

# Homework Club Resource Kit

A GUIDE FOR FUNDERS



# About this guide

As the statewide resource body for Out of School Hours Learning Support Programs (OSHLSP), also known as Homework Clubs, CMY has identified a number of features that underpin safe, inclusive and effective programs. This guide provides an outline of these features and is designed to assist funding bodies to assess applications for program funding.

The guide also includes more detail about features of good practice in the delivery of OSHLSP. The guide provides suggested minimum standards that all programs should demonstrate together with features of high quality programs. Funders are encouraged to require that successful grantees ensure at least minimum standards are met.

## Key features of high quality OSHLSP

Program objectives of OSHLSP will vary according to the particular needs of the target community that the program is designed to address. However there are some key features that should be present in all good quality programs.

Below is a list of considerations that funders of OSHLSP can use as a guide. This list can be adapted to be used within funding criteria and application forms or may provide a simple set of criteria to assess whether good practice is demonstrated within a funding application. Key features include:

- A target group of children and young people who need extra learning support out-of-school hours to achieve educational outcomes is clearly articulated. This need may be due to limited levels of learning support at home as a result of disadvantage or a migrant or refugee background.
- Program needs and objectives have been identified by engaging the target group using consultative and participatory processes and the program has been designed to meet those needs.
- Program coordination includes session planning, safety and risk management systems, program promotion and community and school engagement.
- Family and community engagement strategies are in place to provide a welcoming and well-considered program.
- Sessions are held regularly at safe and appropriate locations, venues and times to meet the needs of the target group.
- Tutors are screened, trained and supported to provide appropriate learning support and are available

regularly in sufficient numbers.

- Mechanisms are in place for stakeholder feedback, evaluation and program improvement.
- Strategies to improve program sustainability are present including school and community partnerships and willingness to be involved in the wider OSHLSP sector.
- Unmet need has been identified and the need is not currently addressed by an existing program.

## Background and Acknowledgements

The Stan Willis Trust (SWT), the Australian Communities Foundation (ACF) and the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) have been working in partnership over several years to improve the quality of grants made by SWT to homework clubs in the western suburbs of Melbourne. In 2013, SWT, ACF and CMY approached other philanthropic organisations with an interest in supporting educational opportunities for disadvantaged young people to explore opportunities to further improve homework club outcomes.

An initial meeting involving eight trusts and foundations was held in December 2013, and a follow up session held in March 2014. There was enthusiastic discussion of the issues and possible approaches to a more targeted, reliable and coordinated funding approach. These discussions identified the need for a consistent set of best practice guidelines for the design and delivery of homework programs and for a common set of principles for funders when assessing homework club applications. This kit was developed by CMY in response to this need in consultation with ACF, SWT and other philanthropic organisations.

SWT, ACF and CMY continue to work in partnership with other interested organisations and initiatives include:

- The establishment of a Homework Club sub-fund at ACF which can co-fund homework clubs with other trusts and foundations.
- Promotion of the partnership to other philanthropic organisations, through articles and events, such as the launch of the Resource Kit.
- An ongoing partnership between CMY and the philanthropic sector, with CMY providing on-going advice to funders regarding areas of greatest need across Victoria and assisting to embed minimum standards in granting guidelines.





PROGRAM ELEMENTS	MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR GOOD PRACTISE	FEATURES OF HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMS
Program participants i.e. children, young people and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants attend with regularity and are provided with 1:1 or group based tutoring support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutor/student ratios of 1:1 or 1:2.</li> <li>Participants are involved in making decisions about aspects of the program and their feedback is collected and used to evaluate the program.</li> <li>For example, students and families are able to describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The changes made in learning skills as a result of attending the program.</li> <li>» How the program has increased their social connections, understandings of the education system and the benefits they have gained from new relationships.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Program design, coordination and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs employ a program coordinator with adequate planning and liaison time, in addition to their service delivery responsibilities.</li> <li>Programs include thorough volunteer screening and induction processes.</li> <li>Programs implement child safety, cultural inclusion and OHS policies.</li> <li>Programs hold public liability insurance.</li> <li>Programs provide safe environments and appropriate learning activities.</li> <li>Coordinators have immediate access to children's and volunteers emergency contact details.</li> <li>Programs provide water and nutritious snacks.</li> <li>At least one adult trained in first aid (paid or voluntary) is onsite during program delivery times.</li> <li>Programs have basic data collection systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisations effectively plan programs for sustainability to ensure retention of quality staff and maintenance of strong relationships with volunteers and students.</li> <li>EFT provided to coordinators is at least twice the hours required to deliver a program (e.g. a 2-4 hour session requires 6-8 hours coordination time, minimum).</li> <li>Programs have comprehensive policies and procedures about volunteers, privacy, complaints and feedback are documented and implemented.</li> <li>Program data collection includes data on students' learning undertaken in the program, to reflect on achievements and to develop more effective strategies for individual students.</li> <li>Programs have systems to enable participant and stakeholder feedback and review and improvement of program practice.</li> </ul>
Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutors are screened for suitability e.g. Working with Children Check; communication skills.</li> <li>Tutors receive induction and ongoing supervision and sign a volunteer code of conduct.</li> <li>Tutors commit to a minimum weekly period of involvement and ideally a minimum amount of time in the program e.g. 6-12 months.</li> <li>Tutors receive cultural competency training when working with young people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.</li> <li>Tutors are offered training at least annually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutors are rigorously screened, using phone or face-face to interviews and referee checks prior to induction.</li> <li>Tutors are provided with regular training to increase knowledge and skills in assisting students with their school work, language development and social skills.</li> <li>Tutor feedback is sought to improve program quality and the tutoring experience.</li> <li>Volunteer contributions and successes are acknowledged.</li> <li>Specialist tutors are recruited for particular needs, such as subject-specific tutors in VCE or bilingual tutors.</li> <li>Resources and support are provided to tutors to assist with activities and to improve learning outcomes.</li> </ul>
School and community partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links are present between OSHLSP, schools and relevant community agencies in a local area.</li> <li>Schools are aware of community run homework programs in their local area.</li> <li>School run OSHLSP engage with relevant community agencies and other schools in the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs and schools develop partnerships and regular communication mechanisms to improve student learning outcomes, identify and address individual student needs, create referral pathways and increase links to school curriculum.</li> <li>School teaching staff provide input into tutor training to improve and develop consistent pedagogical approaches that assist young people in their homework.</li> <li>Teachers are aware of local homework programs and actively assist their students and families to access programs.</li> </ul> <p>Note: School and community partnerships with clearly defined roles have a greater likelihood of sustaining funding from different sources and attracting volunteers through various networks.</p>
Family and community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs welcome parents, carers and families to visit and ask questions.</li> <li>Families perceive the program to be safe, culturally-appropriate (e.g. dietary requirements taken into consideration) and valuable in providing a positive learning environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs offer opportunities for parents and community members to share their interests and skills with children and young people, and participate as volunteers where appropriate.</li> <li>Programs foster positive cross cultural relationships and links.</li> <li>Programs increase parents' understanding of the education system and improve capability to support learning at home.</li> <li>Programs provide opportunities for the whole family e.g. adult learning or early childhood activity.</li> </ul>
Venue and timing for sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs are delivered at a suitable venue which is conducive to the study/learning requirements of students.</li> <li>Timing of programs is appropriate for the needs of the student group. e.g. finishing early enough for younger students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs are co-located with other relevant agencies and can offer opportunities for improved community links.</li> </ul>
OSHLSP sector involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational support for the program coordinator.</li> <li>Program coordinators access professional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs share expertise and innovations with other programs.</li> <li>Program coordinators access professional development and participate in homework program networks.</li> <li>Planning and coordination of programs within local regions occurs, to ensure student needs are being met and program duplication is avoided.</li> <li>Collaboration is fostered amongst programs to enhance possibilities for sharing resources and achieving sustainability.</li> </ul>



## What are Homework Clubs?

Homework clubs (otherwise known as Out of School Hours Learning Support Programs or OSHLSP) provide extra learning support to disadvantaged young people and those from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

OSHLSP are held in schools, libraries and community centres across Victoria. They provide support to students with literacy, numeracy and study skills, help build confidence, self-esteem and feelings of connection to school and the wider community and they provide a safe place to study. They can also assist families to gain greater knowledge of the education system and provide opportunities for families to explore practical strategies to support their children's learning at home.

There are over 250 OSHLSP operating across Victoria. These are attended by more than 6000 students weekly and assisted by approximately 1800 volunteer tutors. They are a particularly important service for students from a language background other than English and 75% of programs have a majority of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL).

There is a diversity of programs at both the primary and secondary level. Innovative approaches include programs with a focus on parent involvement, those that combine recreation activities with a literacy or numeracy focus, specialist programs for VCE students, targeted programs for girls or for students at risk of disengaging from school and programs supporting students to transition between education settings such as from a language school to a mainstream school.

Philanthropic organisations and individuals have played an important role in financially supporting OSHLSP over many years. Other sources of funding for OSHLSP include local government, corporates, local businesses and the state government. Funding received by individual programs is at a basic level and commonly provided only for a limited duration.

## Why are they important?

OSHLSP can provide extra learning support to students who have had disrupted education and to those who may receive limited study assistance at home. They can also assist those at risk of low academic achievement and early school leaving. For example, some students who attend these programs may live with parents and carers experiencing the following factors:

- a low level of formal education
- a lack of familiarity with the Australian education system
- limited English skills making it difficult to understand homework requirements or assist their children with learning at home.

OSHLSP can have positive effects on children's academic, social and emotional lives. They provide opportunities for small group or one-to-one support tailored to their needs. By helping students develop social, communication and academic skills in an informal setting, they contribute to students' wellbeing and confidence, which can lead to greater participation in classroom settings and in education generally. Due to the involvement of volunteer tutors from a diverse cross section of society, these programs also support students to build meaningful social connections through the interactions they promote between students, tutors, staff, teachers and parents.



## About Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)

CMY is a Victorian not-for-profit organisation supporting young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to build better lives in Australia. Through a combination of specialist support services, training and consultancy, knowledge sharing and advocacy, CMY works to remove the barriers young people face as they make Australia their home. CMY's MY Education program provides resources and support crucial to the success of primary and secondary students' learning outside of school hours.

## About the Australian Communities Foundation (ACF)

ACF is the oldest independent community foundation in Australia and is dedicated to making giving easy and accessible. By combining philanthropic expertise with in-depth knowledge of societal trends and grass-roots connections, ACF works to create an active community of engaged donors. Since inception, ACF has made over \$33 million in grants to charitable organisations operating locally, nationally and globally.

## About the Stan Willis Trust (SWT)

The Stan Willis Trust (SWT) was set up in memory of Stan Willis - a tireless union and community worker - and two organisations established by the 1972 Whitlam government, the Western Region Council for Social Development and the Western Region Education Centre. The Stan Willis Trust is committed to engaging people in Melbourne's western suburbs to work together for justice and to level the playing field so that all get a 'fair-go'. The current focus is on supporting participation in education, especially among children and young people.



**STANWILLISTRUST**



CMY's MY Education program is generously supported by the Victorian Government.

Photos courtesy of the Family Inclusive Language and Learning Support (FILLS) Program

# ADVICE AND SUPPORT FROM CMY

CMY can provide individualised advice and information to funders to assist in improving funding outcomes. CMY maintains a database of OSHLSP throughout Victoria and works closely with community agencies and schools across Victoria. CMY can provide information to funders to assist in determining where new areas of need exist or where existing services are adequate.

CMY's MY Education program also provides support to OSHLSP to improve program design and delivery.

The MY Education team can provide:

- consultation on starting up out-of-school-hours learning programs
- resources and advice to support program management and delivery
- professional development and networking opportunities for program coordinators
- assistance with program quality and improvement plans
- training for volunteer tutors as well as advice on volunteer recruitment and management
- information to link potential volunteers to local out-of-school-hours learning programs
- evidence-based advice and advocacy at local, state and national levels on education issues.

CMY has produced a range of resources for OSHLSP, schools and volunteer tutors that can be accessed at <http://www.cmy.net.au/article/my-education>.

## CONTACT CMY

Carlton Office (Head Office)  
304 Drummond Street  
Carlton VIC 3053  
T: 03 9340 3700  
E: [education@cmy.net.au](mailto:education@cmy.net.au)

