

Parents Next Newsletter



Djerriwarrh
Community & Education Services

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Renee is confidently achieving her goals

Renee was a stay-at-home mother with year 9 as her highest qualification. Renee had goals but had no guidance. She had anxiety, and no social support or community connections which caused her to drop out of her education two months after starting.

When Renee was referred to Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services in



Renee with her ParentsNext coach, Jeantine

September 2018, she wasn't confident that she would get much help, she thought it was just a meeting with a provider to ensure she was doing what was required of her so she was able to keep receiving her benefits.

From the first appointment Renee felt relieved that there was support and local help available. She felt really empowered.

"After the first meeting I was excited as we talked about my goals, anxiety management and career path and best of all that the program was all about helping me"

At the initial appointment, Renee and her coach worked on a Career Choices quiz to

work out what career was best for her. That got Renee thinking about what she really wanted to do.

To overcome Renee's social anxiety, her coach referred her to a Parenting Support Group at her local library. When Renee started to feel confident, her coach began working with her on upskilling so that she could achieve her goal of being a teacher.

In June 2019 Renee started a Certificate III in Education Support with Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services and her coach was with her on her first day to support and encourage her. Renee said to her coach,

"I would not be upskilling if it wasn't for you guys"

In August 2019 Renee got work placement and since then she has worked at Exford Primary, Sunbury Specialist School and Djerriwarrh VCAL to gain a wider range of experience.

Renee's coach referred her to Reconnect to help her get her driver's license. In December 2019 Renee got her license and was over the moon.

"I can't believe I've achieved so much in such a short time. I want to now complete a Diploma in Education Support and eventually Masters"

Renee is due to complete her work placement in March 2020 and is looking forward to a fulfilling and successful career.

In This Edition

Renee is confident

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Djerriwarrh's ParentsNext site locations

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



ParentsNext
AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

1. Performance Results

Department of Education, Skills and Employment (Department) recently released the ParentsNext (six month) Interim Performance Review for Performance Period Two ending 31 December 2019 with the following national results.

116,500	Participants supported
46,000	Participants in education
23,000	Participants in employment
2,800	Participants exited for ongoing employment

The above figures are a good indication of the long term positive effect of ParentsNext on our communities and we hope to see this trend continue in the coming years.

Djerriwarrh has helped parents plan and take steps to achieve their education and employment goals by reducing their barriers through a wide range of services and connections to the community.

Djerriwarrh's services to the community were commended and acknowledged by the Department in our ranking as one of the top providers nationally.

We thank the Department and our participants for working with us to ensure our communities reach their full potential.

2. Department's Update On COVID-19 & Delivery Of ParentsNext

On 12 March 2020, the Department provided an update to all providers on COVID-19 and continued service and support arrangements for participants.

We welcome the Department's timely advice and guidance in continuing to service vulnerable participants in these challenging and tough times.

Djerriwarrh is committed to following the Department's advice to ensure ParentsNext participants are well informed on the latest COVID - 19 developments and to continuing our services in a caring, compassionate, inclusive and flexible manner.

We also welcome the Prime Minister's economic stimulus package which includes

- Prime Minister's \$2.4 billion health plan focused on preventing and treating COVID-19 in the coming weeks.
- \$17.6 billion economic plan which includes support for business investment, cash flow assistance for businesses, a stimulus payment to lower income household and assistance for severely affected regions.

3. Message To Our ParentsNext Participants

Department has provided all providers with a COVID-19 fact sheet clearly outlining the servicing requirements and participants obligations during this period.

Summary of the fact sheet is (available at all our service sites);

- If a participant contacts the provider to indicate that they are *unable to meet their requirements due to a need to self-isolate* in line with Department of Health advice, provider's staff must ensure the participant has no requirements in the near future.

- Where a participant contacts Centrelink to advise they are in isolation, a Major Personal Crisis exemption may be granted for a period of 14 days.
- If a participant contacts the provider to advise they are *unwell or may have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and may need to self-isolate*, again, it is important for the provider's staff to change any appointments or activities scheduled in the near future to avoid payment suspension.
- In circumstances where provider's staff have information that a *participant has recently returned from a listed country or has been in contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 but has not self-isolated*, the participant can be directed to not attend or to leave the premises. Adjustments should be made to ensure they have no requirements to attend appointments or activities in the near future.
- At this stage, advice from the Department is that *activities should continue as usual, unless the Department of Health advice indicates otherwise*. In some instances, providers are encouraged to use flexibility to negotiate alternative activities or conduct some servicing by phone or online methods.

Please contact us with any questions or enquiries. We will continue to update and inform you of any changes to these servicing arrangements as they eventuate.

4. Protecting Our People, Participants & Community against COVID-19

At Djerriwarrh we believe our people & our community are our strength and looking after their safety is our priority.

We have been closely monitoring and following the advice from the government and have been implementing the required changes. We will ensure we continue to meet our funding obligations whilst maintaining our personal and community safety.

Our Senior Management team has been meeting regularly to consider various short and long term scenarios to ensure we are well prepared to continue to support our people and our communities in these challenging times.

Our CEO has also convened an Emergency Response Team (ERT) to provide real time updates and advice at a senior level which is regularly shared with all staff.

5. Useful Resources

We have compiled a list of websites that will keep you updated with the latest information on COVID-19

Department of Health

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

Department of Education, Skills and Employment

<https://www.dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19?>

Safe Work Australia

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-employers>

Message From Our ParentsNext Manager

Dear Community Members,

World experts are informing us that the COVID-19 health crisis and the economic aftermath could last at least one year. In this context, the difficult decisions that our governments and employers must make need to be sustainable and sensible for the long term.

We need to be responsive and decisive in our decision making but we must do so in a planned and staged process. We cannot risk rushing into decisions without carefully weighing up all the spill-on effects of each decision and ascertaining their long-term viability and overall impact. Our decisions need to be informed by and aligned to government policy, the advice of state and national health experts and future proofing our businesses.

The trade-off between economy and health that we hear about is a fallacy. They are actually two sides of the same coin; one directly impacting the other. If you don't have an economy your health system will fall apart and similarly, if you have a health system that is under stress then this will negatively impact the economy.

This is why it is so important for our essential services to continue moving forward in these challenging times. Just like our health workers, protective services, food retailers (supermarkets), transport industry and many others; employment and community service providers are part of our front-line people that need to continue to provide essential services to our communities and indeed the most vulnerable people in our communities. Our work is not only essential but it also helps keep the economy moving on which in turn helps support our health system to better manage the growing crisis. Moving the economy along also puts us in a better position to fully bounce back once we are on top of containing this virus.

All of us in this current climate must first and foremost follow the latest directives for personal hygiene, social distancing and self-isolation. It is important that we all take individual responsibility for these actions and do not turn up for work, attend appointments and indeed interact in the community if we are feeling unwell. In these circumstances, advise your employer/provider of your health concern and remain at home and immediately seek medical advice. Keep your employer/provider updated of your condition and do not resume work or go out into the community until you are feeling well or have been cleared by a medical professional.

We need everyone to be safe, otherwise no one can be safe.

If your work and funding agreements allow it, we should be limiting the face-to-face contact with our participants (and others) where we can. We need to start transitioning our service delivery model to more phone contacts and online services. We must maximise our usage of current systems, such as myGov to update participant plans, set activities and send documents for approval.

We must also explore and utilise other available technologies, such as Skype and Microsoft Teams to seamlessly engage and support our participants (as well as interact with our team members and industry colleagues) during these challenging times.

Regular check-ins with our participants (and team members) will ensure we are aware of how they are feeling, concerns they may have and addressing these in a timely manner.

For our participants, making sure we support them with options for online activities to keep building their education, skills and work readiness is also key. And, for those participants who are work ready now and are willing and able to join the workforce, we must continue to assist in placing them into jobs (especially those in the high need areas) so that we can continue to move the economy along.

As essential service providers, we can maintain our safety and that of our community whilst still continuing to provide valuable support to those most in need and thereby keep moving the economy along which in turn assists our health system to better manage the COVID-19 crisis.

The role essential service providers, including the employment and community services sector, play in this unprecedented time in history is highly commendable.

Please continue to be safe, adhere to the latest government and health expert directives and be psychologically prepared for a long period of constant change and challenges until this pandemic is successfully contained.

Best regards,

Gengiz Soy Turk

