

# Position Description

<b>Position title</b>	Family Preservation and Reunification (FPR) Early Years Practitioner
<b>Document ID</b>	
<b>Program/Unit</b>	Family Preservation and Reunification Response
<b>Term</b>	Full time fixed term until August 2021 with view to extension
<b>Classification</b>	SCHADS Level 5
<b>Position reports to</b>	FPR Practice Team Leader

## Organisational context

On 1 July 1997, MacKillop Family Services was formed as a new organisation by re-founding seven agencies operated by the Sisters of Mercy, the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart in Victoria. However, our legacy and inspiration is much older. From the 1850s, these three congregations, respectively founded by Catherine McAuley, Edmund Rice and Mary MacKillop, worked in Victoria to establish homes for children who were orphaned, destitute or neglected, and for families who were in need of care and support. Throughout the years, the original model of institutional care evolved into different forms of residential care, foster care, education, family support and disability services.

The purpose and character of MacKillop Family Services as a Catholic organisation, continues to draw from the lives, works and inspiration of the three founders who provide a living model for the way our staff and volunteers approach their work. Woven through this ethos is the acknowledgement and recognition of the inherent Aboriginal spirituality of this country and respect for the cultures that have lived here for thousands of generations.

Today, we continue this work within the framework of Catholic social teaching and in the spirit of the Gospel - one of radical inclusion, restoration and accompaniment. MacKillop Family Services is now a national organisation and a leading provider of services for children, young people and families across Victoria, New South Wales, ACT, Western Australia and to other organisations in every state and beyond. We offer services and programs in family support, foster care, residential care, disability services, youth support, education and training, parenting, family therapy, mental health, family violence, early childhood, and support to women and men who, as children, were in the care of our founding agencies.

At MacKillop we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders - past, present and emerging - and acknowledge the importance of their stories, history and wisdom. They hold the memories, traditions, cultures, hopes and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are strongly committed to the ongoing work of Aboriginal self-determination, reconciliation, and cultural safety for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, staff and stakeholders.

MacKillop has almost 1,500 staff, operating out of more than 50 sites, and has forecast annual revenue for the 2020/21 financial year of over \$150 million.

## Our purpose

MacKillop Family Services continues our founders' passionate commitment to social justice - to work for the rights of children, young people and families to be safe, to learn, feel nurtured and connected to culture. We provide high quality services to promote healing from trauma and loss, and to enable hopeful futures.

MacKillop Family Services will care compassionately, respond large-heartedly and advocate courageously.

## Our vision

Children, young people and families are welcomed and supported by MacKillop to be empowered and thrive.

## Our values

We commit to the following five foundational values which we continue to embed in the culture of our organisation and practice:

**JUSTICE.** We believe in the right of all people to experience respect and to have access to quality services irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, marital status, disability, sexuality or age. We advocate for inclusiveness and social justice in the wider community and commit to these principles across our organisation and all services we provide. ***We believe in the right of all people to be treated justly and fairly.***

**HOPE.** We commit to creating positive and hopeful relationships where people find meaning in their experiences and relationships and are able to learn, explore their strengths and create possibilities for growth and change. ***We seek to foster hope that assists people to find meaning.***

**COLLABORATION.** In our work with individuals, families and other organisations and groups, we commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination, partnership and empowerment. ***We commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination, partnership and empowerment.***

**COMPASSION.** Compassion is an attitude of the heart, an expression of our shared humanity and a deep desire to alleviate another's suffering. We commit to creating an attitude of openness to others and to their circumstances. ***We seek to foster compassion, an attitude of the heart and a response to exclusion and suffering.***

**RESPECT.** We value ourselves and other people, the earth and all creation. We seek to listen and learn from each other and build relationships with respect, being proud of what we hold in common and with understanding and tolerance of our differences. ***We seek to act with respect with regard to each other, the earth and all creation.***

## Our Sanctuary Commitment

Our values are brought to life through our commitment to the Sanctuary Model. Sanctuary is an evidence-supported, whole-of-organisation framework that guides how we practice as an agency. Sanctuary enables a shared language, knowledge, and response to the impact of trauma and loss on all of us.

Our seven Sanctuary Commitments are as follows:

- Non-Violence - Mean what you say and don't be mean when you say it
- Emotional Intelligence - Look out for yours and other people's feelings
- Social Learning - We all learn from, and teach each other
- Democracy - Everyone is heard
- Open Communication - Be honest and share information
- Social Responsibility - We all help each other ... It takes a village to raise a child
- Growth and Change - Open to new ideas and ways of thinking

## Position purpose

The Victorian Family Preservation and Reunification Response (the Response), has been funded as a pilot by the Department of Health and Human Services. It was co-designed with representatives from the child and family services sector to be implemented in 2020-21 by Victorian registered children and family service providers.

This Response includes an initial intensive intervention phase, delivered through a mobile and integrated approach, followed by a sustained service support phase, aimed at preventing at-risk children entering or re-entering care. The Response will link to, align with, and build on (and not duplicate) existing child and family services within the broader service system, providing an enhanced continuum of care across the state. It will be evaluated and continuously developed to enhance the Family Preservation and Reunification (FPR) evidence-base for Victorian child and family services (including Child Protection).

The model is an integrated and evidence-based/evidence-informed approach to supporting and problem solving with families and preventing children and young people's re/entry to out of home care. The team will work as a cohesive whole and report directly to the FPR Practice Team Leader.

## Primary objectives

This pilot will test if an intensive family preservation response linked to a clinical therapeutic service can reduce the demand for residential care services for some of the most complex children and young people in Victoria.

The FPR team will bring an innovative and wrap around service that will outreach to families with unborn and preschool children and families with young adolescents.

## Key result areas and responsibilities

The early years family work will engage parents and their babies/children in order to build their capacity as parents that provide for their children's health, safety and development as well as work towards building their self-reliance and sustainability through access to education, vocational training and employment. The program is a whole-of-family service in the form of pre-birth support, intensive and longer-term interventions and case work support until the child reaches approximately school age.

The family work will be child focussed and family-centred aligning coherently with the Best Interests Case Practice Model. The team will deliver services in the family's home with FPR Practitioners being with the family several times per week. The families will be able to access MacKillop's Afterhours service, seven days a week should a crisis arise, giving advice on the phone and if required supporting contact into the home.

The Early Years Practitioner has a case load of 5-6 families and services will be delivered in the home and community as needed for 4 to 6 months by practitioners. However, we expect that the early parenting intervention may benefit from more extended engagement before being referred to other services if needed. Areas of clinical focus include risk assessment and safety planning and practitioners will strive to empower caregivers to help their children live safely in the community. Practitioners will work with the ecology of the family and school, sporting clubs and local businesses will be engaged as the individual needs and strengths of the family are identified.

The Early Years Practitioner will engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in a culturally safe and competent way. This includes engaging in regular consultation with the program's Cultural Advisor and including ongoing training.

## Key result areas and responsibilities

The Early Years Practitioner will:

- Provide high-quality intensive, flexible and responsive early parenting support suited to client needs, including role modelling, outreach, groups and centre-based interventions.
- Actively participate as part of a multi-disciplinary team to meet the various complex needs of the families in order to achieve their goals.
- Work in close collaboration with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), placement services and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- Provide emotional and practical support and guidance to young pregnant women and young mothers experiencing difficulties in relation to parenting and providing for the health, safety and well-being of their babies and children.
- Ensure the implementation of the case plans for client is being followed in consultation with the Early Years Practice Leader and other staff as appropriate.
- Ensure the rights of the young women and their babies are always protected.
- Conduct child and family needs and risk assessments with young parents, their families, and the multi-disciplinary team on an ongoing basis.
- Provide information and assistance in building confidence of the parents to access a range of services and support their development towards independence.
- Support therapeutic intervention to young parents in supporting their healing from possible traumatic experiences that may be impacting on their parenting.
- Other duties as required.

## Key selection criteria

Bachelors degree in Psychology, Social Work, Counselling or a related subject area. Tertiary qualifications with extensive experience in family work will be considered.

### Preferred Experience:

- Work experience in a relevant field which supports an understanding of key child development issues relating to young parents and their families who have complex needs.
- Demonstrated ability to undertake complex casework with families and children who have experienced trauma.
- Demonstrated capacity to develop collaborative relationships across professional and organisational boundaries, as well as knowledge of relevant Community Service Organizations, local and State Government (DHHS) and the ability to network with these services.

### **Preferred Knowledge:**

- Child development research and its application in treatment
- Direct use of pragmatic (i.e., systems, strategic and functional) family therapies
- Needs, risk and social skills assessment and intervention
- Preferred sound knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal history, values, the stolen generation, practices and culture
- Have an awareness and knowledge of attachment and trauma theories related to Aboriginal children, young people and families; Demonstrated ability to use this knowledge to guide practice with Aboriginal children, young people and families
- Knowledge of Aboriginal cultures and a commitment to their social, economic and cultural development
- Demonstrated understanding of cultural safety

### **Required Personal Skills:**

- Well-developed interpersonal and communication skills, with a demonstrated capacity to work collaboratively with others and exercise influence in a diversity of contexts.
- Excellent time management skills with the ability to meet deadlines, targets and key deliverables of the program.
- An ability to work flexible hours when required including some evenings and weekends.

### **Other information**

The incumbent is required to:

- Sign and actively abide by MacKillop's Code of Conduct.
- Observe and actively support MacKillop's P.8 People and Workplace Policy.
- Observe and fulfil health and safety responsibilities as contained within 'WHS-P-001 Responsibility Statements' document.
- Attend mandatory and other training as required.
- Actively participate in MacKillop's Bid Management process as required.
- Participate in and promote continuous quality improvement processes.
- Promote an environment that is culturally safe and strengths focussed.
- Abide by principles and commitments of the Sanctuary Framework.
- Incorporate cultural safety into your practice with Aboriginal families.

The incumbent must possess a:

- Valid and current Victorian Driver's Licence.
- Valid and current Victorian Working with Children Card.
- Satisfactory criminal history check conducted by MacKillop Family Services.

## Approval

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<b>Approver's full name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Approver's position title:</b>			
<b>Incumbent's full name:</b>			
<b>Incumbent's signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	



*MacKillop Family Services acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge all Aboriginal children, young people, families and staff who are a part of MacKillop Family Services.*