

SOUTH EAST

SOUTH EAST

Toorak College introduces program to support ‘forgotten victims’ of coronavirus pandemic

Recent high school graduates are among the “most vulnerable” during lockdown says one of the nation’s top principals. Here’s what her school is doing to help.

Lucy Callander, Mornington Peninsula Leader

 Subscriber only | July 22, 2020 4:20pm



 Young Alumni committee members Lucy, Sophia, Annabel, Charlotte and Mae.

Fears for the “forgotten victims” of the coronavirus pandemic have prompted a Mornington Peninsula school to create an innovative support scheme for recent graduates.

Toorak College launched a Young Alumni program on Wednesday to give 18-21 year olds opportunities to take part in virtual reunions and free sessions on everything from financial advice to yoga.

The program material is being driven by a committee of young graduates.

Students from Toorak’s classes of 2016-2019 will be invited to join.

Their parents are also being contacted to ensure all past students know about the initiative.

Principal Kristy Kendall, who was recently nominated as a finalist in the Australian Education Awards in the category of School Principal of the Year – Non government, said support for the 18-21 age group was critical during lockdown.

“There is a lot being said about the need to protect older people and the importance of having schools open for vulnerable students and children of essential workers,” Ms Kendall said.

“But I think some of the most vulnerable people are recent graduates.

“They can’t go to uni. They’ve lost their part-time jobs. They can’t see their friends.

“And this is happening at a time when they would normally be embracing new freedoms and make big decisions about their lives.”

Ms Kendall said she had noticed a gap in mental health support for recent graduates.

“They really do seem to be the forgotten victims of this pandemic.

“I’m hoping that more schools will be able to offer something similar to the Young Alumni program.”

The idea has already been embraced by older graduates with many offering to share their skills and knowledge.

“We have a student who graduated 50 years ago offering to run a session on financial advice, Ms Kendall said.

“There’s another who was at the school about 30 years ago who has volunteered to run yoga classes.”

Since the second lockdown began Lifeline has reported a 22 per cent surge in calls in Victoria while calls from Victoria to Beyond Blue’s support services have doubled in the past fortnight.

On Monday Minister Mental Health Martin Foley launched an online tool to give young people access to therapy and peer support.

Moderated Online Social Therapy (MOST) is now available to Orygen clients in Melbourne’s north and west and will be rolled out across the State later this year.

“This is an anxious and uncertain time for everyone – investing in people’s mental health and wellbeing will not only save lives but is critical to our social and economic recovery after this crisis is over,” Mr Foley said.

MOST is part of the State Government’s recently announced \$59.4 million coronavirus mental health package.

MORE NEWS

[ALL THE VIC SCHOOLS CLOSED DUE TO VIRUS](#)

[‘KAREN FROM BRIGHTON’ NOW HAS OWN MERCH](#)

[WHERE TO FIND THE GHOSTS THAT HAUNT MELBOURNE](#)

lucy.callander@news.com.au

.

“