# Video transcript - The Wodonga Project

[On-screen text: Wodonga, Vic]

[On-screen text: Amanda Kelly, Ovens Murray Regional Partnership]

**Amanda:** Wodonga is a high priority location for place-based investment for improving outcomes for vulnerable young people.

According to a Deep Dive that the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership took into Mental Health in 202 in the Wodonga region, this is a region that significant pockets of high socio-economic disadvantage.

[On-screen text: Wodonga: highest levels of mental stress incidents reported by schools, 12 months wait for homelessness services, 12 months wait for family violence support services]

**Matt:** We have an extremely vulnerable cohort of students who, many of them are at the crisis stage.

[On-screen text: Matt Moylan, Wodonga Senior Secondary College]

Our wellbeing staff are very highly trained, very competent, do a wonderful job, but they are really struggling with the escalation of crisis management at the moment.

**Rachel:** The Wodonga Project is unique because it brings together the schools, the community and the services in an early intervention approach.

[On-screen text: Rachel Habgood, Junction Support]

**Rachel:** This model is based on The Geelong Project model, the Community of Schools and Service model or COSS model.

[On-screen text: Community of Schools and Service model or COSS model]

**Rachel:** The Geelong project had many learnings and we were able to learn form those. One of the learnings is that about 6% of our school population will be identified.

[On-screen text: 6% identified for support]

**Rachel:** Of those 6% they will receive one, two or three levels of support.

The Geelong Project had a 40% reduction in young people entering the homelessness system, they had a 20% reduction in early school leaving and a huge 50% reduction in school disengagement. Further to this, the services in the region found that there was less crisis responses required because young people had been supported much earlier.

[On-screen text: -40% young people entering homelessness system, -20% early school leaving, -50% school disengagement.]

**Rachel:** The Geelong Project also found that for every $1 spent on the program there was a $5 return.

[On-screen text: $1 spend, $5 return]

Amanda: So this initiative is in direct response to the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership deep dive undertaken in 2020. The project delivers on key recommendations in Victoria’s Royal Commission into Mental Health and its Enquiry into Homelessness. Specifically, recommendation 19 which seeks to expand the Community of Schools and Services Model to seven pilot sites in Victoria.

This project is ready to go. It costs $730,000 per annum. So, we are looking for an investment upfront of $2.19m.

[On-screen text: $730k per annum, $2.1m upfront investment]

**Matt:** The students are here now. These are real people, and we don’t want more students to fall through the cracks. It’s all well and good to say we’ll fund this in three years’ time, or five-years’ time, or ten years’ time, but in that time, there will be more kids that are falling through the cracks and disengaging from education. We need to do something about it now.

Right now, we are really working at the crisis end. We would really like to work at the earlier end to avoid students disengaging from education.

[On-screen text: Regional Partnerships Ovens Murray, Victoria State Government, The Wodonga Project – 3690, together for better]