EVALUATION OF THE MOBILE YOUTH VAN CLAYMORE
PROJECT IN NSW

PROJECT REPORT
February 2016

Dr Joanne Orlando
Dr Mohamed Moustakim
# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary** ................................................................................................................. 4

  - Background .......................................................................................................................... 4
  - Scope of this evaluation ...................................................................................................... 4
  - Key points from this evaluation .......................................................................................... 4
  - Aim of this evaluation ......................................................................................................... 4
  - Key findings .......................................................................................................................... 5
  - Recommendations ............................................................................................................... 5

1. **Introduction** ......................................................................................................................... 6

  - Aims ......................................................................................................................................... 6
  - Methodology ........................................................................................................................... 7

  - Design principles .................................................................................................................. 7
  - Components ........................................................................................................................... 7
  - Scope and limitations ............................................................................................................. 7

2. **Program Profile** ............................................................................................................... 9

  - Attendance ............................................................................................................................. 9

  - Unique attendance ............................................................................................................... 9
  - Repeat attendance ............................................................................................................... 10
  - Contextualising attendance at M.Y.van Claymore ............................................................... 10
  - Attendance at M.Y.van events ............................................................................................... 10

3. **Progress towards achievement of objectives** ................................................................ 11

  - Learning from internal review and reports (2013-2015) ..................................................... 11

  - Objective 1: The provision of a safe environment to learn and play ..................................... 11

  - Objective 2: To improve the skills and wellbeing of vulnerable young people through non-formal education and diversionary activities ......................................................... 12

  - Objective 3: To strengthen connections between young people and the community by referring them to available services ............................................................... 14

  - Objective 4: To support young people to access their rights and voice their concerns about the issues that affect them ................................................................. 16

4. **Cost-benefits of the M.Y van project** .................................................................................. 19

  - The social challenges faced by people of Claymore ............................................................ 19

  - Cost of the delivery of the program: efficiency and effectiveness ........................................ 20

  - Aspects of the van that support its cost effectiveness ............................................................. 20

  - Areas for improvement .......................................................................................................... 20

  - Social benefits of the M.Y Van ............................................................................................. 21

  - Community/government connections .................................................................................. 21

  - Localised and empowering strategies and solutions ............................................................... 22

  - Alternative, engaging and safe space for learning ................................................................ 23

  - Increasing resilience of youth .............................................................................................. 24

5. **Recommendations** .............................................................................................................. 25

6. **Background materials reviewed** ....................................................................................... 28

7. **References** .......................................................................................................................... 28

6. **Appendices** ......................................................................................................................... 30

  - Appendix 1: Data for M.Y.van project research report, 2015 ............................................. 30

  - Appendix 2: Unique Attendance .......................................................................................... 31
Executive Summary

Background

The Mobile Youth Van (M.Y.van) project is an initiative of Save the Children Fund (STCF) that provides social, educational and recreational opportunities for young people of Claymore during their leisure time. Claymore is a suburb in south-western Sydney that has been identified as one of the most disadvantaged suburbs in NSW; the Socio Economic Index for Areas rating of relative socio-economic disadvantage for Claymore is 495 (ABS, 2015). It was also described as home to 3,300 of the poorest people in the country in Growing up Poor (Four Corners, 2012) and was included among a list of ‘Red Alert suburbs’ in a research report that highlighted the employment vulnerability index for Australia’s major urban regions (Baum & Mitchell, 2009).

The M.Y.van project was launched in July 2013 in response to research reports and national media that highlighted the lack of suitable and appropriate health and welfare services, education and training, recreational opportunities in the area and the high risks of social exclusion the young people were facing. Since its launch the M.Y.van project has made an important contribution to children and young people by providing opportunities for them to engage in empowering educational, social and recreational activities.

Scope of this evaluation

Since the commencement of the M.Y.van, there has been one internal review (2013) and three end of year reviews (2013, 2014, 2015) conducted to assess the program’s impact on the youth of Claymore. No other external reviews or evaluations have taken place.

This evaluation report has been commissioned by STCF to externally evaluate the M.Y.van project at Claymore. This report combines findings from previous internal and yearly reports with new qualitative data to demonstrate the impact for young people after two years of implementation of the program. This evaluation includes a cost-benefit analysis for current and potential future corporate partners. STCF also anticipate using this evaluation to improve current service provision and scale up the project in other locations across Australia.

Key points from this evaluation

At the time of this evaluation, the M.Y.van project has been running a regular weekly program at Claymore for 2.5 years. All the evidence reviewed in this evaluation points to the significant positive, social impact this project has had on the young people of Claymore and their community. MY van team is working effectively and efficiently to achieve the project objectives. At the launch of the van in Claymore, bullying, low literacy levels, young people’s confidence and difficult relations between young people and their community were dominating issues that negatively impacted on their participation at the van. Over this time, however, our qualitative and quantitative data show a healthy and promising increase in the confidence of the young people, their active participation in creative digital projects and health promotion workshops; and the sense of ownership they have developed towards the program. There is now an obvious change in attitudes, behaviours and sense of pride that the young people feel in themselves and their community.

Aim of this evaluation

This evaluation was conducted by researchers from Western Sydney, University. The aim is to assess outcomes and impact of the MY van project on young people in Claymore and their communities.
Key findings

The M.Y.van project has made praiseworthy progress in working within and towards the achievement of its objectives. The practices and curriculum that have been developed, and that are continually being refined, are very effective in providing a safe and empowering space for the young people of Claymore to learn in a supportive environment. The researchers consider MY Van to be a good model of practice and an excellent example of interventions designed to produce socially just outcomes in disadvantaged locations in Australia.

The most outstanding features of the M.Y.van include:

- Positive engagement with the indigenous community;
- Youth Advisory Committee as an empowering intensive advocacy strategy;
- Leveraging of multi-agency networks;
- Provision of an alternate approach to learning;
- A strategy for empowerment and advocacy in the ways technology is used in the van;
- An effective curriculum that addresses needs of the youth and builds on their strengths;
- A trusted space for young people to play and learn

The van is cost efficient with a current cost per beneficiary of $56.13. This figure has been reduced by 4.86% in the last year. The self-sufficient setup of the van, its diverse appeal, and its wide reach, make it excellent value on a cost per beneficiary basis. The mobility of the van is also conducive to expanding the program beyond its current location. It provides opportunities for working in partnership and attending larger community and youth festivals, which increases reach and is likely to significantly reduce cost per beneficiary in the long run.

Recommendations

The Western Sydney researchers who completed this evaluation have no hesitation in recommending the continuation of this innovative intervention. The key recommendations the evaluation team make for the project to move forward and to enhance the opportunities it is already providing for young people in Claymore include:

- Leveraging the mobility of the M.Y.van so as to explore alternative sites on a peripatetic basis in Claymore;
- Targeting provision for 12-18 year olds with separate program strands;
- Addressing the high-risk time of school holidays by offering structured summer and Easter holiday programs;
- Building on the commendable Youth Advisory Committee initiative by extending this model of good practice to other STCF locations and projects;
- Revising the administration of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) so that it can be used to follow the trajectory of individual young people;
- Extending current multiagency partnerships so as to maximise efficiency of youth provision;
- Refining monitoring and reporting systems in relation to records of attendance, CYRM surveys, and targets set against indicators;
- Refining recording of user characteristics so that they are captured in a more systematic way;
- Using social media to gain and sustain the interest of the older age group in the van activities and build a sense of connectedness with Claymore community;
- Creating a pool of casual youth workers with skills in digital media;
- More detailed anonymised reporting of the referrals in the quarterly reports is needed;
- Greater use of technology to manage user data more effectively, for example attendance, resilience surveys and other user profile features;
- Work towards addressing young people’s concerns about lack of safety in Claymore;
- Extend existing network of participating schools in the Alternative Learning Program.
1. Introduction

The M.Y.van project caters for children living in the highly disadvantaged suburb of Claymore, located in the city of Campbelltown in south-western Sydney. The program delivers a weekly outreach program each Monday afternoon between 3 and 5pm, which consist of creative uses of technology to help young people articulate the issues they are facing, whether at home, school or in the community. This report focuses on evaluating this project – now in its 3rd year – to assess a range of elements in its approach to countering social and economic risk in a region of severe disadvantage in NSW.

The young people of Claymore face social and financial disadvantage that negatively impact on their family life, education, health and employment prospects. Their high risk of social exclusion is well documented in Growing up Poor (ABC, 2012) and in a research report highlighting the employment vulnerability index for Australia’s major urban regions or ‘Red Alert suburbs’ (Centre of Full Employment and Equity, 2009). The program’s commencement in July 2012 was prompted by a growing realisation of the significant risk the young people of Claymore were experiencing in terms of disengagement from positive social connections, peers and support networks and the lamentable scarcity of youth organisations offering structured social and recreational activities to support them. The M.Y.van filled a significant gap and one year later in July 2013 established a weekly outreach program.

The aim of the project is to divert young people from anti-social behaviour and also offer a refuge from adversity or instability in their lives. The van is equipped with the latest digital and multi-media equipment, musical equipment, sporting equipment and health promotion materials on iPads that are used in the provision of creative arts workshops which explore health promotion issues around mental and physical health, community safety, conflict resolution, substance misuse, nutrition, resilience and connectedness in a safe and non-confronting environment. The M.Y.van Claymore project has the following objectives:

1. To provide a safe place for young people to learn and play each week in Claymore.
2. To improve the skills and wellbeing of vulnerable young people through non-formal education and diversionary activities.
3. To strengthen connections between young people and the community by referring them to available services.
4. To support young people to access their rights and voice their concerns about the issues that affect them.

Since its commencement, regular tri-monthly quarterly reports have been undertaken by STCF to track changes and assess the program’s impact on the youth of Claymore. The most recent in December 2015 concluded that in spite of many challenges the program provided young people with the opportunity to feel empowered that they would have been highly unlikely to achieve had they not attended the van. It also pointed to the vital importance of wellbeing support, and supportive relationships in general. The findings of this evaluation show that good progress was made in these areas, with a promising long-term positive contribution that the project can make to the youth of Claymore and those in other similar highly disadvantaged areas.

Aims

This report presents the findings from the 2015 external evaluation. The evaluation addresses the following specific questions:

- What progress has been made towards achieving the key objectives of the project?
- What role has digital media played in achieving the key objectives of the project?
• What are the project’s most significant outcomes for children to date?
• What effect did the program’s activities have on the community and what would be the impact if Save the Children were not delivering the M.Y.van project to young people in Claymore?
• What are the cost savings to government of operating a Mobile Youth Service (cost-benefit analysis)?
• What is the potential for the continuation of project benefits beyond the project timeframe?
• What role has the M.Y.van project played in establishing and expanding Save the Children youth development work in the Campbelltown area? What role, therefore, could M.Y.van play in expanding Save the Children’s youth Development work in NSW?
• What impact has the M.Y.van project had in providing youth employment (such as the Claymore Youth Advisory Committee / Junior Mobile Youth Van Youth Workers)?

Methodology

Design principles
Since 2013 a series of internal evaluations have informed the development and refinement of the M.Y.van Claymore project. These evaluations have also reflected a closer and dynamic understanding of the needs of the youth of Claymore, as well as shifts in understandings and policy concerned with mitigating disengagement and enhancing educational prospects for young people. The approach to this 2015 evaluation incorporated the following activities:

• Input from STCF management on the evaluation design
• Formal and informal consultations with program staff on operations and curriculum
• Primary data from staff
• Primary data from young people attending the program
• Primary data from those who do not attend the program but are affected by it: parents, agencies that STCF collaborate with in Claymore
• Analyses of a wide range of data, captured in M.Y.van Claymore STCF internal accountability processes and procedures.

The research design is informed by an interpretive approach that values highly the personal and educational experiences of the young participants, as well as the insights of frontline and coordination staff.

Components
Data collection included semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observation visits, and data analysis. These are detailed in Table 1, page 29.

All efforts were made during the selection process to ensure that the interviewees formed a representative sample of the program community.

The questions asked during interviews and focus groups, aspects of the program that were observed and analysis of all data was informed by five specific themes. These themes and their sub areas are detailed in Table 2, page 29.

Scope and limitations
Exclusions
Fewer children aged 14-18 years were attending the van during the data collection period in November 2015, as a result their views are under represented in this evaluation. Generally, there is limited interaction between the parents and the youth workers at the M.Y.van and, as a result, their views are also under represented. The time of year the data collection took place was also a busy
end of the year time for youth agencies and therefore partner organisations are also under represented.

Ethics
The Western Sydney University Ethics Committee approved the evaluation procedures. All interviewees were provided with a plain language statement about the study, and consent was sought for their participation. These documents outlined the research aims as well as the prospective participants’ rights to confidentiality, anonymity and access to the final report.
2. Program Profile

Attendance

In 2015 the M.Y.van catered for 239 young people. The tables, graphs in the appendices show M.Y.van Claymore unique and repeat attendance by user characteristics, such as age, gender and cultural group. The sources of attendance data include M.Y.van end of year report for 2013, 2014, 2015 and four M.Y.van quarterly reports 2015. Although data from 2013 and 2014 are used for general attendance and program profile comparisons over the past 3 years, M.Y.van final and quarterly report 2015 have provided comparatively more comprehensive data and have enabled closer examination and analysis.

Unique attendance

M.Y.van - Claymore unique attendance by gender during years 2013, 2014 and 2015 is shown in Graphs 1 and 2, and Table 3, page 30. Unique attendance relates to when an individual is only counted as having attended the M.Y.van once during the term regardless of the number of times they actually attended during the term.

As shown in table 3, page 30, there has been a sharp increase in unique attendance over the past 3 years. The number of young people taking up the M.Y. van provision went up by nearly 47% between 2013 and 2014. It then jumped a further 74% between 2014 and 2015. However, unique attendance by age by gender shows a consistently higher attendance by males compared to their female counterparts over the past 3 years. The M.Y.van achieved a total of 239 attendance over four terms in 2015, including 135 male and 104 female, a 67% increase in the number of young women participating in the activities compared to 2014. The steadily high increase in unique and repeat attendance is evidence that the young people of Claymore identify the M.Y.van as a valuable contribution to their community and one that they want to be part of.

During one field observation, the mobile feature of the van was leveraged and the van was relocated to the heart of the Claymore housing estate. This led to a large number of new youth to discover the van and engage with the project. It also led to greater engagement with parents, and a greater participation by girls and young women. As discussed more fully in the recommendations, a strategy to increase participation by young women may include moving the van closer to Claymore housing estates on occasions, for example, once a month or during key events and festivals.

M.Y.van quarterly reports 2015 allowed closer examination of attendance data as it included more differentiated attendance records. Table 5 and graph 2 in page 31 provide detailed unique attendance data in Claymore in 2015 and show that 7 to 11 year olds constitute the largest group of participants in M.Y.van, followed by 12 to 18 year olds. The newly refined data recording systems, as used in the 2015 quarterly reports, have allowed more detailed analysis of attendance.

Unique attendance by cultural group

Attendance records captured in the signing-in sheets and quarterly reports, consistently show high levels of participation by children and young people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the M.Y.van activities. Data outlined in table 7 and graph 4, page 33 rely on young people’s self-identification rather than any predefined ethnic or cultural group classifications, hence the diversity of user responses. We have kept the ethnic grouping as the young people have self-defined.
Repeat attendance

Repeat attendance by age group & by gender
In most instances an individual has attended the M.Y.van on more than one occasion. Repeat attendance therefore refers to all the visits made by an individual male or female to M.Y.van during a term. However, it was difficult to attribute repeat attendance figures to individual projects organised by M.Y.van staff in the end of year report 2013 and M.Y.van summary 2014. For example, repeat attendance data captured in the 2013 report shows that a total of 2206 visits were made to M.Y.van. However, while 83 young people participated in 7 weekly sessions, with 50 males representing 60 per cent and 33 females representing 40 per cent, it was not clear how many repeat attendances were made during 2013 by both males and females. Similarly, while 2200 young people aged 8 to 18 participated in activities organised by M.Y.van around NSW, 208 of these participated in weekly sessions in Claymore and it was not clear how many repeat visits they made to the van. In contrast, table 5 and graph 3, page 31, show detailed attendance data for repeat attendance. Table 6, page 32 also shows repeat attendance by location in 2015.

Contextualising attendance at M.Y.van Claymore
The M.Y. van is located in Claymore on Monday afternoon each week, however it is also located in Glebe and Woolloomooloo on other weeknights offering youth outreach programs. The table on page 32 shows the total number of attendance by location. As the table shows, M.Y.van Claymore project (including the Scratch and Alternative Education projects) attracts a considerably large number of participants compared with the other locations.

Attendance at M.Y.van events
In addition, the M.Y.van Claymore organised a series of high profile events during the year 2015, attracting a total of 283 young people as shown in Table 8, graph 5, page 34. It is clear from the diversity of these events and their popularity among young people, that they can attract large numbers of young people.
3. Progress towards achievement of objectives

Learning from internal review and reports (2013-2015)

- Young people in Claymore have gravitated towards the M.Y.van because of the unique and engaging features of the programs. There are no other services offering outreach programs with access to up to date technology for young people.
- All young people attending the van face significant challenges in their lives, and there are insufficient community resources to support them.
- When introduced to the smaller, more intimate M.Y.van environment, young people consistently describe a sense of security and acceptance. All youth identify staff at the van as supportive and trustworthy adults in their life.

In common with previous internal reviews and reports, most of the 2015 cohort of young people had backgrounds marked by instability and often severe hardship. The following section details how the van is operating to make a positive contribution to their lives. The explanation is presented in terms of the four objectives of the van.

Objective 1: The provision of a safe environment to learn and play

The M.Y. van project provides a physically and emotionally secure environment with a subtle mix of education and play, to support the health and wellbeing of the young people in Claymore. This approach is proving to be very successful with all stakeholders, particularly with attendees who have highlighted it to be an empowering and fun place to learn.

The van’s education program centres on a weekly health or advocacy topic that connects with the needs of the young people and their Claymore community. We have identified this as a significant outcome of the project and this is discussed further in the report. Finding out what is important to them comes from a continued community consultation process, as well as ongoing conversations and surveys with children. This data is then developed into a weekly health topic, which is explored via a creative digital activity. The weekly activities have also led to larger projects, which the Claymore community have embraced. One youth worker explained:

‘We found out that rubbish was an issue...this led to the development of a curriculum around rubbish and then the successful clean up campaigns.... Also information sessions about recycling... It allowed the van to have an impact on the attendees but also the community more broadly’.

The weekly program is pre-planned but sensitive to the needs of the attendees and what is going on privately in the community. The program is adjusted accordingly. There is also time within a normal two-hour engagement period for the young people to have free time. Young people spoke very favourably of the flexibility in the program as they had the opportunity to pursue their interests with photography, music and other digital creative forms of expression. As one attendee stated:

‘I like coming here because it has lots of stuff... (I like) Going on the computers... (for) songs... pictures. I take photos and print them... I get to meet some people that I haven’t met before - -
and you get to take photos with friends and you get to take them home... I get to show my mum - I got a couple of them. She goes, oh, that’s good. I’ve got a couple’. 

All children and parents however stated that Claymore was unsafe. Part of the lack of safety relates to tense relationships and negative personal networks. Part of the safe space the van offers is in the numbers of children they aim to work with and the relationships that can develop with the youth as a result. Approximately 20 children attend the van each week. As the attendance patterns in section 2 (Program Profile) indicate some are regular visitors but others visit more sporadically. This smaller group size provides ample opportunity for youth workers to spend one on one time with each attendee. The atmosphere is focused yet relaxed and this allows for a deeper impact. It allows ample time to share, for children to tell their stories and, for youth workers to pursue areas of need. For example, when chatting to youth worker one new attendee (aged approximately 15 years) stated that he was having trouble telling the time and this was negatively impacting on him getting to school on time. The youth worker pursued this need and, after some discussion with the chid, began teaching him how to read time. It was a one-on-one learning experience and an invaluable opportunity for the young person. Safety at the van is often is expressed as time for the young people and this promotes a sense of belonging, self-esteem and enhances the possibility for deep learning.

The van has a regular location, however it is close to the liquor store and also in a large, public area of land. Parents and stakeholders expressed concern at the location and that an alternative location, away from alcohol and mischievous park activity, would be better.

Aspects working well: Curriculum content connects with needs of young people and their communities; opportunities to learn through virtual as well as real life play; young people are encouraged to learn at their own pace and to pursue their interests using cutting edge technology

Areas for improvement: A perception of lack of safety among the young people and their parents regarding the regular location of the MY Van, particularly in the winter months, due to poor lighting.

Objective 2: To improve the skills and wellbeing of vulnerable young people through non-formal education and diversionary activities

As noted earlier in this report, the children and young people in Claymore face many challenges and uncertainties resulting from living in one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Greater Western Sydney. The M.Y. van staff demonstrated a deep understanding and sensitivity to these challenges and made the young people feel valued and welcome.

During observation visits, the researchers observed snapshots of the non-formal and diversionary interventions organised by staff at the M.Y.van project. A music workshop was observed one afternoon that began with a youth worker talking about how childhood and children’s rights were experienced differently around the world. The group then proceeded to write lyrics based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and within 10 minutes, they were all rapping, with one of the young people displaying exceptional Beatboxing skills, which surprised everyone. The observers were subsequently informed by the youth worker that this young man had been withdrawn and uncommunicative due to personal family difficulties, but his newly discovered beatboxing and rapping talents shone through as he sang ‘I’ve got rights! I’ve got child’s rights!’
As demonstrated in the above description M.Y.van staff encourage critical awareness of the young people’s rights to be heard, to make informed decisions about issues that affect their lives, and to be able to make a positive contribution to their environment and the communities in which they live.

Central to the success of the M.Y.van Claymore project is the flexible and compassionate non-formal pedagogic approach adopted by the youth workers to engage in interactions and relationships with vulnerable children and young people. The non-formal approach they use is characterised by a commitment to promoting young people’s active participation in decision-making and to making a positive difference in young people’s lives. Their approach is holistic and person centred. For example, a workshop on audio speaker design can turn into a safe space to talk about young people’s hopes, fears and desires.

Providing health promotion and referrals was identified by M.Y.van staff in the Internal Review 2013 conducted by Save the Children as one of the deliverables that was partially not met. However, there is no shortage of health promotion and information materials at the M.Y.van and records from the 2015 report shows that there has been a significant improvement in this area. As table 9, page 34 indicates, a total of 120 referrals were made by community and government partners and 15 referrals were made from other agencies. It also shows that most of the referrals related to mental health, grief and trauma and other health, 46 and 21 respectively. This was followed by child protection issues, 24, then safety, education and training and employment. The number of referrals to M.Y.van has been comparatively low and has solely focused on education and training.

Since the Internal Review staff have invited health specialists to run workshops at the van and plans were underway to involve an Aboriginal health organisation. However, few referrals to secondary health agencies had been made and while pointing out that it was challenging to encourage children and young people, particularly 8 to 12 year olds in Claymore, to request referrals where appropriate, a youth worker said:

‘...last time we had someone from New South Wales Department of Health who ran a dental hygiene workshop’. However, one child who disclosed that he had been bullied was referred to his school. A member of staff explained:

‘Because a lot of that bullying or trouble with learning happens at school so we have referred to Claymore public school to get a young person into counselling after what they disclosed to us’.

Promoting health and wellbeing awareness-raising messages are a recurring feature in the program activities. For example, the BBQs frequently organised by the project not only promote a sense of belonging among children and young people by creating a familiar and safe place where they feel at home, they also provide an opportunity to talk about healthy eating. As one Youth Worker pointed out:

‘...when they’re hungry the first thing they think of is either fast food - so now with that we provide - as a van we provide the health. We’re also developing their skills in cooking, learning to barbecue, [and] they feel that they can be leaders amongst themselves and they take on the duties’ (Youth worker).

Ordinary activities such as organising BBQs can provide opportunities for health awareness raising messages while also creating a sense of belonging in a safe and familiar environment. An example of this was observed during one of the visits to M.Y.van. As they left school the young people came straight to the Van. They knew that the staff had planned to organise a BBQ. Under the supervision
of a youth worker, five young people were busy preparing the food while they talked about their day at school. They also talked about the ingredients used and the harmful effects of eating saturated fats to the body. It was clear that they felt at home and there was a sense of good teamwork in their interactions with the staff and one another. One of the young people talked about how he appreciated the warm and friendly atmosphere at the Van. He said:

‘I feel at home when I come here because it seems just like seeing the kids play, like seeing your little brother or little sister playing’ (Attendee, aged 16).

While the provision of referrals is a laudable desired outcome, it is predicated on building trusting relationships between the young people and the youth workers and the example given above shows that the staff at the M.Y.van project have made progress in achieving this. However, building enduring relationships of trust and mutual respect requires persistence and patience and is likely to take a considerable time, particularly given that the M.Y.van only operates in Claymore once a week. It is expected that, given time, the young people are more likely to talk to youth workers about sensitive issues in their lives and request appropriate referrals.

**Aspects working well:** Activities are engaging and promoting young people’s active decision making, informal pedagogic approach supports deeper conversation with youth about important issues in their lives.

**Areas for improvement:** Health related referrals, mental health in particular account for more than 50% of all referrals made in 2015, more detailed anonymised reporting of the referrals and any follow-up actions to provide support for young people as part of the MY Van program of activities.

**Objective 3: To strengthen connections between young people and the community by referring them to available services**

There is a paucity of youth service provision in Claymore. With the exception of the Benevolent Society funded youth club that offers very limited access to recreational activities on a drop in basis. This is particularly important given the recurring concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour in the participants’ descriptions of their experiences of their neighbourhood.

Youth workers and young people expressed serious concerns about the lack of safety and the considerable risks associated with high levels of crime to the children and young people in Claymore. Some of their concerns about lack of safety in Claymore included:

‘I see people at night, walking up and down my street smashing bottles and what not’ (Attendee aged 17).

A M.Y.van youth worker echoed these concerns when she said:

‘Night time it’s not safe in Claymore. It’s a very high crime area. If you go into those shops .... if you sit outside the newsagent in Claymore for more than 15 minutes for sure you’ll see some behaviour that you wish you didn’t see’ (Youth worker).

One of the Community Development Workers from the Benevolent Society also pointed to the seriousness of the risks associated with early school leaving for a significant group of young people in Claymore. She said:
‘It’s basically all the youth that are sitting under the bridge, you know, having a shot of ice that haven’t been engaged in education for four or five years and they’re only 15. Because there’s a lot of them out there’ (Community Development Worker, Benevolent society).

However, we also found countervailing evidence of a strong sense of community among young people, youth workers and stakeholders we interviewed that was expressed in a desire to make a difference to the lives of children and young people in the Claymore. A youth worker said:

‘My feelings about Claymore change week to week, they can. The strong sense of community is really unlike a lot of places I’ve worked in’ (Youth worker, M.Y.van).

The formation of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is viewed by all participants in this evaluation as a success story and poignantly highlights the significant contribution that M.Y.van has made in terms of fostering the engagement of young people in their local community through the provision of opportunities for them to undertake work experience and employment on the M.Y.van.

Young people were given an invaluable experience in the selection and recruitment process involved in securing employment. During the focus group they described how they were personally transformed by the opportunity to be part of the YAC and to be able to contribute to the design and delivery of M.Y.van activities. A young man said:

‘Well I’ve definitely learnt more communication skills and I have built on my confidence. Before I started working here, I was basically antisocial. I wouldn’t really talk much...but ever since I started working here, it’s just gotten a lot better for me. I’ve learnt how to speak better. Also learnt how to definitely build my confidence and encourage myself and have that self-esteem’ (Male YAC member).

Having paid employment at an early age is particularly significant in a socio-economically disadvantaged area such as Claymore. As a youth worker pointed out, ‘for some of them they may be the only one working in their family’ (Youth worker, M.Y.van).

Additionally, being part of the M.Y.van team provides YAC members with the resources and structure through which to make a difference in their community, while acting as positive and accessible role models for the children and young people they work with. For the M.Y.van, the advantages of having local junior youth workers provides unique insights into the insider knowledge and lived experiences of the young people of Claymore. This in turn has enabled the M.Y.van staff to deploy responsive youth provision that meets identified needs and strengthens connections between young people and their community.

### Aspects working well:

Multiagency partnerships have culminated in successful joint initiatives for young people and the wider Claymore community; M.Y. van programs, such as YAC model, help foster a strong sense of community among young people and a desire to make a difference in the Claymore community.

### Areas for improvement:

M.Y.van could devise programs aimed at addressing young people’s concerns about lack of safety associated with high levels of crime in Claymore.
Objective 4: To support young people to access their rights and voice their concerns about the issues that affect them

Advocacy for the rights and voices of children is a priority for the M.Y. van project. This commitment permeates all aspects of the van’s activities, with a particular focus on ensuring young people have the knowledge, confidence and know-how to create positive change in their own lives as well as in the lives of other young people.

The van incorporates several strategies to foster this priority. This includes creating a trusting environment, which empowers van attendees to share their stories with peers, staff and their community. The focus on creativity in the curriculum is another layer, which encourages a sharing of ideas and stories. As one youth workers states:

‘Each creative activity is structured so that children can express themselves and find the ways to communicate what’s important to them… whether it’s through rapping or whether it’s through music or graphics or speaking or whatever we do that’s a really important core value’.

Voice is encouraged in a democratic environment when one has choice. For this reason young people are given choice to pursue their interests at the van; this includes the opportunity to use the technology equipment or to pursue new learning in ways that personally connect with their interests and needs. Staff at the van explained that the attendees had serious anger issues and as a result their school life was unhappy, often with consistent behaviour management issues. The Van’s focus on choice, personal expression and respect for children gives attendees the understanding that it is a ‘safe environment’. As one youth worker explains:

‘When they consecutively come it means yes they trust us. They believe in us…. It fosters changing their perceptions about teachers and learning and themselves’.

There is however hesitancy expressed by staff at the younger age of the attendees at the Claymore Van:

‘Based on what I see and I believe the work is very different in [unclear] with the van. It’s just like mobile kiddies van’ (Benevolent society staff member).

The development of YAC initiative is a very positive intensive advocacy strategy run by the M.Y.van that aims to nurture young people to be youth leaders in Claymore. As one YAC aptly stated: ‘We are the voice of the young people’. The young workers are regularly asked to voice their concerns and then supported to take action to contribute to positive change. They work with the school, council, the youth centre staff, and with the young people who attend the van. The program’s recent ‘Clean up Claymore’ campaign was initiated by this process. In a focused conversation with youth workers, the YACs identified their concern about the high levels of rubbish in Claymore. They then surveyed around 50 locals who confirmed it to be an issue for the broader community as well. This information was actioned into a process of change and the YACs successfully applied for a grant to address the situation. The YACs’ development of a manifesto that was presented to Federal ministers in ACT is a similarly impressive opportunity for these young people to voice their concerns and act on their rights. The intention of this process was to advocate for other young people that don’t have that same access to government or similar groups that can make change.

The YACs speak with undeniable pride in their role, and their high attendance rate and commitment to their work is evidence of this. This strategy is also having significant long-term impact on these young people.
The M.Y.van’s commitment to children accessing their rights and voicing their concerns is a standout feature of the project, positively contributing to the lives of children in the short and long terms.

**Aspects working well:** A trusting environment has been established in the van which empowers young people to share their stories; YAC is a very positive intensive advocacy strategy.

**Areas for improvement:** Consider providing differentiated sessions for different age groups in order to maximise the take-up of M.Y.van provision by older age groups.

### The Role of Digital Media

Technology as a central feature of the M. Y.van greatly supports meeting the project’s objectives. The program offers state of the art digital equipment and relevant technologies that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have little or no access to, which includes: iPads, a printer, laptops, and digital music equipment. The weekly program has two focuses: first, the delivery of health promotion content via creative digital activities. These activities focus on supporting the attendees to find their voice, communicate what’s important to them, and to be able to effect change in their world. Recent activities have included storyboarding and creating a short film about crime in their neighbourhood, and creating a rap based on children’s rights. A second focus is time to pursue their interests using technology.

The programs are creative and demonstrate a sound and innovative understanding of digital media and the needs and interests of children. Observations of van activities show children to be consistently engaged in the activities. This is well supported by attendees who consider the use of technology at the van to be fun and relevant to their lives. Staff stated an important benefit of their engagement was that it opened spaces for relationship building, further learning and advocacy. It opens up opportunities for them to tell their story:

> ‘We give them some pointers on how to use the equipment, but actually to get their hands on that kind of gear is not common. With every activity that is your entry point into conversations, whatever topic it is for the day.’ (Juliet, M.Y.van worker)

Children in Claymore generally do not have access to technology or the internet at home or in public spaces. This lack of opportunity is a concern for van attendees because they consider developing good technological skills to be a priority and feel they are missing out. Children expressed that a lack of access delayed their technological skills as well as their confidence and learning at school:

> ‘(At the van) I’ll play a game or we sit down and talk with them. I have trouble getting on (at school), because I don’t use it that much and it’s very hard for me’ (regular male attendee).

Attendees stated that the informal opportunities to use a range of equipment to play and learn, coupled with the staff’s expertise and one-on-one guidance, provided a safe and energising space to develop their technological capabilities. Children use the van’s technology to complete homework, which importantly provides a leeway to keep up with school expectations.

Benchmarking of the attendees’ technology skills show that many have consistently improved their knowledge of computer and photographic processes since attending the van. Many young people even displayed tendencies for peer supported learning, with older participants explaining digital processes to less experienced participants. Coding workshops run by STCF at the local school
enhances this approach. The van attendees (and their parents) are proud of their achievements and are motivated by the possibilities their digital skills open up for their future careers.

Staff state that the first big hurdle for the young people of Claymore is actually getting them to engage in anything. The attendees explained that the opportunity to use technology on a first visit (instead of having a conversation with a youth worker) is very appealing and a less confronting experience for the young people. That initial visit then provides the opportunity for staff to strengthen connections between young people and the community by referring them to available services.

There is an overarching strategy for empowerment and advocacy in the ways technology is used in the van. Freedom to use technology to learn and pursue interests, the employment of staff with high technology expertise, plus the availability of good quality technology allows priority to shift away from fixing technology, and uncertainty of how to engage and teach young people with technology. It importantly facilitates shifting children away from simply being consumers of technology to using technology to create, communicate with and to empower themselves in the future.

There is enormous scope for using technology to support understanding the young people who attend the van however technology appears to be used minimally for these aspects. Using the iPads to track attendance, to conduct resilience surveys so that it supported understanding the history and trajectory of young people is an important consideration for future use of technology. This idea is explained more fully in the recommendations section of this report.

Aspects working well: Creative uses of technology which the young people enjoy and want to engage with.

Areas for improvement: Greater use of technology to support the administrative aspects of the project.
4. Cost-benefits of the M.Y van project

Effective early interventions that partially remediate the effects of adverse environments can reverse some of the harm of disadvantage, benefitting not only the children themselves, but also their community, and society at large. The following costs-benefits analysis of the M.Y van project evaluates how effective the van project is in cutting through the social deprivation that characterises Claymore, and increasing the career and life opportunities of the young people. The costs-benefits analysis is considered from two perspectives:

a) The costs associated with the project
b) The social return on investment that take into account benefits (and costs) to society, in addition to financial benefits (and costs).

The social challenges faced by people of Claymore

Suburbs such as Claymore, which bear a disproportionately high level of disadvantage, experience particular social issues that place children at risk of social and economic failure (Jesuit & Catholic social services, 2015). Compared to the rest of NSW, those living in the most disadvantaged postcodes such as Claymore are:

- 3.6 times as likely to have spent time in prison.
- More than 3 times as likely to be experiencing long term unemployment.
- Nearly 3 times more likely to have a low level of education and/or have suffered domestic violence.
- Twice as likely to have a disability or significant mental health problem.

More than two-thirds of such communities record criminal convictions; over 60% record high levels of unemployment; and 60% of those living in such areas state that family violence is a major issue.

Sustained social deprivation comes at an immense economic cost to the government and for this reason, on productivity grounds, it makes sense to invest in young children from disadvantaged environments (Heckman & Masterov, 2007. For example, figures regarding youth detention indicate that to keep children in community-based supervision in South Australia costs an average day of $73 per day, while the cost per day, per young person subject to detention-based supervision in South Australia was $1000.

Indigenous youth are over represented in the M.Y.van, constituting the highest membership across all ethnic and cultural groups. The economic costs to the government are exacerbated with the Indigenous population who experience even higher rates of social challenges. Young people from Indigenous communities are significantly more vulnerable to ‘constant and consistent’ (Gray & Beresford, 2008, p. 197) inequality in all areas of life compared to non-Indigenous (NI) Australians, as evidenced by data relating to:

- Life expectancy (<17.2yrs; unemployment rates (>3.2%)
- Weekly household income (<$200)
- Suicide rates ( (I) 12 – 36 / (NI) 11 – 16 deaths / 100000)
- Education (School attendance, learning outcomes on Benchmark measures)
Cost of the delivery of the program: efficiency and effectiveness

Given the limited financial resources in the early intervention space, one measure of success relates to how efficiently a program can work to leverage the budgets they have available. The following section details the budget the M.Y.van work with and costs per beneficiary. It is evident that the M.Y.van has decreased its costs per beneficiary over the past two years.

Costs per beneficiary

The current cost per beneficiary for the M.Y.van Claymore is $56.13. This figure is based on the program costs for 1 x 2 hour session per week (Monday 3–5pm) for 4 X 10 week terms each year; it does not include the costs for the team leader or for depreciation of the van. The Tables 12 and 13 on page 38 give costs per beneficiary for each of the M.Y.van programs. As the tables show, the cost per beneficiary has decreased by 4.86 % since 2013. The decreased cost indicates that the M.Y. van is managed efficiently and the increasing take-up of its diverse programs is set to improve efficiency further. As highlighted in the recommendations section of this report, maximising the number of high profile events organised by MY Van is likely to reduce costs and offset additional expenditure incurred as a result of resource intensive interventions.

Aspects of the van that support its cost effectiveness

The mobile aspect of the van is a significant contributor to the cost effectiveness of the project. This has numerous advantages for running the program, ensuring the program remains close to the needs of the community and working with other agencies. The mobile aspect of the van has several advantages:

- The M.Y.van, due to its self-sufficient set up and diverse appeal has a large reach, which makes it very good value on a cost per beneficiary scale.
- The van can easily shift locations so that it can remain close to the locations that have the greatest need at the time. Trialling of new locations is an important possibility.
- The van does not bear the costs of a fixed building and location.
- It has greater scope for multi-agency networking. This supports enhanced opportunities for working in partnership, which is conducive to sharing/cutting costs.
- The program can increase attend at large community/youth festivals, which increases reach and will improve cost per beneficiary figures.

It is important to note that the M.Y.van is 100% externally funded through Corporates. This is beneficial as it allows for innovation and addressing immediate needs. This is in contrast to the at times lengthy process associated with government funding, which can lead to the delivery of outdated or generalised strategies, which do not necessarily meet the needs of that specific location.

Areas for improvement

A significant cost for the van is staff that can utilise the technology in a way that engages and supports the youth. Creating a casual pool of technologically capable staff and training them in digital media workshop facilitation will remove the need to use specialist (expensive) facilitators. There is also an argument for creating workshops, which do not rely so heavily on specialist facilitators. However, the technological aspect of the van is highly important in attracting youth and having them attend regularly. Any additional workshops should not replace those that are technologically based.
Social benefits of the M.Y Van

The M.Y.van is an innovative project that uses a new approach to early intervention. There is an urgent call in the literature for new approach to early intervention projects that target the small number of communities that experience persistent and entrenched disadvantage such as Claymore. This new approach is characterised by:

- Sustained and long-term commitment to change.
- Addressing economic and social disadvantage at the individual and community level.
- Developing local solutions that bring the community, business and government together.
- Integrating government services to support local solutions and effectively drive change.

The objectives and curriculum of the M.Y.van characterises these four features. Table 11, page 37 summarises what the evaluation team identify to be the most significant outcomes of the project in terms of these features. These can be more broadly categorised as Community and government relationships, and an alternative, engaging and safe space for learning. A further explanation of each significant outcome in terms of the four characteristics is outlined below.

Community/government connections

Since its launch in Claymore, the M.Y. van has made a significant contribution to addressing some of the challenges faced by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people and their communities in Claymore through establishing multiagency partnerships with a range of voluntary and statutory organisations, such as MTC Australia, White Lion, Mission Australia, the Benevolent Society and the Aboriginal organisation Muru Nanga Mai.

Positive engagement with the indigenous community: Of particular note is the high level of positive engagement with the Indigenous community. As the unique attendance by ethnic and cultural group outlined in table 7, graph 4, page 33 shows, the number of young people who identified as being of Indigenous heritage are well represented compared to other groups. This is a major achievement given widespread low representation by this group in the take-up of youth service provision and attests to the MY Van youth workers’ compassionate approach that is underpinned by acute sensitivity to the marginalising effects of poverty and a commitment to equity and social justice. The partnership with Muru Nanga Mai has led to a joint initiative in health promotion that would not have taken place without the leadership of the M.Y.van staff. The continuation and perhaps expansion of the M.Y.van provision in Claymore is therefore crucial to meeting the complex needs of Indigenous young people in Claymore and their communities.

Leveraging networks: Multiagency networking is an important plank of the M.Y.van strategic development plan and these partnerships have led to the design and implementation of innovative joint initiatives, including Ramps 2 Real Skateboarding workshops on Tuesday and health promotion on Wednesday, which attracted favourable feedback from the children, young people and their parents. Some of M.Y.van program activities are specifically designed to harness the strong sense of community in Claymore by drawing on an extensive multiagency network to further strengthen relationships between young people and their community. A Youth Worker said:

‘In Claymore we've certainly worked with a whole multitude of agencies, both in terms of having agencies, there delivering their own thing and we're delivering our own thing and we're referring young people across’ (Youth worker M.Y.van).
Localised and empowering strategies and solutions

The M.Y.van offers an inclusive program model that builds relationships with young people and the Claymore community to offer unique support in a safe and empowering environment.

**YACS as an intensive advocacy strategy:** The formation of the Youth Advisory Committee is one of the most significant achievements of M.Y.van. It constitutes an educative process, which allows young people to earn while they learn. The application/interview process gave them the opportunity to think about the kinds of dispositions, demeanor and communication skills that are essential to effective presentation skills. The induction training for junior youth workers gave the young people further insights into a professional working environment including the opportunity to shadow senior members of staff who modeled ethical and professional youth work practice through providing them with mentoring and guidance.

For some of the young people who were successful in securing paid junior youth worker roles, this was an achievement of the highest order as they were the only members in their families to be in paid employment.

Being part of the M.Y.van team provides YAC members with the resources and structure through which to make a difference in their community, while acting as positive and accessible role models for the children and young people they work with.

During the focus groups the young people were asked to reflect on their learning journeys since they became YAC members. They all talked about how they were transformed by the experience of joining the YAC. A Youth worker noted gave an example of a young woman whose aspirations were raised since she became involved in the YAC. She said:

‘…one of the YAC left school at the end of Year 11…She’s just said last week that she wants to go back and finish Year 12 because she wants to go on and do uni. I don’t know if that would have been her trajectory if she didn’t have this job here to support her’ (Youth worker, M.Y.van).

In speaking of another very successful YAC, one youth worker stated:

‘He’s the only worker, well consistent worker in his family...there was also self-harm, he would not have gotten a job elsewhere. The confidence that he’s built... he was the one that spoke to Bill Shorten and he contributed to this work. You hear him speak, he would not be here in this position, right now, without the support of this program. We are one of the only things that he does every week. He’s not at school, he’s not in other training while we’re trying to support him but these are the two things that he does every week consistently. He doesn’t have anything else’ (Youth worker, M.Y.van).

Reflecting on the positive experiences she had had as junior youth worker another YACs talked about her future with enthusiasm and optimism. She said:

‘Well I didn’t really know what I wanted to do with my career and stuff, but since working on M.Y.van and the YAC I’ve just enrolled in the Diploma of Youth Work. So that’s my pathway. It’s what I want to do’ (YAC member).

The Youth Advisory Committee learnt other transferable skills they honed through their active involvement in community development projects:
‘We’ve also learnt a lot about event coordination and a lot about stakeholders in the community and who you have to contact a lot, because even such a simple thing about putting a recycling bin in the youth centre, that we realise how many people we need to contact and who’s going to empty it, who’s this affecting’ (YAC member M.Y.van).

**Alternative, engaging and safe space for learning**

Children, staff and parents repeatedly talk about the lack of safety in Claymore, both in the suburb’s environs as well as in the children’s home life. They also refer to the lack of resources for children, (there are no parks at Claymore). Given the paucity of regular youth service provision in Claymore, M.Y.van project fills a gap in Claymore. The staff stated that those children that attend the Van are the ones who are allowed to be unsupervised in the unsafe environment of Claymore. These children are the most vulnerable.

**Curriculum addresses needs of the youth and builds on their strengths:** An essential aspect of all of these factors is that they contributed to raising aspirations. The van used peer teaching which involved the youth workers identifying attendees who had particular skills and asked them to teach the other children. For example, one child with exceptional skills and interest in drawing was asked to teach art classes, and another with excellent cooking skills was asked to run cooking classes for the attendees. The idea of peer mentoring was part of the youth workers’ focus on identifying young people’s strengths and harnessing those strengths to not only share them, but to build their own confidence and development. The contribution to the children’s self-esteem was significant. The implementation of the YAC model also provides unique insights into the insider knowledge and lived experiences of the young people of Claymore. This in turn has also enabled the M.Y.van staff to deploy responsive youth provision that meets identified needs and strengthens connections between young people and their community.

**Staff as positive role models for youth:** Central to the success of the M.Y.van Claymore project is the collective expertise of the youth workers. As a group the staff have skills and knowledge in technology in a range of activities that are integrated into the van project. For example, some youth workers possess considerable expertise in the use of cutting edge digital media as a catalyst for achieving educative outcomes; others are passionate about engaging youth in outdoor sports activities. Collectively this range of skills connects with the interests, needs and knowledge of the youth. Also of particular significance is the flexible and compassionate approach used by the youth workers in their interactions with the young people of Claymore. The staff works as a team in the positive and empowering ways they interact with the youth. They communicate a collective message of trust and safety to the children. In addition, each member has skills pertinent to the objectives of the van, including high-level technology skills, and a deep understanding of the needs of youths. The youth workers’ commitment to making a difference in young people’s lives was expressed in their focus on youth empowerment through active participation and involvement in decision-making, which was reflected in all the materials reviewed and the activities observed in this evaluation. This was particularly evident in the development of the Youth Advisory Committee.

**Transferable skills via engaging technology use:** The creative use of technology is another outstanding outcome for children as it provides an alternative model of learning for youth who are challenged by more traditional approaches (Orlando, 2013). The young people associated a sense of freedom, trust and control when they used technology at the van. They also developed important skills of using technology to research, to present and publish data and ideas, to search (including searching for employment), and prepare a CV. This overall creative strategy supported youth
learning about the health promotion themes, positive youth-staff relationships, and how the youth interpret their identity as learners. The choice of high quality equipment is also an excellent strategy as it shifts the focus from the technical aspects of the equipment to youth and staff exploring the creative possibilities of the technology.

**Provision of alternative learning programs:** The provision of a growing suite of alternate workshops that build on the project’s health promotion curriculum is an important alternative learning initiative by STCF. The Alternative Learning Program piloted in early 2015 designed for young people who were suspended from school due to challenging behaviour has seen an increase in the number of referrals (for example, from Eagle Vale High School). The youth workers reported that the young people responded well to the non-formal learning environment and engaged positively with learning through digital media.

**Increasing resilience of youth**

A further aspect that affirms the social impact of the M.Y.van project is the increasing resilience of the attendees. Resilience refers to the ability to adapt to stress and adversity. In recent years, due to its potential influence on health, wellbeing and quality of life, resilience has become a major focus of interest for academic researchers, policymakers and practitioners working in the area of mental health and wellbeing (VicHealth, 2015). The M.Y.van have developed systems and processes for gauging the progress towards the achievement of the project objectives, particularly to improve the skills and wellbeing of vulnerable young people through non-formal education and diversionary activities, against the 12-item version of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (Liebenberg, L., Ungar, M., & LeBlanc, 2013). Table 6, page 32 shows the total number of young people who participated in regular activities provided by M.Y.van in Claymore, Glebe, Woolloomooloo, including sessions run at Reiby Juvenile Detention Centre. Information provided in the four quarterly reports 2015 indicates that surveys using the 12-item CYRM were conducted with a total of 34 young people who responded positively to some of the CYRM items. As shown in Table 9, page 34, the percentage of targets achieved shows that M.Y.van has exceeded some of the targets, while falling just below others. While it is understandable that it would be difficult to set targets against the types and levels of support that a young person might require before meeting her/him, it was not easy to ascertain how the team arrived at some of the targets. While the CYRM is a useful tool for identifying young people’s thoughts and feelings about their lives and their relationships to significant others and the wider community, their validity and reliability rest on a systematic approach necessitating sustained contact with the same individuals over time. However, qualitative data elicited through interviews with the young people and their parents strongly indicate significant change in several immediate and intermediate CYRM related measures.
5. Recommendations

All the evidence reviewed in this evaluation points to the significant positive social impact that M.Y.van project has had on the young people of Claymore and their community. The youth workers’ focus on promoting self-advocacy and raising young people’s critical awareness of important issues in their lives has sown the seeds of transformation that are likely to continue to evolve beyond the M.Y.van project timeframe. The Western Sydney researchers who completed this evaluation have no hesitation in recommending the continuation of this innovative intervention with high positive social impact on the young people of Claymore and their communities. However, there are areas for improvement that this report highlights in the recommendations below.

1. The mobility of the M.Y.van enables it to make its provision accessible to communities where there is limited access to youth services. While the location where it currently operates outside the Benevolent Society supported youth centre is strategic and convenient, in order to maximise community engagement and potentially increase participation by girls and young women, M.Y.van team should consider using alternative sites on a peripatetic basis in Claymore.

2. Attendance data by age group suggest that the majority of users are between 7 and 11 years of age. While work with this group is crucial, there are limited opportunities for 12 to 18 to engage in positive activities in their leisure time. The M.Y.van team should consider targeted provision for 12 - 18 age group, for example through the designation of separate sessions in the early evening. This could also provide scope for focused interventions aimed at young people who may not be in Employment, Education or Training.

3. There is currently no youth service provision during school holidays for young people in Claymore. This is a high-risk period for young people in Claymore, as during school holidays they have no appropriate adult outside their family to talk to, nowhere to go and nothing to do for a considerable period of time. This could be a great opportunity for M.Y.van to offer structured Summer and Easter holiday programs that are likely to see high participation rates by high numbers of males and females of different age groups.

4. The Youth Advisory Committee is one of the most significant outcomes of the M.Y.van program in Claymore, with obvious benefits to the M.Y.van project, the young people and the wider Claymore community. The M.Y.van team should consider spreading this example of good practice to other locations of NSW by replicating this highly successful intervention to, for example to other parts of Campbelltown, Glebe, Woolloomooloo and beyond.

5. The 12 item Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) data collected through online surveys conducted by M.Y.van during 2015 provides useful indicators in relation to several dimensions of resilience and self-efficacy among the respondents. However, with the exception of 3 respondents, it was not clear if the same individuals completed the surveys during 2015. In order to derive maximum benefit from CYRM, sustained contact with the same individuals over time is required so that progress can be gauged against resilience measures. The M.Y.van team should consider conducting the 12-item CYRM with individual young people, where possible, at regular intervals over time. This is likely to help devise plans of action in relation to any concerns.
resulting from the survey and is particularly important given the high numbers of health related referrals made by M.Y.van staff to health agencies in 2015.

6. M.Y.van has a longstanding partnership with the Benevolent Society youth centre staff and this gives the young people essential access to toilet facilities while they visit the van. However, greater cooperation between the two organisations could maximise efficiency of youth provision delivery and minimise duplication. The evaluation team recognise that the M.Y.van team have made considerable efforts in developing collaborative working arrangements with the youth centre staff, but there is potential for better cooperation and synchronisation of working schedules and joined up working that could ultimately benefit the young people of Claymore.

7. The monitoring and reporting systems used for gauging work achievements against project objectives observed in the quarterly 2015 reports is an example of good quality assurance process. However, the following recommendations could strengthen the robustness of this tool:
   a. Provide more differentiated records of attendance at different sites. For example, indicate numbers of participants in each project.
   b. Provide more information about how the 12 item CYRM surveys were administered, with whom and over how long. It would also be useful to indicate if any identified needs have led to targeted intervention in response to the surveys.
   c. Provide a rationale for targets set against indicators (for example clarification on what are the targets based on).

8. It is understandable that the M.Y.van team might prefer to leave it to individual young people to self-identify what they perceive to be their cultural heritage rather than predefined cultural categories. The researchers understand the sensitivities and complexities associated with defining cultural and ethnic groups. However, if the M.Y.van team wish to capture user characteristics in a more systematic way, an adaptation of the Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups 2011, based on ‘typical’ Claymore community profile, might be of some help for capturing this kind of data for more consistency.

9. The M.Y.van team might like to consider making greater use of social media in promoting and showcasing the work of the project. Social media could play a pivotal role in gaining and sustaining the interest of the older age group in the Van activities as well as strengthening young people’s sense of belonging and connectedness with Claymore community. For example, developing discussion forums that focus on local issues, provide sign posts to education, employment and training opportunities, or providing confidential contact points for young people to contact the youth workers to request appropriate referrals, particularly during the weekends and holidays.

10. Creating a pool of casual technologically capable staff and training them in digital media workshop facilitation will remove the need to use specialist (expensive) facilitators. There is also an argument for creating workshops, which do not rely so heavily on specialist facilitators. The technological aspect of the van however is highly important in attracting youth and having them attend regularly. Any additional workshops should not replace those that are technologically based.
11. More detailed anonymised reporting of the referrals in the quarterly reports is needed, along with any follow-up actions to provide support for young people as part of the M.Y. van program of activities.

12. There is enormous scope for using technology to support understanding the young people who attend the van however technology appears to be used minimally for these aspects. Using the iPads to track attendance, to conduct resilience surveys so that it supported understanding the history and trajectory of young people is an important consideration for future use of technology. For example, a digital attendance sheet may be introduced. The attendance can then be linked electronically to the profile of each individual attendee.

13. Lack of neighbourhood safety emerged as a key concern for children and young people in Claymore. MY Van might like to consider devising programs aimed at addressing young people’s concerns about lack of safety associated with reported high levels of crime in Claymore. This could be achieved through strengthening existing partnerships with the police and other relevant Local Government departments, for example through setting up a Youth Forum that could serve as a platform for young people to voice their concerns in dialogue with Community Police Officers and community representatives.

14. The Alternative Learning Program piloted in early 2015 designed for young people who are suspended from school due to challenging behaviour has seen an increase in the number of referrals (eg. from Eagle Vale High School). The youth workers reported that the young people responded well to the non-formal learning environment and engaged positively with learning through digital media. MY Van might like to consider capitalising on this success by forming further partnerships with schools in Claymore and the wider Campbelltown area with a view to making the Alternative Learning Program more accessible to young people who are hard to reach.
6. Background materials reviewed

Mobile Youth Service Van Claymore Year End Report, 2013, Save the Children Australia.

Mobile Youth Service Van Summary Report, January to December 2014, Save the Children Australia.

Mobile Youth Service Van Quarterly Report, Quarter 1, 2015, Save the Children Australia.

Mobile Youth Service Van Quarterly Report, Quarter 2, 2015, Save the Children Australia.

Mobile Youth Service Van Quarterly Report, Quarter 3, 2015, Save the Children Australia.

Mobile Youth Service Van Quarterly Report, Quarter 4, 2015, Save the Children Australia.

Internal Review Mobile Youth Van

M.Y.van Case Study Template, (last modified 2015)

Claymore Q3 2015 Safety survey

Survey Report: Claymore Q2 - 2015 Consolidated survey

Survey Report: Claymore Q3 - 2015 Consolidated survey

Survey Report: Claymore Q4 - 2013 Youth Well-Being Survey

Logical Framework- Mobile Youth Service

Planning Documents:

Daily activity plans 2/2/16, 9/2/15, 16/2/15, 2/3/15, 9/3/15, 16/3/16

M.Y.van (Claymore) Daily Activity Plan 5, 7, 8

7. References


6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Data for M.Y.van project research report, 2015

Table 1: Breakdown of data collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-structured interviews</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Document Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 x Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 x Youth Advisory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 x Representatives of agencies that work with the M.Y. Van project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Research themes for M.Y.van project evaluation report, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of inquiry</th>
<th>Program design</th>
<th>Governance and efficiency of the program</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theories/principles underpinning the approach to education/support</td>
<td>Policy development and application</td>
<td>Recruitment processes and staffing levels.</td>
<td>Formal/informal links with other stakeholders</td>
<td>Funding sources, staffing expenses, equipment and other expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approach to using digital media in programs and engagement of participants</td>
<td>Data collection systems for attendance and referrals.</td>
<td>Professional development for all staff including the Youth Workers and Youth Advisory Committee Members.</td>
<td>Partnerships and interactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objectives of program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborations and referrals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Areas for future collaboration and activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Unique Attendance


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 1. Claymore - Unique attendance by gender by year, 2013 - 2015

Graph 2. Unique attendance by age group by gender 2015
Appendix 3: Repeat Attendance

Table 5. Claymore - Repeat attendance by age group by gender in 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-11 years</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18 years</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-21 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>272</strong></td>
<td><strong>235</strong></td>
<td><strong>507</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 3. Claymore - Repeat attendance by age group by gender, 2015.

![Repeat attendance by age group by gender in 2015](image)

Table 6. M.Y.van Repeat attendance by location, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total for 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claymore (including Scratch and Alternative Education and Selvana Way)</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolloomooloo</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: My Van Attendance By Cultural Group

Table 7, Graph 4, attendance by cultural group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islander</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koori</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Pacific</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5: My Van Program Profile

Table 8. Number of attendees at M.Y.van events, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Number of attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown Youth week</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrating Claymore</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tug of Hope</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tharrawal</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiby detention centre</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolloomooloo Community BBQ</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony day</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAVE youth week</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claymore youth week</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolloomooloo Community BBQ</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monster Family Event</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yummy Café - Ambarvale</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIDOC - Glebe</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>283</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 5 - number of attendees at M.Y.van events, 2015
Appendix 6: Referrals

Table 9. Type and number of referrals to and from MY Van, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referral and interagency activities</th>
<th>Number of referrals FROM community and government partners</th>
<th>Number of referrals TO community and government partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allied Health (Speech Therapy/Occupational Therapy)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health /Grief Trauma</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 7: Performance Indicators Against Targets, 2015

Table 10. Outputs and outcomes, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of target achieved</th>
<th>Annual target 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators (National) -Output (immediate change)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. # of life skills sessions delivered by SCA youth projects</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>137%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. # of young people attending life skills session</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. # of cultural activities held by SCA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. # of young people participating in SCA cultural activities</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. # of young people supported to engage with formal education.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. # of young people supported in improving employability.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. # of individuals receiving case management support</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators (National) -Outcome (intermediate change)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. # of young people who have developed life skills that support positive life choices</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>135%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. # of young people who increase education/training engagement and/or attainment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. # of young people who have pathways to sustainable employment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. # of young people who have increased their connection to personal support networks</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. # of young people increased their engagement and participation in their community</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. # of young people have increased their safety</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. # of young people who are supported to voice their concerns about issues that affect them</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. # of clients achieving their goals / resolving their issues (case management/mentoring)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. % change in offending levels by young people (where relevant)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators (Project Specific)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. # of festival events attended</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. # of young people exposed to M.Y.van at festival events</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 11. Most significant outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Significant outcomes of the M.Y.van project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive engagement with the indigenous community</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YACS as an intensive advocacy strategy</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraging multi-agency networks</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of an alternate approach to learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuable uses of technology</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum addresses needs of the youth and builds on their strengths</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusted space</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained and long term commitment to change</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address economic and social disadvantage at the individual and community level</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop local solutions that bring the community, business and government together</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating government services to support local solutions and effectively drive change</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 9: M.Y.van Expenditure 2015

Table 12. Operating costs breakdown per term – Not including Team leader wages and depreciation costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost breakdown</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wages: 2 x youth workers (digital media/music facilitation specialists)</td>
<td>5h x 10 weeks @ 32.90 = 1895.97 7h x 10 weeks @ 28.89 = 2473.13</td>
<td>$4,369.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Supplies</td>
<td>Digital media maintenance and supplies (paper/printer ink/Wi-Fi/CDs etc) 60$ per week.</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Running Costs</td>
<td>Fuel / maintenance/rego</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 10 weeks (100$ per week)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food (snacks for young people)</td>
<td>Fruit / muesli bars etc ($60 per week)</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total per Term</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,569.10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total per Year (Term x 4)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$26,276.40</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. Operating costs breakdown per term – Not including Team leader wages and depreciation costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites of operation</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>26276.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolloomooloo</td>
<td>26276.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claymore</td>
<td>26276.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Program COSTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>78829.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. Cost per young person per site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Repeat attendance 2015</th>
<th>Cost per person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woolloomooloo</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>469.2214286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>80.3559633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claymore (including Scratch and Alternative Education and Selvana Way)</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>56.63017241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Repeat attendance</strong></td>
<td><strong>847</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>