

Children, Young People and Family Services Providers Newsletter October 2017

Department of Health and Human Services

To: Children, Young People and Family Services Providers

- Child FIRST and Family Services
- Early Childhood Development Coordinators
- Cradle to Kinder and Aboriginal Cradle to Kinder
- Early Parenting Centres
- Parenting Assessment and Skill Development Services (PASDS)

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

Children's Resource Program

Homeless Children's Support Services

Youth Support:

- Leaving Care and Springboard
- Finding Solutions
- Adolescent Support Program

DHHS, DET, FSV:

- Local Connections Teams
- Child Protection
- Children and Families Policy Branch
- Children and Youth Area Partnership
- Family Safety Victoria

Introduction

Welcome to our Children, Young People and Family Services Providers Newsletter.

This newsletter has been prepared by the Early Pathways Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services to provide updates in statewide policy and service development to our funded organisations and department programs that deliver services to vulnerable children, young people and families. We hope that you find this informative and useful to the valuable work in your organisations.

We encourage you to please distribute this to staff and managers across your services.

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Giving young Victorians a headstart on a science led future

Children are being given the chance to engage with the world of science, technology engineering and maths (STEM) before their first birthday, as part of a new experience at Scienceworks.

Museums Victoria announced a range of new STEM-focused experiences at Scienceworks designed to prepare young Victorians for a science and technology-led future.

Two new permanent exhibitions and a number of parallel programs are being developed with a specific focus on children under five years old, as well as teenagers and young adults.

The new experiences include:

- A \$2.5 million STEM exhibition for babies to 5-year-olds focused on construction to introduce small children to real world skills in an unreal space
- A \$3.75 million immersive permanent exhibition for secondary school age and beyond, to engage young adults in science through revealing the invisible world of wave forms
- Workshops, outreach programs and professional development resources to support formal and informal STEM education across Victoria.

In addition, Museums Victoria has appointed 11 Scienceworks ambassadors – 10 of whom are women – to inspire the next generation, particularly young girls.

Delivering better maternal and child health services to Aboriginal families

On 2 October 2017, it was announced that Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency will be one of ten organisations across Victoria to share in \$1.2 million in grants through the Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health Initiative.

These grants will help trial new culturally responsive models across the state. Aboriginal families access Maternal and Child Health services at a lower rate compared to non-Aboriginal families.

The new models being trialled will help address the lower rate - through employing new Aboriginal health and outreach workers, more nurses, increased coordination between local government and Aboriginal organisations, and improving referral and outreach with families.

The service model will be trialled across Darebin, Latrobe, Swan Hill, Campaspe, Geelong, East Gippsland, Warrnambool, Wyndham, Whittlesea and Mitchell.

For more details go to www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/amchigrants.aspx

Marrung Scholarships open pathways to excellence

Twenty Victorian students will share in \$100,000 in the Marrung Education Scholarship Awards 2018, announced on 26 October 2017.

Twenty two-year scholarships worth \$5,000 will be awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander government school students to help them thrive in the final years of their secondary education.

Recipients of the 2017 scholarships came from 17 different government schools across Victoria. The students are seeking to pursue careers in professions such as law, psychiatry, design, sports, the arts, and physiotherapy.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing the Victorian Certificate of Education, Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning or VET in Schools Certificate has been steadily increasing over the past five years. Figures have more than doubled from 271 students in 2011 to 570 in 2016.

The 2018 Marrung Education Scholarships close on November 10, 2017.

Nominations can be submitted here. www.education/MarrungScholarships

Victorian early years awards winners announced

A teacher educating young children from Aboriginal backgrounds, and a program supporting refugee mothers and babies are among the winners of the 2017 Victorian Early Years Awards.

Rachel Webb from Save the Children's Nowa Nowa Kindergarten in Gippsland was named Early Childhood Teacher of the Year for her work helping children – many of them from Aboriginal backgrounds.

For more details of 2017 Victorian Early Years Awards winners for each category go to <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/events/Pages/childrensweek.aspx>

More help for students through mentoring: grants open

More young people will be encouraged to remain engaged in education or training through an expansion of the successful Student Mentoring Program. Round two of the program was launched 24 October 2017 – with applications for 2018 and 2019 now open.

The program calls for organisations and schools to develop new or continue existing mentoring programs for children and young people at risk of disengaging from their schooling or training.

The grants will support young people to maintain their participation and interest, particularly at key transition points such as between primary school and secondary school.

A key focus will be on supporting Indigenous students, students in out-of-home care, or those from low socio-economic or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Grant applications close on 6 November, more information can be found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/studentmentoring.aspx>.

Applications open to Engage!

Applications are open for grants to engage young people and help them reach their full potential and connect with their local community.

Grants are available through the \$12.3 million Engage! 2018-20 program – open to local governments and community organisations – to support young people to engage in community life and access education, training and career opportunities.

The grants of between \$90,000 and \$150,000 also aim to help young people aged 12 to 25 take part in local decision making and other community initiatives.

The grants will help organisations to engage young people through volunteering, mentorships, leadership, skills building and other community building activities.

They will assist organisations to support a range of young people – including Aboriginal young people, young people from culturally diverse backgrounds, LGBTQI young people, and young people with a disability.

Applications for the Engage! 2018-20 grant round close on 10 November 2017.

For more information visit www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/

More support for Victoria's youth

More young people in Victoria are being empowered by providing them with intensive support, engagement in education and training and greater pathways to employment.

The South Sudanese Community Association are one of eight organisations who are delivering supports under the \$4 million Empower Youth Program.

The association is supporting South Sudanese young people by connecting them with a community mentor and youth worker to improve access to local initiatives such as education, employment, sport and art.

The organisation is one of eight to support more young people in areas with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and crime.

These organisations have already employed 15 youth workers to support up to 400 young people in their communities every year to develop and deliver individual plans that focus on the key elements of community participation: health and wellbeing, education and training, and employment pathways.

Communities in Greater Geelong, Ballarat, Hume, Brimbank, Wyndham, Frankston, Latrobe, Whittlesea, Dandenong and Casey will benefit from the program over the next three years.

Other recipients include:

- Youth Support and Advocacy Service, with an emphasis on supporting those new and emerging communities in Dandenong and Casey, including Pasifika youths
- Centacare Ballarat, which will partner with Headspace in Ballarat to improve the health and wellbeing of young people by offering intensive and coordinated health services and the development of career pathways
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Co-Operative Ltd, which will provide support for Aboriginal young people to engage with school, family and community, as well as access leadership opportunities.

For more information go to www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au

Better mental health for culturally diverse communities

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities across Victoria will receive more support to improve their mental health, through the Mental Health CALD grants program.

The recipients of the grants were announced on 10 October 2017 to coincide with Mental Health Week (8 – 14 October).

The grants range from \$5,000 to \$80,000 and aim to support culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians who are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, poor mental health. Funding is also being provided to support their families, carers, and to build wider community supports.

A total of 13 grants have been allocated, with recipients including:

- Diversitat, which will support Afghan, Karen, Karenni, Iraqi and Syrian refugees, particularly young people
- cohealth, to provide a community-led project supporting women from the Horn of Africa
- Chinese Health Foundation of Australia, to address barriers for Chinese migrants in accessing mental health services.

For more information on Mental Health Week, visit www.mentalhealthvic.org.au

For a full list of Mental Health grant recipients, visit www.health.vic.gov.au

Making cultural diversity the life of the party

Thousands of Victorians will be able to celebrate and share their diverse cultures and traditions thanks to Multicultural Festivals and Events grants announced on 10 October 2017.

The Multicultural Festivals and Events program will this year fund 897 grants to support events that showcase Victoria's multiculturalism and bring the community together.

More than 1,000 applications were submitted from both new and established community groups, spanning metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Grants are approved for events that foster cross cultural awareness, understanding and respect, and ensure that Victoria's multicultural communities can celebrate, preserve and share traditions in meaningful ways.

The grants are also provided to build the capacity of smaller or newer community groups to engage with both locals and fellow organisations.

For a full list of successful grants, visit www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Helping refugee families settle in Victoria

Recently arrived children and families from Syria and Iraq are being helped to adapt to their new lives through targeted professional development for frontline community workers.

The new investment will enable kindergarten teachers, maternal and child healthcare nurses and others to gain a better understanding of the unique challenges facing refugee families that have experienced severe trauma.

Foundation House will deliver the programs to community workers across northern Melbourne. Foundation House provides specialist support for child survivors of torture and will initially work with the Hume City Council Best Start Partnership to develop and trial new professional learning resources and programs, before expanding it to other local Best Start sites.

The initiative will further strengthen the Refugee Education Support Program by helping refugees to understand and access local education and health services while also supporting early years' service providers to meet the needs of recently arrived communities.

About 4,000 refugees impacted by the Syrian and Iraqi crises expect to be settled in Victoria over the next 12 months. This is in addition to the state's normal intake of refugee settlements.

For more information <http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/>

Revamp for Victoria's leading sexual health service

More Victorian women will be able to easily access expert advice on sexual and reproductive health issues, thanks to a modern makeover of the Family Planning Victoria Action Centre in Melbourne. The refurbished clinic was opened on 24 October 2017.

Family Planning Victoria is the state's leading provider of services, education and training for sexual and reproductive health issues.

The revamp of its home base will allow more women to get support and services.

This includes extending the delivery of contraception to women of all ages, as well as re-launching support groups for same-sex attracted and gender-diverse young people.

The makeover was part of Victoria's first-ever Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan launched earlier this year, supported by \$6.6 million in new funding.

The strategy includes:

- Delivering family planning training for doctors and nurses, particularly in regional Victoria
- Establishing eight community-based sexual and reproductive health hubs, four of which will be in regional Victoria
- Working with Aboriginal women and women with disabilities to improve sexual and reproductive health.

Victorian women will also be able to access confidential, evidence-based advice and support with Women's Health Victoria, chosen to establish and operate Victoria's first women's reproductive health phone line.

For more information [Family Planning Victoria](http://www.fpv.org.au/) <http://www.fpv.org.au/>

Greater support for people following suicide attempts

People leaving hospital following a suicide attempt are now receiving dedicated support, thanks to the Hospital Outreach Post-Suicidal Engagement (HOPE) program.

More than 80 people have already been supported by HOPE, which has been running successfully at St Vincent's, The Alfred and Frankston hospitals. The trial will also start at Geelong, Maroondah and Wangaratta hospitals this year - with service models and recruitment now underway.

The program provides holistic support to help individuals, carers and families identify factors and build strategies to reduce the risk of suicide. Sites were selected based on analysis of suicide data, population demographics and community profiles.

HOPE delivers practical support for those who have thought about or attempted suicide and need an intensive response in the months following, during the period of risk or vulnerability. Individuals are supported for up to three months after their discharge from hospital.

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are supporting 12 local communities to develop and implement proactive suicide prevention strategies through place-based pilots.

PHNs will work with local services, schools and communities to develop and deliver suicide prevention plans that address local priorities and build on existing services and supports.

For more information [victorian-suicide-prevention-framework-2016-2025](#)

Victorian Carer Card Program

A collaboration between the government, businesses and the community, the Carer Card Program gives **recognition, understanding** and **support** to Victorian carers.

The program has a wide range of discounts and benefits on offer from businesses, the local government and community organisations.

To be eligible for a Carer Card you must be a resident of Victoria and either:

- the primary carer of a person with a disability, severe medical condition or mental illness, or someone who is frail aged or in need of palliative care
- a foster, kinship or respite carer.

For more information go to <http://carercard.vic.gov.au/>

National Carers Weeks 2017

National Carers week was held 15-21 October 2017, for information, resources and support groups go to

<https://www.everythingcarers.org.au/> or <http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/about-us>

Workshop: Parenting with intellectual disability

A workshop on using competence based models with parents with learning difficulties, featuring international expert Professor Maurice Feldman will be held on 29 November 2017.

This event will interest professionals who are interested in developing their knowledge and skills in working with parents with intellectual disabilities.

For further information and to register click here: <http://bit.ly/2hqGah8> or www.healthystart.net.au

IRIS Newsletter - October 2017 No 55

The October 2017 issue of the IRIS Newsletter has been posted on the IRIS web page. This newsletter contains information about the IRIS upgrade (Latest Build Version 1-12-0-17284) that is now available on our new web site and program specific information.

The IRIS newsletter is attached or go to the new Funded Agency Channel website

<https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/systems>



Please feel free to send this newsletter onto all staff within your organisation.

Regards

Early Pathways Team
Children Families Disability and Operations Division
Department Health and Human Services Victoria