



JUNE 2023

Brighter Futures

A start in life
a brighter future for young australians

🎯 CAREER AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

An excellent start to our new Scholarship!



Students collaborated in small groups to communicate why a specific sport should be included in the Olympics.



Our Career and Skills Development Scholarship focuses on broadening students' career horizons and building essential skills for modern careers.

This new program kicked off with a bang as a small group of Year 9 students from a diversity of schools and backgrounds came together to attend our first workshops. We were delighted with what the students gained, their dedication and self-awareness. Beginning with communication and collaboration, this series of workshops focuses on developing 21st Century skills and behaviours vital to students' future careers.

During these workshops, students not only learnt about communication and collaboration, but practiced using these skills in role plays, group discussions and problem solving activities.

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>>> These aspirational students were encouraged to be curious and ask questions, step outside their comfort zone and consider how they'd like to grow. They learnt the value of non-verbal communication as they acted out emotions. They analysed body language and facial expressions. They learnt techniques to overcome communication difficulties. They explored the importance of setting expectations before collaborating. They practiced collaborating to find solutions to problems. And they came to understand that conflict is naturally bound to occur, but "it's how we react or solve the problem that matters" (Vee, 14 years old).

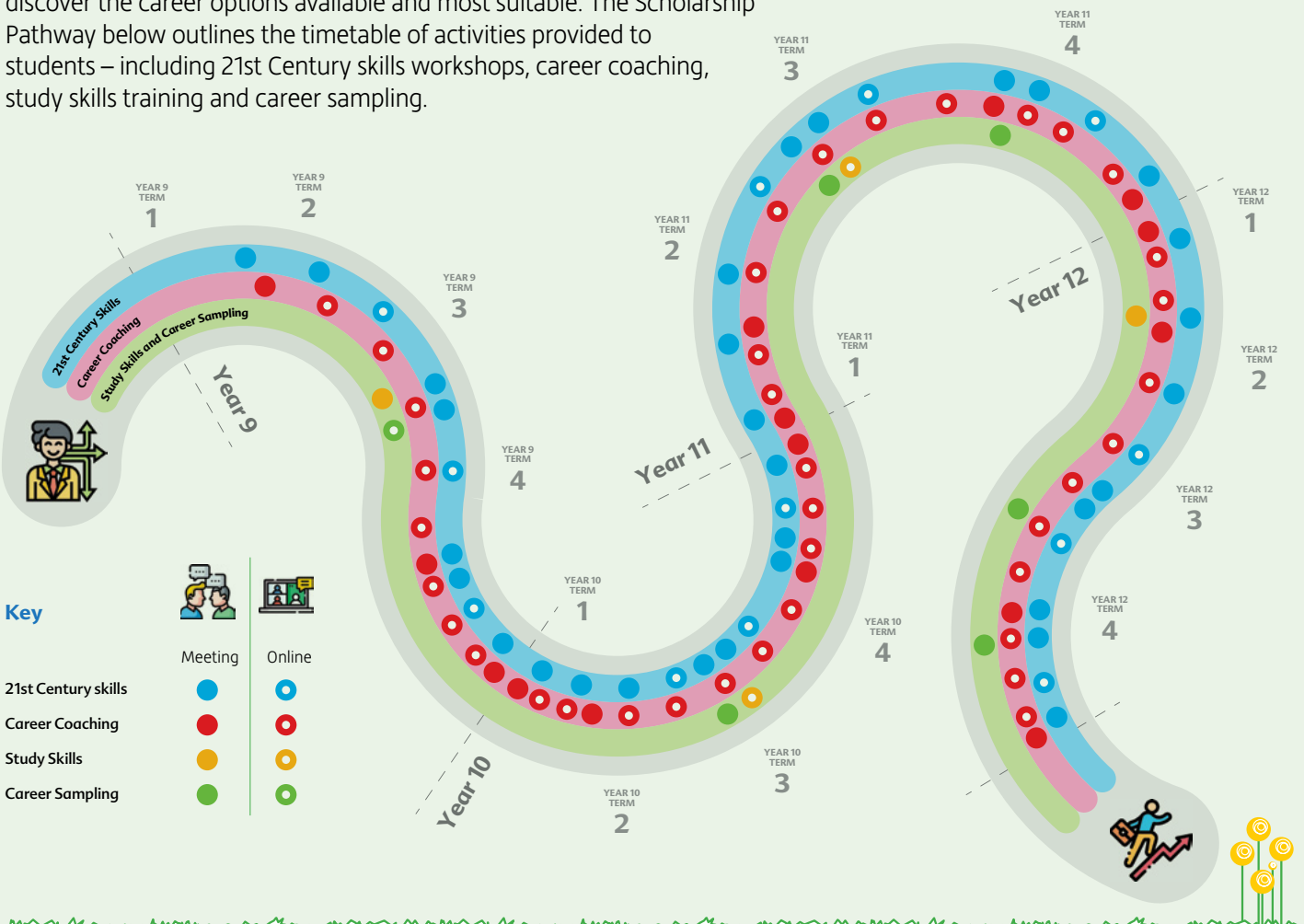
Our one-to-one monthly Career Coaching sessions are also underway. Here, students are encouraged to explore and discover their innate strengths, skills and values, and how they may relate to possible careers. We look forward to telling you more about these soon!



A brainstorm from one group of students exploring various blocks and solutions to collaborating at school.

Scholarship Pathway

You learn a lot in school, but it can't cover everything! Schools teach vital academic knowledge, but often can't focus on all skills that modern employers are looking for. Additional time, assistance and resources are also required to help students discover the career options available and most suitable. The Scholarship Pathway below outlines the timetable of activities provided to students – including 21st Century skills workshops, career coaching, study skills training and career sampling.



Meet Arnold and Tay

Both come from single parent households, both are overcoming learning difficulties and both have had great personal triumphs.

Arnold Year 5

Background	Lives with his single father, who is highly engaged with his learning. Has always struggled with learning, attention, behaviour and social skills, but has come a long way since support began 4 years ago.
Likes	Swimming during summer, camping with Dad, going to school, learning new things, meeting up with great friends.
Dislikes	Bullies, seeing people in the street who don't have a safe and comfortable home to live in.
Challenges	Arnold was diagnosed with ADHD in 2021. Since receiving additional support his school has noted substantial improvements in both his learning and behaviour. He is now a member of his school band and told us school taught him to be kind, caring and compassionate. Last year, Arnold was puzzled by Maths equations; however, he learnt how to solve them with the tutoring provided.
Achievements	In 2022, Arnold improved an entire grade in Art and Mandarin, achieving a B in both. His teacher noted many improvements, including being more focused, co-operative and responsible. Arnold receives regular English and Maths tutoring. He and his tutor have excellent rapport, and his father has noted the significant role this plays in his learning. His tutor told us "Arnold is a smart, interesting, creative person. He has a unique way of approaching learning...His character is strong and funny. Arnold is a great writer and grasps concepts quickly and easily. He is also improving greatly in his Maths, and is able to answer questions faster and faster! I am proud of his enthusiastic and focused nature".
What are you looking forward to about school this year?	"I am looking forward to learning more about reading and writing at school. My favourite subject is English because I get to learn how to write my sentences correctly. I also love music lessons and band."
From the support provided, what has been the most helpful?	"The tutorial support because this has helped me improve my grades, confidence in the classroom, fluency and answering arithmetic questions...my tutor Sasha is the greatest."

Tay Year 7

Background	Support began in Kindergarten. Lives with single mother and older sister. His mother is extremely supportive of Tay's learning, yet faces difficulties with her own literacy skills.
Likes	Reading, writing, video games, playing soccer and playing with friends.
Dislikes	Broccoli, meat, messy hair and cricket.
Challenges	Tay has struggled with his learning, language and memory since beginning school. To help, our Student Support Team regularly liaise with Tay's school and support team to ensure he receives the assistance he requires. We have also provided tutoring across various subjects since Year 1. His tutor notes "Tay is a hard worker...very cooperative and willing to learn". Tay was having difficulties with his times tables, but with the help of his tutor now feels a lot more comfortable with them.
Achievements	Tay is in the school band and enjoys music lessons funded by <i>A Start in Life</i> . He told us "I have learnt so much playing the drums, learning the different notes in music, also performing in special assemblies". Tay also started high school this year and his mother told us he is enjoying it much more than primary school. He is settling in well and recently emailed to show some of his recent progress, including a Merit Award for "great effort and enthusiasm in dance", and very neat notes he'd written for Geography and History. A recent proud moment for his Mum was when he started taking the bus to school by himself!
What is one thing you recently learnt at school that you could teach to others?	"I learnt how to use a scientific calculator."
How has working with our Student Support Team helped you?	The team "have helped me with my time management skills, especially as I am not used to a lot of homework for different subjects. My timetable management sheet [provided by <i>A Start in Life</i>] has helped me a lot with spacing my time for each subject."



The Ongoing Benefits of Support

Our support not only helps students during their studies, but assists their career trajectories and helps provide the futures they desire. Ra, Sammy and Emi recently shared updates on their careers below.

Ra

Our support for Ra began when she moved several hours from her family farm in rural NSW to study a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in Law and Industrial Relations. Drought and a family illness prevented her family from providing the financial support she needed. However, with our assistance, Ra successfully graduated. She then chose to independently pursue and complete her “dream” – a post-graduate Juris Doctor Law degree. She obtained a clerkship at one of Australia’s top corporate law firms and then secured a graduate role with them. Ra is currently a paralegal with a leading Australian book publisher and recently reached out to say “I could not have done this without the much needed support from A Start in Life...I had more time to study and get my marks up, to allow me entry into the Juris Doctor degree.”

“You have been so generous and I cannot wait to pay this forward when I have achieved my career goals, as a strong education is critical to success.”

– an email from Ra during her support

Sammy

Since she was eight years old, Sammy wanted to become a vet. To achieve this, she later learned it would require moving a substantial distance from her family home and completing a six year Bachelor of Veterinary Sciences / Biology degree, involving a large number of unpaid work placements. Sammy asked if we, and our supporters, could help her undertake this degree. This assistance began in her first year and continued throughout the six years she completed her studies. Sammy often told us

how much she enjoyed her degree and sent us photos of her experiences while on practical placements, which we shared with you over the years. She is now working at the local veterinary clinic where she obtained her first practical experience with a school traineeship when she was just 16 years old! She is thrilled, telling us “The team is like one big family which I love. I am still getting a good mix of livestock and domestic animal work. This has enabled me to be very close to achieving some of my long term large animal goals and taken my small animal skills and knowledge to the next level.”

“You guys came into my life at a point where I didn’t know how I was going to put food on the table, afford accommodation and still be able to attend Uni. To say it was a big relief to have your support is a massive understatement. I am incredibly grateful for the team choosing to support me to reach my goals...ensuring I didn’t miss an important learning opportunity or resource because of finances. I’m currently shedding a few tears at how truly lucky I was to have come across your program.”

– Sammy

Emi

Our support for Emi began in Year 12 and led to her successfully complete a Commerce degree, majoring in Human Resources. Emi has had an excellent career trajectory since, constantly striving to achieve more and experiencing various roles! She recently reached out to us with a wonderful update, happily reflecting “most importantly...I love my job and the people I work with!” To read Emi’s delightful email, scan the QR code above.

