

A photograph showing the back of a young boy in a blue shirt, green shorts, and a yellow backpack, walking on a sidewalk. He is holding the hand of a man in a pink shirt and blue shorts. The background shows a street with parked cars and trees.

Annual Report

2018/19

We're with you.



CatholicCare
Social Services

We're with you.





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We're with you.

As the social services agency of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, CatholicCare provides a range of services to promote individual, family and community wellbeing.

From humble beginnings in 1983 of lunchtime counselling sessions conducted by volunteer workers, CatholicCare now employs approximately 50 staff and over 170 volunteers that service an area of nearly 500,000km² in Southwest Queensland.

CatholicCare supports all clients in an inclusive environment that welcomes diversity. CatholicCare is welcoming of and support/work with clients from:

- All cultural backgrounds including refugees, migrants and new settlers to Toowoomba,
- Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders,
- All religious and spiritual beliefs,
- All relationships and family's structures.

Vision

A community of kindness and justice reflecting Christ's mission.

Mission

Our mission is to empower individuals, families and communities to meet the challenges of life and relationships.

Values

Our values inform the way that our people relate to the community, to those we serve and to each other.

Supporting families at the pressure points over their lifespan

Our Services include:

- Family Support Program (Counselling, Education and Family Dispute Resolution),
- Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support (TRAMS),
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Service,
- Employee Assistance Program and
- Mental Health Services (including Partners in Recovery).

Our Team

Our staff are a diverse, eclectic group of caring individuals whose personal values align perfectly with CatholicCare's mission to 'empower individuals, families and communities'.

With a wide range of qualifications, expertise and life experience our staff have the perfect mix to go above and beyond a basic service and put great outcomes for our clients within an arm's reach.



THOSE WE'VE HELPED:

737
Individual Counselling
Sessions Delivered

823
Family's Assisted
Through Mediation



STAFF MEMBERS COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS:

Migrants

5

Indigenous

4

Toowoomba

40

Roma

3

St George

1

Charleville

1



OFFICES:



STAFF MEMBERS:

Male

5

Female

40

Total

45

From the Bishop

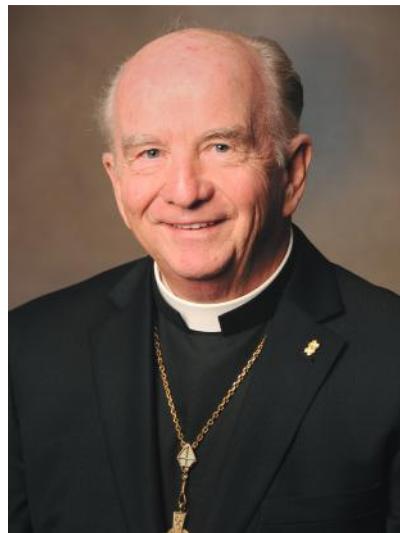
Once again, CatholicCare has engaged with the gospel call to serve and support people across the Diocese. Pope Francis reminds us that communities should be places of care and compassion, listening to each other, welcoming new people in, and I am delighted to note that our CatholicCare staff have embodied this throughout the year.

They have taken the 'church to the streets' as they have transformed the lives of families, large and small, from different culture and backgrounds with different needs and issues. As our lives become more complex and complicated, CatholicCare has continued to be a beacon for those seeking hope and light in times of darkness.

May God bless the work of CatholicCare, the staff, volunteers and supporters as they strive to achieve their Vision of a society that is just and kind.



Bishop Robert McGuckin



“ ...CatholicCare staff connect with clients in ways that are compassionate and respectful, inclusive and non-judgemental... ”



Chairperson's Report

2018-2019 has seen CatholicCare navigate a challenging economic environment, with ever tightening and competitive funding environment and the ongoing demand for greater efficiency from all service providers.

The CatholicCare Board has responded proactively to these challenges through a variety of strategies, as we have maintained a well-rounded, skills-based board focused on providing strategic governance and support, all the while remaining client-focused. We have further enhanced our corporate governance and accountability framework and strategically assessed CatholicCare's competitive advantage, refining and adapting our strategy as we have supported the leadership team to strengthen relationships with key stakeholders across health, education, business and government agencies.

The Board has proactively worked to support the continuation and effectiveness of key programs addressing unmet needs within the community and ensured critical ongoing professional development for the organisational leadership team to strategically develop staff capabilities and culture.

Looking to the future, we have continued to invest time discussing, defining and developing our new Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 as we focus on how we can empower individuals, families and communities to meet the challenges of life and relationships.

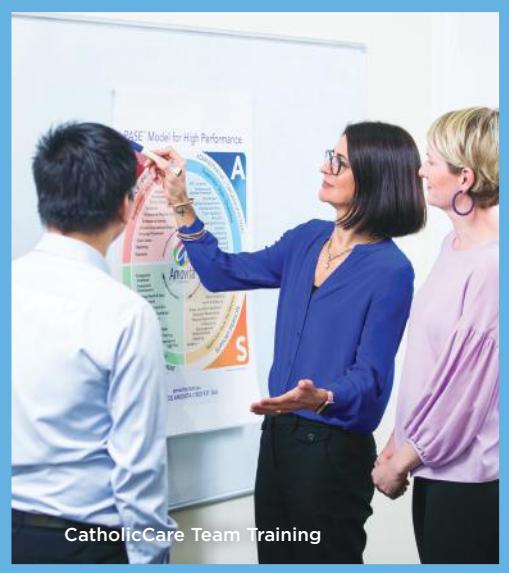
I would like to acknowledge the support of our dedicated and highly capable Executive Director, as well as the committed volunteers on our Board for their ongoing commitment to supporting the organisation and thank departing members Mr Roberto Garcia, Ms Anne Michelle Alroe and Dr Doug Birrel for their valuable contribution.



John Olive



“
...we focus on how
we can empower
individuals, families
and communities...
”



Executive Director's Report



It is wonderful to be once again reporting about all that we have accomplished in the past 12 months, as 2018-19 has provided both challenges and a number of new opportunities for CatholicCare Social Services in Toowoomba and South West Queensland region.

Working collaboratively with other agencies and developing targeted, evidence-based programs has enabled us to respond to service gaps aimed at supporting families, youth, refugees and migrants even more effectively.

We have addressed the challenge of delivering essential services in an environment of ever-tightening government funding with the significant decrease in funding for CatholicCare (and Toowoomba Region as a whole) for services for recently-settled refugees. This impact included a reduction in the number of staff and volunteers and a reduction in the number of clients we were able to support. Importantly however, it prompted us to launch a social media campaign calling on the community and key stakeholders, with "Let's have a conversation on how we can best support refugees and migrants settling in our community." Our campaign highlighted the complexities and benefits involved in our specialised support and raised awareness throughout our community.

There are some particular highlights in the 2018/19 year, I would like to share:

- We were successful in receiving additional funding for TRAMS under the MUSTER initiative (Mutual Understanding, Support, Tolerance, Engagement and Respect) as part of the Strong and Resilient Communities Program through the Department of Social Services, and the advocacy of our local member, Dr John McVeigh. This funding has been used to support the ongoing casework for our TRAMS program as well as developing a new pool of interpreters for local community organisations and businesses. As we continue to welcome refugees into our community, it is critical we build cohesion to further understanding and acceptance of diversity. It will allow us to meaningfully support and positively shape people's lives enabling additional assessment and referral throughout our extensive network of local government and non-government services in health, education and employment.
- We launched our Employee Assistance Program to the broader business community, offering an affordable, pay per use, short-term counselling service, workplace mediation services and on-site critical incident response service.
- We established a formal partnership with the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce for the Business Skills Connect Program. Given the enduring skill shortages and ongoing challenges in attracting talent to regional areas, we (CatholicCare and the Chamber of Commerce) are encouraging business owners and managers to think more broadly about potential opportunities for newly settled Australians and the enormous contribution that they will be able to bring to your business. This partnership is significant as it highlights the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration where leading community and industry groups work together to make real and lasting difference in the Toowoomba region. Our project enables us to celebrate diversity in our community and encourage Toowoomba to see the value of newly settled Australians.
- The creation of our amazing Which Way Holiday camps (an extension to the Whaddup Youth Program) have been specifically designed to reconnect Indigenous Youth with their cultural heritage. Consisting of 2-3 day camps, our program has involved almost 40 ten to thirteen-year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth reinforcing healthy lifestyle choices, while celebrating and strengthening their connection to country.
- We have also launched our Youth Bail Support Program, funded by the Department of Communities, to support CatholicCare to work collaboratively with Legal Advocacy and the statutory Youth Justice Service to help prevent crime, to act early in reconnecting young people to make healthy choices and to support good behaviour and a positive future.
- In keeping with our mission, we have supported more than 800 families to access support through the Family Relationship Centre with Legally Assisted and Child Inclusive Family Dispute Resolution.

Finally, our ongoing focus is to continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders and to respond to critical need and we look forward to another year strengthening families and promoting individual, family and community wellbeing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Venables".

Kate Venables
Executive Director



Corporate Governance

CatholicCare Social Services is committed to delivering services that empower individuals, families and communities to meet the challenges of life and relationships while meeting the needs of our diverse community.

Throughout 2018/19, CatholicCare Social Services:

- Strengthened strategic partnerships to support service delivery;
- Committed to building ongoing workforce capability and the development of workplace culture.

This strengthened direction has led to the development of a number of new programs and increase in the accessibility of:

- Counselling and Education services;
- Refugee and Migrant Support Services and
- Family Support Services.

CatholicCare's Board initiated extensive community consultation with a number of organisations including Commonwealth Department of Social Services Queensland Health (Division of Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services), Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN, Education Queensland, TAFE Qld, Toowoomba Regional Council, Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce, Toowoomba International Multicultural Society, Refugee Talent, Heritage Bank and University of Southern Queensland, to identify service gaps and any unmet needs within the community.

Bishop Robert McGuckin

Catholic Diocese of
Toowoomba

CatholicCare Board

Executive Director



The CatholicCare Senior Leadership Team

Our Supporters

Commonwealth Government Funding

CatholicCare has been successful in gaining status as an NDIS provider which enables us to deliver support coordination and counselling.

The Department of Social Services provides funding for CatholicCare Social Services:

- Family Relationship Centre
- Future Families
- Family and Relationship Services
- Rural Mediation services
- Separated Parental support
- BLESS
- Which Way
- Settlement Grant Program & SETS (Settlement Engagement Transition Support)

The Department of Health (via Lifeline/Partners in Recovery consortium), provide funding for:

- Partners in Recovery

State Government Funding

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability provides funding for CatholicCare Social Services:

- Youth Bail Support Service

The Department of Justice provides funding for CatholicCare Social Services:

- Community Justice Service

Donations

LifeLine provided funding for CatholicCare toward the running of Whaddup.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Throughout 2018/19, CatholicCare Social Services partnered with or worked collaboratively with a number of organisations, including:

- Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce
- Catholic Agencies including:
St Vincent's Hospital,
Toowoomba Catholic Schools
- University of Southern Queensland
- Headspace Toowoomba
- TAFE Qld
- Education Queensland
- Community & Private Family Law Firms
- Toowoomba International Multicultural Society (TIMS)
- Carbal
- Goolburri
- Lives Lived Well
- Murri Court



Toowoomba Head Office was privileged to host Charlotte, a work experience student from the Concordia Lutheran College



Staff working together at Staff Forum Sept 2018



Kate Venables & Paul Fletcher celebrating after vital funding boost announcement for TRAMS

Our Board



Mr John Olive
Chairperson

John has served on the CatholicCare Social Services board since 2014 and was appointed to the role of Chairperson late 2016.

John is a qualified Chartered Accountant, a Partner at Horizon Accounting Group and is recognised by the Taxation Institute of Australia as a Chartered Tax Advisor.

John has extensive experience advising a broad range of clients, and holds a particular passion for supporting small to medium family enterprises.



Ms Andrea Frost
Deputy Chairperson

Andrea has served on the CatholicCare Social Services board since 2015 and was appointed to the role of Deputy Chairperson late 2016.

She has enjoyed an extensive career in journalism, communication and stakeholder engagement and currently works co-ordinating media and communications for Toowoomba Catholic Schools.

Andrea holds a Bachelor of Education from USQ as well as a Master of Arts (Journalism and Mass Communication) from Griffith University.



Dr Lachlan Rathie
Member

Dr Lachlan Rathie currently works as Senior Staff Anaesthetist at the Toowoomba Base Hospital, and has spent the last ten years serving tenures as Departmental Director and Deputy Director as well as the Supervisor of Training.

Lachlan has a proven track record in providing high-quality services in regional areas within a cross cultural environment and strong leadership of multidisciplinary teams within a consultative environment.



Mr Patrick Nunan
Member

Patrick has an accomplished legal career with extensive experience across personal injury, aviation and commercial litigation and is a qualified Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland and High Court of Australia.

He has a strong affiliation for community, dedicating more than 40 years of service to various Not for Profit organisations. His career experiences support invaluable contributions to corporate governance, breaking down isolation and providing a voice to communities, while supporting sustainability and development of organisational objectives.



Dr Ken Auenell

Member

Ken's passion for the Educational sector is clearly reflected within an exceptional career that started in 1979. He is currently employed as Assistant Director of Formation and Identity for Toowoomba Catholic Education.

Over the course of his career, Ken has been the recipient of many awards namely, Excellence in Educational Leadership, Excellence in educational administration, and Outstanding leadership in education, educational writing and research.

Ken also recently held the role of President for SPELD Qld from 2014 – 2018.

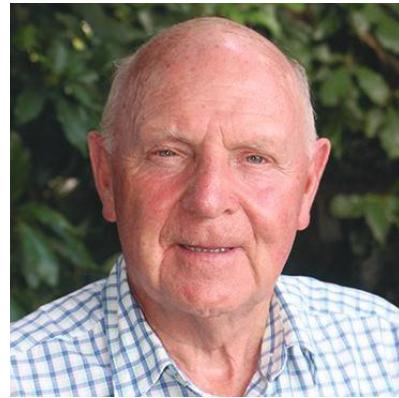


Ms Wendy Agar

Member

Wendy holds a Diploma of Teaching (Primary), a graduate diploma of human resources management, a diploma of tourism management and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company directors.

With a personal purpose of 'creating change for good' Wendy is passionate about making a difference in our communities. Her strong cross sectoral background includes leadership experience in education, agriculture, banking and regional development. It is this broad skill set, combined with her strategic and purposeful leadership and a drive to innovate and collaborate, that has allowed her to transform Toowoomba's Sunrise Way Rehab.



Father Ray Crowley

Member

Father Ray Crowley has served on the CatholicCare Social Services board since 2016. Originally a student of St Joseph's and St Mary's in Toowoomba, Father Ray was ordained in 1972 and served in Parishes in Warwick, South Toowoomba and Roma.

In 1982, Father Ray was entrusted to initiate the Counselling Departments in two of our Diocesan Colleges, building and supporting the departments of Counsellors and Chaplains across the Catholic Framework.

Today Father Ray provides support to Chaplains in Catholic Education and has a wider involvement in the community, particularly facilitating groups for those affected by grief and walking with those who are dying.



“ I think the session was very well explained and I really enjoyed it and took lots away from today. ”

MEDIATION SERVICES

Supporting families through relationship breakdown, separation and co-parenting.

Throughout 2018/19, we supported 823 families with a wide range of information, advice, and referral services and personalised support, mediation and dispute resolution services to assist in conflict management and the development of parenting plans.

Across all programs, CatholicCare supported families in the development of 145 written parenting agreements. Programs successfully delivered include:

- » Mediation
- » Legally Assisted Mediation
- » Rural Mediation
- » Child Inclusive Mediation
- » Future Families
- » Culturally Appropriate support



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Toowoomba Family Relationship Centre

CatholicCare delivered professional and ethically based mediation services to 469 families through The Toowoomba Family Relationship Centre in 2018/19.

CatholicCare supported/delivered 31 information sessions and 164 joint mediation sessions. Of these, additionally 138 Individual Legal Advice Sessions were facilitated by community and private lawyers at no cost to the client.

"I don't know why I waited so long to start mediation, if I knew that this existed and how little you have to pay, I would have done this years ago."

Rural Family Dispute Resolution

Supporting families in South Western Queensland

Throughout 2018/19, CatholicCare assisted 214 clients across Toowoomba, Warwick and Roma through the Rural Family Dispute Resolution program. Services delivered include personalised counselling, mediation and dispute resolution services to assist families with managing conflict and developing parenting plans that best support the interests of any children involved.

"I'm so relieved that we now have something in writing and I'm able to spend regular time with the boys."

Future Families

Legally Assisted, Family Dispute Resolution

Throughout 2018/19, CatholicCare assisted 182 families, of which 109 are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and 34 are Toowoomba's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) clients, through the Future Families program. This program assists family members who identify as CaLD or Indigenous (where one party or child identify) who have separated or are in the process of separating; where there has been a history of Family and Domestic Violence and there are children under the age of 18 years.

"I love coming here and working with the staff, the wealth and diversity of knowledge of the practitioners, the setup of the rooms." Local Family Lawyer



National Mediation Conference held in Canberra



CatholicCare team members attending the National Mediation Conference held in Canberra in 16 April 2019



6 Community Action Dinners were held throughout 2018/19.

Community Action Dinner

Engaging with Toowoomba's CaLD communities

In conjunction with the Future Families program, CatholicCare held 6 Community Action Dinners throughout 2018/19. The aim of these dinners is to engage with CaLD communities and support connections to local resources, reducing barriers people in these communities may experience. Catering is sourced from within the CaLD community and guest speakers include local police, local specialised employment services and other vital community services. CatholicCare staff take the role of Peer Links and together with key cultural advisors and leaders share information, encouraging community engagement and connectedness.

The Court Kiosk

Making information readily available for separating parties

CatholicCare established The Court Kiosk in partnership with Family Law Pathways Network and The Toowoomba Federal Circuit Court. CatholicCare's Future Families team staff The Court Kiosk, and maintain a particular focus on supporting CaLD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. The Court Kiosk is set up on sitting dates to:

- » assist separated parties, lawyers and FCC staff with brochures and information regarding local family law services;
- » offer written materials covering general information on topics relevant to family law e.g. child development information;
- » discuss the individual needs of interested participants to determine what local services or information may be of benefit to the participant or their family;
- » provide a hub for volunteers representing local family law services. These volunteers may complete internal referrals for services offered by their organisation (with the participant's consent) or provide contact information for other local family law services;
- » offer a notice to Federal Circuit Court staff identifying the name of the duty lawyer and Court Kiosk Operators servicing the Court each day.

"The mediator was an amazing lady...and for me so helpful...and for the better of my children."

"This information really opened my mind on ways I was brought up as a child and has helped to understand more of myself and my problems."

TRANSFORMING THINKING

Our Service in Action

“BUT MEDIATION IS A WASTE OF TIME”

Mother contacted us following family breakdown. Father was very hesitant to participate in mediation as he did not feel comfortable talking about their private life with people they didn't even know and thought mediation was a waste of time. Mother and Father were Future Families clients.

Father was very wary and not at all trusting of us, however, after several appointments, he reluctantly agreed to participate in Family Dispute Resolution.

The day of the Joint Session, he called to cancel as there had been a family emergency. We contacted the Father to immediately offer support and assisted in arranging for him to receive food and other vouchers. The Father was extremely grateful and teary with the support provided.

When the rescheduled Joint Session happened, the Parties were each individually supported by a CatholicCare Future Families worker. Despite the Father's initial reluctance, he participated effectively, speaking at length about his concerns in an open manner, and was able to respond to the Mother's concerns. They had already been separated for a long time, and both found it particularly helpful to discuss and agree on ways of better communicating with each other.

Both parents were able to reach agreement on a parenting plan. Following the process, the Father expressed his absolute gratitude for all our support, for both the mediation process and for helping their family in a really sad time of need.

“SOMETHING HAS TO CHANGE. WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?”

Two clients who did not proceed to mediation, thanked us for the sensitive way we dealt with their matter and said that the referrals we recommended for their family have made all the difference. The engagement we had during intake gave them different ways of viewing

their situation so that mediation did not become their sole option for retrieving their family relationship.

They instead engaged with family therapy which has given them sustainable long-term ways of connecting what has been a fractured family.

"BUT WHAT'S BEST FOR THE KIDS?"

CatholicCare provided support for two clients during the Family Dispute Resolution process. They had two young children and the parents disagreed on the time arrangements, with the Mother insisting that she had been advised that was right. The Father was clear that he would not agree to these terms as it was not in the best interest of the children. Sensing a stalemate, the CatholicCare Mediator went on to negotiate and discuss the other agenda items.

During these discussion and agreements, the mediator was able

to weave theory around attachment and provide other helpful information. When negotiations returned to time shared arrangements, the Mother was better placed to focus on the children's needs and not the misinformation she had received.

The parents were able to reach agreement about an age appropriate arrangement for the children that resulted in an increase in the amount of time the Mother was actually available to spend with the children outside her working hours.

"I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THESE THINGS WORK IN AUSTRALIA"

This Client was a direct referral from CatholicCare's TRAMS program.

Father came from CaLD background and had lived in Australia for few years. He had moved out of the family home due to "constant arguing" a few months earlier. He was not sure what do in relation to managing a separation and was not comfortable talking about his private life story. He was mindful about his culture sensitivities and was very shy.

The Father had been living alone for months and had no access to either of his children. He was interested in

mediation with the Mother as he was concerned about possible breakdown in communication with his children.

The parents were assessed by CatholicCare, and mediation was deemed appropriate and safe to proceed. Both had language difficulties and CatholicCare arranged interpreters to support both parents throughout the process.

A Parenting Plan and agreement was reached in a joint session. The parents are now happily living separately and working towards supporting their children in a shared arrangement.

“Opened my eyes to the whole process. Especially from my child’s viewpoint.”





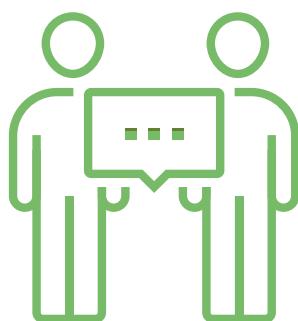


“ I love the fact
that you call a
spade a spade,
I need this ”
middle aged couple

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Sometimes we all need a little extra support.

This has been a remarkable year with more than 700 people supported through CatholicCare's range of counselling services. The primary service delivery location has been Toowoomba, however face-to-face counselling services are delivered on a regular basis to Dalby and Warwick and to the western district through Skype and other multimedia formats. It is intended that during 2019/20, delivery of SPARK workshops will be extended into additional rural centres.



Our Range of Counselling Services Explained

Individual Counselling

This service focuses on a range of needs for all individuals, including those impacted by trauma, domestic violence, grief and loss, anxiety, relationship concerns and self-esteem.

Couples Counselling

This service offers counselling for couples in a relationship who are encountering difficulties in a wide range of areas including communication, connection, parenting, addictions, intimacy and safety. We also offer a Pre Marriage Education Program (FOCCUS).

Children's Counselling

This service works with children who are experiencing difficulties in a range of areas, including parental separation, childhood trauma, identity and bullying.

Family Therapy

Family therapy focuses on supporting all individuals within a family structure to develop healthy communication, functioning and development through strength based support and to promote the overall emotional and mental health and wellbeing of all individuals. This occurs via individual, couples and family (group) counselling sessions.

Individual Counselling for Separated Parents

This service provides an opportunity for an individual parent experiencing separation to be heard and validated. It also provides room for reflection and strategies for change.

Conflict Coaching

A structured support for individuals experiencing conflict to develop interpersonal skills and techniques in order to resolve disputes and develop healthy working relationships within the workplace.

Separated Parents Are Raising Kids (SPARK)

This program assists post-separated parents finding it challenging when it comes to raising children. The program assists individual parents with communication skills, conflict management, the court system, attachment parenting and blended family structures.

Community Seminars

These sessions/seminars are offered in a variety of modalities and topics, including parenting, resilience building and change management.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

This is a work-based intervention program designed to enhance the emotional, mental and general psychological wellbeing of all employees within an organisation and includes services for immediate family members. The aim is to provide preventative and proactive interventions for the early detection, identification and/or resolution of both work and personal problems that may adversely affect performance and wellbeing.

"You saved my life and set me on a path"

single mother of two children, one child severely impaired

Counselling rooms in the CatholicCare Toowoomba office have been transformed by talented artist Susie Klein





Mural in counselling room



Mural in counselling room

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Partners in recovery

Throughout 2018/19, CatholicCare delivered services in the Partners in Recovery program across St George, Roma and Charleville as part of the Lifeline/Partners in Recovery Consortium.

Partners in Recovery (PIR) is a mental health program designed to provide support to people experiencing severe and persistent mental illness.

Many people have complex needs requiring a coordinated response from a range of sectors, including health, housing, income support, disability, education and employment.

The Partners in Recovery program provides the services of a Support Facilitator to work with a person and their family to ensure that all of the services that they come into contact with are working together, and that their recovery journey is well supported.

CatholicCare provide ease of access to NDIS for psychosocial disabilities and support coordination once a plan has been approved. We continue to support clients who are not successful with NDIS funding and assist with flexible funding and capacity building activities to promote engagement in community participation and learning.

35

Clients engaged

41

Clients referred

"I was forced to attend, now I insist on being there"
male who had never attended therapy

"The engagement changed my perceptions"
young worker in youth services

TRANSFORMING THINKING

Our Service in Action

“NOW I HAVE A REAL CHANCE AT LIFE”

Our client presented with:

- » ADHD diagnosis
- » Drug Addiction
- » Large debts
- » Shared accommodation
- » Child 1yr old
- » High School education

Through coordinating supports required for this client and continued contact, in under 12 months this client is now:

- » Drug Free
- » No debts
- » Private accommodation with child
- » Studied Certificate course
- » Employed full-time
- » Budgeting with bank to purchase home within 18 months

POSITIVE OUTCOMES REPORTED BY OTHER CLIENTS:

- » Client travelled on first supported holiday to Tasmania.
- » Clients now fully functional within community.
- » Clients studying to gain employment
- » Clients securing financial assistance to improve their future.
- » Clients receiving a holistic approach to recovery from Mental Health.





“ TRAMS is thriving...and is such a happy and productive place. I feel very lucky to be a very small part of it all. ”

TRAMS

TOOWOOMBA REFUGEE AND MIGRANT SUPPORT

Providing support to newly arrived individuals and families.

Australia has a long history of immigration and Toowoomba is a diverse and dynamic community. TRAMS enables people from differing cultural backgrounds to share and learn about one another in a safe environment.



Supporting Families to Build a New Life

Our small team are highly skilled at providing casework support to empower and educate new arrivals to be able to independently care for their personal and family wellbeing in a new culture. Throughout 2018/19, we provided 1,137 sessions of casework support to over 150 clients. Services are delivered in our Toowoomba Office, onsite at Harlxton State School and out in the Toowoomba community.

The majority of people accessing this service have arrived in Toowoomba as Humanitarian entrants and we consider it a privilege to walk alongside these people who have experienced such difficult circumstances but show such strength and resilience. Like most of CatholicCare's programs we aim to support families to build a new life and brighter future for them and their children.

Celebrating our network of Volunteers

We are blessed to have an extensive volunteer network, built upon long term Toowoomba residents creating a welcoming, friendly environment and creating a sense of belonging and community connection beyond TRAMS.

TRAMS Group Programs.

In addition to the casework, throughout 2018/19, we offered 345 group sessions to 165 people. TRAMS is only able to offer these group programs because of the remarkable team of volunteers who provided almost 3,500 hours of support.

- » Making Toowoomba Home - an orientation class teaching new arrivals about Australia's systems, laws and responsibilities.
- » TRAMS Homework club supporting students with their homework and providing additional help for parents wanting to support their children's educational journey.
- » Employment support provides one-to-one support to build a resume, apply for jobs and develop interview skills.



Hours of Support



TRAMS Group Sessions

"TRAMS fills a vital role in Toowoomba. The training and support I received there equipped me to continue to work with the refugee community in my other teaching roles as well."



Celebrating 15 years of TRAMS



TRAMS Family

SPOTLIGHT ON:

BLESS

Building Linkages to Empower South Sudanese

The South Sudanese were the first migrant group to arrive in Queensland from 1996 to 2006. Different cultural values and norms have meant that the South Sudanese community does not always fully understand the harmful effects of domestic and family violence, and that support and help is available for people impacted by violence.

The BLESS program has a culturally specific Community Connector role, focused on building family harmony within the South Sudanese community of Toowoomba. This role engages with community leaders and volunteers to identify triggers that add pressure to relationships, devise strategies to support family harmony. Parenting, family budgeting, and schooling are three key focus areas for the BLESS program.

Throughout 2018/19 we were able to support 159 clients, with 15 of these referred to other specialist community services.



BLESS Cooking Workshop

"Being part of a community. Feeling I am doing something worthwhile getting to know the clients."

"I enjoy the atmosphere at TRAMS, the clients are lovely and it feels good to be able to help new Australians adjust to life here."

TRANSFORMING THINKING

Our Service in Action



"I JUST WANT MY FAMILY TO BE SAFE"

Party A, an unemployed mother in the community has heard that she can call the CatholicCare South Sudanese Community Connector, Dabora, if she is concerned about her safety at home. She knows of Dabora's role from other community members and feels confident to call her, knowing that Dabora will be able to understand her first language, Dinka, and will give her advice that considers her place in the community and extended family.

When she receives the call, Dabora draws upon the training she has received as the Community Connector and is able to listen with empathy and respect. Dabora explains that the conversation is completely confidential, CatholicCare always keeps family business private. Referrals to other support services will only be made with her consent.

Party A explains that though she is trying to maintain healthy relationships and a safe family life, Party B's drinking is contributing towards incidents that escalate towards violence over and over again. In between, when Party B is not drinking, he treats the family well. The drinking is also causing problems for the family budget.

Party A doesn't understand Australia's legal responses to family violence and what she has heard is confusing and frightening.

Dabora is able to reassure her that the first priority is the safety of herself and her children. Dabora helps her to make a safety plan that will help to manage the situation.

Over time, Party A and Party B were able to work out how to become a healthy family again.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Business Skills Connect

CatholicCare has partnered with the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce to develop the Business Skills Connect project. This project is aimed at establishing employment relationships with local businesses and to uncover job vacancies for migrant job seekers. In addition, this project will identify and explore the major benefits or challenges associated with local employment of migrants and refugee and develop strategies to build local skills supply chain.

The main insight from employers currently employing migrants or refugees is that migrant employees are loyal, hard-working, helpful, caring, tolerant, mature, resilient and have a solid work ethic and use their initiative.

Even though no job placements have been made to date, momentum and traction is building and progress is being made.





“ 96% of Toowoomba businesses surveyed by the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce are open to hiring a migrant or refugee in their business. ”

Working with refugee staff benefits CatholicCare



YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

Increasingly, our youth are facing pressures and temptations resulting in challenging behaviours.

Our aim is to deliver programs offering welcoming, safe, inclusive, trusting and supportive community environments to help our youth to grow and sustain a positive wellbeing, to have aspirations, to make healthy lifestyle choices, support good behaviour and ultimately, a positive future.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

WHADDUP Youth Program

Whaddup is a youth program held on Friday nights during school term in Toowoomba for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth aged 10-17 years. Throughout 2018-19, 433 youth were engaged in the WHADDUP Youth Program.

Whaddup is a drug and alcohol-free environment and provides a safe environment where youth are free to be themselves.

We provide transport to and from the venue, along with life education activities and dinner, while focusing on reinforcing healthy lifestyle choices and deterring youth from risk taking behaviours.

Elders, parents and volunteers promote social connectedness, and celebrate and strengthen connection to country.



"I loved meeting and making new friends"

Indigenous Learners Program and Youth Activities aged 10-17 years.



"I learned that there have been 2000 generations of Aborigines in Australia and only 9 generations of other cultures"





30 Aboriginal youth aged from 10 – 17, along with 7 staff and volunteers, headed to QCCC Mapleton Tribellink Outdoor Education Centre.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Which Way School Holiday Program

The WhichWay School Holiday Program connects indigenous youth to self, family, community, culture and country through developing skills to imagine, learn, lead, communicate and collaborate. Since the program commenced in January 2019, 37 youth have participated in the program.

The Which Way School Holiday Program is based on 5 principles defined by representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Toowoomba:

- » Create a space where our mob loves and cares for us.
- » Youth will have input on how things are run and all voices are heard, valued and recognised.
- » Provide knowledge, communication skills and trust building skills.
- » Build a strong sense of belonging and identity to family, community, culture, and country.
- » Provide experiences that passes on cultural knowledge and information.

The program is being implemented through a range of activities:

1. Holiday programs for youth
2. Training for volunteer mentors
3. Engagement with Indigenous Businesses
4. Research to evaluate Social and Emotional Wellbeing contributions

Youth provided feedback about their favourite moments during the holiday program:

- » Making clap sticks, didgeridoo and spear (see pg. 31)
- » Watching 3 girls find out that they were family
- » Rock climbing, Mountain biking, Archery
- » The campfire and skipping rocks on the lake

Youth were asked for three words to describe their experience. The top three words were **Deadly, Awesome, Fun**. Just what we were hoping for!

“I learned how to create my own story with my team”

“I learned that our culture is still strong”



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Community Justice Group/Murri Court

115 clients were referred to the Community Justice Group/Murri Court in 2018/19 and 95 of these clients participated in the program.

The CJG /Murri Court supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within in the justice system.

The Murri Court objective is to reduce the number Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being incarcerated.

Since the re-instatement of Murri Court in August 2016 there have been no clients sent to do actual jail time

Client's words - Being able to come to Murri Court has helped me change my life around. I have stopped drinking, got my own place, got my license back and bought myself a car. With the support I got through Murri Court I am now living a better life.

Going to Murri Court getting support from community and Elders gave me the strength to go the rehab to get off drugs. Without their encouragement and support I never would of done it.

Youth Bail Support

The Youth Bail Support is a program providing support and mentoring to the young people while they are on bail. The aim of this voluntary program is to cut down the number of incidents of recidivism. Our program received 41 referrals from Youth Justice, Solicitors, Police and the Courts, and 17 youth chose to engage in our program across Toowoomba and Roma.

Some of the young people on the Bail Support program have successfully engaged in boxing sessions once a

week. Two young people from Roma have successfully gained employment with the support of the Bail Support youth workers. One young person from Roma stated that since getting support from the Bail program she has begun painting her life story in Aboriginal art form.

Other positive outcomes include participants securing gainful employment, obtaining a Learner's Driver's License and joining a football team.

“ Youth Bail Support Program service supports other agencies to help prevent crime, to act early in reconnecting young people to make healthy choices and support good behaviour and a positive future. ”



Making clap sticks at the Which Way school holiday program.

Want to get involved?

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of our amazing volunteer community. Throughout 2018/19, we averaged over 170 volunteers each week working across our TRAMS and WHADDUP programs.

TRAMS Volunteer Roles

Our volunteers provide support services to refugees and migrants as they settle into life in Australia. Volunteer roles may include:

- Teaching or assisting in adult English classes,
- Caring for and engaging with young children while their parents attend English classes,
- Assisting school students with homework and assignments (primary school and high school),
- Providing transport for clients,
- Participating in women's support and craft groups,
- Other occasional roles e.g. special projects, assisting with donations, administration, computer support.

WHADDUP Volunteer Roles

Providing a positive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, reinforcing healthy lifestyle choices and deterring youth from risk taking behaviours. Volunteer roles may include:

- Teaching and assisting children to learn about healthy lifestyle choices and avoid high risk behaviours,
- Assisting with supervision during transport and picks ups each time the program runs,
- Participating in educational activities and craft,
- Preparing dinner for the program participants.

“

If you are interested in a volunteer role, please contact the Coordinator of Volunteers at CatholicCare on 1300 477 433. All potential volunteers for CatholicCare must complete application documentation and hold or apply for a Blue Card.

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In my work at TRAMS I see the newcomers to our country **embracing the support offered** and as a result, they blossom. More importantly, I feel I gain from working with these families as well.



"The hour I spend in-home tutoring really is **the highlight of my week!**"

"I love volunteering with the Whaddup/Which Way Program as it gives our kids in community a chance to **try and participate in new things**, they may never have had the chance to do. I know everyone had different circumstances in their lives, but **they are all equal in my eyes**. I love seeing the kid's faces knowing that they **feel safe** in being able to express themselves"

"People can **relax, laugh and be themselves** because they know that they are safe and free from judgment. Witnessing this is a great pleasure for me."

Getting to know the children and families and seeing the improvement in the children's academic performance. I **really feel like I'm making a valuable contribution** and love feeling part of the TRAMS community."

"Firstly, the reward of knowing I'm welcomed by this family each week. **Knowing I'm making a contribution to these students' education**. Working with other volunteers and getting to know them."

"Sharing special moments with students. This goes beyond teaching and learning. Sometimes we are there, just being human beings together and we get to share a very special and deep understanding of each other's life."

