

IFEPS

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“Making Choices”

**‘A look at a working model of best practise
in Vocational Education and Training
at Malmesbury Juvenile Justice Centre’**

Prepared by: Jodi Henderson
Campus Manager
BRIT MJJC

Preface / Introduction

The title of this paper is “Making Choices” I have chosen this title as it depicts the overall philosophy of what Malmesbury Juvenile Justice Centre

strives to achieve. As the paper will reveal the “Making Choices” is appropriate.

I am speaking to you today as a person who is very much a hands on practical operator bringing to you what I believe is an approach that is both innovative and successful in both Juvenile Justice practices in this country, comparable to overseas approaches.

Historical Pretext

Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre was built in 1965, it was built with the Government intent to ‘help cure juvenile delinquency’ amongst older juvenile offenders by providing a centre specifically intended for those 17 to 21 year olds, considered by the courts to be too immature for prison.

The centre was established on a model providing trade training for the trainees in an attempt to enhance their employment prospects on release. Over the years a wide range of educational and trade training facilities have ranged from carpentry and motor mechanics shops to a piggery and even at one time, the centre’s own barber shop.

The number of clients in the centre varied over the years, peaking at 120 in the mid-seventies. About half that number are accommodated in the current facility.

The delivery of vocation education and training at Malmsbury has varied over the years. The most recent and significant change occurred in 1992 when a joint ministerial decision agreed to transfer educational responsibility for young offenders in Victoria from the Department of Schools education to the Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE). Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE began delivery of programs at Malmsbury in February 1993.

An Understanding of Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre

Since the closure of Langi Kal Kal in March 1993 Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre has become the major institution catering for young male offenders aged between 17 and 21 who have been sentenced to detention in a Youth Training Centre (YTC) by an adult court in Victoria.

Malmsbury JJC is part of Victoria’s ‘dual track’ system which is unique within the Australian justice system. Although the young people are sentenced to detention by an adult court, they serve the period of incarceration in a Juvenile Justice facility instead of an adult prison. This option is available to a small number of young people aged 17 to 21 years old that are deemed at risk. Since April 1992, the proclamation of the

Sentencing Act 1991, identified that a Magistrate, County or Supreme court judge, when considering a Youth Training Centre order, must take into account what sentence would be appropriate and proportionate to the given offence and the offenders level of maturity, vulnerability, impressionability, the nature of the offence and past history, as well as the young persons' prospects for rehabilitation. A mandatory suitability report provides information to the courts regarding the young person's vulnerability and prospects for rehabilitation.

Redevelopment

Malmsbury Juvenile Justice has in the last three years undergone a major capital redevelopment. 12.6 million was invested in building a new centre that reflects state of the art contemporary design. *show video*.

Building and refurbishing was one aspect of the Malmsbury Redevelopment. It was a total change process incorporating the provision of new building, enhancement of site layout and the introduction of innovative work practices and philosophes. *Include copy of 'overarching principles of the redevelopment (overhead)*.

The redevelopment has provided an opportunity for TAFE to expand and received a major upgrade that has seen TAFE facilities become an open campus style learning centre that has enhanced opportunities for young men to learn and achieve in a very safe, well designed up to date campus.

The expansion has also allowed new program rooms to exist including:

- Koori Culture Room;
- Multimedia / Information Technology Room;
- Private Study Room.

In line with the principles and philosophies of the redevelopment which TAFE embrace, it was also a time to study and examine policy and procedures at TAFE.

The outcome was an identified need to increase programming areas in some course delivery and to introduce new courses to Malmsbury. This process involved liaison with the State Training Board, key stakeholders at Malmsbury and OTFE strategic plan. To ensure all course increases and implementation reflect a deemed industry need, are suitable for Malmsbury's student group, are well resourced, and provide a 'real' pathway for students entering the course.

As will be discussed further in this paper the TAFE system at Malmsbury JJC has been developed to extensively cater for students individual needs

and abilities. To provide a comprehensive framework of support, counselling teaching and opportunities that assists often very disadvantaged young people, overcome barriers to learning and succeeding in a range of programs and courses that initially may have been perceived as too difficult or unachievable.

To do this successfully there is a strong and committed partnership between Human Services and TAFE. Other important programs / systems that exist and integrate with TAFE at Malmsbury JJC are:

- Client Service Planning;
- Behaviour Management System;
- Code of Conduct;
- Provision of extensive Health Services;
- temporary Leave Program.

Client Service Planning:

As a young person enters Malmsbury JJC he is allocated a Key Worker. The key worker is responsible for the development of the Client Service Plan (CSP). The CSP has been developed to assist the young person in minimising the risk of re-offending and assisting in the successful re-integration to the community. The CSP involves many facets of the young person's life including vocational education and training, health, offending behaviour, family relationships and any other pertinent issues are addressed in the Client Service Planning.

Behaviour Management System:

This program has been devised to allow young men to earn money for participating in programs, completing unit duties and for displaying responsible behaviour in both programs and in the residential units. The system is linked to the temporary leave program.

Code of Conduct:

The code of conduct at Malmsbury JJC clearly establishes the clients rights and responsibilities under the Children and Young Persons Act 1989. Malmsbury JJC rules are also clear and adhered to. **Review**

Appendix A

Health Services:

Malmsbury JJC has a well resourced health centre which provides an extensive service to the young men including:

- health assessment
- challenging offending behaviour
- drug and alcohol programs and counselling
- psychology assessments and counselling
- doctor on centre three days a week
- health planning for individuals
- Peer education programs
- Parenting program jointly run with TAFE

Temporary Leave Program:

Is an opportunity for the young men to continue relationships in their communities eg: families. Experience demonstrates that removing young people from family and community life is likely to magnify their difficulties and can exacerbate long term problems. The temporary leave program provides young offenders in custody with opportunities for:

- progressively increased responsibility;
- structured youth community interaction;
- involvement in employment and training;
- the development of new resources and supports where needed;
- the maintenance of family linkages.

This integrated and comprehensive approach to providing individuals who are sentenced to Malmsbury JJC sees the development of many partnerships, co-operatively working together to provide the young person with many opportunities and challenges that will assist them when re-integrating back into society.

Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (BRIT) and Malmsbury JJC more than a planned partnership:

In the four years I have worked at this centre I have realised that the relationship between (BRIT) and Human Services at Malmsbury is much more than a partnership based around the delivery of Vocational Education and Training for a client.

For these young men to succeed and for the centre to provide a standard of excellence in the provision of Vocational education and training and other relevant programs there is a required commitment, which includes:

- taking calculated risks;
- the delivery and development of quality programs;
- setting a standard of best practice;
- on-going pursuit of excellence and innovation;
- sharing of information;
- building of a cohesive relationships;
- maintaining relevance and realism to program delivery;
- integrating and linking relevant community organisations to Malmsbury.

During this four years I have witnessed significant growth, the establishment of unique programming and the creation of vocational pathways that provide opportunities for our students to maximise their work skills, career development, set vocational goals, improve literacy and numeracy with the foresight to become better prepared for work or return to study.

The Vocational Counsellor plays a key role in the entry and exit programs at Malmsbury JJC.

Unique programs like 'Getting Started' see the vocational counsellor and assessment teacher work with the student to assist them with entering TAFE at Malmsbury, set goals to achieve at TAFE and to begin to plan for the students release.

Normalising is a philosophy held strongly at TAFE / MJJC this includes during the Getting Started program, discussion of all courses on offer at Malmsbury, orientation to all classes and TAFE facilities eg. Library services, timetabling, issuing of TAFE diary and other relevant material.

The initial assessment is to clarify literacy and numeracy abilities and while some students are reluctant or do not provide accurate information they are useful to establish what level of assistance maybe required eg. One to one tutoring, level 1, 2, 3 or 4 CGEA.

Student then choose what courses they would like to participate in, their choices are made in consideration with their assessment and previous work history and or future vocational aspirations. The choice of courses are varied and are all state or nationally accredited.

TAFE Courses available at Malmsbury:
General Education / CGEA

General Education is a well established course at Malmsbury JJC, the innovative use of the CGEA curriculum has provided flexibility and ensured successful integration into the class room. The general education course is a very individualised and allows student to self pace learn.

Recently due to expansion and student needs we have employed an extra .5 CGEA/ESL teacher who is focusing on ESL learning particularly for our Asian students. This has resulted from having approximately 25% population of Asian students.

The CGEA teacher has expanded the course into the general curriculum options and major key competencies in the workplace this has provided opportunities for the students to receive demonstrated competencies in the trade and other courses eg. competencies have real meaning in the workplace for employers. ***Refer overhead example. Meyer Key competencies:***

As you can see by integrating key competencies in the workplace through general curriculum options, it provides as greater acknowledgment of diversified skills and competencies achieved.

The students are very pleased with their achievements and enjoy having the supported documentation in their resumes.

General Education also provides a broad base of assistance from illiterate students who require one to one tutoring right through to level four.

Show examples of works - level one / level four

Certificate II, III & IV in Information Technology:

This course is suitable for absolute beginners as well as advanced students, and provides very valuable employment skills.

Subjects in this course include: Basic Keyboarding Techniques, Using Windows, Programming, Word Processing, Desktop Publishing and a large range of other related subjects.

A course of study made up of appropriate subjects is selected for each individual student, with instruction provided by the teacher and assignment work. Each student can work at their own level and pace. Computer access is available to complete work for other subject areas in conjunction with this course.

This is a more formalised learning environment that usually suits more mature students or students who have come from a rather successful schooling history. Quite often these students are Asian.

Certificate in Occupational Studies - Recreation:

This course is one of our most popular and rewarding courses. It offers great flexibility and opportunities for the young men to explore real life teaching situations and take on many challenges. The teacher delivering the course provides a dynamic course beyond the constraints of an institutional setting.

The flexibility of both the centre and the course allows for greater community interaction and the building of positive relationships between the young men and groups in both the local and wider communities.

The uniqueness of this course has attracted much attention some of the most successful programs include:

Community School Links, - students from Malmsbury conduct outdoor education programs at a local school these include the swimming program, bike education, orienteering, football, hockey, basketball and many other recreational activities.

Ashram - as part of the stress management student visit a local, Ashram and participate in programs with the swamis eg. relaxation techniques.

Basketball - playing basketball in a competition off centre has been very popular the students play an evening a week and clinics are run throughout the year.

Football - is also a popular sports program one approach that has been of great success has been incorporating the AFL football team of Richmond to run a five week clinic.

Other initiatives include using our students as swimming coaches for a local intellectually disabled centre, initially the students were afraid and apprehensive after the first week barriers were broken down and all apprehension ceased the swimming squad have gone on to win four gold medals, two silver and one bronze and will travel to Adelaide to compete in the national competitions.

Horticulture / Gardening:

Again the course is delivered in a positive flexible way with students able to move off the centre to participate and complete interesting and challenging programs in various community environment. More recently:

- revegetation / land care;
- design and paving local community house;
- replanting and maintenance child care centre;
- joint recreation / horticulture program at Ashram.

These opportunities including a lot of participation in the landscaping, planting and maintenance during the recent redevelopment provide an excellent array of 'real' work skills and experiences for students in the horticulture program.

Engineering:

Initially engineering whilst always a popular course students found it difficult to complete modules because it was deemed boring to weld bits and pieces together in order to become competent in a particular module.

The engineering teacher realised the need to make the course more attractive and interesting for the students.

He has achieved this by buying bits and pieces of old cars and the students design 'go-karts' and 'beach buggies' this has proved to be most stimulating and interesting for the students. When sold the money goes back into the purchase of new equipment.

Late last year TAFE also purchased a new machine, Metal Craft Range of Tooling which incorporates the following: Scroll Former, Master Twister, Punch and Sheer and Bending and Rolling Tool. This allows students to make candelabras, towel racks, garden arbors and all sorts of wonderful things from iron. The students like to make things for either themselves or members of their families and feel very proud when they first achieve success of completing a nice piece of work and receive recognition for that work.

Furnishing Studies / Woodwork:

This subject is more structured than some of the other courses although flexibility has also been built in to the course to a degree. In this course for students to complete the required modules they make a clock, when that has been completed, and students wish to continue the next competency level is a cheval mirror. If students wish to continue further we are then able to provide further studies at the main campus (if students are eligible to go off centre).

Most of the students are very happy to make a clock and take it home, one of our challenges for this year is to look at other alternatives to complete competencies in this subject area as an alternative to the clock and mirror.

Kitchen Attending:

The Kitchen Attending course is a valuable course to deliver at Malmsbury given the opportunities in the hospitality field. The course is a five week course that provides an introduction to the hospitality trade, the modules are all part of the Certificate 11 in Commercial Cookery, so students can continue on with longer courses when eligible or alternatively directly enter the vocation.

On completing the Kitchen Attending course at TAFE students are then able to work in the centre kitchen that provides all the meals for the centre under the supervision of the chefs. This provides valuable trade experience.

This year for the first time we will be running the Food Handling Hygiene course to further enhance students opportunities in the workplace.

Motor Mechanics / Small Engines:

These two individual programs are run by the one teacher, both courses are popular with many of the students and quite often students have had previous employment in/or training in the motor mechanics / automotive field.

We are able to pick up on any previous study completed or attempted 1st, 2nd or 3rd year apprenticeships and continue on with the training. When a student is ready to leave Malmsbury he may return to the industry or continue his studies at any TAFE or provider of the course.

Malmsbury has a fully equipped auto motive workshop that services the centres cars, truck, vans, buses, mowers and other equipment the workshop is very well resourced and provides students with a comprehensive experience during the course that is supported by the theory components.

Music Studies:

The Certificate 11 in Music Industry Skills is a great course for young men to commence or continue their studies, whether they are musically inclined or not. It is structured to give maximum hands on experience and addresses all the skills needed in the music industry work place. With the

added support from the In House music program offering work experience and workshops.

The music teacher provides a learning environment that is responsive to individual student needs, interests, and abilities students can develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes to the music industry through a variety of modules offered by the teacher. Classes consist of a balance of theory and practical experiences through the five streams of study. Students look at Occupational Health and Safety, Careers and job profiles, learn to read and write music, as well as being offered the major contemporary instruments, group performance and even have the opportunity to compose their own material. The technology stream introduces students to Acoustics, Audio Equipment, Recording, Lighting, MIDI and Sequencing.

If required students may also study music business, law, finance, touring, marketing, radio, video, media and multimedia. Constant links between content ensures continuity between modules.

Because of the non threatening atmosphere of classes the music program is a great way of introducing the young men to TAFE.

Vocational Arts:

Currently the evening classes offer Ceramics and Leatherwork, students find both these course relaxing and enjoyable. The students move through various modules in both courses making many interesting pieces of work.

STEPS:

Seeking Training Employment and Personal Satisfaction (STEPS). In the last sixteen months the vocational counsellor has developed a specific course for the students as they enter the last part of their sentence.

The STEPS program begins when the student becomes eligible for work release, it has been designed as a pre-release program that assists in equipping students to gain employment, participate more effectively in the workplace, coping skills upon returning to studying, interviewing skills, resume writing, effective communication, teamwork and depending on the individuals needs many other subjects.

The students participate in this program two days a week which is run by the vocational counsellor and accredited through the CGEA course. The students participate enthusiastically and find it valuable in putting information together and in building their confidence to enter the workforce or further education and training..

New Initiatives:

As part of the centre progressive planning strategy this year we will be expanding to trial the innovative Certificate 11 in Multimedia. This course will be run in the multimedia lab which is on line to the Internet.

Skillnet:

One significant initiative will be the registering of Malmsbury TAFE as part of the employment and training services currently being offered at the main campus.

In Summary

Participation in TAFE is high and most young men who enter Malmsbury enjoy the opportunity to participate in TAFE programs.

Malmsbury JJC offers a balance between developing intrinsic motivation eg: decision making, taking risks, participating in programs and extrinsic motivation via the behaviour management system which allows young men to earn money through participation in programs, unit duties, across the board good behaviour which in turn allow them to save enough money and when eligible to participate in the Malmsbury Temporary Leave program.

Barriers to learning:

At Malmsbury JJC some of the elements that can make both teaching and learning difficult at Malmsbury JJC are:

- Substance Abused students;
- Lack of motivation;
- Physical and mental state of students;
- Return offenders to Malmsbury JJC;
- Security issues outside of TAFE control;
- Low literacy / numeracy standards;
- Low self esteem / self concept;
- Disaffection for learning.

Many of the barriers are overcome during the time of building a trusting relationship between teacher and student.

Does it work?

I believe Vocational Education and Training at Malmsbury does work, there are many factors that indicate this include:

positive feedback from students leaving Malmsbury;

90 - 95% of our students who leave Malmsbury either start or resume a job or return to further education and training;

past students providing information that during their time at Malmsbury TAFE was beneficial to them in gaining employment;

student participation is high 98% and when surveys are conducted, the outcomes show that most students believe the course at Malmsbury are interesting and worth doing;

bench marking of CGEA in writing in NSW;

bench marking of general curriculum options in regional Victoria;

recognised by the Senate Employment Education and Training References Committee report as a provider of exemplary TAFE programs in Victoria.

Antidotally many young men do go on and participate in the workforce successfully and hopefully the choice making model has assisted in that young persons ability to make appropriate choices in regard to their work, training, lifestyles and community interaction.

What we do not know is how long the student remains in that job or training after being paroled. There is currently no accurate tracking system or substantial research into this area.

The small group of return offenders are one of Malmsbury challenges. Often their lack of maturity, poor ability to make decisions and take responsibility is obvious, for TAFE this means careful monitoring of the young person, patience and offering limited amounts of responsibilities with the aim to gradually increase.

These young students often require more guidance and a supported framework of professional people to assist and encourage them through their maturation process. Once released and this framework is not provided even though students are weaned off it slowly, the task of

participating in a course or work making decisions about re-offending, staying at home, taking drugs etc. all become very difficult and sometimes the student will break down.

On arrival back at Malmsbury students are often disillusioned and angry with both themselves and everyone else. I believe nearly all our young men leave Malmsbury with the intent to do well. When this does not work out, it is back to trying again.

Challenges for the future

The challenges for the future are indeed great, working and teaching young offenders effectively is an ongoing challenge. In the last twelve months the student group at Malmsbury has required a new understanding and the re-thinking of approaches and strategies to adequately deal with issues such as:

learning to manage and teach a large student group of intravenous drug users;

providing adequate support, resources and courses for a ever increasing Asian population which is currently around 25% of Malmsbury client group.

Challenges also include the on going need to keep abreast of new initiatives, maintain linkages with industries, looking for opportunities to keep at the forefront of VET delivery and to well equipped students to successfully participate in the competitive ever changing labour market. To do this effectively TAFE at Malmsbury needs to monitor local and global trends in industry and employment, and respond appropriately.

To continue to take calculated risks, with the purpose of increasing opportunities for our student group and to pursue every possible avenue to extend, challenge, stimulate and teach young people at Malmsbury, will assist them to take control of their lives and participate in society in a positive and productive way.

Acknowledgments:

Bev Vines, Chief Executive Officer, Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre.

References:

Redevelopment Project
Temporary Leave Guidelines