

ASU Submission to  
*Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children*  
*Inquiry*

For and on behalf of the

Victorian Community Sector Workforce



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## About the Australian Services Union

The Australian Services Union – Community Sector Division is part of the ASU Victorian and Tasmanian Authorities and Services Branch and represents workers in the ‘not for profit’ community sector.

This sector employs thousands of Victorian workers. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the health care and social assistance industry<sup>1</sup> comprised approximately 11.3 percent of the Victorian workforce in 2009<sup>2</sup>. The industry has experienced an average annual growth rate of 3.5 percent over the last 10 years<sup>3</sup>.

ASU members make up a substantial and diverse mix in the community sector, engaged in activities such as community development, welfare, youth and social work.

ASU members work in a range of settings across the non-government child protection system, including but not limited to child and family support services, community and social housing, disability services, employment programs, psychiatric disability rehabilitation and support, community health centres, community legal centres, early intervention services, financial counselling, material aid, neighbourhood houses and supported accommodation assistance program (SAAP) and migrant resource centres.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ASU welcomes the opportunity to participate in this Inquiry and seeks to set out a plan for developing and improving Victoria's child protection system, with particular reference to the non government child protection workforce. The ASU believes that in order to have the best system in Victoria, from early intervention through to child protection with the ultimate aim of supporting children and families in Victoria, a central goal needs to be a highly skilled, stable and sustainable sector workforce.

This submission will outline some key challenges that threaten quality outcomes for Victoria's children and sustainability of the community sector child protection workforce. In many ways, the industry is at a crossroads. Strong industry growth is predicted to continue but widespread evidence shows that staff turnover is high with workers often leaving the industry for better pay and conditions elsewhere. A Victorian survey by the ASU of over 1,000 workers demonstrates that:

- 48% of workers are not committed to staying in the industry beyond the next 5 years;
- 35% of workers who intended to leave the industry gave better pay elsewhere as the reason – this was the single biggest reason identified;
- 77% of managers surveyed nominated low wages as the main barrier to attracting and retaining staff;
- 74% of managers said low wages was the main reason staff gave for leaving their service;
- 12% of managers said they expected a staff turnover of over 50% in the next two years and 51% expected turnover of 20-49%;
- Rural and regional managers identified the two biggest barriers to attracting and retaining staff as lower wages compared to city jobs and limited training opportunities available;
- Portability of long service leave, a less stressful work environment and additional staff to cover workload would all contribute to retaining the SACS workforce; and
- 56% of managers who are trying to attract and retain indigenous workers have difficulty doing so.

Academic, government and industry reports in a number of States and Territories support these statistics.

If left unaddressed, there will also be serious implications for an effective child protection system and ultimately, the well being of Victoria's vulnerable children, young people and families.

In summary, the ASU sets out below a series of recommendations for industry reform to ensure a workforce which can meet Victoria's current and future needs for effective and high quality services to disadvantaged and vulnerable Victorian children and their families:

### Funding

1. Increased on-going funding for improved wages and conditions in order to attract and retain a quality and skilled workforce while ensuring full funding with respect to the equal remuneration case currently before Fair Work Australia
2. Revision of the competitive tendering model of funding
3. Maintain lengthened funding rounds in order to provide more workforce stability
4. Adequate funding for current service provision and projected industry growth

### Workforce development

5. Development of a state-wide workforce attraction and retention strategy
6. Promotion of a highly skilled workforce through greater investment in education and training
7. Development of career paths that recognise skills and experience as well as career structures which allow mobility of workers throughout the industry
8. Strategies to address the shortage of indigenous workers to work with indigenous people
9. Strategies to address the shortage of rural/remote/regional workers

### Industrial relations

10. Support the industry to participate fully in enterprise bargaining

### Governmental and industry response

11. A state-wide roundtable be held in early 2012 to discuss issues for the non-government SACS industry outlined in this submission

## CHAPTER 1: Submission Context

***A focused government strategy for protecting children is integral to a fair and equitable Victoria as well as to our domestic stability and security.***

Preventing child abuse and providing effective and sustainable support systems for parents and communities in times of difficulty or crisis is ultimately the responsibility of Government and the delivery of high quality community services is the most effective way of achieving this.

Providing an effective child protection system also plays a key role in ensuring Victoria's economic prosperity by maintaining a strong and inclusive community that supports families and thereby the wellbeing of the broader workforce.

And as the Productivity Commission identified, the community sector makes a significant contribution to the national economy – contributing nearly 7 per cent to annual growth, \$43 billion to Australia's GDP, and around 8 per cent of employment.

As identified by VCOSS<sup>4</sup>:

*“The challenge is finding a balance between supporting the tertiary child protection system and the need for investment in integrated and early intervention family services. This means looking beyond tertiary child protection services that are required to respond to children and families at immediate risk, and examining why families are in crisis in the first place.*

*Families struggle for all sorts of reasons – poverty, mental and physical health issues, drug and alcohol problems, unemployment, and family violence, among other issues. Providing parents or other carers with the supports they need to do the best possible job, even in difficult circumstances, is the most effective way of protecting children. But it requires strong investment and an integrated response.*

*Over the past decade, successful initiatives in support for families and children have been trialled and robust models for service delivery created in Victoria. However the lack of investment by successive governments means that many families are only getting support once they reach crisis – families needing counselling or parenting help are put on waiting lists, often for months, resulting in problems escalating and leading to child protection interventions.*

*As in all areas of acute need, critical extra resources need to be supported by strong links between the education, health and human services that deliver them.”*

Social and community services work is where vital points of contact at all stages of intervention in addressing child protection issues in the community takes place. We need to ensure the ongoing professional development of SACS workers if we are to have a highly skilled workforce to deliver these services. That means the services these workers deliver need to be properly funded by government in order to assist an agenda for safe, secure and well adjusted children.

The SACS workforce is at the coalface of any future agenda focused on creating a more effective child protection system in Victoria. SACS workers are working in many areas of the current system:

- Family services;
- Child and adolescent mental health services;
- Family support services;
- Family relationship counselling services;
- Aboriginal managed health and social services;

- Domestic violence, mental health, disability, homelessness, financial counselling, problem gambling, refugee resettlement and migrant services.

The vast range of services in the Victorian non government SACS industry already working as part of an integrated, multidisciplinary system confirms the industry's importance.

The ASU suggests that in practice you cannot have a strong and inclusive community that supports children, young people and families without a strong social and community services sector. Further, the community sector cannot effectively deliver services and programs that are needed to achieve health and well-being for Victoria's vulnerable children and young people without appropriately paid, skilled and experienced staff. Yet, despite increasing demand and complexity in their work, community sector workers are among the lowest paid in Australia.

The proposition seems simple - appropriately paid, skilled and experienced staff providing support to families and individuals equals effective service and program delivery and thereby contributes towards achieving an inclusive, fair and a more liveable community and a stronger economy.

However, the ASU believes one part of this equation is failing. The community sector is experiencing a workforce crisis. Its workforce is ageing at the same time as experienced and skilled staff are leaving the sector in droves due to poor pay and conditions. This situation is unsustainable and is unacceptable to many Victorians.

As this submission will show, the majority of workers in the community sector are employed under award pay and conditions (which are significantly below market rates). Where collective enterprise agreements do exist they are inferior to similar professions within, for example, the Victorian Public Sector agreements. And the gap between the community sector and public sector workforce is widening.

In essence, the ASU believes that:

1. We cannot have a strong economy without a strong and inclusive community that supports children, young people and families.
2. We cannot have a strong and inclusive community that supports families without effective delivery of community services and support programs.
3. We cannot have effective delivery of community services and support programs without a strong social and community sector.
4. We cannot have a strong social and community sector unless staff are valued and receive the same pay and conditions as those doing similar work in the Victorian Public Sector.

The remainder of our submission will provide further details of some of the workforce challenges facing the community sector and suggested solutions to address them.

## CHAPTER 2: Community Sector Workforce Crisis

### **Can the current and future state of the community sector workforce be called a crisis?**

Many argue that the terminology is unnecessarily alarmist. And were the following workforce characteristics to exist in isolation the ASU might agree. However the ASU believes that when combined the following characteristics clearly constitute a crisis.

#### **1. Ageing Workforce**

The health care and social assistance industry has a relatively older workforce, with a median age of 44 years in 2009, significantly higher than the median age for all industries of 37 years.<sup>5</sup> The 45-54 year old age group is now the largest age group in the sector.<sup>6</sup> These features are likely to further exacerbate the workforce shortages already facing the industry.

#### **2. Predominantly Women**

The community sector is a feminised industry, with a high proportion of part-time workers. Currently 79.5 percent of all workers in the health care and social assistance industry are women and nearly 40 percent of all workers are women employed on a part-time basis.<sup>7</sup> Requirements for flexible work arrangements and paid parental leave is particularly important for this demographic of workers due to family responsibilities (children and/or aged parent or partner).

The feminised nature of the workforce has meant that the work performed by employees in the sector has been historically undervalued as reflected in the low level of wages. This view is supported by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission in its decision substantially in favour of an equal remuneration claim brought by the Queensland Services Industrial Union of Employees on behalf of employees covered by the SACS Award in Queensland.<sup>8</sup> The ASU has also lodged an application for an equal remuneration order at Fair Work Australia on behalf of the community sector workforce across Australia, including Victoria, proceedings of which have recently concluded.

#### **3. Inadequate Government Funding**

The sector is almost entirely reliant on government funding. However this funding is not adequate and does not meet all the true cost of service delivery by community sector organisations. This view is supported by research undertaken and commissioned within and outside the community sector<sup>9</sup>.

The Australian Productivity Commission report into the contribution of the not-for-profit sector found that a substantial proportion of government funded services delivered by not-for-profits (NFPs) are not fully funded. The Commission recommended that governments should fully fund services that they would otherwise provide directly.<sup>10</sup> The report also went on to state that:

*funding should cover all relevant costs, allowing for the appropriate share of overheads; the costs of managing risk, and of monitoring, reporting and evaluation; costs associated with reaching required standards; staffing and capital costs; appropriate indexation that takes account of industry-specific factors; and costs associated with policy changes such as changed client eligibility rules.<sup>11</sup>*

The Commission also argued that fully funding services would address issues such as ongoing financial viability of NFPs and their ability to retain and recruit staff with necessary skills.

The 2009 Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) Australian community sector survey shows in the 2007/2008 financial year that community sector organisations in Victoria experienced an increase in income by \$15.7 million but that operating expenses increased by \$23.2 million.<sup>12</sup> The time period covered in the survey was before the impact of the global financial crisis on the Australian economy and society. This means that the shortfall in income identified cannot be explained as merely resulting from an unusual increase in demand because of one off or cyclical events but is part of a long term and ongoing problem of underfunding faced by the community sector.

Research undertaken by The Allen Consulting Group in 2008 on behalf of the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) found that 60 percent of the organisations surveyed said their level of funding was not sufficient to cover the services that they were required to provide.<sup>13</sup>

Underfunding has a negative impact on the workforce as well as those who use services. A VCOSS study found that underfunding was a major occupational health and safety issue<sup>14</sup> which contributed to an unhealthy working environment.<sup>15</sup>

The Allen Consulting Group survey also found that approximately 36 percent of those respondents who said their funding was insufficient had been forced to reduce the scope of the services they provided.<sup>16</sup> Over half said they had to reduce spending in other areas by requiring staff to take on additional unpaid hours, 33 percent said they reduced staff numbers and 10 percent had cut wages.<sup>17</sup>

The 2009 ACOSS community sector survey shows that 93 percent of community sector organisation respondents in Victoria have increased their reliance on volunteers and unpaid work from staff.<sup>18</sup>

However, as The Allen Consulting Group noted in its report the increasing use of volunteers involved certain risks.<sup>19</sup> If volunteers do not have the appropriate education and training then quality service provision is jeopardised.<sup>20</sup> It also requires additional expenditure in terms of providing extra training and ongoing supervision.

The ASU believes that the community sector cannot be propped up by the increased use of volunteers or on voluntary work donated by 'paid' staff. This reliance on volunteers to do increasingly complex work is unfair on both the volunteers and on clients and contributes to poor and ineffective service and program delivery. Instead, more funding to employ and pay highly skilled and qualified staff is the answer.

#### **4. Low Wages**

In August 2008, the median weekly earnings (before tax) for a full time employee in the health care and social assistance industry was \$900 per week.<sup>21</sup> This was approximately 11 percent less than median weekly earnings across all industries of \$1,000 per week.<sup>22</sup> However, most workers within the community sector fall within the group of "other social assistance services" that comprise the health care and social assistance industry classification and their median weekly earnings in 2008 was even lower, at \$843 per week.<sup>23</sup>

Only 28% of employers covering approximately 26% of employees in the social and community services sector are covered by enterprise agreements. This includes an existing Multi Business Agreement covering 259 Neighbourhood Houses and a Multi Business Agreement covering 28 Community Legal Centres. Excluding these employers would leave approximately 11% of employers covering approximately 22% of employees covered by enterprise agreements. These figures are an approximation due to a lack of published data on the number of SACS organisations and employees in

Victoria. Only a handful of these agreements provide wages and salaries significantly in excess of the award rates. The Productivity Commission noted that the gross wage rates of workers in the community services sector were significantly lower compared to those in the public sector.<sup>24</sup> It went on to state that unless the wage gap was addressed:

*..NFPs in the community services sector will continue to face difficulties attracting and retaining qualified and professional workers... Competitive wages need to be paid to community sector workers to ensure NFPs can engage staff with the required skills and experience and remain sustainable.<sup>25</sup>*

The view outlined by the Productivity Commission supports our experience, as illustrated by the case study below.

**Graeme – Manager – Housing Agency<sup>26</sup>**

*“The big issue is not being paid competitive rates of pay for work we are expected to do. People employed by local governments and government agencies and departments are paid considerably more for dealing with the same client group. As a Manager I can offer training but I can’t increase wages by \$10,000. We had a young woman come to work for the agency I manage. She had completed her three years of qualification and we trained her. After she had 9 months of experience with us she was offered a job by the local community health centre that was \$7,000 more in pay and less client load. She took it.*

*The government should be saying that we want the best qualified workforce to deliver high quality services. We are poorly funded and that shows how little value and importance that they [the government] place in the work we do and in the people we assist.”*

**5. Poor Occupational Health and Safety Standards and a High Incidence of Occupational Violence, Bullying and Stress**

VCOSS research shows that the incidence of occupational violence, bullying and stress is unacceptably high in the sector.<sup>27</sup> It suggests that this is due in part to underfunding which results in a substandard physical work environment, poor personal security and unrealistic work demands.

Research from WorkSafe analysing stress claims in the community services show that the main causes are: work pressure, harassment, being assaulted by person or persons, exposure to traumatic event, exposure to workplace or occupational violence, and other mental stress factors.<sup>28</sup>

Workplace stress has a significant negative economic impact on Victoria. Figures from WorkSafe show that the average payment per stress claim in the community services sector from September 1985 to June 2008 was \$30,185.<sup>29</sup> The ILO estimates that stress costs the economy between 1-3.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>30</sup>

The ASU believes that taking a long term systemic approach to dealing with OHS challenges is a key factor in addressing the sector workforce crisis and that a key component of this is the engagement and involvement of employees at the workplace level.

### **Shane – Residential Youth Support Worker – Child & Family Service Agency**

*I work at an agency that provides residential care services in regional Victoria. We are finding that the needs of the clients that the State Government expect us to care for are getting more and more complex but that the skills and qualifications of the staff that we are able to attract are reducing due to the low wages we have to offer. Indeed it is now almost always the case that the residential care staff that we now employ have no qualifications and are very young with little life experience. The combination of higher needs clients with unqualified and inexperienced staff is leading to more stress on the staff and more verbal and physical assaults by clients on staff.*

*The management at the agency I work for refuse to deal the concerns of staff because they say that they don't have the money in the budget to fix the problems and that we'll just have to make do. Staff who have notified worksafe or other regulatory agencies have suffered by losing shifts if a casual or been pressured to 'put up or shut up' because the agency is so fearful of "rocking the boat" with the funding bodies.*

## **6. Growing Demand for Services**

The government already recognises that there is a growing demand for community services. The Victorian Government "Action Plan" developed as part of its *Strengthening Community Organisations* project suggests this is due to an ageing and changing community. It also suggests that services are also becoming increasingly complex.<sup>31</sup> This is supported by findings from the ACOSS community sector survey and The Allen Consulting Group survey, among others.

The ACOSS survey shows that the number of people who received assistance from non government agencies across Australia increased by 19 percent in the 2007/2008 and the number of people turned away increased by 17.3 percent.<sup>32</sup>

The Allen Consulting Group survey found that approximately 94 percent of organisations surveyed said that demands for their services were likely to increase in the next year or two.<sup>33</sup> Survey respondents also stated that they were dealing with more complex issues which was caused by an ageing population and increases in mental health issues and drug and alcohol abuse.<sup>34</sup> Of those respondents surveyed, nearly 70 percent said they had turned away people who were eligible for their organisation's services.<sup>35</sup> In 92 percent of cases the reason for turning clients away was capacity constraints.<sup>36</sup>

## **7. Difficult to Retain Experienced Staff – High Staff Turnover**

The sector experiences extremely high turnover and problems with staff retention. The 2009 ACOSS Australian community sector survey reported a staff turnover rate of 15.9 percent.<sup>37</sup> Approximately 64 percent of respondents stated that they had experienced difficulty in attracting appropriately qualified staff and 62 percent of respondents indicated that workforce issues was one of the three most important issues facing their organisation.<sup>38</sup>

A KPMG survey of the community managed housing and support workforce for the Department of Human Services found the average rate at which positions become vacant in a year is 25 percent and that a quarter of employees intended to leave the sub-sector in two years or less.<sup>39</sup> A survey conducted of ASU members across Australia in 2007 found that 52 percent of respondents were not committed to staying in the

industry beyond the next five years.<sup>40</sup> Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) show that job vacancy rates in the health and community sector had increased over the past five years.<sup>41</sup>

The Productivity Commission in its report noted that the community services sector appeared to experience the greatest challenge in being able to attract and retain both qualified staff and volunteers.

According to the Mercer Human Resources Consulting in Australia, staff turnover costs range from 50 percent to 150 percent of the annual employee's salary, depending on the person's role and seniority.<sup>42</sup> Those costs include recruitment, selection, training and lost staffing capacity.<sup>43</sup> Turnover also results in resources being diverted away from where they are needed most - the provision of services and programs to assist clients.

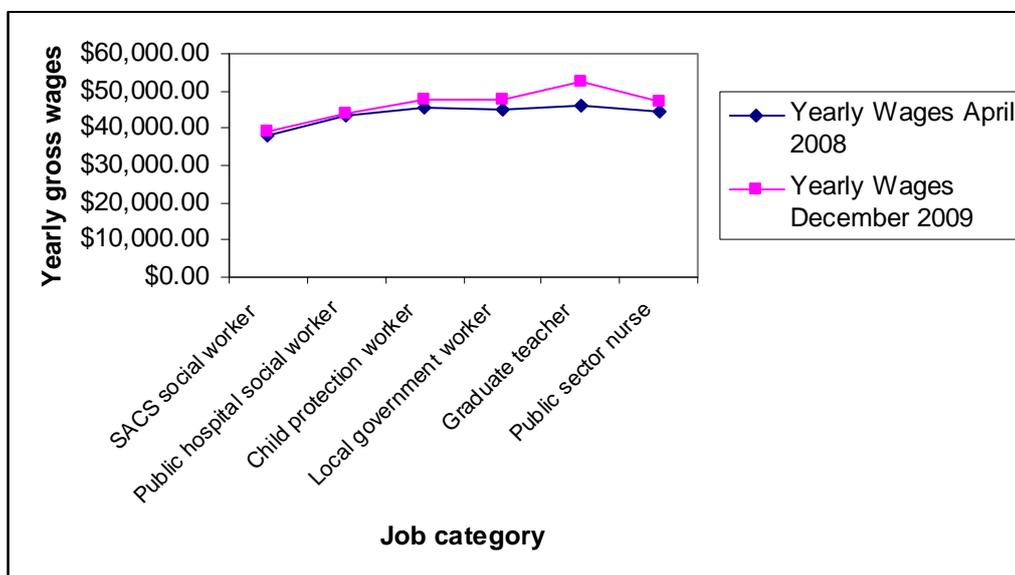
High turnover results from experienced workers leaving the sector in search of better pay, conditions and recognition of the professional work they do. They most commonly move into the public sector. Difficulty in retaining workers also results from high and difficult workloads experienced by workers which in turn leads to increased stress and burnout. The resultant turnover of staff leads to ineffective service and program delivery.

### CHAPTER 3: Community Sector – Wage Comparison

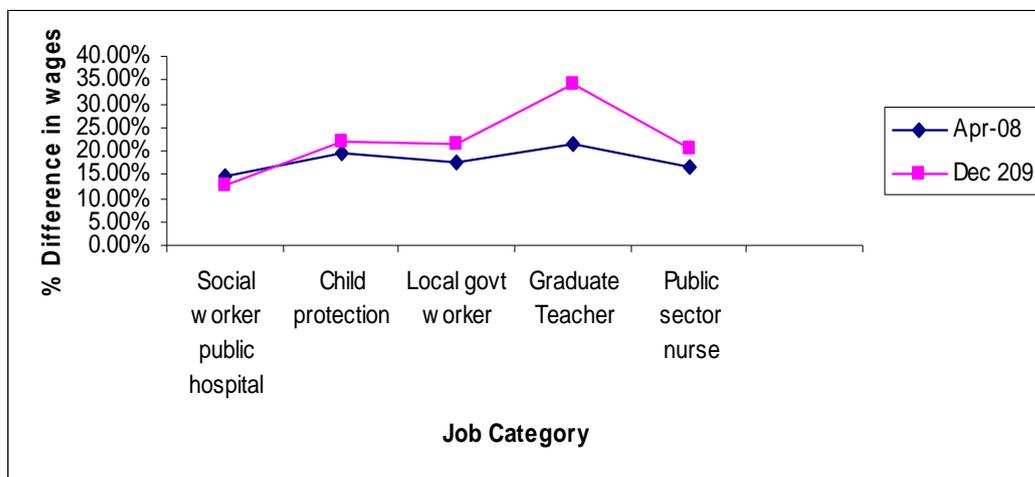
An analysis of the wages of community sector employees with those employees doing comparable work within the public sector show Victorian community sector employees are significantly worse off at all levels and categories (see Table 1 in Appendix A).

The Victorian public sector comparison figures in Appendix A show an entry level social worker employed under the SACS Award is between 13 percent (equating to \$5050 a year) and 38 percent (equating to \$14,679 a year) financially worse off compared to a social worker employed by a public hospital or a secondary school teacher. A social worker after 5 years experience under the SACS Award is between 30 percent (equating to \$13,356 a year) and 32 percent (equating to \$14,293 a year) worse off compared to a child protection worker employed by DHS and a social worker in a public hospital.

This wage gap - dollar and percentage wise - increased from the period between 2008 to 2009 (see Figures 1 and 2 below) in part because no wage increases were awarded by the Australian Fair Pay Commission in 2009.



**Figure 1: Yearly gross wages of SACS social worker entry level compared with public sector equivalent, 2008 and 2009**



**Figure 2: Difference in wages between SACS social worker entry level compared with public sector equivalent, 2008 and 2009, percentage**

Two de-identified witness statements by workers employed in the Victorian non-government child protection system have been appended to this submission (see Appendix B, Witness Statement 1 and 2). These statements were submitted as unchallenged evidence in the ASU's equal remuneration case at Fair Work Australia and provide real life illustrations of these issues in current workplaces.

Given the wage disparity, it is not surprising that the community sector is haemorrhaging staff to the public sector.

The challenges outlined above are currently affecting the sectors ability to meet the needs of people who use their services. In the longer-term, if these issues are not addressed the viability of many services in the community sector is at serious risk. And without these services, many vulnerable Victorians – particularly children – are placed in jeopardy.

The interests of the Victorian community are best served when qualified staff deliver high quality services, and those staff are justly and fairly compensated for their labour.

The ASU, our members and many others believe that if these core workforce challenges remain unchecked it will ultimately have a detrimental impact on the liveability and the economy of Victoria.

## CHAPTER 4: Recommendations for a Skilled Community Services Workforce

### Immediate priorities

#### Funding

- 1. Increased on-going funding for improved wages and conditions (including portable long service leave) in order to attract and retain a quality and skilled workforce while ensuring full funding with respect to the equal remuneration case currently before Fair Work Australia**

In Victoria, community service organisations are funded by government on an 85/15 model which recognises that about 85% of funding is spent on wages. Low wages are a barrier to attracting and retaining a high quality, skilled workforce. Improved wages and conditions which close the gap between non-government SACS and public sector jobs of similar work value would ensure the retention of a future non-government SACS workforce. The State Government should ensure that funding levels are sufficient to support pay levels to attract and retain a quality skilled workforce by closing this gap.

#### **ASU's Equal Remuneration Case**

The ASU has made the first application<sup>44</sup> for an equal remuneration order under the *Fair Work Act 2009*. In this case, the ASU has set out to show that:

- a. The social and community services (SACS) industry is female dominated,
- b. The work in the SACS industry is undervalued, and
- c. The undervaluation is due to the industry being female dominated.

If Fair Work Australia finds that work in the industry has been undervalued then a determination should be made to remedy the situation. The ASU has proposed a classification structure and pay levels which will address the undervaluation (see page 9 of ASU's application for the proposed remedy<sup>45</sup>). The ASU argues that the FWA should follow the approach adopted by the Queensland IRC in the Queensland SACS case, where pay increases of between 18 percent and 37 percent were awarded on equity grounds.

The Victorian Government has participated in these proceedings and the Liberal National Coalition has identified the inequity between community sector workers and their public sector counterparts and has pledged to ensure that SACS workers *"are better paid in order to reflect the importance and value of their work."*<sup>46</sup>

Throughout the proceedings, a number of employers in the industry have supported the application for increased wages whilst making the point that without additional funding, service cuts may ensue. This must be at the forefront of everyone's minds when considering this issue. As evidence mounts that what is needed is a competent and skilled workforce with an adequate supply of new workers to replace the ageing workforce a decision that leads to cuts in services will not contribute to improving services for Victoria's vulnerable children and their families.

The proceedings in the case are now complete and the Full Bench of FWA has reserved their decision.

The impact of undervaluation has led to adverse effects on both workers and families relying on services, all of whom are the subject of this Inquiry. Furthermore, service delivery will always be impacted where there is insufficient staff to deliver the services or where the staff are underqualified. It is therefore the ASU's view, regardless of the outcome of the equal remuneration case, additional funding to address poor wages and conditions is critical.

## **Portable Long Service Leave**

On-going discussions between the Department of Human Services, unions and the community services sector over many years has resulted in a proposal to develop a portable long service leave scheme for the community services sector. As currently stated on the Department of Human Services website:

*Portable long service leave has been strongly advocated for by the sector for many years, and the Victorian Government is introducing the Scheme in direct response to sector needs. The Scheme is expected to deliver multiple benefits including improved attractiveness of community services roles, increased retention rates across the sector and improved employment benefits to a low paid, predominately female workforce.<sup>47</sup>*

Given the agreed benefits, the Victorian Government should immediately move to pass legislation that has been developed in consultation with the industry for the scheme. This move would see Victoria follow the Australian Capital Territory's lead. In December 2009 the ACT Legislative Assembly passed the *Community Sector Portable Long Service Leave Scheme*, which commenced operations on 1 July 2010. PLSL is a measure to make the social and community sector more attractive and competitive with other sectors thereby reducing the loss of employees out of the sector.

The scheme should be as proposed in 2010 and include the following features:

- It should be a full compulsory statutory scheme;
- Entitlements should be paid into a central independent pool administered by a government statutory authority;
- It should be broadly based as the greater the number of participants in the scheme the more effective it is for providing options of portability and spreading the operational costs over a larger number of employees, reducing their individual contributions.

In addition, there should be an introduction of separate itemised funding within salary on-costs to establish a portable long service scheme within the sector by July 2011. We believe that this will prevent the current practice by some employers of not setting long service leave money aside (despite long service leave being a legal minimum entitlement that is a component of funding already provided) and using it to plug funding gaps.

## **2. Maintain lengthened funding rounds in order to provide more workforce stability**

Short term funding contracts act as a disincentive for workers seeking greater job security. In addition, employers have less incentive to provide training to workers who are more temporary, thereby adding to worker disincentive to stay in the industry. Short term funding also places additional, unnecessary demand on employers to continually administer and monitor the various reporting requirements associated with the beginning and end of funding contracts.

Staff turnover becomes more evident in this environment as staff cannot see long-term career prospects. This is demonstrated by the fact that services report recruitment is much more difficult for short term positions.

In addition, ever increasing administrative and accountability requirements from funding bodies (with inadequate funding increases to meet these requirements) impacts on both the time spent on providing actual services as well as increasing the pressure on workers. This is reported by workers as creating an additional pressure to leave the industry – 'why would you work harder with more demands from funding bodies and get paid less than a job in the public sector?'

We argue that funding contracts should be reviewed with a view to lengthening funding rounds in order to provide greater workforce stability. Any future reforms to program delivery should also focus on putting longer term funding arrangements in place.

### **3. Adequate funding for current service provision and projected industry growth**

The demand for social and community services delivered through the non-government sector continues to grow. It is essential that government make adequate funding provision (including funding for wages, staff training, occupational health and safety obligations and relief staff) in unit costing to support this growth in order to ensure quality service provision.

Victorian Government must recognise that the costs of running a service increase each year and that the indexation of funding contracts should accurately reflect these cost increases. In addition, the Government should introduce a uniform, whole-of-government rate of price indexation for all community sector programs.

### **Governmental and industry response**

#### **4. A state-wide roundtable be held in early 2012 to discuss issues for the non-government SACS industry outlined in this submission.**

The State Government should agree to convene an urgent state-wide roundtable for representatives from the government together with peak industry groups, unions and education and training providers to address pressing industry issues including workforce shortages and skills shortages.

### **Medium term priorities**

#### **Workforce development**

As identified by both the Productivity Commission<sup>48</sup> and Healy and Lonne<sup>49</sup>, there is a lack of specific focus on community sector workforce planning and strategy when compared with the education and health sectors. The Victorian Liberal National Coalition's Policy and Plans for the 2010 State Election for Community Services outlines a community sector workforce recruitment, training and retention strategy to strengthen the workforce. The ASU submits this must include the following:

#### **5. Development of a state-wide workforce attraction and retention strategy**

The Victorian Government must support and fund the development of strategies for addressing SACS industry workforce and skills shortages as a matter of urgency.

As a priority, the Victorian Government should fund a promotional and advertising strategy aimed at encouraging both young people and older workers to enter the non-government SACS workforce.

For those workers committed to staying in the industry beyond five years (48% of ASU survey participants), the biggest single factor influencing their decision was their belief in the value of the work they do (nominated by 56%). This value-oriented commitment is an obvious draw card for many working in the industry and a promotional strategy based on these values should be developed aimed at both young school leavers and those older workers looking to or forced to change careers. Such a promotional strategy needs to include public advertising as well as specific targeted programs, for example in schools.

## **6. Promotion of a highly skilled workforce through greater investment in education and training**

ASU survey results indicate that for those SACS workers with no qualifications, the single biggest barrier to obtaining these was high costs (28%). Increasing job insecurity created by short term funding contracts and a predominance of part time work was also identified as contributing to a reluctance to take up education by workers who bear the cost.

Higher wages and better working conditions will go a long way to attracting young workers to the industry. Apart from these fundamental issues, programs for mentoring young workers in the industry that enable them to see the breadth of the industry and the possibilities for work within it would support retention.

The Victorian Government must invest in education and training in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system (in TAFE and in community providers) in order to expedite skill development of new workers in the non-government SACS industry as well as that of experienced workers via Recognition of Prior Learning and other programs. Furthermore, resources should be provided to community sector organisations to pay for staff for VET qualifications, particularly when these qualifications are required by legislative and/or funding arrangements. Fees for training and qualifications in the community sector field should be substantially subsidised.

## **7. Development of career paths that recognise skills and experience as well as career structures which allow mobility of workers throughout the industry**

Workers in the SACS industry experience limited career paths and this is often cited as a reason for leaving the industry. Workers' career advancement would be better served if qualifications were more clearly linked to common sets of job titles and classification systems. The Victorian Government should support this work in workforce planning at all levels.

At present, workers have limited capacity to increase their income by remaining in direct service work as there is a lack of financial recognition for advancing practise skills and qualifications. There is therefore little incentive for direct service workers to continue to improve their practice<sup>50</sup>. In turn, if they seek additional financial benefits, they must move into managerial positions, creating a gap in experienced direct service workers. Other incentives and career pathways should therefore be developed.

An additional career pathway should be made available to all employees by a combination of increased responsibility and the acquisition of an additional qualification that demonstrates Advanced Skills, either via additional specific components of VET or other training opportunities. In this pathway an employee is paid an allowance in addition to their base salary in recognition of these factors.

The further career pathway should be made available to those in positions of leadership both as administrators and as practitioners. There could be two distinct pathways within the Leadership stream. This stream could be constructed so as to equally reward administrative leadership and outstanding leadership by expert practitioners. In this pathway an employee is classified on the basis of a number or criteria including: size and composition of the workforce, complexity of programs and or staff managed, years of experience, degree or expertise, role as a mentor and best practice practitioner.

## **8. Strategies to address the shortage of indigenous workers to work with indigenous people**

The Victorian Government needs to support and fund the development of strategies to attract and retain indigenous SACS workers. Indigenous communities, indigenous educational and employment providers and industry representatives need to be included in the development of these strategies and they must include local initiatives for recruiting, training, mentoring and providing on-the-job support.

In the ASU survey, managers responsible for delivering services to indigenous communities were asked to identify the main barriers to attracting and retaining indigenous workers. While the majority nominated difficulty attracting staff and difficulty finding staff with the right skills for the job, some managers also said that they were not able to provide training to skill up indigenous workers and/or that they could not provide culturally appropriate support to keep indigenous workers in the job.

Investment in training and support is required in order to attract and retain an indigenous workforce. Specific suggestions include:

- greater funding for indigenous traineeship programs;
- a government-funded, industry-specific and indigenous-run organisation to help mentor and train new workers, direct worker to available jobs and enable workers to link up with each other for support;
- an advertising campaign aimed at recruiting potential indigenous workers with known indigenous community figures involved;
- establishing a mentoring program between new and experienced indigenous workers across services;
- strategies for supporting isolated indigenous workers;
- delivery of cultural sensitivity training at workplaces to occur before recruiting an indigenous worker;
- strategies for making the work environment supportive of indigenous workers.

## **9. Strategies to address the shortage of rural/remote/regional workers**

The Victorian Government must support and fund the development of strategies to attract and retain rural and regional SACS workers. Strategies such as enhanced training and education opportunities, a system for subsidising working in rural/regional communities and a scheme for 'bonded' education bursaries must be investigated.

The ASU's survey indicates that the two main barriers for attracting and retaining rural/remote/regional staff identified by managers of these services were lower wages than city jobs (50%) and lack of training options in the region (46%).

This is an all too familiar story for other States and Territories. A SACS industry report produced in NSW in 2006/7 highlights the additional cost pressures faced by rural and remote services and heightened difficulties attracting and retaining staff.

Investment in training and staff support is required in order to recruit and retain a rural/remote/regional workforce. Specific suggestions include:

- subsidies to housing and expenses to acknowledge skill scarcity;
- schemes to attract workers to operate along the lines of bonded educational scholarships;

- waiving HECS fees for workers in Rural, Remote and Regional areas for a specified period for specific courses to attract a future workforce;
- schemes to pool relief staff and share skills;
- schemes to support access to training including ensuring that training is located in rural areas rather than merely being city based;
- a loading on funding contracts to recognise additional costs in transport and communications for services

## Industrial relations

### 10. Support the industry to participate fully in enterprise bargaining

The social and community services sector is one of the last sectors in the modern workforce that has not embraced enterprise bargaining. Until this changes the wages gap that has been outlined in this submission will continue to grow as comparable industries make successive rounds of agreements that provide for pay increases above those provided for by minimum wage adjustments.

At present, the Victorian Government does not require annual indexation to be compulsorily passed onto workers as wage increases. This means that unless EBAs are in place, many workers do not receive wages increases. Ensuring that indexation provided to employers by government is passed onto workers by way of a modest pay increase can only occur by way of an enforceable instrument.

And more recently, the need for the sector to engage in enterprise bargaining has become more urgent as we have seen losses in conditions of employment as a result of Award modernisation. The introduction of the *Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Award 2010* has seen Award dependent workers in some agencies lose their entitlement to paid training and professional development leave to attend an approved degree and up to 11 days paid sick leave per annum<sup>51</sup>. An erosion of already low minimum standards in a sector that is already facing significant workforce challenges undermines the ability of the sector to deliver services to vulnerable Victorian children and families.

The sector must be supported by the Victorian Government to engage in bargaining as without this commitment it will not be possible to overcome the barriers as outlined below:

- The characteristics of the sector are not conducive to bargaining – with more than 1,000 individual employers, resourcing genuine bargaining negotiations in a complex legislative environment requires more resources than employers and staff can accommodate.
- There are a large number of relatively small organisations in this sector - approximately 70% of employers have 20 or less employees. These small organisations do not have the people and other resources to engage in bargaining as they are often run by volunteer committees of management unfamiliar with industrial relations processes and the level of industrial representation of employers is low.
- Government funding is often tied to award rates of pay and funding bodies (i.e. governments) will not pay additional wages arising from bargaining. As a result, whilst there are some larger organisations which do have enterprise agreements they have limited capacity to provide improvements in this process as they do not have access to the additional funding required to pay increased wages and improved conditions.
- The funding pressures mean that workers are often told that wage increases may result in program and service delivery cuts which will impact on clients.

- Difficulties with complexities in the applicable industrial legislation which make it difficult to engage employers in the process. This is particularly relevant to Multi Business Agreements.

## Long term priorities

### 11. Revision of the competitive tendering model of funding

The use of competitive tendering in the provision of social and community services is fundamentally inimical to the provision of services of the highest quality for the most disadvantaged and marginalised in our community.

Competitive tendering is based on an assumption that the lowest cost base for the delivery of services is the best for government. However, in the case of provision of community services it is counterproductive as it can lead to a commensurate reduction in the quality of service delivered to vulnerable children and families.

It can also lead to a reduction in the wages and conditions of the workers required to deliver the services as the sector looks at ways to 'trim' their costs in order to bring in the lowest tender. This in turn exacerbates an already existing workforce crisis.

Social and community services should be funded on "cost basis" models such as those used in health and education. Competitive tendering undermines the role that the SACS industry plays in supporting social inclusion. It should be reviewed with a view to phasing out its use in the SACS industry.

The ASU looks forward to participating in this Inquiry and hopes to work with the Government on its commitment to develop a comprehensive community sector workforce strategy.

The ASU welcomes the Government's commitments to support the decision by Fair Work Australia with respect to the current pay equity case for social workers and community services workers and the recognition that currently these workers are not paid at commensurate levels with their public sector counterparts. We hope this support will extend to further funding commitments and workforce initiatives in this regard, as outlined above.

## Appendix A – Table

### Comparison of employees covered by SACS Award 2000 classifications with public sector counterparts, Victoria, as at May 2010

NGO sector – Social and Community Services – Victoria – Award 2000	Wage rate per week \$	Public Sector Equivalent Comparator	<sup>1</sup> Wage rate per week \$	Diff. per week \$	Diff. per week %
<b>Social Workers</b>					
Social worker <i>Class 1 year 3 (4 yr degree) Graduate entry level</i>	\$752.78	<b>Social Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Business Agreement 2004-2007 (public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Social Worker Grade 1, Year 1</i>	\$849.90	\$97.12	12.9%
		<b>Child Protection Worker – Department of Human Services (DHS)</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>CPW 2-2</i>	\$925.93	\$173.15	23%
		<b>Allied Health (social worker) – Victorian Public Service</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>VPS 2.2.1</i>	\$879.85	\$127.07	16.9%
		<b>Graduate Teacher</b> Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2008 <i>Graduate 1</i>	\$1035.06	\$282.28	37.5%
Social Worker <i>Class 1 Year 7 (after 5 years of experience, work under direction and supervision of more experienced social workers)</i>	\$864.12	<b>Social Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Business Agreement 2004-2007 (public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Social Worker Grade 1, Year 6</i>	\$1139.00	\$274.88	31.8%
		<b>Child Protection Worker - DHS</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>CPW 2- 6</i>	\$1120.96	\$256.84	29.7%
		<b>Allied Health (social worker) – Victorian Public Service</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>VPS 3.1.1</i>	\$993.31	\$129.19	14.9%

1. Wage rate per week is based on dividing the annual salary listed in the agreement by the formula set out in QLD SACS decision - 52.1667, except where the agreement lists a weekly or hourly rate.

NGO sector – Social and Community Services – Victoria – Award 2000	Wage rate per week \$	Public Sector Equivalent Comparator	1Wage rate per week \$	Diff. per week \$	Diff. per week %
<p><b>Social worker</b> <i>Class 2 year 1</i> <i>(not under direct supervision and has some administrative responsibility e.g. in charge of up to 3 social workers, sole social worker, case work supervisor etc)</i></p>	\$872.10	<p><b>Social Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Business Agreement 2004-2007 ((public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Grade 2 year 1</i> <i>(additional responsibilities e.g. individual and family and/or group practice or teaching students)</i></p> <p><b>Child Protection Worker - DHS</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>CPW 3-1</i> <i>(complex protection case work, senior case workers)</i></p> <p><b>Allied Health (social worker) – Victorian Public Service</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>VPS 3.2.1 (Allied health Gr 2)</i> <i>(provides guidance for others, operational leadership re local issues and strategies, complex professional reports)</i></p> <p><b>Teacher, Victorian Government Schools</b> Agreement 2008, <i>Accomplished A5</i> <i>(planning, preparation and teaching of programs to achieve specific student outcomes).</i></p>	\$1139.00	\$266.90	30.6%
<p><b>Social Worker</b> <i>Class 3 year 1</i> <i>(in charge of an agency or department of 7 social workers or 13 staff, training unit for students, special skills and experience)</i></p>	\$943.92	<p><b>Child Protection Worker - DHS</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>CPW 4-1</i> <i>(team leader, specialist skills and experience)</i></p> <p><b>Allied Health (social worker) – Victorian Public Service</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>VPS 4.1 (Allied health Gr 3)</i> <i>(advanced therapeutic interventions incl cross agency collaboration, may manage a team of staff, incl resource allocation, makes decision on service provision on complex problems)</i></p> <p><b>Teacher, Victorian Government Schools</b> Agreement 2008, <i>Expert E1</i> <i>(high quality instruction, engage in ongoing learning, role model, mentor and coach to other teachers)</i></p> <p><b>Social Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Bus. Agreement 04-07(public sector</p>	\$1312.46	\$368.54	39%
			\$1229.71	\$285.79	30.3%
			\$1305.44	\$361.52	38.3%

NGO sector – Social and Community Services – Victoria – Award 2000	Wage rate per week \$	Public Sector Equivalent Comparator	1Wage rate per week \$	Diff. per week \$	Diff. per week %
<b>Social Worker</b> <b>Class 4 year 1</b> <i>(in charge of an agency or department of 8 social workers or at least 14 staff, senior administrative responsibility)</i>	\$1014.60	workplace determination 3 April 2009) <i>Chief Grade 1, Year 1</i> <i>(responsible for organisation of department &amp; supervision of 1 to 5 full-time staff)</i>	\$1399.90	\$455.98	48.3%
		<b>Social Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Bus. Agreement 04-07(public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Chief Grade 2, Year 1</i> <i>(in charge of 6-14 f-time professionals)</i>	\$1570.10	\$555.50	54.8%
		<b>Child Protection Worker - DHS</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 CPW 4-6 CPW 5-1 <i>(unit manager supervises team of professional workers)</i>	\$1448.14 \$1491.62	\$433.54 \$477.02	42.7% 47%
		<b>Allied Health (social worker) – Victorian Public Service</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 VPS 5.1.1 (Allied health Grade 4) <i>(manages defined service delivery function, advanced interventions on complex cases that may require cross-agency collaboration, specialist in an area and relied on for advice in the field)</i>	\$1418.87	\$404.27	39.8%
		<b>Teacher, Victorian Government Schools</b> Agreement 2008 <i>Leading Teacher</i> LT1 <i>(facilitator of professional learning of others, outstanding classroom teacher, take on leadership and management role)</i>	\$1577.73	\$563.13	55.5%
<b>Welfare Workers</b>					
<b>Welfare Worker</b>  <i>Class 1, Year 1</i> <i>Class 1, Year 7</i> <i>(qualified 2 years at tertiary institution)</i>	 \$650.18 \$758.48	<b>Welfare Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Bus Agreement 04-07 ((public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Class 1, Year 1</i> <i>Class 1, Year 7</i> <i>(qualified 2 years at tertiary institution)</i>  <b>Child Protection Worker - DHS</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 CPW 1-1 <i>(less than degree qualified)</i>	 \$724.10 \$915.80  \$756.95	 \$73.92 \$157.32  \$106.77	 11.4% 20.7%  16.4%

NGO sector – Social and Community Services – Victoria – Award 2000	Wage rate per week \$	Public Sector Equivalent Comparator	<sup>1</sup> Wage rate per week \$	Diff. per week \$	Diff. per week %
Welfare Worker  <i>Class 2 Year 1</i> <i>Class 2 Year 4</i>	\$727.32 \$780.90	<b>Welfare Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Bus Agreement 04-07((public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Class 2 Year 1</i> <i>Class 2 Year 4</i>	\$849.90 \$951.80	\$122.58 \$170.90	21.9% 23.7%
Welfare Worker  <i>Class 3 Year 1</i> <i>Class 3 Year 3</i>	\$780.90 \$823.46	<b>Welfare Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Bus Agreement 04-07 (public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Class 3 Year 1</i> <i>Class 3 Year 3</i>	\$951.80 \$1019.10	\$170.90 \$195.64	21.9% 23.7%
Welfare Worker  <i>Class 4 Year 1</i> <i>Class 4 Year 3</i>	\$839.80 \$878.94	<b>Welfare Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Business Agreement 2004-2007 ((public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Class 4 Year 1</i> <i>Class 4 Year 3</i>	\$1048.20 \$1113.10	\$208.40 \$234.16	24.8% 26.6%

### Community Development Workers

Community Development Worker  <i>Class 1 Year 1</i>  <i>Class II (a) Year 1</i> <i>Class II (a) Year 10</i>	\$693.88 \$715.16 \$921.88	<b>Community Development Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Business Agreement 2004-2007 (public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Class 1 Year 1</i>  <i>Class II(a) Year 1</i> <i>Class II(a) Year 10</i>	\$797.20 \$866.80 \$1181.30	\$103.32 \$151.64 \$259.42	14.9% 21.2% 28.1%
<i>Class II (b) Year 1</i> <i>Class II (b) Year 6</i>	\$872.10 \$994.84	<b>Community Development Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Business Agreement 2004-2007 (public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Class II(b) Year 1</i> <i>Class II(b) Year 6</i>	\$1102.90 \$1297.40	\$230.80 \$302.56	26.5% 30.4%
<i>Entry level Community Legal Centre Lawyer, Community Legal Education worker</i> <i>Class II (b) Year 1</i>	\$872.10 \$899.50*	<b>Victorian Government – Solicitor</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 SOL1 (VPS 2.2.4) <i>(minimum salary for qualified admitted solicitor)</i>  <b>Victoria Legal Aid - Lawyer</b> Victorian Legal Aid Certified Agreement 2005-2008	\$925.95	\$53.85 \$26.45	6.2% 2.9%

NGO sector – Social and Community Services – Victoria – Award 2000	Wage rate per week \$	Public Sector Equivalent Comparator	<sup>1</sup> Wage rate per week \$	Diff. per week \$	Diff. per week %
Experienced Community Legal Centre Lawyer Class II (b) Year 6	\$994.84 \$1033.56*	VLA3 <i>(provide legal aid services to clients, as part of a team of lawyers and admin staff)</i>	\$1035.50	\$163.40 \$136.00	18.7% 15.1%
		<b>Victorian Government solicitor - DHS</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 SOL2 (VPS 3.1.6) – after 6 yrs experience <i>(diminishing supervision for routine matters, operating in a more challenging functional environment)</i>	\$1099.70	\$104.86 \$66.14	10.5% 6.4%
Community Development Worker	\$946.58 \$994.84	<b>Victoria Legal Aid - Lawyer</b> Victorian Legal Aid Certified Agreement 2005-2008 VLA4 <i>(legal practise, casework, advocacy, information and advice, act as mentor and trainer to less experienced lawyers)</i>	\$1340.05	\$345.21 \$306.49	34.7% 29.6%
		<b>Community Development Worker in Public Hospital</b> HSUA– Health Professionals Vic Public Sector Multiple Business Agreement 2004-2007 (public sector workplace determination handed down 3 April 2009) <i>Class 3 Year 1</i> <i>Class 3 Year 3</i>	\$1220.90 \$1297.40	\$274.32 \$302.56	29.0% 30.4%
<i>(required to provide direct supervision of other workers, incl community development)</i>		<b>DHS – Housing Services Officer 3,</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 VPS 3.2.1 <i>(highly skilled, resolves complex and challenging problems, maybe required to coach, mentor and guide others)</i>	\$1120.96	\$174.38	18.4%
<i>Including Community Legal Centre Principal Solicitor (provide professional supervision to all solicitors, monitor casework, overall responsibility and oversight of legal practice, including government and professional indemnity requirements)</i>	\$994.84 \$1033.56*	<b>Victorian Government – Senior Solicitor – DHS</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 SOL3 (VPS4.1.1) <i>(legal work at an advanced level, functional expertise, may have responsibility for mentoring less experienced legal staff)</i>	\$1229.71	\$234.87 \$196.15	23.6% 19%
		<i>SSOL (may manage or supervise small legal office/specialised team)</i> VR 1 (VPS 5.1.1)	\$1418.87	\$424.03 \$385.31	42.6% 37.3%
		VR2 (VPS 5.2.1)	\$1567.82	\$572.98 \$534.26	57.6% 51.7%
		<b>Victoria Legal Aid - Lawyer</b> Victorian Legal Aid Certified Agreement 2005-2008 VLA5 <i>(high level legal representation, support and assistance to more junior lawyers, contribute to response on policy and law reform issues)</i>	\$1674.99	\$680.15 \$641.43	68.4% 62.1%

NGO sector – Social and Community Services – Victoria – Award 2000	Wage rate per week \$	Public Sector Equivalent Comparator	<sup>1</sup> Wage rate per week \$	Diff. per week \$	Diff. per week %
<b>Youth Workers</b>					
<i>Unqualified</i>	\$580.26	<b>VPS –Youth Justice</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>Youth justice worker grade 1-1 (basic client care and support, unqualified)</i>	\$756.95	\$176.69	30.5%
<i>Class 1 Year 1 (under direct supervision)</i>	\$682.48	<b>VPS –Youth Justice</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>Youth justice worker grade 2-1 (standard services under general supervision within defined framework)</i>	\$993.33	\$310.85	45.5%
<i>Class 2 Year 1 (a sole youth worker, or working without supervision)</i>	\$758.86	<b>VPS –Youth Justice</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>Youth justice worker 2-8 (standard services under general supervision within defined framework)</i>	\$1142.26	\$383.40	50.5%
<i>Class 3 Year 1 (without direct supervision with some administrative responsibility for 4 employees or less)</i>	\$830.68	<b>VPS –Youth Justice</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>Youth justice worker 3-1 (standard services within framework, complex and advanced case work, supervision of staff)</i>	\$1163.50	\$332.82	40.1%
<i>Class 4 Year 1 (without direct supervision with some administrative responsibility for more than 4 employees)</i>	\$893.76	<b>VPS –Youth Justice</b> Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006 Extended and Varied Version 2009 <i>Youth justice worker 3-4 (standard services within framework, complex and advanced case work, supervision of staff)</i>	\$1229.71	\$335.95	37.6%

\* these pay rates marked are in accordance with the Community Legal Centres Multi Business Agreement (MBA) Certified Agreement 2006-2009, which applies to 27 Community Legal Centres in Victoria

## Appendix B – Witness Statement 1

**FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA**

**No. C2010/3131**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

**APPLICATION BY THE AUSTRALIAN MUNICIPAL, ADMINISTRATIVE,  
CLERICAL AND SERVICES UNION AND OTHERS FOR AN EQUAL  
REMUNERATION ORDER IN THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
INDUSTRY  
STATEMENT**

I, [REDACTED] of [REDACTED], VIC, [REDACTED], state as follows:

### **Personal Information**

1. I hold a Bachelor of Arts (Deakin University, 2001-2003), a Master of Social Work (Deakin and Monash Universities 2006-2009), and I am currently completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Research (Gender Studies). In the current degree, I am researching the impact of trauma on women. I also regularly attend training sessions and conferences to further my skills in social work and work with families.

### **Employment History**

2. I have worked with Kildonan Uniting Care's Strengthening Families Program since August 2009, giving me a total of nearly three years' experience in the sector. I have also spent time working in an administrative capacity with Anglicare (June 2007-July 2008), after which I began working in the agency's Family Services team (August 2008-August 2009). Prior to that I worked in editorial in Europe after completing my first degree. I moved from editorial to social work because I wanted to contribute more to developing what I saw as a dysfunctional community that impacted negatively on a number of groups of people.

3. Prior to my paid work in the community sector I worked in a voluntary capacity with the International Women's Development Agency, Oxfam, the Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning Program, YWCA and other agencies outside of Australia. For these organisations I variously worked as Intern Writer and Editor, transcriber, English tutor and mentor to disadvantaged girls and women. The voluntary roles differed from my current paid work in that I was not required to have any qualifications to carry them out (although with the mentoring position I was required to participate in a brief training program) and there was only a loose structure around the time and skill that I contributed to the organisations.

### **Current Employment**

4. I am a current employee of Kildonan Uniting Care's Strengthening Families Program.
5. Kildonan is a non government organisation in the Social and Community Services Industry whose primary function/focus is to empower people to improve their lives through the provision of effective community services and to address issues of social and economic hardship. The Strengthening Families program does this by assisting parents and supporting them through any issues impacting on their capacity to parent. My position is funded to work with families living in the Yarra region.
6. I am employed as a Strengthening Families Worker, paid at the Class 2, Year 3 level of the Social and Community Services Award. My hourly rate is \$24.32, meaning that my annual salary is \$48, 056.32 this includes superannuation. I believe this wage may be slightly above the award recommendation but there is no incremental progression for pay rates; once a worker is on this wage, he or she would have to become a manager and

move away from direct practice to receive higher rates of pay. I am employed on a full-time basis and work 38 hours each week. At times I use my own car for home visits if I have one at the beginning or end of the day, although mostly I am able to use work vehicles. I was told by my manager that “depending on how far” I travel, I may be reimbursed. There is certainly not a culture of people claiming mileage for use of personal cars.

7. Attached to this statement and marked “A” is a copy of my position description.
8. My place of work is a set of three ‘Victorian’ style, two-storey houses that have been attached to one another and converted into offices. The property has been deemed structurally unsafe, particularly in terms of the agency’s fire escape plan (the stairs that staff members are instructed to use in emergencies are not functional or safe). On account of this, the agency is currently seeking an alternative office location.
9. I commenced employment with Kildonan, and was appointed to my current position, on 10 August 2009.
10. My role in the Strengthening Families program necessitates me conducting home visits with up to 12 families each week. The visits involve listening to any issues the family is having, most often around family violence, financial difficulties, housing instability, mental health concerns, living with intellectual disabilities, drug & alcohol dependency, historical and current trauma, sexual and physical abuse, and issues of grief and loss. I make available for clients information about child development, parenting and trauma as well as services in their area that may be useful for the family. I also apply therapeutic theory, such as exploring a history of childhood abuse or neglect, to help the family address issues acting as barriers, such as re-enacting the way the parents themselves were parented, to achieving healthy lives. There have been instances of me being able to

explore family history with clients and as a result they have been able to see where their ideas about parenting came from and hence make positive changes. Further, in providing information about parenting methods and children's developmental stages, parents are able to tailor their strategies for raising their children.

11. I receive supervision from my direct manager (male). The supervision session is conducted once a fortnight and involves a therapeutic element, ensuring that I am not suffering compassion fatigue, burnout or general stress as a result of dealing with client's troubling issues. My supervisor also provides instruction on how to proceed therapeutically with clients and helps me monitor protective concerns in relation to children. We discuss together strategies to use to help and empower my clients.
12. A typical day for me involves visiting families in their homes, making referrals to other services (either written referrals or by telephone), and liaising with other professionals, such as the Department of Human Services Child Protection, adolescent mental health workers, counselors, school staff, psychiatric workers, drug & alcohol counselors, maternal and child health nurses, GPs and other medical professionals.
13. I spend a lot of my time listening to client's stories and ensuring they are receiving the support they need and want. I am mindful of working to empower clients and ensuring that I enact social work theories, such as working with a solution-focused and strengths-based approach. This means that I consistently highlight client's strengths to give them confidence and hope, while always focusing on solutions to the problems being presented. To facilitate this process I administer tools such as the Beck Depression Inventory to check the status of a client's mental health, and help clients explore barriers to change. I do this by drawing up family histories with clients, family trees, and

exploring the way that the parents were themselves parented and how this impacts on their own parenting style.

14. I must continuously monitor the safety of children and the parent's capacity to raise the children in a safe, healthy and stable environment. I must take into account the government's Best Interest Guidelines to ensure the child is meeting developmental milestones and that the parents are protective and actively assisting the child's development. I have the added pressure of meeting the parent's needs while also bearing in mind the child's situation and if the parent can offer the best conditions in which to raise the child. At times I make recommendations to DHS about the conditions in which children are being raised and whether or not I believe the child is safe and developing healthily. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of DHS to make decisions about the removal of children. In cases when children are removed, families obviously suffer trauma and pain and it is then the role of the Strengthening Families Worker to support them through that and work on parenting strategies for them to be capable of looking after their children again.

15. My work is carried out with families in all age groups, all different ethnic backgrounds and parents and children of both genders. I use interpreters both in person and on the phone in my work with non-English speaking clients. If a client has an intellectual disability, an acquired brain injury or is a migrant, I consult relevant services on the most appropriate ways to work with them. When working with refugee populations it can be difficult to reconcile imbedded issues, such as mistrust of authority figures and the effects of chronic trauma, i.e. post-traumatic stress disorder. It can also be difficult to reconcile cultural differences, which is something that I am constantly working at and ensuring that I am respectful and knowledgeable about the client's culture, without making judgements or assumptions.

16. At times my safety is compromised when I am working with clients with histories of violence and aggression. Most of the families with which I work have experienced or are currently experiencing family violence. If the perpetrator of violence is also present it is my role to engage and work with that person too, without compromising the survivor of violence and/or the children's safety.
17. I have been trained to recognise the signs of trauma, particularly in children for example sexualised behaviours in children that indicate sexual abuse, as well as to be alert to the possible presence of mental illnesses and family violence. Often clients disclose the experience of sexual or family violence to me and I am required to manage this in a sensitive, professional and responsive manner.
18. I often find myself suffering from work-related stress. It is particularly difficult to manage situations in which children have been neglected or abused and I am a witness to the effects or the disclosure. I have to ensure that I go to my colleagues and manager for adequate support and direction, as it is impossible to manage this work on one's own. I receive therapeutic services outside of my work place, in my own time, to manage my feelings about my work. I also have to ensure that I put in place an active self-care plan, that I am eating well, exercising, generally attending to my physical and mental needs as well as occasionally treating myself!
19. When distressing incidents such as witnessing an incident of verbal or physical violence in family homes, happen while I am at work I am required to complete an incident report, inform the occupational health and safety officer and participate in debriefing with a manager. I must also ensure that I monitor my own mental health after the incident to check if it impacts on me negatively down the track. Another incident that I deal with regularly is clients who are dissatisfied with decisions or suggestions I have made and

express this dissatisfaction by raising their voice at me, making threats to me or criticizing my work.

20. More recently the families that we work with became more complex. Changes in legislation (The Children, Youth and Families Act) meant that DHS directed agencies to manage high-risk families, that the department would previously have managed itself (and it's staff members were and still are paid more than community workers). I entered the community sector as these changes came into place but I know about them because there is ongoing discussion in the work place, with my colleagues and workers from other agencies that I encounter at training or events, about the more complex nature of the families and the work and how it has changed over the years. By that I mean that the Department of Human Services would historically have dealt with cases/families that are now directed to Family Services such as Kildonan's Strengthening Families Program. The families that we are allocated present with much more difficult, entrenched and complex concerns. The work that we carry out on a day-to-day basis is therefore much more difficult.

21. My qualifications taught me to work towards the best interests of the child and ensure that I am always bearing them in mind. I am required to be familiar with the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.

22. I write case notes detailing all contact I have with clients and professionals. These case notes are kept in client files in secure filing cabinets. I also carry out family action plans in conjunction with families, as well as six-month reviews, Best Interest Assessments (based on legislation) and closure reports. I type them on a computer at my office and they are all read and approved by my manager and at times DHS staff. I also use the

computer to carry out research on services or diseases for clients, as well as to make referrals to other services.

### **Training in my current employment**

23. I am currently taking regular unpaid study leave to complete the Postgraduate Diploma of Research (Arts), which my employer allows me to do. This is four hours per week. I am not paid to attend the course but I do have the provision of travel time to get to the university.

24. My employer also pays for me to attend regular training courses in the sector. The training allowance was \$1000 per staff member per year, but was recently reduced to \$500 per staff member per year. This has hindered our opportunities for learning as some training sessions can cost up to \$250 each, meaning we can sometimes only attend two per year. The training is crucial to keep up-to-date with current theories and approaches with particular client groups. It is also important to refresh what I learned at university. The training sessions are facilitated by qualified professionals sometimes from other agencies or from the government. At times I have also attended training that has been facilitated by high-profile international professionals who work with families and children. Training can go from half a day to three days in duration. They include case studies, advice on how to work with particular client groups and practical sessions such as role plays or brainstorming.

### **Income Issues**

25. I work side by side with workers from state and local government. The work carried out by local government family services workers is identical to the role I carry out, but local

government workers receive significantly higher rates of pay than those in non-government organisations.

26. As Family Services workers are now working the more complex cases that were previously managed by DHS, they are essentially doing very similar work but being paid much less. The skills and qualifications required at both state and local government levels are identical to those that I hold. Further, we are all responsible for monitoring the safety, stability and development of children. If I gained employment with the government I would be earning somewhere in the order of \$15,000 to \$20,000 more per year. I am not planning to work for the government as I strongly believe that our client group (families) can manage most of their issues with non-government agencies and with a sense of connectedness to a supportive community.

### **Conditions of Employment**

27. Within the organisation with which I work, there is very little opportunity for career progression, unless one wants to assume a management position and move away from direct client work. Otherwise there is no paypoint progression. We are provided a salary packaging provision of which I make full use.
28. We are strongly encouraged to take lunch breaks and it is not acceptable to not have a lunch break. However, the work I do does not always allow a lunch break to be taken, because of addressing client crises or the like.
29. I often build up Time in Lieu (TIL) because I start work early or leave later than my contracted hours. This is often because of the necessity of out-of-hours visits with families, i.e. to help families address issues at going-to-school time or dinner time. The agency has a policy around TIL stipulating that too much TIL cannot be built up and must be used within a fortnightly period (we are not permitted to have more than 15

hours TIL at the end of a fortnightly period). This sometimes makes things difficult when work builds up because of having been away and then more and more TIL builds up when catching up on work, perpetuating the problem.

30. My workload (a caseload of 10 to 12 clients depending on the complexity of issues the client presents with) does not take into account the time it takes to do necessary therapeutic work with clients to address entrenched and chronic issues preventing them from parenting at optimal capacity. I work with families for anywhere between four and twelve months. As soon as I close a case I am usually allocated a new one. After closure families can be referred to other more specialized services or they may be prepared and capable of managing with intensive support from that point on. We are always working towards empowerment and an ability to survive without services intensively involved.

Because at times clients have crises that they need support in managing, the deep-seated issues, such as grief and loss or trauma, persist and are carried onto the next generation. My work therefore feels chaotic in nature and as though I cannot really support clients to get to the real and important issues.

31. I am committed to my clients and my work. I feel well-supported at Kildonan as far as the work itself goes as well as being able to study at the same time. If my pay and conditions were improved I would be very happy to continue working in the sector. My plan is to continue working with Kildonan and working strongly to advocate for worker's rights and improved conditions.

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Date:

## Appendix B – Witness Statement 2

### FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA

No. C2010/3131

#### IN THE MATTER OF:

#### APPLICATION BY THE AUSTRALIAN MUNICIPAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, CLERICAL AND SERVICES UNION AND OTHERS FOR AN EQUAL REMUNERATION ORDER IN THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES INDUSTRY

#### STATEMENT OF [REDACTED]

I, [REDACTED] of [REDACTED], Victoria, states as follows:

##### Qualifications and training

- 2007 – Present**      **Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)**, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW. (Graduate entry), theory and practice 1; theory and practice 2; Research methods; Social Policy 3; Practicum Field Placement 1, theory and practice 3; theory and practice 4 (currently in final year)
- 2001**      **Master of Child and Adolescent Welfare**, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW. Child & Adolescent psychology; Child and Adolescent Welfare: Philosophy and Politics; Legal Issues in Child and Adolescent Welfare; Child Protection 1; Child and Adolescent Welfare in Aboriginal Society; Evaluation in Child and Adolescent Protection; Substitute Care.
- 1992**      **Graduate Diploma in Social Ecology**, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, NSW. Research Project - A ten-year history of The Women's Cottage, a woman's information and referral Service, Richmond.
- 1984**      **External Study Unit, Alcohol and other Drugs**, Macarthur Institute of Higher Education, Milperra, NSW
- 1982**      **Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts – Photography and Philosophy)**, Sydney College of the Arts, Balmain, NSW.

##### Employment History

1. I have been working in the SACS industry since approximately 1985 – 25 years.
2. After having worked as a cadet journalist and photographer after leaving school, my first position in the SACS industry was as an editor of a community newspaper, in St Clair, NSW, as a part of a Federal Government Wage Pause program. This was a two-year position. I then worked for more than six years as a project worker for Western Sydney Drug and Alcohol Resource Centre (WESDARC). This position included working with the media and the community on health promotion campaigns - working in partnership with Quit for Life.

3. During this time, I had my two children. I left the position when I had my first child and secured the same job when he was aged two years. I took maternity leave for the second child. While on maternity leave I undertook further studies, gaining a Postgraduate diploma in social ecology.
4. In 1992, I was employed as Family Support Worker at Richmond Neighbourhood Centre, in NSW. I was employed in this position for approximately four years. Through this position, I furthered my skills and experience working in child protection. In 1998, I was employed as a case worker for Swinson Cottage, a child protection service in Blacktown, NSW. I worked there for two years, during this time I was acting team leader. While in this position I gained my masters degree in Child and Adolescent Welfare, studying externally.
5. In 1999, I was employed as a case worker, with the NSW Department of Community Services, at Penrith Community Service Centre. This was a temporary position. I worked there for a year before transferring to a permanent position at the DoCS Helpline, in Parramatta.
6. In 2002, I was employed as a senior family worker, with Hawkesbury City Council. This was a SACS position as it was a funded project and the council paid under that award The Social and Community Workers NSW State Award. During these six years, I progressed to become the Manager of Family Services, and then to be Manager of Community and Youth Services. Council set up a non-government agency, Peppercorn Services, and outsourced all of its community projects in 2008, so my employer changed, although my position, award and conditions did not. When I left that position, I was being paid at Grade 6, Year 2, of the SACS Award, the highest point – approximately \$64,000.
7. In 2009, I moved to Melbourne and commenced my current position as a Families First case worker for Connections Uniting Care. Moving to Melbourne and not knowing the service system has meant I have had to take a significant drop in salary and level of responsibility. The SACS award is also lower in Victoria, compared with NSW.
8. Since 2007 I have been studying social work honours, part-time, externally. I am in final year. This is my fourth degree.
9. Throughout my working life I have played an active role in the sector and in the community on a voluntary basis. I have been on management executives for my children's childcare and after-school hours care services; primary and high school parent and citizen organisations; a community representative for Education Department Quality Assurance and staff interview processes. I am a founding member of the Hawkesbury Women's Information and Resource Centre, establishing this new service in 1985. I am currently the student representative on the editorial committee of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Social Workers Association. I am a member of the Social Justice Committee of Connections Uniting Care.
10. Being active in the community is integral to how I see my role as a social worker/activist for social change. However, my voluntary roles are quite different from my

paid work. My paid work as a professional has a different level of responsibility – I am representing my organisation, in a paid professional role. As a volunteer, I am representing myself, my own views and personal ethics. Working voluntarily is about my relationship with my community. While I take this role very responsibly, it is quite different from being a professional employee for an organisation.

Attached to my statement and marked “A” is a copy of my resume.

## **Current Employment**

11. I am a current employee of Connections Uniting Care. Connections Uniting Care is a non-government organisation in the Social and Community Services Industry which provides a range of services to the community to support children, young people and families, in the inner and outer southern and eastern areas of Melbourne.
12. I am employed as a Families First Case Worker paid at level of Social Worker Grade 3 under the Social and Community Services Award at pay point year 1. My current salary is [\$24 per hour]. I am employed on a full-time permanent basis. I work 38 hours each week. In addition to my paid hours, I also do regular unpaid work to ensure my practice is up-to-date and of high quality. On average I may work an additional four hours per week. My employer does not require that I do this work. I voluntarily do this unpaid work to stay well informed and to continually improve my skills and the quality of my work.
13. Attached to this statement and marked “B” is a copy of my position description
14. I work in a separate office building leased by Connections Uniting Care. All of the family workers are housed on the ground floor with corporate services above. I work in an open pod area, with my four Families First case worker colleagues. This building has been fitted out for our work. There are separate interview rooms for clients. The office is comfortable and appropriate for our work. There is however a major problem with the building - there is no emergency exit in the event of fire or an emergency.
15. I commenced employment in my current position with Connections Uniting Care on June 1 2009.
16. I am an intensive case worker. I provide intensive family work services to two clients each for up to 15 hours per week for an eight-week period, as a part of a family preservation or child reunification program. All of the families are current child protection clients of the Victorian Department of Human Services.
17. I work on my own in the family home of my clients for extended periods (approximately 3-4 hour periods), including early mornings and evenings. I am on an on-call 24-hour emergency roster, requiring me to take a mobile phone home for a week approximately four times per year. Clients in crisis may phone at any time during the night or on weekends, requiring support and emergency referral and follow-up. On these occasions I am paid an on-call loading of \$14.75 per evening, and at time and a half of the hourly rate if a client phones and I am required to return to duty.

18. I provide parenting support, including interviewing, assessment, counselling, education, referral, modeling, and practical support. My work providing parenting support and education usually commences with interviewing clients to determine their parenting goals, such as 'to improve the family's domestic routines and better manage my children's difficult behaviours'. I assist the family to make parenting plans for the daily home activities, including making wall charts and preparing and presenting parenting education strategies. Some parents may require assistance planning meals and managing meal times. Many of the children have difficult behaviour and parents may need education and skills in order to address their children's special needs. Frequently, I will model parenting strategies in the home with parents and children, such as, showing a parent how to divert a child who is tired and demanding, demonstrating the importance of planning ahead and responding to a child's needs before tantrums occur. Much of this hands-on work is then reinforced through separate educative and support sessions with the parents. Many parents also require referral to other services for specialist support, such as therapeutic counselling or play therapy. I frequently will take the parent grocery shopping to assess their purchasing decisions and assist them in making budget-conscious shopping choices and to plan healthy meals. I may also help them to cook some nutritious meals and plan children's school lunches and snacks, as many families lack the basic skills of household management.
19. The parent I am currently working with is isolated from the community because she has a serious and chronic personality disorder; a history of drug and alcohol abuse; she was sexually and physically abused as a child; she has been suicidal and has a long history of serious self-harming. She is also a victim of domestic violence. Child protection services have been involved with her family for more 15 years. She receives support from more than six services – making working across the service system an undertaking in itself. She has four children, all who have witnessed violence and experienced trauma. Her story is fairly typical of the client group.
20. Parenting support requires expertise on a range of issues including childhood trauma and attachment problems; mental illness; psycho-therapeutic theories and modalities; child development; social behavioural problems and intervention programs; community engagement; drug and alcohol problems; homelessness; family violence; grief and loss; diseases and illness and disability.
21. I work across the eastern area of Melbourne, so I frequently drive an hour to visit the client, often in a remote and isolated area.
22. A typical day's work may start at 7am, when I will pick up a work vehicle and drive to a client's home. I will assist the family with their morning routine and getting the children to school. I may then return home with the parent to reflect on the morning's parenting issues, help them to develop strategies to better manage the morning (there may have been an incident, the children were fighting; would not cooperate; there may have been no food for breakfast; the parent was not cooperative. I will then return to the office and write up the case notes; research the issues; make follow up phone calls to update DHS or other workers on events that occurred; and prepare resources/programs for the next visit. I also will record all of my tasks on two databases, one for DHS and one for Connections. I may return to the family home in the afternoon, to assist the parent in the evening routine, or take the family to a referral appointment. Although I am paid for 7.6 hours per day, I frequently work

back to complete my tasks. I am able to claim time-in-lieu but only if authorised for an after-hours client visit. Staying back to complete tasks and do a 'good job' is not authorised overtime.

23. The family home is my workplace. This has its own pressures; the parent or child may at times be very anxious, stressed and/or uncooperative. We have a clear remit about not working with families who are violent or threatening and we have a mobile phone system to call for support if placed in a difficult or threatening situation. Fortunately this does not happen often. However the day-to-day work does involve working in homes that are often filthy, and where the client may smoke. We may observe and have to manage poor and distressing parenting practices. I never use a client's toilet and always bring my own water.
24. It is part of my role to report child-at-risk concerns. This may result in the children being removed from the home. I am required to communicate these concerns and the likely outcome to the parent. This is always very distressing and often results in abuse.
25. I have supervision on a fortnightly basis (although this is not always regular). Our team also has external team supervision provided by a psychologist on a monthly basis. This professional clinical team supervision includes review of current literature, case presentations and reviews by the team; sessions of specialist issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder or autism; review of practice knowledge and skills such as cumulative trauma; engagement and relationship-building techniques.
26. My work is contracted from the DHS, so in effect they are the client. We develop a three-way contractual relationship between our service, DHS and the client. Given that the client usually has current Children's Court orders [that require them to accept support from services such as Connections], the client is ostensibly involuntary. It is my role to make these issues in the relationship transparent and to work with the client to develop a relationship in which they feel empowered and have something to gain from the process. This is not easy, given that most clients have a long and acrimonious relationship with child protection services. It is not helped by the constraints of service outcomes and the frequent systemic failures of an over-worked and under-funded DHS child protection system. I work with clients who usually have children's court orders and conditions as a part of either a family preservation program or reunification program. These families often feel they have no choice but to participate in our program, if they are going to keep their children at home or have them returned to their care. Many of the families have recently been through court actions and feel angry with the system. Many families have experienced a recent family crisis, such as homelessness, illness, death of a family member, or loss of income. They often feel judged by society as failing to care for their children and believe that DHS have made their situation worse, not understanding the depth of the problems they are experiencing. Within this charged situation, it is my role to engage with client and work with them to take some control of the program for their family's benefit. As a skilled and experienced worker, I am able to develop an honest supportive relationship, offering the family the opportunity to work through some of these issues and to appreciate the concerns from their children's perspective. I work carefully and sensitively with parents to help them better understand their relationship with DHS, to appreciate DHS's role within the constraints a legislative framework.

27. Most of the clients are isolated, many with poor literacy and a history of poor relationships and trust of services. Within an eight-week program, we work intensively to build a working relationship, so the family is able to take full advantage of the support and services offered. It is important to support the family through the closure process. After the intensive support, the families usually do not want the program to end - for many parents this has been their only experience of a close, supportive relationship. We then work to refer them to other services and assist them towards making the program separation.
28. Some of the issues where clients have requested support are listed as follows:
- (i) How do I tell my children about my mental illness and all the scars from where I cut myself?
  - (ii) Can I teach my daughter protective behaviours? I am worried about her relationships with boys?
  - (iii) Will you tell me how to talk to my daughter about menstruating?
  - (iv) How can I learn to read, so I can read to my children?
  - (v) How will I tell my daughter I have breast cancer again?
  - (vi) How do I tell my daughter I adopted her sister out?
  - (vii) I told her 'fuck off', what can I do now?
  - (viii) I have to physically restrain my son from hurting the other one – how do I do that?
  - (ix) For the children, I have to stop being abusive to my ex-wife, where do I start?
  - (x) How can I tell my daughter that I am too sick to look after her?
  - (xi) How can I explain why I was such a bad parent?
  - (xii) How can I make my daughter tough enough, she has to be able to handle the fact that her mother committed suicide?
29. At times my job is very stressful. However, I am a trained professional and this is the work I do. Because of my experience and qualifications, I am able to understand the underlying issues at play and to ensure I work within the required OH&S procedures and manage my stress. I participate in an active exercise program. This is a must. Evidence has demonstrated that physical exercise is the best remedy for a stressful job. My workplace does provide me with a good structure and procedures to combat injury and burn-out. However, in a job like this, exercise programs should be subsidised. I know supervision is not always provided to case workers in some workplaces. I am a strong advocate of regular supervision. In my view, the low award wages and conditions (including lack of paid maternity leave, OH&S improvement and portable long-service leave) are the big problems.
30. During the 25 years I have worked in the sector, there have been significant changes:
- (i) The professionalism of workers has increased substantially. Workers are more educated and they have increased skills. The programs and strategies we provide are complex and evidence-based.
  - (ii) The needs and concerns for clients are more complex. As our society has advanced, we have left behind a group of disadvantaged people, who are developing generational concerns. Current social-science research refers to these groups of disadvantaged people as being a part of toxic communities, where concerns, flowing

from chronic unemployment, crime, mental illness, child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, poor literacy and education are reproduced in ghettos of state dependency and social and economic isolation. This means that the same complex problems are being reproduced in each new generation.

(iii) The level of responsibility has increased significantly. All of the clients I work with have serious child-protection concerns. The decisions and actions I take will have a serious and ongoing impact on the lives of these children and their families.

(iv) Risk-minimising administration practices have become an essential and ever growing part of the work. Practices to minimise risk of injury to workers and the client have significantly changed the work in the past 10 years. Our work roles are now clearly delineated, with delegations to ensure management operational control through requirements to document, assess and report all aspects of the work. Administration support services have also disappeared; so much of this work has been loaded on to the role of the welfare worker. While this work is clearly an important and essential obligation to safe practice, regular professional review is required to ensure my duty of care to the client and my ethical standards of social justice are not minimised through these risk-management processes. This is highly skilled professional responsibility.

(v) Many older workers have left the sector, moving into higher-paid government positions. Most of the community workers I know are under 35 years of age.

(vi) The service system is also more complex, requiring specific expertise – inter-agency case management and leadership. This adds another layer to the casework.

(vii) The reporting standards are much higher and requirements much more arduous.

31. I have been undertaking further studies external to my employment for the past four years, and two years prior to that. This study is directly related to my work, ensuring my practice is current and well researched. I find the study helps me to manage the stress of the work. Through my study, I participate in tutorials – these are helpful for my work.
32. I am required to know about current child protection legislation as well as policy changes, reform and new research at the International, Federal and State level. I subscribe to several journals and memberships [including Australian Association of Social Workers membership; AASW Journal of Social Work; Australian (Oz) Child; NSW Association of Child Welfare Services] which I read in my own time.
33. Specialist training is a requirement of the position. I plan to undertake further specialist training once I have completed my social work degree. My colleagues have specialist qualifications in child play therapy; family therapy and child forensic psychology.

### **Training in my current employment**

34. My previous employer paid \$1000 per year (for 2 years) towards my university HECS fees. This was provided as an above-award entitlement to match the local government award of my colleagues. I was also given a week off for study per year. I asked my current employer to provide some study leave or assistance for my university degree. Their response has been that as I was undertaking the course prior to my recruitment they would not consider any assistance.
35. Connections provide a bi-monthly program of training. They provide a training program that is coordinated by the Psychologists' team. A program of service development sessions is also provided by the family service network. These activities are usually one-day or half-day in-service activities.
36. A two-week orientation program was provided when I started work. A two week program, Beginning Practice is also provided for new practitioners.
37. This year, Connections has agreed to allow me to undertake my second social work practicum at the workplace. It is the 'practice' practicum and I am required as part of my social work degree to undertake 480 hours work in my own time. This work shall be undertaken in the evenings, as additional hours over the next nine months.
38. I undertook my first practicum with Hawkesbury City Council, for a similar length of time. I prepared a research report on a crime prevention strategy for the Hawkesbury. Again this was undertaken in my own time.
39. My qualifications have made a substantial difference to the skills and level of professionalism of my work. I now have a strong theoretical overview of the context of the work, including knowledge of the history, legal, ethical and social policy directions of child protection. I am able to apply practice theories and frameworks to assessment and interventions in my work, such as strength-based, structural, systemic, psycho-dynamic and child development. I have a clear appreciation of the ethical framework of my role as a social worker.

### **Income Issues**

40. I worked four day a week for several years at Hawkesbury City Council, because of funding limitations. I was able to secure an additional day but that was only on a casual basis and it frequently was not allowable within the funding constraints. There was always too much work, but never enough money.
41. All of my positions have been subject to ongoing funding – that is the condition of my employment. In my previous job, several staff were made redundant due to loss of funding.
42. This insecurity is a stressful issue. All of my positions have been subject to annual recurrent funding. So every year it is possible the job may end. This has affected my financial circumstances and in particular on my ability to secure personal loans.
43. I work side-by-side with DHS Child Protection Workers. All of my cases are referred by protective workers from DHS. I communicate with DHS workers on a daily basis,

attend protective planning meetings and contribute to case plan decisions. I provide reports to inform their decision-making for court recommendations. Given we are supporting the same clients; my work is a part of the shared responsibilities to intervene to ensure the safety of children and young people. Many of my colleagues and indeed I, have come from the government sector. Their remuneration is about \$15,000 more than my wage. Two of colleagues are ex-protective workers and they have said that their remuneration was about \$15k more working for DHS. They also said the DHS pay scale had many more steps to advance and there are also lots more opportunities for career advancement, as senior practitioners, specialists and team leaders.

44. I have previously been employed in the government sector where I worked for three years as a child protection case worker with the Department of Community Services in NSW. This salary was considerably higher than my current wage. Unfortunately I was forced to leave because the position moved to shift work.
45. I regularly think about leaving this sector. I will leave as soon as complete my degree. It is not that I want to leave; I am committed to the community sector. I just cannot sustain a living on the low wage.
46. Below is a copy of an advertisement for a child protection position with DHS which I looked at recently. The wage is quite low for the level of expertise, however in terms of comparability with the social and community services industry, the SACS Award is lower.

Child protection practitioners are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Child Protection offers opportunities to specialise in a range of areas - working with infants, adolescents, indigenous children and families, as well as culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

As a member of our valued workforce you will have access to:

- comprehensive resources
- professional training
- support and supervision
- career development opportunities

### ***Job description***

You will be part of a team of practitioners, supported by a team leader and other senior experienced staff to:

- provide advice and consultation to people who report concerns about children and young people
- assess children and families where it is believed a child is at risk of significant harm
- engage and work with children and families to promote safety, stability and development of the child, and to strengthen family capacity

### ***Qualifications***

The preferred qualifications for working in child protection are:

- a Bachelor of Social Work
- a Diploma of Community Welfare Work
- a similar welfare-related tertiary qualifications which:
  - 
  - is at least diploma level or higher
  - is at minimum a two-year full-time course
  - included at least one applied unit of study in case management, case work practice and counselling
  - Included a supervised practical work placement.

### **Salary**

Salary range for an entry level child protection worker (CPW2) starting at \$47,037 - \$57,755.

More senior roles (CPW3-CPW6) starting at \$59,400 - \$119,995.

47. The impact of the downgrading of the Social and Community Services Industry is a social justice issue. The lower wages reflect the low regard the government and the community place on the work we do and the families, young people and children we serve.
48. Governments have outsourced large slabs of community and social services simply because it is cheaper. As a result, the service sector has had to play catch-up with the rapid growth of the sector in order to develop systems to ensure risk management and governance. This has caused many smaller services to be swallowed up by large charities. I have seen this both in NSW and during my work in the past year in Victoria. Smaller services are often not able to compete with larger charities as they cannot provide the service infrastructure, particularly in a climate of competitive tendering and when services are brokered by the government without ongoing financial security.
49. Many services have to reduce the hours of staff, due to fixed grants that do not keep up with wage increases. It has had the widespread and chronic effect of de-skilling the industry of experienced staff. Many organisations are forced to employ inexperienced staff as they are not funded to employ staff with experience. As a consequence staff turnover is high. Many of my colleagues work only four days per week, although they would like to work full-time. I have witnessed some workers have their hours reduced as a result of their wage increasing through continuous employment, these workers have then been forced to leave in order to secure their wage.
50. Women leave because there is no access to paid maternity leave. Only yesterday, a colleague said to me that she was planning a family and would have to return to the government sector in order to secure paid maternity leave.

### **Conditions of employment**

50. I have never received long service leave, despite having worked in my last job for six years. There is no portability of long service leave in the SACS sector.

51. I am one step below the top of my grading. I will reach that step in June, this year (2010). There is no possibility of progression from there.
52. I frequently work through meal breaks and I am never paid for this. If you are in a family's home, you cannot have a meal break.
53. There is no possibility of paid overtime if I work additional hours. Because I work with clients for eight-week blocks, it is preferred that time off is taken outside of these blocks. Time off must be negotiated within this context.
54. Salary packaging is offered in my workplace, and I package the maximum amount in order to increase my salary. I resent salary packaging, as I see it as poor second to receiving equitable remuneration for the work I do. Salary packaging is about charity, I am not a charity. I am a skilled worker, I would like to earn a good wage and pay the appropriate tax for my wage band, like other comparable skilled professionals.
55. My accrued superannuation is approximately \$60,000. I worked part-time for some of my working life, while my children were young. However, this is still not much for someone who has worked continuously for 25 years.
56. If this pay equity case is successful, I will remain in the sector. Otherwise, I will leave and return to the government sector.

\_\_\_\_\_ [witness signature] \_\_\_\_\_

[Print name]

Date:

## Attachment A



June 2009 – current

**Caseworker, Families First, Connections, Uniting Care.** The Families First program provides an intensive outreach service to families involved with Child Protection and who require assistance to preserve their family or to reunify following the out of home placements of their children.

Responsibilities include the development of an approach to the understanding of a family's functioning; provision of short term, intensive in home interventions to provide parenting support and education to preserve families at risk of having their children placed in alternative care or to support families with the reunification of their children from out of home care; detailed report writing; participation in a multi disciplinary team approach to the work and effective liaison with Child Protection, other agencies and professionals to achieve case plan goals

January 2007 — June 2009

**Branch Manager, Community and Youth, Peppercorn Services Inc (PS Inc).** PS Inc is a social enterprise unit of Hawkesbury City Council. In 2007, HCC transferred its family, community, aged, transport, children's and youth services to PS Inc, to form a separately constituted body with Council representatives providing governance and executive support to the organisation. In 2008, HCC won the Federal Government's National Award for Innovation in Regional Development for Peppercorns Services Inc: A model for social entrepreneurship in local government. *(Note: PS Inc website is currently under reconstruction)*

Duties include:

- Operational Management of four funded community development and youth projects, including staff management and development, project reporting and delivery of service and community outcomes. Programs include:
  - Hawkesbury Community Hub
  - Forgotten Valley Community & Youth Development Project
  - Hawkesbury Youth Transport Options
  - W Y S H - Working to Strengthen Youth Services Development Project
- Leadership role in strategic planning process for Peppercorn Services Inc, including development and implementation of five year strategic and operational plan.

- Leadership role in community planning and engagement initiatives for PS Inc including development of strategic partnerships with local community and youth service providers. Established W Y S H (working to Strengthen Youth Services in Hawkesbury) Coalition – good practice capacity building project recently funded by the Department of Community Services.
- Leadership role in service re-branding and redevelopment of PS Inc Website and Intranet.
- Service commissioning and capacity building, including scoping of new projects, submission writing and project implementation.
- Community event and engagement activities including International Women’s Day, Harmony Day, NAIDOC Week, Refugee Week and Youth Week.
- Crime prevention planning and implementation.

## Employment history

### November 2002 —January 2007:

- **Manager – Early Intervention Family Centre, The Family Co-op.** The Family Co-op was established 2002 as in a unit of Hawkesbury City Council, it is now a Branch of Peppercorn Services Inc. The Family Co-op provides early intervention parenting and case management services to vulnerable families with children aged 0 – 18 years. It operated with a combined budget of more than \$350,000, employing seven permanent staff. It now has a budget of more than half a million dollars.

#### Duties included:

- Established this new service including all client management procedures, policies, referral service agreements and case management processes.
- Management of client early intervention services including assessment, referral, program and case management services.
- Intake and allocation, family assessments, case planning and coordination, home visiting, family conferences, referral, evaluations, report writing, file and case reviews and closures.
- Team management, including recruitment, staff development, supervision and appraisal.
- Key role in establishing Right Connections Early Intervention Coalition – best practice capacity building project to improve EI health and welfare services for families with children aged 0-8years in the Hawkesbury.

### 1999 - 2002

Child & Adolescent Caseworker, NSW Department of Community Services, Penrith Community Service Centre (child protection and foster care) and Parramatta (DoCS Helpline)

### 1998 – 1999

Senior Family Worker & Acting Manager, Swinson Cottage Family Centre, Blacktown, a child protection family centre – casework, coordinated supported playgroup and parenting programs, worked in partnership with DoCS to develop and implement family restoration programs.

- 1992 – 1998** Family Worker & Acting Coordinator/ Team Leader, Richmond Neighbourhood Centre.
- 1985 – 1991** Project Worker, Western Sydney Drug and Alcohol Resource Unit, St Marys.

### **Academic qualifications**

**2007 – Present Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)**, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga NSW. (Graduate entry), theory and practice 1; theory and practice 2; Research methods; Social Policy 3; Practicum Field Placement 1, theory and practice 3; theory and practice 4 (currently in final year)

**2001 Master of Child and Adolescent Welfare**, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga NSW. Child & Adolescent psychology; Child and Adolescent Welfare: Philosophy and Politics; Legal Issues in Child and Adolescent Welfare; Child Protection 1; Child and Adolescent Welfare in Aboriginal Society; Evaluation in Child and Adolescent Protection; Substitute Care.

**1999 Graduate Diploma in Social Ecology**, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury NSW. Research Project - A ten year history of The Women's Cottage – women's information and referral Service, Richmond.

**1984 External Stud Unit, Alcohol and other Drugs**, Macarthur Institute of Higher Education, Milperra, NSW

**1982 Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts – Photography and Philosophy)**, Sydney College of the Arts, Balmain, NSW.

### **Papers & Publications**



## Attachment B

	<b>Position Description</b>	
	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Case Worker</b>
<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Eastern Family Services</b>	
<b>Program:</b>	<b>Families First</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>12 March 2009</b>	
<b>Award:</b>	<b>SACS Class 3</b>	
<b>Employment status:</b>	<b>Full Time - Permanent</b>	

### **Organisation**

Connections is a community welfare agency of the Uniting Church and UnitingCare Network in Australia supporting people in need and empowering them to live more fulfilling lives as valued members of the community. Connections provides services that respond to the needs of children, young people, families, couples and individuals throughout Melbourne's *Eastern and Southern* suburbs. In undertaking this work, we prioritise the rights of children and young people for protection against all forms of harm, abuse and exploitation.

### **Purpose of the Position**

#### **Program Information and Background**

Connections has undertaken an extensive redevelopment of its Families First program. Based on the Home Builders model, this program provides an intensive outreach service to families involved with Child Protection and who require assistance to preserve their family or to reunify following the out of home placements of their children.

Based at Mt Waverley this multidisciplinary team consists of 3 full time staff, 2 part time staff and a part time Psychologist. The program also includes the use of the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale as well as a network of consultants who can inform interventions with families.

#### **Position**

The key objectives of this position are the provision of a high quality service to meet the needs of clients within the context of a multidisciplinary team approach to the development of holistic assessments and intervention plans.

#### **This will be achieved by:**

- Development of an holistic intervention program for families based on a multi disciplinary approach to the understanding of a family's functioning
- Provision of short term, intensive, in home interventions to provide parenting support and education to preserve families at risk of having their children placed in alternative care

- Provision of short term, intensive, in home interventions to provide parenting education and support to families where there is a case plan for reunification with children currently placed out of their care
- Participation in a multi disciplinary team approach to the work
- Effective liaison with Child Protection, other agencies and professionals to achieve case plan goals

### *Key Relationships*

- Team Leader
- Program Manager
- Team Members
- Relevant CSO networks
- Department of Human Services
- Network of private consultants

### *Accountabilities & Responsibilities*

#### **The Case Worker is accountable and responsible for the following**

- Provision of an intensive outreach service to families
- Participation in a multi disciplinary team and contributing to the ongoing development of the team approach
- Undertaking assessments utilising the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale
- Development and implementation of a skills development plan for families based on the multi disciplinary assessment of their skills and knowledge to assist them in preserving or reunifying their family
- Development of interventions for the family that are tailored to the family's current level of skill, concerns outlined by Child Protection and that take into account their individual learning styles and capacity to make changes
- Providing analysis of the child's safety and wellbeing in the care of their family including an analysis of family functioning, capacity to parent and to make and maintain changes
- Engaging with families who are referred from Child Protection
- Provision of a range of written reports to the Department of Human Services (Child Protection) and to the Courts as required
- Review of work undertaken with families and the celebration of change
- Working respectfully with families with reference to social, political, familial, and cultural restraints that impact on their parenting and family life
- Liaison with other service providers and consultants and working collaboratively with the broader child and family care sector
- Undertaking administrative and data collection responsibilities
- Participation in meetings relating to the management and development of the Families First program
- Provision of support to other team members and contribution to the multi disciplinary approach of the team
- To be accountable through supervision with a Team Leader
- To work flexible hours
- To adhere to the organization's mission, vision and values

- To adhere to the organization's policies
- To be part of the on call telephone support roster
- To undertake other duties as requested by the Team Leader, Program Manager, or Director

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

- Attendance at professional development programs, seminars and workshops to enhance knowledge, expertise and networking
- Ensuring knowledge and skills are continuously updated
- Sharing newly acquired knowledge with colleagues.

## ***Key Selection Criteria***

### ***Knowledge/Experience/Qualifications***

- A relevant tertiary qualification such as Social Work, Psychology or equivalent.
- Background in provision of Mental Health, Family Violence or Drug and Alcohol services
- Sound knowledge of Child Youth and Families Act 2005 and the Best Interest Principles
- Experience and ability to engage families and to successfully provide outreach services
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of a range of theoretical approaches relevant to working families and children.
- Demonstrated experience in risk assessment of children and adolescents
- Experience in working with families
- Sound knowledge of Family Services and/or Child Protection
- Current Working with Children and Police Checks
- Current driver's license

### ***Technical Competencies (skills)***

- Capacity to liaise appropriately with consultants and other professionals
- Demonstrated capacity to work in a multi disciplinary team
- Ability to undertake a multi disciplinary assessment in relation to the functioning of families
- Capacity to plan and implement appropriate interventions in relation to the development of parenting capacity and family functioning
- Demonstrated ability to complete case notes and reports in a professional manner
- Highly developed report writing skills
- Demonstrated analytical skills
- Excellent time management skills
- Creative and innovative approach to problem solving

### ***Personal Attributes***

- Self-confident, focused and clear about purpose and able to set appropriate personal boundaries

- Professional and confident in dealings with others
- Strong sense of ethics, morals and respect for others
- Strong interest in people
- Achievement, results and outcome oriented
- Open honest and flexible approach to communication
- Able to actively listen and suspend judgment
- Self-motivated, able to understand requirements quickly and work autonomously
- Demonstrates team behaviours striving for co-operative and professional relationships
- Ability to admit mistakes, as an opportunity for reflection, learning and development
- Demonstrates high levels of self-awareness including interpersonal strengths and areas for development

The position is located at Connections Office at Mt Waverley but service is provided in families homes across the Eastern Metropolitan Region.

This position description will be reviewed in 12 months and thereafter on an annual basis by Connections management and Human Resources.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Healy, K & Lonne, B. (2008) *The Social work & human services workforce: Report from a National Study of Education, Training and Workforce Needs*. Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Queensland University and Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, pp 50-56;
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- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.
- <sup>8</sup> *QSU v QCCI and Others* [2009] QIR Comm 33; 191 QGIG 19 (6 May 2009) p.20.
- <sup>9</sup> 80 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that Government funding covers the true cost of delivering contracted services, ACOSS, *op. cit.*, p.6; Productivity Commission 2010, *Contribution of the Not-For-Profit Sector*, Research Report, p, 283-7.
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- <sup>11</sup> Productivity Commission, *op cit.*
- <sup>12</sup> Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) 2009, *Australian Community Sector Survey Report 2009, ACOSS Paper 157*, ACOSS, Canberra, p.56
- <sup>13</sup> The Allen Consulting Group 2008, *How many wheelchairs can you push at once? – Productivity in the community sector organisation sector in Victoria: Report to Victorian Council of Social Services*, The Allen Consulting Group, Melbourne, p.9.
- <sup>14</sup> Victorian Council of Social Service 2008, *Occupational Health and Safety Education in the Victorian Community sector 2008*, VCOSS, Melbourne, p. 20.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33
- <sup>16</sup> Allen Consulting, *op cit.*, p.10
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9
- <sup>18</sup> ACOSS, *op. cit.*, p.54
- <sup>19</sup> The Allen Consulting Group 2008, *op.cit.*, p.8
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid*
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- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>24</sup> Productivity Commission, *op. cit.*, p.xxv
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xxxii
- <sup>26</sup> Australian Services Union 2009, *Submission in response to the Victorian Government 2020 Homeless strategy discussion paper*, ASU, Melbourne, unpublished, p.6
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- <sup>31</sup> Victorian Government 2008, *The Victorian Government's Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations 2008*, DVC, Melbourne, p. 8.
- <sup>32</sup> ACOSS, *op. cit.*, p.2
- <sup>33</sup> The Allen Consulting Group, *op.cit.*, p.14.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>43</sup> KPMG, op. cit., p.46.
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- <sup>46</sup> Victorian Liberal Nationals (2010), *The Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Plan for Community Services*, Authorised by Tony Nutt, 104 Exhibition St, Melbourne VIC, p 5
- <sup>47</sup> <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/publications/community-services-sector-portable-long-service-leave-scheme>
- <sup>48</sup> Productivity Commission, op cit., p.1viii
- <sup>49</sup> Healy and Lonne, op. cit., p.8
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.51
- <sup>51</sup> Losses of Award conditions are as follows: The previous *Social and Community Services – Victoria – Award 2000* provided for sick leave as follows: 12 days in the first year of services, 14 days in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of services, and 21 days for 5 years services and over. The Modern Award provides for personal leave at a rate of 10 days per annum. The previous Award provided for up to 5 hours per week to attend agreed training and professional development without loss of pay, including tertiary courses relevant to the community services professions and any skill requirements set out in the award. The Modern Award has no such entitlement.