Case Study 2: Happy Haven – State wide

1. Scope of the Project-School, Employer, students
Happy Haven is a South Australian owned and operated company operating 40 sites and expanding across both metropolitan and regional South Australia. An approved Provider with an expert team capable of running OSHC programs on school sites. Happy Havens focus is on ensuring value for money and satisfaction among their families and customers, as well as providing career pathways for their staff.

Schools and students across the state who offered a certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care were targeted to be engaged in opportunity to connect with this project. 10 Happy Haven centres were identified as having highly skilled staff who were willing and able to mentor trainees, these sites became the pilot sites. With a long term vision of all sites across the state employing a school student as a trainee.

10 Happy Haven pilot sites:
- Glenelg
- Hewett
- Mark Oliphant College
- Naracoorte
- Quorn
- Stirling North
- The Pines
- Vale Park
- Westport
- Mitcham

2. Purpose of the engagement-What was the need? How was it identified?
Happy Haven in the past have struggled to attract qualified and/or job ready applicants to fill vacancies.

Further Education and Pathways staff engaged with both the owners and CEO of Happy Haven to explore options to form a partnership in support of students linking with work experience and possible apprenticeships in one specific region. Once Happy Haven understood the possibilities they agreed to develop a pilot program across the state to support with their workforce development strategy and they allocated significant HR resources specifically for this project.

2. How does it link to the new policy? What makes it best practice?
The Happy Haven Model is utilising students that are already undertaking vocation training in Early Childhood Education and Care in year 11 and transitioning into a flexible School based Apprenticeship in year 12, in line with the new VET for School’s policy.

Clearly Articulated Pathways:
- Co-designed by Industry
- Students are supported and informed prior, during and post project
- Expanding Apprenticeship opportunities: Happy Haven had never employed through a school-based training contract prior to this project

Enhanced Career Education:
- Students are connected to the employer prior, during and post project

Improved Student Outcomes:
- Improved VET Completions: the VET program has been developed in partnership with the RTO, Employer and School to ensure the student is access the most appropriate vocational training to maximise their employment opportunities post school.
- SACE Completion: the school utilise the flexibilities in SACE to provide a relevant and effective learning program for the students. All curriculum has been developed in partnership with the employer.
- Leadership and Innovation: employer allocated leadership and resources to the development and management of this project.
3. **Operational elements of the project-How did it operate in the school, employer and training?**

The first intake into this pilot program was to ensure maximum success for the sustainability of this model for years to come. Sites were selected based on:

- Appropriate qualified supervisors
- Teaching and caring culture within existing staff
- Mixture of city and country enabling a state wide structure
- Proximity to school undertaking a certificate III in Early Childhood Care and Development VET program
- Transport logistics

All schools were notified of vacant positions within sites and students were asked to provide written applications, resumes and referees. A process was undertaken to shortlist students for work experience and interviews. On completion students were offered positions based on performance to the mentioned tasks and feedback from various sources provided.

RTO’s were engaged that had a pre-existing relationship to deliver vocational training with schools, to continue within current class room studies and to switch funding models from TGSS to Work Ready. This process has helped to streamline the function.

4. **What were the challenges and how were they worked through**

Greatest challenge has been to arrange placement in working with babies (compulsory aspect) that isn’t linked to Happy Haven. This predominately has been done with the help of RTO’s and other industry contacts that often schools have, enabling successful outcomes. Travel and limited options for training has been an issue in certain Regional Areas. Negotiations have taken place at a local and often higher level with RTO’s to be flexible in delivering the qualification based on tyranny of distance. Ability to attract suitable or willing applicants still exist in certain areas across the state. There is no easy solution for this other than education and promotion to all stakeholders as to the benefits of this program. This is a work in progress.

5. **What were the outcomes? Employment, SACE and post school pathways**

15 school based flexible apprentices have been signed up across the state in 12 different Happy Haven sites.

Another two student’s from Mannum Community College have confirmed they will also be starting next month.

Students who successfully complete this course receive up to 80 stage 2 credits greatly increasing their ability to complete SACE. This completed certificate could also be used to help with entry into University via automatic entry through University of SA if wishing to study a Bachelor of Early Childhood.

Happy Haven are committed at providing long term opportunities to all staff who are part of their flexible School based apprenticeship program. On completion they will be offering the ability for staff to remain employed and pay all cost associated with studying a Diploma.