



Rice Education and Youth Services

Rice Education and Youth Services incorporates all services associated with education and training programs in the Melbourne metropolitan area. These services are the Transitional Integrated Education Residential Service which includes St Vincent's School; Western Education Centre; Behaviour Management Support Service; School Focused Youth Service, CIRCESS (Children in Residential Care Education Support Service) and Cedar Works.

TIERS (Transitional Integrated Education Residential Services) provides intensive residential, educational and case management services for high risk special needs young people aged between 9 and 15 years of age. The service includes out-of-home care in three residential care units; education services through St Vincent's School, and intensive case management and support services;

St Vincent's Special School provides intensive education services as part of the statewide TIERS program. This service gives priority to young people in residential care;

Western Education Centre is based at St Anthony's Family Preservation Service in Footscray, and provides education support services for at risk children;

Behaviour Management Support Service assists Catholic primary and secondary schools in a systemic approach to the management of students with an emphasis on behaviour management and community linkages;

School Focused Youth Service provides support services for schools in the cities of Melbourne and Moonee Valley in their management of at risk students aged 10 to 18 years;

Children in Residential Care Education Support Service provides intensive support for children and young people aged between 9 and 17 years who are in residential care. It assists them to integrate or re-integrate into school, and to plan for their future educational and vocational needs.

Cedar Works provides training in furniture restoration and construction, and metal works training for long-term unemployed, students at risk of prematurely leaving school; and workers on community orders.

Program Manager:

Marwin Austerberry

Staff:

38 staff including case managers, teachers, integration officer, instructors, education support workers, residential workers.

Expenditure:

\$2,830,391

Highlights

In 2000/01, Rice Education and Youth Services:

- Began the building of St Vincent's School in its new Maidstone location. The new school will begin operating at the new site in the first term of 2002;
- Received funding of \$21,000 from the ANZ Family and Community Trust to conduct an adult education program for parents of children attending the Western Education Centre;
- Began a metal works training program at Cedar Works through the funding support of the Precision Foundation;
- Received funding from the Melbourne Newsboys Foundation to run a camping and outdoors program for young at risk people in our residential care.

Southern and Specialist Services (from left):

If we listen, we can help

"Angie" was 13 years of age when she was referred to one of our services. Her family relationships had completely broken down and her behaviour was out of control. She was into alcohol and drug misuse and was sexually active – behaviour which was not good for the reputation of a teenager in a close-knit regional home town. She wasn't attending school because of her behavioural difficulties, and her referral to us came about as the result of being out on the streets.

Angie's case manager immediately observed Angie's resistance to being in a city program away from the familiarity of her country environment and friends. She just didn't want to be there. She exhibited all the aggressive behaviour one would expect from a young person in that position – unco-operative, angry, disconnected, and ready to abscond even if it was just back to the streets.

Her case manager sat down with Angie and listened to her, through the aggression and anger, to find a young woman mature beyond her years. Someone not prepared to accept threats, but willing to be part of a win/win situation that would help her get back to her home town and reconnected with school. So Angie's residential carer, case manager and teachers worked on a contract that

would help Angie reach her objective, at the same time modifying her anti-social, aggressive behaviour.

Angie has worked co-operatively with our team, and with a friend in her home town, who is prepared to act as carer for Angie when she returns home.

So far, the signs are good and Angie feels she has a say in her future. She has negotiated her contract; she has kept curfews, and made a huge effort to fit in with the social environment of her residential unit.

Everyone around her has made an effort to get her back to her home town, to reconnect her with a school, continue the drug and anger management counselling in her local area, and to keep open the lines of communication with her family.

Angie's case manager knows it won't be easy for Angie. She will have some stops and starts, but her natural intelligence and maturity will see her in good stead. Sometimes case plans just have to go out the window, while adults listen to the needs and wants of vulnerable young people.

Marwin Austerberry, David White, Sr Mary Davis, Brian Mitchell, Jenny Gapsch.

