likely to make safer decisions about alcohol in the future <p>NSW 2021 data</p> <p>Surveys conducted on 4 modules (Mind your medicine, On the case, Think twice, and Decisions) show that: positive results were found both in behavioural change intention and increase in knowledge awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95.3% know to always check with an adult if they need to use medicine 95.6% of students feel they can say "no" if they are offered a cigarette 85.5% of students learnt that drugs change the way the body works <p>Teacher survey: VIC 2019 data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 99% Of teachers find the LEV sessions to be student-centred 99% Of teachers said students were actively engaged in sessions <p>Teacher assessment results: NSW 2021 data</p> <p>Assessment results (using the Student Assessment Tool) by Teachers show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% recognised actions they can take to stay safe 96% explored techniques to respond to unsafe online and offline situations 95% recognised that drugs can be classified, e.g., stimulants, legal status <p>Parent Survey: All States (2019) data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of parents surveyed were concerned, with 81.4% of parents admitting they are worried about underage drinking in relation to their own children 87% of parents noted online safety as their biggest concern |

| Mental Health and Wellbeing stream | | |
|---|--|---|
| Module | Evidence synthesis from SRs | Facts from Life Education reports and internal surveys |
| Mind Your Medicine Harold's Friendship Growing Good Friends Relate Respect Connect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Skills Training (LST) is effective in improving emotional and social skills, and healthy behaviours. (Sancassiani, 2015) Universal school-based social-emotional development programs improve social behaviour, problem behaviours, and academic performance (11-percentile gain), with the Effect Size (ES) for social-emotional skill performance (0.69) being the largest (Durlak, 2011) The implementation of a community component was associated with a significant higher effect size on children's social and emotional adjustment (ES = 0.22) and behavioural adjustment (ES = 0.13) (Goldberg, 2019) Interventions focused on the whole school have been found to be more effective in reducing bullying than interventions delivered through simply classroom curricula or social skills training, but the programs did not show positive returns in the long-term (Cantone, 2015) School-based mental health literacy programs can improve knowledge, attitudes, and help-seeking behaviour (Wei, 2017) | <p>LE NSW evaluation 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Education is highly trusted by teachers and students and their modules are useful in addressing specialised curriculum requirements, contributing to student awareness of tricky issues in their lives and contributing to assertive action in specific settings (e.g., through modules such as On The Case; Think Twice; Decisions) (Clear Horizon, 2019a) <p>Students feedback survey: VIC 2019 data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 84% - reported helping themselves or others in tricky situations with friends 55% of students said that they sought out more information about respectful relationships after the visit <p>Teacher survey: VIC 2019 data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 98% of teachers feel the sessions equip students to positively change their behaviour 84% of students helped themselves or friends in tricky situations in the first 3-6 weeks after the session <p>Teacher assessment results: NSW 2021 data</p> <p>Assessment results (by teachers using the Student Assessment Tool) show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% discussed thoughts and feelings about safe and unsafe situations 100% discussed how positive relationships make them feel 97% explored the characteristics of respectful relationships 86% identified strategies to maintain respectful relationships <p>Parent survey: All States (2019) data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30% parents reported their child has been bullied |

For further detail, Appendix A presents the full list of previous evaluations reports (Figure 19), and other key documents (Figure 20) that formed part of the review. For detailed evidence from previous systematic reviews on school-based interventions see Appendix B (Figure 21).

3 Evidence from the front line

This section presents the results of the *Life Education Educator Survey* administered during August 2021 via state and territory CEOs to their staff. It captures Educators’ views and experiences delivering the programs across Australia.

Educators also provided specific examples of feedback that they had been emailed from school staff and students, providing another source of independent evidence of the positive impact that the programs might have.

3.1 About Life Education Educators

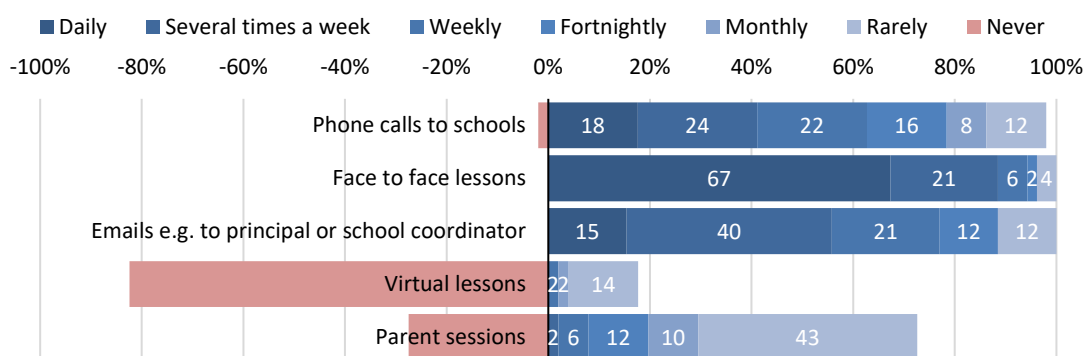
The survey covered key aspects of the educator role and aimed to capture insights about how educators currently interact with sites, including the method of contact and frequency. Table 4 shows that 52 Educators participated in the survey, with representation from all Life Education offices (QLD, NSW/ACT, WA, SA, NT and VIC/TAS). Educators typically visit 11 primary schools per term to deliver the programs but this could range from 5 to 35 schools depending on locations and time of year.

Table 4. *Life Education Educator survey responses*

| State | Responses | Average school visits per term (range) |
|--------------|-----------|--|
| NSW/ACT | 27 | 11 (5 - 35) |
| NT | 3 | 8 (6 - 10) |
| QLD | 10 | 14 (5 - 26) |
| SA | 4 | 11 (8 - 15) |
| VIC/TAS | 4 | 14 (8 - 30) |
| WA | 4 | 8 (7 - 10) |
| Total | 52 | 11 (5 - 35) |

When not being impacted by COVID restrictions, two-thirds of Educators (67%) typically worked directly with schools on a daily basis, delivering face-to-face lessons (see Figure 4), with another 27% of Educators doing this on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

Figure 4. *When you are not being impacted by COVID restrictions, how often do you typically work directly with schools?*



3.2 The impact of Educators

Importantly, we used this opportunity for Educators to share their personal experiences working with schools and delivering the Life Education programs. Three questions were asked, inviting them to share moments of clear impact (see Table 5), examples of positive feedback received from schools (see Table 6), or other anecdotes where they felt they made a difference (see Table 7). For brevity, the following tables provide a sample selected from all the Educator comments given in Appendix C.

The evidence emerging from Educators' comments, shown in Table 5 (also see Appendix C), about moments when they felt they really helped a learning community, relate to:

Student outcomes:

- instilling vital skills and knowledge in students: action in emergency, online safety, critical thinking, decision making, respect
- creating opportunities for authentic student engagement for all students by using concrete metaphors and creative modalities that students can really connect with
- creating memorable learning moments triggered by iconic stimulus like Healthy Harold
- ensuring that the program is inclusive of every student, particularly those with additional needs, learning difficulties or disability
- creating opportunities for student voice

Teacher outcomes:

- providing additional administrative support to school staff and going the extra mile
- modelling best practice teaching and learning pedagogy, with teachers wanting more
- changing classroom climates due to students improved interpersonal skills
- normalising and destigmatising the conversations around mental health

School community outcomes:

- providing highly relevant content that addresses real and current issues facing schools
- giving low SES and remote communities a voice and making them feel valued
- building lasting trust and strong respectful relationships within the education community, especially important and valued in very remote communities that often miss out
- extending the classroom program to running young women's forums in indigenous communities
- adapting the program to best meet the needs of indigenous and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- reaching beyond the 'van' and beyond the school-gate into homes and families

Table 5. Have you got any moments to share when you felt you really helped a learning community?

| Modules/outcomes | Educators' comments about moments of clear impact |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly relevant content | A school affected by bushfires and another affected by floods chose the Safety Rules module and we focused on different types of emergency role plays and how to keep safe in these situations (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vital skills | Safety rules, I was told a boy at the school I visited had to ring 000 and he learnt that at Healthy Harold! (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> using concrete metaphor that students can connect with | I was teaching bCyberwise to Grade 3 and 4, and one of the activities we did while discussing cyberbullying was getting one student to come up to the front and hold an A4 picture of Computer Jack. We then instructed the class to give examples of online bullying - where it takes place and what it looks like - and every time an example was given the volunteer student would make a fold in the paper. Once the paper was as small as it could go, we discussed things that could be done / said to make Computer Jack feel better, and with each example the paper was unfolded. We then looked at the paper crease marks and had a discussion around, that no matter what we did or said, those dents would forever be on that paper and this is a practical example on how bullying affects people. It leaves marks that perhaps might never go away. The class was really involved and engaged and the teacher later explained that they had recently experienced cyberbullying in the class, so it was a great activity for them to learn about the long term mental affects cyberbullying can have on people (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normalising and destigmatising the conversations around mental health | In regards to mental health, it is amazing how many children know what impact that bullying and cyberbullying can have on someone's mental health. When asked the question, "How can words hurt someone?", we are increasingly hearing children using terminology such as 'anxiety', 'depression', 'mental health' and even on occasion 'suicide'. The children take these topics seriously and talk about what people could do if they were feeling sad or depressed. (WA Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a sense of class community Impacting interpersonal skills | RRC LEAP - a six-week program build around RRC. A teacher had wonderful feedback about how much the lessons had helped her class. She said that the sessions helped to build a sense of community within the classroom, students were expressing their feelings more clearly and their communication skills had improved. Wonderful feedback! (SA Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extending the classroom program to running young women's forums in indigenous communities | Life Education NT support some communities to run young women's forums as an extension of the program in classroom. These forums encourage young girls to design and develop a day that empowers positive health and wellbeing for women in the community. Across 2019/2020 and later in 2021 LENT will have run 3 women's forums for 3 remote communities Lajamanu, Yaralin and Kalkaringji. These days have been well received by women of all ages in community and supported by local Aboriginal Medical Services. (NT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit very remote schools in at-risk communities that miss out | Plenty, but recently an almost 2000km round trip to teach children in a very remote school. Due to their geographical location and socioeconomic status, a lot of organisations choose not to travel out there or expect the school to pay for their expenses. The children and staff were very grateful for the effort we went to, to ensure they didn't miss out on a visit from Life Education, and the costs involved for little in return were not lost on them. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visible changes in student behaviour | My learning communities are the Primary Schools in the Darwin, rural and regional surrounds. When I arrived in 2007, 4300 students (only 20 schools booked) attended the LE program that year. Now 10 000 students and 50 schools are on my books. I have 14 years of moments! 1) When a crying mother hugs me at school drop off because her child has eaten vegetables for the first time this week. 2)When the first time an autistic, often non-communicative student takes it upon himself to become the 'lunch-box monitor' for his class post Harold's visit. 3) When a student tries food other than chicken nuggets and spaghetti bolognese because Harold gave him a lunch box for his fruits and vegetables. 4) When students recite body facts they have learnt from previous years 5) When students remember my name but forget Harold's 6) When teacher's arrange teaching students to attend at the time of our visit so they can learn 'best practice - behaviour management' - My favourite, because I'm not a teacher! 7) When a student who has never read in front of the class confidently does so for the first time in the Life Education van, reducing the teacher to tears. (NT Educator) |

While many staff reported that they regularly received positive feedback, it was mainly verbal or in session feedback forms as the following examples of comments suggest. Other staff did receive emails but didn't especially keep them or weren't easily able to find them.

My feedback is mostly given verbally, either by teachers directly after the session or via Principals/co-ordinators before the end of the scheduled visit. (NSW/ACT Educator)

As I am new to Life Education I have not received any emails as yet. I do get plenty of verbal feedback from teachers saying that the sessions were valuable. (WA Educator)

Not in an email but certainly verbally and in teacher survey data. (WA Educator)

Many Educators were able to provide examples of feedback they had received from schools. Table 6 presents some examples of the feedback received, which highlight the quality of delivery, levels of student engagement, the importance of the messages, and value-adding to the health curriculum. Appendix C provides all the examples of feedback received by Educators from appreciative schools.

Table 6. Have you received positive feedback from teachers or students in an email?

| Emailed feedback received by Educators |
|--|
| <i>The feedback received has been awesome, all staff were so happy with how you delivered the modules and commented on how engaging you were. (Primary school, NSW)</i> |
| <i>"Fun and informative sessions" (Catholic school NSW)</i> |
| <i>"Friendliness and professional delivery of programs" (Primary school, NSW)</i> |
| <i>"The success of the session is very much dependent upon the strength of the presenter" (Primary school NSW)</i> |
| <i>"Great. A variety of learning experiences were delivered to engage students' learning" (Primary school NSW)</i> |
| <i>Thank you for delivering all these wonderful modules to our students. The feedback from both students and teachers has been great! (Primary school, NT)</i> |
| <i>The health messages that Life Education covers are more important now than ever, with our modern Australian society plagued by a largely overweight/obese population, domestic violence and drug and alcohol misuse and abuse. Having a modern up-to-date teaching van will enable Life Education to continue to provide a top-class facility for all the schools and students who access their valuable program. Thank you. On behalf of our staff and students. (Deputy Principal, State school, QLD)</i> |
| <i>Hi Life Ed team, I would like to give some formal feedback from when [Educator] taught our Life Ed lesson for [School] Year 6C. As usual, the content was very appropriate and the way [Educator] presented was fantastic. The discussions were interesting and she does a brilliant job of engaging the students every year. She's awesome and the van is a fantastic addition to our Health and Social Skills curriculum. (Year 6 teacher, State school, QLD)</i> |
| <i>A very engaging session. Certainly, relevant and reinforces what we teach in the Child Protection unit - bCyberwise. (Primary school, SA)</i> |
| <i>Thanks so much for coming over to KI. There is so much value in your sessions. It would be awesome if it was an annual visit to support our students. The feedback from students who attended today's session, was extremely positive (Teacher, Kangaroo Island, SA)</i> |
| <i>We have just had the Life Ed Van visit our small school and as expected the students loved it. [Educator] is a brilliant presenter. She has great control, is engaging, informative and very encouraging. [Educator's] ability to learn student's names in such a small time frame is amazing. We all look forward to the Life Ed Van, especially as [Educator] is the teacher. (Grade 2/3 teacher, VIC)</i> |
| <i>[School] recently had the opportunity to be visited by the Life Education van and [Educator]. The students always thoroughly enjoy her sessions and look forward to her return next year. Some more feedback from a staff member: [Educator] is an outstanding educator! I wish parents were there in the van with their children to hear such profoundly important messages! Thank you for the opportunity, keep up the great work. (Visual Art teacher & Life Education coordinator, Primary School, VIC)</i> |
| <i>Thank you so much for the 'extra' resources. They will be much appreciated in [class] at [school]. Love your work.... Safety Rules ... best Incursion ever! (Primary School, WA)</i> |

There were a wide range of themes that emerged from Educators' anecdotal stories of how Life Education programs have impacted schools, staff, students or families, as Table 7 lists. The themes and the comments from which they emerged are presented in Appendix C.

Table 7. Please share any other anecdotal stories of how Life Education programs have impacted schools, staff, students or families?

| Themes related to how Life Education impacts learning communities | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting teachers and students in meaningful discussion • Current timely information • Embracing remote communities • Empowering students and involving parents • Empowering students in a safe space • Engaging challenging students • Healthy Harold in school signage • Impacts that change lives • Increased physical activity • Intergenerational reinforcement and impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LE visit the highlight of the year • Parent engagement and education • Positive feedback from observing teachers • Positive impact on students, schools and families • Preparing kids for the next stage • Strong uptake and use of resources by teachers and community • The familiarity of Harold gives comfort in a changing world • Visible growth and retainment in student learning year after year • Voted 'Favourite Educators' in NT |

3.3 The most effective Life Education programs

The survey also asks about Educators' views on the programs they deliver e.g. which programs educators think were the most impactful on student outcomes and the reasons why. Figure 5 presents the results, ordered from most to least effective. More than 70% of Educators selected *bCyberwise* in their top three modules as being most effective. This was followed by 65% of Educators who rated *Decisions* as the second most effective.

Figure 5. How effective at impacting student outcomes are LE programs?

Please put the following LE programs in order from most (first) to least (last) effective.

| | Most effective | | | < > | | | Least effective | | | Average | | |
|------------------------|----------------|----|----|-----|----|----|-----------------|----|----|---------|----|-----|
| bCyberwise | 33 | 20 | 20 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8.1 |
| Decisions | 19 | 16 | 29 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 7.5 |
| My Body Matters | 17 | 0 | 10 | 13 | 23 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 6.0 |
| Relate Respect Connect | 14 | 21 | 0 | 10 | 7 | 21 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 14 | 5.7 |
| Safety Rules | 0 | 3 | 13 | 23 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 13 | 0 | 4.9 |
| Harold's Friend Ship | 0 | 10 | 7 | 13 | 13 | 23 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 13 | 4.8 |
| On The Case | 7 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 13 | 13 | 10 | 13 | 7 | 4.8 |
| Mind Your Medicine | 7 | 7 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 7 | 10 | 13 | 13 | 10 | 4.2 |
| Growing Good Friends | 4 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 8 | 20 | 20 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 4.0 |
| Think Twice | 7 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 20 | 7 | 7 | 20 | 20 | 3.6 |
| Ready Steady Go | 0 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 13 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 10 | 3.2 |

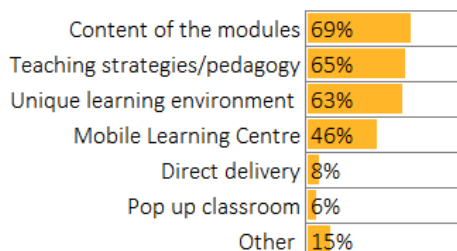
The effectiveness of the Life Education modules listed in Figure 5 above, were further reinforced by evidence collected from teachers who had observed the session and completed a feedback survey (discussed in detail in Chapter 4). With more than 3300 positive comments out of the 4200 comments received from over 16,000 submitted feedback surveys, Table 8 provides just one or two examples for each module.

Table 8. Examples of positive teacher feedback on the Life Education module

| Module | Example comments from teachers |
|------------------------|---|
| All Systems Go | No suggestions, just praise. We, the students and teachers, always look forward to our visits. The movie is engaging and presented at a very age appropriate level. [Educator] is a fabulous presenter. (Teacher, QLD) |
| bCyberwise | [Educator] was articulate and his delivery and language was clear and suited the year level. He practised consistent active listening and reinforced students ideas. Effective use of students' names. Activities were relevant and meaningful and reinforced and consolidated cyber safety. A great session. (Teacher, SA) |
| Decisions | Wonderful presentation! Loved the way the complicated content was delivered in a child friendly way without being patronising. Perfectly pitched for my 5/6 class. Thank you. (Teacher, VIC) |
| Growing Good Friends | A crucial program for all Primary years. The govt needs to continue valuing the positives from the van visit. (Teacher, VIC) Audio visual excellent, great how activities were interspersed with screen, great to have touching/sticking/sorting (Teacher, QLD) |
| Harold's Friend Ship | I remember sitting in this van almost two decades ago! It's so wonderful to see Healthy Harold still in schools - a great testament to the joys he brings to young learners, thank you! This session was so relevant to prep students and aligned perfectly with our curriculum of social and emotional learning as well as respectful relationships. There was a great variety of experiences - imagining his house, music, singing, ICT, dancing, circle time, meeting Harold, questioning as well as whole class & independent activities which invited students to be super involved and engaged. [Educator] has a lovely teacher presence, calm, encouraging, informative and engaging. Loved the circle time about what to do when scared, really thoughtful and meaningful content, modelled really well for this cohort. Thank you for visiting and for all your work, it was a real treat! (Teacher, VIC) The session reinforced the child protection curriculum and classroom teaching. The students were very engaged and the session was very informative and age appropriate. (Teacher, SA) |
| Mind Your Medicine | With the small amount of space, the lessons are still very effective and interactive. Harold is still a big draw card and exciting, even in grade 4. (Teacher, VIC) |
| My Body Matters | The students loved getting physically involved by showing how they brush their teeth, etc. [Educator] was great at redirecting student's attention when some weren't listening and she really tried to learn all of their names. The pass the parcel game was awesome, the kids loved it! Kept the pace of the lesson moving, which was great for keeping them engaged. The videos were great to break up the lesson. It was a great lesson to participate in and provided additional information that can be used in follow up lessons. Overall, the kids loved it! Thanks (Teacher, VIC) |
| On The Case | [Educator] was a fantastic facilitator and engaged the students in positive ways. She was very informative and was inclusive of all students. The students seemed to really enjoy the session and it was an excellent topic for them, especially with some going to high school next year. (Teacher, VIC) |
| Ready Steady Go | Able to adapt to the learning difficulties of all students. Positive interaction with all. Made students feel positive about their interactions. Acknowledged all student responses (Teacher, VIC) Fantastic opportunity for our children to learn from [Educator] about health and sports. Our small country school was fortunate to get the program. Thanks so much. (Teacher, VIC) |
| Relate Respect Connect | Having Life Ed visit our school was a lifesaver. So many of our students find managing relationships in upper primary challenging and the practical resources are easy to implement in a busy classroom. The sessions was well pitched to the students. The material covered was relevant and reinforced concepts that the students have been working on (Teacher, SA) I felt that the Life Education session was fantastic and addressed the needs of my students. The materials and scenarios were engaging and relevant to this age group. [Educator] understood the needs of the students and delivered the content professionally. I enjoyed the session and so did my students. (Teacher, QLD) |
| Safety Rules | Absolutely fantastic, this lesson built on students' prior knowledge and also provided them with example situations to practice when they should or should not call 000. They were very engaged and the workbook is going to assist them to solidify their learning today. Thank you. (Teacher, VIC) |
| Think Twice | It is great to get a trained expert in to run sessions on health topics in an honest and informative way. The students were engaged from start to finish. (Teacher, SA) The session was fantastic and the kids were really interested, engaged and involved. It was interesting to see the misconceptions and reasoning and justifying of their ideas about alcohol. [Educator] was a fantastic facilitator and the activities and information she delivered was great. Thanks. (Teacher, VIC) Very engaging and inclusive of all students. Able to work with challenging/disruptive behaviours so all students have the opportunity to learn and take part in the session. (Teacher, VIC) |

These independent views from teachers are reflected in the top three elements, rated by most Educators, about what makes the programs effective. Figure 6 shows that the content of the modules (69%), the teaching strategies/pedagogy (65%) and the unique learning environment (63%) contribute to the effectiveness of the programs.

Figure 6. What is it about the top Life Education programs that you think makes them effective?



Other suggestions about what made the programs highly effective were also offered. These touched on the importance of being relevant and dealing with real-life issues.

Attention to relevant material to what's confronting the school community. Children having COVID, Fires, Floods. The spread of misinformation, being corrected (NSW/ACT Educator)

Relevance to real life scenarios (NSW/ACT Educator)

Educator knowledge (NSW/ACT Educator)

Super relevant, kids are naturally interested (NSW/ACT Educator)

Addition of virtual sessions (NSW/ACT Educator)

Decades of reputation (VIC/TAS Educator)

3.4 Alignment with the Australian Curriculum

As Figure 7 shows, 88% of Educators reported that their general impression when working with schools, was that Life Education programs were in good or excellent alignment with the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education outcomes, reflected in this Life Education Educator's comment as well as these examples from teachers' session feedback.

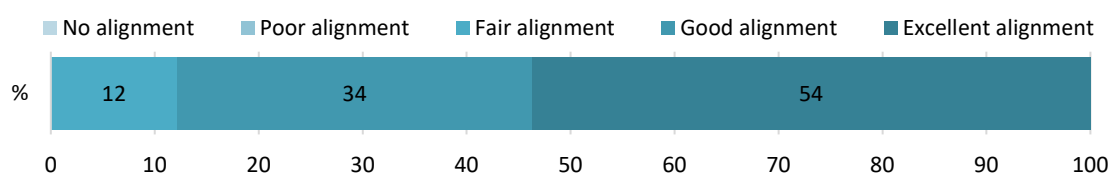
Given that we are able to cover so much content and so many outcomes in a memorable way and in a time efficient way, I consider Life Education to be a valuable resource for 'time poor' teachers who are faced with teaching an overcrowded curriculum. (NSW/ACT Educator)

The Educator was very engaging and presented a hard topic well. This was great as it built on our social and emotional learning curriculum. The different activities were relevant and engaging. (VIC Primary school teacher observing Relate Respect Connect)

The Life Education van is a magical space where the learning comes alive. Sessions are engaging and age appropriate, matching the Australian curriculum and referencing themes from protective behaviours. (SA Primary school teacher observing Harold's Friend Ship)

The Educator was very good at remembering student names and answered ALL questions in a calm and honest manner. Students felt very comfortable opening up to her and hence gained the very most they could from the lesson. Was also perfectly connected to our health and respectful relationship curriculum. A great job! (VIC Primary school teacher observing Decisions)

Figure 7. What is your general impression when working with schools, of how well LE programs align to the Australian Curriculum - Health and Physical Education outcomes?



Teachers and an Educator, however, commented that there was also opportunity to tighten the content:

Our programs would have more impact if they focussed on fewer outcomes. We could do deeper learning in the MLC's/sessions if we didn't have to cover so many outcomes. Our programs would be even more impactful if they covered the content that teachers aren't as trained to cover and focussed on some of the more challenging content within the Australian Curriculum. (SA Educator)

It would be helpful to integrate Life Education curriculum more closely with School Personal Development programs. (VIC Primary school teacher observing Growing Good Friends)

3.5 Impact of a unique learning space

A clear point of difference offered by Life Education over other school-based wellbeing programs, is that it provides onsite incursions in a differentiated learning space, such as the mobile learning classroom (van) and the pop-up classroom. One of the main themes emerging from Educators' comments presented in Table 9, related to the unique learning experience that really engages students in a way that the regular classroom can't.

Table 9. What benefits do children have from a differentiated learning space such as the MLCs or pop-up classrooms?

| Theme | Educators' comments |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Collateral benefit to teachers | The ability to switch on their imagination in a unique and exciting setting like no other offers a learning environment whereby the rules differ to the classroom. Therefore the outcomes are generally unexpected from the teachers. They witness their students in a different space and are more often than not genuinely surprised by the level on engagement, enthusiasm and knowledge on display from the group. The teachers benefit also. (NT Educator) |
| | Change of scenery for students. Sensory, fun, very interactive, music, lights, TAM and Tam E. The VAN is very important not only to the students but to the school and teachers too (QLD Educator) |
| Excitement of an incursion | Excitement of being able to leave their classroom whilst still staying on school grounds. The stars, Harold, Tam and Velcro walls make this learning space unique for students (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | The EXCITEMENT of going on a mini excursion; the ability to have an hour of make believe and magic! The new and unusual. The out of their comfort zone. The ability to 'shine' in front of their peers for those who might not otherwise. The non-threatening nature of learning, no pens/pencils required. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | Even though we predominantly teach inside schools, students feel as though visiting Harold is an excursion. It's so different to classroom learning meaning the students are often more engaged and learn a lot while having lots of fun. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| Flexible delivery | Children are always very excited to come into the van which improves behaviour and makes them ready to learn. (QLD Educator) |
| | I think the Van does create an exciting atmosphere for the children to learn in but (to my pleasant surprise) I discovered that Direct Delivery in the Classroom did have the same effect (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| | Ability to transfer leaning from van to classroom (due to covid) (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| | DD can have benefits in Special needs situations where those with limited attention can do something with a teacher. (NSW/ACT Educator) |

| Theme | Educators' comments |
|---|---|
| Focused learning with less distraction and disruption | Memorable but also less interruptions. We can plough through so much content because kids are super engaged with the new resources and the unique learning space but we are also far less likely to experience disruptions from the 'normal' school life going on around them (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | Being able to focus on lesson, little distractions (QLD Educator) |
| Inclusive of students with special needs | It provides them a safe, unique space that allows them to engage in a different way. It provides fun and excitement and is something different to their everyday classroom. Often teachers will be surprised by their students' behaviour in the MLC because they are calmer and less distracted by things around them. (SA Educator) |
| | I am lucky enough to now have experience working in our new pop-up. I have so far found that for students who have additional needs benefit greatly from the ample space of the pop-up. I had support classes including students with Autism eager to participate but also utilise the extra "outdoor" space when things became overwhelming for them. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | Caters for all different types of learners, games, activities and skill of educators all contribute to offering young people a safe space to learn about a range of topics that influence their health and wellbeing. Different spaces, places and faces can often instigate positive discussions. (NT Educator) |
| | I think they make such a difference. Especially for kids who don't normally engage that much in the classroom or those with learning difficulties, you see them go so well in the Van because of the space. The uniqueness and the special effects of the van and dome allow kids to want to listen more and want to pay attention. (SA Educator) |
| Nostalgia | It creates a fun and safe place, that changes the situation in a way that levels the field for all students to engage in learning (SA Educator) |
| | They are in an environment that is different to the classroom. It's new and exciting for them and it's information presented by someone that is not their classroom teacher. (WA Educator) |
| | The MLC provides a unique atmosphere to be anticipated and enjoyed - it also creates a safe learning space for the often personal and important content of the lessons and discussions relating to choices. It is different to a regular classroom, with stars and AVs and every child has the opportunity to have-a-go. There is also a nostalgic atmosphere when staff and parents return to the MLC, having been taught in one when they were young. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| Safe learning space | It's a fresh environment and a safe space. (QLD Educator) |
| | Fun environment where they feel safe and able to leave behind things that are happening in the classroom. Students have the opportunity to really engage and not feel like it's just another classroom lesson. The magic that cannot be recreated in a classroom. (WA Educator) |
| Unique learning experience that really engages | Magical learning experience (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | It is a unique special magical environment; teachers cannot offer this. It's safe and memorable (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | The theatre of the MLC and pop up can help set a mood that middle of a hall may not. MLC contains so much tech and helps students feel calm and relaxed with carpet around also helps with concentration from outside noises. Complete feeling of closeness with the teacher's undivided attention with games that are different. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | MLCs provide a unique learning environment for students - one that creates memories, excitement and enthusiasm. Having previously worked in a region where schools were approximately a 50/50 split between direct delivery and MLC lessons, the MLC brings a different approach to learning than direct delivery due to the different learning environment. Schools who have had both MLC and direct delivery learning opportunities comment on the benefits to each environment but always love the excitement the MLC brings. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | I can only think of the phrase 'a change is as good as a holiday'...by being in a different learning environment, kids are instantly more engaged and invigorated to learn. A change of scenery and different props/technology etc creates a kind of magic that allows them to escape their usual classroom and we are so lucky to be the facilitators of this experience. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| Unique space - fun experience (NSW/ACT Educator) | Association of what happened in the unique learning environment. It could be the stars, seeing tam or tam-e and seeing the AR appear on the screen. All these unique styles to life Ed make it memorable and allow the students to connect to their learning. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | Fantastic! The children are engaged immediately and due to their enthusiasm in being in the MLC, their experience is unlike anything in a regular classroom. Students that may struggle with learning in general seem to excel in this environment. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | Unique space - fun experience (NSW/ACT Educator) |

| Theme | Educators' comments |
|-------|---|
| | As for working in the MLC, you cannot beat the looks on students and teachers faces coming in, whether it is their first or last time entering. I do have mixed responses from students sometimes regarding space in the van, however this was when class numbers were especially large. Overall, students are always in awe of the stars, the equipment we have (TAM, TAM-e) and enjoy moving around the van. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | Memorable lessons, something unique and fun (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | It's like a parallel universe. Rules still apply but they're different rules. I've had to do direct delivery a few times and it's just not the same. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | The students love coming in. Even when they get excited it is enough to help them remember a little more and make the lesson slightly more effective. The stars on the roof just tickle the little kids fancy's so much and add to the fun (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | They remember what they have learned from the year before. It must be the uniqueness of the situation. (QLD Educator) |
| | Change of classroom environment, more engagement and participation - it is treated as a special experience. Also, things such as Tam-e help to support learning - the props are valuable and really help it support lesson content (SA Educator) |
| | It provides students with a 'special' experience. They spend so much time in a regular classroom. Inviting students into a different space enriches the learning experience and labels the learning as 'exciting, different' and pleasurable. (WA Educator) |

3.6 Opportunities to develop

As a final question, Educators were asked to provide any other feedback about the impact of Life Education programs (see Table 10). While some took the chance to provide further praise about Life Education and what it offers, other Educators provided insightful comments about further opportunities to improve and develop the offerings. This included extending and updating the program, providing more staff training, and undertaking research on student impact. Addressing this last area is considered in the next chapter.

Table 10. Is there any other feedback about the impact of Life Education programs?

| Theme | Educators' comments |
|--------|---|
| Praise | The MPs are always pleased to see Harold and Life Education in their area. The difference they see in schools in their region is rewarding. They tell me students are trying new strategies with parents, siblings and that tells them its valuable for communication in different settings (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | The programs are a relevant, strong, supplement to what is being taught in classrooms and a great resource for teachers. The MLC has a presence in a school and the Kindy kids especially look forward to the magic of the van and Harold (as do the students up to yr 6). Young adults see the Harold on my T-shirt and remember and reminisce about what they learnt: and "what would Harold Do?" rings in their ears when making choices. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | The program is fun, engaging and creates memorable learning experiences for young people. Every year I'm humbled by the number of young parents who say they have fond learning experiences of the can when they went to school! (NT Educator) |
| | It works!! I see/ hear evidence of this all the time. The students remember so much from the year before too and this is always commented on by the teachers (QLD Educator) |
| | Students and teachers look forward to the visit - it starts conversations (QLD Educator) |
| | I think Life Education is an amazing concept and we are completely unique in the way we focus on health and wellbeing as an incursion. We have such a tremendous reputation for amazing teaching. I have had schools ensure that student teachers on placements have a chance to attend a Life Ed session so that they can observe good quality teaching in practice. I think that says a lot about our wonderful program (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| | Harold! What an awesome mascot who is loved and adored by all! (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| | I think they should be compulsory in all schools and supported fully by the Department of Education. (NSW/ACT Educator) |

| Theme | Educators' comments |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Opportunity: extend reach | <p>Could be reaching into different also needed areas. Sex education is seriously lacking in NSW. (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>Our programs have been developed to be delivered in suburban schools. When delivering to remote indigenous schools or even country schools educators end up stripping back the programs to make the module relevant. (NT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>RRC has good program content and is very effective for some groups but not others. I think for the more challenging groups, there needs to be more fast, fun and challenging activities for the older students. (WA Educator)</p> |
| Opportunity: update programs | <p>Some programs are not hitting the mark, I believe. Some updates and serious money and resources are needed in program development but in particular with RESOURCES - the laminated A4 Cards are no longer good enough! There needs to be an injection of fun/cleverly designed unique resources designed, that can't be accessed from their own classrooms - something DIFFERENT and unique to Life Education!!? (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>Our content is also dated when it comes to cyber safety. (NT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>The teacher resources could be more structured and easier to find and easier to follow. I think the post visit learning is crucial to embed the student learning to highest capacity. (NSW/ACT Ed)</p> <hr/> <p>Some say Harold is what sets us apart. I disagree. What sets us apart is the learning experience we provide. Ideally that is in a Mobile Classroom. That cannot always be possible of course. Life Education is all about the skill, ability and the magic of the Educator, it's about how they engage and connect with the students, teachers, schools and local community as a whole. Life Education is a Lifelong memory, every Aussie kid's rite of passage. Our programs are ageing rapidly and many are quite embarrassing to present due to their outdated content, lack of multicultural content and lack of inclusivity of all abilities and pansexual people. To ensure we remain relevant in our health education space our Educators need to be equipped with the best possible programs available to them. (NT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>The introduction of in classroom sessions in Victoria has given us great scope for reimagining activities and creating new learning experiences. For example, the space afforded means we can get students collaborating in meaningful ways developing artefacts that put their learning into action. (VIC/TAS Educator)</p> |
| Opportunity: More training | <p>As a new educator, I would like some better training in the senior programs such as the Think Twice and Decisions programs. I still feel ill-equipped at times and even though I do some research and training online, I would like more practical, hands on training that builds my confidence in this area. (WA Educator)</p> |
| Opportunity: research | <p>It would be wonderful to know the long term impact of a LE program for students. Visiting on a yearly basis does allow educators to refer back to previous programs/learning but to see how knowledge attained in a LE infiltrates student learning/knowledge/understanding throughout the school would be great. (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>The truth is that we'll never know the long-term, meaningful impact of what we do. All you can do is put yourself in the best position to potentially make it. (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>Feeling frustrated that to validate what we do and the impact we have needs to be measured with a scale (as in this survey) that doesn't actually measure the impact. You can't quantify or observe what doesn't happen. No one has come up with a way to measure the student wellbeing outcomes effectively and realistically (VIC/TAS Educator)</p> |

4 Evidence from teachers

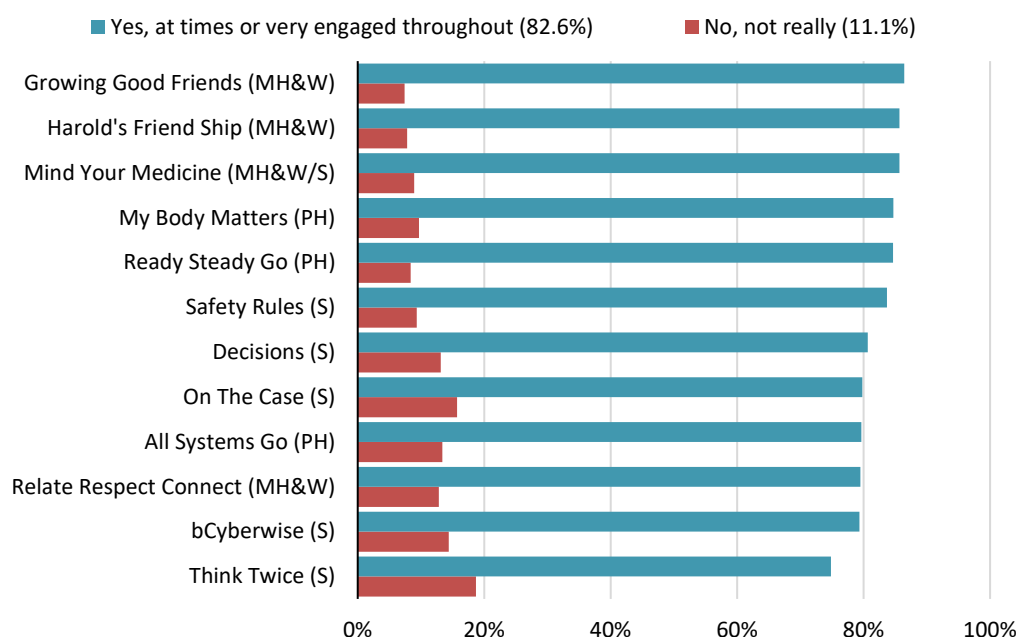
Monitoring session quality has been a mainstay of Life Education through the use of online teacher, student and parent feedback forms administered by state offices. Teacher feedback data for 2019 and 2020 was provided to ACER from the Life Education state offices in NSW, NT, SA, VIC, WA and QLD (see Appendix D). ACER collated the individual state datasets where items and data were similar, to create a national record of over 16,000 teacher responses. Table 11 **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the number of responses by state.

Table 11. Number of teacher feedback responses in the collated 2019-20 dataset

| Year | NSW | NT | SA | VIC | WA | QLD | Total |
|-------|------|----|-----|------|-----|------|-------|
| 2019 | 1771 | 49 | 163 | 3613 | 506 | 4994 | 11111 |
| 2020 | 240 | 13 | 460 | 710 | 26 | 3750 | 5241 |
| Total | 2011 | 62 | 623 | 4323 | 532 | 8744 | 16352 |

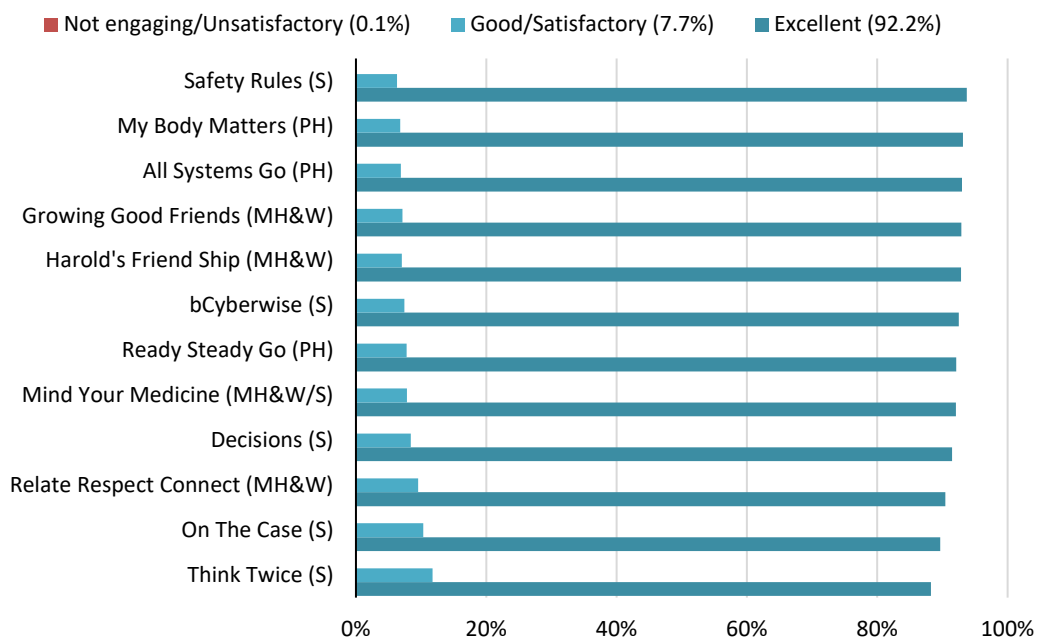
The majority of teachers were highly positive about programs, with more than 75% agreeing that regardless of module, they felt actively involved in the session. Around 11% of teachers disagreed. According to teachers' perceptions (n=15,314), Figure 8 suggests that modules under the mental health and wellbeing stream tended to be more engaging.

Figure 8. Teacher feedback: Were you actively involved in the session?



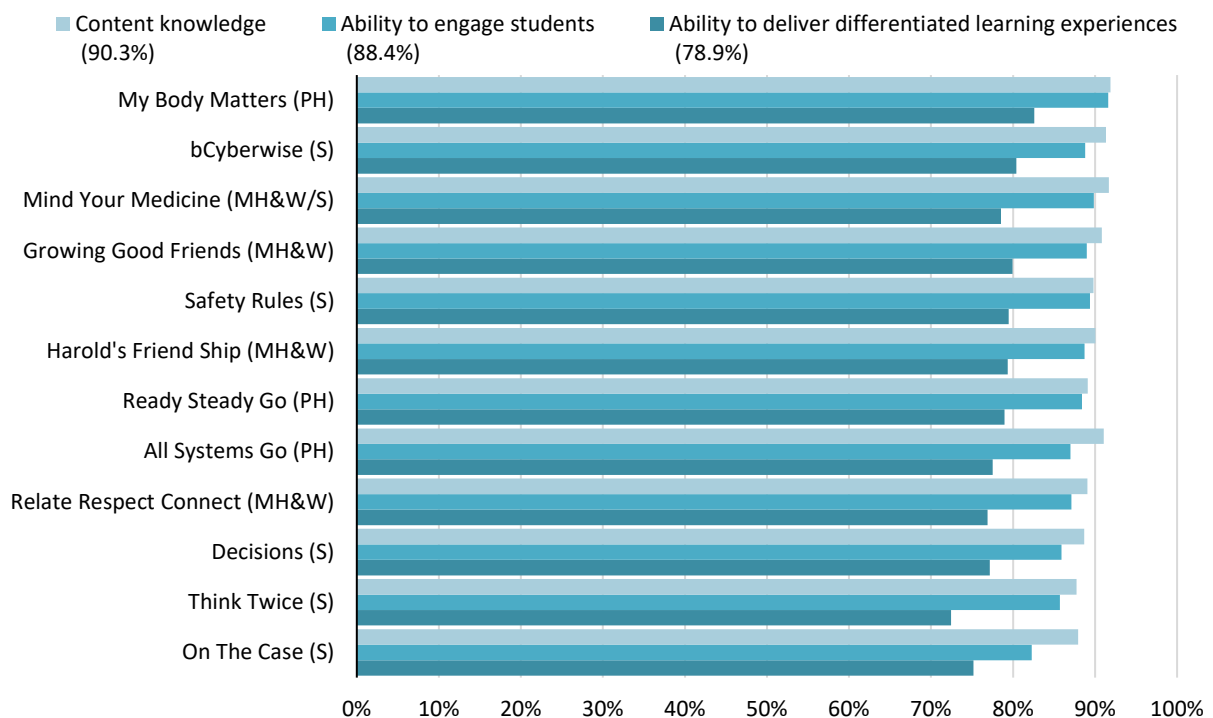
Teachers (n=16,034) were also invited to provide feedback about the quality of delivery. Figure 9 suggests that the Life Education Educators (92%) were, on the whole, excellent at facilitating sessions, particularly with the modules Safety Rules, My Body Matters, All Systems Go and Growing Good Friends.

Figure 9. Teacher feedback: How would you rate the facilitation from the Life Education Educator?
How well did they deliver the session?



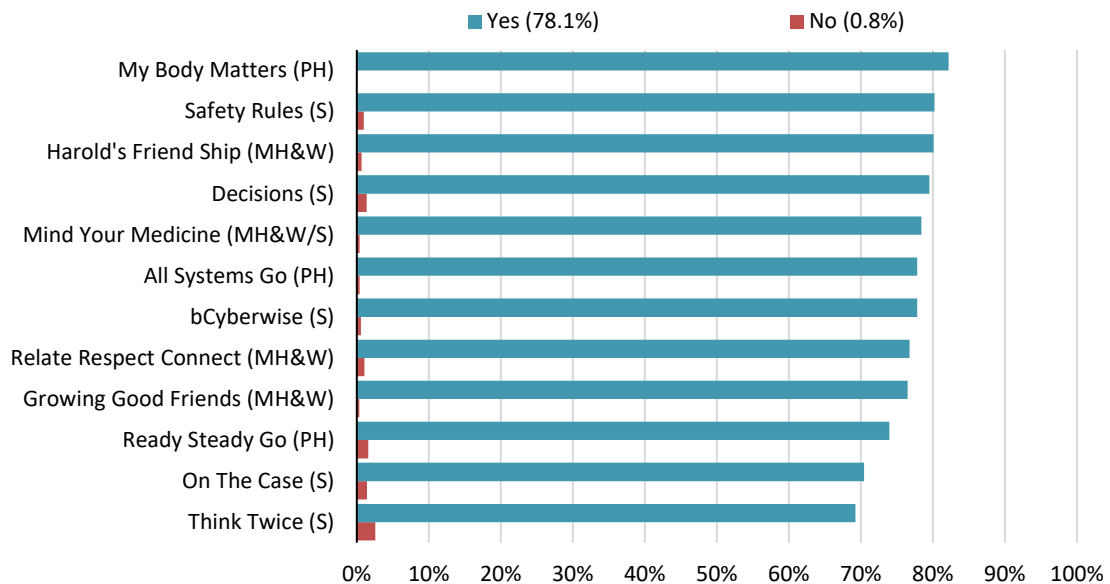
Teachers (n=7551) were asked about the abilities of Life Education Educators in terms of how knowledgeable, engaging, and able they were to deliver differentiated learning to meet the needs of the class. Nine-in-ten Educators were rated by observing teachers as demonstrating sound content knowledge and having a good ability to engage students. Eight-in-ten Educators were able to identify and address the needs of a class and deliver differentiated learning experiences. Figure 10 presents the results.

Figure 10. Teacher feedback: Did the Educator/Facilitator effectively demonstrate ...



When asked if teachers (n=3229) would recommend Life Education to friends and colleagues, around 78% of teachers indicated that they would, with less than 1% reporting that they wouldn't. As Figure 11 presents, approximately 20% of teachers did not indicate either way. The three most highly recommended modules came from each stream: My Body Matters (PH), Safety Rules (S) and Harold's Friend Ship (MH&W).

Figure 11. Teacher feedback: Would you recommend Life Education to friends and colleagues?



Teachers' were invited to provide any other feedback about Life Education sessions and how they might be improved. Figure 12 captures their comments, which were overwhelmingly positive, in a word-cloud, with words like *great*, *fantastic*, *engaging* and *excellent* frequently being used.

Figure 12. A word-cloud based on teachers' comments (n=2390) about the Life Education sessions



Suggestions for improvement were also provided in teachers' feedback. Table 12 presents a couple of example comments grouped by module, which mostly related to refreshing the content of some modules, providing more resources for students to take home and ideas to keep students engaged in the sessions.

Table 12. Opportunities for improvement raised in teacher feedback on the Life Education module

| Module | Teacher suggestions for improvement |
|------------------------|---|
| All Systems Go | I would add more hands on experiences. (Teacher, VIC) Some videos etc. may be becoming a little dated - although I was amazed at how my class really enjoyed them. (Teacher, QLD) |
| bCyberwise | Parent information that could be sent home with students eg. How to apply restrictions / age restrictions for social media and apps. (Teacher, QLD) Could you please send out relevant resources prior to the visit so students get your program as a follow-up enhancement program. Donna was fantastic!, (Teacher, QLD) |
| Decisions | Perhaps some interviews/video from people who have recovered from substance abuse and how this has impacted their health & relationships (Teacher, QLD) A great presentation that fitted in with our central idea of keeping safe in society. It made students think about many different situations and relate learning to their own lives. It might work better if students could work in smaller groups to share ideas...rather than having a whole group discussion for all activities. This would allow more students to be involved. Also, it is important that students are listening to other peers and the presenter...rather than having continual side conversations. (Teacher, SA) |
| Growing Good Friends | Perhaps seek to engage students even if they don't put their hand up as there were a number of students who remained quiet. Many of the same students answered the questions. (Teacher, VIC) Possible posters or resources to display in eating areas about healthy food. (Teacher, QLD) |
| Harold's Friend Ship | Video material would be excellent to reinforce the information we've learnt and to share with parents to do the same (Teacher, QLD) More content on good friendships - perhaps role play and children can problem solve different scenarios and offer alternative solutions. (Teacher, VIC) |
| Mind Your Medicine | Although great subject, being more aligned with Australian curriculum would make it easier to implement (Teacher, QLD) Using actual medicine containers and packages would help students make connections to their own lives. Students were very engaged by final activity related to medicine packages and labels. This was more engaging for grade threes than identifying the type of medicine quiz. The quiz was a little too difficult for year 3, there was a bit too much trying to guess the correct answer. The role play activity worked very well, more of this would work very well with this level, eg role play an asthma attack then treatment, or child with skin rash asking for help. Thanks for a great session, will prompt lots of classroom discussion. (Teacher, VIC) |
| My Body Matters | Possibly have the ability to look at and borrow resources prior to arrival of van. (Teacher, QLD) Longer sessions, we loved every minute and could have stayed a lot longer and learnt a lot more (Teacher, QLD) |
| On The Case | Parent/family manuals to send home to support lessons at school (Teacher, QLD) It is tricky for those students who have parents that smoke, especially having the session so earlier in the year we as teachers are unaware of how each student may be affected. It was, however, great to have the poster about how your body can repair itself after smoking. I can imagine this is a hard one to put a positive spin on! (Teacher, VIC) |
| Ready Steady Go | Facilitator too quiet. Kids up back couldn't hear. It's a Friday afternoon with preps! I think this survey is too black and white, yes or no. Needs to be more nuanced (Teacher, VIC) Providing support materials to teachers to use prior to visits to get students thinking about what they will be learning. (Teacher, QLD) |
| Relate Respect Connect | A few children became restless, were still engaged though. A 1-2 minute break midway through could be a good idea if children are restless. (Teacher, SA) With the stories shown and discussed on the tv/ interactive whiteboard, perhaps stories with male lead roles. I believe it may at times be harder for the boys to engage within this type of content, so perhaps this could influence and support their learning. (Teacher, VIC) |
| Safety Rules | Myself and the STS noticed there was no police officer in the going to get help. We were wondering why. Just due to the negativity that can come around police and how some kids don't go to police for help due to 'getting in trouble' I haven't used any lessons prior, but feel I might do one after this lesson (Teacher, VIC) Maybe more hands on activities (Teacher, QLD) |
| Think Twice | More frequent visits, a free to all students (Teacher, QLD) Videos to be updated to make them more relatable :) (Teacher, VIC) |

5 Evidence of student impact

Case-control matching is a retrospective quasi-experimental approach that randomly matches a ‘treatment group’ to a ‘control group’ in an existing dataset – in this case, [ACER’s Social-Emotional Wellbeing \(SEW\) survey](#) database. This statistical technique minimises threats to internal validity and selection bias by using binary logistic regression that controls for pre-existing differences known to influence outcomes, such as socioeconomic background (Mansournia et al., 2018; Pearce, 2016). In other words, this analysis ensures demographically similar schools are compared, with the overt difference being one group is engaged Life Education learning, and the other group is not.

For the purposes of this analysis, ‘treatment’ schools were defined as any school in Australia that had at least one Life Education booking during 2018-19. ACER created a national booking record based on data files provided by Life Education state offices (see Appendix D). Table 13 shows that there were 3,326 eligible treatment schools with an average of 16 bookings each. One booking indicates one class of primary-aged students engaged in a Life Education session conducted in the mobile learning classroom during 2018-19. We chose this pre-COVID period to avoid confounding factors due to the significant disruption to on-site delivery that occurred in 2020-21. Potential ‘control’ schools were any other school with primary enrolments that had not participated in Life Education in 2018-19.

Table 13. Total number of ‘eligible’ schools booking Life Education sessions in 2018-19

| | ACT | NSW | NT | QLD | SA | VIC | WA | National |
|---|------|------|-----|------|------|------|-----|----------|
| Number of schools with primary enrolments | 20 | 1575 | 89 | 497 | 159 | 835 | 151 | 3326 |
| Average number of bookings | 13.6 | 15.7 | 6.5 | 24.1 | 11.5 | 16.1 | 7.8 | 16.3 |

To investigate a comparative analysis of student outcomes in Life Education (treatment) vs non-Life Education (control) schools, we made use of an existing national database of student social-emotional and wellbeing outcomes collected in 2019 using ACER’s Social-Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) survey from 324 participating schools. Within this database, 87 Life Education schools (n = 17,964 students) were identified and categorised as the ‘treatment’ group.

The assumption underpinning this analysis is that the students who attended Life Education sessions over the years leading up to 2019 were among the same students who participated in the SEW survey in 2019. To what extent their social-emotional skills differ from students who have not experienced Life Education sessions, might provide some tentative indication of the impact Life Education is having on students’ wellbeing.

About the matched sample of schools

Case-control matching in the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) software was applied to the remaining ‘control’ schools in the SEW database to randomly match similar schools that had not booked Life Education. The regression model identified 87 non-Life Education schools (n = 19,731 students), matched on state and socioeconomic status.

In summary, the following analysis of the SEW data involves 174 schools and 37,695 student responses in Years 2 to 6 across most Australian states.

Table 14 compares the matched samples identified in the SEW dataset of 87 treatment schools and 87 control schools, along with the national profile of all schools in Australia. There was no significant difference between control and treatment groups on ICSEA and most differences on other

characteristics were within $\pm 5\%$ bias, suggesting that the matched school samples were broadly comparable. The SEW samples varied to the national profile of schools and tended to attract more affluent schools.

Table 14. Demographic characteristics of case-matched schools in the SEW databases

| School level characteristics | | Nationally** | Non-LE schools (matched control) | LE schools (treatment) | Bias T-C % |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| School n (cohorts) | | 10,638 | 87 | 87 | |
| State | ACT % | 1.4 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 0.0 |
| | NSW % | 31.9 | 20.7 | 20.7 | 0.0 |
| | NT % | 1.9 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 0.0 |
| | QLD % | 17.8 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 0.0 |
| | SA % | 7.3 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 0.0 |
| | TAS % | 2.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | VIC % | 25.8 | 44.8 | 44.8 | 0.0 |
| | WA % | 11.3 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 0.0 |
| Sector | Government % | 17.0 | 47.1 | 46.0 | -1.1 |
| | Catholic % | 67.3 | 33.3 | 35.6 | 2.3 |
| | Independent % | 15.8 | 19.5 | 18.4 | -1.1 |
| Type | Primary % | 59.4 | 70.1 | 80.5 | 10.3 |
| | Combined % | 17.3 | 28.7 | 19.5 | -9.2 |
| | Secondary % | 16.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Special % | 6.7 | 1.1 | 0.0 | -1.1 |
| ICSEA* | below 900 % | 9.5 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 0.0 |
| | 900 to 999 % | 37.2 | 25.3 | 25.3 | 0.0 |
| | 1000 to 1099 % | 38.9 | 40.2 | 40.2 | 0.0 |
| | 1100 above % | 14.4 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 0.0 |
| Location* | Metropolitan % | 54.0 | 65.5 | 65.5 | 0.0 |
| | Regional % | 39.6 | 29.9 | 34.5 | 4.6 |
| | Remote % | 6.4 | 4.6 | 0.0 | -4.6 |
| ICSEA | mean | 1002.1 | 1046.1 | 1055.9 | 0.2 |
| Staff size | mean | 38.7 | 51.7 | 42.1 | -5.0 |
| Student size | mean | 457.8 | 575.6 | 498.2 | -3.6 |
| ATSI% | mean | 9.9 | 4.3 | 3.8 | -3.0 |
| LOTE% | mean | 20.9 | 26.9 | 22.2 | -4.9 |

* matched on characteristic ** ACARA School list 2019

About the SEW survey

ACER's Social-Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) survey is based on research that defines student wellbeing from an ecological perspective (Bernard & Stephanou, 2018; Hamilton & Redmond, 2010) and its theoretical framework is consistent with models that investigate resilience (e.g. Durlak et al., 2011). The SEW is also consistent with the developmental assets model (e.g. Benson, 2006), which represents external assets (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time) and internal assets (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity) as building blocks of healthy development that help students grow up to be healthy, caring and responsible.

The Primary School SEW was designed to provide schools with information on the student population to inform school planning and improvement. Items assessed the internal protective factors of social-emotional skills as well as positive and negative aspects of wellbeing. The survey has 42 positively or

negatively worded items and is designed to be completed by students in Years 2 to 6 by indicating their level of agreement on a two-point Agree or Disagree Likert scale.

Research from the field of social-emotional learning indicates that self-awareness and self-management of social, emotional and learning skills contributes to optimum functioning (e.g. Durlak et al., 2011). Research also reveals that values (e.g. Lovat et al., 2010) including character strengths (e.g. Toner et al., 2012) are associated with a wide variety of SEW outcomes.

The SEW Primary survey therefore investigates students’ internal strengths by collecting their view on their social, emotional, and learning skills, and values. Social Skills investigates students’ perceptions of their social capabilities (such as friendship making, solving problems without conflict, managing anger, understanding how people feel) and pro-social attitudes (such as demonstrating a willingness to follow rules and showing tolerance of others who do the wrong thing). Emotional Skills investigates students’ perceptions of their emotional capabilities such as resilience, coping skills and positive, rational attitudes. Learning Skills investigates students’ perceptions of their learning capabilities such as work confidence, persistence, organisation and work cooperation. Values investigates students’ dispositions towards important social values such as respect, care for others, honesty, responsibility and good citizenship. The survey concludes with items related to positive and negative aspects of general wellbeing.

5.1 Students’ social skills

Primary students’ social skills were assessed by five items, which included perceptions of social competencies, such as friendship making, solving conflicts, understanding how people feel, and willingness to follow rules. Figure 13 presents primary students’ views about their social skills grouped by treatment group. The majority of students believed that they behaved well and followed the rules regardless of the type of school they attended. Around three quarters of primary students felt that they were good at solving conflicts without fighting, particularly if they had done Life Education.

Figure 13. Comparison of primary students’ views about their social skills

| | Non-LE schools (C) | LE schools (T) | T-C Diff % |
|---|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| I am good at solving conflicts without fighting | 72% | 75% | 3% |
| I know how to make friends | 86% | 88% | 1% |
| I try to make sure that everyone has a fair chance to win, even if it means that I lose | 86% | 88% | 1% |
| I try hard not to say or do things that hurt other people’s feelings | 90% | 92% | 2% |
| I can behave well and follow rules | 90% | 92% | 2% |

Results represent 37,695 students in 174 matched schools in 2019. Figures rounded to the nearest percent.

5.2 Students’ emotional skills

Students’ emotional skills were assessed by eight items, which included perceptions of emotional capabilities/coping skills (e.g. finding someone to talk with when upset) and positive, rational attitudes around self-awareness (e.g. not putting yourself down when you do not understand something) and self-management (e.g. knowing how to control nerves). Figure 14 presents students’ views about their emotional skills, grouped by treatment and control. Around three quarters of students believed that ‘running and playing can help me feel better’. Results were similar for students in Life Education and non-Life Education schools but tended to favour the Life Education schools by showing reduced levels of undesirable emotional-regulation.

Figure 14. Comparison of primary students' views about their emotional skills

| | Non-LE schools (C) | LE schools (T) | T-C Diff % |
|---|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| I think someone who treats me unfairly is a bad person and that it is okay to hurt them back* | 17% | 15% | -2% |
| When someone teases me, I think I'm stupid* | 31% | 31% | -1% |
| I can calm down quickly when I feel bad | 61% | 64% | 3% |
| I talk to someone when I feel bad | 62% | 63% | 2% |
| It's hard for me to describe how I feel* | 66% | 65% | -2% |
| I can control how nervous I get | 64% | 64% | 0% |
| When I am angry, I stop and think before I act | 65% | 67% | 2% |
| When I feel bad, I know that running and playing can help me feel better | 74% | 77% | 3% |

* Negatively worded items reverse scored prior to scaling. In these cases, a negative T-C difference favours LE schools. Results represent 37,695 students in 174 matched schools in 2019. Figures rounded to the nearest percent.

5.3 Students' learning skills

This domain involved six items about perceptions of learning capabilities, such as work confidence (e.g. I am good at helping others), persistence (e.g. I don't give up), and organisation (e.g. planning time). As Figure 15 shows, responses were similar, but tended to favour students in Life Education schools.

Figure 15. Comparison of primary students' views about their learning skills

| | Non-LE schools (C) | LE schools (T) | T-C Diff % |
|--|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| When I do not understand something, I give up easily* | 21% | 21% | 0% |
| I am disorganised (forget pencil, do not write down homework, have a messy book, bag, papers)* | 25% | 25% | 0% |
| When I do badly in my schoolwork, I think "I'm stupid" | 28% | 26% | -2% |
| I can do schoolwork that is hard to understand | 68% | 68% | 0% |
| I think about planning my time so that I get all my work done | 71% | 70% | -1% |
| I am good at helping others with their class projects or jobs | 84% | 84% | 1% |

* Negatively worded items reverse scored prior to scaling. In these cases, a negative T-C difference favours LE schools. Results represent 37,695 students in 174 matched schools in 2019. Figures rounded to the nearest percent.

5.4 Students' social values

This domain assessed by six items, included perceptions of important social values, such as the character strengths of respect, caring, honesty, curiosity and good citizenship. Figure 16 presents primary students' views about their values, by treatment and control. Nearly all students felt that it was important to treat all people with respect and liked helping someone with a problem. Responses to these items were similar across both groups. Around 90% of students identified as someone who can be trusted, particularly if they were in a Life Education school.

Figure 16. Comparison of primary students' views about their social values

| | Non-LE schools (C) | LE schools (T) | T-C Diff % |
|--|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| I love to learn | 81% | 82% | 1% |
| I can be trusted to do what I say I am going to do | 88% | 89% | 1% |
| I always want to know more about how things work | 91% | 90% | 0% |
| I like helping someone with a problem | 90% | 91% | 1% |
| When I grow up I will have a good life | 91% | 92% | 1% |
| I think it is important to treat all people with respect | 95% | 95% | 0% |

Results represent 37,695 students in 174 matched schools in 2019. Figures rounded to the nearest percent.

5.5 Students' wellbeing

This domain consists of Positive and Negative Feelings and behaviours. These two aspects aim to measure students' overall wellbeing as a result of their external and internal strengths. Positive wellbeing (9 items) investigated students' perceptions and experience of positive emotions (such as happiness, self-regard and feeling safe) and behaviours (including participation, good behaviour and forming positive relationships with family, teachers and peers). Negative wellbeing (7 items) investigated students' perceptions and experience of negative emotions (such as anger, loneliness, being depressed or anxious) and behaviours (such as rule breaking, bullying or being mean to others).

As Figure 17 presents, nine-in-ten primary students believe that they are a happy person and that they get along well with their teacher. Three quarters of students felt that they have lots of energy for everything they do at school. For the negatively worded items, almost half worried a lot about their schoolwork or what others thought about them, but less so if they were in a Life Education school.

Figure 17. Comparison of primary students' wellbeing (positive and negative feelings and behaviours)

| | | Non-LE schools (C) | LE schools (T) | T-C Diff % |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| Negative Feelings & Behaviours | I get into trouble a lot* | 15% | 15% | 0% |
| | I feel lonely* | 18% | 17% | -1% |
| | I am sometimes very mean to other people* | 23% | 20% | -3% |
| | I lose my temper a lot* | 25% | 22% | -3% |
| | I feel very bad for long periods of time* | 27% | 26% | -1% |
| | My feelings are easily hurt* | 41% | 40% | 0% |
| | I worry a lot about my schoolwork or what others think about me* | 44% | 43% | -2% |
| Positive Feelings & Behaviours | I have lots of energy for everything I do at school | 75% | 76% | 1% |
| | I like being at school | 79% | 80% | 1% |
| | I feel safe and free from danger | 81% | 82% | 2% |
| | I clean up and try to make my classroom and home a nice place | 82% | 84% | 2% |
| | My classmates like me | 86% | 86% | 0% |
| | I get along pretty well with members of my family | 86% | 86% | 0% |
| | I like the kind of person I am | 88% | 89% | 1% |
| | I get along well with my teacher | 92% | 93% | 0% |
| | I am a happy person | 93% | 93% | 1% |

* Negatively worded items reverse scored prior to scaling. In these cases, a negative T-C difference favours LE schools. Results represent 37,695 students in 174 matched schools in 2019. Figures rounded to the nearest percent.

5.6 Impact of Life Education on student social-emotional skills and wellbeing

The domain scales were derived by averaging the responses across items, in order to further investigate differences between the otherwise similar cohorts of students in the treatment (doing Life Education sessions) and control schools. Negatively worded items were reverse scored prior to scaling. Effect size differences (Cohen's d – used to test for differences of practical significance) on students' scale scores aggregated to the school level were performed. This approach took into account the nestedness of the data (students nested in schools). Results are presented as an effect size, which can be interpreted as: small, from 0.2; medium, from 0.5; and large, from 0.8 (Cohen, 1992). A positive effect size means that students in Life Education schools were more positive than students in schools not involved in Life Education.

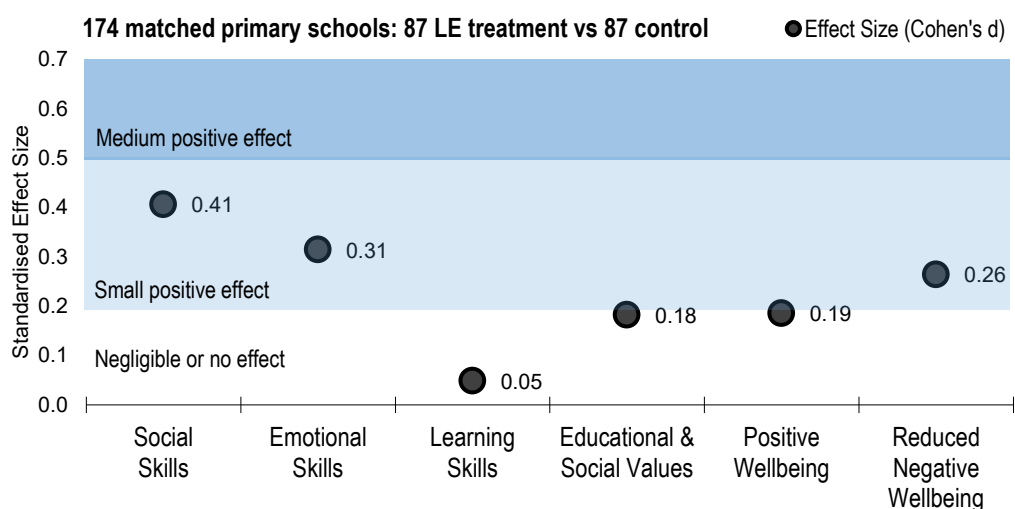
Figure 18 presents our insights from the analyses of a large national dataset: the Social-Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) survey. The SEW assessed students' *internal strengths* (social skills, emotional skills,

learning skills, values) that influence their *wellbeing* (positive and negative feelings and behaviours). The analysis involved the views of 37,695 students in Years 2 to 6 in 147 matched schools across Australia that completed the SEW during 2019 – before COVID-19 hit. Many of these schools had been booking Life Education sessions for years and students had directly experienced multiple sessions, particularly if they were older. Therefore, it is conceivable that their learnings in Life Education sessions could have measurable impact on their wellbeing outcomes.

The findings suggest that for a small group of students (3%), their community’s engagement in Life Education learning has made them better at solving conflicts without fighting, more able to calm down when feeling bad and more considerate of other people.

Figure 18 shows small gains in students’ social skills (effect size Cohen’s $d = 0.41$) and emotional skills ($d = 0.31$) and a small reduction in negative wellbeing ($d = 0.26$) in schools that used Life Education in 2018-19 (treatment group), compared to schools that did not (control group). As such, the results presented in Figure 18 are compelling and could reflect the impact that Life Education programs are having on Australian primary school students.

Figure 18. Estimates of impact on students’ social-emotional skills, and wellbeing, of being in a Life Education school, compared to a similar school not involved in Life Education



Cohen’s d Effect sizes interpreted as 0.2 small, 0.5 medium, and 0.8 large. These results are based on a case-control matched sample of comparable schools from the SEW 2019 survey datasets of students in LE schools (treatment) and non-LE schools (control).

These results should be treated with caution. We attempted to match similar schools, based on state and socioeconomic status (ICSEA), and on these and other characteristics they appeared to be similar. However, there may be other factors that we have not taken into consideration or controlled for that may have contributed to these outcomes. It could be that schools that choose to engage Life Education may also be doing other activities that promote student wellbeing.

What we can say with confidence is that schools that focus on wholistically promoting physically and mentally healthy communities by engaging with programs like Life Education, are more likely to be strengthening students’ social-emotional skills and their educational and social values, leading to improved wellbeing outcomes.

6 Findings, discussion and recommendations

This report presents a rapid evaluation, drawing upon the available research literature, data and key stakeholders, to consolidate the evidence of impact that the Life Education program is having on primary-aged students across Australia. Independently undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), this rapid evaluation aimed to address the following questions:

1. *How are core Life Education programs underpinned by evidence-based best practice?*
2. *How are core Life Education programs impacting primary-aged student wellbeing outcomes that align to the health and physical education Australian and State Curriculums?*

The evaluation undertook four lines of investigation to gather and consolidate the evidence.

- A synthesis of findings from previous Life Education evaluation reports and impact assessments.
- A synthesis of published systematic reviews of the effectiveness of programs related to the three Life Education module streams (Physical Health, Safety, and Mental Health and Wellbeing) and their modes of delivery.
- A survey of Life Education Educators to gather insights and reflections from those who deliver the programs to students in schools.
- Secondary analyses of program feedback and impact data, including a case-control matched analysis using ACER's Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) survey data (2019).

6.1 Findings

With significant long-term government investment, Australia is amongst the world leaders in funding national universal wellbeing promotion, prevention and early intervention initiatives that support schools to build mentally and physically healthy communities. As part of this fabric, Life Education is one of the longest running programs, providing for over 40 years direct-delivery health and safety education to children and young people during their formative years (Botross, 2016).

Previous Life Education evaluations have demonstrated that the sessions delivered by Life Education Educators play a valuable role in helping schools to strengthen the understanding and behaviour of students towards making safe and healthy choices (Life Education, 2016). The evaluation of literature and previous research, presented in Chapter 2, demonstrated that the ***core Life Education programs are underpinned by evidence-based best practice*** in the following ways.

- Life Education program content and structure is based on guidance from the Health Promoting Schools Framework (WHO, 2000). Research on Health Promoting Schools suggest programs built on this framework can influence students' health and wellbeing. Although the effects reported are quite small, they are potentially important at a population level. These effects include reduction in BMI, smoking, and bullying, and improvements in physical activity, fitness, and fruit and vegetable intake (Langford et al., 2015).
- Life Education practices continuous improvement by establishing structured, ongoing processes to collect and use data to inform site-level and system-level decision-making.

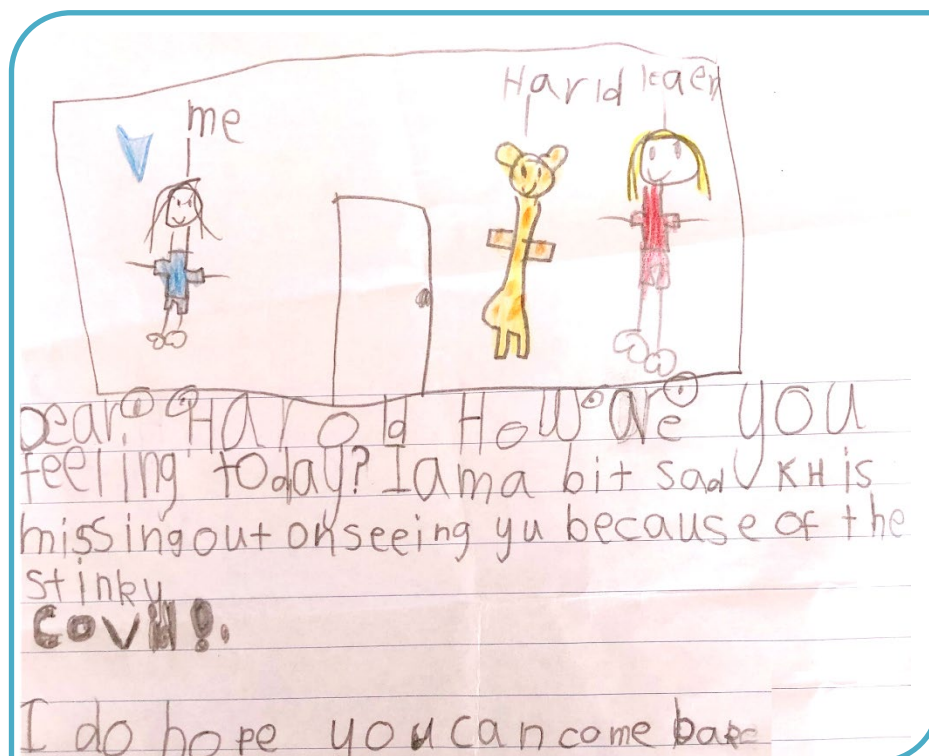
- Life Education promotes social-emotional learning and drug-alcohol awareness for children and young people throughout the curriculum by encouraging the use of contextualised universal and targeted approaches to best meet the needs of communities.
- Schools that are engaging Life Education year after year benefit from an ongoing trusted relationship with expert Life Education Educators. This builds foundational support that guides schools to develop a whole-site approach, tailored to their context.
- Life Education strengthens teacher competencies and capacity when teachers observe sessions as well as through the provision of information sessions, supported classroom modules, and resources for teachers, students, and parents.
- Life Education program modules are largely consistent with the commonly accepted features of effective school-based drug and health programs and based on the Principles for School Drug Education (Meyer, 2004). Life Education modules are based on a practical theory of change, which is backed by:
 - evidence suggesting that building knowledge and skills is a protective factor, (Hindmarsh, 2015; Langford et al., 2015; Shackleton, 2016; Sklad 2012)
 - the visible outcomes in the limited number of studies that measured outcomes of the Life Education program (Hill, 2015; Hodder et al., 2018), and
 - evidence that the Life Education program categorically increased knowledge and skills, and this then appeared to reduce harm (Craig, 2021; Hill, 2015; Kantar, 2019; LE, 2021c; 2016).

The review of literature also established that relative to the number of programs designed to promote Mental Health and Wellbeing stream, there were very few programs targeting the Physical Health and Safety streams. One systematic review (Dix et al., 2020) approximated the ratio at 80% wellbeing-related programs, 15% physical health programs and 5% safety-related programs. This suggests that the Life Education modules, particularly those pertaining to the Physical Health and Safety streams, are filling a significant gap in the child protection curriculum.

The analysis of new data from Life Education Educators (Chapter 3), existing data from teacher feedback surveys (Chapter 4), and ACER's Social Emotional Wellbeing database (Chapters 5), provided evidence that ***core Life Education programs are impacting primary-aged student wellbeing outcomes that align to the Australian and State Curriculum health and physical education outcomes***. The findings present a compelling picture of the positive impact Life Education programs are having on students, staff and the wider learning community, in the following ways.

- For a small group of students (3%), their community's engagement in Life Education learning has made them better at managing conflict (social skills, effect size Cohen's $d = 0.41$), more able to calm down when feeling bad (reduction in negative wellbeing, $d = 0.26$) and more considerate of other people (emotional skills, $d = 0.31$). While this empirical evidence indicates improvement in only a small number of students, this shift is significant at a population level.

- For all students, Life Education is instilling vital life-skills and knowledge (e.g. action in emergency, online safety, critical thinking, decision making) that are not widely available in other programs. It appears to also be having collateral impact by being highly inclusive of all students and creates opportunities for student voice.
- For teachers, Life Education programs support their professional development when they observe Educators model best-practice teaching and learning pedagogy. This can lead to improved classroom climate through students' improved interpersonal skills and awareness of mental health, but also through improved teaching and learning.
- For school communities, Life Education is providing support that helps to address real and current issues facing schools (e.g. bushfire, flood, substance abuse, isolation). The on-site visits, which are an increasingly rare feature in educational programs, are highly appreciated by schools, particularly those in low SES and remote communities that often miss out. It builds networks and makes marginalised communities feel connected and valued. Being on-site also allows the Educator to understand each school's unique context and adapt modules and resources, for example, to meet the needs of indigenous and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- For many families, Life Education programs are an inter-generational mainstay of their schooling experience. This builds trust and confidence in the key messaging and opens up opportunity for student-parent discussion at home, further supporting students to take on board important learnings.



Ada, 5 years old. (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/LifeEducationNSW>)

6.2 Recommendations

Positive findings have emerged from this rapid evaluation, independently undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research during 2021. In a time when there has been unprecedented disruption to education and normal life due to the Covid-19 pandemic, risking the health and wellbeing of Australian children, programs like Life Education seem more important and relevant than ever.

The following recommendations are based on the view that the evaluation findings indicate that Life Education programs provide positive support for schools as an important part of a broader health and wellbeing curriculum, in partnership with families. It also recognises the overall significance of these formative years in children's lives and the need to provide impactful learning moments that can truly galvanise healthier life-long behaviours.

1. Taking into account the evaluation findings and the limitations of the approaches used, the main recommendation is that the broad processes and resources associated with the Life Education program be maintained as the basis for sustaining an effective national health and safety education program for all primary-aged school students in Australia.
2. A notable absence from this national evaluation is evidence from Tasmania. This poses an issue of equity. It is recommended that Life Education Victoria be supported to extend or reallocate resources to have a physical presence (e.g. mobile learning classroom) in Tasmania – to offer island children the same opportunities as mainland children.
3. The preparedness for Life Education to service remote and very remote communities is commendable and provides a highly unique and rich learning opportunity for children who would otherwise completely miss out. Mindful of the higher levels of substance abuse in some remote communities, it is recommended that particular attention be given to tailoring or developing resources that better meet the needs of remote and indigenous communities, and to expand services to reach more of these communities.
4. To maintain or increase program effectiveness, resources need to be kept relevant, current and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of schools and of their students. It is recommended that resources be reviewed or expanded to embrace current issues and to better encompass and reflect the diversity of modern Australia (disability, gender-diverse, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures). There is also opportunity to improve teacher access to resources and the communication around when and how to use them.
5. Life Education state and territory offices are monitoring the quality of program delivery by using teacher, parent and student feedback surveys. However, there is no standardisation of forms or centralisation of data. This limits its use to inform state and national improvement strategies and duplicates data management processes and efforts. It is recommended that Life Education centralise and unify online feedback forms as a centralised service used by state and territory offices, in the same way they provide the website.

References

References in **bold** are the reports supplied by Life Education for review.

- Ahmed, S. K., Mitchell, P., & Trevitt, J. (2018). Social norms approach in secondary schools: literature review. Camberwell, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Astbury, B. (2011a). *Assembling the Evidence Base. A discussion paper prepared by The Centre for Program Evaluation: The Life Education Program Benchmarked against Common Features of Effective Drug and Health Programs.* University of Melbourne.**
- Astbury, B. (2011b). *Assembling the Evidence Base. A discussion paper prepared by The Centre for Program Evaluation for Life Education Australia.* University of Melbourne.**
- Becker, K. D., Brandt, N. E., Stephan, S. H., & Chorpita, B. F. (2014). A review of educational outcomes in the children's mental health treatment literature. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion, 7*(1), 5-23.
- Benson, P. L. (2006). *All kids are our kids: What communities must do to raise caring and responsible children and adolescents.* Jossey-Bass.
- Bernard, M. E., & Stephanou, A. (2018). Ecological Levels of Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Young People. *Child Indicators Research, 11*(2), 661-679.
- Botross, P. (2016). *Teaching together as tapestries: teachers' experiences of partnering with external providers to facilitate school-based drug education.* Unpublished Thesis. University of Melbourne. https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/bitstream/handle/11343/168280/TEACHING_TOGETHER_AS_TAPESTRIES_DEdThesis_Botross.pdf?sequence=1
- Bücker, S., Nuraydin, S., Simonsmeier, B. A., Schneider, M., & Luhmann, M. (2018). Subjective well-being and academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Research in Personality, 74*, 83-94.
- Cantone, E., Piras, A. P., Vellante, M., Preti, A., Danielsdóttir, S., D'Aloja, E., ... & Bhugra, D. (2015). Interventions on bullying and cyberbullying in schools: A systematic review. *Clinical practice and epidemiology in mental health: CP & EMH, 11*(Suppl 1 M4), 58.
- Chatterjee Singh, N. & Duraiappah, A. K. (Eds.). (2020). *Rethinking learning: A review of social and emotional learning frameworks for education systems.* New Delhi. UNESCO MGIEP. <https://mgiep.unesco.org/rethinking-learning>
- Clear Horizon. (2019a). *LEV Evaluation Report.* Prepared for Life Education Victoria.**
- Clear Horizon. (2019b). *Process Report: The LEV Journey.* Prepared for Life Education Victoria.**
- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological bulletin, 112*(1), 155.
- Craig, M. (2021). *Life Education South Australia's services to the South Australian Department for Education.* PairCo, Adelaide.**
- Dix, K., Ahmed, S. K., Carslake, T., Sniedze-Gregory, S., O'Grady, E., & Trevitt, J. (2020). *Student health and wellbeing. Systematic Review.* Social Ventures Australia & ACER, Melbourne. <https://evidenceforlearning.org.au/research-and-evaluation/evidence-reviews/health-and-wellbeing-systematic-review/>
- Dray, J., Bowman, J., Campbell, E., Freund, M., Wolfenden, L., Hodder, R. K., ... & Small, T. (2017). Systematic review of universal resilience-focused interventions targeting child and adolescent mental health in the school setting. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 56*(10), 813-824.
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development, 82*(1), 405-432.
- Erebus International. (2006). *Best Practice in Drug Education as Applied to Life Education Australia.* Report prepared for Life Education, Erebus International. http://www.lifeeducation.org.au/images/PDFs/Erebus_Report_Oct_2006.pdf**
- Erebus International. (2017). *Review of current theoretical and design principles underpinning the Life Education program.* Report prepared for Life Education, Erebus International. <https://www.lifeeducation.org.au/content/legacy/images/pdfs/erebus-report-to-life-education-australia-february-2017-v7.pdf>**
- Fedewa, A. L., & Ahn, S. (2011). The effects of physical activity and physical fitness on children's achievement and cognitive outcomes: a meta-analysis. *Research quarterly for exercise and sport, 82*(3), 521-535.
- Ferreira-Vorkapic, C., Feitoza, J. M., Marchioro, M., Simões, J., Kozasa, E., & Telles, S. (2015). Are there benefits from teaching yoga at schools? A systematic review of randomized control trials of yoga-based interventions. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2015*.
- Garcia-Carrion, R., Villarejo-Carballido, B., & Villardón-Gallego, L. (2019). Children and Adolescents Mental Health: A Systematic Review of Interaction-Based Interventions in Schools and Communities. *Frontiers in psychology, 10*.
- Hamilton, M., & Redmond, G. (2010). *Conceptualisation of social and emotional wellbeing for children and young people, and policy implications.* Canberra: ARACY & AIHW.

- Hendrie, G. A., Brindal, E., Corsini, N., Gardner, C., Baird, D., & Golley, R. K. (2012). Combined home and school obesity prevention interventions for children: what behavior change strategies and intervention characteristics are associated with effectiveness? *Health Education & Behavior*, 39(2), 159-171.
- Hill, R. (2014). *Life Education Program Evaluation: Executive Summary*. Regina Hill Effective Consulting. https://www.lifeeducation.org.au/content/legacy/images/latestnews/lifeeduau_execsummary2014_new.pdf
- Hill, R. (2016). *Life Education Queensland Module Evaluation Term 3 and 4 2015*. Regina Hill Effective Consulting. https://www.lifeeducation.org.au/content/legacy/images/whatwedo/life_ed_qld_evaluation_report_2016_final_report.pdf
- Hindmarsh, C. S., Jones, S. C., & Kervin, L. (2015). Effectiveness of alcohol media literacy programmes: a systematic literature review. *Health education research*, 30(3), 449-465.
- Hodder, R.K., O'Brien, K.M., Wolfenden, L., Nathan, N., Gillham, K., Bowman, J., Searston, J. & Wiggers, J.H. (2018). *Evaluation of the NSW Life Education Program and its impact on Year 5 students*. Report commissioned by NSW Ministry of Health via Health Administration Corporation. University of Newcastle, Newcastle. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/Documents/evaluation-nsw-life-education.pdf>
- Janssen, I., & LeBlanc, A. G. (2010). Systematic review of the health benefits of physical activity and fitness in school-aged children and youth. *International journal of behavioral nutrition and physical activity*, 7(1), 40.
- Jones, S. M., Brush, K., Bailey, R., Brion-Meisels, G., McIntyre, J., Kahn, J., ... & Stickle, L. (2017). *Navigating social and emotional learning from the inside out: Looking inside and across 25 leading SEL programs: A practical resource for schools and OST providers* (elementary school focus). <https://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/33952>
- Kantar. (2019). *Evaluation of Life Education's 'Decisions' Module A review of the evidence base*. Kantar.
- Langford, R., Bonell, C., Jones, H., Poulidou, T., Murphy, S., Waters, E., ... & Campbell, R. (2015). The World Health Organization's Health Promoting Schools framework: a Cochrane systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC public health*, 15(1), 130.
- Lees, C., & Hopkins, J. (2013). Peer reviewed: effect of aerobic exercise on cognition, academic achievement, and psychosocial function in children: a systematic review of randomized control trials. *Preventing chronic disease*, 10.
- LEQ. (2020). *Life Education Queensland Healthy Eats evaluation*. Internal report, Life Education Queensland.
- Life Education. (2016). *Life Education - Our Evidence Base: An Executive Summary*. Internal report. Life Education Australia, Sydney. https://www.lifeeducation.org.au/content/publications/pdfs/LifeEduAus_EvidenceBase_April2016_FINAL.pdf
- Life Education. (2018). *Life Education and the Australian Curriculum – Health and Physical Education*. Internal report. Live Education Australia.
- Life Education. (2019). *Student Evaluation and Feedback Term 3 2019 Data Collection*. Internal report. Live Education Australia.
- Life Education. (2020a). *VIC 2020 Teacher feedback*. Internal report. Live Education Australia.
- Life Education. (2020b). *Program Participation Report Dec 2020*. Internal report. Live Education Australia.
- Life Education. (2021a). *Life Education Primary Modules*. Internal report. Live Education Australia, Sydney.
- Life Education. (2021b). *Life Education Program Design Strategy*. Internal report. Live Education Australia.
- Life Education. (2021c). *LENSW Evaluation feedback TERM 1 2021 Student surveys and teacher assessment results*. Internal report. Live Education Australia.
- Lovat, T. (2010). International research handbook on values education and student wellbeing (pp. 23-24). In R. Toomey, & N. Clement (Eds.). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Mahoney, J. L., Weissberg, R. P., Greenberg, M. T., Dusenbury, L., Jagers, R. J., Niemi, K., ... & Yoder, N. (2020). Systemic social and emotional learning: Promoting educational success for all preschool to high school students. *American Psychologist*.
- Mansournia, M. A., Jewell, N. P., & Greenland, S. (2018). Case-control matching: effects, misconceptions, and recommendations. *European Journal of Epidemiology*, 33(1), 5-14.
- Markow, K., Coveney, J., & Booth, S. (2012). Enhancing food literacy through school-based cooking programs- What's working and what's not? *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*, 19(2), 2.
- Martin, R., & Murtagh, E. M. (2017). Effect of active lessons on physical activity, academic, and health outcomes: a systematic review. *Research quarterly for exercise and sport*, 88(2), 149-168.
- McKeering, P., & Hwang, Y. S. (2019). A systematic review of mindfulness-based school interventions with early adolescents. *Mindfulness*, 10(4), 593-610.
- Meyer, L. (2004). *Principles for School Drug Education*. Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training. Copyright Commonwealth of Australia reproduced by permission, Available from: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, GPO Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia.
- Midford, R. (2019). *What the Life Education Program provides; what the research evidence indicates makes difference: and how the Program can use this understanding to increase its impact*. Discussion paper for Life Education Queensland, Brisbane.

- Murano, D., Sawyer, J. E., & Lipnevich, A. A. (2020). A Meta-Analytic Review of Preschool Social and Emotional Learning Interventions. *Review of Educational Research, 90*(2), 227-263.
- Ng, E. D., Chua, J. Y. X., & Shorey, S. (2020). The effectiveness of educational interventions on traditional bullying and cyberbullying among adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 15*24838020933867.
- Ohly, H., Gentry, S., Wigglesworth, R., Bethel, A., Lovell, R., & Garside, R. (2016). A systematic review of the health and well-being impacts of school gardening: synthesis of quantitative and qualitative evidence. *BMC Public Health, 16*(1), 286.
- Payton, J., Weissberg, R. P., Durlak, J. A., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., Schellinger, K. B., & Pachan, M. (2008). The positive impact of social and emotional learning for kindergarten to eighth-grade students. Chicago, IL: *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning*.
- Pearce, N. (2016). Analysis of matched case-control studies. *BMJ, 352*.
- Price, C., Cohen, D., Pribis, P., & Cerami, J. (2017). Nutrition Education and Body Mass Index in Grades K-12: A Systematic Review. *Journal of School Health, 87*(9), 715-720.
- Raspberry, C. N., Lee, S. M., Robin, L., Laris, B. A., Russell, L. A., Coyle, K. K., & Nihiser, A. J. (2011). The association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance: a systematic review of the literature. *Preventive medicine, 52*, S10-S20.
- Rawlings, J. R., & Stoddard, S. A. (2019). A critical review of anti-bullying programs in North American elementary schools. *Journal of school health, 89*(9), 759-780.
- Richardson, R. (2011b). *The Life Education Program Benchmarked Against Effective Drug and Health Programs. Assembling the Evidence Base- A discussion paper prepared by The Centre for Program Evaluation. Internal summary prepared for Life Education Australia.***
- Salerno, J. P. (2016). Effectiveness of universal school-based mental health awareness programs among youth in the United States: a systematic review. *Journal of school health, 86*(12), 922-931.
- Sancassiani, F., Pintus, E., Holte, A., Paulus, P., Moro, M. F., Cossu, G., ... & Lindert, J. (2015). Enhancing the emotional and social skills of the youth to promote their wellbeing and positive development: a systematic review of universal school-based randomized controlled trials. *Clinical practice and epidemiology in mental health: CP & EMH, 11*(Suppl 1 M2), 21.
- Shackleton, N., Jamal, F., Viner, R. M., Dickson, K., Patton, G., & Bonell, C. (2016). School-based interventions going beyond health education to promote adolescent health: systematic review of reviews. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 58* (4), 382-396.
- Singh, A., Uijtdewilligen, L., Twisk, J. W., Van Mechelen, W., & Chinapaw, M. J. (2012). Physical activity and performance at school: a systematic review of the literature including a methodological quality assessment. *Archives of pediatrics & adolescent medicine, 166*(1), 49-55.
- Toner, E., Haslam, N., Robinson, J., & Williams, P. (2012). Character strengths and wellbeing in adolescence: Structure and correlates of the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Children. *Personality and Individual Differences, 52*(5), 637-642.
- Velardo, S., Fane, J., Jong, S., & Watson, M. (2020). Nutrition and Learning in the Australian Context. In *Health and Education Interdependence* (pp.159-177). Springer, Singapore.
- Wei, Y., Hayden, J. A., Kutcher, S., Zygmunt, A., & McGrath, P. (2013). The effectiveness of school mental health literacy programs to address knowledge, attitudes and help seeking among youth. *Early intervention in psychiatry, 7*(2), 109-121.
- WHO. (2000). *Local action: Creating health promoting schools* (No. WHO/NMH/HPS/00.4). World Health Organization.
- WHO. (2018). *Global standards for health promoting schools*. World Health Organization.

Appendix A: Life Education Documents Analysed

Figure 19. Key reports from past evaluations

| Title of the document | Year | Who? | Brief description | Affiliates | Programs evaluated | Data collection | Findings |
|---|------|---------------|---|------------|---|---|---|
| Evaluation of the NSW Life Education Program and its impact on Year 5 students | 2018 | Hodder et al. | Delivery of the NSW Program within schools involves pre-visit support, selected module delivery directly to students, and provision of resources for teachers, parents, and students' resources. Generally, teachers had positive attitudes towards the Life Education Program drug and alcohol modules, however few agreed it was appropriate for schools or parents to pay for the delivery of mandated curriculum by Life Education (31% and 33% respectively). Interviewees considered the uptake of programs was hindered by cost. | NSW | Drug & Alcohol: 'On the Case' (Years 5 to 6), 'Think Twice' (Years 5 to 6), and 'Decisions' (Years 5 to 7). | Document review (including cost data); pre-post-follow up student survey; schoolteacher survey; Life Education NSW educator and administrator interviews; observational audit | Strength of delivery is variable depending on educators, teachers, students and their families Half of NSW primary schools participated in 2017/18; few schools participate every year Effect shown: improved student knowledge regarding tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; no other significant effects shown Mean investment of \$1288 per school needed to achieve effect shown |
| Evaluation of Life Education's 'Decisions' Module A review of the evidence base | 2019 | Kantar | Life Education Australia commissioned the Kantar Public Division team to undertake a review of the Decisions Module. The aim of this review is to assess the performance of the Module across a range of 'effectiveness measures' – specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design effectiveness – the degree to which the module is based on best-practice principles related to alcohol and drug education, including a review of the module from a theoretical standpoint. • Implementation effectiveness – The degree to which the process of module implementation facilitates outcomes in line with its stated aims. Outcome 1: providing opportunities and resources that support drug and health education within schools and communities; Outcome 2: assisting teachers to meet the requirements of the curriculum • Participant outcome effectiveness – whether the module contributes to the stated teaching aims. Specifically, increased understanding, knowledge and attitudes, and potentially capability, among students (see these detailed below); the impact on teachers in being able to deliver the Curriculum; and enabling parents to complement the work of Life Education and the child's teacher. | All | Drug & Alcohol: Decisions | Secondary data analysis. Sources included previous Life Education evaluation reports, student and teacher feedback surveys and reports, internal Life Education documentation (including program theory and frameworks) | Design effectiveness: Objectives met Implementation effectiveness: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Objectives met 2. Objectives partially met Participant outcomes effectiveness: Objectives in stated outcomes 1–4 all partially met |

| Title of the document | Year | Who? | Brief description | Affiliates | Programs evaluated | Data collection | Findings |
|--|-------|---------------|---|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Life Education South Australia's services to the South Australian Department for Education | 2021 | Craig | Life Education South Australia (LESA) provide an effective and evidence-based drug education program, in partnership with the South Australian Government. The evidence convincingly shows the program is respected by parents and educators, is in demand from schools, has a positive social impact, and is cost effective. Six recent evaluation reports have been assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Education: Our Evidence Base • Evaluation of the NSW Life Education Program and its impact on Year 5 Students • Kantar Review of University of Newcastle evaluation report an action items • Evaluation of Life Education's 'Decisions' Module A review of the evidence base • Discussion paper for Life Education Queensland • Evaluation Report: The LEV Journey Prepared for Life Education Victoria 23 December 2019 | SA, NSW, QLD, VIC | Drug & Alcohol: 'Decisions' and 'Reality Now' | Secondary data analysis. Sources listed in description column | Life Education programs provide high-quality drug and alcohol education, are based on a sound theory of change and the best available evidence, and maximise the outcomes drug education can achieve. The drug and alcohol education programs are efficient, provide value for money, and reduce burdens on teachers and schools |
| LIFE EDUCATION QUEENSLAND Module Evaluation Term 3 and 4 2015 | 2016 | Hill | The evaluation demonstrates that the Life Education sessions are generally effective in getting students to think about health and safety issues and in providing them with information, both in terms of basic knowledge and options or strategies for dealing with different situations, that they can then draw on to make healthier and safer choices. | QLD | Health (healthy eating and physical activity): Harold's Diary, All Systems Go Drugs (smoking and alcohol): On the Case, Think Twice Puberty and sexual health: Talk About It Years 5 - 6, Talk About It Yrs 7-8, Talk About It Yrs 9-10 | Pre-post Life Education session student surveys | Life Education sessions are generally effective in improving students' knowledge and skills that they can draw on to make healthier and safer choices |
| EVALUATION REPORT Prepared for Life Education Victoria | 2019a | Clear Horizon | The most significant impact for students as a result of the D&A program is an increased awareness of drugs and alcohol use and its negative consequences. Post-LEV visit found that many students suggest that smoking and alcohol are things to fear and avoid and they negatively associate these 'bad habits' with factors such as homelessness and poor health. | VIC | Drugs & Alcohol (Years 5-6, Decisions, On the Case and Think Twice modules); Respectful Relationships (Years 5-6, Respect Relate Connect module), and Student Agency Pilot Program (Year 6, Healthy Harold Heroes). | Student exit survey, student change (commitment) card, post-visit reflections and surveys, teacher surveys, school surveys, teacher interviews | Life Education is highly trusted by teachers and students. LE sessions have exceptionally strong student engagement, are useful in addressing specialised curriculum requirements, contribute to student awareness of tricky issues in their lives and contribute to assertive action in specific settings |
| PROCESS REPORT: THE LEV JOURNEY Prepared for Life Education Victoria | 2019b | Clear Horizon | This report explains the evaluation journey that Life Education Victoria (LEV) underwent in 2019 with its evaluation partner Clear Horizon. During the year, LEV staff received training, collected evaluation data, and incorporated evaluation into their program design process. This report outlines this journey and how LEV is positioned to continue evaluation activities beyond 2019. | VIC | Drugs & Alcohol (3 modules, Year 5-6), Respectful Relationships (Respect, Relate, connect module, Years 5-6), and a new pilot program called Healthy Harold Heroes | Sprint workshops to enable LEV staff to monitor and evaluate programs. Workshops included training, expert advice, reflective practice, and coaching | The incorporation of evaluation data into LEV's module review and redesign process will ensure quality, evidence-based refinements to LEV programs. |

Figure 20. List of other LE documents analysed

| Title of the document | Year | Who? | Brief description | Affiliates | Findings |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|---|------------|---|
| Life Education Our Evidence Base An Exec. Summary | 2017 | Life Education | A summary of the evidence base underpinning LE program and demonstrating its effectiveness is presented in this document. The LE primary school programs focus on the following topics: Body knowledge: Safety; Cybersafety; Nutrition; Physical activity; Puberty; Relationships; Medicines; Decision making; Tobacco; and Alcohol. | All | Survey data collected throughout Term 3 and 4 2015 from 8,658 students in 136 schools across Queensland, in Year 4 suggest that (Regina Hill Effective Consulting Pty Ltd, 2015): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While only 46.8% of students in a pre-survey said that they participated in physical activity daily. After the Life Education session 64.9% indicated that they would exercise daily and over 85% said that they thought they were more likely to be physically active because of what they had learned in the session. 78.8% of students in a pre-survey said they would never smoke and this increased after the Life Education session to 85.2%, in addition to approximately 90% of students saying that they thought that they were less likely to smoke because of their learnings from the session. More than 86% of students signalled that they would be likely to make safer decisions about alcohol in the future because of what they had learned through LE session. |
| Assembling the Evidence Base: A discussion paper prepared by The Centre for Program Eval. Annex: The Life Education Program Benchmarked Against Effective Drug & Health Programs | 2011a 2011b | Astbury | The purpose of this report was to assist Life Education in reconciling 'what it knows' with 'what it does', enabling it to generate the necessary consensus around a set of principles that will guide the development of its program – that will see it close the gap between the knowing and doing – and that will increase the impact of the work as a result. | All | LE programs are based on guidance from two key framework documents Health Promoting Schools Framework (WHO, 2000) and Principles for School Drug Education (Meyer, 2004). A comparative analysis presented in this report, shows that 'the content of, and processes involved in implementing the Life Education program are largely consistent with the commonly accepted features of effective school based drug and health programs' (p.3). |
| Best Practice in Drug Education as Applied to Life Education Australia | 2006 | Erebus International | This review focussed on the central questions of firstly, whether Life Education's current approach to delivering drug education is in line with the research on known best practice in school drug education and secondly, whether Life Education's current delivery model is the most appropriate means through which it can achieve its mission. | All | Life Education's drug and alcohol program aligns well against the set of 12 best practice Principles for School Drug Education (Myer, 2004), particularly on principles 1, 2, 7, 11 and 12. The research literature (and the Principles for School Drug Education) suggests that drug education is best taught as part of a sustained, whole school program and LE could play a crucial role in building teacher capacity, and already does so by engaging teachers in the delivery of units of work and through modelling by Educators during the visits to schools. |
| Review of current theoretical and design principles underpinning the Life Education program | 2017 | Erebus International | This literature review looked at the theoretical underpinnings and design principles for the LE school health and drug education program. | All | Life Education's program modules and session content are based on health promotion, harm minimisation and behavioural change theory. They are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging Inclusive Age appropriate Informative Credible Relevant Practical <p>The LE program is comprehensive, high quality, aligned to the curriculum • delivered by professional and expert educators, interactive in nature, focussed on developing knowledge as well as motivation, strategies, skills, and confidence and regularly evaluated to collect evidence on the quality and impact of its delivery.</p> |

| Title of the document | Year | Who? | Brief description | Affiliates | Findings |
|--|-------|----------------|--|------------|---|
| LENSW Evaluation feedback TERM 1 2021 Student surveys and teacher assessment results | 2021c | Life Education | Infographics report- Student surveys and teacher assessment results. | NSW | <p>Surveys conducted on 4 modules (Mind your medicine, On the case, Think twice, and Decision) show that: positive results were found both in behavioural change intention and increase in knowledge awareness.</p> <p>Mind your medicine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 74.7% OF STUDENTS FOUND OUT THAT MEDICINES ARE DRUGS ○ 95.3% KNOW TO ALWAYS CHECK WITH AN ADULT IF THEY NEED TO USE MEDICINE ○ 64.5% OF STUDENTS SAID THEY CAN COMMUNICATE BETTER AFTER THE SESSION <p>On the case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 98% OF STUDENTS UNDERSTAND HOW SMOKING AFFECTS THEBODY ○ 95.6% OF STUDENTS FEEL THEY CAN SAY 'NO' IF THEY ARE OFFERED A CIGARETTE ○ 92.3% OF STUDENTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO SMOKE AFTER WHATTHEY LEARNT IN THE SESSION <p>Think twice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 92.3% OF STUDENTS SAID THEY KNOW SOME OF THE EFFECTSO F ALCOHOL ON THE BODY ○ 89.4% OF STUDENTS SAID THEY KNOW THE LAWS RELATING TOUSING AND BUYING ALCOHOL ○ 93% OF STUDENTS SAID THEY WILL MAKE GOOD DECISOINS ABOUT ALCOHOL AFTER WHAT THEY LEARNT THAT SESSION <p>Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 85.5% OF STUDENTS LEARNT THAT DRUGS CHANGE THE WAY THE BODY WORKS ○ 93.8% OF STUDENTS UNDERSTAND WHY SOME DRUGS ARE ILLEGAL ○ 91.8% OF STUDENTS SAID THEY WOULD MAKE GOOD DECISIONS ABOUT DRUGS AFTER WHAT THEY HAD LEARNT <p>Assessment results (using the Student Assessment Tool) by Teachers show the following key findings for these primary modules:</p> <p>MY BODY MATTERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 93% Recognised safe/unsafe situations ● 86% Identified healthy foods vs sometimes foods ● 58% Identified that, the older you get, the more responsibility you have for your health ● 71% Discussed the effects of physical activity on bodies <p>HAROLD'S FRIEND SHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 88% Discussed thoughts and feelings about safe and unsafe situations ● 100% Recognised emotions and demonstrated appropriate ways to respond ● 90% Identified people they trust and feel safe around, and how those people support them ● 90% Recognised the body's reaction to a range of situations, including safe and unsafe situations <p>READY STEADY GO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 70% Recognised safe and unsafe situations ● 97% Recognised or practiced emotional responses ● 61% Identified the importance of relationships ● 76% Identified people and places that help to keep them safe <p>SAFETY RULES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 95% Recognised actions they can take to stay safe ● 71% Explored characteristics of positive relationships ● 71% Identified people who can help them |

| Title of the document | Year | Who? | Brief description | Affiliates | Findings |
|-----------------------|------|------|-------------------|------------|--|
| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91% Discussed strategies to deal with an emergency <p>GROWING GOOD FRIENDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Discussed how positive relationships make them feel • 76% Identified foods which are processed and unprocessed • 90% Recognised safe and unsafe situations • 98% Identified people who are important to them • 93% Described the characteristics of positive relationships <p>ALL SYSTEMS GO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 98% Explored how body systems are interrelated • 90% Identified that bodies need oxygen, nutrients and water to stay alive • 90% Recognised that some factors negatively impact the body • 72% Discussed strategies to resist peer group pressure • 54% Identified that bodies can respond differently to stress <p>MIND YOUR MEDICINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Identified medicines as drugs and the consequences of misuse • 86% Identified people who advise them about medicines • 88% Explored strategies to keep themselves and others safe • 67% Recognised what may impact how a person values themselves • 70% Discussed skills which enhance relationships and promote inclusion <p>BCYBERWISE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68% Described the characteristics of positive relationships • 100% Described safe and respectful behaviours when using technology • 96% Explored techniques to respond to unsafe online and offline situations • 100% Identified strategies for keeping personal information safe online • 76% Discussed strategies to deal with both face-to-face and online bullying <p>ON THE CASE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Identified nicotine as a drug • 75% Identified that cigarette smoke contains many chemicals • 75% Discussed strategies to address pressure to smoke • 80% Discussed the laws governing the advertising and sale of tobacco products • 80% Identified the effects smoking has upon the body <p>THINK TWICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 94% Identified that alcohol is a legal drug • 100% Discussed the effects alcohol has on the body • 94% Explored the harmful effects that alcohol can have on the community • 88% Identified standard drinks and high risk use of alcohol • 88% Identified the laws governing the advertising, sale and use of alcohol <p>DECISIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% Recognised that drugs can be classified, e.g. stimulants, legal status • 90% Identified the risk of drug use • 87% Discussed ways friends can influence decisions • 84% Explored the short/long term effect of drug use |

| Title of the document | Year | Who? | Brief description | Affiliates | Findings |
|---|-------|----------------|--|------------|---|
| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 84% Discussed the laws governing the sale and advertising of alcohol and tobacco <p>RELATE, RESPECT CONNECT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% Recognised the importance of respectful relationships 97% Explored the characteristics of respectful relationships 86% Identified strategies to maintain respectful relationships 81% Identified the positive and negative use of online communication 86% Explored strategies to respond to disrespectful situations |
| What the Life Education Program provides; what the research evidences indicates makes a difference: and how the Program can use this understanding to increase its impact. Discussion paper for Life Education Queensland | 2019 | Midford | The Queensland Life Education Model, the research evidence as to effective health education and promotion in schools, how research evidence can be used in Life Education Queensland Program development | QLD | <p>This report documents the 11 elements that are critical to program effectiveness summarised by a recent Life Education evaluation by PairCo. (Craig, 2021, p.21), as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programs should be theory-driven and research-based. 2. Information about drugs should be developmentally appropriate. 3. Programs should provide social resistance training. 4. Normative education on drug use should be included. 5. Broader social skills training and health education should be included. 6. Teaching should be interactive and promote active student participation. 7. Teachers should receive training and support. 8. Coverage should be adequate, with continued follow up. 9. Programs should be culturally sensitive. 10. Programs should be supported by broader family, community, and media components. 11. Programs should be evaluated. |
| VIC_2020 Teacher feedback | 2020a | Life Education | Data / infographics report | VIC | |
| Program Participation Report Dec 2020.xlsx | 2020b | Life Education | National program participation report by state 2016- Dec 2020 | All | |
| Life Education Primary Modules | 2021a | Life Education | Description of what is included in each of the primary modules | All | Description of junior primary, middle-primary and upper primary modules, along with their goals and content. |
| Life Education and the Australian Curriculum – Health and Physical Education | 2018 | Life Education | The core streams and their link to the Australian Curriculum- Health and Physical Education. | All | <p>Life Education’s health and drug education program is designed to be integrated into the primary F - 6/7 curriculum taught in Australian schools.</p> <p>The primary modules align with to the ‘Personal Social and Community Health’ and ‘Movement and Physical Activity’ strands of the Australian School Curriculum.</p> |
| Life Education Program Design Strategy | 2021b | Life Education | Discusses the Program Design Strategy- what why and how, benefits, user pathways for teachers and students, and program models for the 3 Core Streams - Physical Health, Safety, and Mental Health and Wellbeing | All | <p>This document outlines LE’s new program vision and presents a roadmap for the development of a deeper learning experience for students across Australia, supporting them to reach their potential – growing up healthier, happier, and safer. It documents what, why and how of achieving greater impact through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • categorising the LE program into three defined but interrelated “streams” • refining the outcomes of each module to align with these streams • deconstructing and reconstructing existing modules to create more logical content and lesson flow • the creation of new "wraparound" e-learning resources (repurposing existing content and developing new assets) for teachers to deliver pre and post the face-to-face lesson |

| Title of the document | Year | Who? | Brief description | Affiliates | Findings |
|--|------|----------------------|---|------------|--|
| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allowing teachers the ability to cater to the individual needs of their learning communities aligning future modules within the three streams. |
| Life Education core program strategy and operating model | 2020 | McKinsey and company | Summary report covering all aspects of program design, approach, and models. Focuses on two key questions: (1) What should be our program development strategy? (2) What is the best working model between Life Education and Affiliates? | All | <p>Preschool Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program perceived as “dated”. The language in animations is simplistic, workbooks old pedagogy, parent handouts print heavy. Big opportunity to grow presence in this space and build relationship with the “Harold brand” with children and families before school. Preschools and Early Learning Centres look to external providers for support. It is a low-cost delivery model & opportunity for multiple sessions per centre per year. NSW has seen significant growth in this sector & SA is trialing virtual delivery. <p>Junior Primary Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> F2F lessons well received by schools and Educators but room for improvement in pre- and post-resources A recent review of the content of the workbooks has shown some of the pages are difficult for students and teachers to interpret and others lack educational merit Identified need for resources or an additional module focusing on Cybersafety <p>Middle Primary Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Systems Go and bCyberwise still relevant. Mind Your Medicine is due to be retired. Affiliates identified need to include more SEL content (e.g. SA reporting schools requesting RRC) Need for a nutrition focused module or resources. <p>Module specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mind your Medicine: Due to be retired as it is dated. bCyberwise: Still a great and popular program however some elements could be refreshed. Currently on PowerPoint All Systems Go: Nutrition content boosted in 2019. <p>Upper Primary Modules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are currently 4 modules, so it takes time to train educators across them all. <p>Module specific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think Twice: Demand reducing for this module. Still on PowerPoint On The Case: Demand reducing for this module. Need arising for more content to address vaping. ATSI resources excellent yet underutilised Relate Respect Connect: Most popular program in this suite but room for improvement. Feedback is that Bethany videos are too long and boring. Not enough time in the f2f sessions to cover all content Decisions: Not enough time in the f2f sessions to cover all content. Heavy reliance on post resources and these need to be refreshed to make them more user friendly and robust to equip class teachers to cover topics in greater depth. |

Appendix B: Synthesis of Results from Previous Systematic Reviews

Figure 21 provides a synthesis of some systematic reviews conducted within the last decade which focus on the different focus areas of the Life Education program. The first three columns of this table provide key information about the systematic review such as the last name of the first author, the year of publication, type of interventions included and the outcomes of interest. The fourth column identifies the focus area which is linked to Life Education core program areas. The last column notes the studies which appeared in these reviews that provide evidence which support for the types of interventions undertaken by Life Education.

Figure 21. Evidence synthesis from previous systematic reviews of relevance

| Systematic Review (SR) | Title of the SR | Streams | Findings and outcomes | Evidence on effectiveness | Effect Size/ Impact data | Mode/ design |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Hindmarsh 2015 | Effectiveness of alcohol media literacy programmes: a systematic literature review | Physical Health; Safety | Intervention focus: Media literacy education on underage drinking Findings from this systematic literature review provide a comprehensive understanding of the descriptive, methodological and outcome characteristics for alcohol media literacy programs. Outcomes: Pre-drinking behaviour, persuasion knowledge, realism, social norms , similarity, desirability, identification, expectancies, behavioural intention, alcohol consumption, deconstruction skills | Media literacy education on underage drinking is useful for addressing the young people's alcohol related cognitions, attitudes, and behavioural intentions. | – | Face-to-face (but supported by 2 types of media -print and television advertisements); school-based |
| Sancassiani 2015 | Enhancing the Emotional and Social Skills of the Youth to Promote their Wellbeing and Positive Development: A Systematic Review of Universal School-based Randomized Controlled Trials | Mental Health and Wellbeing | Intervention focus: Emotional and social skills (Life Skills Training (LST)); positive youth development Most interventions characterized by a whole-school approach and Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit (SAFE) practices can enhance emotional and social skills and have been found to demonstrate promising outcomes that are relatively far-reaching for children and youth wellbeing. Outcomes: Healthy behaviours , emotional and social skills, academic performance, and psychological wellbeing | Life Skills Training (LST) is generally effective in improving emotional and social skills, and healthy behaviours. | – | Face-to-face; universal school-based |
| Langford 2015 | The World Health Organization's Health Promoting Schools framework: A Cochrane systematic review and meta-analysis | Physical Health; Safety | Intervention focus: Health promoting school (HPS) Interventions focused on HPS can have an impact on students' health and wellbeing by reducing BMI, smoking and incidence of being bullied, and increasing physical | HPS interventions focusing on physical activity alone found an average reduction in BMI of 0.38 kg/m ² but no effect was found for Physical Activity + Nutrition intervention. | Physical activity focused interventions: average reduction in | Face-to-face; school-based |

| Systematic Review (SR) | Title of the SR | Streams | Findings and outcomes | Evidence on effectiveness | Effect Size/ Impact data | Mode/ design |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|--|--|--|---|
| | | | <p>activity, fitness, and fruit and vegetable intake. These effects may be small but are potentially important at a population level.</p> <p>Outcomes: Body mass index (BMI), physical activity, physical fitness, fruit and vegetable intake, tobacco use, being bullied and educational outcomes (absenteeism, attendance, academic motivation, suspensions, academic performance)</p> | <p>Stronger evidence is available for HPS effects on smoking and bullying.</p> <p>Students receiving HPS interventions were, on average, 23% less likely to smoke and 17% less likely to be bullied</p> | <p>BMI of 0.38 kg/m²</p> <p>HPS interventions: 23% less likely to smoke and 17% less likely to be bullied</p> | |
| Fedewa 2011 | The Effects of Physical Activity and Physical Fitness on Children's Achievement and Cognitive Outcomes | Physical Health | <p>Intervention focus: Physical activity and physical fitness</p> <p>Physical activity programs that focus on aerobic exercises have been found to have the largest impact on children's cognitive outcomes, followed by the effects of regular physical education programs and perceptual motor training.</p> <p>Outcomes: math/reading achievement, grade point average, Intellectual quotient</p> | <p>Physical activity has a significantly positive impact on children's cognitive outcomes and academic achievement. Its magnitude was 0.28 with an SE of 0.03, showing a small to medium effect.</p> | 0.28 | Face-to-face; School-based |
| Singh 2012 | Physical activity and performance at school: a systematic review of the literature including a methodological quality assessment | Physical Health | <p>Intervention focus: Physical activity</p> <p>Based on the results of the best-evidence synthesis, the review found evidence of a significant longitudinal positive relationship between physical activity and academic performance.</p> <p>Outcomes: Academic performance, cognition</p> | <p>Participation in physical activity can be positively associated to academic performance in children.</p> | – | Face-to-face; school-based |
| Janssen 2010 | Systematic review of the health benefits of physical activity and fitness in school-aged children and youth | Physical Health | <p>Intervention focus: Physical activity</p> <p>Results from experimental studies indicate that even modest amounts of physical activity can have health benefits in high-risk youngsters (e.g. obese).</p> <p>Outcomes: Physical health (cholesterol and blood lipids, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, overweight and obesity, bone mineral density), depression and related symptoms</p> | <p>Evidence of interventions that support physical activity, suggest that the activity should be of at least a moderate intensity for achieving significant health benefits. Aerobic-based activities can have the greatest health benefit, while for bone health, high-impact weight bearing activities usually have more impact.</p> | – | Face-to-face; programs for school-aged children |
| Lees 2013 | Effect of aerobic exercise on cognition, academic achievement, and psychosocial function in children: a systematic review of randomized control trials | Physical Health | <p>Intervention focus: Physical activity</p> <p>There is evidence that aerobic exercise programs can have a positive impact on students' cognition, academic achievement, behaviour, and psychosocial functioning outcomes.</p> <p>Outcomes: Cognition, academic achievement, behaviour, and psychosocial functioning</p> | <p>Aerobic physical activity interventions generally have a positive impact on children's cognition and psychosocial function. This relationship was found to be minimal in many studies and in some measures, no significant improvement was seen at all.</p> | – | Face-to-face; school-based |
| Price 2017 | Nutrition Education and Body Mass Index in Grades K-12: A Systematic Review | Physical Health | <p>Intervention focus: Nutrition education</p> | <p>Longer-term nutrition education delivered in the school setting can</p> | – | Face-to-face; school-based |

| Systematic Review (SR) | Title of the SR | Streams | Findings and outcomes | Evidence on effectiveness | Effect Size/ Impact data | Mode/ design |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| | | | <p>Longer-term studies (greater than 1 year of implementation) showed more pronounced results with positive impact on reducing overweight/obese BMI measures.</p> <p>Outcomes: BMI percentile or BMI z-score</p> | provide children with tools to achieve a healthy weight status. | | |
| Ohly 2016 | A systematic review of the health and well-being impacts of school gardening: Synthesis of quantitative and qualitative evidence. | Physical Health | <p>Intervention focus: School gardening, Nutrition education</p> <p>There is evidence that participants in school gardening programmes (including children and adults) may experience and perceive a range health and well-being impacts.</p> <p>Outcomes: Fruit and vegetable intakes, nutrient intakes (and other dietary outcomes), food preferences, knowledge and attitudes towards food, physical health and activity and well-being</p> | <p>There is quantitative evidence based on self-reports on the nutritional impacts of school gardening, such as increased preference for, and consumption of, fruits and vegetables.</p> <p>There was also some qualitative evidence on how school gardens could lead to health and well-being improvements which may help to influence better study design and the elements of school gardens that have the potential to be beneficial.</p> | – | Face-to-face; school-based |
| Durlak 2011 | The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions | Mental Health and Wellbeing | <p>Intervention focus: Social and emotional learning (SEL)</p> <p>SEL focused programs can have significant positive effects on students targeted social-emotional competencies and attitudes about self, others, and school. It was also found that classroom teachers and other school staff effectively conducted SEL programs.</p> <p>Outcomes: SEL skills, attitudes, and positive social behaviours, conduct problems, emotional distress, and academic performance</p> | <p>Universal school-based social-emotional development programs impact on positive social behaviour, problem behaviours, and academic performance, however, the largest Effect Size (ES) occurred for social-emotional skill performance (mean ES = 0.69).</p> <p>In a small subset of all reviewed studies there was 11-percentile gain in academic performance.</p> | 0.69 | Face-to-face; Universal School-based |
| Goldberg 2019 | Effectiveness of interventions adopting a whole school approach to enhancing social and emotional development: a meta-analysis | Mental Health and Wellbeing | <p>Intervention focus: Social and emotional learning (SEL)</p> <p>Although whole school interventions have not shown any impact on academic achievement, a small, significant positive impact has been found on students' social and emotional adjustment, behavioural adjustment, and internalising symptoms.</p> <p>Outcomes: Social and emotional adjustment, behavioural adjustment, school performance and internalising symptoms</p> | <p>Post-intervention outcomes demonstrated significant but small improvements in participants' social and emotional adjustment (d = 0.220), behavioural adjustment (d = 0.134), and internalising symptoms (d = 0.109). Results from the meta-analysis indicated that the implementation of a community component was associated with a significant higher effect size on children's social and emotional adjustment.</p> | Social and emotional adjustment (d = 0.220), behavioural adjustment (d = 0.134), and internalising symptoms (d = 0.109) | Face-to-face; Universal School-based |

| Systematic Review (SR) | Title of the SR | Streams | Findings and outcomes | Evidence on effectiveness | Effect Size/ Impact data | Mode/ design |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Sklad 2012 | Effectiveness of school-based universal social, emotional, and behavioral programs: do they enhance students' development in the area of skill, behavior and adjustment? | Mental Health and Wellbeing | <p>Intervention focus: Social and emotional learning (SEL) and behavioural skills</p> <p>The universal, school-based social, emotional, and/or behavioural (SEB) programs reported increase in social skills and decrease in antisocial behaviour as the most frequent impacts.</p> <p>Outcomes: Social-emotional skills, positive self-image, behavioural adjustment - antisocial behaviour, prosocial behaviour, substance abuse, mental health disorders, and academic achievement</p> | <p>The review reports moderate immediate effects on positive self-image, prosocial behaviour, academic achievement, and antisocial behaviour, improving each of these four outcomes by nearly one half a standard deviation. Immediate effects on mental disorders and substance abuse were found to be small.</p> <p>Also, on average social skills of students participating in programs were .7 standard deviations higher than their counterparts, which means that the average program participant had better skills than 76% of regular students.</p> | Average program participant had better skills than 76% of regular students | Face-to-face; universal school-based |
| Dray 2017 | Systematic Review of Universal Resilience-Focused Interventions Targeting Child and Adolescent Mental Health in the School Setting | Mental Health and Wellbeing; Safety | <p>Intervention focus: Resilience and protective factors; Social and emotional learning (SEL)</p> <p>Universal resilience-focused interventions can support short-term reductions in depressive and anxiety symptoms for children and adolescents, particularly when a cognitive-behavioural therapy-based approach is used.</p> <p>Outcomes: Anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms, hyperactivity, conduct problems, internalizing problems, externalizing problems, and general psychological distress</p> | Resilience-focused interventions were effective relative to a control in reducing 4 of 7 outcomes: depressive symptoms, internalizing problems, externalizing problems, and general psychological distress. | – | Face-to-face; Universal School-based |
| Earnshaw 2018 | Stigma-based bullying interventions: A systematic review | Mental Health and Wellbeing; Safety | <p>Intervention focus: Bullying prevention</p> <p>Although stigma-based bullying interventions are increasing in popularity, they are often unevenly distributed across stigmas, geographic locations, and social contexts.</p> <p>Outcomes: Behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge related to stigma-based bullying</p> | Interventions included in this review affected behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge related to stigma-based bullying as well as other outcomes. | – | Face-to-face; Universal School-based |
| Ng 2020 | The effectiveness of educational interventions on traditional bullying and cyberbullying among adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis | Mental Health and Wellbeing; Safety | <p>Intervention focus: Bullying prevention</p> <p>Cyberbullying focused interventions can be more effective in reducing traditional bullying or cyberbullying and cybervictimization among adolescents when delivered by technology-savvy subject experts compared to classroom teachers.</p> | Interventions had very small to small effect sizes on traditional bullying and cyberbullying perpetration (traditional: standardized mean differences [SMD] = -.30 and cyber: SMD = -.16) and victimization (traditional: SMD = -.18 and cyber: SMD = -.13) among adolescents | – | Face-to-face; whole school-based or classroom based |

| Systematic Review (SR) | Title of the SR | Streams | Findings and outcomes | Evidence on effectiveness | Effect Size/ Impact data | Mode/ design |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| | | | Outcomes: Bullying or cyberbullying and cybervictimization | | | |
| Cantone 2015 | Interventions on bullying and cyberbullying in schools: A systematic review | Mental Health and Wellbeing | Intervention focus: Bullying prevention There is evidence that programs aimed at reducing bullying can be effective in the short term, but their long-term effectiveness has not been established. Besides, there are important differences in the impacts based on gender, age, and socio-economic status of participants. Outcomes: Bullying or cyberbullying | Interventions focused on the whole school have been found to be more effective in reducing bullying than interventions delivered through simply classroom curricula or social skills training, but the programs did not show positive returns in the long-term. | – | Face-to-face; whole school-based, targeted or classroom based |
| Dix 2020 | Systematic review: Effectiveness of wellbeing interventions (2020) | Mental Health and Wellbeing | Intervention focus: Wellbeing; SEL School based wellbeing interventions make a difference to student outcomes and everything that schools do to support student wellbeing counts although some are more effective than others. While disadvantaged students benefit most from tailored support, to have an impact on academic outcome, longer programs need to be sustained. | School-based wellbeing programs had small to moderate positive impacts on student academic achievement, compared to similar students in control groups engaged in their usual activities with general academic performance equivalent to three months of additional learning gain. Wellbeing programs had small to moderate effects on wellbeing-related measures compared to students in control groups, consistent with previous reviews | Academic performance equivalent to three months of additional learning gain (g = 0.26) Social-emotional adjustment (g = 0.14), behavioural adjustment (g = 0.15), cognitive adjustment (g = 0.18), and a moderate impact on internalising symptoms (g = 0.20) | Face-to-face; universal school based |
| Becker 2014 | A Review of Educational Outcomes in the Chnt Literature | Mental Health and Wellbeing | Intervention focus: Wellbeing Positive educational outcomes were demonstrated by treatments delivered in school and non-school settings. Outcomes: Educational measures - academic achievement, academic and behavioural skills, attendance, quality of the learning environment, and academic self-efficacy; mental-health outcomes | There was a significant association between improvement on educational and mental health outcomes. | – | Face-to-face; school based |
| Martin 2017 | Effect of Active Lessons on Physical Activity, Academic, and Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review | Physical Health | Intervention focus: Physical activity Physically active academic lessons increase physical activity levels and may benefit learning and health outcomes. Outcomes: Teacher/ Student's on-task behaviour, student's BMI | Both students and teachers positively received and enjoyed these teaching methods. | – | Face-to-face; school based |
| Rawlings 2019 | A Critical Review of Anti-Bullying Programs in North American Elementary Schools | Mental Health and Wellbeing; Safety | Intervention focus: Bullying prevention; wellbeing | Effective intervention strategies targeted different types of bullying behaviours using diverse mechanisms | – | Face-to-face; school based |

| Systematic Review (SR) | Title of the SR | Streams | Findings and outcomes | Evidence on effectiveness | Effect Size/ Impact data | Mode/ design |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | | <p>This review found identification of 10 interventions aimed at youth in grades K-6 enrolled in North American elementary schools.</p> <p>Outcomes: bullying, aggression, victimization, strategies for bystanders, school achievement, perceived school safety, and knowledge or attitudes about bullying.</p> | and included a school--and community-wide approach. | | |
| Salerno 2016 | Effectiveness of Universal School-Based Mental Health Awareness Programs Among Youth in the United States: A Systematic Review | Mental Health and Wellbeing | <p>Intervention focus: Wellbeing</p> <p>This paper reviewed universal mental health awareness interventions aiming to improve mental health related outcomes among students enrolled in US K-12 schools, especially minorities vulnerable to health disparities.</p> <p>Outcomes: knowledge, attitudes, and/or help-seeking pertinent to mental health</p> | All studies indicated some level of improvement for the intended outcomes. | – | Face-to-face; school based |
| Shackleton 2016 | School-based interventions going beyond health education to promote adolescent health: Systematic review of reviews | Physical Health; Safety | <p>Intervention focus: Health promoting behaviours</p> <p>This review synthesised potential of alternative school-based approaches (such as healthy school policies, improving how schools respond to bullying, and parent outreach) to health-education in school classrooms.</p> <p>Outcomes: sexual health, preventing bullying and smoking, alcohol, and drug use</p> | Multicomponent school-based interventions, for example, including school policy changes, parent involvement, and work with local communities, are effective for promoting sexual health and preventing bullying and smoking. | – | Face-to-face; school based |
| Wei 2013 | The effectiveness of school mental health literacy programs to address knowledge, attitudes and help seeking among youth | Mental Health and Wellbeing | <p>Intervention focus: Wellbeing</p> <p>This review studied program effectiveness of school mental health literacy initiatives to enhance knowledge, reduce stigmatizing attitudes and improve help-seeking behaviours among youth (12–25 years of age).</p> <p>Outcomes: knowledge, attitudes, and help-seeking behaviour</p> | The included studies claimed school-based mental health literacy programs improve knowledge, attitudes, and help-seeking behaviour, however, 17 studies met criteria for high risk of bias, 10 studies for moderate risk of bias, and no studies for low risk of bias. | – | Face-to-face; school based |

Appendix C: Educator Survey analysis

Have you got any moments to share when you felt you really helped a learning community?

Shaded rows are the examples included in the main body of the report (see Table 5)

| Modules/outcomes | Educators' comments about moments of clear impact |
|--|---|
| Safety Rules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly relevant content | A school affected by bushfires and another affected by floods chose the Safety Rules module and we focused on different types of emergency role plays and how to keep safe in these situations (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| Safety Rules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vital skills | Safety rules, I was told a boy at the school I visited had to ring 000 and he learnt that at Healthy Harold! (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| Healthy Harold breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin support Giving low SES schools a voice | I regularly fill booking forms out to help schools return them faster. I've been on Club grants at present and helping schools realise the value in visits takes some encouragement. Healthy Harold breakfast as well for schools. I have St George community events for schools where Big Harold promotes Life Education. The lower socio economic schools in the region, I help them have a voice. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| Healthy Harold breakfast Good friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing extra resources Authentic student engagement | Healthy Harold breakfasts, where the whole community joins into the Healthy Harold good food choices. The times you go the extra mile to get resources to teachers etc. The student (who was new to the school) who ran across playground and said her parents have split and she didn't think she would see Harold and me again. She said she felt better that we will always come to schools. Good friends was her previous program. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIG Harold in attendance in annual events (Drug Action Week, Obesity Week, school carnivals, festivals, etc) | Drug Action Week - being present at it annually. Obesity Week - being involved with that organised event. Athletics Carnivals, Cross Country Events & Swimming Carnivals with BIG Harold in attendance. Fetes / Other Health Related Events - Ironman/Triathlons/Running Festivals. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| Healthy Harold's Heroes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving students a voice | Healthy Harold's Heroes seems to really resonate with the school community. It provides students with an opportunity to develop a health and wellbeing Campaign for their school. The lunchtime clubs introduced by the students at XX PS really helped the students find their voice. (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| All Systems Go <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual visits build lasting trust Going the extra mile to make a difference in students' lives | Yes I feel like this happens all the time between the schools and I. Some of the schools that I go to every year have developed a very good relationship with the teaching staff and the students. A recent time when I felt I really helped a learning community was last week: I had a Year 3 All Systems Go class. The students had some excellent questions and they were so interested in the human body. Harold told the teacher and the students to go back to their class and write down all the questions they had about the human body. When I received the questions I hand wrote all of the responses to the students and delivered them the next day. The teacher and the students were so happy with it. They improved their knowledge about the body and I felt I had contributed positively to the learning community. (WA Educator) |
| bCyberwise Relate, Respect, Connect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop students' critical thinking, decision making and respect | I have had great sessions with a range of our modules but bCyberwise and Relate, Respect, Connect stick out the most for me and my schools. Majority of my schools select the bCyberwise module, with differing focuses ranging from a focus on online friendships (both with known people and unknown) to safe gaming behaviours. I do not have a particular school in mind to note but I have seen through discussions and questions I have with students that the session has had an impact and enabled them to think more critically regarding their actions. With Relate, Respect, Connect I have had fantastic discussions with students. This is a great module that enables us to take in a variety of perspectives from both teachers and students. I always encourage the classes I have to share their views and opinions and especially note how as individuals, we may all perceive something different which is not necessarily incorrect. At one low SES school, students had very different ideas about respect, especially who they deemed "important enough" to show it to. I listened to students sharing, offering slightly different perspectives whilst not disregarding their views. In all honesty, it was a tough class but by the end they did feel validated but also confident in their own views and experiences. (NSW/ACT Educator) |

| Modules/outcomes | Educators' comments about moments of clear impact |
|---|---|
| bCyberwise | bCyberwise - when students and teachers have 'ah ha' moments in realising the lack of privacy online. It felt like the learning really sunk in for all and the message was getting across. (SA Educator) |
| bCyberwise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visible impacting online safety Modelling best practice | I was delivering the bCyberwise module to XX Primary School. The Assistant Principal came to watch the session and gave me some amazing feedback. He said the program was really helping their students be cybersafe and that was the reason he had come to observe my facilitation (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| bCyberWise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> using concrete metaphor that students can connect with | I was teaching bCyberwise to Grade 3 and 4, and one of the activities we did while discussing cyberbullying was getting one student to come up to the front and hold an A4 picture of Computer Jack. We then instructed the class to give examples of online bullying - where it takes place and what it looks like - and every time an example was given the volunteer student would make a fold in the paper. Once the paper was as small as it could go, we discussed things that could be done / said to make Computer Jack feel better, and with each example the paper was unfolded. We then looked at the paper crease marks and had a discussion around, that no matter what we did or said, those dents would forever be on that paper and this is a practical example on how bullying affects people. It leaves marks that perhaps might never go away. The class was really involved and engaged and the teacher later explained that they had recently experienced cyberbullying in the class, so it was a great activity for them to learn about the long term mental affects cyberbullying can have on people (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| bCyberwise Relate Respect Connect Mind your Medicine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harold inspiring students to take initiative Clear awareness about the effect bullying and cyberbullying can have on mental health Normalising and destigmatising the conversations around mental health | During bCyberwise lessons we talk about how and why Harold should have some screen time limits on his ""PS4"". The discussions and ideas about why too much screen time could impact Harold's health are very insightful. The children are very aware of the impacts that too much screen time can have, particularly around reduction of exercise and body movement and also often raise the topic of screen addiction. We also discuss that Harold can set his own screen time limits and some students are suggesting that if Harold's parents don't set screen time limits he could set them himself. I think this is a great way to get students to start to think about taking the initiative and setting their own limits in regards to how much time they spend on screens and playing video games. (WA Educator) Also in regards to mental health (bCyberwise, RRC and MYM), it is amazing how many children know what impact that bullying and cyberbullying can have on someone's mental health. When asked the question, "How can words hurt someone?", we are increasingly hearing children using terminology such as "anxiety, depression, mental health and even on occasion suicide". The children take these topics seriously and talk about what people could do if they were feeling sad or depressed. Giving the children ideas about who to talk to and what to do if they were feeling this way, seems to be a topic that they all lean into and the teachers are very interested in the discussions as well - sometimes I see the teacher physically lean forward when we start talking about mental health - it is obviously something that everyone needs to learn more about and I think just starting the conversation is really having a positive impact on some of the children who really need it. (WA Educator) |
| Relate Respect Connect Mind your Medicine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacting interpersonal skills | I love teaching about friendship and how to make new connections. In Relate Respect Connect and Mind Your Medicine we do games and activities that nurture friend making skills. These activities are designed so that students interact with peers they don't normally interact with much. It's great when I can see them forming new connections and having a laugh with each other. I don't have an example from a particular school. (QLD Educator) |
| Relate, Respect, Connect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacting interpersonal skills | I had an awesome experience with a Year 6/7 student when delivering the Relate, Respect, Connect module. He said to me at the end of the session "I had a bit of an issue with a friend this morning and this lesson really helped me know what I can now do about it to make it all better". This module I have seen the most impact from and a lot of the time this module can open up some really good discussions around friendships & empathy (SA Educator) |
| Relate Respect Connect LEAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a sense of class community | RRC LEAP - a six-week program build around RRC. A teacher had wonderful feedback about how much the lessons had helped her class. She said that the sessions helped to build a sense of community within the classroom, students were expressing their feelings more clearly and their communication skills had improved. Wonderful feedback! (SA Educator) |

| Modules/outcomes | Educators' comments about moments of clear impact |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacting interpersonal skills | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating with curriculum • Authentically extending students' knowledge in active, contextualised participation | There have been numerous occasions when a program taught at a school ties directly into a current class program (either by coincidence or on purpose). To be able to use a LE module to extend the knowledge of students is fantastic and prominently highlights the importance of the LE program with a school. Often, the opportunity for class discussion arises and allows students to share information and ask questions in an environment where they feel differently to their normal classroom. This allows for open dialogue and a deeper level of understanding to take place. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative impact, growing with students over time | After 15 years, I have trouble boiling impact down to moments. Instead I feel a sense of 'cumulative impact' by returning to schools every year and making a connection with the students as they grow. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing interpersonal skills | XX State school required a focus on relationships/friendships. Constant feedback from teachers on how much the lessons were relevant and helped improve kids' interactions at schools. (QLD Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending the classroom program to running young women's forums in indigenous communities | Life Education NT support some communities to run young women's forums as an extension of the program in classroom. These forums encourage young girls to design and develop a day that empowers positive health and wellbeing for women in the community. Across 2019/2020 and later in 2021 LENT will have run 3 women's forums for 3 remote communities Lajamanu, Yaralin and Kalkaringji. These days have been well received by women of all ages in community and supported by local Aboriginal Medical Services. (NT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive modules supporting indigenous communities | Help to work with the community at XX school in regards to alcohol usage within their community. This allowed other agencies to increase their support through child protection agencies (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of impact depends on how engaged teacher is | Not that stands out. Overall the experience is that they enjoy the program. It depends on the teachers as to how much they get. If teachers are engaged in the program it supports me in making the learning relevant and impactful for the students. When teachers target learning to students or re-word questions, encourage participation and link back to their experiences it creates an overall better learning environment. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical presence in regional schools that often miss out • Inclusive modules supporting special needs and non-English background communities | Having a face-to-face presence in regional school communities, and reinforcing the ideas and messages raised in the classroom and at home. Great impact during Education week with parents and students at a Special Needs school. Great impact among newly arrived migrant students with limited English language skills. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular physical presence in very remote schools in at-risk communities that miss out | Plenty, but recently an almost 2000km round trip to teach children in a very remote school. Due to their geographical location and socioeconomic status, a lot of organisations choose not to travel out there or expect the school to pay for their expenses. The children and staff were very grateful for the effort we went to, to ensure they didn't miss out on a visit from Life Education, and the costs involved for little in return were not lost on them. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular physical presence in very remote schools in at-risk communities that miss out | I feel that our role/job/KPIs were always helping a learning community. With the work Life Ed NT does, in the community working with at-risk youth and overworked teachers constantly. So I believe that allowing our program to be so accessible with remote schools is something we do on a daily basis. (NT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing full-funded sessions to low SES and indigenous schools so students don't miss out | Providing fully funded sessions to lower socio-economic and/or high indigenous communities means that more students are able to attend the sessions. (QLD Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing lifelong knowledge and skills to empower students to make informed choices around their health and wellbeing | Having worked in education for 30+ years and specialising in wellbeing and counselling for over a decade it's important to note that it is very challenging to provide hard evidence or data related to the delivery of wellbeing programs. This is even more challenging with Life Education delivery – we are there for such a short time and we don't get to see or measure personal success stories. When you work from an early |

| Modules/outcomes | Educators' comments about moments of clear impact |
|--|--|
| | intervention model how do we ever measure which students make better lifestyle decisions around safety, nutrition, exercise , healthy relationships, drugs, alcohol , help seeking , problem solving, emotional literacy, coping strategies etc. That can't be easily measured. Life Education delivers exemplary explicit teaching around all of these wellbeing strategies providing lifelong knowledge and skills to empower students to make informed choices around their health and wellbeing. (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach beyond the 'van' and beyond the school-gate into homes | A friend of a friend sent me a link to a FB group of Mums from the school I was teaching. They were comparing notes on their child's experience in the van. I was very happy that the classes had taken home masses of information to share with their families including (lots on) food and food groups plus friendships and respectful interactions, cyber tips, smoking facts and more !! (QLD Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standout activities (eg OTC timeline activity, drug sort task in Decisions) Right blend of fun and learning | I often get told that the timeline activity in OTC is really eye-opening and the students learn a lot from it. The same goes for the drug sort activity in Decisions. The students have fun learning whilst also being really engaged. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers wanting more | Moments when classroom teachers will stay behind and compliment a learning activity or concept and ask for more info or resources to continue the learning with their students. (WA Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visible changes in student behaviour | <p>My learning communities are the Primary Schools in the Darwin, rural and regional surrounds. When I arrived in 2007, 4300 students (only 20 schools booked) attended the LE program that year. Now 10 000 students and 50 schools are on my books. I have 14 years of moments!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) When a crying mother hugs me at school drop off because her child has eaten vegetables for the first time this week. 2)When the first time an autistic, often non-communicative student takes it upon himself to become the 'lunch-box monitor' for his class post Harold's visit. 3) When a student tries food other than chicken nuggets and spaghetti bolognaise because Harold gave him a lunch box for his fruits and vegetables. 4) When students recite body facts they have learnt from previous years 5) When students remember my name but forget Harold's 6) When teacher's arrange teaching students to attend at the time of our visit so they can learn 'best practice - behaviour management' - My favourite, because I'm not a teacher! 7) When a student who has never read in front of the class confidently does so for the first time in the Life Education van, reducing the teacher to tears. (NT Educator) |

Have you received positive feedback from teachers or students in an email?

Shaded rows are the examples included in the main body of the report (see Table 6)

| Emailed feedback received by Educators |
|--|
| <i>The feedback received has been awesome, all staff were so happy with how you delivered the modules and commented on how engaging you were. (Primary school NSW)</i> |
| <i>"Fun and informative sessions" (Catholic school NSW)</i> |
| <i>"Friendliness and professional delivery of programs" (Primary school NSW)</i> |
| <i>"The success of the session is very much dependent upon the strength of the presenter" (Primary school NSW)</i> |
| <i>"Great. A variety of learning experiences were delivered to engage students' learning" (Primary school NSW)</i> |
| <i>Thank you so much. You always make it so easy. We love having you at our school. (Catholic school NSW)</i> |
| <i>The day was fabulous and the takeaways the kids took were so beneficial. It was great to have everyone together again and in a learning capacity too. Let's do it all again in 2022! (Primary school NSW, regarding modules: HFS, MYM, RRC)</i> |
| <i>Thanks so much [Educator] for your wonderful delivery of the Life Ed program across all stages. The students definitely took on board the concepts covered and were very happy with the visit. (Primary school NSW, regarding the modules: HFS, MYM, RRC)</i> |
| <i>Many thanks to [Educator] and Harold for another year of excellent health programs. I sat in on 4 out of 7 class sessions and was in awe of [Educator's] skills - teaching health topics to energetic students in a closed space, [Educator] was a master at weaving music, songs, jokes, videos, games and hilarious puppetry throughout the</i> |

Emailed feedback received by Educators

presentations. [Educator's] information was all current including internet apps and Australian Government e-safety. The students were at all times engaged and vying to assist [Educator] with the activities. I look forward to completing the online components of the units with our students. Thank you and see you next time!" (Primary school NSW, regarding modules: RRC, bCyb, GGF, SR, HFS)

Thank you, the feedback from the kids and staff was so positive, they thoroughly enjoyed it and found the topic content and delivery spot on. (Primary school NT)

Thank you for delivering all these wonderful modules to our students. The feedback from both students and teachers has been great! (Primary school NT)

My Year 4 students attended the Life Education Van on Monday 2nd March 2020. I wanted to share with you what an excellent and valuable experience it was. Our topic was cyber awareness – at our school our BYOD program begins in year 4 so this is a very timely and important topic.

The presentation is very engaging and informative without being terrifying! You present the information in a way that the children feel safe and can make connections that are relevant to them about the topic. I know it also teaches them some very important safety steps they should all be taking. The program very much promotes awareness and empowers the kids to know what to do. Jennifer speaks to the children in a respectful way and the kids really respond to her and listen SO attentively.

I really like the simple key ideas that the children can easily remember, and we have had further feedback in the classroom as well as some positive parent feedback after their children have gone home to discuss what they have learned as well. The information provided is essential for our students and their families in this modern world. And of course, Harold never disappoints. (Year 4 teacher, State school QLD)

I just wanted to thank you for the wonderful program you delivered to our students this year. I have had nothing but positive feedback from teachers and students, and that makes all the difference. Thank you again for your time and efforts, and for working so well with our students. (Principal, State school QLD)

We all thoroughly enjoyed the Decisions session today focusing on the topic of drugs. The students were very engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. It is vital that all children are aware of the different drugs available out there in the 'real world' and can view the side effects. It is a serious topic that needs to be addressed. Thank you for the parent session too ... and your effective teachings with my year 6 kids. (Year 6 teacher, State College QLD)

The health messages that Life Education covers are more important now than ever, with our modern Australian society plagued by a largely overweight/obese population, domestic violence and drug and alcohol misuse and abuse. Having a modern up-to-date teaching van will enable Life Education to continue to provide a top-class facility for all the schools and students who access their valuable program. Thank you. On behalf of our staff and students. (Deputy Principal, State school QLD)

My thanks for all of your efforts in delivering the module on 'Decisions' to my year sixes yesterday. Having taught upper school for a number of years I can confidently say that the content is so relevant to the maturation of our year six students and their quest for knowledge. Our girls and boys are curious, they see and hear things both in their own homes and out in the community. Having a designated program that delivers the facts and also strategies for dealing with everyday life is so vital for their continued healthy development and for them to grow as informed citizens.

The Life Education Program and its teachers continue to deliver high quality, engaging lessons that really resonate with children and this I have witnessed over the years the van and its staff have been coming to this school. Life Education Programs give the children the scaffolding and it's the conversation starter. My sincere thanks for all that you do. (Year 6 teacher, State College QLD)

Hi Life Ed team, I would like to give some formal feedback from when [Educator] taught our Life Ed lesson for [School] Year 6C. As usual, the content was very appropriate and the way [Educator] presented was fantastic. The discussions were interesting and she does a brilliant job of engaging the students every year. She's awesome and the van is a fantastic addition to our Health and Social Skills curriculum. (Year 6 teacher, State school QLD)

I have always enjoyed taking my students to the Life Education Van knowing that they will be entertained, excited, engaged and empowered. You have an incredible teaching skill; your classes are energetic, informative, fun and interactive and as a teacher for more than 25 years, I still come away from your classes feeling energized and motivated to improve my own practice. You are an inspirational teacher who strives to ensure our children have the knowledge and skills to make informed, safe and healthy choices especially for my little year 2's. (Year 2 teacher, State College QLD)

My class participated in the Life Education program this week and it is hands down one of the BEST sessions I've attended. I've taught in a variety of schools and have been along to many Life education programs in schools across NSW, ACT and Victoria and this session with [Educator] has left me wondering why the previous sessions

Emailed feedback received by Educators

haven't been as good? I put it down to [Educator] and the way she runs the session, with her enthusiasm, energy and friendliness as well as a genuine knowledge for all things Health and Wellbeing, it was a very successful session. She is beyond engaging with both students and teachers. The session was just the right balance between content, games and interactive activities. My class and I were left wanting more and are eager for next year's visit! Thank you! (Year 3 teacher, State school QLD)

I just want to say that we really enjoyed the visit to the Life Education Van today. The material is very relevant and you do an amazing job presenting it to the children. My TA, new to Prep, was in awe of the whole event. The material presented follows the Australian Curriculum for Health in Prep very well and some of the children knew this content from their Kindy class with you. Having the same information backed up by a visitor to the class is very powerful for the Prep children. Thanks again for a great morning. (Prep teacher, College QLD)

We had a great time with the lessons you sent through to us. The learning that students implemented into their everyday lives was awesome. I was super impressed to see students come out of their shells. Identifying how to interact with others productively and appropriately gave the confidence for individuals to be who they are without judgement. A few students were seen to drastically improve in their wellbeing with smiles and laughter and positive friendships. The boys became closer as a class where the girls began to recognise some friendships were not successful or a positive influence in their lives. We continue to identify ROAR throughout everyday situations and understanding that talking about our feelings is a great strategy to moving forward. I am looking forward to implementing some more tasks around identity aligning with the CPC. (School SA, regarding module: Relate, Respect, Connect LEAP)

Relate, Respect and Connect communicated a very clear message about friendships that related to the challenges students experience in their daily lives. (Lutheran College SA)

A very engaging session. Certainly, relevant and reinforces what we teach in the Child Protection unit - bCyberwise. (Primary school SA)

On behalf of the [School] year 8/9 classes, we would like to say thank you for taking the time to come and visit us over on Kangaroo Island. Everyone really enjoyed the new information, the games, and the coordination tests. Learning more about drugs and alcohol was helpful especially because we didn't have much knowledge on the subject.

We think that younger students should have the opportunity to have this same learning experience as we did. More visits would have a big impact and keep everyone aware of what is going on with drugs and alcohol. Thank you for coming once again. We would also like you to consider coming over again. (Year 8/9 Students, School, Kangaroo Island SA)

Thanks so much for coming over to KI. There is so much value in your sessions. It would be awesome if it was an annual visit to support our students. The feedback from students who attended today's session, was extremely positive (Teacher, School, Kangaroo Island SA)

Life Education has been a regular visitor to [Name] Primary School for many years. It is an essential component of our Drug Education learning for students within our Personal Development Program. I have had the pleasure of coordinating this service during this time and have always found staff to be efficient, friendly and well prepared and informed. Each component of bringing 'Harold' to our school is organized well in advance and there are online learning opportunities for staff to complement their classroom programs. The children of [school] look forward to Harold's visit each year and know that he has valuable information to share to keep them healthy and safe.

We have been fortunate to have an amazing educator [name] work with us. Her rapport and enthusiasm with children and staff, together with her content knowledge ensure children's learning is comprehensive and powerful. [Educator] is also available to sort any minor bumps that may occur during our visit which ensures the visits run smoothly. Life Education is a highly regarded program by all stake holders at [school] and will continue to be booked and welcomed into the future. (Personal Development Coordinator, Primary School VIC)

Greensborough Primary students love visiting Harold and the Life Education Van and regard it as one of the highlights of our school year. The education sessions are informative and engaging, and staff are high in their praise for [Educator] and the way in which she maintains students' enthusiasm, stimulates their curiosity and ensures students have achieved the learning intention of the lesson. The accompanying resources are of a high quality and provide students with opportunities to extend their learning after the Life Education Van departs. We always receive excellent feedback from parents who attend the Parent Information session with [Educator], in terms of the information received and their enjoyment of sharing the Life Ed Van experience with their children. (Principal, Primary School VIC)

I speak for everyone at [school] when I say thank you so much for delivering a fantastic program, you are a superstar! I will forward Harold's letter to all the P-2 teachers and email out the feedback link right away (Phys Ed. Coordinator, Primary School VIC)

Emailed feedback received by Educators

We have just had the Life Ed Van visit our small school and as expected the students loved it. [Educator] is a brilliant presenter. She has great control, is engaging, informative and very encouraging. [Educator's] ability to learn student's names in such a small time frame is amazing. We all look forward to the Life Ed Van, especially as [Educator] is the teacher. (Grade 2/3 teacher, Primary School VIC)

[School] recently had the opportunity to be visited by the Life Education van and [Educator]. The students always thoroughly enjoy her sessions and look forward to her return next year. Some more feedback from a staff member: [Educator] is an outstanding educator! I wish parents were there in the van with their children to hear such profoundly important messages! Thank you for the opportunity, keep up the great work. (Visual Art teacher & Life Education coordinator, Primary School VIC)

The being 'Cyberwise' program is expertly delivered by [Educator]. As always, it has some very powerful messages for students at this level. Our students got a lot out of attending the Life Education Van again. Even at this age, they love seeing Harold again! (Year 4 Teacher, Primary School VIC)

I have been trying to find the time to write you a nice little testimonial for your newsletter. Sorry it has taken so long. Thank you for another successful life education program for us here at [school]. The children were empowered by the rich and engaging sessions. It opened up great discussions in the classroom about healthy choices to make and problem solving. We look forward to our continued relationship with the Life Education program. (Teacher, Primary School VIC)

Life Education visits are anticipated with glee by our students. Relevant programs are delivered at appropriate grade/age/stage levels and enjoyed by all students. There is always lots of audience participation, several group activities and even the teachers are asked to join in! At grades 3 and 4, which are my teaching levels, our unit was "bCyberwise". This was a highly appropriate and educational session for the students, most of whom own some sort of technological device and visit many sites. They particularly understood the value of a secure password and the potential for trouble at some sites. Our presenter, [name], is knowledgeable about all the areas she teaches and engages the students with humour and kindness. Deputy Principal, Primary School VIC)

I just wanted to share with you all a moment from last Thursday. Our program was planned to run each Tuesday at lunch during the planning stage. Due to staffing arrangements we had to change this day to Thursday. As part of routine, I went to go collect the HHH children to set up their lunchtime program. On this particular day it was our gymnastic group running the program. I was very proud to hear from the group that they used their own initiative and ran the program on the Tuesday as originally planned. The girls told me that they organised a teacher to supervise their program. I thought this was so wonderful. The opportunity of participating in this program has developed the skills for these children to be able to plan, organise and lead their program. I believe this truly reflects on the effectiveness of how the program was delivered by both [name & name]. (Primary school VIC, regarding the Healthy Harold's Heroes Program)

I just wanted to let you know that we really enjoyed our life education van visit. The session was so interactive and the children really LOVED it. The content was relevant and engaging. They especially LOVED their sticker and their very own activity booklet. Harold was a hit! We would love to do it again next year :) (School WA, regarding module: Harold's Friend Ship)

The LE educator was amazing and we loved her energetic approach and kindness towards the students. (Primary School WA, regarding My Body Matters module)

Thank you so much for the 'extra' resources. They will be much appreciated in [class] at [school]. Love your work.... Safety Rules ... best Incursion ever! (Primary School WA)

Please share any other anecdotal stories of how Life Education programs have impacted schools, staff, students or families?

| Themes | Educators' comments |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Connecting teachers and students in meaningful discussion | We have children coming back to the van asking questions like "why do we have emotions?" and also giving answers like - we have emotions so that we connect to others. When we talk about screen time limits, often the classroom teacher really gets involved and asks the class questions as well which indicates that this is an important issue to the classroom teacher as well. (WA Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Current timely information | Recently there has been a push for information around e-cigarettes to be included into the stage three programs from schools. Being able to work with the schools/coordinator/classroom teacher allows our programs to be more specific to the needs of the school and the region. Access to important information from an external source (LE) has also allowed light to be shed on a topic that is constantly changing but also unknown. (NSW/ACT Educator) |

| Themes | Educators' comments |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing remote communities | <p>I love going to small communities. Like 20 kids total in the school small. They are all beautiful students and produce such amazing answers that it always blows me away. And they always want to say hello as you walk through the playground, and the teachers are always so excited to talk to someone new! (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowering students and involving parents | <p>There was a particularly nice moment at [name] School with a boy from Indigenous background in Grade 5 coming up to Harold at the front of the class and giving Harold some tips on how to make new friends. The teacher video recorded this and shared it with the student's mother. She said that he is usually very shy but came right out of his shell during our lesson. (QLD Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>Improved lunch box options and a greater understanding of cyber safety. (QLD Educator)</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowering students in a safe space Parents' memory as a student Intergenerational reinforcement and impact | <p>Life Education is a fun and engaging way for students to learn. It gives them a real sense of power and allows them to feel safe to voice their opinions. I once had a student that spoke for the first time in my session, because they felt safe to have a say. The teacher was in tears with delight - which I only understood fully afterwards. We make strong connections and provide real world, relevant learning that makes a difference.</p> <p>I don't know how many times I have had adults tell me how much they loved having Life Education as a kid - some can even remember what they learnt, rather than just the van, stars, Harold and TAM. When they speak about Life Education the adults light up like a Christmas tree - which shows we have had a positive impact. (SA Educator)</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Harold in school signage | <p>Love turning up and Healthy Harold is mentioned on the school sign out the front. (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts that change lives | <p>Life Education has supported some people of the community to make life decisions involving drug and alcohol. (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>A non-verbal child at a special needs school who smiled and tried to say Harold. (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging challenging students | <p>Teachers often comment on how surprised they were by certain students who engaged in a way rarely seen in the classroom; particularly students with behaviour management issues and students with special needs. An example would be a kindergarten student at [school] who had never said a word but did contribute in the Life Ed lesson. (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>I have been at a variety of schools where the "students who don't normally participate" (not my own words) have joined in and shared significantly more than they do in class. I have also had comments from teachers about "difficult students" (again, not my word choice) who genuinely participated and left teachers shocked. (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> <hr/> <p>Sorry, my memory is not that good :(I love receiving letters and written feedback for this reason. Overall comments when students say 'I love it here, it's my favourite part' or thank me for my time and knowledge and giving them the opportunity to be curious and ask questions. (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LE visit the highlight of the year Students knowing Harold was around in their parents' day | <p>Again way too many to record here at recess - but everyday someone comments that the Life Education visit was the highlight of the school year for them!</p> <p>Or a teacher will say I taught THEM!! And they LOVED Harold.</p> <p>Kids will say often 'my mum/dad had life Education when they went to school'!</p> <p>The young teachers comment to their students that [Educator] taught me or that they met HH when they were their age!!</p> <p>I often ask older kids (when they comment on my sign written vehicle) if they are still 'making great health choices' and they always laugh and say - 'Of course HH taught us well!!!' (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intergenerational reinforcement and impact | <p>I've met teachers who I have previously taught. I've met parents who are now sending their kids into the van. I've met students who have grown up and have great memories of Harold. It's only when you see the grains of sand together that you realise there's actually a beach (Me, 2021). (NSW/ACT Educator)</p> |

| Themes | Educators' comments |
|--|--|
| | The main one would be that parents and teacher come up to you and say we had this when I was at school and it's nice that it's still going and that parents and children can have shared experiences. (WA Educator) |
| | Excitement and enjoyment to most kids. Flooding of memories of good times for parents. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | When explaining what I do for work, I've had a lot of people tell me that the reason they never smoked was because of what they learned from Harold and the Life Education van when they were younger. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | Parents and staff often comment on when they have visited the van as a student and share their memories of Harold and the stars on the roof (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent engagement and education • Increased physical activity | Parent information nights are helpful for parents to know what we do in schools and to appreciate our value. Although we don't do many of these now, we have very good online parental information. Within schools more emphasis on healthy lunchboxes and physical activity often is activated by my visits. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback from observing teachers | My first ever Ready Steady Go lesson (and first-ever day by myself) was an impactful one. The teacher at the school told me that she had been so intently watching me as I taught and she praised the program at the end. It made me feel like I was doing something right! (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive impact on students, schools and families • Preparing kids for the next stage | I have no doubt that all Life Ed programs positively impact students, schools and families. The lessons we teach are important life lessons and skills and I am constantly blown away by the answers and input the students give during the lessons. Relate, Respect, Connect is one of my favourites and I truly believe it's a powerful module where we can make a big difference in students' attitudes before moving on to the next stage of their life. (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong student engagement | Every single day as educators we see engagement from students - we hear them share their collective thinking about all of these topics. We know they leave having learnt more about how to navigate their wellbeing and health. (VIC/TAS Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted Favourite Educators in NT | Life Education NT has a very small dedicated passionate team! In 2020 the team was voted Favourite Educators by schools and staff across the Territory! (NT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible growth and retainment in student learning year after year | I know our program is a highlight as I receive a very warm welcome back into the schools I visit. I am always blown away about the detail of what the students remember learning in the previous Life Ed session, usually a whole 12 months ago. (WA Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong uptake and use of resources by teachers and community | Teachers report as to how they use the activities, behaviour management techniques back in the classroom. Families and teachers access Life Education staff and resources for outside-school-hours activities such as Hosting Cybersafety sessions, attending school fetes / assemblies / concerts with Harold. Life Education is a part of the Darwin Community and it is important we are seen to support school activities so as schools in turn support the program. (NT Educator) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The familiarity of Harold gives comfort in a changing world | I have come to a school where a new student has run up to say, 'I remember seeing Harold and you at another school. When my parents split I thought I'd never see you again. I'm so happy you're here. I feel better'. Students realising their heart pumps the blood with the Tam-e and digestion as well. Well informed students after we've been, gives teachers satisfaction. (NSW/ACT Educator) |
| | The school community was getting ready for the MLC when the govt just announced COVID precautions and a teacher told me we were not having [face-to-face] lessons. After talking to executives in meeting, they tried DD [Direct Delivery - webinar] and they were so happy with how Life Education changed the feelings in school and brightened everyone up. Harold even kept eating a plant I'd put on floor to show his garden. School sent many letters of thanks. (NSW/ACT Educator) |

Appendix D: Data provided by Life Education

| Year | State | Informant |
|--|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Session booking records | | |
| 1998-2019 | ALL | LE booking records |
| 2017-2021 | NSW, ACT | LE booking records |
| 2018-2021 | NT | LE booking records |
| 2015-2021 | QLD | LE booking records |
| 2015-2021 | SA | LE booking records |
| 2015-2021 | VIC | LE booking records |
| 2015 | WA | LE booking records |
| 2016 | WA | LE booking records |
| 2017 | WA | LE booking records |
| 2018 | WA | LE booking records |
| 2019 | WA | LE booking records |
| 2020 | WA | LE booking records |
| 2016-Dec 2020 | NSW,VIC,QLD,SA,WA,NT | National program participation report |
| Teacher data from feedback forms after an incursion | | |
| 2019 | VIC | Teacher feedback |
| 2020 | VIC | Teacher feedback |
| Feb 2019-June 2021 | SA,WA,NT | Teacher feedback |
| Aug 2020-Mar 2021 | NSW | Teacher feedback |
| March 2019-Feb 2020 | NSW | Teacher feedback |
| 2019 | SA | Teacher feedback |
| 2020 | SA | Teacher feedback |
| 2019 | QLD | Teacher feedback |
| 2020 | QLD | Teacher feedback |



ACER