

力

BE STRONG

穩

BE CALM

慈

BE KIND

努

TRY HARD

# THE MAT PROGRAM

A therapeutic Martial Arts program

Year one report on  
Submission for funding  
from October 2009





---

*The MAT Program was developed by Steve Golding as a private business which started delivering services to schools in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). The MAT Program is attached to DEECD through Croydon Community School where Steve Golding is now appointed as the MAT Program Coordinator.*

## Introduction

The Martial Art Therapy Program (MAT) is an active therapeutic approach and set of processes that combines the principles of psychosocial rehabilitation with those of traditional martial arts training techniques.

**This report outlines the objectives of the Pilot program funded in October 2009, and the program's achievements in the first 12 months to August 2010. The Pilot program commenced February 1st, 2010.**



## Background

The demand for the MAT Program is growing at an exponential rate.

### Here are a few facts:

- There are currently more than 50 schools using MAT services each month in some way, including a number of country-based schools.
- MAT Programs are involved with 1000 students each month through direct engagement in schools.
- There are currently 26 Martial Art Practitioners involved in delivering the MAT Program with Steve Golding; these are paid for on a sessional basis.
- There are around 30 students involved as Peer Educators working with other students with problems.



**The MAT Program has developed a wide variety of group and individual programs that utilise a broad base of martial art skills and drills all linked to the concepts being taught, to produce therapeutic outcomes for children and young people.**

**Many of the programs include pathways that support young people to gain and maintain connections to their peers, school communities and families, along with providing opportunities for further education and employment.**

力

穩

慈

努

## The MAT Program delivers a wide variety of individual and group based programs

- **Primary school based programs**  
‘Life Skills’ targeted for young people identified as needing social, emotional or behavioural support
- **Secondary school based programs**  
‘Life Skills’, Peer Educator, VCAL
- **Disability programs**
- **CAMHS Programs**  
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- **Community based programs**  
WOW (Way of the Warrior) Programs for primary aged boys
- **Peer Educator and Mentor Programs**
- **Gender specific groups**  
‘Healthy Girls’ for Secondary and Primary schools
- **Parent and child groups**
- **Individual Programs**  
for children & young people
- **Stand alone** Motivational and Life Skills sessions for VCE students

Programs are based at schools, community organisations, and licensed martial arts premises. Most programs are delivered across school terms and in either 60 or 90 minute sessions.

Programs are delivered 5 days a week between 8am and 6pm.

BE STRONG  
BE CALM  
BE KIND  
TRY HARD

## The three year Pilot project

### Why was a Pilot project needed?

The current challenges in school have been increasing over recent years and there are real risks in the system which needs to be addressed. These include the following:

- Across the State there are students with severe behavioural and conduct disorders, mental health issues and other challenging and concerning behaviours. These behaviours place the **students, staff and other students at risk of injury and constantly disrupt classroom learning.**
- School staff are seeking ways of **managing at risk students** and **improving both student and staff safety** and **addressing the rising stress levels in staff.**
- There are groups of **students that have been identified as at risk of disengaging from education** and who need to develop the necessary life skills to manage the current challenges in their lives.



The increase in demand for MAT programs is based on anecdotal evidence, not on empirical measurement of the outcomes. This unfortunately creates a risk for DEECD, as there was no specific study on which the department can rely to justify the MAT program and the results we know (anecdotally) are being achieved.

It was considered essential that a pilot be established which would provide the Department (and the minister) with facts related to the **educational value of the MAT program**. Valuable testimonials are attached to this report, however their value is greater when backed by empirical evidence, highlighting achievements and outcomes.

### Assessing the effectiveness of the pilot project

In order to assess the effectiveness of the pilot it was important to put in place the right set of measures to provide valuable feedback on the events which occurred over time and the actions taken by the MAT team.

As the program is only a pilot it is not expected that the program will have any measurable impact on the number of events in the schools, it was envisaged that there will be measurable improvements in the educational environment and therefore the educational outcomes in the areas where there has been some intervention of a MAT Team. An assessment regime has been developed to measure these outcomes.

In the first year of the Pilot, two different school-based surveys and written testimonials from school leaders were used to measure outcomes. This initial broad data will be used to develop more detailed measures in the second and third year of the Pilot. All measures will reflect the educational outcomes against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

## **Measurement of Outcomes – KPIs: 1st Year of Pilot program**

### **1. Redirection Programs**

#### **Aims:**

- **Reduce** student behaviour that places the student or other students or staff at risk of injury.
- **Reduce** teacher/staff stress levels and increase staff morale
- **Increase** effective options for school leaders (principals etc) in managing entrenched challenging/concerning behaviours by students

### **2. Primary, Secondary and VCAL programs**

#### **Aims:**

- **Reduce** challenging /concerning student behaviours
- **Determine** effectiveness in engaging disconnected/at risk students
- **Increase** student participation in learning and education pathways
- **Increase** staff support in VCAL programs using this approach

### **3. Specialist setting programs**

(includes Child and Adolescent mental Health (CAMHS), Disability and Alternative Education Sector.

#### **Aims:**

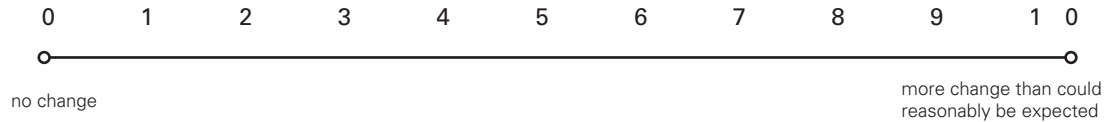
- **Decrease** challenging/concerning student behaviours
- **Determine** effectiveness in engaging disconnected/at risk students
- **Decrease** teacher /staff stress/ and increase staff morale levels
- **Provide** effective options for school leadership teams to manage challenging behaviours

This report is a summary of the outcomes. A similar report will be created at this time each year of the Pilot. An overall report will be produced at the end of the three year Pilot period, which will incorporate a summation of the outcomes and measurement of achievements, as well as recommendations on future directions for the program.

## Highlights from the First Year of Pilot

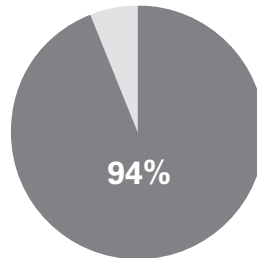
### Redirection Programs

A questionnaire asked schools and services to respond to a set of questions regarding the amount of **positive change** the MAT program has had within their schools, and rate the questions posed on a continuum from '0' (No positive change) to '10' (More change than was reasonably expected)

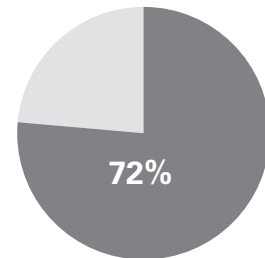


### Responses from the Redirection Programs questionnaire

**Q:** Indicate the amount of **positive change** the MAT program has had on **the number of incidents resulting in/or were likely to cause injury to students and/or staff**

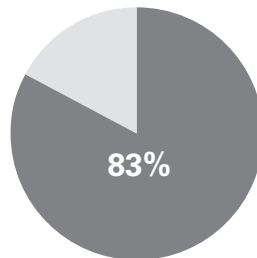


responded with a score of 7 or above

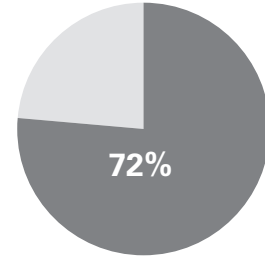


responded with a score of 8 or above

**Q:** Indicate the amount of **positive change** the MAT program has had on **reducing teacher stress and improving staff morale**

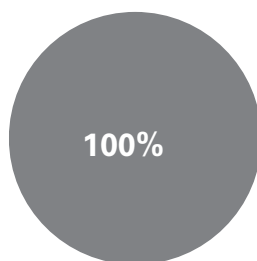


responded with a score of 7 or above

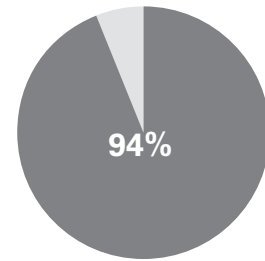


responded with a score of 8 or above

**Q:** Indicate the amount of **positive change** the MAT program has had on **the number of options for school leaders (principals, assistant principals etc) having to manage challenging/concerning behaviours**



responded with a score of 7 or above



responded with a score of 8 or above

Redirection programs have been limited to the Eastern Region alone.

There is strong anecdotal demand, as yet unquantified, for these programs to be rolled out to other regions across Victoria.



## Redirections Testimonial



Shepherd Road  
Glen Waverley, Victoria  
AUSTRALIA 3150

W: [www.mountviewps.vic.edu.au](http://www.mountviewps.vic.edu.au)  
E: [mount.view.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:mount.view.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au)  
T: +61 3 9560 0471  
F: +61 3 9560 8750

ABN 85 269 418 832

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2010

Steve Golding  
EMR – MAT program  
PO Box 239,  
CROYDON 3136

Dear Steve,

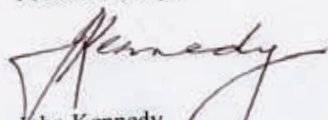
I am writing to answer your request regarding feedback for the MAT aide program at this school.

We currently employ Damien Kordick for four days each week to work with a Year 6 student who was funded under the category of Severe Behaviour Disorder this year. The student was prone to violent actions and running from class and school through the latter part of Year 5 (2009) despite of the fact that the school employed an aide to assist the classroom teacher in the management of his behaviour.

Employing Damien in 2010 has seen these types of behaviour – violent actions and running from school – reduced to a minimum and they are now non-existent. There is no doubt that the other students in Year 6 appear much more relaxed and settled in the company of the student, which is a real positive for the program. Naturally staff stress levels – teachers, Principal, Assistant Principal - are much lower as a result. The student in question is making quite good academic progress and is working positively with Damien after a period of initial reluctance. He is now an active member of his class and even had the opportunity to attend a three-day ski camp to Mt. Buller recently.

A MAT Aide such as Damien was an excellent solution to the school's search for an appropriate aide to support this student in the classroom. Although Damien has not had to physically restrain the student, the reality is that he is capable of subduing the student if required. Even better, however, is the fact that Damien has been positive and supportive when working with the student and there has been a reasonable level of rapport developed between the two.

Yours sincerely,

  
John Kennedy,  
Assistant Principal.





## VCAL Life Skills Testimonial

12<sup>th</sup> August 2010

### Re: Martial Arts Therapy Program

Dear Stephen,

I am writing to express my gratitude and amazement at how successful the Martial Arts Therapy Program has been with our LEEP students.

As you are aware the LEEP students have been referred to us because they are disengaged from mainstream education. Many have experienced homelessness, family dysfunction, substance abuse, physical or sexual abuse. Historically their schooling has been marked by truancy, disengagement and negativity.

Our students have all been involved in counselling and a range of intervention programs, which have worked to varying degrees for some individuals. We have been astounded at the overwhelming impact the MAT Program has had on the group as a whole.

An analysis of attendance data has indicated that we had improved attendance on days when the program was running and overall we have seen an increase since the program commenced.

Several of the LEEP students have a history of aggressive and violent behaviour. They frequently overreact to issues within the peer group and have been unable to manage their emotional responses to perceived threats or problems. We are astounded at the improvement in their ability to self regulate, rationalise and control their behaviours when challenged. Anecdotally, one particular student who regularly threw furniture or self harmed has not demonstrated these behaviours since his involvement in the program. The classroom teachers and Social Worker have observed an overall improvement in student behaviour, motivation and self discipline. We have noticed that students are able to interact more positively with one another and adults in general.

The primary school component of the program was especially beneficial to our students. One commented to me that he "couldn't believe we would trust them to do the right thing with little kids". That statement really demonstrated for me the fact that Craig and Alice were able to significantly improve self-esteem and confidence within the group. The students didn't believe in their own capacity for positive behaviour, they had no faith in themselves. I think the greatest thing that Craig and Alice did was to have such high expectations of the students. They rose to the occasion and surprised themselves at their own capabilities. It is something that we have been able to use as a tool in the classroom also, when they limit their potential or think they can't do something we remind them of exactly how much they achieved in the MAT Program.

Craig and Alice as individuals were inspirational role models for the students and were so successful in relating to them and creating such positive relationships over a relatively short period of time. The teaching staff really valued the fact that they were able to highlight concerning issues that had occurred between Craig and Alice's visits and Craig incorporated some discussion on these problems into the program. Consequently, relevant and recent examples were addressed in such a way that would not be as successful or possible for the classroom teacher to do.

Once again, I would just like to express my sincere gratitude for such a wonderful opportunity. I believe that the model of the MAT Program should be an integral part of all Victorian schools curriculum. I think it is essential that we provide young people with better strategies for conflict resolution, problem solving and that we endeavour to teach them to respect themselves and others. Unfortunately there seems to be a disrespectful and violent trend emerging in society. A program like this goes a long way towards preparing young people to be responsible young adults.

Kind Regards

**GABRIELLA WARFE**  
LEEP Manager

## Measurement of Activities undertaken in the Pilot

There are **seven** sets of objectives/tasks which needed to be undertaken to establish and operate the pilot over the three year period.

The objectives and achievements for the first pilot year were:

### Objective 1.

#### Establish MAT program training centre based at EMR Options with a regional structure that provides for future growth across all regions.

- Training program for MAT Team has been established at EMR Options
- Discussions held with Mackillop Family Services to 'export' MAT to Western region and "host" model with key stakeholders including DEECD, VACCA, Victoria University and RMIT.

### Goals

Aim to train twenty new Redirection Aides, who will be employed by schools under the Education Support (ES) payment structure.

*No recurrent funding required as this would be funded by individual schools (exact numbers will be based on demand within schools).*

Aim to train fifteen new MAT Life Skills Instructors, available for contracting to schools on a fee for service basis.

*No recurrent funding required as this would be funded by individual schools (exact numbers will be based on demand within schools).*

### Achievements to date

**Ten** new Redirection Aides have been trained and employed through EMR Options for work in EMR schools.

**Two** new Redirection Aides are currently being trained for role in EMR

#### Aide activity:

Term 1: 176 days

Term 2: 186 days

Term 3: 151\* days

\*in first three weeks of Term 3, projected as 450+ Aide days by end of term.

**Nine** new Life Skills Instructors trained and involved in program delivery.

Life Skills Activity – number of sessions:				
Program Setting	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	No of Students
VCAL	61	105	91	540+
Secondary	46	94	110	650+
Primary	21	66	182	850+
Specialist*	150	204	216	700+

\*Includes Alternative Education providers, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Pathways Programs and Disability Schools.

## Goals

Develop and deliver **on-site Professional Development Programs** for teaching and aide staff. Delivered on a term-by-term schedule and funded by participating schools on a per-head basis.

Develop a **Professional Development Program Team** that will deliver to teaching staff within regional schools and funded on a fee-for-service basis.

Work with other associated Government agencies such as CAMHS, DHS, Student Wellbeing Coordinators, Psychologists, Allied health providers in order to **provide an integrated support network for students, parents and teachers.**

Establish a waiting list of demand for MAT services based on the fee for service funding in other regions.

## Achievements to date

Professional Development for school staff continues to be developed as part of EMR Options Professional Development Services and is in line with DEECD Flexible Learning Options draft document (Tier 1 –Tier 4)

Initial Professional Development Programs are responding to demand from Primary and Specialist settings.

Anticipate 30+ Professional Development Programs in Managing Challenging Behaviours and Staff Safety to be delivered in Semester 1, 2011.

Established effective practice model with increasing interest and support of associated Government agencies (CAMHS and DHS etc)

**NOTE:** Strong demand from families seeking MAT Individual Student Programs with support and input of associated services.

A web-based referral management system is currently being implemented at EMR Options and is on track to manage all referrals (will be able to qualify the demand across all MAT streams from November 2010). This system is expected to be trialled in the Government Education Network outside EMR Options in 2011.



## Objective 2

### Goals

**MAT Program to be streamlined into four main areas**

### Achievements to date

**MAT Program have been streamlined into four main areas:**

- **Life Skills – Primary Level**  
Individual and group programs, including Community WOW programs. This includes the employment of a coordinator for the program.
- **Life Skills – Secondary Level**  
Individual and group programs including peer educations, VCAL and specialist setting programs. This includes the employment of a coordinator for the program.
- **Redirection Aides**  
Integration Aides with specialist skills enabling them to intervene and assist in the management of violent students within Primary and Specialist Education settings.
- **Professional Development for Teaching Staff**  
Managing challenging behaviours & staff safety.



## Objective 3

**Develop the recruitment, training and support processes for MAT trained personnel.****Goals**

Ensure that the appropriate recruitment and training processes are put in place for staff coming into the MAT Program. Include the development of training manuals and processes for monitoring the training and progression of MAT staff.

**Achievements to date****Recruitment**

Established appropriate processes with growing number of Martial Arts Organisations. (List available on request)

Commenced 'pilot' processes for potential MAT team members from TAFE Youth Work/Community Development providers including Chisolm, RMIT and Holmesglen.

Discussions underway with Victoria University for collaboration with their teaching students.

MAT to provide placement and training opportunities for students who can be employed as Redirection Aides while completing their teaching training.

**Training**

Development of training for MAT team continues.

- Training shaped in line with MAT streamline program delivery, including new training manuals.
- Redirection Aide process instated and in place
- Involves individual, group and school placement sessions.

**Team Support**

- Planned/regular formal documented individual supervision for all MAT Team members, includes program/session reviews, feedback from key shareholders, professional development, performance management etc.



## Objective 4

**Formalise accreditation of MAT-trained therapists/instructors.****Goals**

Undertake the task (with EMR staff) to map MAT Redirection training to existing Certificate 3 Integration Aide Course. Aim to create appropriate new Certificate in Integration Redirection by the end of the project.

**Achievements to date****Accreditation**

Discussions commenced with EMR Options and Chisholm Tafe

Year 12 VCAL Certificate 2 in Community development to be offered in 2011

Certificate 3 in Youth Work and Community Development to be offered in 2012.

## Objective 5

**Develop I.T. infrastructure required to support the projects on management, reporting and future expansion.**

Development of web-based services to support the MAT program. It is proposed that these services will be accessible by the Ultranet when this is available.

The first of these services will provide:

- information on the MAT Program.
- Booking facilities to manage the growth of the MAT Program.
- Appropriate management tools and reporting functions.

**I.T. Infrastructure**

Web based "Dropbox" system established for initial trial/learning of information management requirements.

Development and trial of "Sandbox" system in Semester 2, 2010 for roll out to MAT team in Semester 1 2011.

"Sandbox" to provide management and reporting functions consistent for use as part of an effective practice export model.





## Objective 6

### Develop Memorandum of Understanding between MAT Pty Ltd and DEECD that covers Intellectual Property.

This activity will be carried out in the first year of the pilot and will include the formalisation of the MAT Governing Body to oversee the operations of the pilot.

Memorandum of Understanding continue to evolve along with the development of the MAT/EMR OPTIONS partnership.

MAT Governance Body includes the participation of

- Business Manager, EMR Options
- Croydon Community School Council
- Paris Consulting (Business Management Consultants and Advisors)

Chris Bennett, partner  
PricewaterhouseCoopers, ProBono project oversight, advice/input into Pilot management, development and evaluation.

## Objective 7

### Develop the measurement techniques and processes to provide feedback to DEECD and the Minister on the performance of the Pilot.

The development of measurement and reporting processes for the measurement of outcomes.

Range of measures used in First Year of Pilot to be used over the length of the project.

Eastern Region to provide expertise and resources including statistics management package, data compilation and publication.

