

MATES MATTERS

Term 3, 2020

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A Message from Sam

Hello MATES Mentoring Community,

Firstly, thank you for volunteering to be a MATES mentor and being a part of our MATES community. You are making a real difference in the life of your mentee. Unfortunately, in accordance with the Victorian State Government regulations and measures to stop the spread of COVID-19, we advise that face-to-face mentoring catch-up sessions continue to be on hold until further notice.

We are rolling out methods in which mentors and mentees can still communicate during these times that adhere to the Department of Education regulations. This includes introducing a pen-pal system where mentees can either write (or draw) to their mentors. If you would like more information on this, please email me on mates@llen.com.au

We ask that any mentors wanting to contact their mentee outside of the school environment, first check with their MATES school coordinator to ensure that the contact complies with school policy. While some established mentor-mentee matches have permission to meet outside of school grounds, we understand this may not be the case for primary school students and schools who have elected not to have outside catch-ups within their program. Any catch-up sessions done outside of the school environment must adhere to social distancing recommendations.

Mentor training will still be available online and we are investigating methods of a more interactive style of training – e.g. over Zoom. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in participating in the online training, please email me on mates@llen.com.au

All LLEN hosted face-to-face MATES related events are still on hold, including training, launches, and celebrations.

Again, we thank all the participants involved in the MATES Mentoring Program during this time.

I'll leave you with the words of Oscar Wilde, "When it rains, look for rainbows; when it's dark, look for stars."

We will provide further updates when they become available.

Take care, keep safe, stay well and we hope to see you soon.

Sam Flaherty
MATES Coordinator



Contact the MATES team:

Phone: 03 53810122

Email: mates@llen.com.au

Web: llen.com.au/mates

Facebook: facebook.com/MATESMentoring

Instagram: [matesmentoring](https://instagram.com/matesmentoring)



Support and help during COVID-19

Tips to stay healthy mentally from the [Head to Health website](#).

Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Key things that we know help include:

- Set up a daily routine. Plan activities that are fun (such as reading, watching movies, hobbies) and that give you a sense of achievement (such as cleaning, completing work tasks, learning a new skill).
- Stay active—create an exercise routine that can be completed at home, to maintain physical fitness and reduce stress.
- Eat well—plan and eat a variety of nutritious meals.
- Stay connected with friends and family via phone, chat, email, or video conferencing.

Stay informed

Getting information from trusted sources can help you determine reasonable precautions to take to maintain your health.

Stay positive

Remember:

- This is unpleasant, but it will pass.
- What you say to yourself is important. Listen to the things you are saying to yourself and change negative comments to be more helpful and realistic.

Access support

If you're feeling overwhelmed, access support.

We have more information about how to access mental health services below. You can also check out the range of phone and online services which can offer mental health support. Resources and tools that can help manage financial stress can be accessed here

Support and help during COVID-19:

Black Dog Institute:

[Improving sleep for teens \(and adults\)](#)

Headspace Australia:

[How to cope with stress related to COVID-19](#)

[Everyday tools that you can use to build and maintain a healthy headspace](#)

Psychology Australia:

[Tips for coping with coronavirus anxiety](#)

Beyond Blue:

[Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#)



Plan Activities



Stay Active



Eat Well



Stay Connected



Stay Informed



Stay Positive



Access Support

MATES Mentoring— A Multi-Million Dollar Program



Even though the MATES mentoring program has been unable to organise celebratory events to mark ten years of mentoring, we have good reason to celebrate. The work of volunteers is extremely valuable to communities across Australia and we depend heavily on the work of armies of volunteers, to keep our society functioning, but how much are our MATES volunteers worth?

In 2016, Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN commissioned an independent agency, Regional Advance, to conduct a review of their programs and projects.

Their review investigated the value of the MATES Mentoring Program.

While it is too early to assess the full extent of the impact that the MATES Mentoring program will have on the long-term life outcomes of the program participants, a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program which has been running for over 30 years in Australia and, which has similarities to MATES Mentoring, has shown a number of important life benefits for program participants when followed up at an average age of 37 years. Compared to a control group the study found that former mentees were:

- Generally higher workplace achievers
- More likely to earn higher incomes
- More likely to achieve leadership positions with their employers
- More active volunteers
- More likely to donate to charity
- More likely to pursue a healthy lifestyle
- More financially literate
- More likely to make good life choices
- More likely to report being a happy person
- Connected with stronger networks of family and friends
- More likely to strongly agree that they were a confident person.

The study found that for every dollar invested in the program, an average of \$18 was returned in social value, which stemmed from higher taxes paid, higher consumer spending and increasing charitable giving and volunteering.

For the most disadvantaged young people that participated in the program the social return value was calculated to be as high as \$23 for every dollar invested in the program. If the average social return value for the Big Brothers Big Sisters program was applied to the MATES Mentoring program, it could be estimated that the investment made into the program over the past ten years across the Wimmera would likely return a social value to the community of up to \$5.4 million.

This is a very good reason to celebrate and acknowledge the work of volunteer mentors.

The MATES mentoring program had its beginnings in 2010 when Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN partnered with Dimboola Memorial Secondary College and the Hindmarsh Shire to deliver a pilot mentoring program.

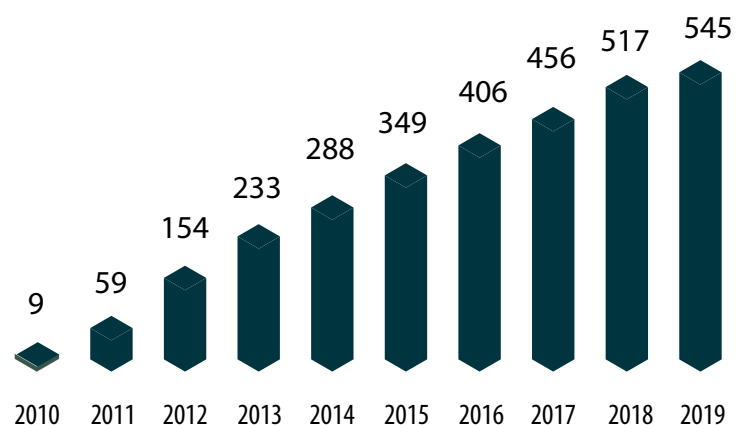
The pilot mentoring program was further developed by Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN in 2011 and became known as the MATES Mentoring Program. By the end of 2012, twelve schools across the Wimmera Southern Mallee region had developed MATES Mentoring Programs with 151 volunteer mentors supporting young people.

Businesses were encouraged to become involved in supporting young people in their local communities by providing flexible working arrangements to allow staff to mentor during business hours. The MATES Mentoring Program began the practice of acknowledging these businesses as 'Community Champions'.

In 2013 the MATES Mentoring Awards were established to acknowledge the contribution that mentors were making in the community. In 2016, additional categories, of MATES Mentoring Community Champion of the Year and MATES Mentoring Team of The Year were added to the MATES Mentoring Awards in recognition of the contribution of volunteer mentors.

The program has continued to expand across the region with 545 mentors having been matched with young people across the Wimmera and Southern Mallee from the inception of the program until the end of 2019.

Cumulative Total of MATES Mentors by Year



Comeback revival tour

Have you mentored in the past and thinking of trying it again? Just like John Farnham, you can keep on mentoring! You've done the training and had the experience, why not try again at a different school or age group. 'One may be the loneliest number', but if you 'Dare to Dream', you can be 'The Voice' and go 'Beyond the Call' to make a real difference again.

Contact Sam on mates@llen.com.au to express your interest (and no more John Farnham references).



Could you make a come-back?

MATES Mentor Training Continuing

Face-to-face training sessions for MATES mentors have been put 'on hold' for the time being, but we are still looking for positive role models to mentor local youth!

While we're practising safe social distancing, we've made the training available online.

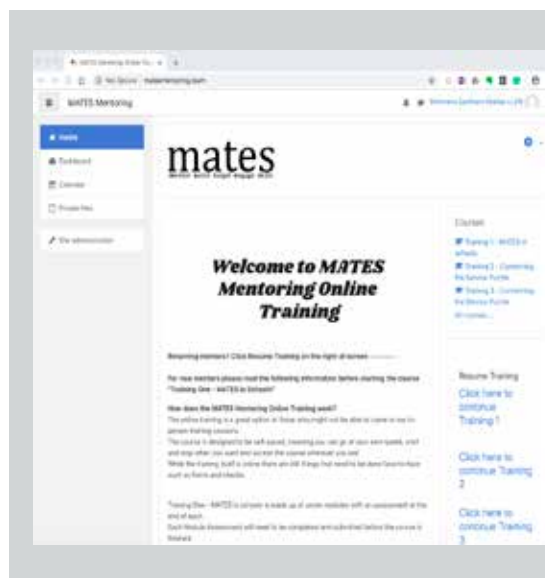
The training can be done on your phone, tablet or computer and stopped and started at any time.

If you're being a legend and staying at home, but sick of watching movies, try the mentoring training and make a positive difference in a young person's life!

Contact Sam on 03 538 10122 or email mates@llen.com.au to register for a training session.

**We are still seeking mentors
Online training available
Enquire now!**

MATES training is a free professional development opportunity and existing mentors are welcome to repeat the training as a refresher.



MATES training is available online.

The training is all self-paced and can be accessed anywhere and anytime! It takes approximately two hours to complete but can be stopped and started at any time. If you're interested or know of someone who wants to mentor but finds it hard to find the time, to attend training, let Sam know and he can sign you up.



Sam Flaherty
MATES Coordinator



Tim Shaw
Executive Officer



Vanessa O'Loughlin
Systems and Development

Contact the MATES team:

Phone: 03 53810122

Email: mates@llen.com.au

Web: llen.com.au/mates

Facebook: facebook.com/MATESMentoring

Instagram: [matesmentoring](https://instagram.com/matesmentoring)

About the LLEN

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) are an initiative of the Victorian Government. They were established to bring together schools, business and industry, community organisations, government agencies and individuals to improve the lives and education outcomes of our young people.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN works across the Hindmarsh, Horsham, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack local government areas. We have a strong focus on supporting disadvantaged young people to remain at school. The WSMLLEN strives:

- To improve the participation of vulnerable young people and their families in education
- To increase the re-engagement of young people into programs leading to qualifications
- To increase our schools' engagement with the community to improve students' aspirations and education outcomes

Helpful Phone numbers

Grampians Community Health: 5362 1200

Hindmarsh Shire (03) 5391 4444

Horsham Rural City Council: 5382 9777

West Wimmera Shire:

Edenhope: (03) 5585 9900

Kaniva: (03) 5392 7700

Yarriambiack Shire: (03) 5398 0100

Police (Horsham): 5382 9200

Rural Northwest Health (03) 5396 1200

West Wimmera Health Service (03) 5391 4222

Wimmera Health Care Group (Horsham Hospital): (03) 5381 9111

Bushfire information: 1800 240 667

headspace (Horsham): 5381 1543

LifeLine: 13 11 14

Nurse on call: 1300 060 024

SES Emergency: 13 25 00