

## Youth Off The Streets Key College

122 Little Eveleigh Street, Redfern. NSW 2016

Established in 1996, Key College Redfern (KCR) is one of four accredited independent high schools serving disadvantaged young people operated by Youth Off The Streets (YOTS). The College provides educational opportunities for young people aged 14-18 who have become disengaged from education and who are homeless or have unstable accommodation. Most young people attending KCR are living in youth refuges. They receive strong support to *overcome barriers to a positive and healthy lifestyle* and *achieve their Record of School Achievement (RoSA), Higher School Certificate (HSC, Year 12) or skills for further vocational education, apprenticeships and/or employment*. In 2011, 21 young people were enrolled at the College and 24% of the group were Aboriginal.

### How this program works

Key College Redfern offers a *broad curriculum* catering for students' *academic, psychological and vocational needs*. With one teacher to 6-8 students, all working in one large classroom, KCR aims to empower young people through participation in relevant *learning programs for years 8-12* with strong *extracurricular support*. An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is designed each term with a *focus on literacy and numeracy* tailored to each student's *interests and talents*. ILPs may include vocational training and work experience as well as mainstream subjects that will enable students to obtain the RoSA or HSC. Young people's welfare and wellbeing are supported through a range of YOTS services and programs in health and mental health, drug and alcohol education, careers counselling, Service Learning, leadership camps, mentoring and assistance with housing and legal issues. Breakfast, lunch and clothing (when necessary) are provided for students and YOTS outreach also provides personal support, recreation and cultural activities for students during school holidays.

As well as fostering young people's sense of belonging, the College promotes young people's responsibility and accountability. For example, it takes a restorative justice approach to *negative behaviour*. Rather than being issued a punishment, students are encouraged to discuss issues with peers and staff, to communicate their feelings and resolve the issues. This approach helps to *empower them in decision making over their own lives and circumstances* and to express their maturity and genuine concern for others.

KCR actively promotes improved relationships between young people and their families. Parents/carers are required to attend the initial intake interview and any case conferences and are welcomed to College and YOTS activities such as excursions and open days.

### Outcomes

Positive outcomes, indicating the success of this program, include: young people re-engaging in education, experiencing a sense of belonging, obtaining school, TAFE or other training certificates, participating in a range of community activities and establishing stable accommodation:

**Credentialed attainment:** In 2012, 9 of 27 students gained their School Certificate. 6 obtained the TAFE Certificate of Attainment in work skills and 2 obtained the White Card for employment in the construction industry. Six students were awarded the Senior First Aid Certificate.

**Destinations and pathways:** Some participants go on to TAFE studies; others have taken up apprenticeships, traineeships or secured employment.

**Engagement and participation in learning:** The Year 10 attendance rate in 2011 was 74%. In the 2012 annual YOTS online survey, 87.9% of young people thought that YOTS had helped them *to achieve things I didn't think I could*.

**Health and well-being:** KCR assisted students to access general (8 students) and specialist (3) medical, dental (4), mental health (4) and counselling (6) services. Ten students participated in YOTS Dunlea Alcohol and Other Drug Youth Service workshops (2011). 7 students who were in crisis refuges moved to semi-independent (2), independent accommodation (4) or returned to the family home (1). (2012)

**Civic/community participation:** Four girls attended the Ultimo TAFE Hospitality School's International Women's Day Lunch; 9 students were involved in Belvoir St Drama workshops/performance; and 10 participated in a public reading of the children's book they created. Students also participated in leadership training camps and activities and two students represented KCR at the Young Leaders Day at NSW Parliament House. (2011)

**Productive partnerships:** KCR provides access to other YOTS services as well as learning opportunities using the resources of the city and local area. For example, participants in the music program – write material, mix and record, using the professional studio provided at Redfern Community Centre.

**External recognition:** Three YOTS staff have been recognised in the National Excellence in Teaching Awards (2011).

### **Why this program is successful**

KCR teachers identify the *wrap-round* support for students in the personalised small school environment as key to young people achieving, including *those with high and complex needs*. In the annual YOTS online survey (2012), feeling safe (87.9%) and respected by staff (97.1%) contributed to young people's overall positive experience of YOTS.

### **Want to know more?**

<http://www.learningchoices.org.au/programs/821/Youth-off-the-Streets-Key-College.php>  
<http://www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/page.aspx?pid=267>

### **Sources of information**

Key College Redfern (2011) Annual School Report  
Key College Redfern (2013) School website (accessed 29.04.13)  
Youth Off The Streets (2012) Annual Report, *A celebration of youth*

Please note, where possible and appropriate, we have adopted the language and terminology used by the program sources (*italic fonts*) and referred to the most recent publicly available information.

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