

Brotherhood of St Laurence Homework Club

2018 Evaluation

The aim of this evaluation is to give a broad overview of how the Homework Club has tracked in 2018 and to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the program and its effectiveness. Information has been gathered from the enrolment forms, attendance data and feedback gathered from students and tutors.

Sources of information

Data collected includes:

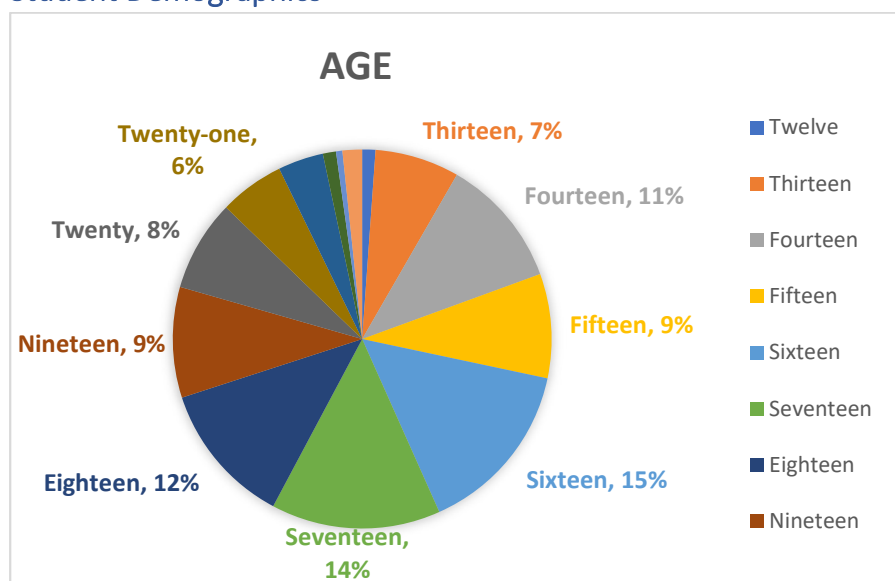
- Tutor feedback surveys - 22 responses
- Student feedback surveys – 20 responses
- Attendance data
- Enrolment information

A note about the nature of evaluating Homework Clubs

While many Homework Clubs seek to improve the marks of students, it is very challenging to assess both the improvement in students' marks and the precise impact the Homework Club has had in this process. One reason for this is that getting information from schools on individual students is both time consuming and often challenging, relying on an exceptionally close and collaborative relationship with student's schools that most Homework Clubs find challenging to maintain, particularly when there are multiple schools involved. Additionally, it is hard to pinpoint the precise influence Homework Club has for the student compared to their school, family, friends or natural pace of improvement.

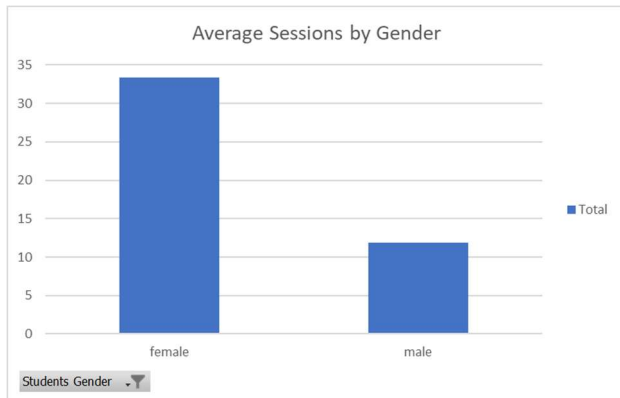
Therefore, the nature of evaluating Homework Club relies heavily on students' self-assessment and belief statements as well as other factors, such as confidence in the classroom, that can have a positive influence on students' marks.

Student Demographics



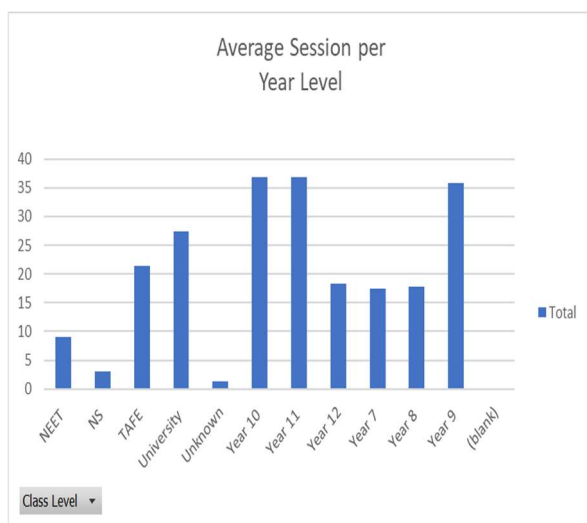
Age

There was a good spread of students between the ages of 12 and 25. This year's cohort was slightly older than the previous year, with the average age increasing from 16.5 to 17 years of age. This continues the trend from 2017 of a greater representation of senior students. There was a mostly even spread in average attendance from different age groups. With slightly higher average attendance among 17 and 21-year-olds.



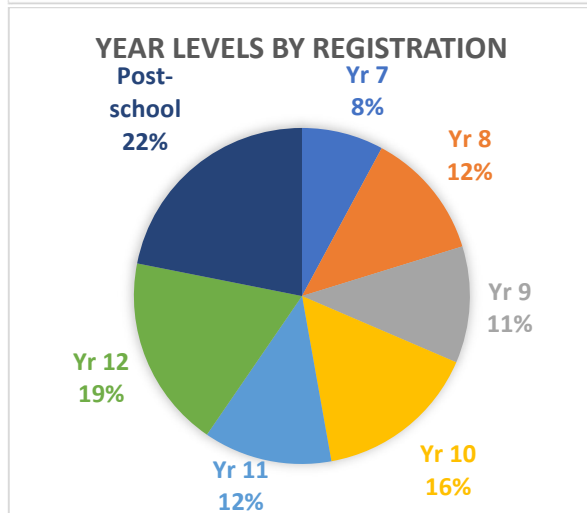
Gender

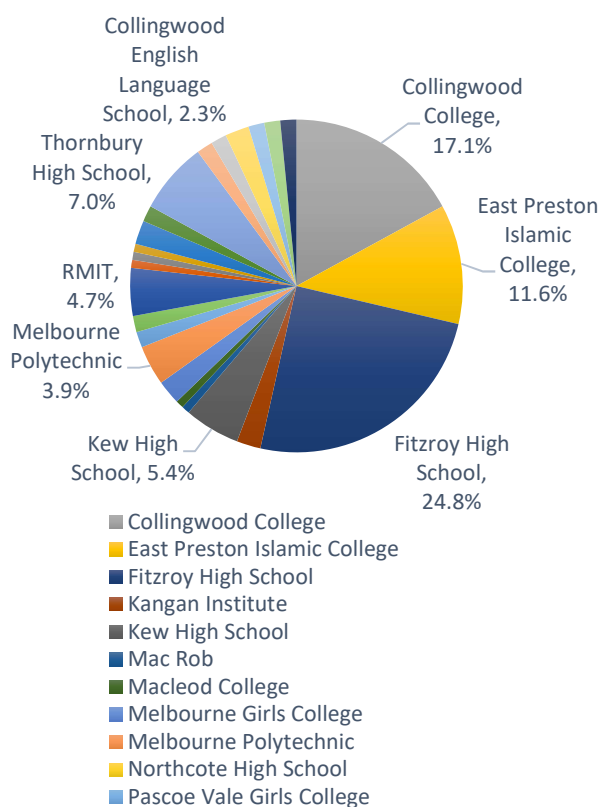
The Homework Club had a significant change in gender representation this year with registered male students dropping from 46% in 2017 to 39% in 2018. The decline in attendance of male students was even greater with average attendance by males dropping to an average 12 sessions per year compared to 33 sessions per year for female student, meaning that females attended nearly three times as often as male students.



Year Level

There has been a small but notable increase in attendance by senior students and decline by junior students. The most significant change has been the increase in post-school (university and TAFE) students from 15% in 2017 to 22% in 2018. This is partly explained by the large Year 12 cohort of 2017 that went on to tertiary study and continued attending, but also by the impact of the Late Sessions becoming a welcoming space for tertiary students. The decline in Year 7 students is significant when compared to 2016 data with a drop from 13% in 2016 to 8% in 2018. According to average attendance, Homework Club was most frequently attended by Year 9, 10 and 11 students.

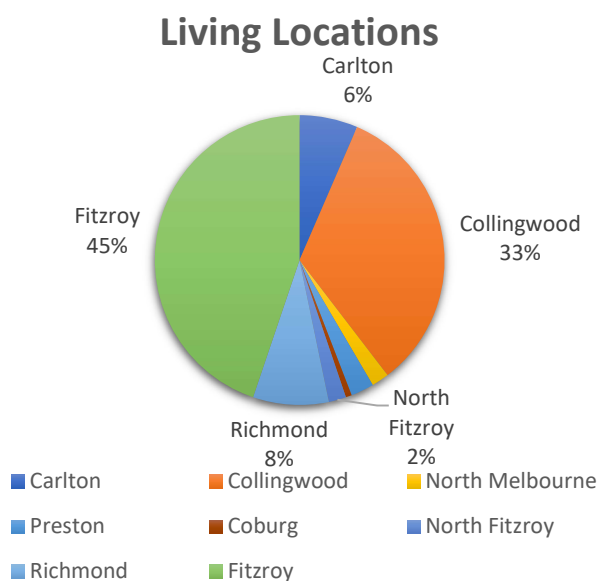




Educational Institutes

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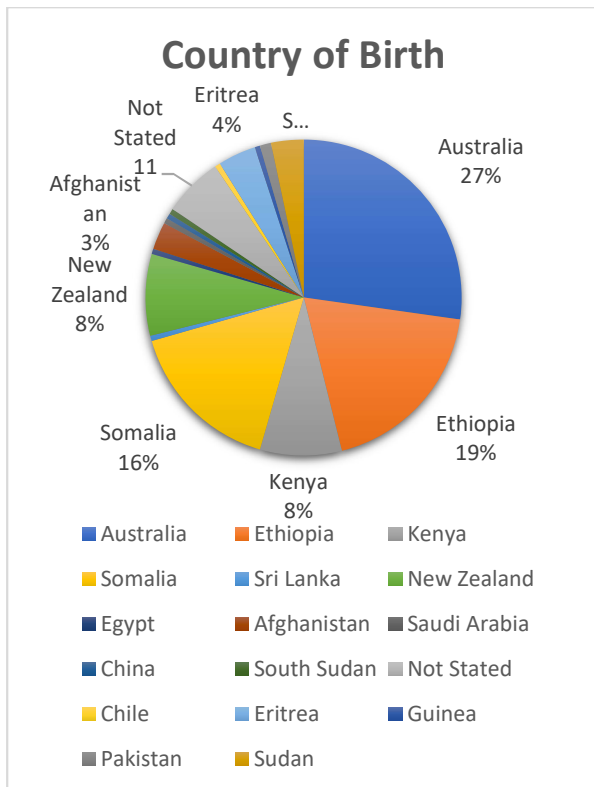
The Homework Club worked with students from 23 different educational institutes in 2018. The three biggest feeder schools were Collingwood College, East Preston Islamic College and Fitzroy High School. Notable changes from 2017 to 2018 were an increase in students from Fitzroy High School, Thornbury High School and RMIT University, and a notable decrease in students from Collingwood English Language School.



Living Locations

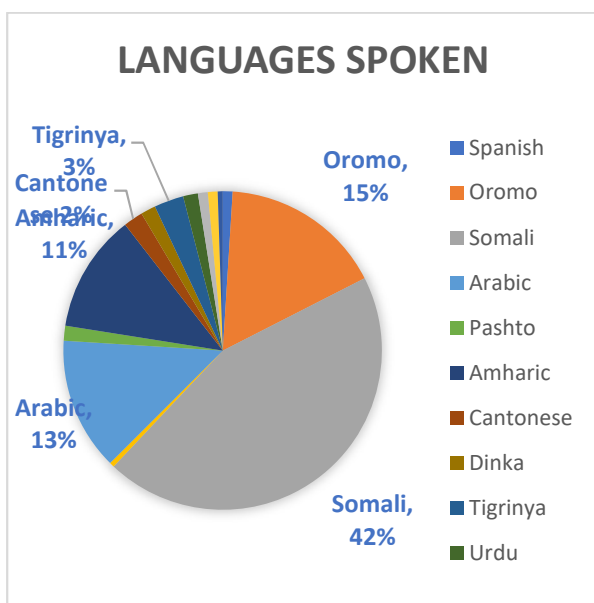
Living Locations

Students predominantly came from the local suburbs of Fitzroy and Collingwood. The most significant change was the reduction in students attending from a variety of suburbs, with the number of different living locations decreasing from 18 in 2017 (17 in 2016) to just 8 in 2018. There was a small increase in students attending from Richmond and decline in students from Carlton. There was also a greater proportion of students coming from Fitzroy in 2018 than in 2017.



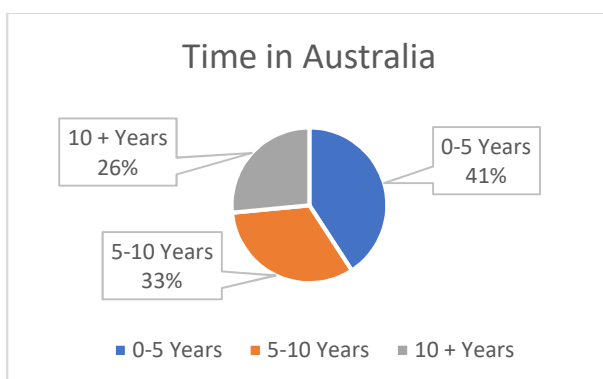
Country of Birth

In 2018 students came from 20 different countries, making the Homework Club quite multicultural. In particular, Australia, Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia had the biggest student populations. It should be noted that while these are countries of birth, they may differ from the ethnic background of the family due to the impact of displacement on families. The only notable difference from 2017 to 2018 was an increase in the number students that were born in Ethiopia and decrease in students born in South Sudan. Also notable is that average attendance was significantly higher amongst students born outside of Australia, with students born in Australia attending 10 sessions on average, whereas students born outside of Australia on average attended 28 sessions.



Languages Spoken Other Than English

Many languages are spoken other than English. Somali, Arabic, Oromo and Amharic were common amongst students in 2018. The notable changes from 2017 to 2018 were the increase in the number of students that speak Oromo and Amharic and a reduction in the number of different languages spoken from 23 in 2017 to 13 in 2018.



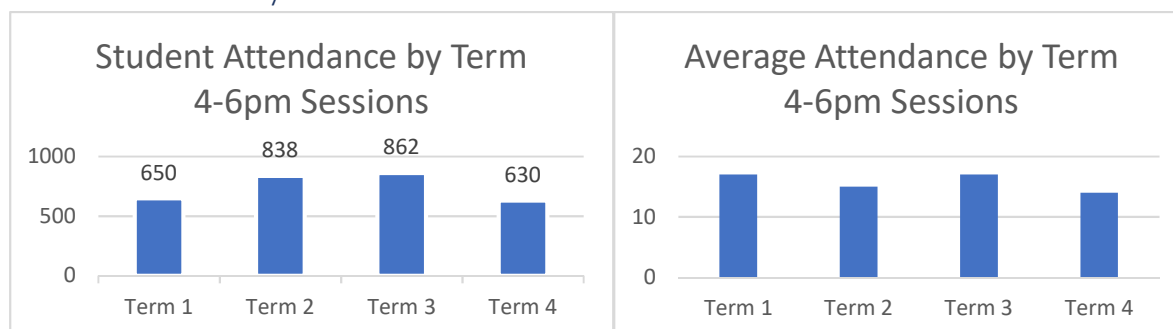
Year of Arrival to Australia

There is a reasonable balance of students who are newly arrived (less than 5 years), arrived between 5-10 years ago and those who have been in Australia more than 10 years. 2009, 2014 and 2015 are the most common years of arrival to Australia. The only notable change from 2017 to 2018 was the decrease in the number of students that arrived that year.

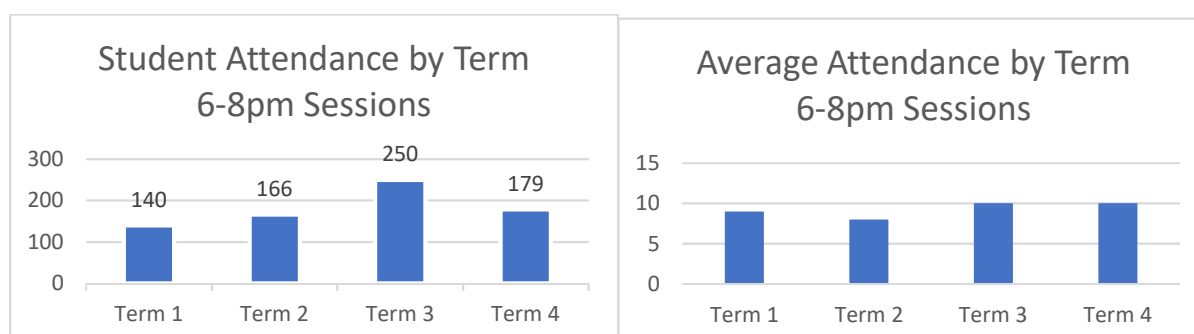
Student Attendance

147 different students attended the 4pm to 6pm Homework Club across 186 sessions held this year. 90 different students attended the Homework Club Late Sessions across 72 sessions held this year. There was a significant rise in the number of different students from 107 in 2016 and 124 in 2017 to 147 in 2018.

Total Attendances by Term

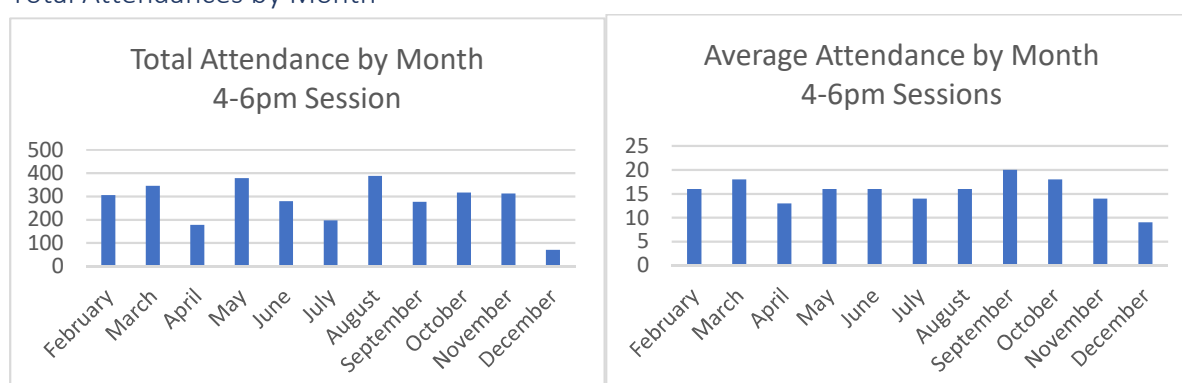


There was a slower start to the year with lower attendance in Term 1, partly explained by the large 2017 Year 12 cohort completing high school. The rise in attendance in Term 3 is explained by new students more frequently attending and Year 12 exams.



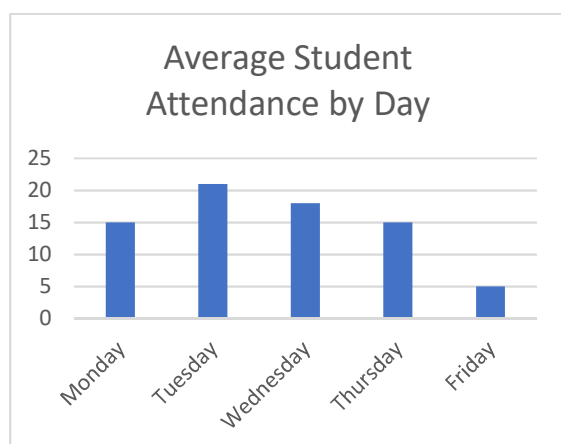
There was a slower than expected start to the Late Session and a much higher than expected attendance in Term 4. Both variations were accounted for by the rise in university and TAFE students attending in 2018.

Total Attendances by Month



There was a significant drop in February attendance when compared to 2017 and much higher attendance in September, October, November and December. This change is mostly accounted for by an increase in university and TAFE students at the end of the year. The dips in attendance in April

and July are explained by school holidays and the high attendance in September was significantly higher than any previous years.



Average Number of Students per 4-6pm Session

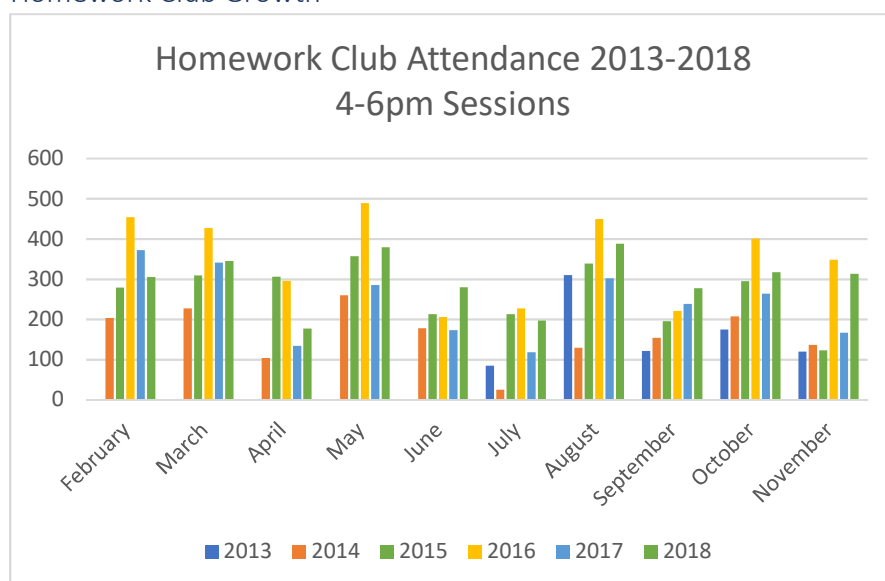
Tuesday and Wednesday were the days with highest attendance, which is consistent with past trends.

Average student attendance on all days dropped from 21 in 2016 to 15 in 2018 (see detailed explanation below in 'Homework Club Growth'). This change is explained by a drop in overall attendance across the year and by changes in student sign-in processes, with students only signing in if they were attending whereas in the past students had signed in and not attended.

Average Number of Students per 6-8pm Session

Late sessions had an average 10 students on both Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, which is significant growth from the 7 students on average attending a session in 2016 and 2017.

Homework Club Growth

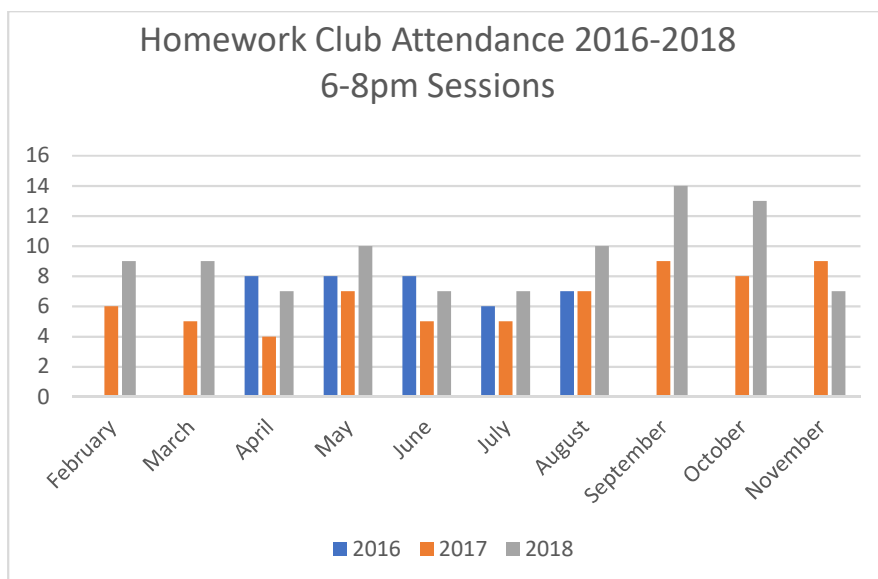


Total Attendance by Year 4-6pm Sessions

2014	1623
2015	2629
2016	3518
2017	2425
2018	3048

The growth from 2017 to 2018 was substantial, with an overall increase of 584 students or 24 per cent. This growth was mostly due to consistency attendance by a core group of 20 students and by increased attendance by university and TAFE students. 2018 recorded the second highest total attendance since Homework Club was founded in 1992.

In interpreting attendance data, changes in attendance sign in processes by students must be considered. The dip in attendance in 2017 is partly accounted for by the change to sign in practice in the middle of 2017 that aimed to correct the practice of students coming to Homework Club only to sign their name but not to actually attend Homework Club.



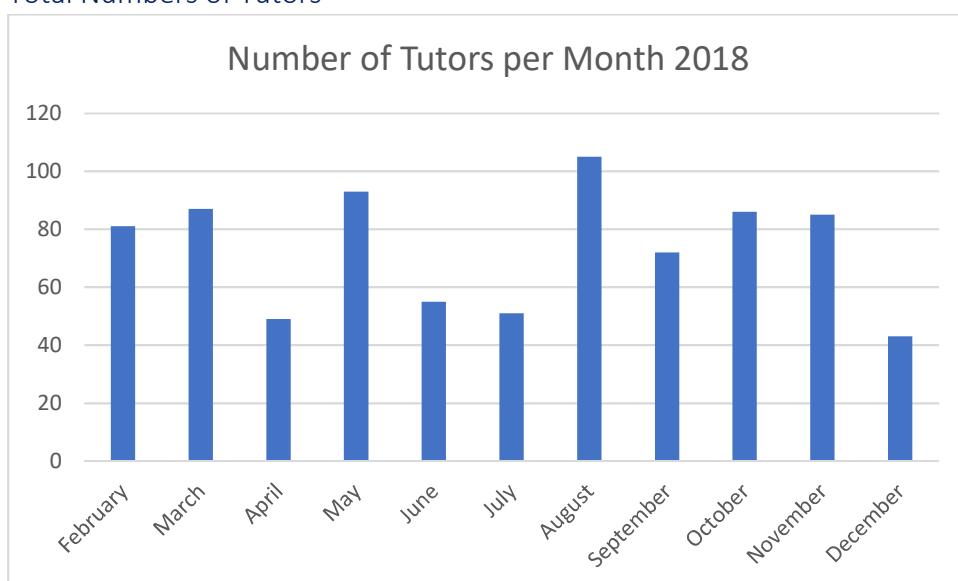
Total Attendance by Year
6-8pm Sessions

2016	189
2017	461
2018	735

There was significant growth in the last sessions in 2018, with an increase of 274 in total attendance or 59 per cent. This growth is explained by the overall increased attendance by university and TAFE students and by the Late Sessions still being relatively new, having only started in the middle of 2016.

Tutor Attendance

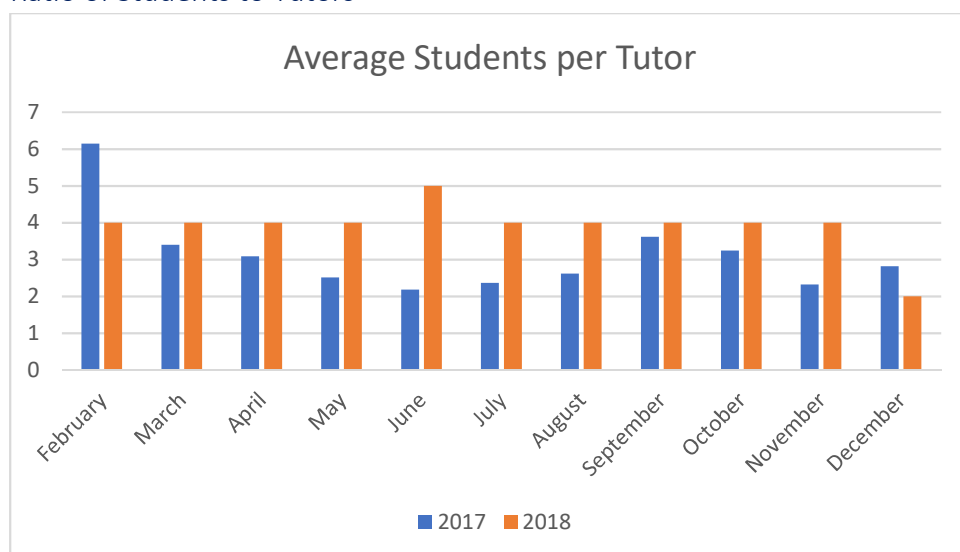
Total Numbers of Tutors



The graph reflects the year starting with a high number of tutors and the dip in the middle of the year is due to both school holidays and university exams.

Retention of tutors in 2018 was very high with 37 of the 46 volunteer tutors at the end of 2017 returning to tutor at the start of 2018.

Ratio of Students to Tutors



The student to tutor ratio was much more consistent in 2018 with no significant fluctuations and a consistent 4 students per tutor. The dip in December was due to unexpected high student attendance for that time of year. Following the first analysis of student to tutor ratios in 2017 it was considered best to have 3 students per tutor and anecdotal evidence throughout 2018 did suggest there was often a need for more tutors, meaning that the conclusion reached in 2017, of 3 students per tutor, was correct.

Key events and changes to the program this year

Term 1

- Study Skills Session for Year 10 to 12 students run by Elevate Education
- Homework Club Support Worker began – as a past Homework Club student and member of the Ethiopian community he provided valuable insight and quickly built relationships with students
- End of Term Pizza Party and science games

Term 2

- Tutor Dinner at the Horn of Africa Ethiopian Restaurant to provide relationship building between tutors and cultural experience.
- First Leadership Workshop in collaboration with Yarra Libraries and Yarra Youth Services with guest speaker Khaled Abdulwahab from hip hop group Diafrix
- Second Leadership Workshop with Akec Chuot, a South Sudanese refugee and AFLW player
- Ramadan dinner for Homework Club students

Term 3

- Snow excursion to Lake Mountain
- Youth Behind the Wheel driver education program for under 25-year olds
- Year 12 Exam Revision Sessions
- End of Term Pizza Party

Term 4

- Middle Years Space Pilot Program – three-week pilot of program to meet needs of 8 to 14-year olds
- End of Year Dinner with students and tutors

Response to 2018 Areas of Improvement

A number of areas for improvement were identified by students, tutors, the HWC Support Worker and the HWC Coordinator as detailed below.

Recommendations

1. Ensuring Homework Club is well-resourced

Actions

- Ensure stationary budget is adequate for needs of Homework Club and stationary is regularly topped up
- Purchase core textbooks for VCE subjects
- Purchase EAL resources to assist students and tutors

Mostly achieved with a wider range of text books and study guides available to students. Well stock stationary throughout the year.

More textbooks still required for specific subjects.

2. Ensuring volunteers are supported to manage challenges

Actions

- Establish routine of two-week, one month and three-month check-ins with new tutors to give them the opportunity to ask questions and raise any issues

Implemented well at start of year but not sustained – it is good practice and should be restarted in 2019

- Update tutor training session to incorporate a greater focus on techniques and tips for tutoring and working across language barriers, strategies for managing various situations with students (including last-minute work and gaps in learning), approaching students and building rapport and social emotional literacy

Partly achieved with tutor dinner training but not sustained.

- Develop a pack of tutor resources (or use existing where possible) for tutors to make use of

Achieved but need to remind tutors and make hardcopies more readily available

- Start quarterly tutor debrief dinners after Homework Club to provide an opportunity for peer-support, debrief with the coordinator and team bonding

Not achieved, and not a priority

- Provide a calendar of training opportunities for tutors and make use to the new online modules through CMY for tutors

Not achieved but should be in place for 2019

3. Holistic support for senior students

Actions

- Identify tutors with skills and interests in providing resume building and job-searching skills.

Not a priority following introduction of Yarra Youth Services Pathways Program

- Book Year 12 students into VCE study skills workshops

Some success, late for some workshops

- Engage Education workshops to be held throughout the year with VCE focus

Two sessions held at beginning of year but others cancelled due to very low attendance

- Develop career events further to possibly include a trade version of the careers conversations event

Not prioritized and not carried. To be explored in 2019

- Continue university visits

Not carried out

- Explore opportunities for group tutoring settings for students doing the same subjects

Not carried out

- Explore options for subject revision sessions over the school holidays

Somewhat successful but with low attendance. To be carried out in 2019

Areas of improvement for 2019

A number of areas for improvement were identified by students, tutors, the HWC Support Worker and the HWC Coordinator as detailed below.

Recommendations

1. Higher ratio of tutors to students
2. More training opportunities for tutors
3. Improve independent study skills of students
4. More resources for students and tutors: more textbooks for tutors and more subject outlines for tutors
5. Increase attendance by boys and newly arrived students

Qualitative Feedback

Students

What is Homework Club doing well?

- 85% of students think they get enough help from tutors (same as 2017)
- 75% of students think there is a good study environment at Homework Club (down from 90% in 2017)
- 90% of students think the tutors are friendly and helpful (same as 2017)
- 95% of students feel supported at the Homework Club (up from 85% in 2017)
- 70% of students think the Homework Club helps them with other things than homework (down from 85% in 2017)
- 90% of students think Homework Club is fun (up from 85% in 2018)
- 95% of students would recommend Homework Club to their friends (up from 85% in 2017)

The main reasons for coming to Homework Club identified by students were:

- Get help with Homework (67%)
- The study space (28%)

Students identified a range of things they liked about the Homework Club including:

- The study environment (51%)
- The food
- The tutors
- Being with friends

Improvements to the Homework Club suggested by students included:

- More tutors
- Reducing noise
- More study spaces
- A separate study space for Year 12 students

Volunteers

Across a range of key indicators, the Homework Club appears to be providing volunteers with effective support:

- 82% of volunteers feel the orientation and training made them feel adequately prepared for tutoring. This is an improvement by almost 20% from the 2017 survey.
- 100% of volunteers feel that they are valued in their role as volunteers. With 75% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing with the statement 'I feel valued as a volunteer'.
- 100% of volunteers feel they are making a positive difference in the lives of vulnerable young people
- 100% of tutors agree or strongly agree that they would recommend volunteering at Homework Club to their friends

Motivations for volunteering

Motivations for volunteering included:

- Supporting or giving back to the community
- Wanting to make a difference to those in need
- Enjoyment and satisfaction of volunteering in a Homework Club
- A desire to help refugee students
- Seeking fulfilling activity
- Complete a university program
- Desire to share knowledge and skills

The best thing about volunteering at HWC

Volunteers identified a range of aspects they enjoyed in the program, with key themes related to connecting with students and satisfaction in seeing students improve. Responses included:

- Making an impact on the students work and helping them to reach their goal for the day.
- Getting to know the students and having a connection with them.
- Getting to know the students and being able to resolve some of their queries in a way that gives them confidence to tackle future problems
- Helping CALD students learn relevant skills when it comes to their assessments and learning so that they can make the most of the educational and career opportunities available to them.
- The impact you are able to have on motivated and vibrant students who may not otherwise have the resources.
- Working with students that genuinely want to learn
- Meeting and working with motivated students who have in many cases have probably had very challenging upbringings - it's inspiring to see.
- Satisfaction in passing on knowledge to eager and grateful learners
- Appreciation of the students and seeing improvement
- Connecting with kids, encouraging them and chatting about their lives - helping them breakthrough and discover their own voices.

Most challenging thing about volunteering at Homework Club

Challenges identified by volunteers included:

- Not doing the students work for them
- The language barrier
- Lack of continuity due to working with different students each week
- Not knowing students learning level and academic background
- Balancing volunteering and work commitments

Ideas on how the volunteer experience could be improved

Volunteers equally favoured three of the options provided in the survey:

- More training opportunities
- More educational resources for student who don't have homework
- More ideas for supporting student from refuge and non-English speaking backgrounds

9% of volunteers selected the option to have more regular emails and no volunteers selected the option for more social activities.