



Wheatbelt & Beyond Youth Mentoring



Mentor Program Outline

Karen Strange
Ph: 0429 619 160

Janine Dayman
Ph: 0428 611 290

www.wbym.com.au

PO Box 86
Bruce Rock
WA 6418

admin@wbym.com.au



Wheatbelt & Beyond Youth Mentoring

About Us

Wheatbelt & Beyond Youth Mentoring (WBYM) is a Not-for-Profit organisation providing school-based mentoring opportunities for high school students throughout regional Western Australia. In 2021 we were successful in our application for charitable status through the ACNC.

Our Purpose

To broaden aspirations and opportunities of Rural Regional, and Remote young people.

Our Vision

Empowered, skilled and supported Regional, Rural and Remote young people to achieve their own goals and aspiration and inspire a passion for life-long learning.

Strategic Outcomes

Recognise and respect all student backgrounds and diversity in their needs

Build life skills and encourage life-long learners

Build mentee confidence on a foundation of a trusting mentoring relationship

Increase mentee awareness of broader perspectives and new aspirations

Support mentees through the challenges of adolescence



Our Mission

We support our regional, rural and remote young people as they make the often-challenging transition from adolescence to adulthood within the social and physical constraints of isolation. We are committed to building our young people's self-confidence through a holistic nurturing network of young adult mentors, families, communities and organisations so that they become lifelong contributors and are able to seize the opportunities offered in life while stepping up to the many challenges that arise.

3. History

Wheatbelt & Beyond Youth Mentoring (WBYM) is a not-for-profit organisation that was formed in 2019 by Karen Strange and Janine Dayman following 10 years of developing and running a successful mentoring program at Bruce Rock DHS. External confirmation of the benefits of this mentoring program to secondary students in Bruce Rock was provided through an evaluation completed by RDA Wheatbelt in 2018, which was funded through the Federal Government Building Better Regions Fund Community (BBRF) grant. The commencement of WBYM has provided further opportunity to share the benefits of this flexible, cost effective, successful program with other Regional, Rural and Remote District High Schools in WA. In 2021 WBYM gained charitable status: 'Advancing Social and Public Welfare' and 'Advancing Education.'

Secondary students in Rural, Regional and Remote District High Schools in WA face unique challenges due to isolation of their community and small cohorts of peers. They must make decisions about their upper secondary education in Year 7 or 8 to ensure enrolment at a school of best fit for Year 11 & 12, often also having to leave home at the end of Year 10 or earlier and board away. They are exposed to a limited number of careers in their local communities due to the size of the towns and are largely isolated from further education and training facilities. With most people knowing each other and the facilities in the community well, there is little opportunity to be put out of one's comfort zone. As a result, many students feel uncomfortable and are often unwilling to be exposed to new things. For all these reasons, a mentoring program is a great opportunity for our students.

The inception of our own WBYM program ensured the continuation of the successful Bruce Rock DHS program with a new District High School being added each year since. Carnamah DHS (428km from the organisers) was successfully established during COVID lockdown in 2020 with Quairading, Dowerin and Brookton DHSs added in each subsequent year. The aim is to establish at least one new program each year, whilst supporting existing programs.

4. Mentors

WBYM has established effective partnerships with universities across Perth, connecting their students to the program as mentors. A mentor coordinator for each school program is appointed on a voluntary basis and they source and support mentors. Mentors also come from a variety of other sectors after hearing about the program and contacting the organisation.

To become a mentor a person must complete and send the required paperwork to WBYM. The Program Director contacts their referees to follow up on their suitability for the program and to learn a little more about the person. All the information gathered is passed on to a School-Based Coordinator who runs the program in their school and uses the information provided to make effective matches between mentors and mentees.

5. Running of the Program

5.1 WBYM Program Opportunities

- All students in Year 7-12 attending a participating District High School are eligible to have individual mentors.
- Some schools have a class mentor for their upper primary class where emailing is done as a class through the teacher. This platform creates great insight, enthusiasm and training under the guidance of a teacher before students have their own individual mentor.
- Schools may also consider their secondary students mentoring junior primary class students to enhance relationships across the school, increase secondary leadership opportunities and give the secondary students a sense of being a mentor as well as a mentee.

5.2 Getting Started

- Eligibility: Mentors must be at least 18 years of age, trustworthy and responsible, sensitive to the needs of others, law abiding citizens who don't come from the local community. This is a deliberate decision to help broaden the student's horizons.
- NB: anyone who has committed a Class 1 or Class 2 offence will be ineligible to be a member of WBYM. (For further information refer to Department of Communities website)
- When an application is received, referee checks are completed, and the mentor will receive induction and training information for completion before being matched with a school.
- Except in extenuating circumstances, a mentor/mentees relationship remains constant until either the mentee leaves the school, or the mentor leaves the program. This could be up to 6 years. The extended relationship creates a strong bond and allows for great achievements both personally and academically as the mentee progresses through their lower secondary education.
- Mentees also receive training from the school, so they better understand what mentoring is, the benefits and how the program runs in the school. This includes information about goal setting, quality conversations, how to get the most out of the program and what to do if there are issues.
- Once a mentee and mentor are matched and all paperwork is completed an email is sent from the school to inform the mentor of their mentee's name and provide them with a brief information sheet, completed by the mentee, giving some background about themselves and their family. The mentee is now ready to send their first email.

5.3 Contact

- Contact is predominantly email via the mentee's school email address. It is expected that mentors and mentees email each other at least once per week.
- Whilst emailing is the only requirement of the program other types of contact are allowed and encouraged according to parent permission gathered by the school and if both parties are in agreement. Other types of contact include:
 - Video Conference (eg Teams, zoom, webex) from a home computer is an effective way to make contact as it is free, both parties can see each other, and it can be done in the evenings when mentors are more likely to be available.

- Video Conference (eg Teams, zoom, webex) from a school computer may be arranged if the mentor and mentee are available at the same time and it is organised with the school.
- Mentors and mentees are also able to contact by text, facetime, WhatsApp and phone calls (in accordance with parent permission) with parent permission. However, social media contact (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram etc) relationships are NOT PERMITTED.
- Face to face catchups are encouraged and have proven to greatly enhance the relationship but are not essential. This may include school organised overnight, weekend catchups, mentee visiting Perth with their school or families or casual mentor visits to the town.
- Mentors are welcome to attend all or part of any activity that they can. If they can only make it to part of an activity that is fine.
- Activities organised by the school are kept cost neutral for mentors where possible.

5.4 How Does the Program Run at the School?

Mentee/Mentor matchups are organised as early as possible in the school year. Mentees are provided with training and given a workbook to complete throughout the year. The workbook includes:

- good topics of conversation
- student goal setting
- a mentor information sheet that allows an opportunity to ask questions about their mentor and gives mentees a starting point during early emails.
- a calendar to record upcoming events that they could discuss with their mentor, and any contact, email or other, that they have received or sent.
- teacher support to ensure the workbooks are kept up to date.

5.5 Feedback

- Is gathered at the end of each year. This feedback is used to evaluate the program and make any necessary changes to improve it. Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt compiled the data for an extensive evaluation into the positive effects our unique style of mentoring has and is having on our students. This is exciting and highlights the benefits to all involved.

5.6 Support

- Is provided to all parties in the form of induction, training and ongoing support as required.
- Social Media platforms are set up for mentors/schools to share information.
- TEAMS is the main WBYM platform for sharing documents and information
- A contact plan identifies when and who you should contact for support or concerns.

More detailed information is available if you wish to know more and will be provided if you choose to apply to become a mentor. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us by email or phone.