

MacKillop Family Services Pilot Values Audit

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Pilot Values Audit

MacKillop Family Services values are collaboration, compassion, commitment, hope, justice, and respect. These values were developed after a series of consultations among the agencies that came together to form MacKillop. MacKillop's Board proposed that time be given to reflection on these values in the year 2000, in the spirit of Jubilee.

A Pilot Values Audit was then proposed (see below p. 6) and program managers were invited to open their programs to this audit. Four programs volunteered themselves. For the sake of comparison and balance, it was decided to do the audit on two quite different programs, Mercy Children's Services in Barwon and TIERS in Melbourne. The Barwon program is well-established, relatively small, and working chiefly with younger children through volunteer caregivers. The other program is large, being a recent integration of three long-standing services, and working with adolescents.

The processes in the audit were for the most part similar: John Honner and the relevant pastoral care worker (Sr Eileen Casey in Geelong and Lesley Mackie in South Melbourne) met with the teams and explained the process. John Honner then facilitated a team conversation about MacKillop's values with the help of a brief discussion paper (see p. 10). This discussion was minuted and returned to staff, along with a questionnaire (see the appendices to the Mercy and TIERS audits). The questionnaires were collated and the quantitative results put into graphical form. Surveys/discussions were also done with clients (with young people at TIERS and with some parents and volunteer care givers in Geelong). At each stage, where possible, feedback was given to the relevant team. The Program Planning Committee monitored the process of the audit.

As the results attached indicate, MacKillop's values are alive and well in the organisation. The audit did not establish whether or not this vitality comes more from individuals or more from organisational culture. The staff was clearly engaged in the preliminary conversation about values, and all appreciated that values were important in our work. Where there were critical remarks about the absence of values, however, these tended to be directed more at organisational structures than at individuals.

One significant difference between the two processes was that the program manager was present at most meetings in Geelong, but not present at most meetings in TIERS. While this was a matter

of choice and allowed for comparisons to indicate what might be the best way to do a values audit in the future, it created a significant side-issue. For example, when contentious matters were raised at a meeting at which the program manager was not present, it was very difficult for the program manager then to know at what point to deal with such matters. Similarly, while staff were told that discussions would be written up and circulated, some were later reported to say that they believed discussions in the meetings would be treated more confidentially. A related issue, further, is what the values audit is meant to lead to. Given the issues raised, who is to pursue these issues once the report is published? In future values audits, these questions will need to be addressed.

Nonetheless, the two projects turned out remarkably similar results, in participation levels, and in the qualitative and quantitative surveys. While the TIERS audit was a lengthy process, given the time it took to arrange meetings of the three groups and to circulate material across a number of sites, the Mercy process was comparatively simple. In both groups, however, staff appeared to appreciate the chance to reflect on values together, and to be consulted as part of the larger organisation. The TIERS audit was also undertaken in the midst of a process of change and, upon reflection, these may not be the best circumstances under which to undertake a values audit.

The audit indicated, at least in some sections of MacKillop, a difference in the perception of values between those who were new to MacKillop and those who had worked in the constituent agencies prior to the formation of MacKillop. Some older staff lamented the passing of the old order, and found the more responsible approach of the new organisation too “managerial”. These issues were not of great concern to newer staff. On the other hand, however, it could also be argued that the older staff had generally been successful in inculcating MacKillop’s values among newer staff.

Even though some consulting among clients was undertaken, it should be noted that the pilot values audit was a relatively subjective audit. That is, while staff were asked to give their opinions on how they saw themselves, their work with clients, and MacKillop as a whole, other sections of MacKillop or of management were not asked how they saw the particular service in question. A future audit might also be more closely related to how the values operate in practice styles.

It was also planned, in the pilot proposal, that a small committee from each program would become part of the audit process. This happened to some degree in one program, but not in the other, largely through the difficulties of organisation and the pressure of workloads.

Importantly, in both programs it became clear that the strength of a value was not necessarily a measure of its importance. In both programs, for example, “hope” was described as absolutely central to the quality of the team and the quality of the work. At the same time, it was also acknowledged that, given the fragile nature of the young people we work with, hopes could easily be dashed. So, hope is a key value, but it does not score high on the scale of operation.

Again, in both programs “respect” was seen as very important, but fragile. Young people thrive when they feel respected and when they grow in self respect. So also do staff. But there was a general refrain, particularly among staff who had previously worked in MacKillop’s founding agencies, that the new organisation, particularly in its central management, was more business like, more impersonal and less respectful of staff.

In both programs “justice” was a contentious value because it has so many overtones through the justice system. Often the young people do not get justice and, moreover, often workers feel they

get injustice as a result of current legislation to protect children. There was not a great awareness of MacKillop’s action for justice, except among some newer staff who had a wider experience of the organisation.

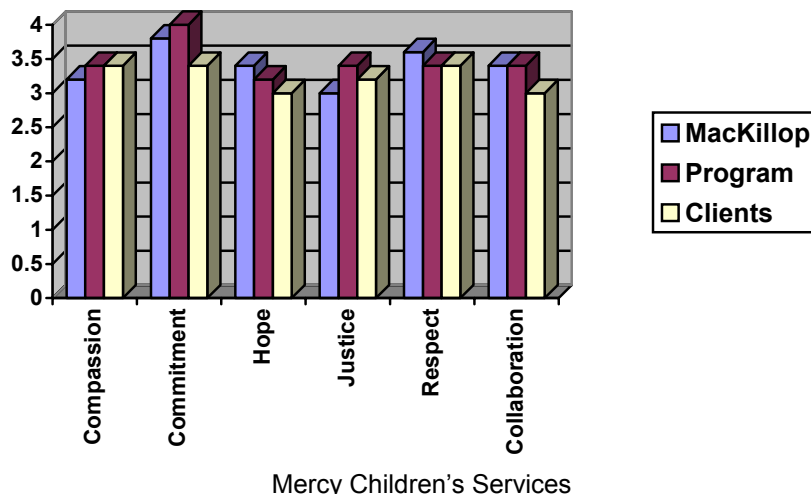
In both groups collaboration within teams was seen as very important -- teamwork and belonging were often spoken about as other significant values – but again in both groups the pressures of work made it very difficult to reach out more widely in MacKillop, or to experience collaboration across MacKillop. Both programs saw themselves as open in their collaboration with other agencies and services.

Compassion and commitment often scored as the strongest values. While MacKillop’s commitment to young people and families was unquestioned, some staff wondered about MacKillop’s commitment to them as staff. Others found great support and respect. All spontaneously said that you had to have compassion to work with young people in difficulty, but that compassion had to be tempered with firmness.

MacKillop’s stated values therefore operate strongly in both programs in a general manner. But, on the other hand, there was not much awareness of values being explicitly developed or specifically operative within programs. Perhaps three examples were found. Clearly TIERS is an effort at greater collaboration across a number of teams, and the St Vincent’s staff said that their weekly chapel meeting was the place where many of them renewed their hope. In Mercy Children’s Services, thirdly, recruitment is done with a specific eye on the strength of “hope” that a person brings with them.

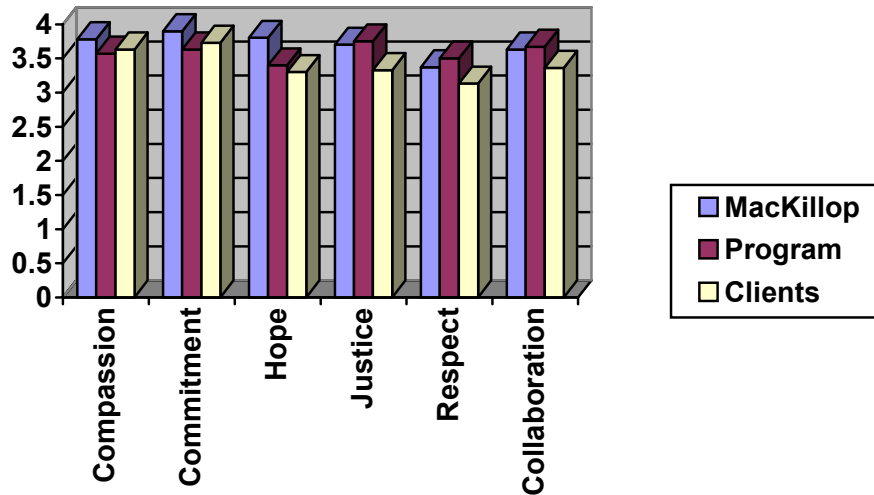
Other operative values in MacKillop that were reported were “celebration”, “professionalism” and “teamwork” or “belonging”.

Quantitative results are shown below. Even though they represent statistically very small samples, they match quite well the qualitative report. The graphs represent averaged replies to a questionnaire. Staff were asked to estimate how they thought each value operated in MacKillop as a whole, in their own team, and in their work with children and families. A score of ‘5’ indicated that the values operated very strongly, and a value of ‘1’ indicates they operate poorly.



What this graph indicates is the extent to which the stated values are perceived to operate first in MacKillop as a whole, secondly in the Mercy Children’s Services program team, and thirdly in

the team's work with clients. Thus, for example, commitment is seen to rate highly in MacKillop as a whole, and even more so in the program team, but less so with clients. Compassion, on the other hand, is perceived to operate less in MacKillop as a whole than it does in the program team or with clients. Curiously, while "hope" is not always strong, other conversations indicate it is a key value. The graph below shows very similar results for all TIERS staff.



Transitional Integrated Education and Residential Services

The appended documentation (pp. 6ff.) gives full details on the process of the pilot values audit. While the task was time-consuming and difficult to keep moving along, it was an enjoyable process to be involved in, and gave me the opportunity to meet MacKillop staff in their place of work.

The next step in this process is to undertake an evaluation of the pilot audit. Future values audits would be designed in the light of this evaluation and the current experience.

John Honner
1.11.2000

**MacKillop Family Services
Values Audit Proposal**

1. MacKillop's chosen values are collaboration, compassion, commitment, hope, justice, and respect.
2. A Values Audit promotes the good health of an organization. It serves the same function as an audit of financial accounts or a medical check-up: a comparison is made between how we hope to be and how we are. MacKillop's values are expected to guide daily practice in the organization and to be manifest in all its operations. MacKillop's integrity and vitality are at risk if there is a real or perceived clash between values and practice.
3. A Values Audit of MacKillop is to be conducted in 2000. The CEO has designated John Honner, as Coordinator of Mission and Social Policy, to facilitate this audit. Because Helen Burt is currently developing a Quality Assurance process for Service Standards, and because of the overlaps between this process and a Values Audit, Helen and John will, when appropriate, work together on both tasks. Focus will be both on how the values already operate and on how program area intends to further incorporate the values.
4. It is proposed that the Values Audit be linked with the Jubilee Year themes of reflection and restoration, and that the process at the program level be guided by a collaboration between the relevant Pastoral Care Workers and the Program Managers or Coordinators. John Honner would facilitate this process.
5. In the first instance, the values audit would be conducted in two program areas (one from Barwon and one from Metropolitan). *Program managers and/or team leaders/coordinators are asked to consider volunteering themselves and their program area to participate in this pilot audit.*

6. The audit would have four stages: preparation, implementation, consolidation, and evaluation.

6.1 Preparation: John Honner would prepare a brief discussion paper on MacKillop's values and how these values might be audited. The format of the meeting would be arranged in consultation with John Honner. Preliminary discussions of the refined proposal and discussion paper would then be held at a routine staff meeting with Pastoral Care Worker. Notification of the process is also to be made to clients and volunteers.

6.2 Implementation: The Program Manager/Team Leader/Coordinator and Pastoral Care Worker then arrange for a special meeting is to be held within their program area to which staff and clients and volunteers are invited. At this meeting a self-audit of values would be conducted and further ways of implementing values would be explored. John Honner and/or Helen Burt would attend this meeting and would also receive any individual submissions. John Honner should be in a position to draft a one-page audit the program. This draft-audit would be considered by a representative committee of interested parties and pastoral care workers and revised in the light of their comments.

6.3 Consolidation: The two pilot audits would be reviewed. Depending on outcomes, a report might be prepared for the Board, or a revised audit process implemented with two further program areas. John Honner would draft a report back to the organization, which, after being signed off by the CEO, would be communicated back to the organization.

6.4 Evaluation: An evaluation of the whole process, and recommendations for further audits, should be conducted by a small committee to be appointed by the CEO.

7. The Mission and Value statements of MacKillop Family Services are due for review in July 2001. The values audit will contribute to this process.

John Honner
28.2.2000

MacKillop's values

Collaboration, compassion, commitment, hope, justice, and respect.

MacKillop's value statements

In our ministry to children, youth and families, MacKillop Family Services is guided by the moral and ethical teachings of the Catholic Church.

We believe that all people should be treated with sensitivity and compassion, respecting social and cultural differences.

We embrace a sense of solidarity with those we serve, sharing their lives, sorrows, joys, hopes and fears and, in turn, we are touched by those experiences.

We believe that children, young people and adults can be encouraged to learn, explore and adapt to changing circumstances only when they feel acceptance, trust and confidence in the helping relationship.

We believe that relationships with those we serve should reflect a deep and abiding respect.

We are committed to work in a collaborative spirit, ever ready to share our resources and talents and to be enriched by the experiences and insights of others.

We believe that, together with the children and families we serve, our advocating for socially just policies and programs is an important aspect of our ministry.

We are committed to listening to those who seek our services and we acknowledge that we work in partnership in meeting their needs.

We believe that it is only in accepting our personal story, with its strengths and limitations, that we can understand and respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers.

We are committed to the provision of excellence in our services which aim at all times to bring strength, direction and hope to the lives of those we serve.

We acknowledge the right of all people to be treated justly and fairly and we endeavour to respect this right both within the services we provide and within our own organisation.

Process for Pilot Values Audit

1. Identify program or team ready to participate (March/April)
2. Explain process to program/team (March)
3. Identify three or four program/team members willing to form an audit committee with John Honner and relevant Pastoral care Worker
4. Have small sub/group meetings (resi workers/ case managers/teachers) to talk about experience and ideals of values (facilitated by John Honner/relevant Pastoral Care Worker) (March/April): What values have meaning? Which ones seem to stand out? Which ones seem not so strong? What other values seem obvious? Some involvement of volunteers, clients, other agencies might help.
5. Individuals may make private submissions to John Honner and/or relevant Pastoral Care Worker.
6. John and committee to draft and circulate a preliminary “audit report”
7. The whole program/team to meet for at least an hour to discuss and finalise the draft report.
8. John to submit final audit report to CEO.

A brief discussion paper on MacKillop's values

A “value” is an inner attitude that guides how we act. If we value honesty, we tell the truth; if we value wealth, we do our best to save money and often can be a bit stingy...and so on. In an explosives factory, the most important value is “safety consciousness”.

MacKillop's stated values are compassion, commitment, hope, justice, respect, and collaboration.

Compassion: sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. Do I feel that others have compassion for me when I am in stress or distress? Do those children and families we work with feel that we are with them in their hurt and that we are trying to help them? The opposites of compassion would include being cool, ruthless, impersonal, negligent, insensitive. Do we see these traits anywhere?

Commitment: a personal and corporate pledge. How committed am I to the work I do? Do I feel others are committed to me? Is my program/service committed to its goals? In thinking about this, it might help to ask what sort of conditions we put on our work, or why do we work as hard as we do, or would we go the extra distance in a crisis. To what degree do we feel drawn by the needs around us? The opposites of commitment include “I couldn't care less” or “we come and go as we please” or “I'm only doing this until I get a better offer” or “It's not my problem”.

Hope: a desire accompanied by the expectation that we can achieve our goal, especially when it seems difficult. Do people in MacKillop show hope in you? Do they show hope to you in their attitudes? Signs of hope include resilience and cheerfulness when the going gets tough, an inner calm in all the panic when there's a disaster. The opposites of hope include a negative pessimism which blames others, like the department, the children, the system, the manager.

Justice: the quality of being just, impartial, or fair to all. Do we listen to both sides of every story? Do we treat everybody the same? Do you feel treated fairly? Do we have some people in the gun all the time? Are we able to suspend our judgement until we know more facts? Do we gossip too much about others (coworkers or families)? Are we racist? Sexist? Do we discriminate against religions?

Respect: a high or special regard, an esteem for others. Do we cherish people for who they are? Do we have an attitude of interest in others? Do families and children and co-workers feel that we *value* them? Do you feel respected by managers and co-workers? The opposite of respect includes taking people for granted, not really listening to them, trivialising their contribution, not valuing their opinion.

Collaboration: to work jointly with others, and to cooperate with other agencies or organisations with which one is not immediately connected. We hold other agencies or workers and the departments in good regard. Collaboration creates networks of goodness, mutuality, confidence, community. The opposites of collaboration include competition, secrecy, self-importance, sectarianism, and selfishness. In our work, do we deliberately try to make partnerships with families, other parts of MacKillop, other agencies?

Lying behind these values is the conviction that we can make a difference, that people are of inherent value, and that community is essential for human fulfilment. These are also key Christian values, and key to the spirit of our founders.

Other values: are there any other values that seem to be operating in MacKillop, whether positive or negative, which touch you or concern you?

MacKillop Family Services Values Audit: Final Report Mercy Children's Services

Mercy Children's Services comprises a team of ten workers, including a program manager, team leader, recruitment co-ordinator, and over 90 volunteer caregivers. In 1998/99 over 250 children accessed the program's services.

Of MacKillop's six stated values, **hope** is the most explicitly operative value in Mercy Children's Services. Tests for an attitude of hope operate in the recruitment of staff and volunteers. An attitude of hope is also seen as crucial to successful work with children: when workers or volunteers lose hope in a child, then inevitably their work with that child cannot continue. The team believes it is good at giving hope to families and children. Reports from families support this view. Hope is fragile, however, because the nature of the work often entails disappointment.

The strongest operative value is **commitment**, which can be seen as a practical expression of hope. Within the team there is a strong feeling of commitment to one another; MacKillop is seen as a very committed agency; and there is an abiding commitment to the children and families with whom the team works.

Compassion, justice, and respect form the next tier of values. While each of these values operates strongly, each is also experienced as difficult to sustain at all times, because the nature of the work can sometimes lead to a feeling of being let down, and hence a diminishment of a worker's capacity for compassion, justice and respect. The principle of "respect" was seen by some as underlying all the other values. Some volunteer caregivers felt that they did not experience as much respect and justice as they thought they should. "Justice" was seen to have many layers, including departmental, organisational and personal issues, and was difficult to talk about.

Collaboration within the team is strong, as is the principle of collaboration with other agencies and DHS. On the other hand, it was acknowledged that the team was so occupied by its workloads that it was somewhat self-contained and that collaboration with other parts of MacKillop was therefore limited, even if desired.

Other key values in the team were the commitment to weekly meetings, to ongoing training, to professionalism and equality, and to celebrations with appropriate nourishment.

In general, work does create stress, and stress does undermine values. There is evidence from staff and families that workloads are such that sometimes compassion or justice or respect or collaboration is obscured.

The sources of these values and the sustaining of these values seemed to be connected with recognition of the need for children to be given care and the pleasure that making a difference to a child's life brings. The way the team functioned as a strong community of care and learning also greatly helped sustain these values.

John Honner
9/8/2000

The following pages offer details of the processes and the findings involved in shaping this audit.

Background

1. Initial Meeting: discussion of values

On Thursday 11th May the team members of Mercy Children's Services met with Sr Eileen Casey and John Honner to discuss the audit process in general and MacKillop's values in particular. The meeting lasted for over an hour. After outlining the reasons behind the audit, and the process to be followed, a document outlining some of the significance of the values was tabled (see text in bold below), and the team's comments were recorded. These comments were later added to this document (see text in Italics below).

A "value" is an inner attitude that guides how we act. If we value honesty, we tell the truth; if we value wealth, we do our best to save money and often can be a bit stingy...and so on. In an explosives factory, the most important value is "safety consciousness".

MacKillop's stated values are compassion, commitment, hope, justice, respect, and collaboration.

Compassion: sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. Do I feel that others have compassion for me when I am in stress or distress? Do those children and families we work with feel that we are with them in their hurt and that we are trying to help them? The opposites of compassion would include being cool, ruthless, impersonal, negligent, insensitive. Do we see these traits anywhere?

Comments: Sometimes black humour is still a form of compassion. It's always difficult to reconcile professional judgment and compassion, but sometimes professional judgement is long-term compassion. Maintaining compassion prevents you from becoming hard in your work.

Commitment: a personal and corporate pledge. How committed am I to the work I do? Do I feel others are committed to me? Is my program/service committed to its goals? In thinking about this, it might help to ask what sort of conditions we put on our work, or why do we work as hard as we do, or would we go the extra distance in a crisis. To what degree do we feel drawn by the needs around us? The opposites of commitment include "I couldn't care less" or "we come and go as we please" or "I'm only doing this until I get a better offer" or "It's not my problem".

Comments: Team commitment to each other is strong. This also includes a commitment to the families we serve, and a commitment to act professionally. IN a highly dedicated team like this the sense of commitment can be contagious. If someone loses heart for a while, the team can carry that person and maintain the commitment of MacKillop to the client. Commitment comes from our conviction that the work we are doing is of the utmost importance. Perhaps MacKillop could publicise more the fact that it does take its commitment so seriously.

Hope: a desire accompanied by the expectation that we can achieve our goal, especially when it seems difficult. Do people in MacKillop show hope in you? Do they show hope to you in their attitudes? Signs of hope include resilience and cheerfulness when the going gets tough, an inner calm in all the panic when there's a disaster. The opposites of hope include a negative pessimism which blames others, like the department, the children, the system, the manager.

Comments: Hope is the belief that you can make a difference and this drives us and keeps us going day by day. It doesn't take a lot to generate hope in this group. We wouldn't be able to hang in if we didn't have hope. When people are being interviewed to work with Mercy Children's Services,

they are tested for “negativism” in their interviews. We try to give children and families hope. We are good at giving hope to families.

Justice: the quality of being just, impartial, or fair to all. Do we listen to both sides of every story? Do we treat everybody the same? Do you feel treated fairly? Do we have some people in the gun all the time? Are we able to suspend our judgement until we know more facts? Do we gossip too much about others (coworkers or families)? Are we racist? Sexist? Do we discriminate against religions?

Comments: Justice is easy to define but hard to act on. It can apply to policies and procedures. Agency and DHS guidelines operate here. Justice applies to our day-to-day work of assessing and judging. It balances compassion. Its opposite is being judgmental. It also includes “seeking justice”, to defend children and families against discrimination or to protect their rights. Justice might even mean having some (appropriate) compassion to perpetrators of abuse, but needs clear boundaries. We also need to be just and compassionate to ourselves, looking after ourselves. Just doesn’t quite mean treating everybody the same, because contexts are important, and no two people are the same. It means “treating everybody with consistency and fairness.”

Respect: a high or special regard, an esteem for others. Do we cherish people for who they are? Do we have an attitude of interest in others? Do families and children and co-workers feel that we value them? Do you feel respected by managers and co-workers? The opposite of respect includes taking people for granted, not really listening to them, trivialising their contribution, not valuing their opinion.

Comments: Respect hits in individually: people look for “respect” more than they look for compassion, justice and hope. We expect respect, and when it is missing we feel shock. People are more likely to say “I don’t feel respected” than “I don’t feel compassion”. Professionally, you don’t have to “like”, but you do have to “respect”. The level of respect in our team is high. Sometimes you might feel like having a go at someone, but you then remember that they deserve respect. If you are not respected, it is a most destructive thing, very demoralising, but this team is very supportive. Treating others as you would like to be treated: this is done very, very well.

Collaboration: to work jointly with others, and to cooperate with other agencies or organisations with which one is not immediately connected. We hold other agencies or workers and the departments in good regard. Collaboration creates networks of goodness, mutuality, confidence, community. The opposites of collaboration include competition, secrecy, self-importance, sectarianism, and selfishness. In our work, do we deliberately try to make partnerships with families, other parts of MacKillop, other agencies?

Comments: There are some important issues to be explored here. Collaboration has a work-focus. MacKillop doesn’t oppose collaboration, and does try to create shared pathways: for example in inter-agency training.

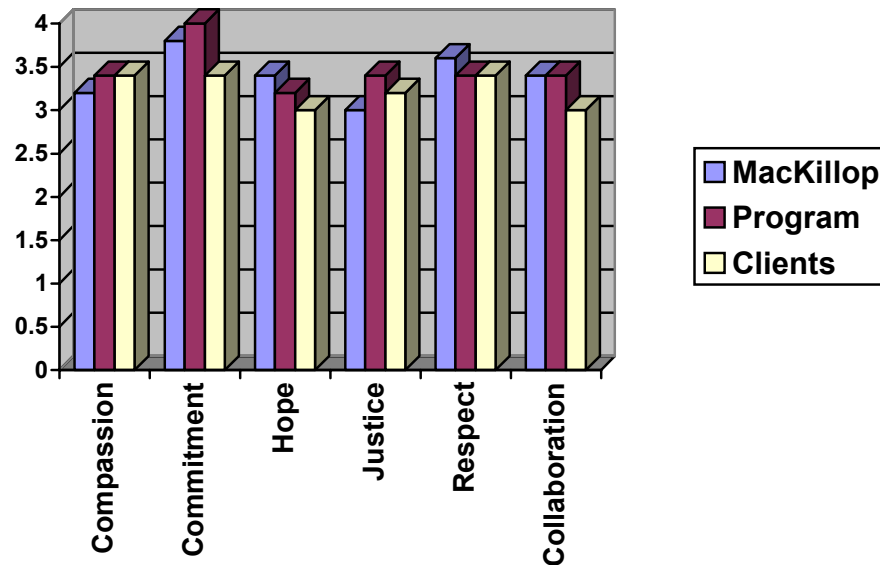
Lying behind these values is the conviction that we can make a difference, that people are of inherent value, and that community is essential for human fulfilment. These are also key Christian values, and key to the spirit of our founders.

Other values: are there any other values that seem to be operating in MacKillop, whether positive or negative, which touch you or concern you?

Comment: Every value is tinged with “respect”. One value that is quite high here is the value of “celebration”.

2. Questionnaire

The record of the initial conversation (section 1 above) was returned to the team, along with a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) seeking further responses and reflections. Five replies to the questionnaire were received, which are averaged out in the table below:



What this graph indicates is the extent to which the stated values are perceived to operate first in MacKillop as a whole, secondly in the Mercy Children's Services program team, and thirdly in the team's work with clients. Thus, for example, commitment is seen to rate highly in MacKillop as whole, and even more so in the program team, but less so with clients. Compassion, on the other hand, is perceived to operate less in MacKillop as a whole than it does in the program team or with clients. Curiously, while "hope" is not always strong, other conversations indicate it is a key value.

In response to the question about other values, one reply noted "support, both formal and informal" as a value particularly evident in the team.

Other comments from the questionnaire:

Compassion: "We constantly have to prioritise access to our limited resources and make judgements about degree of need: some families might perceive our response as a lack of compassion."

Collaboration: "Some families would like more. I think we try hard but are sometimes limited by heavy workloads and time pressures."

Justice: "Sometimes when court makes decisions that are out of our control – no justice for families. I think we advocate for justice always for families."

General: "I believe that at the beginning of MacKillop there were many changes for staff as amalgamation occurred. I have noticed a change in the agency since then and think that staff are now happier workers and now more able to work according to MacKillop values."

3. Report from meeting with caregivers

On Friday 2nd June, John Honner met with five volunteer caregivers for Mercy Children's Services at North Geelong for about ninety minutes. Robyn Coots and Judy Emond were present for most of the meeting. John's report on the meeting is as follows:

After a short explanation of the purpose of the values audit, I said a few words about each of the values and then asked the carers if any of these values struck a chord, or prompted some other kind of response.

There was a strongly felt response first of all to "compassion", "collaboration", "respect", and "justice". Caregivers felt there was a high rotation of support workers, and while some were terrific, others failed to show much compassion and respect. There was also a feeling of being left out of case planning and this was seen as a failure of collaboration. While it was explained that there were many issues involved here, like not disclosing placements and not disempowering parents, some caregivers felt they should be at least informed about what was going on and to have their experience and opinion consulted, especially with long-term care. Sometimes decisions were made about a placement starting, changing, or not going ahead, and the caregiver would be the last to know. Some carers also felt they didn't get as quick a response from their workers as they needed when there were serious problems, and that sometimes they were left too long alone without a supportive call.

They appreciate opportunities to gather together and would like to feel more a part of the team and to be included in gatherings and functions as much as possible, when practical. This had happened in the past, but they'd like more of it in the future. Some caregivers were generally very happy with the way things had gone for them, with some rare minor hiccups, but others felt there were some abiding patterns of poor communication that could be improved on. As one said "The only real bug is when workers decide things without telling you – put you on rest, or take child away – and this is unjust, as are their inconsistent views about the number of children a care can take on a placement." "It's good that they don't want you to burn out, but they should consult, including our own children, who are affected by placements stopping and starting." They were critical both of MacKillop and DHS staff for "changing the rules all the time".

On "commitment" there wasn't a lot of comment: "there are some [MacKillop workers] whose heart isn't in it, but there are plenty who go the whole hog."

What kept the caregivers going? "The kids", they all said: "a motherly thing", "the smile keeps you going", "good times are far more often than the bad". There had been quite a lot of venting of feeling during the meeting, and at the end the mood swung around to assuring us that MacKillop was "terrific" in lots of ways.

The caregivers do feel really deep compassion from some workers, and some acknowledge there is also collaboration. It became evident that the caregivers are in an undefined position in some ways, being both close to and separate from MacKillop: they didn't know a whole lot about MacKillop in terms of policies and practice. They appreciated the morning very much, and agreed that they liked coming together and being invited to celebrations.

4. Report from survey of families

On 31st May, Heather Cooney circulated a questionnaire to families in contact with Mercy Children's Services (see Appendix 2) and on 21st June submitted the following report:

Questionnaire survey of adult clients who are natural parents of children in foster care.

Methodology

A simple questionnaire was compiled with questions aiming to tap into the values clients feel are apparent in their dealings with MacKillop Family Services staff.

The language was kept straightforward and non-technical.
People were asked to tick a response for each item. (Yes/ No/ Sometimes)
Opportunity for other comments was provided at the end.

The questionnaire with a brief covering letter was mailed out. A stamped addressed return envelope was also included.

The sample - All natural parents of children placed in voluntary emergency and respite placements during the last 3 months (28 in all) were surveyed. Twelve statutory client families were also surveyed. A minor difference in the wording of the main question distinguishes the responses of the voluntary versus statutory families.

Results

Out of 40 questionnaires sent out, 16 were returned, which was quite a good rate as questionnaires go. Half of the voluntary clients (14 out of 28) responded, but only 2 out of 12 statutory clients responded.

CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT MacKILLOP'S VALUES

When you are in contact with MacKillop Family Services, how well do you feel treated by the staff?

Please tick YES, NO or SOMETIMES for the following questions:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>SOME- TIMES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Do MacKillop staff have compassion for you when you are in stress? (No response – 2)	9	2	1
Do you feel they understand your situation? NR –2)	5	7	1
Do you feel they are trying to help you? (NR – 1)	10	3	-
Do you think the staff are committed to what they do? (NR – 1) One “Yes” respondent added “somewhat own agenda”	12	-	1
Do you think they would “go the extra mile” to try to help you? (NR – 2)	8	3	1
Do they encourage you? (NR – 2)	7	4	1
Do they give you hope that life will not always be so difficult? (NR – 2)	9	2	1

Do they see the things you do well, as well as the things you are having difficulty with at the moment? (NR – 1)	11	1	1
Do you feel they treat you fairly? (NR – 1)	11	2	-
Do you feel listened to? (NR – 1)	11	1	1
Do you feel they respect you as a person? (NR – 1)	10	1	2
Do you feel included in the decisions that are made about the service that is provided to your family? (NR – 2)	10	1	1

Do you wish to make any other comments, positive or negative, about how you feel treated by MacKillop Family Services staff?

“I have not had enough to do with MacKillop’s services too make comment.”
(This person did not respond to any question.)

“I have not had a great deal to do with anyone but when I have I have found them very good and have helped me with the placement of X for the last 4 months with one week end a month.”

“I find it odd that family services in Geelong have not heard of Barnados (a world-wide children’s help organisation) who are completely confidential and very helpful. There is not the constant threat of being reported to Government agencies. Whilst I have deeply appreciated the assistance of this service, which I really needed, I have found it to be intimidating. I have particularly appreciated, as does my child, the delightful respite carer. She’s tops!”

“That MacKillop Family Services and their staff should keep up the great work and know that their help is much grateful to people in need! Thank you!”

“It’s the system that fails us, not the people working for the people.”

“I would highly recommend your service in the future to anyone.”

“Nothing but absolute delight in my positive association with MacKillop. I will be sorry to see Leanne Julian leave – she has been a wonderful support and friend throughout my involvement.”

“MacKillop Family Services are great when you need help in lots of ways.”

“Sometimes I feel frustration. I realise MacKillop is very busy. But sometimes no one rings back. It would be great to get a simple answer yes or no – the children can go to respite or no, they can’t this time. Thank you.”

“I believe MacKillop are somewhat under staffed – in what areas I think you should all stop and access that many families benefit from MacKillop and for that I’m grateful.”

Respondents who are statutory client families

How well do you feel treated by MacKillop Family Services staff?

Please tick YES, NO or SOMETIMES for the following questions:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>SOME-TIMES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Do MacKillop staff have compassion for you when you are in stress?	-	1	1
Do you feel they understand your situation?	-	-	2
Do you feel they are trying to help you?	-	2	-
Do you think the staff are committed to what they do?	-	2	-
Do you think they would “go the extra mile” to try to help you?	1	-	1
Do they encourage you?	1	-	1
Do they give you hope that life will not always be so difficult?	1	-	1
Do they see the things you do well, as well as the things you are having difficulty with at the moment?	-	-	2
Do you feel they treat you fairly?	-	2	-
Do you feel listened to?	-	1	1
Do you feel they respect you as a person?	1	-	1
Do you feel included in the decisions that are made about the service that is provided to your family?	-	1	1
Do you wish to make any other comments, positive or negative, about how you feel treated by MacKillop Family Services staff?			

“The lies said about me not being a good mother. I try. I’m not perfect.”

“Supposed to help families reunite not give false hope for the future.”

[It should noted that these comments may be more appropriately directed to DHS than to MacKillop.]

5. Interim report

On 21 June John Honner completed the following interim report for discussion among the team.

The team has a clear understanding of what MacKillop’s values entail, and is well aware of their subtleties as, for example, in the balance of compassion and justice.

Commitment, compassion, and respect seemed the strongest values in the team. Hope was seen as very important too, but the nature of the work made hope fragile. While justice was seen to operate well in the service, it was not a value that provoked a lot of energy. MacKillop's sponsorship of various activities for justice was not registered. Collaboration was practised both internally and externally, but it too was a less obvious operative value. The notion of collaboration across MacKillop as an organization did not draw a lot of attention. Respect and compassion were seen as dominant values, with commitment and hope as necessary companions, and celebration and support were significant as other values. The questionnaire results indicate similar patterns, with a sensitive hope balanced by a strong commitment.

The meeting with a sample group of caregivers paints a different picture. The values of compassion, respect, collaboration and justice triggered some strong responses from some of the caregivers, who felt that on occasions they had been left out or neglected in decision-making. The values of being "included" and respected seemed significant, and the feeling of doing something good with the children they cared for was especially significant for them. They had high praise for MacKillop and its staff, nonetheless, and some caregivers had not experienced the same sense of being disrespected.

The survey of families is very positive about the program. Commitment ranks very highly, and compassion, justice, respect and collaboration are not far behind. If there is a challenge here, it is perhaps in the area of understanding, or showing understanding, of the situations families are in (see response to question 2). The survey of statutory client families is more negative. This is a more difficult area, and challenges seem to be presented here.

The program promotes values in some explicit ways: the value of hope operates in recruitment, in as far as a positive attitude is seen as a necessary element of working in this service; the value of support and celebration operates explicitly in the way the team functions. There are also deliberate decisions made to be collaborative with other agencies, as in shared training days.

Some questions for further discussion:

- How does the team experience MacKillop as promoting these values?
- How does each individual feel she contributes to the values?
- Which values need attention, if any?
- Which areas of work need attention, if any?
- How can we develop our values?

The process of the audit has been smooth, and the support and collaboration of all staff involved has been outstanding.

6. Discussion of Interim report

On 22nd June John Honner and Eileen Casey met with the team to discuss the interim report (see section 5 above). The following points emerged.

Rather than "dominant values", the team preferred to speak of "key" or "leading" values. It was also important to appreciate that this value survey mainly looked at MacKillop's explicit values and how they operated. It would be better to speak of collaboration as "not high on the graph" rather than "did not draw a lot of attention."

Even though hope did not appear to score highly on the questionnaire, hope was seen as strong and significant indicator: when people lose hope things go downhill: if a worker loses hope in a child, then they cannot work with that child any more. Hope is augmented when people learn new openings from training sessions. There is a strong emphasis on staff development, and ongoing professional development helps personal as well as professional staff development.

The audit of caregivers was discussed for some time. It was noted that the team tries to include caregivers as much as possible, but that they still needed more communication, appreciation, and support. It was a pity that Pastoral Care was not normally available to them, for example.

The survey of families, particularly the statutory cases, needed to take into account the fact that any non-negative comments in this area were a very positive sign, given the circumstances, and that some comments were more appropriately directed to DHS than to MacKillop.

Some members of the team said that they experienced themselves as MacKillop rather than MacKillop as something external to the team. Other values noted in the team were professionalism and equality. The weekly morning meeting was also of vital value. The team saw itself as self-contained, really hard working, and that sometimes the work makes it difficult to practice the values. There is a commitment to collaboration, but the service system has lots of barriers: efforts have been made to build relationships with DHS, for example, but restructuring there has made this difficult. It was acknowledged that there was not a lot of collaboration with other parts of MacKillop, even at Barwon, because the work levels were so high. There was a risk in the strength of the group, because it made for self-containment and there could be more reaching out to other groups in MacKillop. Once again, however, work levels make reaching out tough. However, the team was supportive and understanding when the program manager took on extra duties from time to time in the wider organisation. Perhaps the team could make a gesture of hospitality or support from time to time to another team in MacKillop.

In general, work does create stress, and stress does undermine values.

Appendix 1
Values Survey

Having reflected on MacKillop’s values, could you please rate how you think they operate within MacKillop as a whole, within your team, and within your work with families and children.

Please circle one of the numbers (1 indicates low grading, 5 a high grading) or “don’t know” and make any other comments you wish in the space below. If you wish to write something longer, please attach it to the survey.

COMPASSION																	
In MacKillop						In our team						With families and children					
1	2	3	4	5	don't know	1	2	3	4	5	don't know	1	2	3	4	5	don't know

COMMITMENT																	
In MacKillop						In our team						With families and children					
1	2	3	4	5	don't know	1	2	3	4	5	don't know	1	2	3	4	5	don't know

HOPE																	
In MacKillop						In our team						With families and children					
1	2	3	4	5	don't know	1	2	3	4	5	don't know	1	2	3	4	5	don't know

JUSTICE		
In MacKillop	In our team	With families and children
1 2 3 4 5 don't know	1 2 3 4 5 don't know	1 2 3 4 5 don't know

RESPECT		
In MacKillop	In our team	With families and children
1 2 3 4 5 don't know	1 2 3 4 5 don't know	1 2 3 4 5 don't know

COLLABORATION		
In MacKillop	In our team	With families and children
1 2 3 4 5 don't know	1 2 3 4 5 don't know	1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Any other comments:

Appendix 2

31 May 2000

Dear

MacKillop Family Services tries to treat the families and children we work with, with respect and compassion.

Could you please fill out the questionnaire and let us know how well you feel you are treated by MacKillop Family Services staff.

Your answers will not have your name on, so we will not know who the answers came from.

There is a stamped envelope to send your answers in.

Please send back your answers within the next day or two.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

**Heather Cooney
Team Leader
Mercy Children's Services.**

CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT MacKILLOP’S VALUES

When you are in contact with MacKillop Family Services, how well do you feel treated by the staff?

Please tick YES, NO or SOMETIMES for the following questions:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>SOME- TIMES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Do MacKillop staff have compassion for you when you are in stress?
Do you feel they understand your situation?
Do you feel they are trying to help you?
Do you think the staff are committed to what they do?
Do you think they would “go the extra mile” to try to help you?
Do they encourage you?
Do they give you hope that life will not always be so difficult?
Do they see the things you do well, as well as the things you are having difficulty with at the moment?.....
Do you feel they treat you fairly?
Do you feel listened to?
Do you feel they respect you as a person?
Do you feel included in the decisions that are made about the service that is provided to your family?

Do you wish to make any other comments, positive or negative, about how you feel treated by MacKillop Family Services staff ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your feedback.

MacKillop Family Services Values Audit: Final Report

TIERS

Draft 12.10.00

Summary

TIERS (the Transitional Integrated Education Residential Services program) provides a holistic intervention for young people through education, residential, and case management services. St Vincent's School, which has a maximum enrolment of sixteen, includes some students who are not part of the TIERS program. Six teachers work in the school. Young people in the TIERS program live in three residential units, each staffed by a team of residential workers. Four case managers work with the young people and their families.

The three groups that make up TIERS – teachers, case managers, and residential workers – gave significantly different responses to the values audit. While there were differences within each team, some common threads became evident.

All staff expressed strong commitment to their work, and believed MacKillop as a whole was very committed to its mission. Some felt it a challenge at times to maintain commitment, and one regretted that a commitment regulated by the clock was only a conditional commitment. Others again wondered how committed MacKillop was to its employees.

Significantly, many staff who had previously worked with St Vincent's Boys Home, prior to the formation of MacKillop, found marked differences between the two organisational cultures. They experienced the larger organisation as being more managerial and less personal in its culture, and losing some of the positive personal characteristics of the smaller agency. They felt the more business oriented style of the new agency cut across respect, justice and compassion. Communication was not so strong either, in this group's experience, and this weakened their sense of collaboration.

These issues were of little concern to more recently employed staff, who experienced more positive relationships in MacKillop. More significant for them were the professional standards of practice and the quality of collaboration within and across teams, based on shared expectations of good practice and shared commitments to the young people and their families. These commitments did not always translate into hope and justice, but hope and justice nevertheless remained important values. Again, while compassion was seen to be important, it had to be balanced with justice and firmness, and at times the behaviour of young people made it difficult to maintain compassion. Justice remained an elusive value, because the justice system itself was experienced as unjust at times, and workers often felt they had less rights than the young people with whom they worked. This group of workers was also more aware and appreciative of MacKillop's external work in advocacy for justice and for better policy.

“Hope” is a pivotal value: work with a young person begins with hope, and hope can often be dashed. Success with a young person builds up hope, as does the support and expertise of a team. While hope is not always high, it remains of great importance.

“Respect” was a challenge. Given that self-respect is such a key to the development of a young person, the respect shown by staff for each other and for young people, and the respect that staff

experience in the organisation, are key to the program's success. Unfortunately, respect was not easy to maintain, and some staff felt unrespected. Other staff remarked positively that they felt "respected" by the organisation when they were offered more responsibility or further training.

"Collaboration" would be expected to be an important element in a program that involves three teams. Collaboration within teams was stronger than across the whole program, but teams were appreciative of being involved in and supported by a wider program. Pressure of work, however, generally meant that there was little time for wider collaboration.

The other values that were noted included "honesty", "involvement in local community", "firm standards of practice", "perseverance", "empowerment", and team "belonging". A negative value noted was the corporatization of welfare and the complexities of the managerial approach.

It is noticeable that values appear to operate less strongly with the young people and families than they do in the program or in MacKillop as a whole (see Table 4).

The young people in the program appear to place priority on developing self-respect and good relationships.

Evidence for these conclusions is contained in the following pages.

John Honner
26.9.2000

Background

1. Initial Meeting: discussion of values

On Wednesday 5th April, at the TIERS team members meeting, John Honner briefly explained the background to, and the process of, the values audit and invited the team to participate. Lesley Mackie, pastoral care worker, was also present and introduced as a participant in the process.

Three meetings were subsequently held with teachers (26 June), case managers (6 July), and residential workers (23 August). At each of these meetings a discussion was held of MacKillop's stated and unstated values, and how they operated in MacKillop, in the team, and with the young people and families. Each meeting went for over an hour and discussions could have lasted longer. The following is a summary of these three meetings.

Compassion

Teachers: *Compassion was felt to operate strongly in the work with young people: "basic to our work", "we couldn't survive in this work if we didn't have compassion", "you need to see behind the facade the kids put up, which takes compassion", "it's the same as empathy". One typical sign of compassion in the work is the fact that the young people are welcomed back after they have gone and done something wrong. Compassion was on some occasions felt to be lacking in MacKillop's treatment of staff, and some felt that the demands of a large organisation unfortunately sometimes clashed with community values.*

Case Managers: *One remarked that the Christian Brothers gave a real example of giving and caring and putting their values into practice, giving up hours to make the venture work, and others who worked with them would be more generous as a result. MacKillop is now seen as a business: are values really supported in the organisation? Another noted that we need to be beware of false compassion. Compassion has to be genuine. Structures can cut across human relationships, where more flexibility is required. There is a lot of compassion within our team, for one another. It's hard sometimes to be compassionate with families, and you can get de-sensitised: professionals can become "cool". Compassion for our young people is not easy to sustain and can go on and off.*

Residential Workers: *It goes without saying that you need compassion to work with children, and without compassion we couldn't do the work that we do. There are different expressions of compassion, sometimes in strength and sometimes in motherliness. But in resi work you have also to be able to set distances between yourself and the young people, even cool and ruthless, "cruel to be kind", because if you get too personally involved you can't survive. Compassion has to be controlled alongside strong rules; it's a tough love. There's always compassion deep down, but day to day you have to be firm.*

In the organisation some had experienced disillusionment, particularly in the early days, where very large contributions made over previous years appeared not to have been recognised and some felt central office treated them like a number rather than a person. It is important to keep alive the history of what workers have contributed in the past, which may not show up on new records or be known by new staff. Pastoral care workers have been the face of the organisation's compassion and have really made a difference. Another reported, on the other hand, that in recent incidents of injury and bereavement they had received a great deal of sensitive support and compassion.

Commitment

Teachers: *As in the past, so also now, there was a deep commitment to the young people and the work: "you didn't work here for the money". However, because of the demanding nature of the work, commitment had its ups and downs. Nonetheless, the staff continues on in the work, both collectively and individually, so there is considerable depth of commitment. Some staff expressed the fear that the*

organisation was not totally committed to them. MacKillop, however, shows its commitment to the young people and the work in its determination to keep the show on the road.

Case Managers: *There are a lot of really committed people in MacKillop. Some are committed in different ways, and some are less committed. It's hard to keep commitment up all the time when there's a conflict between organisational policies and personal convictions. Constant red tape can cut across the quality of work with young people. The current trend in society of people moving from workplace to workplace goes against the experience of being a valued employee in one organisation. Being valued and recognised would be a helpful sign of the organisation's commitment to staff. MacKillop is clearly committed to the young people, but it often has its hands tied by DHS. Unfortunately, commitment these days is often in terms of a structured relationship (hours on) rather than a commitment that is person-to-person and transcends hours. The young people that are with us the longest are generally the ones who do best, especially if there have been some long term staff in place.*

There has to be commitment in this work, because it's not for the money, and you want so much to happen for the young people. It is difficult to maintain commitment to the young people, however, if both DHS and MacKillop are experienced as demanding, as can happen, and staff feel the commitment to them is conditional upon their work. Commitment is in fact very strong within the team, but at a larger level it's a challenge, and the bigger the organisation becomes, the sense of commitment lessens.

It can be difficult to balance commitment to the program and commitment to a young person: MacKillop has been forced to accept young people inappropriately, and workers can be caught in an impossible situation, and it can be difficult to make the best decision.

Residential Workers: *The work demands wholeheartedness, and you get out of it what you put into it. Many of the staff have shown the reality of their commitment by putting in so many years in resi work. Nonetheless, it is important to have cut off lines and commitment at work needs to be balanced by other personal commitments. But you never stop caring about the young people you've worked with over a long time. People are committed to their work and to the young people.*

Some miss the personal support that had been given when the Brothers were always there and wish there were a closer personal link with Central Office. Some accepted that the business approach was now necessary, but felt there should be more respect for the resi workers, who are at the working end of MacKillop's mission.

Hope

Teachers: *On the surface, there were many signs of loss of hope. It was difficult to maintain hope, for example, when work to help the young people goes unrecognised and unacknowledged in the wider community: "this work is not a vote catcher". The dependency on government funding and the fact that the work is unfashionable in the wider community diminishes hope. Recurring behavioural difficulties with the young people do not help. A need for more support was expressed. Yet there was underneath this a deeper hope: "a lot here is pretty much hopeless and just has to be accepted, yet in spite of that you still hope". The move to TIERS and the new sites gave some a little hope because of the increasing links, but others were sceptical that the new program would make a difference, given that a new location had been talked about for so long. Staff appreciated the fact that hope was a value, and that it does get nourished in the chapel gatherings. The facts that the current staff had been together for some years and that no staff had resigned out of disillusionment, were thought to indicate that the levels of hope were still quite strong.*

Case Managers: *Hope is a huge source of energy, even though it is often disappointed. The resi workers help give hope to the young people, and good outcomes help maintain hope. The reverse is also true. Hope is built up through shared joy and pain and shared knowledge and debriefing.*

Informally, the team has a hopeful motto: what a difference a day makes. At times the team turns to irony or offloading to cope with disappointment. It was also noted that outside issues (personal/family/etc) can affect work and levels of hope. The fact that “everyone is allowed to have their own deep personal values” helps maintain hope.

Residential Workers: *You have to have hope at the beginning of working with every kid. There is a lot of hope in the units, and it comes from a sense of the team’s competence and strength. The team offers support and the support nourishes hope and keeps it alive. No goals can be achieved unless we work as a team with consistent approach. When a “them/us” situation arises, this can take hope away, because it is a sign of things. Hopes get dashed when you are not respected and your experience and judgement is not listened to. Achieving progress with the kids keeps up your hope. It’s great to work in a good group. Where there have been enormous changes in staffing and kids it is very difficult to establish a team and to see that you are making a difference*

Justice

Teachers: *Justice isn’t practised at all times. The young people can exploit staff, and sometimes injustices may occur. Teachers try to be just, but mistakes have been made. Teachers also felt that they had experienced injustice more than once. Justice wasn’t a value that drew a lot of energy: the problem with talking about justice as a value was that the word was tainted because so many of the young people experienced “juvenile justice” as a lack of justice.*

Case Managers: *There’s not a lot of justice in the world, and justice as a value is a double-edged sword. We’d like to have justice, but there isn’t a lot of justice for the young people, and there’s not much justice when young people trash staff or courts allow them so much space. The current application of the Children and Young Persons Act is a cause of injustice: young people in care are allowed to do too much, against the standards of the workers. Externally, MacKillop does try to stand up for young people as an advocate for justice and is proactive on structural issues: it could perhaps say more. Internally, the management has nearly got the difficult balance right, in showing justice to staff.*

Residential Workers: *It’s hard to show justice to a kid in the heat of the moment. You try to be fair. Justice goes alongside and cuts across compassion. The world isn’t just, especially for the kids, and you need to prepare them for that.*

Respect

Teachers: *Respect should be a high value in the organisation. It was a very sensitive value for staff. Because abuse from the students is a constant and unrelenting factor, and because teachers do not have much to show for the work that they do, there is considerable drain on their sense of being respected. It is very important to teachers that they feel their work is understood and respected. Within MacKillop’s organisation, staff felt they were patient and offered a lot of good will, but sometime they felt trivialised or taken for granted.*

Case Managers: *Respect has a high priority, it is a “highlight”. In the team there is a lot of respect for each other. It’s hard to get respect from the young people. Staff feels respected by MacKillop management: their ideas, values, beliefs are respected, even if not agreed with. Staff also feel respected when they are asked to take on more responsibilities or offered more training.*

It is hugely important to be respectful of young people. Sometimes in debriefings we could be more respectful of young people. The young people have little respect for themselves and little respect for each other and their parents, and are very vulnerable. It’s important to model respect to the young people: respecting them can get respect back. However, kids can take advantage of you if you show

too much respect to them, and may not learn self-respect as a result. Like everybody else, kids have to earn and learn respect.

Respect is a value with many layers to it. Does it mean equality? Respect can come from cultural background (respecting elders) or from a sense of rights (a person deserves respect) or as a personal achievement (a kid who has some life and has a go gets respect). Respect might be too complex a word: it can mean respect for what people do, or respect from being a person, or respect (in faith) of the person as image of God (and this is where commitment and compassion come in). "You can measure respect in the amount of time you give a person."

Residential Workers: *Respect is especially important for the kids: they lack respect for themselves often. And if a kid doesn't feel respected by you, you soon find out. The remarks about the organisation's compassion and commitment also apply to respect.*

Collaboration

Teachers: *Teaching staff work in collaboration well together, and there is collaboration with line of management. There was not much sense of what was happening in the rest of MacKillop, and a slight feeling of being in a minority group (as teachers in a welfare organisation) where once they had been significant as teachers in a school. It was felt that there had always been collaboration between teachers and resi workers, and that this would continue in the future.*

Case Managers: *Collaboration happens across all levels, and is good. There is collaboration with outside organisations and through networks and it's another hugely good thing. This is especially the case because in working with young people there can be lots of workers from lots of agencies involved with any one young person. Because there is still competition for funding and because it's important to uphold MacKillop's name, this can put a balance on collaboration.*

Residential Workers: *Collaboration is a good word, and collaboration is really valuable in a unit. We can help the kids learn to work together and establish togetherness. Collaboration with other teams in TIERS and across the wider MacKillop organisation is really difficult, because the nature of the work means that workers have no time for anything else.*

Other values, comments

Teachers: *There was a concern that the value of being connected with the local community had been lost: St Vincent's had once been host to local groups and visiting country schools, and the Art Show and other events had created a lot of good will, support, and understanding in the local community. Because a different direction was being taken now, because the Brothers were less active now, and because some of the local supporters had aged, this important sense of support and belonging had been lost.*

There was also a feeling of being part of a work that was phasing down and a feeling of treading water, with low numbers of students and a loss of spirit. The corporatization of welfare was thought to have changed things dramatically, with so many people being involved with each young person, and some staff felt confusion because the work was becoming all too complicated.

Case Managers: *values need to be balanced by firm standards of practice. Honesty, determined perseverance (commitment?), empowerment across the board.*

Residential Workers: *Every human being needs to feel valued, and if we are not valued for our skills and our experience then we are less likely to value the kids. A key value in each unit is the unique character of each team: its sense of identity, the skills in the team, and the belonging that is offered.*

2. Questionnaire

The records of the discussion of values (see section 1 above) were returned to the respective participants. In the light of the discussions, they were asked to fill out the questionnaire on values (see above p. 22). This questionnaire asks respondents to indicate how they think MacKillop’s values operate (a) across MacKillop, (b) within their program, and (c) in their with young people and families (clients). The questionnaire also invites other comments.

Teachers: Four replies were received. The scores included some inconsistencies: one respondent scored “5” for team commitment, while another scored “1”. The same two scored “4” and “1” respectively for team collaboration. Two sets of replies were relatively positive, two were relatively negative. Only one written comment was appended, with respect to “justice”: “our clients seem to have the ability to accuse staff of whatever and the processes by which staff are stood down during these investigations gives them (clients) tremendous power and credibility while the staff feel powerless.” The figures indicating values for work with clients are rounded out, as some respondents to the questionnaire included a “don’t know” to this reply. The following table averages the scores out of a maximum of five.

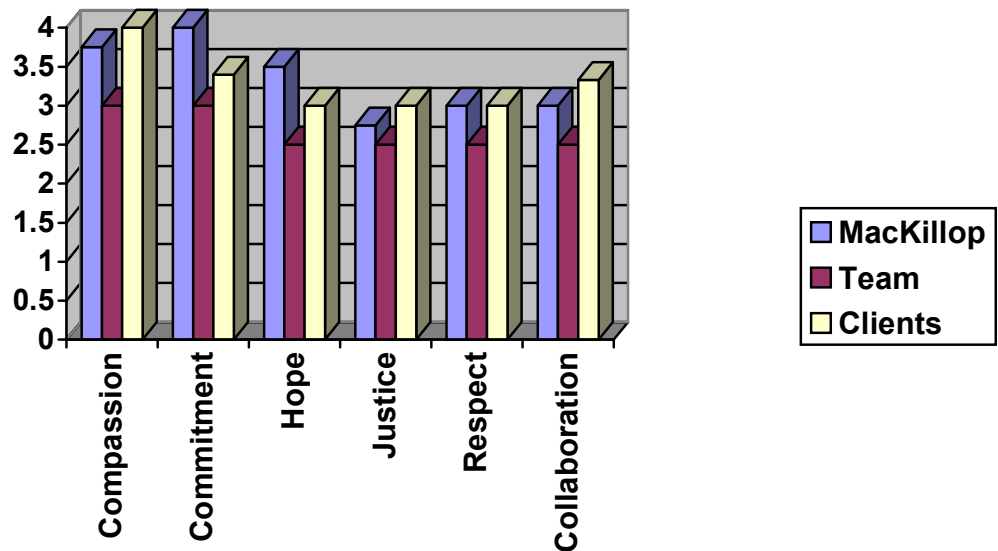


Table 1. Teachers’ replies to questionnaire, averaged out of 5

The most noticeable feature of this table is the teachers’ perception that MacKillop’s values are less operative within their own program than in MacKillop at large or with students. Compassion and commitment generally score above hope, justice and respect. Justice and respect appear to be the values of most concern.

Case Managers: only two replies to the questionnaire were received. The following table averages out replies.

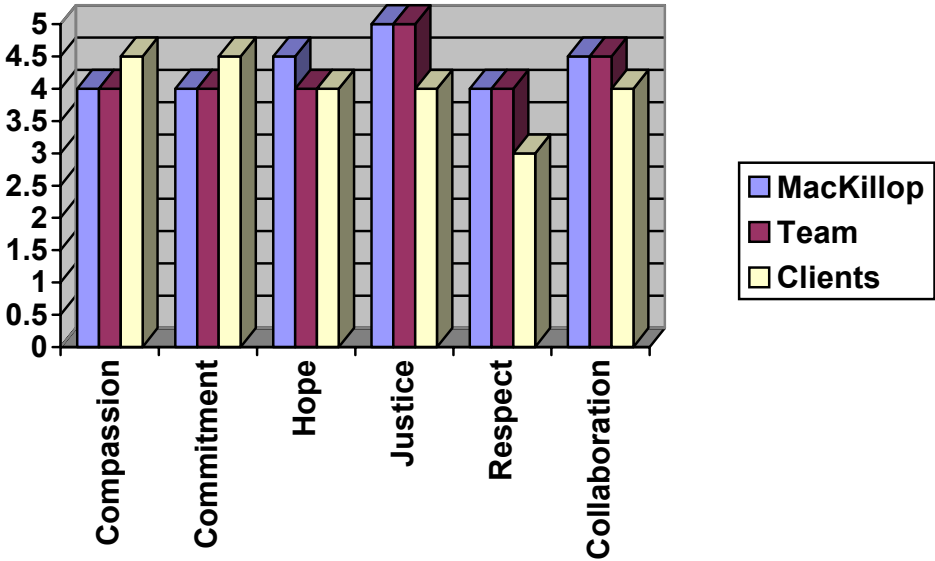


Table 2. Case Managers’ replies to questionnaire, averaged out of 5

The most noticeable features of this table are the high placing given to justice and the consistent equivalence of scores for MacKillop as a whole and for the team itself. “Respect” appears to be the value giving most concern.

Residential workers: Nine replies were received to the questionnaire. One reply responded with “1” or “2” for all scores, which was quite off the scale of other replies, which were “3” to “5”. The following table averages these scores out of a maximum of five.

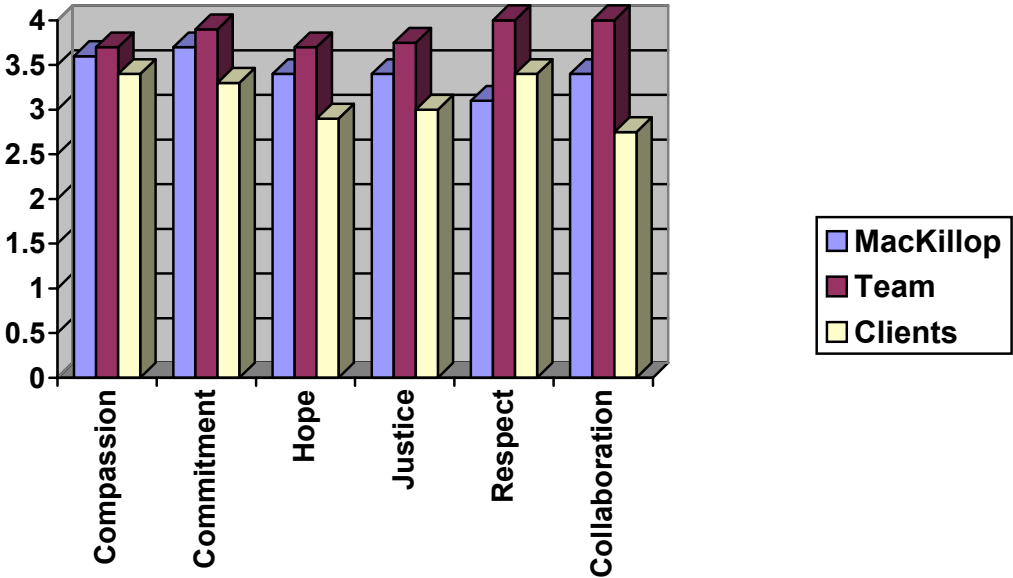


Table 3. Residential workers’ replies to questionnaire, averaged out of 5

The notable features of this table are the consistently high scores for values within the team and low scores in work with young people, with MacKillop as a whole in the middle range. Once again justice and respect score as the most fragile values.

If the three separate tables are combined and averaged out, the following table for TIERS appears:

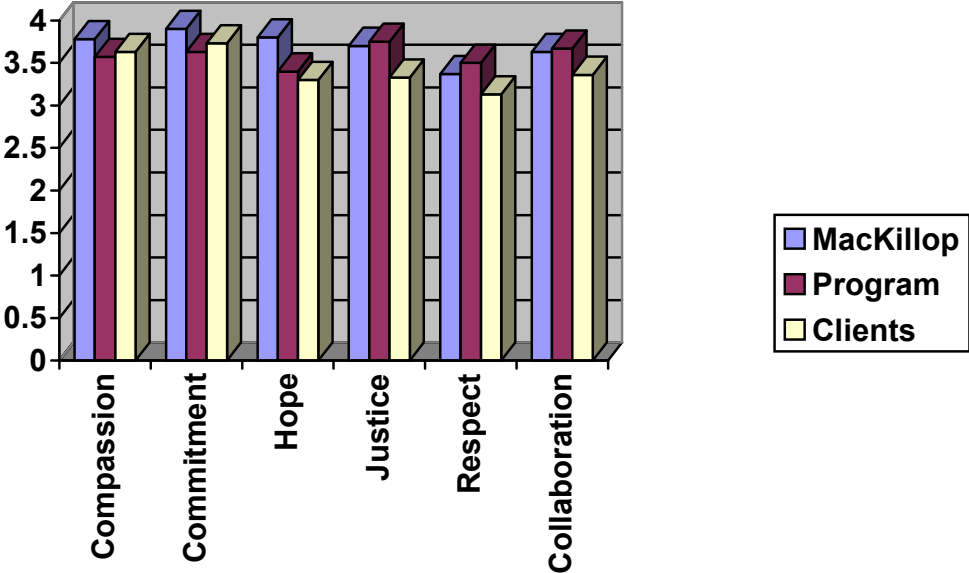


Table 4. Combined average scores for TIERS

When all scores are averaged out, the emerging picture shows less variation across categories, though “respect” remains the most fragile and “commitment” the most positive. It is noticeable that the “client” group averages out as the one in which values are least operative.

3. Values survey with students

Lesley Mackie conducted a values audit with students from St Vincent's School as part of the TIERS values audit.

Four students (all boys) willingly participated in a hands-on activity with value concept cards on the carpet floor of the chapel. One student declined the invitation but watched the others throughout.

A prelude to this discussion was a brief discussion of what values are – values being “those things which are most important to us”. Two students were asked in turn to name their favourite football star and their favourite pop star. They were then asked to imagine which values these people lived by. Their answers included “sportsmanship”, “family”, “friends”, “vocal talent”, “clothes”, “beauty”, and “determination”.

The students were then invited to take a pack of sixty cards each, and place them on the carpet. Then they were asked to place on one side the values they would regard as their own values, and on the other side the values they would reject. They were asked to be honest and not just to try to please anyone, and come up with the six most important values for them in their lives now. As they completed the task the students discussed the values with the teachers present.

The most important values that were selected fell roughly into three categories: Personal, Relational, and Personal Development. They are outlined as follows:

PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
Being myself (2)	Getting along with other people	Accepting things as they are
Taking care of myself,	Being well liked	Trying new things
Being healthy (2)	Sharing (2)	Learning and growing
Having physical strength	Being a member of a family (2)	Doing things I'm supposed to
Having fun (2)	Being part of a community	Honesty
Power	Having a good friend I can trust	Seeing the funny side of things
Winning	Control	

“Control” was described as being able to manage anger when necessary. “power” was not described adequately by the student concerned.

The students appeared to enjoy this activity, although there were some grumbles about there being “too many cards” to choose from.