



THE
Bridge
Youth
SERVICE

2018-2019
Annual Report

What we
achieved



Over 1200
young people
engaged with us



54%
were 12-18yrs



124 Young
people
used visiting
services

HOMELESSNESS, TENANCY SUPPORT

260 young people

were assisted with
**HOUSING SUPPORT
CASE MANAGEMENT**

19 FAMILY
RECONCILIATION
/ MEDIATION

81 **STAR**
HOUSING

DISENGAGING FROM SCHOOL, RISKY BEHAVIOURS

26 young
people

were involved in the
**MENTORING PROGRAM
& LINKS TO EDUCATION**

110 referrals
Department of Education & Training
NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

112 involved in
**FINDING SOLUTIONS
& ADOLESCENT
SUPPORT PROGRAM**

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS & VIOLENCE ISSUES

Therapeutic
GROUP WORK
for young people



Step Up
4 GROUPS
30 young people
and their parents

173 internal consultations
BY OUR FAMILY VIOLENCE SPECIALIST

YOUNG PARENTS, SEXUAL HEALTH, PREGNANCY & FAMILY SERVICES

33

first time parents
received
**PREGNANCY
SUPPORT
& ANTENATAL
CARE**

96 Young parents
were supported in
PARENTING PROGRAMS

What we
achieved



13%
identified as
Indigenous
Australians



9% other
Cultural Backgrounds



78%
Australians

President and CEO Reports

Charlotte Brewer PRESIDENT REPORT

The past year has seen TBYS expand in service delivery and community connections. Our presence is growing in Wallan, the fastest growing area of our region. Melinda Lawley, our CEO, is on many committees and networks across the region and is a great advocate for young people.

“ My thanks as always to our principal funding bodies: the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education and Training, and to Melinda Lawley and everyone else at TBYS. ”

TBYS is committed to supporting young people to enter or return to education, training or employment. This is essential if we are to reduce the level of youth unemployment, one of the highest in the country, sitting at 17.5% in April this year. Our highly skilled staff address homelessness issues and early parenthood with young people as well young people with mental health issues, drug and alcohol problems, and family violence or discord. As we have always done, much of this is in conjunction with other agencies and services as well as nearly all the secondary schools in the region.

The saddest part of 2019 for TBYS was the closure of REVAMP, our much loved 'Op shop'. In nearly two decades of operation REVAMP enabled us to provide additional services to our clients and to purchase the Shepparton office. This was due to the magnificent efforts of the only two managers we had throughout its years of operation: Sandy Cole and Fiona Martin and the great volunteers who assisted them. Thank you to all who supported REVAMP through work, donations or purchases.

We welcomed Anne Ryan to the Board of Management and Jenny Cook to a new Executive role. Jenny has provided sterling service to TBYS for many years, at both the operational level and as a team leader and senior manager. We are lucky to have her in this position.

Melinda Lawley CEO REPORT

This year again brought with it significant growth and changes for TBYS leading to the appointment of our new Executive Manager, Jenny Cook who is overseeing all aspects of Service Delivery.

We have prioritised our commitment to working alongside the Mitchell Shire Council as they advocate strongly to government to understand the difficulties faced by young people in the shire to access services, particularly those to assist mental illness and family violence. We are looking forward to opening our new office in the Wallan Youth Hub.

We were delighted to be the lead organisation for the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust funded project 'Making Quality Happen' which focuses on a shared approach to quality and consumer engagement. This project is the next focus of the Shepparton Community Share, a partnership we value with FamilyCare, Primary Care Connect and Connect GV.

We hosted a public hearing for the National Youth Commission into Youth Employment and Transitions in Mooroopna and provided our account of what is needed to improve the educational and employment outcomes for young people in our region.

We are very proud of the partnerships with the DET funded flexible learning centres in Shepparton and Seymour. We continue to provide a Youth Worker to assist the schools' Student Wellbeing program. It also provides the opportunity for staff from both organisations to work and learn from each other, offering insights into the similarities and differences in working with young people.

Our expertise and specialisation in supporting young people continues to be acknowledged through our involvement in regional expert panels for high-risk infants and family violence cases. We introduced a Family Violence Specialist role with has been well utilised within the organisation. With our high engagement levels and well qualified staff, we have a lot to offer and share with others interested in providing high quality case management and therapeutic interventions for young people.

FROM OUR SURVEYS 97% of young people would come back for help in the future 93% felt supported by their youth worker

Our young people felt

- INSPIRED & MOTIVATED
- HEARD & UNDERSTOOD
- SAFE & RESPECTED
- INFORMED & ENCOURAGED
- INFORMED OF THEIR OPTIONS

Supporting youth

- 11 MENTORS
- 5 GOVERNMENT AREAS
- 6 LEADERSHIP TEAM
- 17 PROGRAMS

- 36 STAFF
- 9 current 2 retired BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Feedback

FROM A NAVIGATOR PARTICIPANT APRIL 2019

“ ...a hard process with a lot of ups and downs, ...a step backwards was always converted into a plan to take me two steps forward. With consistent efforts from my support network and a willingness to get better, I worked through each fear to acquire a normal life. ”

NAVIGATOR - LEADING THE WAY IN SCHOOL RE-ENGAGEMENT

Navigator is a valued Department of Education and Training (DET) program, first funded as a pilot in 2016. It provides Case Management support to young people severely disengaged from secondary school. As the lead agency we employ 5.2 EFT to support the whole Goulburn region. Our partner agency, Berry Street assist to do this with 1.6 EFT.

When young people are referred to us via DET they have been absent from school for 70% of time. The case management we provide focuses on the barriers to attending school. The most common barrier for this cohort of young people is their mental health, anxiety in particular. 30% of young people in the program are more than 2 years behind their peers for literacy and numeracy. Our workers work with the school, DET staff, family and the young person to plan their return to school.

There are different types of school attendance problems which require different support strategies to support the young person back to school so each young person has a personalised plan to how they will get back to school and what support is required to stay engaged. At any one time there are approximately 100 young people across the Goulburn area receiving such support.



So far **70** over **young people** HAVE RETURNED TO SCHOOL

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF OUR YOUTH AMBASSADOR

Lauren Beks has had a busy year as our first Youth Ambassador, attending group sessions, reviewing our website, encouraging our youth and being involved in our Accreditation review.

One of the highlights of the year was Lauren running a number of cooking sessions with our Future Parenting Program, creating a recipe, setting up and running the kitchen and leading the activity. This was both a fun activity and a great learning experience for our young parents.

Lauren is a strong advocate for Family Violence support for Youth and is passionate about educating others on how to access support if they need it. Lauren worked with our team to suggest and review additional resources to educate and inform our youth.

With the help of TBYS Lauren has used the year to further enhance her sewing skills, upgrading her tools of trade and attending training to further her skill base. Lauren has constructed many items over the course of the year that are going to be donated both to youth and to Pregnancy support services.

Thank you to Lauren for your input and dedication over the year.

REVAMP USED STUFF GOODBYE AND THANK YOU...

This year we had to say good bye to our fabulous Opportunity Shop, Revamp Used Stuff and our many dedicated staff and volunteers to whom we are very grateful.

We would like to take this opportunity to pay a special thanks to Sandy and Bob Coles who were instrumental in helping the Board of Management establish the Opshop. Jim Andreadis and Helen Phillips, important community members of the Board, led the establishment of Revamp with Jim providing business and retail expertise and donating goods to establish the stock. The community of Shepparton then rallied behind the initiative and have demonstrated fantastic support through donations.

Revamp has been a major fundraiser enabling us to purchase a building to provide a base for our workers and young people and to fund gaps in services to help the young people in our region.

“ I would like to thank our passionate, informed and skillful service delivery staff who provide support to so many young people living in difficult and ever-increasing complex circumstances. To our equally dedicated administrative staff who continue to respond to our needs, who suggest and implement new processes and equipment to do this; thank you. ”

- 85 VOLUNTEERS
- 16 YEARS
- RAISING OVER \$930K

Our group work outcomes

ANTENATAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM

PARTICIPANTS: 22
SESSIONS: 37

The **focus** is to provide accessible antenatal care and education in partnership with GV Health to young women in a youth focused supportive environment.

Activities focus on education around pregnancy, birth and parenting. Included are visits from Maternal & Child Health and a Centrelink Social Worker. The birth suite tour is the highlight each term with partners/ birth support person invited as well.

Good news story: Having consistent contact with a midwife has built rapport and trust with the young women at group. This encourages the young women to attend group and appointments and builds confidence around the impending birth.



FUTURE PARENTING PROGRAM

PARTICIPANTS: 54
SESSIONS: 34

Targeting parents up to the age of 25 and their children in the Greater Shepparton Area with the **focus** on ensuring the health and well-being of the child and family and to develop parenting skills in the young parents.

Activities included; Infant & Child First Aid St Johns Ambulance, Play Therapy, indoor and outdoor activities (splash park, abilities playground) and zoo visit.

Good news story: Possible developmental concerns were identified and discussed with a young mother and support offered. This resulted in a referral to IFS where the mother was supported with appropriate referrals to a paediatrician, Early Childhood Intervention Services and Play Therapy. As a result of the relationship between the worker and the mother, the young child is now receiving therapeutic services and the mother is accepting advice and support.



STEP UP!

PARTICIPANTS: 30
SESSIONS: 40

The **focus** is to assist young people and their parent/carer to address aggressive behaviour in the home, school or community, as well as work toward restoring relationships. Participants are supported to develop skills to recognise aggression and resolve conflict without violence, through focusing on topics such as communication, relationships and accountability.

Activities consist of one-on-one conversations, group discussions, role plays, worksheets, videos, story telling and self-expression through drawing.

Good news story: A young person and their mum identified that small disagreements would escalate into violence very quickly due to misunderstandings. The facilitators observed both the mum and the young person working hard to improve their communication such as, listening when the other spoke and asking questions when curious about why they reacted in a certain way.

MAKING A HOME

PARTICIPANTS: 26
SESSIONS: 18

The **focus** is to equip, inform and connect young people at an early stage in order to reduce their chance of requiring homelessness services later in life.

Activities included; exploring the private rental process, Centrelink information, renting supports, other housing options, budgeting/financial literacy and food assistance.

Good news story: The realisation that obtaining a private rental is in fact a bit more down the track than they realised. Suggesting they will look to find more employment or stay at their current residence longer before making decisions to live more independently. Students have been empowered to make more informed and educated decisions regarding their housing situations.



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.



(03) 5831 2390

127 Welsford St, Shepparton

54 Tallarook St, Seymour

www.thebridge.org.au

