Division of Education, Arts & Social Sciences
School of Education

A Report on the Evaluation of the Safe Schools Hub


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Council of Education Associations of South Australia
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New South Wales Parents Council Inc.
NT COGSO (The Council of Government School Organisations)
Parents Victoria
Principals Australia Institute
Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Association
South Australia Association of School Parents Clubs
South Australian Association of State School Organisations Inc.
South Australian Schools
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University of South Australia: School of Education Pre-service teachers
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Executive Summary

Introduction

In positioning this commissioned evaluation, the main report commences with a contextual background drawn from the literature to specifically scope the following key themes related to this study: Internet use - The Australian context; Young people and wellbeing & the National Safe Schools Framework; Website evaluation and; Future considerations. The Website Evaluation Framework (WEF: Taddeo, 2011) provided the theoretical underpinning for the evaluation process and facilitated a systematic mapping of the stakeholder reported strengths and weaknesses of the SSH and the identification of areas requiring future development. This was achieved by examining key indicators of website design, purpose, content and technology integration.

Project Aim

The overarching aim of this study was to evaluate how successfully the Safe Schools Hub (SSH) resource provides digital resource coverage for the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) by exploring: who uses the resource; why and how is it being used; the technical considerations such as navigability and discoverability of the website; and suggestions for future improvements.

Methodology

This evaluation employed a Convergent Parallel Mixed Method research design (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2011). The enabled the concurrent collection of different, but complementary data from a range of stakeholders about the purpose, activities, and outcomes associated with the SSH. Following quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, findings were merged to provide an evidence-base to inform future development and directions of the SSH. Data collected included demographics, responses regarding familiarity and engagement with the SSH, the ease of location and navigation, user experience and thoughts about future directions and development of the SSH obtained via the following methods:

(a) Active data collection methods, which involved participant engagement, through:
   i. semi-structured telephone and face-to-face interviews (N=25)
   ii. an online survey (N=138)

(b) Passive data collection accessed via:
   i. Google Analytics (with 60,034 sessions recorded between the period of 14 March 2013 and 31 January 2015), to examine volume of visits to the SSH, geographical location of visitors and sources of traffic, technology used to access the site, purpose for visiting the site and engagement with the SSH.
Ethics

This project was approved by the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Additionally, ethics approval to conduct the evaluation in school settings, i.e. with teachers and school leadership was received from:

- SA Department for Education and Child Development
- Western Australia Department of Education
- Queensland Department of Education and Training.

The processing time for a number of the ethics applications submitted to Education Department ethics committees extended beyond the project timeline and as such recruitment of participants in school settings was either unable to be pursued or not able to be maximised. Alternative recruitment strategies were subsequently employed.

Recruitment

Multiple recruitment strategies were undertaken to help achieve desired sample numbers and included discussions/invitations to: parent associations across Australia; Principals Australia Institute; Council of Educational Associations of South Australia; University of South Australia pre-service teachers, School of Education academic staff and Alumni members; and South Australian Schools. Findings from diverse stakeholders were obtained from across: the education sector through the survey, and the various Australian States and Territories through interviews. Participants included: school leaders; teachers; pre-service teachers; parents; school leavers; policy advisors and wellbeing consultants.

Findings

The general consensus from this evaluation suggests that the availability and access to a website that promotes safe schools and student wellbeing whilst catering for a diverse range of education stakeholders is strongly supported and very much required. This is particularly so with the recognition that young people’s wellbeing can be an important predictive factor in their capacity to be engaged and happy learners. Clearly evident from this study is that the SSH is considered to be a valuable online resource that for the most part, and particularly in terms of content, addresses this identified need for such a website. The SSH is perceived to be credible and reliable in terms of providing information and resources on topics related to safe schools for the school community and for other users who are active in domains that intersect with children and young people’s learning, safety and wellbeing. However despite widespread acknowledgement across the sample that the SSH is a valuable resource, the low visibility, lack of awareness of the SSH existence and the likelihood that the SSH is an under-utilised resource is an area that warrants a targeted solution.

The following findings are organised under the key research questions.
To what extent do students, teachers and parents who have used the Safe Schools Hub believe it will be effective in improving education outcomes for students?

Attributing improved learning outcomes directly to the use of the SSH would constitute a large claim, for there are numerous variables that can impact on perceived effectiveness, including the resources themselves and how they are applied in a classroom or school setting. It is not surprising then that there was considerable variation in the responses regarding participants’ perceptions about the effectiveness of the SSH in improving wellbeing outcomes or education outcomes of young people. Whilst no clear conclusion can be drawn, it is encouraging that the value of the resources on the SSH was consistently acknowledged by participants. Ultimately if feeling safe and well is a factor in enhancing learning outcomes then the SSH which provides evidence-based resources has the potential to positively impact on improving student outcomes.

How successfully does the Safe Schools Hub provide digital resource coverage for the National Safe Schools Framework for Foundation to Year 12?

Whilst coverage of the NSSF was considered comprehensive, suggestions indicated the need to ensure that all areas of the NSSF were promoted on the SSH. Embedding links directly to the NSSF to help draw explicit connections between the content available on the SSH and the principles of the NSSF was highlighted as a way of clarifying aims and purpose. Suggestions that greater focus on contemporary social issues with regard to school safety and child protection also were noted, as was a need to more inclusively represent diversity in the resources provided, in terms of youth sexuality, culture, and disability. There are however two key aspects that warrant consideration when addressing this research question, one is content and the other is audience. Whilst digital resource coverage for the NSSF for Foundation to Year 12 is evident for teachers and school leaders, responses suggest that it is less so for parents and students. Clarity then regarding the target audience for the SSH warrants careful consideration, as the purpose, content and audience of the website are closely related, and when well aligned can enhance a users’ experience.

Do stakeholders – including jurisdictions, teachers, professional associations and peak bodies intend to continue to use and to promote ongoing use of the Safe Schools Hub? If not, what improvements do they suggest in order to make the resource more suitable to use and promote to their constituents?

The majority of non-users of the SSH indicated they would visit the SSH in the future for information about safe schools and student wellbeing. A primary reason provided suggests that credibility and reliability as a government supported site rank highly for potential users. This is an important factor to consider then when promoting the SSH in future. Visibility of the site was perhaps the biggest limitation identified in this study, many participants had not heard of the SSH, however once aware of the site were keen to promote it actively to their colleagues. There were also unexplored opportunities, with regard to promoting the SSH to parents, the majority who indicated they were having conversations with their child about safety and wellbeing were not necessarily aware of the SSH. A resource such as the SSH has huge potential to inform the discussions parents have with their children, however it appears to be a substantially under-utilised resource. Additionally, with analytics showing that most visitors are unique users who do not return to the SSH, there are opportunities to build into the SSH features, functionality and elements that would provide users with an authentic reason to return to the SSH.
In what ways are users interacting with the Safe Schools Hub?

Participants acknowledged that the SSH was visually appealing with easily accessible resources. It appears that the ‘within site’ search function is somewhat of an indicator of the bounce rate, with those who conduct a search on the site more likely to spend considerably longer period of time on the site. When examining why users are coming to the site in the first instance it would seem that bullying related queries along with homophobia, and NSSF audit are key areas of interests for potential users, with the home page identified as the most visited page. Examination of users’ behaviour patterns suggests that the toolkit overview and the nine elements page are primary paths of engagement, whilst it appears that Twitter users tend to engage in the first instance with the home page, Facebook users appear to be interacting with the parent related pages. This information will help developers to identify which pages should be promoted on particular platforms and which should be optimised for engagement on mobile platforms.

How discoverable is the Safe Schools Hub to teachers, pre-service teachers, school leaders, parents, students and specialist support staff?

Although participants emphasized the importance of the SSH, many reported they were unaware of its existence prior to the evaluation. Responses indicated that the site is easily located when searching specifically for the ‘Safe Schools Hub’, however when using search engines to locate information on particular issues such as bullying, the website did not rank highly. This is particularly problematic for parents and students who may not know the actual name of the site, but who may be conducting searches with more generic terms such as cybersafety, sexuality, and bullying. This has implications for both the website design and search engine optimisation to help improve the ranking and visibility of the site and the type of marketing strategies employed to increase awareness of the SSH. With the opportunities social media provides for promotion, there is potential to leverage more effectively these avenues and other credible external sites in order to drive traffic to the SSH.

What improvements could be made to the Safe Schools Hub to support students and families to better achieve the objectives of the project?

Understanding the user profile, inclusive of the needs, and digital behaviours, of the intended audience, is considered particularly fundamental when developing digital resources. It is also important to understand the context within which the resources are likely to be adopted, and the factors which potentially could impact on reach and uptake. These may be factors which are external and difficult to manage such as competing sites, or may be internal challenges that can be addressed by developers and curators of the site such as improving navigation cues. Participants suggested a number of areas for development: improved navigational aids; more age-appropriate materials; greater interactive elements; improved functionality to support communication between stakeholders and sharing of resources; enhanced mobile compatibility and social media integration; improved coverage of contemporary youth issues; and ensuring accessibility guidelines are met.
Conclusion

Safety of all students is a collective priority of all stakeholders who engage with children and young people. The need for a website to support school leaders, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders to implement the principles of the NSSF, inclusive of fostering positive relationships and student wellbeing is clearly evident. The value of the SSH which aims to service a range of stakeholders by providing useful resources in this domain is also well recognised by those who are aware of the site. However, there is a need firstly, to better promote the site and secondly, to clearly identify the target audience, their particular needs and the purpose of the site.

In conducting an evaluation, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of a website when the purpose is less tangible and when it has less quantifiable outcomes than an ecommerce site for example, whose primary aim is to generate revenue. However, uptake of, and response to, a site does nonetheless provide important indicators of a useful site as highlighted throughout this report. Uptake however does not occur without dedicated efforts to marketing. In many instances substantial investment is allocated to the development of a website with little consideration given to promotion strategies. Ensuring a website is fully utilised requires the resources allocated to extend beyond the development phase to incorporate promotion and marketing of the site to avoid the risk of being under-utilised.

There is considerable respect for the SSH as a credible and useful digital resource. However, there remains significant untapped potential for the site, both to increase its visibility and to move it forwards in the next iteration of the site, so that it will continue to extend its reach to provide stakeholders with valuable, current and interactive resources that communicate and align with a clear purpose, and that reflects innovative design and content.

Recommendations

Awareness Raising

Key Recommendation 1

Employ proactive targeted marketing and promotion strategies, including search engine optimisation, that focus on increasing awareness of the SSH across the education sector, in particular among parents and teachers.

Key Recommendation 2

Incorporate input from all stakeholders to inform the type of strategies that will contribute to improved visibility, reach and subsequent use of the SSH.

Key Recommendation 3

To improve visibility and use of this resource by all school communities, some accountability to the NSSF needs consideration. Use of the audit tool to gather data on school safety should be mandated for a school’s internal and external reporting processes. This would ensure that use of this highly valuable resource is optimised, to really support young people’s safety in schools in Australia.

Key Recommendation 4

Utilise social networking channels and credible external sites to drive traffic to the SSH.

Key Recommendation 5

Leverage the networks of users by providing additional options for visitors to share pages and links within the SSH.
**Design**

**Key Recommendation 6**
Enhance visual cues on the SSH to better orientate visitors and to make the site more intuitive. This includes improving the labelling/headings to more accurately reflect content.

**Key Recommendation 7**
Incorporate navigation aids to guide users through the site, given the volume of information and extensive site structure.

**Key Recommendation 8**
Develop features and functionality that promote, encourage and provide authentic reasons for users to bookmark and continue returning to the SSH.

**Key Recommendation 9**
Ensure government accessibility guidelines are addressed.

**Key Recommendation 10**
Reconsider the placement of the ‘within site’ search function to maximise its visibility and consider the use of search filters to improve the efficiency of searching within the SSH.

**Key Recommendation 11**
Incorporate more interactive features to improve engagement with content and SSH generally.

**Key Recommendation 12**
Consider ways to enhance mobile compatibility and improve social media integration.

**Purpose & Content**

**Key Recommendation 13**
Clarify target audience and more closely align stakeholders’ needs with SSH design and content.

**Key Recommendation 14**
More closely align digital resource coverage for the NSSF for Foundation to Year 12 for parents and students.

**Key Recommendation 15**
Provide links to key ‘help seeking services’ on the home page.

**Key Recommendation 16**
Improve coverage of contemporary youth issues, especially related to sexuality, child protection, disability and cultural diversity- consult with youth and consider a participatory design process in the development of any associated content to ensure relevancy and authenticity.
Introduction

This report details an evaluative study of the Safe Schools Hub (SSH) conducted to determine its effectiveness in improving education and wellbeing outcomes for students. The SSH is underpinned by the National Safe Schools Framework and funded by the Australian Government working in collaboration with state and territory governments, government and non-government school sectors and Education Services Australia. The SSH provides the tools and knowledge to assist all members of the school community to: nurture student responsibility and resilience; build a positive school culture; foster respectful relationships and learning environments; and support students who are impacted by anti-social behaviour, including bullying and cyberbullying. ’ - Education Services Australia, 2014.

This commissioned research has engaged a diverse range of stakeholders, from education and associated sectors, to obtain their insights and feedback on the SSH to assess the function, content and perceived effectiveness of this resource to direct future implementations. Analytics data also were examined to provide insights into the nature of users’ engagement with the SSH. Specifically then, findings from this report draw on:

- Survey data (N =138) collected from: school personnel including school leaders; teachers; school counsellors; specialist support staff; pre-service teachers; parents and students
- Interview data (N= 25) collected from: subject matter experts; Department of Education team members; Education Services Australia team members and key stakeholders in education and related sectors.
- Website Analytics data collected through: Google Analytics from 14 March 2013 to 31 January 2015.

The Website Evaluation Framework (Taddeo, 2011) has guided the evaluation of the SSH by informing the constructs and themes examined and extracted in both the qualitative and quantitative data.

Project Aim

The overarching aim of this study was to evaluate how successfully the SSH resource provides digital resource coverage for the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) by exploring: who uses the resource; why and how it is being used; the technical considerations such as navigability and discoverability of the website; and suggestions for future improvements to the resource.
Context and Background

Amid rapid technological advancements, the impact of technologies on the way users generate new knowledge and communicate, and interact with, information and, each other, continues to evolve. Whilst this observation is often generally applied, it is particularly pertinent to the education context, where school communities are at the fore of managing the integration of digital resources to enhance teaching and learning. This can be especially challenging given the plethora of education-related digital resources. Whilst the literature highlights many advantages of incorporating digital technologies in education settings (Fewkes, & McCabe 2012), the challenge for educators and stakeholders lies in differentiating resources that are credible and derived from a sound evidence-base, from those that may be less reliable and of questionable credibility and quality. Building a knowledge base regarding what constitutes a useful and engaging digital resource and examining the benefits and impact of integrating credible and effective digital technologies in learning environments may provide a way to address these challenges, potentially leading to better utilisation of educative digital resources.

This is particularly important given that research suggests that digital technologies can facilitate new relationships among teachers, learners and the learning content (Beetham, & Sharpe, 2013). However, with the ongoing innovation in this domain, the advantages could extend beyond this, and provide new ways of initiating, supporting and enhancing sustainable, dynamic relationships between, the technology itself, the users, and the content or knowledge being created and shared, to improve the learning experience and associated outcomes. To align these key aspects, namely: technologies; users; and content, it is important to understand the context within which the resource is positioned, inclusive of factors that could directly and indirectly impact on the reach and uptake. This includes aspects such as the quality, credibility and usability of the content and the accessibility of the resource. Insights into these elements can be sourced via a number of avenues including website analytics, and data collected directly from experts in the field, users and non-users, and stakeholders in general, through questionnaires and interviews. Understanding the user profile is considered particularly fundamental when developing and evaluating digital resources. Harley et al., (2006) propose that user studies can provide information that informs the development and refinement of a digital resource and further can inform future policy and investment decisions.

The significance of understanding user profiles and audience also is evident in a study conducted by Taddeo (2011). In acknowledging that there is considerable variation in the quality and purpose of education websites, Taddeo & Barnes (2014) noted that one aspect that differentiated websites considered progressive, was the way in which they were tailored to address the needs of the intended audience. The research further reinforced, that when providing digital resources for an identified purpose and audience, it is important to consider the profile of the intended users and the extent to which user-generated content and feedback is supported and included, so that the resource closely aligns with their needs and online practices. Specifically, understanding the needs, preferences, behaviours and practices of actual and prospective users, and further garnering users’ thoughts about, and response to, the resource can contribute to fully realising the potential of a digital resource. Additionally, examining issues that might compromise the accessibility of the resource also is warranted to better understand factors that could contribute to the reach and uptake of an online resource. Considerations, therefore include what ‘reach’ can realistically be expected of a digital resource and who is likely to engage with the resource.
**Internet use: The Australian context**

Data from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) showed that the overwhelming majority (83%) of all Australian households have Internet access. This represents 7.3 million households with reports further indicating that approximately three quarters of these households access the Internet via a broadband connection. Additionally, almost every household with children under 15 years of age (96%) has access to the Internet at home (ABS, 2013), and up to 99% of Australia youth use the Internet on a daily basis (Burns et al. 2013). The Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA: 2013) report also highlighted that Australian children and young people are ardent users of the Internet and particularly of social networking services (SNS), and whilst access is predominately via a computer, children and young people are increasingly accessing the Internet on their mobile phones. Given insights into the Internet behaviours and practices of Australian households and in particular children and young people, there is a substantial opportunity, for education-related digital resources such as the Safe Schools Hub to reach and engage a large portion of its intended audience.

Research suggests that despite the overall increase in Internet accessibility, household income and geographic location continue to be indicators of Internet access and use (ABS, 2013; ACMA, 2014). Specifically, 97% of households with household income of $120,000 or more had Internet access, compared to 77% of households with an income of less than $40,000 (ABS, 2013). Further, whilst there has been strong growth in Internet access for communities located outside of the capital cities, access continues to remain higher for those residing in capital cities (ABS, 2013). As such when developing digital resources, it is important to consider alternative avenues for disseminating resources in instances where individuals or groups may have limited or unreliable Internet access. The cultural relevance of education-related digital resources is also an important consideration given the cultural diversity of Australia’s population with one in four Australians born overseas (ABS, 2012).

Technology-related access in schools has experienced considerable growth in terms of improved infrastructure, increased access to devices, software, professional development opportunities and supporting resources. In 2008, through a National Partnership Agreement, the Australian Government committed more than $2.1 billion to the Digital Education Revolution (DER) (Digital Education Advisory Group, 2013), an initiative which sought to support large-scale integration of technologies throughout Australian Schools. A key objective of this initiative was to provide every student in Years 9–12 with access to technology required for learning. With this injection of resources and improved access to technologies in schools, there is a need to examine the way in which the digital resources available are being utilised by school communities to inform future directions.

**Young people and wellbeing & the National Safe Schools Framework**

The United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2011) outlines all aspects of what is needed to safeguard children’s quality of life and their rights to an education free from all forms of violence, victimisation, harassment, exploitation and neglect. It is a fundamental premise therefore, that schools should be safe and supportive places of learning and teaching, to maximise the educational, physical, social and emotional outcomes for all Australian children. Feeling safe and secure contributes to one’s sense of wellbeing, and the link between enhancing students’ wellbeing and academic outcomes is also now well recognised.
(Dix et al., 2012; Durlak et al., 2011) indicating that young people can enhance their potential by being afforded safe and respectful places in which to operate and learn.

The Australian Federal Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood and Youth Affairs (MCEEDYA) endorsed the first National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) in July 2003, leading the way for the development of a consistent, national approach to reducing bullying and violence and improving child protection. Following legislation passed in 2004, all Australian schools were required to implement the NSSF by 2006, and report against it annually through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs’ (MCEETYA) Annual National Report on Schooling in Australia (McGrath, 2007).

This first iteration of the NSSF (2003) comprised 11 nationally agreed principles to inform policy and practice. It also articulated the importance of employing a whole-school approach to manage these safety and wellbeing concerns and acknowledged the need to develop and implement policies and programs in consultation with the wider school community. In addition, the ‘Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Committee’ was established to enable collaboration between Australian States and Territories’ education sectors, and the Bullying. No Way! website was created, to share information, resources and effective practices and strategies to address bullying, harassment and violence in schools (http://bullyingnoway.gov.au/). A ‘Best Practice Grants Programme’ to support schools to develop and evaluate effective ways of ensuring safe school environments also was provided, along with funding for implementation support for the NSSF (McGrath, 2007).

With the rapid rise in the use of the Internet, the uptake of associated social media and the appearance of cyberbullying as a new form of bullying, a review of the NSSF was undertaken and endorsed by the Ministers of Education in 2010. This revision specifically took account of, and acknowledged, the online context when considering safe and supportive learning sites. The revised NSSF (2011) emphasised wellbeing and safety as essential elements which supported academic and social development: and had 6 new guiding principles:

1. Affirm the right of all school community members to feel safe and be safe at school.
2. Acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
3. Accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfil the school’s child protection responsibilities
4. Encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
5. Actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
6. Commit to developing a safe school community through a whole school and evidence-based approach.

To support implementation, an online resource was created, which included a School Audit tool, and resources to support teachers and the school community. To further support schools to implement the NSSF, the Safe Schools Hub was established as an online one-stop-shop for strategies and resources and launched on 15th March 2013.
A key difference between this revised NSSF version (2011) and the previous Framework (2003), is that its use has not been mandated by legislation, thus schools are not required to report against it, and are able to decide how, when and why they might implement it or not.

**Website evaluation**

For the purposes of this study, a website is considered to be an environment that is accessed via connectivity to the Internet or remote service. Websites are often developed with a particular audience in mind and can serve a variety of purposes, which can include: ecommerce; marketing; informing, engaging, and communicating with, a particular audience; and can provide a platform for showcasing innovation.

In many instances substantial investment is allocated to the development of a website with little consideration given to how website performance will be measured (Morrison, Taylor, & Douglas, 2005). Further the evaluation of websites often is considered through indicators normally associated with the business or marketing sector, with a focus on ecommerce and the generation of revenue (Chiou, Lin & Perng, 2010). However whilst some evaluation criteria considered from a marketing perspective can be applicable to websites that have an educative focus, there are distinct differences, with regard to purpose and audience. As such potential website performance indicators and any framework applied to the evaluation of educative websites should reflect the inherent differences between the two, particularly given that raising revenue is not, in most instances, the core purpose of an educative website.

Another consideration in the evaluation of websites is that some assessments of website performance focus solely on website analytics. In noting the value of this data, there is a need to consider broader criteria in order to obtain a truly comprehensive and accurate picture of the website’s performance. Feng & Ye (2014) suggest it is important to consider evaluation from a number of perspectives, namely evaluation of the website: as a carrier, that is, how the website performs as a platform including the navigation and design; and from the users’ behaviour, that is, the engagement/interaction of a user, both with the content itself and, if available, with others who engage with the site. Other examples where a range of criteria has been considered include: Wang, Zhang, Yang, & Ye (2015) who addressed both subjective and objective measures in the analysis of websites, with insights obtained through questionnaires and web log data and; Feng & Ye (2014) who applied a social network perspective to website evaluation and further advocated for a website evaluation process that considers the interactivity that occurs on learning websites.

Interactivity on some level is often inherent in education-related digital resources, which provide an avenue for: sharing information and facilitating teaching, learning, communication and engagement, to enhance learning and wellbeing outcomes for students. However given the considerable variation in the: quality and credibility of website content; organisation and presentation of content; nature of the user experience; and the way digital resources are marketed and promoted (Taddeo & Barnes, 2014), it is important that any evaluation collects insights and feedback that helps to establish what constitutes a useful digital resource for the intended audience.
Further, the criteria by which a website’s performance is measured should serve to help users differentiate and sort through the large number of digital resources and to identify resources that are credible, useful and likely to meet their needs. Additionally, identifying explicit evaluation criteria, indicators and descriptors can provide a common language that can be used by stakeholders, regardless of their background or level of expertise, when referring to digital resources. This can be particularly helpful when stakeholders and developers come together to build or refine a digital resource.

Drawing conclusions from one perspective, such as website analytics alone, can potentially compromise the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the evaluation undertaken and as such selecting appropriate metrics is the critical preliminary stage when evaluating websites. As part of establishing the review process for the evaluation of the SSH website, in addition to website analytics, the Website Evaluation Framework (WEF: Taddeo, 2011) was applied to facilitate the mapping of the strengths and weaknesses of the SSH and the identification of areas requiring future development (see Figure 1). The WEF provided the theoretical underpinning for the evaluation process and provided a systematic method to website evaluation that was used with multiple stakeholders and provided a manageable approach to guide website development. The WEF was developed by drawing on the:

- Novice/expert literature (Bruer, 1993; Hogan, Rabinowitz & Craven, 2003; Leinhardt, 1989; Schunk, 1991; Sternberg & Ben Zeev, 2001), and provides the basis for identifying differences between progressive and emergent elements of education websites. To reflect the dynamic and evolving nature of websites, as distinct from individuals, the terms novice and expert were substituted with emergent and progressive.
- Website evaluation literature (Beck, 2009), which was applied to the evaluation of the website as a platform, resource and a tool in its own right.
- The Making Better Connections framework (Downes et al, 2001), which is inherently progressive in nature and contextually appropriate for education settings, informed the development of indicators related to teaching and learning elements, curriculum, pedagogy and broader education-related factors.

The WEF (Taddeo, 2011), which addresses website design, purpose, content and technology integration, promotes a holistic approach to website evaluation. Collectively the criteria enable comprehensive insights into educative digital resources. Additionally, the various components of the evaluation process, inclusive of survey, interview and analytic data aims to contribute understandings about the ways in which the SSH can:

- Enable and enhance teaching, learning, communication and innovation in the context of Safe Schools and young peoples’ wellbeing
- Connect and engage school communities and stakeholders, in particular schools, students and parents by facilitating interactivity and the exchange of information, ideas and resources
- Become an embedded feature of contemporary education settings.
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<td>Level 3P: Inform, Communicate, Engage</td>
<td>Level 3C: Moderate/regular stakeholder contributions, moderate coverage, evidence of authority, credibility &amp; currency</td>
<td>Level 3II: Descriptors indicative of a pedagogical focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2D: Basic template Functional website</td>
<td>Level 2P: Inform, Communicate</td>
<td>Level 2C: Limited or irregular stakeholder contributions &amp; updates, limited coverage, no explicit evidence of authority, credibility</td>
<td>Level 2II: Descriptors indicative of a curriculum focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1D: Static Website or No Website</td>
<td>Level 1P: Inform</td>
<td>Level 1C: No or minimal stakeholder contributions, incomplete/outdated, no or minimal coverage, static information</td>
<td>Level 1IID: Descriptors indicative of a skill focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1 Website Evaluation Framework (Taddeo, 2011)*
Future considerations

The digital landscape is a dynamic space that continues to undergo rapid changes. Some of these include cloud computing, big data analytics, growth in mobile wireless broadband penetration, and uptake of ubiquitous smart devices (OECD, 2014). These advancements are changing the way information is delivered, accessed, used and stored, and the way people are communicating and conducting various tasks and activities. However, whilst these developments can provide new opportunities such as novel ways to engage with users, they also can introduce new challenges, particularly with regard to remaining current with new platforms and utilising innovative ways to deliver resources. To remain relevant and accessible, these advancements warrant consideration in the planning, development and refinement of any education-related digital resources.

Research Questions

The following research questions provide the focus for this evaluation.

1. To what extent do students, teachers and parents who have used the Safe Schools Hub believe it will be effective in improving education outcomes for students?
2. How successfully does the Safe Schools Hub provide digital resource coverage for the National Safe Schools Framework for Foundation to Year 12?
3. Do stakeholders – including jurisdictions, teachers, professional associations and peak bodies – intend to continue to use and to promote ongoing use of the Safe Schools Hub? If not, what improvements do they suggest in order to make the resource more suitable to use and promote to their constituents?
4. In what ways are users interacting with the Safe Schools Hub?
5. How discoverable is the Safe Schools Hub to teachers, pre-service teachers, school leaders, parents, students and specialist support staff?
6. What improvements could be made to the Safe Schools Hub to support students and families to feel safer in their school community?
Methodology

Summary
This commissioned evaluation of the Safe Schools Hub:

- Employed a Convergent Parallel Mixed Method research design (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2011)
- Incorporated (a) traditional active data collection methods, which involved participant engagement, through interviews (N=25) and an online survey (N=138), and (b) passive data collection accessed via Google Analytics (60,034 sessions recorded between the period of 14 March 2013 and 31 January 2015).
- Involved a diverse range of stakeholders including school leaders, teachers, pre-service teachers, parents, regional and state wide policy advisors.

Context

Learning is an inherent aspect of any planned inquiry process, including evaluations of programs or initiatives. Rallis and Bolland (2004) propose that the overarching aim of an evaluation is to examine and explain purposes, activities, and outcomes of a particular initiative or program and further generate knowledge regarding its value, effectiveness and usefulness. Patton (1997) details three interconnected aspects of evaluations: (1) a systematic collection of data about (2) identified elements of a program or initiative, including activities, characteristics, and outcomes (3) for the purpose of informing judgements and decisions, to ultimately improve the effectiveness of an initiative or program.

This evaluation of the SSH aligned with the elements of an evaluation as identified by Rallis and Bolland (2004) and Patton (1997) above: in that it applied a systematic approach to data collection by employing a convergent parallel mixed method research design (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2011) (see Figure 2). This design enabled the concurrent collection of different, but complementary data from a range of stakeholders about the purposes, activities, and outcomes associated with the SSH. Following the collection and analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data, findings were merged to address the research purpose: to provide an evidence-base to inform future development and directions of the SSH.

A particular strength of this evaluation is the number of diverse stakeholders from education and related sectors who provided insights. This enhanced the validity of the process employed, enabling adequate and appropriate inferences to be drawn from the data (Brandon, 1998). Additionally, this approach supports data and method triangulation across various data sources and collection methods in order to comprehensively address the research objectives.
By employing both traditional data collection methods, through active participant engagement, in interviews and an online survey, and passive data collection accessed via Google Analytics this approach:

- Maximised stakeholder reach and engagement in the evaluation and consultation process
- Capitalised on the collective experiences and expertise of stakeholders
- Enabled engagement with descriptive and numerical data, inclusive of analytics data, to inform future directions for the Safe Schools Hub.

**Figure 2: Convergent Parallel Mixed Method Research Design**
(adapted from Plano Clark & Creswell, 2011)
Qualitative Research Methods

Face-to-face and telephone interviews (N= 25)

Face-to-face and telephone interviews were designed to explore in depth, expert and user: awareness; insights; and experience; of the Safe School Hub, specifically related to:

- Content coverage, relevancy, currency, quality and organisation of information on the SSH
- Perceived effectiveness of the SSH in providing resources to support the National Safe Schools Framework and to facilitate the education and wellbeing outcomes for students
- User practices when interacting with the SSH
- Future:
  - intentions to use the SSH, and motivations/reasons for using or not using the SSH
  - suggested improvements
- Delivery, specifically how discoverable the SSH is for its intended audience.

A semi-structured format was employed to enable discussion of key pre-determined constructs aligned with the WEF (Taddeo, 2011), specifically: design; purpose; content; and pedagogy, whilst still providing opportunity for open-ended discussions and exploration of relevant themes that emerged during interviews. To minimise interviewer bias and facilitate consistent delivery of questions and coverage of themes, interview protocols, including guiding questions, were identified as part of the interview schedule and were organised under the following key headings:

- Demographics
- Familiarity and engagement with the SSH
- Locating and navigating the SSH
- Experience of the SSH
- Thoughts about future directions and developments of The SSH.

Additionally, attempts were made to convene focus groups, but due to time constraints and poor response rate, the decision was made to proceed with one on one interviews.

Quantitative Research Methods

Online survey (N=138)

An online survey was employed to gain an understanding of the target sample’s opinions, attitudes and perspectives about the SSH. The online survey was a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire which incorporated Likert scales and text-based open-ended responses to explore relevant themes. The survey was hosted on the Qualtrics secure platform. Qualtrics uses Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption (also known as HTTPS) for all transmitted data and uses HTTP referrer checking. Access to the survey on the Qualtrics platform was password-protected and when downloaded, anonymous survey data was stored on password protected University servers.
During the development phase, the online survey underwent a comprehensive iterative process of refinement and trialling by the research team. This included input from members of the University of South Australia’s Centre for Research in Education: Wellbeing Research Group. Additionally, staff from Education Services Australia also were invited to review the survey and provide feedback.

The survey instrument aligned closely with the interview schedule and WEF (Taddeo, 2011) and was structured under the following key sections:

- Section 1: About You - key demographics
- Section 2: Your familiarity and engagement with the Safe Schools Hub
- Section 3: Locating and navigating the Safe Schools Hub
- Section 4: Your perspective on the purpose of the Safe Schools Hub website
- Section 5: Your experience of The Safe Schools Hub website
- Section 6: Your thoughts about future directions and developments of The Safe Schools Hub.

**Google Analytics (GA)**

Google Analytics data facilitated the analysis of visitor traffic to the SSH and provided a picture of the: characteristics and behaviours of SSH users, such as browsers and devices used to access the SSH; the routes users took to reach the SSH; and a visual assessment of the way users interacted with various pages on the SSH.

It is important to note that analysis of GA data was based on the generic reports generated within the GA platform, and included: website traffic; sources of traffic; visitor geographic location; browsers and devices used.

**Data Analyses**

**Analysis of semi-structured interviews**

Telephone and face-to-face interviews were conducted in metropolitan Adelaide and were completed between February and March 2015. Interviews were approximately 20 to 40 minutes in duration and were audio-recorded with informed consent from participants. These files were then transcribed by an independent transcription service provider. Data were de-identified and subsequently analysed.

Qualitative content analysis involves the processes of immersion (engagement with the data), reduction (developing a consistent approach to the data), and interpretation (Forman & Damschroder, 2008). A qualitative directed content analysis (Mayring, 2000) was employed whereby existing research, namely the WEF (Taddeo, 2011) provided the initial key constructs to frame the analysis of the text. The main objective was to provide explicit definitions, examples/quotes from the transcript and coding rules for each identified category. The coding scheme then facilitated the organisation of data into identified categories. Additional themes that could not be classified under pre-determined codes were noted and assigned to a new category (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). An advantage of establishing and complying with a coding scheme is that it contributes to increased validity of the study (Hsieh & Shannon 2005; Kaid 1989).
Three members of the research team independently reviewed and coded the transcripts to ensure inter-rater reliability of macro-themes identified. The interviewer then independently reviewed the main themes and overview of the findings, to ensure that the ideas from the participants were accurately represented. Direct participant quotations are presented where relevant, enabling individual voices to be heard, adding richness to common, core (macro) themes. In summary, macro themes emerged from participants conversations which reflect the evaluation criteria being applied: viz awareness and promotion; design; content, purpose of the Safe Schools Hub and future developments.

To further strengthen the validity of the findings, peer debriefing, triangulation and persistent observation were undertaken. Specifically, the findings from this process were triangulated with those generated with the survey responses. Peer debriefing was conducted as part of the formative check of credibility to discuss and validate coding rules, descriptors and allocation of the data to the categories. To ensure themes were accurately captured and as part of the inter-rater reliability process, three members of the research team, who were not involved in the initial coding of interview transcripts, reviewed the analysis procedure and provided inter-rater reliability checks, by reviewing the coding of data and the intermediate/macro themes identified.

Analysis of survey data

Survey data were analysed using various techniques available in SPSS procedures IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp. 2010) and where required, charts were generated in Microsoft Office Excel (2010) to provide a visual representation of the data. Interpretative coding was employed to capture the emergent themes evident in the open-ended text responses which was further analysed in concert with the stakeholder interview data.

The findings in this report draw predominately on descriptives, frequencies and cross-tabulation procedures. Whilst additional options for analysis were available they were not considered necessary to address the research questions. Responses from school leaders, teachers, school personnel, pre-service teachers and parents were examined and data reported are inclusive of perspectives from both users and non-users of the SSH. It is important to note that low numbers in some subsamples was not conducive to conducting comparative analysis.

Analysis of Google Analytics data

Reports generated in GA comprise dimensions and metrics. Dimensions such as city, or country, describe user characteristics including their sessions or number of visits and actions. The dimension country for example describes a characteristic of a session and indicates the country from which a session originated. The dimension Page describes a characteristic of page view actions and provides the URL of each page that was viewed. Browser, devices and language also are dimensions that can be examined. Metrics on the other hand, are quantitative measures; the metric Sessions is the total number of sessions/visits. The metric Pages/Session is the average number of pages viewed per session. Average session duration, page view, users and bounce rate are other available metrics.
SSH web analytics were examined through the reports available in GA by reviewing relevant dimensions and metrics. An important consideration is that a number of reports generated in GA rely on data collected through cookies. Therefore it must be acknowledged that if a visitor deletes or disables cookies on their device, information for that visit or visitor will not be recorded or could be compromised or lost.

The GA data examined are organised under the following macro level headings:

- Volume of visits to the SSH
- Geographical location of visitors & sources of traffic to the SSH
- Technology used to access the SSH
- Purpose for visiting the SSH
- Engagement with the SSH.

**Ethical Considerations**

Human research activities are governed by the principles outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007).

This project was approved by the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Additionally, ethics approval to conduct the evaluation in school settings, i.e. with teachers and school leadership was received from:

- Department for Education and Child Development (South Australia)
- Department of Education (Western Australia)
- Department of Education and Training (Queensland).

The processing time for a number of the ethics applications submitted to Education Department ethics committees extended beyond the project timeline and as such recruitment of participants in schools settings was either unable to be pursued or not able to be maximised. Alternative recruitment strategies were subsequently employed (See Recruitment section below).

Obtaining informed participant consent was a critical component of the research process.

Information/consent forms that outlined the: research; contact details of the team members; and participant confidentiality and privacy were provided to participants either in hard copy or as part of the landing page of the online survey.
Recruitment

Multiple recruitment strategies were employed to help achieve desired sample numbers and included discussions/invitations to the organisations identified in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Broad level recruitment strategies employed

Table 1 provides specific details of the organisations approached and where possible the potential reach of the invitations disseminated.

Table 1 Participant recruitment invitations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Invitations (N) where possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT Council of Parents &amp; Citizens Associations</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Council of State School Organisations Queensland</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Education Associations of South Australia</td>
<td>56 member organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of Parents and Citizens’ Associations of New South</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales Parents Council Inc.</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT COGSO (The Council of Government School Organisations)</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Victoria</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals Australia Institute</td>
<td>&gt; 6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Association</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia Association of School Parents Clubs</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australian Association Of State School Organisations Inc.</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australian Schools</td>
<td>40 schools approached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Invitations (N) where possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Parents and Friends Federation of Western Australia Inc.</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Queensland Independent Schools Parents Council Incorporated</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Australia Alumni members - currently employed in the education sector</td>
<td>5,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Australia- School of Education Pre-service teachers</td>
<td>2,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Australia: School of Education Staff</td>
<td>≈ 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Parents Council</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowballing through researcher colleagues</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Characteristics**

*Interview participants*

A total of 25 stakeholders from across Australia were interviewed over a one month period from February to March 2015. Participants who were interviewed represented various sectors and positions as detailed in Table 2 and Table 3.

**Table 2 Interview participants by sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Government Schools</th>
<th>Catholic Schools</th>
<th>Independent Schools</th>
<th>All sectors</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional wellbeing advisor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State wide wellbeing advisor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic University sector and Wellbeing consultant</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent peak body</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing consultant</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing consultant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3 Interview participants by location**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>Across States</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Survey participants**

Interest in the study was overwhelmingly supportive, however with regard to the survey component of this study, the response to the invitations which were sent to over 15,000 stakeholders translated to 138 survey entries. Despite the disappointing response rate, a diverse distribution of school leaders, teachers, parents, school leavers and pre-service teachers and across the levels of education was captured. An overview of the sample characteristics revealed the survey sample was predominately female and located in South Australia (Table 4).

Table 4 Characteristics of survey participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Total % (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State or Territory (N=138)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>0.7% (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>4.3% (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>0.7% (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>1.4% (n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>88.4% (n=122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>4.3% (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (N=138)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>88% (n=122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12% (n=16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation (N=138)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>14.5% (n=20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leaders</td>
<td>10.1% (n=14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Support Staff</td>
<td>2.2% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-service Teacher</td>
<td>7.2% (n=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>23.9% (n=33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leaver</td>
<td>23.9% (n=33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other *1</td>
<td>18.1% (n=25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schooling (N=63)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>4.8% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>23.8% (n=15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>23.8% (n=15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-12</td>
<td>19.0% (n=12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other *2</td>
<td>28.6% (n=18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

*1 Other is inclusive of roles such as University Academic, Teacher Librarian

*2 Other is inclusive of settings such as Adult Education; TAFE; Childcare
Results

In line with a convergent parallel mixed method research design, the survey responses and interview findings were merged together. The results in this section subsequently bring together text and numerical data to address the core sub-questions, and are organised by key: deductive themes identified through the application of the WEF (Taddeo, 2011) and; inductive themes that emerged from the data and which could not be classified under pre-determined codes/themes. This further facilitated the reporting of findings from diverse stakeholders from across: the education sector obtained through the survey and; the various Australian States and Territories acquired through interviews.

Merged Interview and Survey Data Findings

Level of awareness and promotion of the SSH

This overarching theme was examined in the context of: participants’ awareness of the SSH and the NSSF; the perceived effectiveness of the promotion of the SSH and; the discoverability of the SSH for both users and non-users.

What is the level of awareness of the SSH?

- Many participants reported an initial unawareness of the SSH’s existence
- 19% (n=25) had heard of the SSH
- Of the subsamples, school leaders were most aware of the SSH
- The SSH was consistently recognised as a valuable resource but not easily located

I actually stumbled across it [when] I was looking for some information for one of my teachers that I work with ….. I was extremely excited….and I hadn’t heard about it from any other sources….my seniors hadn’t heard of it either’ (Interview 3)

Overall the visibility, awareness, promotion and marketing of the SSH were key issues that emerged from the qualitative and quantitative data. For some participants, the site was well known and was used to support their work. For many others, however, it was considered a valuable resource that was not highly visible and therefore potentially under-utilised.

This macro theme of awareness and promotion of the SSH was explored extensively in the interviews, where responses from participants provided further insights into: the extent to which the key target audience was familiar with the SSH and; perceptions regarding its visibility and how well known the SSH is across the education community.
‘We did circulate it [link to website] to our membership from time to time ... We also have a link to it on our other website as well’ (Interview 8).

Proactive strategies concerning awareness raising and sharing amongst the education community clearly need to be encouraged and strengthened. Many participants, reported an initial unawareness of the Safe School Hub’s existence, thus there are clear implications for marketing and advertising, including use of school or organisational newsletters and websites. Survey participants were asked if they had heard of the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) which underpins the SSH. Of the 134 who provided a response, 35% reported they had heard of the framework, 48% had not heard of it and 17% were unsure. With regard to the SSH itself, 19% (n=25) were aware of the site, and of those who provided a response, 62.5% (n=15) indicated they had visited the SSH. Whilst school leaders were the subgroup most aware of the SSH, a large percentage of the remaining subgroups had not heard of the SSH (Table 5).

The majority of participants (77%; n=10) who indicated they had visited the SSH, had gone to the site once a term or less often. Additionally, the majority did not bookmark or add the SSH to their Favourites (70%; n=16), however the majority of survey participants felt that the SSH Home Page specifically was easy to locate from a search engine (N=12; M=89.50; SD=17.51).

Table 5 Levels of awareness by sub-sample groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Have you heard of the SSH?</th>
<th>% (n=)</th>
<th>Number who had visited the SSH*¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10.0 (n=2)</td>
<td>(n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>85.0 (n=17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>5.0 (n=1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leader</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57.1 (n=8)</td>
<td>(n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>42.9 (n=6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>0 (n=0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-service Teacher</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0 (n=0)</td>
<td>N/A*²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>90.0 (n=9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>10.0 (n=1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Support Staff</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33.3 (n=1)</td>
<td>(n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>33.3 (n=1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>33.3 (n=1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32.0 (n=8)</td>
<td>(n=5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>44.0 (n=11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>24.0 (n=6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20.7 (n=6)</td>
<td>(n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>69.0 (n=20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>10.3 (n=3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leaver</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0 (n=0)</td>
<td>N/A*²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>81.8 (n=27)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>18.2 (n=6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*¹Branch logic was incorporated within the online survey. This enabled the survey items to be tailored to participants level of awareness and exposure to the SSH. For example, those who had not heard or visited the SSH were not asked about content, design etc.

*²Due to missing data
Participants who had not heard of the SSH were subsequently provided with some general information about the SSH and then asked if it would be a site they would go to in the future for information and resources about safe schools and student wellbeing.

Approximately three quarters indicated that they would (74%; n=72) and 22% (n=21) reported they were unsure if they would use the site, citing reasons such as: uncertainty regarding the usefulness and relevance of the SSH for their particular context, needing more information before making a decision; connecting with the school counsellor would be their first preference and; there would need to be evidence that the strategies provided on the SSH actually worked and would facilitate positive change.

Those who indicated they would go to the SSH reported they would do so because: it is credible and reliable (given it is a government supported site); it provides useful resources in the one location and; safety and wellbeing is a priority. Reasons why some participants indicated they would not go to the SSH included: there were already sufficient online resources; and it was unlikely to be relevant for them.

What was promising, was that the SSH was consistently recognised as a valuable resource especially given the increasing emphasis and responsibility for advancing safe school and educational initiatives. This was reinforced by those participants who did not initially know about the website prior to being interviewed, but who then spoke very positively about it once they had viewed and explored the site.

‘I’ll certainly be referring them onto this because I think there’s a lot of resources in here that we could utilise in some of the work we do’
(Interview 12)

The extent to which the SSH is being promoted by current users, such as school leaders, also was investigated. According to participants, the perceived major users of the SSH are teachers and leaders who reported disseminating the SSH link to parents in their school.

‘The main way that I’m promoting it [SSH] to our schools is to support the leadership, to promote it into their school and to use it as that audit’
(Interview 2)

Whilst all survey participants who had visited the SSH either strongly agreed or agreed that the SSH was a valuable resource for teachers and school leaders (n=7), opportunities to more effectively promote the SSH should be explored, as the majority (57%; n=4) did not agree that the SSH was well promoted and marketed across the education and wider community.

Related to this seemingly low visibility, are how the search terms are employed by those seeking information. When using general safety- and wellbeing-related search terms to locate the SSH in search engines such as Google, participants identified that the search exercise was generally problematic. Unless using the full name in the search engine: ‘Safe Schools Hub’, or the more generic ‘safe schools’, stakeholders were unable to locate the website. This presents a conundrum: how can you know what you don’t know?

‘It’s not easy to find if you don’t know it’s there, ... so it’s easy to find once you type in the address – Safe Schools – but I didn’t know it was there’
(Interview 3)

‘You actually have to put the title into google to get to the space’ (Interview 15)
If one is unaware of its existence, search terms often utilised by individuals for specific, but related safety and wellbeing queries, are unlikely to locate the site.

A general consensus from all participants was that parents and students searching for information on specific issues such as ‘bullying’ would not be directed to the Safe Schools Hub website.

‘if you google say... bullying .... I know that bullying is one of the big concerns with parents and that’s how they will be incidentally be looking for things,... that will be the term they use ....and it doesn’t come up in the first page of search for bullying’ (Interview 8)

This has implications for Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) strategies of the SSH and the increased marketing of the SSH through various avenues, including traditional channels. Closer examination of SEO strategies such as unique, accurate page titles, effective use of the "description" Meta tag and refining site structure may help to improve the ranking of the site when generic searches are conducted by potential users. Whilst improving the visibility of the SSH in search engines is particularly important, ensuring the needs of the site’s targeted audience inform any SEO strategies is however fundamental to any future developments especially if the SSH is to be used by parents and students as key stakeholders of this initiative.

Knowing what parents and teachers are actually searching for, aligning stakeholders’ needs with SSH web design and content, in addition to input from all stakeholders to inform the type of marketing strategies that should be employed to achieve extensive reach could potentially improve the visibility and subsequent use of the SSH.

The visibility and awareness challenge then, lies in appropriately promoting the SSH to connect with the intended audience, so that they know: it exists, how to locate it and; what it has to offer. This highlights the need to capitalise on existing opportunities to raise awareness about the SSH and consider new ways to more actively promote the SSH to its target audience by explicitly promoting what the SSH offers for education stakeholders, particularly as a resource that supports and facilitates the implementation of the NSSF.
Design

Website design refers to aspects associated with website structure, webpage layout, content production, and graphic design. This macro theme of design encompasses participants’ response to the look and feel of the SSH generally, their response to specific elements on the SSH, such as, within site search function, and what constitutes good, efficient design for a range of stakeholders with diverse needs.

What do users think of the SSH design?

Most participants felt that the SSH had a functional, interactive and visually appealing interface. Some did identify that the site was text heavy and noted the need to consider improved ways to:

- help orientate users around the SSH
- facilitate interaction
- integrate social media

‘I like the look of it, I think it’s friendly and appealing’ (Interview 8).

Interview data revealed similar findings to survey data regarding participants’ perceptions of the SSH design. Whilst most responded positively to the design of the site, areas for improvement were identified and are discussed below.

Participants overwhelmingly described the SSH as a colourful, visually attractive, user-friendly site that was generally easy to use and navigate, though some noted that you could get lost in the depth of information, making it difficult to backtrack. Use of elements such as ‘breadcrumbs’ as a navigation aid could help users to keep track of their location when navigating through the SSH.

Additionally ensuring that any links to external sites open in new tabs or windows could make it easier for users to return to the SSH.

I did just get shot off to the Safe Schools Hub for students and then couldn’t get back to the original site. So some of that navigation was just a bit tricky’. (Interview 8).

Findings indicated that the majority of participants who had visited the site (n=6) strongly agreed or agreed that the SSH was visually appealing, however overall participants’ responses on a sliding scale from 0 to 100 suggested that the SSH could be more intuitive (N=11; M= 66.27; M=25.62).
Some participants also felt that the navigation/menu bar could be improved (N=11; M=64.91; SD=26.62) to facilitate navigation of the site. Enhancing the visual cues on the SSH could help to better orientate visitors and could make the site more intuitive for users to support efficient searching.

The majority of participants felt the SSH had a functional interface with working links to external sites. Examination, however, of responses to other design-related questions revealed that most participants who had visited the SSH neither agreed nor disagreed that the SSH: was tailored; had social media functionality that worked well; was easy read on mobile devices; was compatible across browsers (37.5%; n=3) or that content on the SSH downloaded quickly. These responses suggest there are a number of areas that could be enhanced to improve the user experience, especially as participants appear to be indifferent about a number of the design elements of the SSH. For some, the site itself was perceived to be ‘clunky’ and ‘static’ and needed more opportunities for interaction.

‘Finding resources is really clunky, I know they’re there but I can’t really access them’ (Interview 18)

This comment again highlights the need for improved cues for users as they navigate the site. Updating to a more user-driven, interactive and innovative platforms which could include features such as discussion forums, ‘Frequently asked questions’ and functionality to share resources, or ‘Ask an Expert’ may provide a means to improve user engagement.

Capturing ongoing feedback from the target audience regarding website design will help to ensure that the design aligns with the changing needs of stakeholders and remains relevant for technology enhanced learning and social environments.

Results show that 60% (n=6) of participants who had visited the SSH used the ‘within site’ search function. Just over half of the participants agreed that it was easy to locate a contact person on the SSH (56%; n=5) and that it was easy to make contact via the SSH (56%; n=5). The majority neither agreed nor disagreed that the SSH provided functionality that enabled collaboration between stakeholders (57%; n=4) or two way communication within the platform (57%; n=4). However the majority did agree that the SSH provided functionality that supported communication across platforms such as social media, though 62.5% (n=5) agreed that better use of social media could be incorporated in the SSH.

Whilst the majority (55.5%; n=5) agreed that the SSH delivered innovative design, 22% (n=2) strongly disagreed with the statement. All participants who provided a response (n=8) either strongly agreed or agreed that the SSH provided a consistent format and 87.5% (n=7) felt that the content was readable with suitable type face and colours. The majority (62.5%; n=5) also felt that the SSH was accessible for multiple audiences.

If this site is to truly engage with parents and students, many suggestions identified that reducing the amount of text and designing a more interactive platform was needed. Additionally, the use of info-graphics to communicate information could be explored as a way of reducing the amount of text and making the site more user friendly, particularly for young people and parents.

‘It could be a bit more interactive – even just having more video content’ (Interview 10)
Given young people’s increasing use of mobile devices, it was suggested that a phone app could be one strategy for increasing student engagement. Catering for cultural diversity and embracing inclusion of those with disabilities: by aligning the website design with national requirements such as including text behind images, tables and figures on the site also were considered important aspects to address in future iterations of the SSH.

‘I think it is very much targeted to the Anglo Saxon parent….. what sort of testing was done with culturally diverse parents?’ (Interview 15)

However, regardless of the strategies employed to improve design, a critical consideration, before embarking on any redevelopments is to revisit and clarify the intended audience of the SSH: something that is not immediately obvious when the student section is examined.

Content
Web content can serve various purposes and can take many different forms. Some content remains static on a website whilst other content is interactive and can continue to evolve either through ongoing development from the contributor or by the manipulation of those who engage with it. Common website content can be textual, visual or aural and can include: text, podcasts; images, sounds, videos, games and animations.

- Majority felt the SSH covered the principles and key elements of the NSSF
- Majority agreed that content was relevant, current, credible, creative and comprehensive
- There is a need to more closely align navigation headings with content
- Some identified a need to more openly and comprehensively address contemporary social issues related to young people and school safety: especially sexuality, disability & culture

‘Continue to add resources, keep them fresh and to keep them current’ (Interview 8)

Interviews provided the opportunity for participants to comment both on the content that was available on the site, and topics they would like to see further developed. The overwhelming position from stakeholders’ interviews was a desire to have a ‘one-stop’ website that provided information and resources but which importantly, would need to be refreshed and updated on a regular basis to ensure currency and relevancy. The SSH was considered an ideal platform to provide such a resource.
‘having a one stop shop that allows me to look at a whole different range of issues, and also not just a whole different range of issues but organised in a way – targeting schools and parents with students. So I think it would be really really helpful to have it all in the one place. And also credible – you want to be able to trust the information you’re receiving as well’ (Interview 10)

Of those who had visited the SSH and provided responses to questions about SSH content, participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the content adequately covered the principles and key elements of the NSSF (87.5%; n=7). Overall, as recorded on a sliding scale from 0 to 100, most participants felt that the SSH provided digital resource coverage for the NSSF for Foundation to Year 12 (N=9; M=82.67; SD=15.20).

Whilst participants consistently recognised that the SSH was closely aligned with the NSSF, there was a need for all areas of the NSSF to be promoted:

‘[the first one]… responsibility and resilience, … I’m not sure how well it promotes that but I think certainly safe supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities and student wellbeing and respectful relationships and positive school culture it does’ (Interview 3)

Providing links to the NSSF throughout, to highlight the principles of the framework, were suggested, to clarify and illustrate the purpose of the SSH as a resource for all education communities.

The teacher/leader users thought the structure based on the nine elements of the NSSF, and then drilling into vignettes and activities, made the website user friendly. Participants’ comments indicated that the videos were particularly well received and liked, and were considered an excellent medium to unpack the vast amounts of information provided.

‘the links to external websites is sensational – the amount of information there is fantastic … I actually became a little bit overwhelmed with the information. So I think it’s [the tour] good to start with that… it actually puts it in context and it looks at the objectives and aims’ (Interview 3)

Most of the participants who had visited the SSH (≥ 75%) agreed or strongly agreed that the content was relevant, current, credible, creative and comprehensive. The majority (89%; n=8) also felt it was relatively easy to locate the sources of the content available on the SSH. The majority strongly agreed or agreed that the SSH content was inclusive (78%; n=7) and that SSH supported and promoted stakeholder contributions (75%; n=6). Approximately two thirds of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed that the SSH provided a privacy policy and terms of use that were easily understood or - a privacy policy and terms of use that were easily located.

Related to inclusivity, the presentation of a range of social issues that were informed by current research and endorsed by experts in the field were appreciated by participants as it gave legitimacy and validity to the site and its content. Participants also considered that there was a need to openly and comprehensively address contemporary social issues with regard to school safety: especially teen sexuality and LGBTI young people’s experiences; disability and culture.
"I'm looking for resources for a student who is gay and just started high school and is experiencing bullying... I would like to see something a little more specific that mentions sexuality" (Interview 25)

All participants (100%; n=8) who had visited the SSH and provided a response, either strongly agreed or agreed that the SSH provided flexibility in the way student wellbeing and safe schools can be addressed and strongly agreed or agreed that the SSH provided ideas and activities that had not been considered (100%; n=9), with links to external sites that were useful and relevant (100%; n=9). The majority either strongly agreed or agreed that the SSH showcased innovative content (78%; n=7) that was unbiased (62.5%), however just over a third (37.5%; n=3) neither agreed nor disagreed that the content was unbiased.

The majority of participants either strongly agreed or agreed that the SSH was pedagogically sound (75%; n=6) and focused on transforming practices (75%; n=6); skill development (62.5%; n=5) and curriculum (62.5%; n=5), however there was considerable variation in the responses recorded on a sliding scale from 0 to 100 with regard to participants’ perceptions about the effectiveness of the SSH in improving wellbeing outcomes (N=12; M=59.17; SD=22.90) or education outcomes (N=12; M=54.92; SD=24.06) of young people.

Related to overall wellbeing outcomes, it was identified that deep exploration of child protection as a topic was not addressed in the website content. This was surprising given the foundational and underlying principles of child safety within educational policy, curriculum and practice. As such ways to incorporate this topic effectively in the SSH needs to be explored.

In terms of the clarity of the organisation of content, it was noted, that the content in the student and parent sections, can be used by leaders to develop specific classroom activities or parent communications, ongoing clarification regarding the purpose and audience of the website is essential and will need to inform marketing strategies. Many noted however, that the headers and labels used to help navigate users needed to be better aligned with the content. This was particularly evident in the section entitled “For Students” as most felt the content was not actually for students, but rather, was a suite of resources which teachers could use with students.

‘The student material is probably most useful for teachers who are going to teach students about the topic’ (Interview 12).

Participants also expressed the need to ensure that language and resources were appealing, culturally inclusive and developmentally appropriate. For example, ensuring that resources for younger children, if they are actually intended for younger children, as distinct from their teachers: are not primarily text based.

‘but what kid in year 1 would ever be able to read – it’s not written – it says it’s for the students, but if students were to look at it they won’t be able to’

(Interview 12)

This page heading was particularly perceived to be problematic and confusing for site visitors, making the purpose and audience seem unclear. Improved labelling of sections could help to reduce confusion regarding the purpose and target audience of the content on various pages and of the site in general.
**Purpose**

Communicating a clear purpose of a website is critical. The WEF (Taddeo, 2011) identifies four primary purposes of education-focused websites, namely: to inform, to communicate, to engage and to showcase innovation. Whilst the purposes identified do not necessarily exist in isolation, that is, a website can deliver information, facilitate communication, engagement and innovation, there is an inherent progression as websites move from focusing on information delivery through to incorporating and promoting innovation in order to provide users with an experience that meets their needs and exceeds their expectations.

- Most participants identified the purpose of the website as providing ‘advice and support for staff’
- Most did not recognise its role as a resource for supporting other stakeholders including students and parents

Website purpose was discussed from multiple perspectives in the interviews and almost three quarters (70.5%; n=5) of participants who visited the site, felt the SSH had clear, transparent goals. Although the SSH services a range of stakeholders by providing information and resources about school safety and social issues that influence student wellbeing, commonly, it was identified that the purpose of the SSH, was to provide:

‘advice and support for staff’ (Interview 3).

Therefore, not unsurprisingly, participants did not readily recognise the SSH’s role in supporting other stakeholders, such as parents and students. It would be fair to say that all respondents understood what the site was about: but once again, the organisation of it, in relation to its purpose, was confusing for some, especially in terms of the headers, which were really for teachers, rather than parents or students.

‘you should re-look at how that’s written because – I can’t remember… I think I was looking at words like relationships or something it comes up quite often, and I thought, which year – what prep kid or year I kid is going to read that and go, re-la-tion-ships, what’s that’ (Interview 12)
In efforts to provide a comprehensive digital resource, it is important that those responsible for further development and refinements of the SSH focus on delivering targeted resources for their intended audience. Trying to provide resources for a wide range of stakeholders can be challenging and rather than achieving high uptake and reach, can result low levels of engagement due to confusion about the purpose and audience. Clearly communicating purpose and audience is therefore essential.

All participants who had visited the SSH and provided a response either strongly agreed or agreed that the SSH was informative and just over three quarters (78%; n=7) felt it was engaging. Participants’ responses varied considerably (Range: 40 to 90 out of a possible 100) when asked if the SSH provided digital resources that met their needs (N=8; M=68.75; SD=17.60). All participants however did feel the SSH benefited school (100%; n=6) and most felt it benefited the wider community (86%; n=6) and further supported a holistic approach to building a safe school community (100%; n=7).

Participants’ also were asked to indicate on a sliding scale 0 to 100 how well they thought the SSH provided the tools and information to assist all members of the school community to nurture student responsibility and resilience. Responses (N=9; M=80.44; SD=13.25) suggested that users of the site felt that SSH addressed this purpose and further fostered respectful relationships (N=8; M=75.38; SD=16.78) and supported members of the school community to build a positive school culture (N=9; M=84.78; SD=13.44). Additionally, participants felt the SSH provided the tools and information to assist parents/carers to support a child who may be impacted by antisocial behaviour, including bullying and cyberbullying (N=10; M=73.00; SD=18.36).

Examining participants’ uptake of the newsletter revealed that of the eight who responded to the question, four indicated they had signed up for the SSH newsletter and found it to be reasonably informative and useful (N=4; M=66.50; SD=18.52).

Gaining insights into the triggers that initiates users’ visit to the SSH can be useful to: determine if the website is aligned with the needs of users; expose areas that may require further development or promotion and; inform the marketing and promotion strategies to better communicate what the SSH offers. Most responses suggested a visit to the SSH was triggered by interest and curiosity or for work-related purposes such as reporting to curriculum leaders.

Parents/carers were asked if, in the past 12 months, they had a conversation with their child/children about safety and wellbeing. Approximately two thirds (64%; n=16) indicated they had, additionally, 56% (n=16) of parents reported that they intended to have a conversation with their child about safety and wellbeing at the beginning of the school year. Whilst it is encouraging that parents are having these important conversations with their child, only one parent had indicated they had visited the SSH. This highlights there is an opportunity to promote to parents the SSH as a resource that can inform these conversations.

Addressing safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of all members of society, particularly schools and their communities, engaging key stakeholders in the development, refinement and re-designing of the website, where relevant, is essential. There are potential benefits in employing participatory co-design processes, where end-users actively engage in the development of the resources they will ultimately use.
This evaluative exercise contributes in part to that process by providing feedback on the existing site. The challenge now is to engage them meaningfully in the re-design of the SSH, so that it encourages a sense of collective ownership. This needs to be inclusive of stakeholders from all education sectors, with provision of case studies that reflect positive initiatives across all settings. It was noted however, that there seemed to be an unbalanced representation from the sectors. Given that approximately 35% of schools in Australia are Non-Government schools, and the remainder, (65%) Government organisations (ABS, 2014), comments were made by some participants who queried the disproportionately large number of Catholic schools represented, as compared with Government Schools.

The importance of community consultations also was highlighted. Specifically, it was noted that if one of the purposes of the site was to engage students (and this was unclear generally) then engaging student voice and involvement would ensure that content is age and contextually appropriate and tailored to young people’s interests and needs.

‘What I would like to see included is consultations… consulting young people on the best way to organise it and the best in terms of content development – just making sure that it’s really reaching the people that it’s trying to target’
(Interview 10)

Similarly, parent voice also was considered an important inclusion to ensure that the information and resources provided for them are accurately addressing their needs. For instance, parents have highlighted the desire to have information about specific steps to follow when approaching schools and teachers about issues affecting their child, particularly to ensure safe communication. Their voice in this area would be invaluable.

‘If it’s about being safe you’ve got to feel safe about raising an issue that maybe interpreted as being – as a parent that you’re being a bit of a helicopter parent or you’re being a bit too over anxious. So I mean the hub doesn’t talk – doesn’t sort of equip parents and students about how to navigate that. So there’s potentially an opportunity here… if they had something that they could download and fill out – as it’s sort of like a way of doing a safe communicato to a school about raising an issue, think that would be a really useful tool… I think to equip them with some additional tools about how they can do that communication without fear and not just fear of the approach, but also the… retribution of being sort of labelled of being … a bit over anxious – those sort of things and I think the other part of that is that if that fails then what.’ (Interview 15)

The purpose of any site, closely relates to the audience it intended to engage. Whilst there is much that is clear, being ‘fit for purpose’ requires consideration as to whether the SSH is for all (parents, students, teachers and school leaders) or specifically identified stakeholders (advice and support for schools and school leaders). If for all, then the organisation of the site needs to more closely marry the purpose and audience. If it is to engage students, then it is suggested they need to be involved in the co-design of the sections relevant to them. If however, the student section is primarily providing ideas/resources for teachers when working with students then the purpose of that section needs to be more clearly communicated.
**Future considerations**

Exploring a feasible and effective consultative process to inform and shape future developments of the SSH beyond involvement in the evaluative phase can provide the opportunity to engage stakeholders in developing a resource that is optimised for, and tailored to the needs of the target audience.

Consider:

- Improved navigation; clearer and easier to read pages
- More practical ideas including resources especially for children, including videos
- Resources that could be edited by users to suit individual contexts/settings
- Greater interactivity
- More content relating to cultural diversity, disability and sexuality

When asked about the need for a website, which provided information and resources that promoted safe schools and student wellbeing, the overwhelming majority of respondents felt it was very important to have such a website; particularly given duty of care responsibilities and the links between students’ safety and wellbeing and their ability to be effective learners.

Participants were asked if there were any features, functionality or type of content/resources that would make the SSH more appealing or useful. A range of responses have been previously mentioned, including: *improved navigation; clearer and easier to read pages; more practical ideas including resources especially for children, including videos they could watch; resources that could be edited by users to suit individual contexts/settings.*

Some also noted more content relating to intellectual disability; State and Territory specific information along with information about the national agenda would be useful.

Additionally, better promotion, including linking articles in posts or a Facebook page to enable easier sharing of information and providing a smart phone friendly version would be useful improvements. Issues that arise from this suggestion however relate to browser compatibility. By optimising the SSH for current browsers some functionality of the SSH might be compromised if viewed on older browsers.
It was noted earlier, that greater interactivity was needed. As part of informing potential directions for the SSH, participants were asked how useful webinars or other 'real time/synchronous' communication options would be on the SSH. Mean analysis revealed considerable variation in responses, but overall they were considered only marginally useful (N=64; M=66.16; SD=26.16) as would be a mediated online user community to share resources, ideas, (N=64; M=68.50; SD=27.98). Responses also suggested that participants were not likely to participate in webinars promoted by the Safe Schools Hub (N=64; M=58.18; SD=28.30).

There were comments provided by some respondents who felt it was not important to have a website that provided information and resources that promote safe schools and student wellbeing. Reasons stated indicated that rather than having another website about student safety and wellbeing, consolidating all resources into one location could help to minimise confusion. Others felt that schools should be primarily responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their students. This however does raise the issue about how school leaders, teachers and the community can be supported to fulfil their responsibility, if resources such as the SSH are not available.

**Google Analytics**

Examination of Google Analytics data provided information predominately about:

- The number of visits, page views and session duration
- Sources of traffic
- Visitors’ engagement with the Safe Schools Hub website
- User profile with regard to: location; devices; browsers and operating systems visitors used to access the website
- The behaviour patterns of users, such as landing pages, exit pages and search terms used.

The data reported covers the first session recorded on Google Analytics, 14 March 2013 to the 31 January 2015 (beginning of the 2015 school year). Data is reported on generic analytics collected in Google Analytics.

During the specified period of analysis, there were 60,034 sessions recorded on GA. A session is considered a group of interactions that take place on a website within a given time frame. A single session can contain multiple screen or page views or events such as watching video. Generally speaking, a session will expire either after 30 minutes of inactivity or at midnight.
Volume of visits to the SSH

This section reports on the number of visits to the SSH and examines any associated trends. It also will report on new versus return visits.

How many people visited the SSH?

- Approximately 48,000 people visited the SSH, generating just over 69,000 sessions (visits) and approximately 269,000 page views
- The majority of users are one off visitors to the site
- Overall, visits to the SSH have slowly but steadily increased from 2013 to 2014

Examination of the session trends since the SSH launch (Figure 4) showed that during 2013, the number of visits to the SSH remained largely under 3,000/month, falling to just over 1,000 visits in the month of December, 2013. However, for 9 months of the 2014 year visits/month regularly reached above 3,000, peaking in March of 2014 with almost 5,500 visits. Not surprisingly, and corresponding with school holiday periods, the months of December and January appear to have the lowest number of visits.

Figure 4 Sessions by month
During the period analysed, approximately 70% (n=48,089) were new visits with just under a third (n=20,945) of visitors returning to the site. Whilst attracting new visitors to the SSH is essential, it also is important to investigate why almost two thirds of first time visitors are not returning to the SSH site. Consideration of strategies to keep visitors returning to the site over extended periods of time is warranted.

*Geographical location of visitors & sources of traffic to the SSH*

This section examines where visits to the site are generated and the sources of traffic, both web and social network referrals.

- The overwhelming majority of visits (85%) were generated from Australia
- The main sources of traffic to the SSH site were either via an organic search conducted on a search engine (36%) or referrals to the site 23% (n=15,879), which are generated by traffic through links on other websites
- The highest referral sources were from bullyingnoway.gov.au and education.gov.au sites
- Just under 2% of visitors came from social media referrals

Where do the visitors come from and what are the main sources of traffic to the SSH?
**Origin of sessions by location**

Visits to the site were generated across 163 countries. Table 6 details the countries where 200 or more visits were generated and Table 7 details the cities with the highest number of visits.

Table 6 Sessions by country where over 200 visits were generated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Sessions (Total N=69,034)</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>58,599</td>
<td>84.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2,008</td>
<td>2.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1,508</td>
<td>2.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,259</td>
<td>1.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Details are only provided for countries where greater than 200 visits were generated. As such the total does not add up to Total number of sessions and percentages do not add up to 100.

Whilst clusters are apparent in the visual representation below (Figure 5), in 86 instances, visits from a particular location equate to 10 visits or less e.g. Hungary 8 visits; Vanuatu 3 visits; Croatia 1 visit.

![Figure 5 Visits to the SSH by origin of city](image)
Table 7 Cities with highest number of visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Sessions</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>16,501</td>
<td>23.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>13,759</td>
<td>19.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>7,196</td>
<td>10.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>6,442</td>
<td>9.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>5,183</td>
<td>7.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>2,874</td>
<td>4.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>2,423</td>
<td>3.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not set</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>1.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>0.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Details are only provided for cities with the highest number of visits. As such the total does not add up to 100.

Sources of traffic by sessions

The majority of visits to the site were generated by organic searches through an unpaid search engine listing. In the overwhelming majority of instances (36% of sessions), this occurred through the Google search engine (n= 25,769). Alternate ways of recording an organic search is either by a user typing in the site’s URL directly into their browser or by clicking on the site’s URL link in their bookmark/favourites.

Referrals, generated by links on other websites, accounted for an additional 23% (n=15,879) of traffic. This highlights the exposure that can be achieved by driving traffic to the SSH site via other credible online sources. Figure 6 shows traffic sources at the general level with closer scrutiny of social networking sources of SSH site referrals.

![Figure 6 Traffic sources](image)

Note: Labelling for Percentages <1% is not included in the chart
Table 8 examines the sources of traffic by sessions/visits. It is evident that there are a number of government sites that are sources of good referrals to the SSH site.

Table 8 Highest sources of traffic by sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffic Source</th>
<th>Number and Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 organic</td>
<td>25,769 (37.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (direct) / (none)</td>
<td>20,949 (30.35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bullyingnoway.gov.au / referral</td>
<td>4,839 (7.01%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 education.gov.au / referral</td>
<td>2,720 (3.94%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 bing / organic</td>
<td>976 (1.41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 scootle.edu.au / referral</td>
<td>955 (1.38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 deewr.gov.au / referral</td>
<td>842 (1.22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 bounceback.com.au / referral</td>
<td>769 (1.11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 decd.sa.gov.au / referral</td>
<td>609 (0.88%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 esa.edu.au / referral</td>
<td>601 (0.87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 t.co / referral</td>
<td>589 (0.85%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 ndlrn.edu.au / referral</td>
<td>583 (0.84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 news.bullyingnoway.gov.au / referral</td>
<td>521 (0.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 leo.acu.edu.au / referral</td>
<td>504 (0.73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 mychild.gov.au / referral</td>
<td>410 (0.59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 decdhrdw.sai.edu.au / referral</td>
<td>408 (0.59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 cybersmart.gov.au / referral</td>
<td>384 (0.56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 generationnext.com.au / referral</td>
<td>364 (0.53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 yahoo / organic</td>
<td>300 (0.43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 m.facebook.com/referal</td>
<td>226 (0.33%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Details are only provided for highest sources of traffic. As such the total does not add up to Total number of sessions and percentages do not add up to 100.

Social network referrals to SSH site

Twelve social networking sites were identified as sources of traffic to the SSH, with Twitter (n=608) and Facebook (n=480) the highest generators of social referrals. In noting however, that less than 2% of traffic sources were referrals from social networking sites, this may provide an avenue for driving traffic to the SSH which is currently under-utilised. Opportunities to capitalise on these channels for promotion and engagement with the site may be worth further investigation.

Type of engagement on social networks

Examination of social networking referrals by the entry page into the SSH site revealed that the site’s home page was the primary entry point. Parent pages on the site were also shown to be key entry points, particularly via Facebook and Twitter platforms (Table 9).
Table 9 SSH Engagement via social networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared URL</th>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Page views</th>
<th>Avg. Session Duration</th>
<th>Pages / Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/">www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/</a></td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>0:01:28</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/">www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/</a></td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>0:02:54</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safeschoolshub.edu.au/</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0:00:22</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safeschoolshub.edu.au/</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>0:00:59</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents/what-to-do-about-bullying/what-to-do-if-your-child-is-taking-part-in-bullying-another-child</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0:00:43</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents">www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents</a></td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0:03:28</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home">www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home</a></td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>0:03:00</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents/resources-for-parents">www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents/resources-for-parents</a></td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0:02:24</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents">www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents</a></td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0:00:04</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home">www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home</a></td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0:03:31</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home">www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home</a></td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0:03:31</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Technology used to access the SSH

The following section reports on the devices that are used to access the SSH. Given the ever-increasing range of devices available to users, information about those which are used most frequently to access the SSH can inform budget and development decisions regarding compatibility and optimisation.
By far, desktop devices are used to access the SSH site (82%), followed by tablets and then mobiles.

Internet Explorer is the browser most often used when accessing the SSH - accounting for 35.37% of all browsers recorded on GA.

441 different mobile devices were used to access the SSH.

In relation to mobile devices, the Apple iPad (n=6,546) and iPhones (n=2,629) are used most frequently to access the SSH.

Desktop computers are the device most frequently used to access the SSH (Figure 7). The top five browsers used included: Internet Explorer; Chrome; Safari; Firefox; and Android Browser.

Where users accessed the SSH site through Internet Explorer, versions 9.0; 8.0 and 11.0 accounted for 82% of visits. Safari versions 7.0; 6.0 and 6.0.5 were most frequently used, accounting for about half (49.61%) of the Safari browser versions. This information can inform further development and refinement, particularly with regard to compatibility of the site with browsers most frequently used.
Examination of mobile devices used to access the SSH site, revealed that Apple iPad and Apple iPhone accounted for almost three quarters of the mobile devices (73.67%). This finding can be used to inform decisions regarding the level of investment allocated to customising the SSH experience for mobile users.

Figure 7 Type of device used to access SSH

**Purpose for visiting the SSH**

Search terms used internally within the SSH site and externally via search engines were examined to help establish the primary reasons or triggers for visits to the SSH site.

**What are the organic search terms and what were visitors searching for within the SSH?**

- The primary search term used in organic searches included Safe Schools Hub or a variation of this term
- Only a small number of visits to the SSH included the use of the site's search function
- Visitors primarily searched for topics related to bullying and cyberbullying, survey, audit tool and homophobia
Google encrypts keyword data within the referrer URL from a secure search; this means that not all keywords which drive traffic to a site can be viewed on GA. The organic search data in analytics is placed into a category called “not provided”. This is the secure data which has no keyword data in the referral string. Whilst the ‘Not provided’ category accounted for most of the sessions (approximately 19,000), the search terms: ‘Safe Schools Hub’ or variations such as ‘Safe School Hub’; and ‘National Safe Schools Hub’ were by far the top search terms used by visitors in searches conducted organically. Other terms that featured included ‘behaviour management’; ‘National Safe Schools Framework’; positive behaviour management; and student wellbeing.

There were 2,723 total unique searches conducted on the SSH site in the identified timeframe. Of the total visits to the site (N= 69,034), 2.55% used the within site search function. Interestingly, those who conducted within site searches spent considerably longer on the site (Average session duration: 11:05) than visitors who didn’t (Average session duration: 3:51). Additionally, of the 48,089 new users to the site only 2% (n=962) conducted a within site search. To encourage increased use of the within site search function it may be worthwhile examining the placement of the search function on the site and the design elements, particularly given that the bounce rate was substantially higher for visits without site search (46.14%) compared to the bounce rate of visits where within site searches were conducted (2.72%).

With regard to the search terms used within the site search function, the top 20 search terms used with the Site’s search function are listed below in Table 10.

Most of the searches conducted within the site were conducted on the home page/landing page of the site on the Resources and Help – Resource gallery page located via the top navigation menu bar and from the Safe Schools Toolkit Overview page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Term</th>
<th>Search Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bullying (n= 111)</td>
<td>11. Student survey (n= 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Search (n= 92)</td>
<td>12. Cyber safety (n= 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cyberbullying (n= 55)</td>
<td>13. Register (n= 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Survey (n= 24)</td>
<td>14. Starting school (n= 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. School audit tool (n= 20)</td>
<td>15. FAQ (n= 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Homophobia (n= 18)</td>
<td>16. Starting school (n= 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Audit tool (n= 18)</td>
<td>17. Gay (n= 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cyber bullying (n= 16)</td>
<td>18. School readiness (n= 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. National Safe Schools Framework (n= 16)</td>
<td>19. Sexting (n= 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Audit (n=15)</td>
<td>20. Cybersafety (n=9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be determined from Table 10 above, there are variations of the same terms such as cyberbullying with and without spacing. When examining the complete list of search terms it is evident that a number of the terms were used only once in the within site search function.
Engagement with the SSH

How did visitors engage with the SSH?

- On average, users stayed on the site for 4:02 minutes per visit, however approximately 48% (n=33,012) of the total sessions lasted 0-10 seconds
- 70% of visitors were new to the SSH.
- On average, users visited 3.90 pages per session

Overall the average page load time was 5.60 seconds. Returning visitors to the SSH site tend to spend longer on the site and view more pages (4.55 pages/session- 5:23 minutes average session duration) than those who are first time visitors (3.61 pages/session 3:27 minutes average session duration).

On average users who accessed the SSH with a desktop spent longer time on the site (4:20 minutes average session duration) than those who accessed it via a tablet (3:16 minutes average session duration) or mobile device (1:57 minutes average session duration).

In terms of key events on the site as recorded by GA there were 3,764 downloads from the SSH. The overwhelming majority of these downloads were pdf files available on the site, with the top downloaded resource on the site being the NSSF followed by the ‘Do you see what I see’ handout (Table 11).

Table 11 Top 10 pdf downloads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Downloaded Pdf File</th>
<th>Total Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/nationalsafeschoolsframework.pdf</td>
<td>1,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/5-8/ss3a_do_you_see_what_i_see_handout.pdf</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/2-4/va2_great_expectations_handouts.pdf</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/9-12/ss4a_through_my_eyes_handout.pdf</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/5-8/ss3b_safe_schools_circuit_handout.pdf</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/2-4/ss2a_my_teacher_and_me_handout.pdf</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/2-4/ss2b_play_it_safe_handout.pdf</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/f-1/ss1a_best_buddies_handout.pdf</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/f-1/va1_care_for_you_care_for_me_student.pdf</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/f-1/r11_friendship_tree_handout.pdf</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally, word documents also were downloaded (Table 12), and of the 494 document files ‘toolkit/smtp’; and ‘When should your child start school’ were by far the top 2 downloaded word documents, with download numbers dropping considerably after the first two documents.

Table 12 Top 10 Documents downloaded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Label</th>
<th>Total Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/docs/default-source/toolkit/smtp.doc</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents-files/when_should_your_child_start_school.doc</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student-documents/f-1/ss1a_best_buddies_teacher.doc</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/student-documents/f-1/val1_care_for_you_care_for_me_teacher.doc</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/student-documents/2-4/ss2a_my_teacher_and_me_teacher.doc</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/student-documents/2-4/rl2_school_rules_walk_teacher.doc</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/student-documents/5-8/ss3a_do_you_see_what_i_see_teacher.doc</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/student-documents/f-1/rl1_friendship_tree_teacher.doc</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/student-documents/2-4/ss2b_play_it_safe_teachers.doc</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/student-documents/f-1/ss1b_playground_detectives_teacher.doc</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination of user behaviours related to email, analytics revealed that the email link on the site was clicked 39 times overall, with 33 being unique events. It appears that the safeschools@deewr.gov.au was chosen 20 times and the remaining 19 email clicks were sshub@esa.edu.au

The other main event recorded on GA was titled ‘External’, review of the data in this field refers to outbound links users have clicked that direct them to external sites or pages not contained within the SSH primary URL.

There were just over 10,000 of these events, with 6,578 of them being unique. The top 10 outbound links recorded are detailed below in Table 13:

Table 13 External links

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Label</th>
<th>Total Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>school-audit-tool.safeschoolshub.edu.au</td>
<td>1,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tplm.safeschoolshub.edu.au</td>
<td>984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au">www.bullyingnoway.gov.au</a></td>
<td>654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plm.safeschoolshub.edu.au</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school-audit-tool.safeschoolshub.edu.au/</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pplm.safeschoolshub.edu.au</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bullyingnoway.gov.au/parents/index.html</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ssh.audittool.stage.esa.edu.au</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
User flow and behaviours

Where do visits to the SSH begin?

- 44% of traffic to the SSH began on the SSH home/landing page, and a further 10% of traffic started on the toolkit/overview page
- Both new and returning visitors tended to enter the site on the SSH landing page
- The second highest landing page for new visitors was the element 5 (positive behaviour management) introduction page

Table 14 details the top 10 landing pages for the SSH site and provides the average session duration for each of the landing pages. Interestingly the landing page with the longest session duration was the toolkit/the-nine-elements page with visitors spending on average of approximately eight minutes on the page. Conversely, the parents’ ‘developing your child’s positive social values’ page and the glossary page registered the shortest average session duration of under two minutes.

Table 14 Landing page by session and average session duration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landing Page</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Average Session Duration (hours, minutes, seconds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>30,351</td>
<td>0:04:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/safe-schools-toolkit/overview</td>
<td>6,666</td>
<td>0:04:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/safe-schools-toolkit/the-nine-elements/element-5/introduction</td>
<td>6,607</td>
<td>0:02:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/home</td>
<td>3,317</td>
<td>0:04:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/for-parents/your-part/developing-your-child's-positive-social-values/</td>
<td>1,743</td>
<td>0:00:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/safe-schools-toolkit/the-nine-elements/element-7/introduction</td>
<td>1,647</td>
<td>0:03:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/for-parents</td>
<td>1,642</td>
<td>0:03:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/resources-and-help/Glossary</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>0:01:53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/resources-and-help/resource-gallery</td>
<td>1,049</td>
<td>0:04:38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/safe-schools-toolkit/the-nine-elements</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>0:07:59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 8 which examined landing page by user flow is based on just over 68,500 sessions and showed that the [www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/) was the primary landing page with over 30,000 sessions. The [toolkit overview](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/overview) and the [element 5 Positive Behaviour Management introduction](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/the-nine-elements/5/introduction) page registered approximately 6,500 sessions each. The [www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/) page is separately identified and registered around 3,300 sessions. The [http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents/your-part/developing-your-child's-positive-social-values/](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents/your-part/developing-your-child's-positive-social-values/) also featured amongst the top 5 landing pages for the site, and registered approximately 1,700 sessions. The remaining 20,000 sessions represented more than 100 landing pages.

Landing pages also were examined by visitor type, that is, returning or new. Data showed that the [SSH landing](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/the-nine-elements/5/introduction) page had the highest number of sessions for new visitors followed by the [element 5 introduction](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/the-nine-elements/5/introduction) page (Positive Behaviour Management), whilst for returning visitors it was the [SSH landing](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/) page followed by the [Toolkit overview](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/overview) page.

- The SSH landing/home page received the most page views, with about 15% (n=39,671) of the total page views, followed by the toolkit overview page with 11.6% of page views (n=31,170)

- Other key visited pages included: the resource-gallery; the nine elements; and element 5 introduction (positive behaviour management) pages

It is evident from Figure 8 below that there were a number of traffic paths and drop-off points when examining user flow within the SSH site. However in analysing the primary traffic path that started with the [www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/) page there were approximately 13,000 drop-offs before the first interaction. The remaining majority clicked through to the [toolkit overview](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/overview); however a further 2,500 dropped-off after the first interaction with approximately 2,800 moving through to the second interaction. The majority of those remaining clicked through to the [http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/the-nine-elements/elements](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/the-nine-elements/elements) page.
The remaining user paths from the www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/ start page were to the www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-students_page with approximately 2,500 sessions and the www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/resources-and-help/resource-gallery_page with just under 2,500 sessions, however just over 1000 dropped-off from this page after this first interaction. The www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents_page registered just over 2,000 sessions and the http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/the-nine-elements/element-5/key-characteristics_page registered just under 1,500 sessions.


![Figure 8 Landing page by user flow](image)

Note: The red arrow represents traffic that exits at this page

As is evident in Figure 8, when examining the Social user flow (Figure 9), the majority of traffic from the top five social networking traffic sources started on the SSH landing page. Additionally, whilst the majority of sessions from Twitter and Facebook started on the SSH landing page, traffic from Facebook registered greater diversity in the starting pages, and although the number of sessions registered, were low, the parent page registered the second highest number of sessions as a starting page. The toolkit overview registered the highest number of sessions in the first interaction. Interestingly it seems that parent and student pages registered more sessions in traffic flow generated via social networking referrals in comparison to other sources of traffic.
Figure 9 Social users flow

Where do visitors exit the SSH?

- The site experienced a 35% bounce rate where users who began on SSH landing page left the site without viewing any other pages.
- Examination of the top 10 landing pages showed that the page with the highest bounce rate at 89% was the parent page-developing your child’s positive social values.

Most of the site exits occurred from the www.safeschoolhub.edu.au page (22%) followed by the toolkit overview page (12%) and the element 5 introduction page (7.5%). Bounce rate is considered the percentage of single page visits where a user leaves the site from the entrance page without interacting with the page. When examining the bounce rates by the top 10 landing pages, the www.safeschoolhub.edu.au/for-parents/your-part/developing-your-child’s-positive-social-values/ page experienced the highest bounce rate (89%), followed by the www.safeschoolhub.edu.au/resources-and-help/Glossary page with a 78% bounce rate.
Discussion and Conclusion

Technology is enabling new ways of: generating, delivering, and sharing knowledge; engagement, and communication; and is further redefining the relationship between, technologies, information and consumers of both. In doing so, new opportunities for enhancing learning experiences, wellbeing and associated outcomes are being created, particularly with the increased accessibility of technologies and improved infrastructure in schools and the community at large. A by-product of this scenario however, is increased expectations, particularly within the education sector, for digital resources that demonstrate currency and innovation, in terms of design, the way in which content is being generated and shared and users’ experience overall.

The Safe Schools Hub is a national initiative, underpinned by the National Safe Schools Framework, which aims to ensure ‘that all Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.’ The SSH is a website which provides the resources and tools to support schools to implement this framework.

The overarching aim of this study was to evaluate how successfully the SSH resource provides digital resource coverage for the NSSF by exploring: who uses the resource; why and how is it being used; the technical considerations such as navigability and discoverability of the website; and suggestions for future improvements to the resource. To address this aim, this study employed the Website Evaluation Framework (Taddeo, 2011), which considered indicators of website design, purpose, content and technology integration. A particular strength of this study was the collection of data from diverse stakeholders from across the education sector, and via multiple sources, including website analytics through Google Analytics; interview data and survey data. This has enabled a comprehensive and accurate insight into: the SSH performance for the sector; users’ perceptions of the website; and recommendations for future directions.

The general consensus from this evaluation suggests that the availability and access to a website that promotes safe schools and student wellbeing can cater for a diverse range of education stakeholders is strongly supported and very much required. This is particularly so with the recognition that young people’s wellbeing can be an important predictive factor in their capacity to be engaged and happy learners. Clearly evident from this study is that the SSH is considered to be a valuable online resource that for the most part, and particularly in terms of content, addresses this identified need for such a website. The SSH is perceived to be credible and reliable in terms of providing information and resources on topics related to safe schools for the school community and for other users who are active in domains that intersect with children and young people’s learning, safety and wellbeing.

However despite widespread acknowledgement across the sample that the SSH is a valuable resource, the low visibility, lack of awareness that the SSH exists and the likelihood that the SSH is an under-utilised resource is an area that warrants a targeted solution. The section below addresses each of the research questions followed by the recommendations of this study.
Research questions

To what extent do students, teachers and parents who have used the Safe Schools Hub believe it will be effective in improving education outcomes for students?

A widely recognised fundamental premise is that schools should provide an environment that is conducive to achieving successful learning outcomes whilst also ensuring the safety and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people. Feeling safe and secure is not only important for a child’s general sense of wellbeing, but it is widely acknowledged that it can enhance a child’s engagement in learning and their subsequent learning potential. However determining if the use of a resource such as the SSH directly impacts on improved educational outcomes is difficult to ascertain without conducting an experimental research study. Attributing improved learning outcomes directly to the use of the SSH would constitute a large claim, for there are numerous variables that can impact on perceived effectiveness, including the resources themselves and how they are applied in a classroom or school setting. It is not surprising then that there was considerable variation in the responses regarding participants’ perceptions about the effectiveness of the SSH in improving wellbeing outcomes or education outcomes of young people. Whilst no clear conclusion can be drawn, it is encouraging that the value of the resources on the SSH was consistently acknowledged by participants. Ultimately if feeling safe and well is a factor in enhancing learning outcomes then a resource such as the SSH which provides evidence-based resources has the potential to positively impact on improving student outcomes.

How successfully does the Safe Schools Hub provide digital resource coverage for the National Safe Schools Framework for Foundation to Year 12?

The Safe Schools Hub provides a rich source of information and extensive resources that closely align with the principles of the NSSF. The site was identified as primarily suited to teachers and school leaders who generally responded positively to the structure based on the nine elements of the NSSF, which then branch off to vignettes and activities, providing a user friendly experience.

When examining other aspects of the SSH, participants felt the site provides the tools and information to assist all members of the school community to nurture student responsibility and resilience and respectful relationships in addition to supporting members of the school community to build a positive school culture. Participants also felt the SSH provides the tools and information to assist parents/carers to support a child who may be impacted by antisocial behaviour, including bullying and cyberbullying.

Whilst coverage of the NSSF was considered comprehensive, suggestions indicated the need to ensure that all areas of the NSSF were promoted on the SSH. Embedding links directly to the NSSF to help draw explicit connections between the content available on the SSH and the principles of the NSSF was highlighted as a way of clarifying aims and purpose. Suggestions that greater focus on contemporary social issues with regard to school safety and child protection also were noted as was a need to more inclusively represent diversity in the resources provided, in terms of youth sexuality, culture, and disability.
There are however two key aspects that warrant consideration when addressing this research question, one is content and the other is audience. Whilst digital resource coverage for the NSSF for Foundation to Year 12 is evident for teachers and school leaders, responses suggest that it is less so for parents and students. Clarity then regarding the target audience for the SSH warrants careful consideration, as the purpose, content and audience of a website are closely related and when well aligned can enhance a users’ experience and further contribute to increased satisfaction in their engagement with the site and ultimately improved reach and uptake.

Do stakeholders – including jurisdictions, teachers, professional associations and peak bodies – intend to continue to use and to promote ongoing use of the Safe Schools Hub? If not, what improvements do they suggest in order to make the resource more suitable to use and promote to their constituents?

Approximately three quarters of non-users of the SSH indicated they would visit the SSH in the future for information about safe schools and student wellbeing. A primary reason provided suggests that credibility and reliability as a government supported site rank highly for potential users. This is an important factor to consider then when promoting the SSH in the future. With an ever-increasing bank of resources available online, highlighting elements that differentiate the SSH from the myriad of others in a very crowded space is necessary if the SSH is to experience continued growth in uptake and reach.

Awareness of the site was perhaps the biggest limitation identified in this study, many stakeholders were just not aware the SSH existed, however once aware were keen to actively promote it to their colleagues. Leaders also indicated that the link to the SSH was distributed to parents, but again the likelihood of engagement from parents is minimal, unless there is a particular relevance or need at the time of receiving the link. There are unexplored opportunities however, particularly with regard to promoting the SSH to parents, the majority who were having conversations with their child about safety and wellbeing were not necessarily aware of the SSH. A resource such as the SSH has huge potential to inform the discussions parents have with their child however it appears to be a substantially under-utilised resource for these particular stakeholders.

Participants did highlight a number of areas that could be improved on the site, better navigation aids, improved social media functionality within the site, greater variety in the way information is displayed such as the use of info-graphics, and enhanced interactive elements. Additionally, with analytics data showing that most visitors are unique users who do not return to the site, there are opportunities to re-engage this group and to build into the SSH features, functionality and elements that would provide users with a legitimate reason to return to the SSH. That is perhaps a limitation of a website that predominately focuses on the delivery of information, and which would be classified as an emergent website in the WEF (Taddeo, 2011).

In what ways are users interacting with the Safe Schools Hub?

Participants acknowledged that the SSH was visually appealing with easily accessible resources. Specific elements of the SSH website were examined to ascertain how users were engaging with the site. It appears that the ‘within site’ search function is somewhat of an indicator of the bounce rate, with those who conduct a search on the site more likely to spend considerably longer period of time on the site. When examining why users are coming to the site in the first instance it would seem that bullying related queries along with homophobia, NSSF audit are key areas of interests for potential users, with the home page identified as the most visited page.
Examination of users’ behaviour patterns suggests that the toolkit overview and the nine elements page are primary paths of engagement, whilst it appears that Twitter users tend to engage in the first instance with the home page, Facebook users appear to be interacting with the parent-related pages. This information will help developers to identify which pages should be promoted on particular platforms and which should be optimised for mobile engagement. Interesting too is that of the top 10 landing pages, the parent page experienced the highest bounce rate. What becomes very apparent is the importance of understanding the profiles of users and potential users in order to 1) retain existing users and increase their level of engagement and 2) convert potential users to actual users of the SSH.

**How discoverable is the Safe Schools Hub to teachers, pre-service teachers, school leaders, parents, students and specialist support staff?**

Although participants emphasised the importance of the Safe Schools Hub, many reported they were unaware of its existence prior to the evaluation. Responses indicated that the website is easily located when searching specifically for the ‘Safe Schools Hub’, however when using search engines such as Google to locate information on particular issues such as bullying the website did not rank highly. This is particularly problematic for parents and students who may not know the actual name of the site, but who may be conducting searches with more generic terms such as cybersafety, sexuality, and bullying. This has implications for both website design and search engine optimisation to help improve the ranking and visibility of the site and for the type of marketing strategies employed to increase awareness of the SSH. With the opportunities social media have introduced, there is potential to leverage more effectively these avenues and other external sites in order to drive traffic to the SSH.

Understanding the likely triggers for visiting the site will help to more closely align users’ needs with the development of future resources. In order to achieve sustainable engagement with the SSH a sense of collective ownership of the site needs to be fostered, through inclusive contributions, cogeneration of content with stakeholders and injection of newly released content/resources and promotion of existing resources. There is a sense that the site has settled into a somewhat passive existence, and unless efforts are directed towards promoting this valuable resource then it is likely to remain considerably under-utilised.

**What improvements could be made to the Safe Schools Hub to support students and families to better achieve the objectives of the project?**

Understanding the user profile is considered particularly fundamental when developing digital resources, this is inclusive of the needs, and digital behaviours, of the intended audience. It is also important to understand the context within which the resources are likely to adopted, and the factors which potentially could impact on reach and uptake. These may be factors which are external and difficult to manage such as competing sites, or may be internal challenges that can be addressed by developers and curators of the site such as improving navigation cues.

A number of improvements were suggested by stakeholders who participated in this study and are described below:

- Incorporate improved navigational aids and cues. The amount of information on pages of the SSH was perceived to be overwhelming by some users, improving the navigation elements could help to address this issue.
• Provide more age-appropriate materials to cater for all stakeholder groups. Given the SSH focuses primarily on the delivery of information, greater interactive elements also is needed.

• Clarify and define the target audience and then align content closely with users’ needs. For example, if students are an intended audience then reassessing the content available in the student section is needed to ensure it is more developmentally appropriate and more accurately represents youth voice by cogenerating resources with young people. Conversely if the student section is to provide teachers with ideas and resources for working with students then the section heading and labels need to be modified to reflect this to avoid user confusion and frustration.

• Incorporate functionality that supports discussion forums and blogs, sharing of resources, frequently asked questions and Ask an Expert. This could enhance engagement and communication between stakeholders.

• Consider enhanced mobile compatibility and opportunities to more effectively leverage social media where relevant.

• Explore ways to progress from an emergent site that focuses predominately on information delivery to a progressive site that showcases innovation, possibly by incorporating more interactive and innovative elements.

• Ensure coverage of contemporary youth issues.

• Incorporate inclusive and equitable principles which underpin the SSH by addressing diversity of issues and accessibility by all stakeholders.

Conclusion

Safety of all students is a collective priority of all stakeholders who engage with children and young people. The need for a website to support school leaders, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders to implement the principles of the NSSF, inclusive of fostering positive relationships and student wellbeing is clearly evident. The value of the SSH which aims to service a range of stakeholders by providing useful resources in this domain is also well recognised by those who are aware of the site. However, there is a need firstly, to better promote the site and secondly, to clearly identify the target audience, their particular needs and the purpose of the site.

In conducting an evaluation, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of a website when the purpose is less tangible and when it has less quantifiable outcomes than an ecommerce site for example, whose primary aim is to generate revenue. However, uptake of, and response to, a site does nonetheless provide important indicators of a useful site as highlighted throughout this report. Uptake however does not occur without dedicated efforts to marketing. In many instances substantial investment is allocated to the development of a website with little consideration given to promotion strategies. Ensuring a website is fully utilised requires the resources allocated to extend beyond the development phase to incorporate promotion and marketing of the site to avoid the risk of being under-utilised.

There is considerable respect for the SSH as a credible and useful digital resource. However, there remains significant untapped potential for the site, both to increase its visibility and to move it forwards in the next iteration of the site, so that it will continue to extend its reach to provide stakeholders with valuable, current and interactive resources that communicate and align with a clear purpose, and that reflects innovative design and content.
Recommendations

Awareness Raising

Key Recommendation 1
Employ proactive targeted marketing and promotion strategies, including search engine optimisation, that focus on increasing awareness of the SSH across the education sector in particular among parents and teachers.

Key Recommendation 2
Incorporate input from all stakeholders to inform the type of strategies that will contribute to improved visibility, reach and subsequent use of the SSH.

Key Recommendation 3
To improve visibility and use of this resource by all school communities, some accountability to the NSSF needs consideration. Use of the audit tool to gather data on school safety should be mandated for school’s internal and external reporting processes. This would ensure that use of this highly valuable resource is optimised, to really support young people’s safety in schools in Australia.

Key Recommendation 4
Utilise social networking channels and credible external sites to drive traffic to the SSH.

Key Recommendation 5
Leverage the networks of users by providing additional options for visitors to share pages and links within the SSH.

Design

Key Recommendation 6
Enhance visual cues on the SSH to better orientate visitors and to make the site more intuitive. This includes improving the labelling/headings to more accurately reflect content.

Key Recommendation 7
Incorporate navigation aids to guide users through the site, given the volume of information and extensive site structure.

Key Recommendation 8
Develop features and functionality that promote, encourage and provide authentic reasons for users to bookmark and continue returning to the SSH.

Key Recommendation 9
Ensure government accessibility guidelines are addressed.

Key Recommendation 10
Reconsider the placement of the ‘within site’ search function to maximise its visibility and consider the use of search filters to improve the efficiency of searching within the SSH.
Incorporate more interactive features to improve engagement with content and SSH generally.

**Key Recommendation 12**
Consider ways to enhance mobile compatibility and improve social media integration.

**Purpose & Content**

**Key Recommendation 13**
Clarify target audience and more closely align stakeholders’ needs with SSH design and content.

**Key Recommendation 14**
More closely align digital resource coverage for the NSSF for Foundation to Year 12 for parents and students.

**Key Recommendation 15**
Provide links to key ‘help seeking services’ on the home page.

**Key Recommendation 16**
Improve coverage of contemporary youth issues, especially related to sexuality, child protection, disability and cultural diversity- consult with youth and consider a participatory design process in the development of any associated content to ensure relevancy and authenticity.
References


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