

Children, Young People and Families Service Providers Newsletter February 2017

Department of Health and Human Services

To: Children, Young People and Family Service 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
- Finding Solutions
- Youth Support Service
- Adolescent Family Violence Program

DHHS & DET:

- Local Connections Teams
- Child Protection
- Community Services Branch
- Children and Youth Area Partnership

Introduction

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

This newsletter has been prepared by the Early Pathways Unit of the Community Services Programs and Design Division, Department of Health and Human Services, to provide updates in statewide policy and service developments 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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Disability Scheme Ready for Those in Central Highlands

Victorians with a disability in the Central Highlands will be the next to transition into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The roll out began from 1st January 2017 in Moorabool, Pyrenees, Ballarat, Ararat, Golden Plains and Hepburn local government areas. People living in these areas, who currently receive support from the Victorian Government will be contacted to make an appointment to undertake planning.

An estimated 4516 people within Central Highlands are expected to transition into the NDIS including 1358 new clients. Central Highlands is the third area to roll into NDIS, after Barwon and North Eastern Melbourne, and Loddon will follow soon after in May 2017.

For more information go to www.ndis.gov.au

Investing In Playgroups Across The State

On the 9th February 2017 the Great Start Community Playgroup recipients of the 2016 grant round were announced.

The \$50,000 investment will support the opening of 36 new playgroups and help 23 existing playgroups expand the number of sessions they run.

Grants will support 10 playgroups in growth areas, 20 playgroups in rural areas and 29 playgroups in metropolitan Melbourne.

The successful grant recipients will get resources and mentoring support for their newly established community playgroup, valued at up to \$1000.

Playgroups play a vital role in strengthening families and communities, and instilling Victorian children with a lifelong love of learning.

Strengthening Support for Young Pacific Islanders

A new pilot program was announced on 20th January 2017 which will be giving young Pacific Islanders targeted support and more opportunities to connect with their community.

The investment of \$600,000 for the Young Pasifika Program is to fund experienced youth outreach workers to work directly with young Pacific Islanders and re-connect them to school, jobs and training.

The youth outreach workers will help engage young people through existing community networks and relationships such as sport, churches and local government programs.

Young people in Pacific Islander communities can face a number of challenges including disengagement from school, experimenting with alcohol or drugs and racism and discrimination.

The program will also fund a project coordinator to work closely with local organisations and networks to help improve links between support services and deliver a coordinated response to issues faced by young Pacific Islanders.

The program will initially be delivered in the local council areas of Casey and Wyndham, and then the program would be extended into Brimbank and Dandenong to reach young Pacific Islanders in those areas.

TILA and Leaving Care Hotline and Email

We would like to remind you of two great leaving care support options for you and the young people that you support.

The Leaving Care Hotline:

The state-wide Leaving Care Information and Referral Line for young people and workers is delivered through Melbourne City Mission's Frontyard Youth Service, phone 1300 532 846, email leavingcare@mcm.org.au

The leaving care hotline aims to provide information and referrals to young people and or other professionals re: eligibility and nearest post care support service. Frontyard is also able to provide information, support and a range of other referral options for young people and workers.

TILA- Transition into Independent Living Allowance:

Melbourne City Mission is the Victorian administrator of the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) through [Frontyard Youth Services](#).

TILA is a payment from the Australian Government to help young people who are leaving out-of-home care. It provides a contribution of up to \$1500 towards the costs involved in moving to independent living.

Young people, aged between 15 and 25 years who have been in formal out-of-home care will be able to access the \$1500 payment for a range of things including training and educational materials, and other items like furniture and white goods.

The \$1500 payment will be available in up to six instalments as agreed between the young person and their case worker.

Is this support for me/my client?

TILA is for young people aged 15– 25 years who have been in, or are currently in, out-of-home care. To be eligible, young people must have left out-of-home care after the age of 15 years (or be within twelve weeks of leaving care) and have last been in out-of-home care for a continuous period of at least six months.

For further information on the supports provided or to access the application form please click on this link <http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au/services/homelessness/young-people-25-years/frontyard-youth-services/program-detail/transition-into-independent-living-allowance-tila>

If you would like further information on any of these programs or have questions, please call the hotline on 1300 532 846 and speak with the worker or leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible.



National Closing the Gap Day Coming Up on 16 March 2017

On 20 December 2007, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), which includes the leaders of federal, state and territory, and local governments, committed to 'closing the gap' in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians. COAG agreed to be accountable for reaching this goal within a specific timeframe. The strategy initiated at this time by COAG has become known as Closing the Gap.

The National Closing the Gap Report 2017 is available at <http://closingthegap.dpmc.gov.au/>.

National Close the Gap Day is on 16 March 2017 and is an opportunity to reflect on how we can make the greatest impact through our work to Close the Gap.

For National Close the Gap Day information and resources go to [Oxfam Australia website](#)

Reducing Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities

On Tuesday 21 February, 2017 funding was announced to reduce family violence in Aboriginal communities by investing in projects that focus on cultural strengthening and building more resilient communities.

40 new projects have been funded to prevent and raise awareness of family violence in Aboriginal communities across Victoria.

These projects were recommended by the 11 Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups that identified priority areas for funding in their community and include:

- Supporting Aboriginal women in outer eastern Melbourne who have been victims of family violence with legal, family violence and maternal and child health information sessions
- A preventative project for fathers in Geelong and surrounds will use traditional methods such as storytelling and community discussions to help build strong family relationships
- Healing Our Mob in the Ballarat area will bring the community together to talk about the impact of family violence and how to address the problem
- Cultural training and workshops will also be held to educate family violence workers

The \$650,000 investment is part of the 2016-17 *Indigenous Family Violence Strategy Community Initiatives Fund*.

Ricci Marks Award nomination

Do you know of a young Aboriginal achiever?

The Ricci Marks Award, established in 1997, recognises the achievements and aspirations of young Aboriginal people in training, education, arts, sport, culture and community leadership.

Nominees must be Aboriginal Victorians between 16 and 25 years old.

What do Award recipients get?

The award is given to 2 recipients who each receive a bursary of \$5,000. A special commendation award, the Ricci Marks Rising Star Award, will recognise a third young person with a bursary of \$1,500.

For more information go to <http://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/grants-funding-and-training.html>

National Youth Week 31 March to 9 April 2017 – Grants Announced

Funding is being provided to more than 100 organisations across Victoria to run youth-focussed activities during National Youth Week in 31 March to 9 April 2017.

In recognition of the contribution young people make to their communities by celebrating their achievements through a \$200,000 investment.

The week will include festivals, music events, awards nights, forums and sport and recreational activities.

Some of the grant recipients include:

- Wonthaggi Secondary College, where students will plan, host and perform a one-day mini-festival event celebrating the arts and strengthening relationships with community organisations and the community
- Brophy Family and Youth Services, who will bring together Warrnambool's young people and their artwork with the creation of a community postcard, to symbolise how diverse identities are connected by a respect for inclusivity
- The Islamic Youth Organisation, who will host the Carlton Young Women's Sport Carnival, which brings together young women from different cultural backgrounds to participate in sports activities and competitions.

National Youth Week is an annual celebration of young people aged 12 to 25 years of age, delivered in partnership between the Commonwealth and state/territory governments.

The Victorian Government will host the inaugural Youth Summit on 31 March 2017, marking the start of National Youth Week. Young people from across Victoria will attend the summit to discuss issues that matter most to them and to turn their ideas into action.

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

Youth Crime Prevention Grants

Applications are now open for the \$2 million competitive stream of the Youth Crime Prevention Grants program.

The Youth Crime Prevention Grants program provides funding for community-led initiatives that address offending behaviour and recidivism by young people aged 10-24 years who have had contact with, or are at risk of involvement with, the criminal justice system.

Funding available

One-off grants of up to \$200,000 to community partnerships to develop and implement evidenced-based youth crime prevention strategies in areas of high crime and disadvantage.

For more information go to <http://www.crimeprevention.vic.gov.au/home/our+grants/youth+grants/>

Young Carer Scholarship Program – Open 14 March 2017

Carers Victoria's Young Carer Scholarship program gives young carers attending secondary school the opportunity to be acknowledged for their contributions to their family and the community and to participate in school or community based activities that enhance their skills, educational achievement and abilities, or that help them to participate more fully in their community.

Young Carer Scholarships are open to secondary school students who live in Victoria and provide care and support to a family member with an illness or disability.

For more information go to:

<https://www.carersvictoria.org.au/how-we-help/young-carers/young-carer-scholarships>

Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI) – Funding Extended

The Australian Government Department of Health has provided Emerging Minds with an extension of funding to maintain the COPMI initiative until 30 June 2017. The funding will support continued access to the COPMI website, hard-copy resources and online training.

During this time, further details will be provided regarding the development of a new national workforce support initiative for child mental health and a new end-to-end school-based mental health program, as announced in the Government's response to the National Mental Health Commission's Review of Programmes and Services.

Mother of the Year 2017

Barnardos Mother of the Year is the largest and most recognised national awards celebrating mothers. The awards publicly acknowledge the critical role mothering plays in keeping children safe, nurturing them to help realise their potential and shaping the future of Australia. Celebrating its 22nd year, Barnardos Mother of the Year is the charity's flagship campaign and aims to drive a social movement around the importance of mothering.

Nomination drive: 1 November – 26 February

Judging Day: 22 March

State and Territory Announcement Ceremonies: 18 – 28 April

Barnardos Mother of the Year National Announcement: 11 May

For more information or to nominate go to www.MotherOfTheYear.com.au

Protecting Children in Immigration Detention

On Monday 20, February 2017 a landmark ruling by the Supreme Court found that the State of Victoria has jurisdiction to intervene when children in immigration detention are in need of protection.

The ruling meant the state could work more closely with the Commonwealth to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every child in Victoria.

The ruling affirms that child protection practitioners can continue to respond to concerns for children in immigration in the same way as any other child living in Victoria.

This means that child protection can investigate reports concerning the safety and wellbeing of children in immigration detention and exercise its statutory powers to intervene with a child who is assessed as being in need of protection.

This may include issuing a protection application in the Children's Court, which could result in the child being placed in out-of-home care, with the consent of the Minister for Immigration.

The matter was referred to the Supreme Court after questions arose about the extent of child protection's statutory powers under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

Child protection will continue to work closely with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, supporting child protection practitioners to assist children and their families who are in immigration detention.

Data provided by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection shows that as at 31 December 2016 there were 80 children in community detention in Victoria. There are currently no children held in immigration detention centres in Victoria.

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

Regards

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