

# Barwon Region

## Regional Director's Report

MacKillop Family Services provides a diverse and innovative range of services in Geelong, comprising specialist education services, services for families of children with disabilities, foster care and residential care services for children and young people, and outreach youth and family services.

St Augustine's Education and Training, Whittington, continues innovative work with many marginalised children and young people experiencing difficulties in mainstream education. A Registered School's Board Review of St Augustine's Special School and St Helen's Special School commenced in 2001, and will be finalised by the end of school term three this year. This review ensures our schools are meeting required Department of Education standards and will assist us to identify areas needing further development.

The Program's Manager, Brother Russell Peters, was on study leave in America for the past year and was replaced initially by Amanda McMahon and then Tony Hunt.

In partnership with the Department of Human Services and the Adolescent Mental Health Service, the Youth Ed-venture Program was expanded in April 2002 to incorporate a therapeutic adventure therapy program for young people at risk. Support from the three Geelong School Networks and the School Focused Youth Service enabled the Second Chance Program to be refunded for a further twelve months to re-engage non-school attending students back to education.

Geelong and Colac Foster Care, and Specialised Home Based Care, again greatly exceeded the negotiated Department of Human Services placement targets with the average of 80 children a day in placement. The generosity and commitment of our volunteer caregivers is invaluable and I express my sincere appreciation for their continued support throughout the year. Share the Care, a new initiative, commenced to support long term foster placements by developing day respite experiences for foster children.

Our residential services for children and adolescents with high needs were reviewed in early 2002, following a number of safety concerns for our residential staff frequently working on roster without co-workers. A redevelopment is planned to improve workplace safety by increasing staffing levels whilst enabling the residential units to continue with

only small numbers of children in placement. I have deeply appreciated the support from the regional Department of Human Services and our residential and casework staff in this process and look forward to implementing the redevelopment over the next year.

Bayview Disability Services has continued to support many families caring for children with disabilities and the respite program was expanded this year. My appreciation is also extended to the Geelong Community Foundation for their grant to enable the program to provide a sibling group, adolescent camp and several parent events.

There are many community supporters I wish to acknowledge, for without their help we could not continue to provide our range of services in Barwon. My thanks to Mercy's Angels, St Augustine's Clothing and Collectables, the Ocean Grove Opportunity Shop, United Way, and G-Force (formerly Geelong Group Training). We continue to work in close partnership with many agencies and my gratitude is extended to the Department of Human Services, Office for Youth, Department of Education, Mental Health Service, Department of Family and Community Services, Catholic Education Office, Australian Catholic University and the School Focused Youth Service.

Finally may I express my deep appreciation for the support and commitment of all Barwon staff and the management team - Chris Cuff (Mercy Children's Services), Ruth Dorman (MacKillop Youth Services Barwon), Karyn Hobday (Bayview Disability Services) and Amanda McMahon/Tony Hunt (St Augustine's Education and Training). Their dedication, flexibility, and perseverance to make a positive difference for children, young people and their families have been outstanding.

### Staff:

37 Full time, 48 Part time and  
24 Casual

### Expenditure:

\$6,383,267



**Anne Condon**  
**Regional**  
**Director**  
**Barwon**