



## St Anthony's Family Centre

St Anthony's Family Centre continued to deliver excellent services to children and families in the Western Region of Melbourne and, this year, was able to take advantage of growth opportunities to increase the range and type of support services provided. In particular St Anthony's was able to substantially increase service provision to the Shire of Melton as a result of Government funding initiatives.

**Regional Parenting Service** funding was awarded to St Anthony's Family Centre and Parenting Australia. The service is region wide and provides consultation, training and support to professionals working with families and various direct services to parents. Staff worked with a range of parents in programs provided in schools, the women's prison, neighbourhood houses, child care centres and other settings accessible to families.

**Disability Services** experienced change and growth during the last year while continuing to provide intensive case management services to families living with a child with a disability. Of particular note during the year was the ability to increase service provision for respite services as a result of increased Government funding.

Work with siblings of children with a disability has been a growth area for the team this year. Bi-monthly activity groups have been conducted, together with a sibling camp being planned for the near future.

Melton Parents Disability Network continues to grow in numbers. This group has monthly meetings with guest speakers, social functions and family days.

Altogether the disability team has worked with 200 families across services, including case management, respite opportunities, residential and continence information and products - making a difference to the children and their families.

It is significant to note that **volunteers** have contributed in excess of 7,000 hours in the areas of transport and childcare for the clients of St Anthony's Family Centre. Social support has been voluntarily provided to over 100 families, greatly enhancing the range and depth of service provision to the families for whom we care.

**Family Preservation Service** has faced a challenging year, with the funding to the service reducing significantly. The cut in funding has led to a reduction in the service to the Shire of Melton and changes to other community organisations who access to the service.

The **Strengthening Families** service gained significantly with a successful tender to operate the service in Melton. This funding has now been extended for a further three years – an excellent base for MacKillop Family Services to explore community development and capacity enhancing issues in Melton. The program continued the assertive case management outreach service, supplemented by group work, as a means of extending and enhancing work with family units. The Moonee Valley Council and Doutta Galla Community Health Service were integral partners in this service expansion.

The **Substance Abuse Family Support Program** also had the opportunity to grow and expand service provision when they were awarded the tender for Family Counselling within the Alcohol and Other Drug Unit of the Department of Human Services. This new service is targeted at the region and will complement the core activities of the Substance Abuse Family Support Program. A training program for professionals in the region began this year and groups for women commenced with the support of the Volunteer Program.