

Parents Next Newsletter



Djerriwarrh
Community & Education Services

Main Office: 239 Station Road, Melton
Contact: 03 8746 1000
Website: www.djerriwarrh.org.au
Email: ParentsNext@djerriwarrh.org

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“Without ParentsNext I would not have been active in looking at courses, it made me follow up things and get things done”

Amy (not her real name)- ParentsNext Participant

When Amy was first referred to Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services ParentsNext program she was not feeling excited at the prospect of attending regular appointments with possibly little help to her. Amy was also concerned that her parenting payments may be affected because of mutual obligation requirements that may not take into account her individual personal circumstances.

At the time of joining our ParentsNext program, Amy was already working part-time at a local retail clothing store and was caring for two young children with complex medical needs. Amy was also in a difficult family relationship which led to domestic violence. At the time, Amy had little support from her parents due to their own health barriers.

After Amy's first appointment with her ParentsNext consultant, she felt good about being on the program.

Amy's coach spent time understanding her personal situation, individual requirements, life and career goals and showed care and concern for her immediate family circumstances.

Amy and her consultant then worked on developing a tailored plan to ensure Amy received the most from the ParentsNext program. Amy said;

“I was very happy with my ParentsNext Coach, I like Djerriwarrh as a provider. I like talking with my ParentsNext coach as she was very easy to talk to”

Amy and her consultant also worked on identifying education and training opportunities that would help her achieve her long-term goal of working in the disability sector. This was a defining step for Amy towards building a career that could offer her the most financial security she and her children ever had. Amy told her consultant;

“I did not have any education goals, I had just started part time employment. I now have goals to study”

While Amy worked towards providing a stable and secure future for her family through her part-time employment, her ParentsNext consultant continued to work with her on her immediate and urgent domestic violence situation to ensure Amy was referred to specialist support agencies for ongoing assistance. Amy's consultant also provided support to Amy to help her progress towards her goals by linking her to local providers, sourcing career course information, health and disability information and local connections.

The support and assistance provided to Amy by her coach and the program, made her journey less challenging and

In This Edition

- **ParentsNext participant becomes home-owner**
- **Manager's message**

Djerriwarrh's ParentsNext site locations

- ◆ Melton
- ◆ Sunshine
- ◆ St Albans
- ◆ Werribee
- ◆ Deer Park
- ◆ Footscray
- ◆ Melton South
- ◆ Bacchus Marsh
- ◆ Taylors Hill/Hillside
- ◆ Laverton
- ◆ Watergardens (outreach)

Currently due to Covid-19 contingency arrangements, services are being delivered remotely.



ParentsNext
AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

when asked in what ways the whole support framework has helped her, Amy told us that ParentsNext worked by;

“Supporting what I am doing and supporting where I want to go”

With her immediate family challenges being addressed, Amy concentrated her efforts in managing her financial goals by sticking to a strong personal saving program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amy's strong savings discipline enabled her to save for a home loan deposit. Amy was at first unsuccessful in getting a home loan application approved but her resilience, sheer determination and commitment to providing a secure future for her kids led her to write to the bank branch manager and after further discussion, Amy was approved a home loan and just this week she settled on her new home.

Buying a home is one of the biggest achievements and under such circumstances as Amy's, many would have given up but Amy was determined to provide a better future for her family. Amy told us;

“This will give my children a home and also I will be able to help my parents as they are able to move in

with me”

Amy is now a proud home owner, enjoys her current job, is ready to upskill through education, has moved on from a rough relationship and feels confident that she has ongoing support available from the ParentsNext program.

It is a humbling and very rewarding experience for our ParentsNext team to see so many of our participants who have turned their lives around and we look forward to supporting many more parents change their lives just as Amy has done.

At the end of our interview, Amy wanted to pass on a message to all parents who are currently participating in, or are about to be referred to ParentsNext, she said;

“Do it. It's a good benefit. ParentsNext have always been courteous, easy to communicate with both my coach and Djerriwarrh Staff”

Amy is a true inspiration and example of someone who overcame her challenges by being determined and accepting our help.

We wish Amy the very best for the future.

A Message From Our ParentsNext Manager

Dear Colleagues

There has been a lot happening in Victoria's response to COVID-19 since I last wrote to you.

One of the major developments in the month of September was the Victorian Government's announcement of a separate COVID-19 Roadmap for regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne which mapped Victoria's pathway to a 'COVID Normal' for work, education and living.

It was very encouraging to see the significant progress our fellow Victorians were making towards suppressing the virus in regional Victoria and the subsequent government announcements easing restrictions regionally and fast tracking regional Victoria to Step 3 of the roadmap from 11.59AM 16th September.

Victorians living in metropolitan Melbourne have also been doing well in their battle against the virus. Although the rate of metropolitan Melbourne's progress has not been at the speed and levels reached in regional Victoria, there has, nonetheless, been gains made.

It's good to see that metropolitan Melbourne moved to Step 2 of the roadmap and the curfew was removed on 28th September. More promising is the reduction in daily new cases and importantly the downward trend of the State 14 day rolling average.

Metropolitan Melbourne's progress means that Melburnians are now set to move to Step 3 of the roadmap on 19th October, one week earlier than originally expected. We are all looking forward to the lifting of further restrictions, including reasons for leaving our homes, lifting of the 5km radius and having more businesses reopen and more workers returning back to their workplaces.

These are all very positive signs for Victoria and reward for all the hard work and effort all Victorians, across both regional and metropolitan areas, have put into fighting COVID-19.

Notwithstanding these positive steps, we must always remember that we all need to remain vigilant in our fight against COVID-19.

Moving to a 'COVID Normal' means continuing to be COVID-Safe so that we can defend and protect the gains made at each step of the roadmap and ensure we don't move backwards and go back into large scale lockdowns.

As we move through the steps in the Victorian roadmap to reopening, we will continue to work closely with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment and monitor specific Victorian government and health advice as it relates to the return of our ParentsNext staff back to their workplaces and the resumption of face-to-face services in Victoria.

We note that providers across the rest of Australia have already moved to face-to-face servicing and we look forward to joining them shortly to bring back a nationally consistent and safe approach to servicing our valued participants.

Since the national expansion in July 2018, the ParentsNext program has made a significant impact in changing the lives of parents and carers of young children.

Nationally under the ParentsNext program

Participants supported - 133,000

Participants commenced education - 56,000

Participants gained employment - 27,000

Given the national success of ParentsNext, it was pleasing to receive the announcement from Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, The Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business on 28th September that the ParentsNext program will be extended.

This is welcome news for our industry and participants as it ensures the continuity of an essential service to vulnerable parents and carers, especially during the critical phases of our challenge, response and recovery from COVID-19.

ParentsNext program will be extended for 3 years from

1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

The upcoming Jobs Australia Virtual Conference 'Conversations Shaping Tomorrow' will be a great opportunity for our industry to come together and celebrate the success and extension of the ParentsNext program as well as share conversations and insights that will help chart a path for the future of employment and

related services.

This year's Conference will be from 8th October to 5th November and will be followed up with additional virtual webinars. Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services will be co-presenting a webinar on Tuesday 10th November with Kullarri Regional Communities Indigenous Corporation on 'Enabling Innovation' to chart a path forward.

Join in on the 'Conversations Shaping Tomorrow'. We'd love to see you there.

Please book your tickets at Jobs Australia's website

www.ja.com.au

In closing, it is very pleasing to see that across all of Australia, we can finally see some light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel.

In Victoria, we remain positive and optimistic that our daily case numbers and State 14 day rolling averages will continue to trend downwards and metropolitan Melbourne will progress to Step 3 of the roadmap to reopening by mid-October. Subsequent to that, all Victorians remain hopeful of reaching a similar 'COVID Normal' as the rest of Australia as soon as practicable.

Let's all keep forging ahead and continue to show the rest of the world what Australia's gold standard in COVID-19 response and recovery looks like.

I look forward to reporting on more positive news in next month's Newsletter.

Yours sincerely,

Gengiz Soy Turk



Don't forget, *Daylight Saving starts

2.00AM, Sunday 4th October

*(ACT, NSW, SA, TAS, VIC)