

COLLEGE CELEBRATES WELLBEING WEEK

by Arj Ganesan

Last week Springbank Secondary College celebrated its first Wellbeing Week, promoting and encouraging positive mental health attitudes as well as inclusivity for people living

with disability or from a diverse cultural, sexual or gender background.

Principal Wendy House said the school wanted to do more to support their students - beyond just their academic performance.

"We run Harmony Day every year but this is the first time we've run a full week of activities around health and wellbeing," Wendy said.

"Student wellbeing enables better learning - wellbeing for learning is really important for students to perform at their best."

Karen Jones, the Wellbeing Leader at Springbank, said the school took a 'wrap around' approach to student wellbeing.

"Being a smaller school we always want to be proactive and preventative rather than reactive," Karen said.

"Wrap around is a concept where no one person is looking after a student.

"So we've got more than one care group teacher per class - by having two care group teachers per class we can set up case management for the students.

"We also have a wellbeing team and that consists of myself as wellbeing leader, a pastoral care worker, a school mentor and an



Students encouraged to have positive mental health attitudes

inclusion team who we work closely with."

The school ran three different workshops for their students covering topics such as looking after your own mental health, how to support your friends and how to deal with bullying and being resilient.

There was also a workshop for parents and caregivers held on the Wednesday night to help parents identify and communicate with their adolescent kids.

"The parent session was around noticing the changes in young people, noticing when they're going through a hard time and identifying strategies on how to connect and communicate - as well as how to access support," Karen said.

"How to promote that help seeking behaviour and link in with outside professional agencies - so things like Beyond Blue."

The workshops were run by Headspace, which Wendy said ran very smoothly and would remain a feature of the school year.

"The workshops have been really well received by the students. They really enjoyed them and the students have come away from them commenting on how useful they found them.

"I think this is going to be part of our calendar of important programs that we run."

Springbank College also ran programs at recess and lunch to help students deal with stress.

"We had a number of different options for students during recess and lunch - things such as seed planting and wellbeing fortune cookies.

"Students could take part in theatre sports, so fun drama games where you just get up and use your body - similar to Whose Line is it Anyway?"

"We've also had what we called the breakfast club - our pastoral care worker organised food deliveries and we gave the students the chance to have a bit of extra food like fruit or toast.

"Research shows that kids do better if they have food in them and many kids do skip breakfast not so much out of neglect or financial difficulty but we wanted to facilitate that opportunity for them.

"It comes back to that wrap around idea - it isn't just one aspect of wellbeing we look at.

"it's not just about mental health - about bullying - about physical health - it's about everything."