

Metropolitan Services Region

The Metropolitan Services Region was re-established in July 2005, bringing together the Programs operating in metropolitan Melbourne. The region's services now extend from Dandenong in the Southern suburbs, to Werribee and Melton in the outer West, and Faulkner in the Northern suburbs. It is a large geographical area, but one that reflects the work of the founding agencies in Melbourne.

Through this new management structure MacKillop hopes to provide efficient and responsive support to our services 'on the ground' – and importantly to share the expertise developed in programs throughout the Metropolitan area. The creation of a new Senior Manager Out of Home Care position will enable particular attention to this crucial area of our work.

There have been many achievements – both large and small – over the last year, and an equal number of challenges. There are successes every day in our work – a young person commencing school after a long time out of the system or moving successfully to independence, a young mother learning to care for her baby, a family being supported through a difficult time.

Particular new service initiatives in the region include

- The establishment of pregnancy support services in Glenroy and

Melton. These services continue the tradition of work with pregnant women in the Northern and Western suburbs. Both these specialized services are an important enhancement to the teams they work with.

- The commencement of an inclusive holiday program in Melton A community survey identified the need for increased activities during school holiday periods. A focus group with the Melton Parent's Disability Network also agreed that the lack of opportunities for both their children with disabilities and their siblings to be involved in school holiday activities needed to be addressed. MacKillop has been able to obtain funding for this service, and the holiday program is now available to all families receiving services from MacKillop and the broader community.
- In conjunction with five other agencies operating in the City of Maribyrnong, MacKillop was successful in obtaining funding for a Family Support Innovations Project. Through this project we are part of new development in family support and able to work closely with other organizations in Maribyrnong to improve the response to local families.
- The practice within our out of home care services – residential and home based care – has strengthened, particularly through the development of a MacKillop-wide



'Working with Adolescent Framework'. Many staff within the region have been involved in the development and roll out of this framework, which will provide a strong basis for our work with young people.

- Cedar Works has continued to provide vocational options to young people and adults in the Dandenong area, through a woodwork factory. Two very successful programs were run during the year, culminating in Graduation Days. The quality of the goods being produced is of an excellent nature.
- Journeys of Change is an innovative response to young people in our services who have substance abuse issues, offering a range of supports including camps, counselling and group work. It is an exciting initiative, and we have been delighted to receive some interim funding from Philanthropic Trusts and the Department of Victorian Communities.
- The planning for the construction of the new St Anthony's Family Centre has been an important highlight. The Disability

and Family & Community Services Programs are now in temporary premises, and looking with anticipation to the completion of the new building.

The work undertaken within the region would not be possible without the enormous commitment, expertise and goodwill of staff and volunteers. The quality of our work is only possible because of their professionalism, willingness

'to go the extra mile' and work from a strong basis of respect for families, children and young people.

Our services are supported by a large number of external relationships. Particularly valued is our close working relationship with the Department of Human Services and other community organizations. Close liaison with Aboriginal organizations and community leaders has

added to our ability to respond appropriately to Indigenous children, young people and families. We are also very grateful for the support provided by a number of trusts which have enabled our services to trial new approaches and strengthen our response to families in the region.

Helen Burt
Director
Metropolitan Services



CASE STUDY

The MacKillop team working in the Shire of Melton is one of our great successes over the last few years. The service demonstrates best practice, a community driven approach and a willingness to look for creative solutions.

The Shire of Melton is a growth area on the edges of Western Melbourne. There are few services in the Shire, and considerable pockets of disadvantage. While MacKillop has had a presence in the Shire for some twelve years, a decision was made three or so years ago to emphasize the work in Melton and to integrate our services in the Shire.

Over a two year period staff from both the Western Disability Services Program and Family & Community Services Program were involved in discussions around the development of an integrated service within the Shire of Melton. The core services involved were

- family support ranging from intensive to short term assistance
- specific support for families with a child with a disability
- respite options for children and young people with a disability
- support for families facing addiction issues
- parent education
- a material aid fund (provided through the RE Ross Philanthropic Trust) .

A range of services were also linked in for particular families or initiatives, including

- education supports for children and young people excluded from school
- foster care to give families respite
- a Volunteer program providing additional support to families

The services based in Melton, and the other services they have been able to link in, take an **integrated approach** to working with families. The model includes one entry point to service, whatever the primary needs of families, so that a phone call to a central intake point can set in motion a cluster of supports. Community involvement and community ownership is also a key element to this approach. To further this involvement and ownership a community development position was created for a 12 month period. The community development worker was to work closely with local government and other service providers to create innovative and exciting opportunities for families within the community.

Some special initiatives in Melton have been -

- The community development position developed strong connections with sporting bodies and led to the development of **a recreation box** filled with opportunities for children and young people with and without disabilities.

It contains information and passes to a wide variety of recreational services including bowling, horse riding and the swimming pool and can be accessed by residents in the Shire. An example of its use was a young person who would

frequently show up at the local leisure centre with no money yet wanting to take part. The leisure centre contacted MacKillop Family Services and we were able to arrange a term fee for attendance at the centre. The family later referred themselves to MacKillop Family Services for assistance and this young person has now been linked in with the Inclusive School Holiday Program and the Young Carers Group as well as support provided to the mother.

- A community survey conducted by the community development worker identified the need for **increased activities during school holiday periods**. A focus group with the Melton Parent's Disability Network also acknowledged the lack of opportunities for both their children with disabilities and their siblings to be involved in school holiday activities. An inclusive school holiday program since March 2005 has had a designated worker. This service is a further development within the integrated model. The holiday program is available to all families receiving services from MacKillop and the broader community. The designated staff person is assisted by all staff working within the integrated model at Melton together with staff from the disability program's community inclusion team and a casual recreation worker.
- A **support group for young people** who play a significant caring role because of the mental illness suffered by their parent was also established.



Family and Community Services Program (FACS)

The FACS program operates from three sites (Footscray, Kensington and Melton) primarily in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne. The services offered include a variety of family support programs, drug and alcohol services, education support services and the regional parenting service.

Family Services provides case management and support to vulnerable and "at risk" families. This support can be as little as a one to two hour telephone consultation (500 in 2004/5) ranging through working intensely in a two worker model of service to support families facing statutory intervention. Services are provided through two integrated teams, one at Melton and the other at Footscray, which include staff with specialist skills and knowledge across drug and alcohol services, counselling, case management, family support, groups for parents and groups for children.

Western Education Services provides education specialist support to children and young people who are at risk of disengaging from education or who are excluded from schooling. The workers operate in a holistic model of support providing both practical education assistance (assistance with transport, school equipment, establishing home work routines) and therapeutic support (educational assessments, therapeutic support, professional consultations and information and debriefing). Workers also support parents, carers and schools to ensure that the child's or young persons learning goals can be achieved. Brokerage funds, centre based programs,

and linkages to parenting education, literacy programs, family support and other assistance are also provided. The service is also responsible for the Melbourne/Moonee Valley School Focused Youth Service, and the UCAP parent literacy program.

ParentsLink is a regional parenting service which also works in partnership with Parenting Australia and Jesuit Social Services to deliver this program in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne. This service provides parenting education and information to both parents and professionals in the Western Region. It also is a partner in the Maribryngong Best Start project and the Brimbank Communities for Children Project. As part of this work it supports the development of groups for newly arrived communities in the Western Region and undertakes a number of community development projects each year.

Program Manager

Maureen DawsonSmith

Staff

36 full and part time plus 80 volunteers

Highlights:

- All targets in the 10 funded programs achieved
- Successfully supporting the development of nine parenting and playgroups for the Sudanese, Vietnamese, Eritrean, Chinese, Somali and Horn of African communities
- Achieving Commonwealth Government accreditation of our regional parenting service
- Receiving funding to deliver parent literacy programs.

- Greater integration of family services and education services to provide a more holistic service model to families.
- Establishing the Melbourne Moonee Valley Transition from Primary to Secondary School's project.
- Developing a partnership with Spirit West and Tweddle Child and Family Services to strengthen and support communities in the Western Region of Melbourne
- Successfully implementing the Maribryngong Innovations Program, including the development of an inter-agency and intra-agency common intake and assessment process.
- Achieving significant service improvement outcomes through the implementation of a family service quality improvement process.
- Further developed the Melton Integrated Service model between FACS and Disability services by implementing the common assessment and intake process.
- Established and supporting 15 new groups to support our social inclusion goals
- Achieving greater diversity in the workforce by employing two male workers and staff who provide the service with access to four new languages.
- Review of Ross Trust Material Aid to extend this access to include social inclusion goals as well as access by other welfare agencies in Melton.

MacKillop Disability Services (Metro)

MacKillop Disability Services (Metro) works with families to lessen the risk of marginalization from education and community networks and assist with the extra demands placed upon a family that has a child with a disability. Services are family focused acknowledging the needs of the child with a disability, the extra pressures placed upon parents and their relationship and the stress and confusion often felt by siblings within the family.

Flexible support packages offer short term and intensive case management supported by a brokerage model. This assists families to develop a care plan looking at both needs and aspirations for their child with a disability and empower families to drive these plans. Case managers sit alongside families when negotiating with government departments or other service providers, assist with respite, recreation and equipment.

To further support community inclusion an integrated practice model has been developed at the Melton office. This model brings disability case managers and family support case managers together to develop holistic care plans for families. There is one entry point to all families that come to the integrated practice where a common enquiry forms and a holistic understanding of the needs of the family is developed.

Family Choice is part of flexible packages but is managed by the Royal Children's Hospital. Case management is tendered out to community case managers. This service allows

children that are chronically ill to live at home rather than be confined to a hospital.

Support and Choice is another initiative introduced by the Department of Human Services to increase community inclusion and lessen isolation. Here the case manager and the family develop circles of support both formal and informal to look at the dreams and goals of the person with a disability to enable an increased involvement within the local community.

Families are encouraged to be involved in service planning which in turn can lead to new developments and how the program delivers services. An example here is the development of *Inclusive School Holiday Activities within the Melton Shire* to enable children with disabilities to be involved in mainstream recreation. A consequence of this activity has been the joining with Sunshine Heights Primary School giving the opportunity for new friendships and broad experiences.

All families need time apart as well as together. Disability services assist here through *respite and recreation services* and *parent to parent* by carer weekends, pampering sessions for mums and nights out for dads. Providing families with telephone information and quarterly newsletters make it easier for families to work their way through what is a maze of services with the disability sector.

Volunteers are a great asset in assisting families to stay connected and supported in the broader

community. Volunteers transport families to doctor's appointments, meetings, respite, shopping and social gatherings. Volunteers are able to fill the gap left by the disconnection from the community that a disability can incur and work at reconnecting the family.

Sharing the care of the child with the disability often works for families and to meet that need disability services has a *residential unit* that operates from a family centred and a community inclusive approach. The young adults live at the unit but all spend time at home with their families. Whilst at the unit the young adults are involved in community activities learn independent living skills.

The West is home to a variety of cultures and having a cultural plan and appropriate services is essential. Disability services employs with this in mind. Parent to Parent employ a Vietnamese worker to facilitate a parent's support and information group. This group has a mailing list of 70 families and a weekly attendance of 35 families. This group together with the recreation and respite services having an evolving rather than a static model aims to keep families connection by the flow of information and the support of all existing services.

Program Manager Kath Barry

Staffing:

16 full time and part time staff
4 casual staff attached to Special Support unit
3 casual staff attached to Community Inclusion Team.
60 Volunteers

Rice Education and Youth Services

Highlights:

- Co presented "I feel like I Count". Flexible support packages "A real Partnership" at CIDA conference
- Presented 'An integrated Practice Approach' at National Symposium CFAW
- Establishment of Parent to Parent Reference Group
- Growth of Melton Inclusive School Holiday Recreation Service
- Together with Family and Community Services continued support of Melton Integrated Practice model
- Melton integrated practice model included in the Margaret Wagstaff Report (Review and redevelopment of Support for Children with a disability and their families) 2005 as good practice and an example of a family focussed approach.
- Eight Kids Under Cover bungalows.
- Continued support and facilitation of Vietnamese Parent Support Group.
- Involvement of volunteers and families in strategic planning
- Supervision and support of volunteers

Rice Education and Youth Services is a specialist and intensive state-wide program, targeting young people at significant risk who have been unable to find a 'place' elsewhere. It:

- Focuses on young people, aged between 10 years–16 years, who are in the statutory care system in Victoria and have a significantly disrupted history of care, either residentially or educationally;
- Targets working with high risk young people with multiple and highly complex needs, many of whom have experienced significant backgrounds of trauma and abuse, often resulting in physically and emotionally challenging behaviours;
- Aims to provide a program centred on the individual needs of each young person, whilst being mindful of the complexity of the potential mix of young people within the program;
- Integrates residential, educational, psychological, case management and family/ community linking services, within an overarching therapeutic model;
- Works with the young person 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for approx. two years and therefore, is able to develop a more complete picture of the young person and to support them in their development and growth accordingly;
- Currently works with up to 20 young people who reside in one of three residential units and

attend St Vincent's Special School.

Program Manager

Marija Joyce
since January 2005

Pam Mansfield
July – December 2004

Staff

1 Education Leader,
5 teachers; 1 youth worker;
1 Coordinator, 3 case managers, 1 community/ integration worker;
1 psychologist; 1 Coordinator Resi, 3 residential supervisors, 4 residential staff for each unit. Casual staff as required.

Highlights

- Undertook a major review in late 2004, which has been implemented throughout 2005 and has focused on the provision of a more integrated range of services;
- Restructured the staffing model and underwent a major change program refocusing the program on the specific and intensive needs of the young people;
- Reviewed the target group for Rice to ensure that we are working with those who most need our services and also reviewed options, especially educationally for young people once they turn 15 and are preparing to leave the program;
- Gained agreement to pilot a new Therapeutic Foster Care placement for one young person in 2005-6 to best support a carer with intensive back up from Rice.





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MacKillop Youth Services (North Western)

MacKillop Youth Services (North Western) provides a continuum of medium to long term adolescent residential care, specialised long term care and leaving care accommodation options for young people across the North Western region. The focuses of the streams within this program are quite different according to where they sit within that continuum.

Three services are based at the Flemington site with the northern adolescent service operating out of the Glenroy office. A mobile on-call response is accessible for the services of this program between 6pm and 2am every day of the year.

The services that comprise the program are;

Western Adolescent Services: Rostered residential care for adolescents aged 12-18 who are on protective services orders or in the early stages of protective services involvement. This service comprises two units with four beds, a three bed unit and a specially funded 1:1 rostered placement. The service provides case management, youth and family counselling and youth support functions through designated positions.

Northern Adolescent Services: Rostered residential care for adolescents aged 12-18 who are on protective services orders or in the early stages of protective services involvement. This service comprises three units of four beds each and provides case management and youth support functions through designated positions.

The two adolescent residential care services focus on stabilizing the young people in their care through often turbulent periods of change. This involves whenever possible maintaining

educational and positive community connections and often establishing new links in these areas. Managing young people's responses to past abuse, emerging mental/emotional health issues and substance misuse are common features of this work.

Long Term Specialised Care Service: This service has four houses with two young people in each. The young people vary in age from 11 -18. The houses are staffed by one residential care worker at anytime who works one week on, one week off.

The young people in the Long Term Specialised Care Service are characterized by extremely limited opportunities to exit the out of home care system prior to 18 years of age, often dual disability and high need. The lower number of young people in these houses and the 24 hour staffing model facilitate a more 'normalized' and 'home like' long term accommodation option. The service provides case management and youth support functions through designated positions.

Lead Tenant Service: This service has four houses with two volunteer lead tenants and two young people in each. A case management and youth support service is provided with a special emphasis on the development of independent living skills as the young people move towards leaving care. Age of young people in the service is 16 – 18.

Journeys of Change: An initiative of the Western Adolescent Service; this Trust and Office of Youth Funded program targets young people struggling with inhalant and other substance misuse through a three month intervention of monthly camps and weekly group work / counselling sessions.

Program Manager

Greg Broadbent

Staff

52.3 EFT comprising 62 employees, 8 volunteer lead tenants.

Highlights

- The establishment and success of the Journeys of Change Program.
- The coordinator of the Northern Service went offline to deliver the Adolescent Practice Framework training to the entire MacKillop Residential Care workforce.
- A number of existing Western Adolescent residential care staff undertook Certificate IV in protective care.
- Four staff across the program successfully completed Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment and Training.
- Two staff undertook Diploma in Front Line Management.
- The expansion of the Lead Tenant Service to include a fourth house from MacKillop's former Southern Region.
- DHS agreed to permanently adjust targets and funding for Long Term Specialised Care Service.
- Lead Tenant team leader presented on the service at the national Leaving Care conference in Brisbane.
- Residential services successfully piloted the DHS Quality Assurance Strategy in the North West Region.
- Western Adolescent Services youth support worker appointed as Western regional LAC support worker for 16 month period.
- High percentage of clients across residential services in educational / day programs.
- Strengthened recruitment across residential care services.



MacKillop Home Based Care (Metro)

MacKillop Home Based Care (Metro) provides home based care services for children and young people across Melbourne's metropolitan suburbs, primarily covering the DHS North and West Metropolitan Region, and some of the DHS Southern Region.

The MacKillop Home Based Care (Metro) program is supported by two staff teams located in Glenroy and in Flemington, and a large pool of well-trained volunteers who offer their time and open up their homes and lives to care for vulnerable children.

The program provides the following components of care: foster care for children and young people referred by DHS, respite care to assist families in caring for children, pre-adoptive foster care, disability respite care, Innovative Home Based Care (IHBC), and Specialised Home Based Care (SHBC).

The program also includes an early intervention program funded by the Telstra Foundation which

assists pregnant young women with drug, mental health and homelessness issues.

Program Manager:

Sacha Miezis

Team Leaders:

Genni Huf – Northern Team.

Rebecca McConnon – (Acting for Terri Scott, who is on maternity leave) Western Team.

Nyree Kivell 2004-2005

Staff: 6.6 EFT Case Management staff, a 0.4 EFT Case-aide worker, and 1.0 EFT Publicity and Recruitment position.
62 Volunteer Caregiver

Highlights:

- Provided generic home based care placements to 37 children and young people.
- Provided Specialised HBC support to 25 children and young people.
- Supported 22 children to return home to their parents, transition to permanent care placements or adoption.

- Cared for seven pre-adoptive babies.
- Provided respite care to 36 families.
- Recruited, assessed, trained and supported a pool of 62 volunteer caregivers.
- Recruited, assessed and accredited 14 new caregiver households.
- Provided pre and post birth early intervention support to 6 mothers with drug/mental health and homelessness issues who gave birth.
- A review was conducted of the program's operations, and the recommendations have resulted in a re-development of the staffing structure and a number of processes which have enhanced the collaborative work of both teams.



Southern Services

Southern Services provides residential care for young people aged 0 – 17 who are unable to reside with their families in the short and long term.

Two units are run on the Family Group Home model providing medium to long term placements, with twenty-four hour carers and four young people residing in each of those units.

The young people are supported in their schooling and participate in a number of youth specific and sporting activities. Families are also supported in playing a role with their children, whilst they are in care. The Units are managed by a Social Worker and the majority of young people are case contracted to Southern Services from DHS.

A Temporary Emergency Care Unit for ages 0-17 is also operated by Southern Services, which provides short term care for young people whose circumstances require the removal from their home for a minimal period of time. A number of these young people are voluntary clients and do not progress to being

placed on Child Protection Orders.

The TECU is overseen by the Unit Manager and is also based on a twenty-four hour carer model and can accommodate up to four young people.

Cedar Works

Southern Services is responsible for the Cedar Works program, which is an initiative that aims to address the needs of at risk young people and long term unemployed in the South-Eastern suburbs. The program runs two courses a year which are funded through Community Job Placements, which teach participants basic woodwork skills and also focuses on the art and skills of furniture restoration.

Major contracts have been completed and are on-going with St. Patrick's Cathedral Melbourne; St. Francis' Church Melbourne and Hoyts Cinemas.

Cedar Works also restores furniture for members of the general public and business has been steady in this area.

Program Manager:

Pam Mansfield

HIGHLIGHTS

- The TECU supported a sibling group of six for a nine month period that eventually returned home to their parent who had received great support from MacKillop staff.
- Following the completion of the DHS Southern Region's strategic review the decision has been made that there will be no further closures of houses within this service other than the one targeted in the previous year.
- A Review of the TECU is nearly completed at the time of writing. Some of the data that was collected was very interesting and has assisted in defining the future service the TECU will provide within the Southern out of home care system .
- Two very successful Cedar Works CJPs were run during the year, with participants glowing at their Graduation Days.
- The quality of the goods being produced at Cedar Works is of an excellent nature.

