

Support Services

Heritage and Information Service

During 2001-2002, there were 283 new requests for information as compared to 281 in the previous year. The steady flow of requests upon the unit is met by our staff who provide a service centred on the individual needs of each person who contacts us.

The publication of an article in "Australian Catholics" led to many people hearing about our service for the first time. As a result we continue to receive telephone calls and emails from people all over Australia who have come to know of the work we do, and are hoping we can assist them to search for records or to find separated family members.

Staff:

5 Part time

Highlights

During 2001-2002 Heritage and Information Services achieved:

- This year's major staffing highlight has been the appointment of Catriona Milne to our new part time social work position.
- During the year, the coordinator, Jenny Glare represented MacKillop Family Services and the Children's Welfare Association of Victoria as a member of the Koori Records Taskforce. This included attendance at eight forums in Melbourne and country Victoria aimed at increasing awareness about searching for and accessing information from historical records in Victoria.

- The Heritage and Information Service has also made presentations at seminars focussing on records preservation and management.

- We are also pleased to have been able to provide consultation to staff of MacKillop Family Services. We have drawn on our experience with releasing records to former residents, to talk about the types of information people hope to find on their files, when years later they re-contact to access that information. The importance of preserving photographs and childhood memorabilia has been incorporated into current record keeping practices and policies across our organisation.

- The MacKillop Family Services history project is nearing completion. We look forward to launching the book in 2003.

- A second oral history project was completed with 30 individual interviews of former residents and staff of the founding agencies of MacKillop Family Services. This project was undertaken by Karen Twigg and Jill Barnard and supervised by Jenny Glare.

- The most significant highlight for the year was the completion of the '...Remember When...' Reunions 2001, a very special project for MacKillop Family Services which the Heritage and Information Service had the privilege of overseeing.

- The reunions provided the opportunity for people to reconnect with a significant place and significant people from their childhood. Many former residents have re-visited sites where they lived for the first time since their childhood. In other instances, the families of former residents attended to see where their parents or other relatives grew up.

- Over the course of the six reunions, more than 2,000 former residents, their children and grandchildren attended and participated in the masses, barbecues and picnics to share histories, memories, tours and experiences with those people who share similar stories and understanding.

