

Yarra Ranges SDS in Action

Key Priority Area: **Active Recreation**

Type of Funding: **Extracurricular**



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| School Overview: | Yarra Ranges Special Developmental School is located at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges in Mount Evelyn. The school caters to 112 students from years F-12, supported by teachers, aides, and therapists. Each student identifies with moderate to profound physical, intellectual, and/or mental disability, as well as other impairments such as ASD. The school delivers a wide and varied physical education program, with extension opportunities provided via student voiced extracurricular opportunities. Difficulty in catering to all student voiced opportunities does arise due to deficiencies in specialist knowledge to best deliver such programs. |
| Project Goal: | Through student voice, identify and activate recreational opportunities for students to be active outside of the curriculum and provide experiences and knowledge to support and encourage community recreational opportunities beyond the school gate. |

Student voiced extracurricular activities were identified as a potential area for students to engage deeper at a physically active level, also bringing with it the potential for families to connect their child to community through extension programs. The importance of building sustainability was central to planning, providing the appropriate tools and knowledge to staff-led programs. The financial support provided through the Active Schools Extracurricular grant enabled the school to secure the support they required to build such a program.

Student voice expressed a desire for Drama. Through engaging the services of *Act Too Drama Academy*, a long-term program was implemented for students to attend and for teachers to attain professional development to build their own knowledge to ensure sustainability. Over the course of three terms, students and staff attended the recess/lunch program.

Throughout the program, opportunities for the inclusion of self-regulatory tool scenarios were included to great success. Engagement to learning and behaviours in the classroom environment were also heightened in those students who attended the drama program. Building on this outcome, the drama program has now been embraced as a part of their School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework.



| Active School Strategy | Impact |
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| Physically Active Environment – Provide alternatives of current sedentary classroom activities to active opportunities instead. | <i>Approx 34 students have transitioned from classroom activities to the drama program. Program has facilitated incidental movement opportunities with students transitioning to and from program, as well as high engagement levels within program due to its guided nature.</i> |
| Program Delivery – Engage the services of Act Too Drama Academy to meet the wants of student voiced recreational interests. | <i>Delivering the program over three terms (Friday based recess and lunch time sessions) provided students with consistent opportunities to partake in the program and evolve their interest</i> |
| Staff Professional Development – Build knowledge across the wider school community to ensure sustainability for the future. | <i>Five teachers and aides attended initial external led drama sessions, both with and without students in attendance, attaining skills to lead their own sessions. This has facilitated higher engagement from students to build self-regulatory tools through the medium of guided teacher delivered modelling-based drama activities.</i> |
| Community – Provide parents with information and opportunities to attend school and observe their child take part in the program. | <i>Parents observing their child partake in the program and providing information of how and where their child can continue drama away from the school environment inspired and empowered families to explore drama opportunities in their community.</i> |