

ParentsNext Newsletter



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

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Ashley feels well supported

Ashley (not her real name) commenced in the ParentsNext program in December 2018. She has two children in her care who have high caring needs which made Ashley eligible for an exemption from the ParentsNext program. After her initial appointment and knowing the benefits of the program, Ashley decided to voluntarily stay on with the program.

Ashley had never got a driver's license and it was very difficult for her to use public transport with her autistic child. With no social support until she started on the ParentsNext program with Djerriwarrh, she was facing a real struggle to cope with the daily challenges of life. She had very limited capacity to achieve her career goals.

Ashley had previously completed a course in hospitality but had limited experience and wanted to change her career.

Ashley mentioned to her

ParentsNext consultant that she really wanted to be a nurse but didn't feel confident in completing the necessary qualification.

With an individually tailored support plan and regular career counselling, Ashley has started her VCAL intermediate level certificate. This is due to be completed by the end of 2019. Next year Ashley wants to enroll in the senior level so that she is ready to start her Diploma in Nursing by 2021. Ashley said, **"I already feel confident and excited to be able to go into further study"** In July 2019 Ashley gained her learner's permit and is now getting regular driving lessons. She is building her experience so she can get her driver's license.

Ashley praised her consultant for the support she has received and said

"I have had a very positive experience with the ParentsNext program and I'm very motivated to work towards my goals."

In This Edition

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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)



1. ParentsNext National Conference

Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services' CEO and the ParentsNext Manager attended the ParentsNext National Conference in Sydney on 30-31st October.

The conference focused on receiving provider feedback on what is working well in the program, as well as highlighting areas for improvement. Providers also heard from the Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (Department) about the future direction of the program. Guest speakers presented on topics related to domestic and family violence, mental health, culturally & linguistically diverse communities and Indigenous Australians and shared best practice ideas on how ParentsNext providers can better support a diverse range of participants.

Both the Minister for Employment and Minister for Indigenous Australians presented.

It was great to hear of the significant national impact that the ParentsNext program has made between 1 July 2018 and 30 September 2019 and celebrate some of our key successes with our peers:

- 100,000 parents have been supported
- 36,000 parents have commenced education and/or training
- 15,000 parents have exited the program due to securing ongoing employment
- There has been a 70% increase in Work Readiness indicating increased motivation in parents to study and plan for their future work

It was also good to hear that the Department continues to receive feedback from the community and providers and incorporate program changes that help to make activity reporting easier and more flexible for parents. Some of the changes that have already been implemented are:

- If you are a participant in fulltime education and that is also your ParentsNext activity,

you will not be required to report your attendance for this activity

- For all other activities, activity reporting requirements will be reduced to no more than once per fortnight
- If participants let their provider know of their Centrelink reporting date, they will consider this when scheduling activities and appointments to reduce the risk of receiving a temporary hold on their payments

We are extremely proud of our organisation's contribution to these national results and we thank the Department for their vision and support in helping parents with young children achieve their full potential.

2. 2020 The Year Of Collaboration

Our ParentsNext team has been hard at work to help improve our participants' lives. We are always looking for ways to help our participants by getting them into education and training and by providing assistance to help them achieve their goals.

In November we held focus groups with ParentsNext participants at our Sunshine office. We wanted to get their feedback on the program enhancements and discuss their ideas for how we could better support our participants.

In February 2020 our Sunshine ParentsNext office is planning to team up with Bunnings Sunshine to run a monthly "parents get-together club" for basic DIY household maintenance and skill development.

We are also planning monthly employment workshops for 2020. These workshops will teach participants the tips and tricks for applying and gaining employment. It is anticipated to be one of the most sought after workshops especially for parents who want to return to work after a long break.

We are also planning to deliver monthly parent and child groups around healthy food/cooking, mental health, swimming/summer safety, financial wellbeing and sewing classes.

If you have any feedback, would like to be part of the focus groups or have ideas that can help ParentsNext participants, please get in touch.

3. Supporting Families

A crafts fun day for the parents and their families was organised by Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services in partnership with Bunnings Warehouse Melton on 7th Nov 2019.

This is the second crafts day Djerriwarrh has organised for our ParentsNext participants and now we are opening up places for participants from any program run by Djerriwarrh to attend.

Crafts day is a perfect opportunity for parents and kids to teach and learn how to paint a pot and plant. It is also a great opportunity for parents to socialise with other parents.



If you'd like to attend our next Pot, Painting and Planting fun day please contact your ParentsNext coach to register.

We would like to thank Bunnings Warehouse Melton for their continuous support in helping us support our community members through such great activities. We would also encourage other participants who missed out previously to take part in the next Pot, Painting & Planting day.

4. Christmas Closure

Djerriwarrh is committed to helping our ParentsNext participants throughout the year and our commitment continues through these holidays. If you have an urgent matter and need to contact us during the Christmas break, please call

0422 107 130 - ParentsNext Manager

0435 853 064 - ParentsNext Project Officer

We will be closed from 25 December 19 and will reopen on 2 January 2020.

5. Team BBQ

Djerriwarrh delivers ParentsNext from 11 different sites and because our team is scattered at multiple locations, we are always looking to bring them together. Regular catchups allow us to share



knowledge and experience of delivering ParentsNext to our local communities.

To keep the sense of team spirit and team culture alive and to give everyone an opportunity to learn, connect and grow, our ParentsNext team got together for a BBQ catch up at Hillside Recreation Reserve on 20th November.



Our people are our strength and they bring a wealth of culture with them. This was reflected

in the traditional foods they brought to the BBQ.

Aussie steaks, American cinnabons & Macedonian tulumbi, created a BBQ with flavours from around the globe. A fantastic day was enjoyed by all!

6. Annual Report

Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services proudly released our 2018 - 2019 annual report at our AGM on 26th November 2019.

Our annual report has information on what we have been working on and what is planned for 2020, our partnership with the local community providers, success stories of our participants and information on our ParentsNext and other programs. It is a good read and recommended to anyone who wants to learn more about us and our programs.

You can access the annual report at

<https://djerriwarrh.org.au/about-us/annual-reports/>

7. Christmas Party With A Twist Of Professional Development

Djerriwarrh staff celebrated our Christmas party 2019 on Friday 6th December at Deer Park Club. The day started with a professional development session that focused on positivity at work and everyday life. It was a well delivered and informative session. All staff members participated in group discussions and came away with ideas that can help them stay positive and motivated. This could have a wider positive impact on the many participants Djerriwarrh serves.



Lunch followed the professional development session and everyone from across all Djerriwarrh sites got a chance to interact with each other. Djerriwarrh staff are spread out at multiple sites and events like the Christmas party are good for meeting and catching up.



After lunch there was a friendly lawn bowling competition and everyone showed off their best bowling skills. It was great to see the team spirit and collaboration amongst staff from different programs and sites.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Seasons greetings and a Happy New Year

Thank you for supporting us in 2019 and we look forward to working with you in 2020



Contact Djerriwarrh for further information about the ParentsNext program on 8746 1000 or ParentsNext@djerriwarrh.org