



Expressive Therapies School Program

# PILOT PROPOSAL



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*Supporting young people to  
learn and flourish*

## 01 Why HEAL?

How we support students to be available for learning and build the capacity of schools to respond to trauma.

## 02 The Need for Trauma-informed Psychosocial Support

Understanding how the refugee experience affects children and young people.

## 03 Why Expressive Therapies?

Why expressive therapies are effective interventions for young people with an experience of trauma.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 04 HEAL's School Model

How our program is embedded in schools, working in partnership to achieve outcomes for students and the school community.

## 05 The HEAL Pilot

How to trial HEAL in your school.

## 06 Contact Details

Get in touch with HEAL to chat about how we can support your school.

# 01 WHY HEAL?

***HEAL believes every child deserves the chance to learn and flourish free from the impacts of trauma, including intergenerational trauma.***

HEAL gives young people the skills to regulate their emotions and supports them to heal from their trauma so they are able to better engage with learning in the classroom, develop a strong sense of identity and build positive relationships with their teachers and peers.

We place qualified expressive therapists in schools, providing individual therapy and group programs for students to strengthen their resilience and sense of belonging.

We build the capacity of school staff to identify and respond to trauma so that schools are equipped to offer a positive educational experience for students from a refugee background and their families.

## ABOUT HEAL



**Founded in 2004  
at Milpera State  
High School**



**3 school  
sites**



**Supporting 279+  
students annually  
from 31+ cultural  
backgrounds**



**Qualified  
expressive  
therapists**



**Joined with  
QPASTT in 2021**

## 02 THE NEED FOR TRAUMA-INFORMED, PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS

*The physical, mental, emotional and material stressors of forced displacement and the refugee journey to Australia has a significant impact on young people's wellbeing.*

### TORTURE AND TRAUMA HISTORIES

Trauma manifestations in adolescents (aged 11-18) can include:

- Anxiety, worries and fears, intrusive thoughts and memories
- Pessimism, despair, hopelessness, disillusionment
- Relationship difficulties with peers, family and teachers including difficulties with authorities and rebelliousness
- Poor attention and concentration
- Poor school performance, school avoidance or refusal
- Impulsivity and reckless, risk-taking behaviour including alcohol or drug use
- Other conduct problems, which may be antisocial or self-destructive
- Engagement with the juvenile justice system

(Kaplan, I. (2020) Rebuilding Shattered Lives)

### INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Refugee trauma is intergenerational. The Building a New Life in Australia Longitudinal Study (2015-16) has found that young people who are children of refugees have more problems with their peers than other Australian children.



### MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

A recent study of Australian children with mental health disorders showed that children from non-English speaking backgrounds are the least likely to access mental health services. (Hiscock et al, 2019).

Cultural community leaders frequently highlight that families do not want their children to access support in fear they will be negatively labelled with long-term consequences.

### BARRIERS TO ACCESS & LEARNING

Newly-arrived families are often unable to access mental health support due to financial, language and transport barriers.

Traumatic events during the refugee journey can have major developmental effects for children and young people. The stress of settling into a new country can also affect a young person's wellbeing and ability to engage with learning.




HEAL art therapists Jane Griffin OAM and Bethany Mahadeo (Milpera State High School) explain some of the impacts of trauma for young people in the classroom and how HEAL responds.

CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH THE VIDEO, OR USE [THIS LINK](#)

## WHY EXPRESSIVE THERAPIES? 03

Expression through creative activity has been found to assist in physical, emotional and cognitive functioning as well as social integration.

Because they are sensory-focused and often non-verbal, expressive therapies (art, music, dance, play, drama etc.) can make it easier for young people to convey their experiences, thoughts and feelings in ways that may be difficult to express with words, especially for participants from diverse language and cultural backgrounds.



“Coming to HEAL has really helped me. Before, I used to fight and get angry. Now I know how to calm myself down.”

— HEAL participant



HEAL art therapists Jane and Bethany explain why expressive therapies are effective for trauma recovery in young people from refugee backgrounds.

CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH THE VIDEO, OR USE [THIS LINK](#)

# 04 HEAL'S SCHOOL MODEL

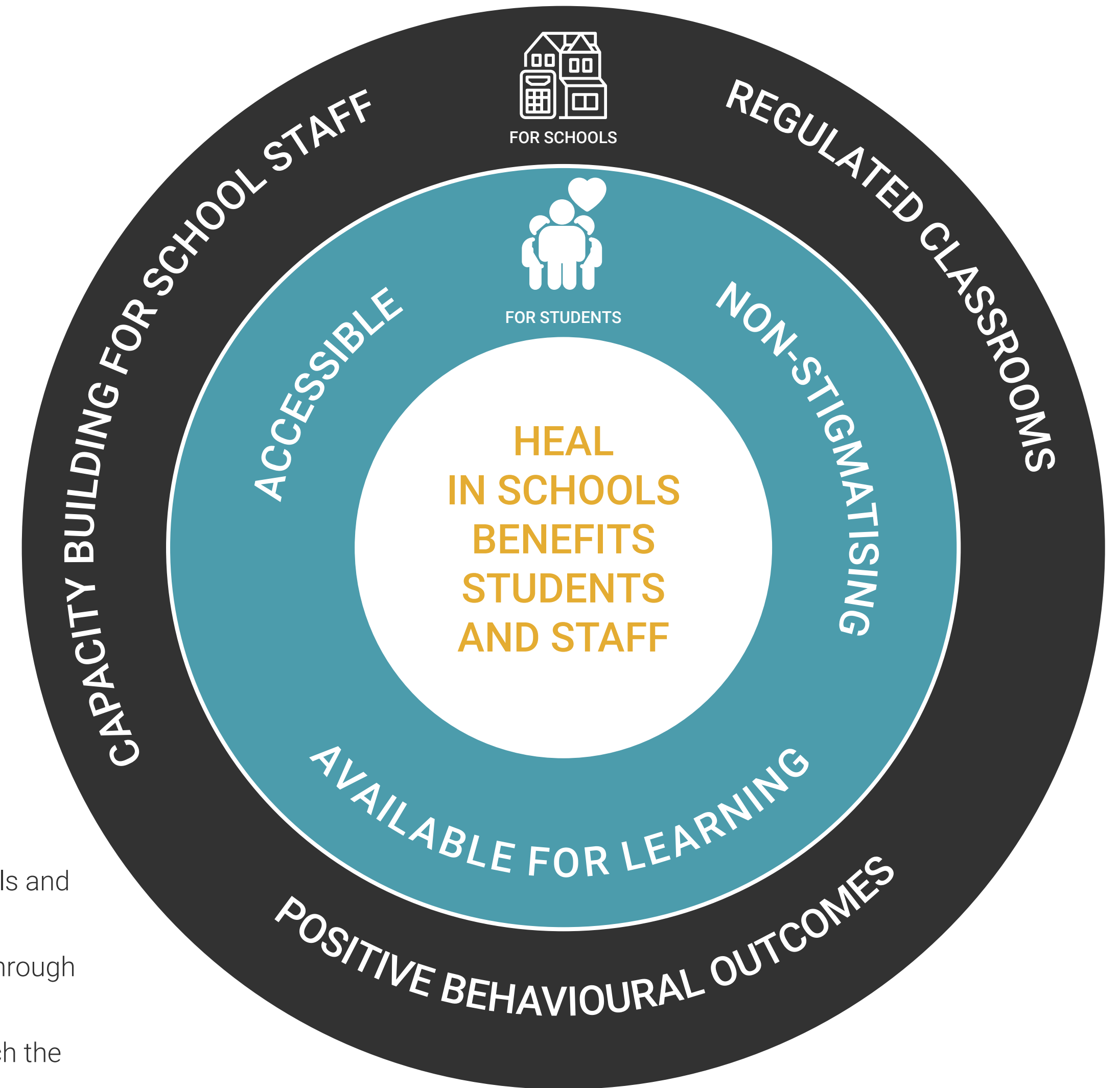
*HEAL is a program embedded in schools, addressing the impacts of trauma for individual students and building the capacity of schools to be refugee trauma-informed.*

## SCHOOL-BASED IS BEST FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

- Embedding HEAL in schools enables close collaboration between therapists and school staff to ensure each student's experience of trauma is not a barrier to their learning and wellbeing.
- School-based programs are accessible for students, especially those experiencing disadvantage including language, cost and transport barriers to accessing private treatment.
- Importantly, school-based interventions are less stigmatising, particularly where the school is nurturing a culture of wellbeing.

## CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR SCHOOLS

- HEAL works in partnership with the school community including teachers, guidance officers, principals and wellbeing team staff to support cultures of wellbeing, inclusion and learning.
- HEAL offers free professional development courses on becoming trauma-informed for school staff through QPASTT (the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma).
- HEAL supports schools to maximise attendance and encourage positive behaviour in students - watch the video of Principal Julie Peel later in this section to hear more.



The HEAL program is a partnership between schools, QPASTT and local communities.

## *HEAL provides*

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Fee-for-service expressive therapy delivered by qualified therapists with extensive experience in trauma recovery.

Facilitated consultation with school staff and wellbeing teams to tailor the HEAL program to meet school goals.

Professional supervision and peer networking for therapists and professional development for school staff.

Program coordination and evaluation.

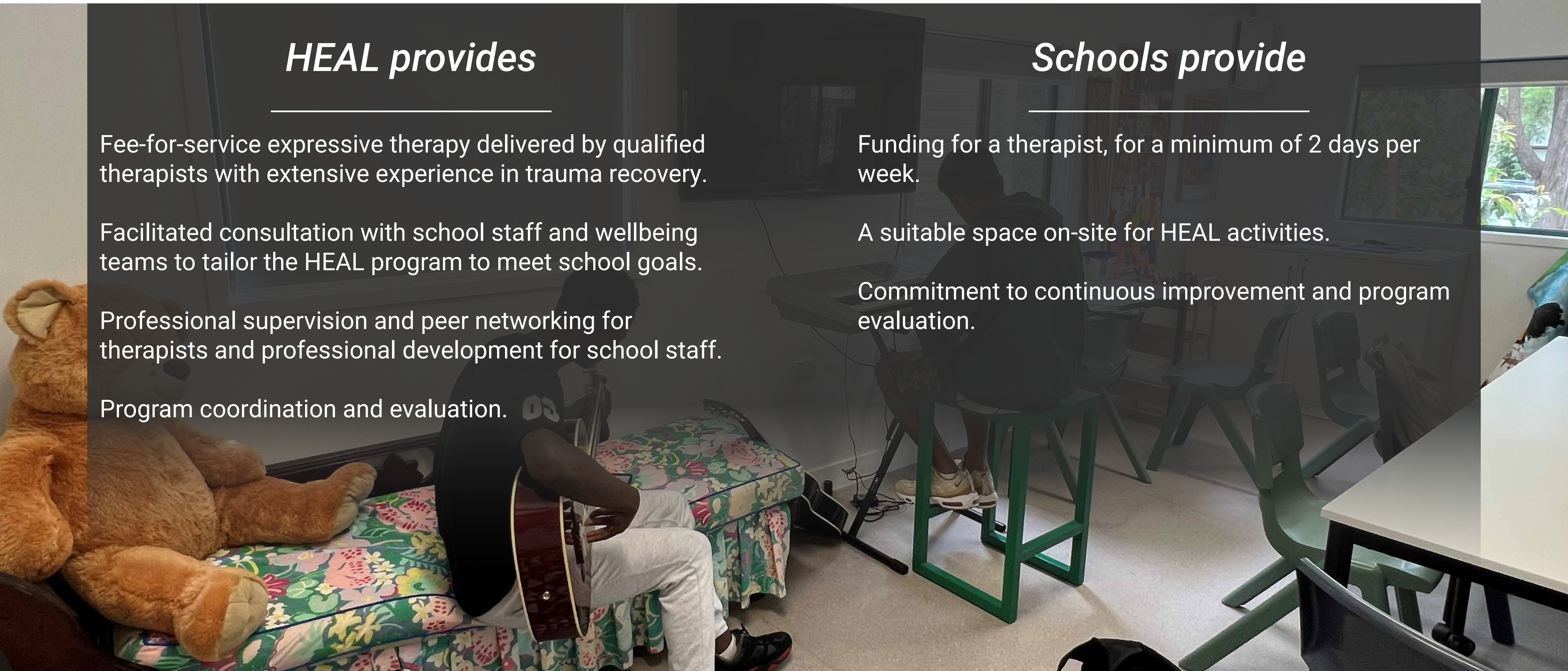
## *Schools provide*

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Funding for a therapist, for a minimum of 2 days per week.

A suitable space on-site for HEAL activities.

Commitment to continuous improvement and program evaluation.





**Julie Peel**  
Principal, Milpera State High School



Julie Peel, Principal of Milpera State High School, discusses how HEAL benefits students and staff by supporting positive educational and behavioural outcomes for students and building the capacity of staff.

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Timothy Barraud, Principal of Yeronga State High School, explains why he has partnered with HEAL to support students to flourish in his school.

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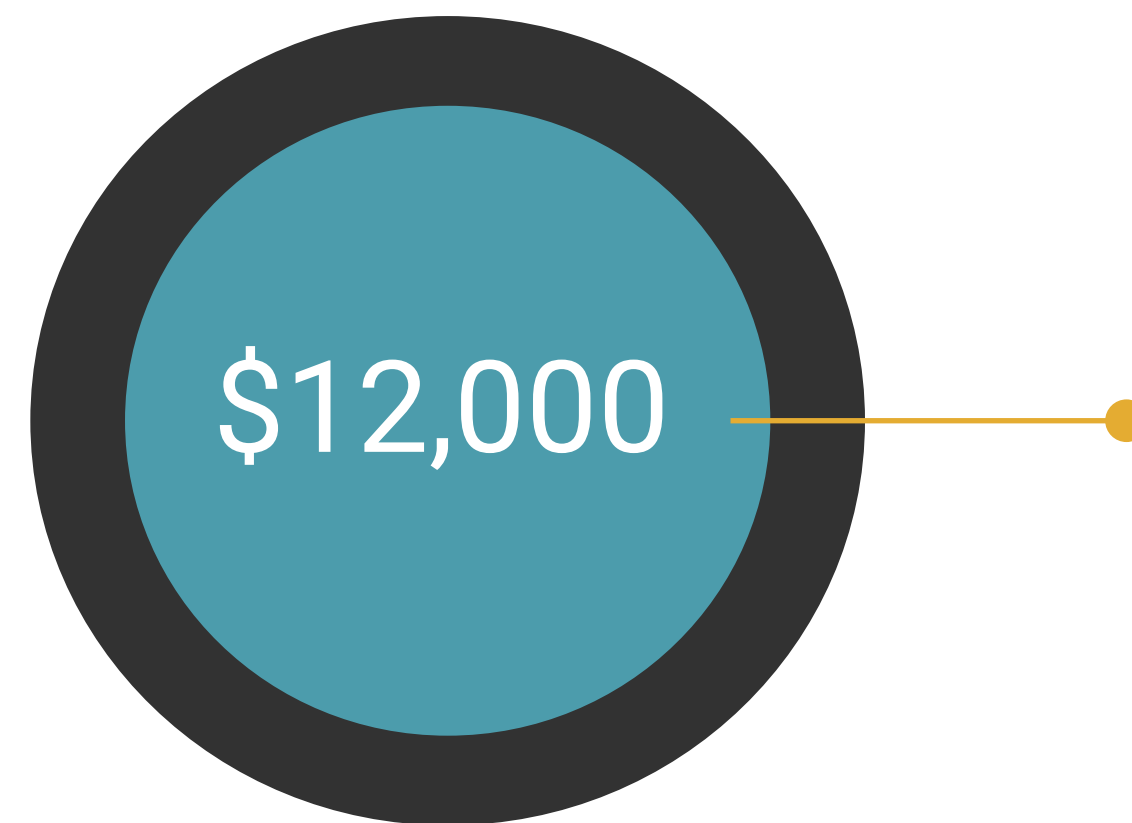
# 05 THE HEAL PILOT

## ***Trial a 10-week Pilot Program to experience the benefits of HEAL for your school.***

The HEAL program adapts to the needs and goals of individual schools.

Our Coordinator will partner with you to co-design the Pilot Program, supporting you through every stage of implementation.

HEAL will collect evaluation data to measure student wellbeing, and staff feedback to report on Pilot outcomes.



FUNDS A HEAL THERAPIST  
FOR 2 DAYS PER WEEK OVER  
A 10-WEEK PILOT

*Do you already have a therapist or teacher engaged or interested in expressive therapy?  
We can tailor support to provide program co-design and professional development.*

## THE PILOT PROCESS

### 1. CO-DESIGN

- UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL GOALS
- IDENTIFYING PILOT OUTCOMES
- ESTABLISHING PROCESSES

### 2. DELIVERY

- 10-WEEK PILOT
- EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPIST ON-SITE IN SCHOOL DELIVERING INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

### 2. EVALUATION

- REPORT ON PILOT RESULTS AGAINST AGREED OUTCOMES
- EVALUATION DATA ON STUDENT WELLBEING MEASURES

# CONTACT US



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