

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS & VIOLENCE ISSUES

Therapeutic GROUP WORK for young people



37 participants FAMILY MEDIATION AND RECONCILIATION

Step Up 3 GROUPS 9 young people and their parents

## YOUNG PARENTS, SEXUAL HEALTH, PREGNANCY & FAMILY SERVICES

51 young parents received PREGNANCY SUPPORT & ANTENATAL CARE

95 young parents were supported in PARENTING PROGRAMS

What we achieved



12% identified as Indigenous Australians



11% other Cultural Backgrounds



77% Australians

# Options for young people

OUR VISION:  
By 2020 we will have a greater presence in the community through innovative programs and practices.

OUR MISSION:  
Create opportunities that value and empower young people, build family harmony and foster supportive communities, enabling all young people to reach their full potential.

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# THE Bridge Youth SERVICE

## 2017-2018 Annual Report

What we achieved



Over 1052 young people engaged with us



50% were 12-18yrs



84 young people used visiting services

## HOMELESSNESS, TENANCY SUPPORT

292 young people were assisted with HOUSING SUPPORT CASE MANAGEMENT

43 FAMILY RECONCILIATION

82 STAR HOUSING

## Disengaging from school, RISKY BEHAVIOURS

78 participants Department of Education & Training NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

13 young people were involved in the MENTORING PROGRAM & LINKS TO EDUCATION

64 involved in ADOLESCENT SUPPORT PROGRAM CASE MANAGEMENT

# Charlotte Brewer PRESIDENT REPORT

I am happy to report another year of successful service delivery by the Bridge Youth Service. Congratulations to the team for not only meeting their targets but in many cases exceeding them.

We all know that homelessness is a huge problem in the region. Our youth workers provide much valued support to young people. Given the levels of youth homelessness in our region, they do a sterling job finding and maintaining housing options for young people. In addition, we provide extra support to young people setting up a home through, for example, packs containing kitchen utensils, linen etc. and the purchase of child restraint seats. This is made possible through donations and funds raised through the efforts of our valued volunteers at REVAMP.

**Thank you to our Board members for their commitment and as always, my heartfelt thanks to Melinda Lawley, our energetic and innovative CEO, the managers and staff of The Bridge Youth Service for all you have achieved this year, with dedication and enthusiasm.**

Being in the fortunate position of having funds in our Future Development Fund, earned for us by the great work of the REVAMP staff and volunteers, we have allocated funds to make our Shepparton premises more accessible to wheelchair users with plans to build a bathroom for disabled access, as well as supporting program delivery. In addition we are planning to use some of these funds to support young people ready to take the next step but who do not have the resources to do so. No agency works in isolation and the Bridge Youth Service continues our close links with Rumbalara through the Cradle to Kinder Program, Berry Street through Navigator, FamilyCare with the ChildFirst Alliance, headspace with support for the Family & Friends and in-school programs and with GV Health's Midwife for our antenatal program. A new partnership with Connect GV has some of their clients doing voluntary work at REVAMP. We could not continue our work without the support of our funding bodies, chiefly the Victorian State Government through the Health & Human Services and the Education and Training Departments. Our thanks go to their local representatives who support and advocate for us.

# Melinda Lawley CEO REPORT

2017-2018 represents a year of growth and consolidation. In particular the Bridge demonstrated our responsibility to assist young people to value and commit to their education. It was the first complete year the Navigator program has been operational. As at the end of the financial year, 151 young people had received case management, 47 of whom identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 90 of these had re-engagement plans in place and were attending school again. Demand for this program remains high.

Our Youth and Family Support, and Young Pregnant and Parenting Programs are also in high demand. The teams did extremely well to meet their targets as they were understaffed for some time. We have committed to asking young people to share with us how much the support from our dedicated workers has meant to them. Some of their stories are included in this report and our AGM.

**Thank you to our fantastic staff who provide both practical and emotional support day-in and day-out to young people. Their skillful, positive and non-judgmental approach is highly valued and inspiring. A big thank you to our dedicated, capable and knowledgeable Leadership Team who have helped to realise all of these achievements.**

We undertook a research project to determine the prevalence of family violence amongst young people attending our programs. The finding that 50% were experiencing family violence is consistent with national data that indicates up to 60% of people seeking support from homelessness services come from a family violence situation. This led to the appointment of the Bridge's first specialist role – a family violence specialist. This research also led to the introduction of Step Up, a therapeutic-based group program to assist adolescents with aggressive or violent behaviour in the home, to improve communication with their parents. The groups have been very successful, with the parents getting as much out of the sessions as the young people.

We have expanded our outreach in Wallan with a Family Services worker based at FamilyCare and a Navigator worker located at the Council's youth drop-in centre.

We value and seek out partnerships. This year saw a consolidation of a new partnership with both the Shepparton and Seymour Flexible Learning centres, providing a youth worker to their team of teachers. This has provided easier access for young people to services they may require and a valuable mentor to provide guidance. We also introduced a new mentoring program with Shepparton High School.

**Revamp OPPORTUNITY SHOP** 45 volunteers 264 days of the year

**VOLUNTEER STUDENTS** from Berry St. Wanganui and GV Grammar School

**CONNECT GV** 8 students 3 supervisors 2 days a week since April

**YOUTH FOYER** 5 residents volunteered

## Supporting youth

15 MENTORS 5 GOVERNMENT AREAS 5 LEADERSHIP TEAM 14 PROGRAMS

35 STAFF 9 current 3 retired BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

**FROM OUR SURVEYS** 95% of young people felt they could reach the majority of their goals 100% felt included in setting goals and making decisions that would improve their situation

Our young people felt

HEARD UNDERSTOOD RESPECTED SAFE MOTIVATED AND ENCOURAGED INFORMED OF THEIR OPTIONS

## IMPROVING OUR OPERATIONS

This year the whole team developed the Strategic Plan for 2017-2020. As a group we committed to Values, Guiding Principles, Behaviours and Expectations to provide a non-judgmental culture.

We're committed to help our Young people

FOCUSING ON STRENGTHS PROVIDING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR CHANGE BEING FLEXIBLE PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHOICE

The support worker submitted application for Transitional Housing. Lily was accepted for a property.

Lily presented homeless due to no further family/friend options. Lily was supported into emergency accommodation.

Lily was supported to save for household items, gain a rental reference and create a stable environment for her son.

Given Lily's engagement and ability to sustain her property, she was offered a long-term property.

Lily was able to re-engage in education and employment. Lily continued to work with support services to address her mental health, substance use, parenting skills and long-term accommodation options.

**LILY IS NOW...**

- In safe and stable long-term accommodation
- Engaged in education and enjoying her employment

- Ceased substance use whilst continuing to work on her mental health
- Continues to care for her son

## EXPANDING OUR REACH

**We are dedicated to finding new and innovative approaches to deal with the problems our local Youth face. We believe Early Intervention is a key to reducing the compounding effects of disadvantage.**

The Bridge Youth Service has been advocating to bring the Community of Schools and Services model or COSS model to our region. The COSS model focuses on early intervention to connect Schools and Community Services together, identifying people who are at high risk of becoming homeless and uses a Youth focused and family centred approach to help prevent homelessness now and in the future.

## NETWORKING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our staff are invested in the local community and work hard to develop networks to ensure successful outcomes for our Youth. Staff sit on over 20 different Community Service and Executive panels to advocate and be the voice for our Youth.

**ALLIANCES FOR DECISION MAKING**

- Goulburn High Risk Infant panel
- Child FIRST Alliance Executive
- Mitchell Shire Youth Mental Health Alliance
- Foyer Community Alliance
- GMLLEN Committee of Management

**PANELS FOR OUR EXPERTISE**

- Child FIRST Alliance operations meeting monthly in both Lower Hume and GV
- Lighthouse Collaborative Tables
- Communities for Children Evaluation Subcommittee
- Leaving Care Panel
- Transitional Housing Panel
- CEEP Panel (NESAY Funding for Education)

**NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS**

- Family Violence Prevention Network Meetings
- One Village Headspace
- LASN (opening doors local area service network)
- Hume Region Homelessness Network Meeting
- Targeted Care Packages
- NOYS Meetings
- STAR Housing
- Homelessness person's week committee

## STRENGTHENING OUR TEAM

Our staff are highly skilled to support our Young People. We are dedicated to developing our staff in Specialist Services to ensure we have the best support systems in place to help our Young People.

4 whole staff Meeting days a year allowed networking and sharing best practice across all work sites.

28 staff Attended over 50 training sessions in Youth and Industry specific courses including Family Mediation, Cultural training, Child Risk Assessment and Safety Planning and Adopting Child Led Practice.

3 staff Studying towards further Tertiary qualifications to enhance their skill set.

\* Names have been changed

# Lily\* 16 YEARS

COULD SEE A BETTER FUTURE FOR HERSELF AND HER SON ONCE SHE RECEIVED STABLE ACCOMMODATION AND INCOME.

### BEFORE THE BRIDGE YOUTH SERVICE LILY:

- Was couch surfing with her son between homes with significant overcrowding and family conflict
- Not attending education
- Suffering from high anxiety
- Learning parenting skills

# Jemma\* 23 YEARS

WANTED A BETTER FUTURE FOR HERSELF AND HER CHILDREN.

### BEFORE THE BRIDGE YOUTH SERVICE JEMMA:

- Was a young expectant mum of twins (already the mum of one)
- Had significant mental health issues
- Was subject to family violence and experiencing homelessness
- Facing financial debt

Jemma has built her parenting capacity and strategies for managing behaviour.

Jemma was supported through Antenatal, Integrated Family Services, Housing and Parenting Group.

Support was given to Jemma to gain Transitional Housing and she has now secured a private rental.

Jemma's overall mental health has improved significantly and she has increased her physical activity for both herself and her children.

### JEMMA IS NOW...

- Building a positive family routine and attending parents group
- Enrolled and attending TAFE
- Out of the family violence situation
- In secure accommodation
- Managing her finances
- Has stable mental health