

# Parents Next Newsletter



Djerriwarrh  
Community & Education Services

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**"I thought I couldn't get into something. I never thought I could achieve what I have achieved."** *Amanda - ParentsNext Participant*

Amanda joined Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services as a ParentsNext participant in November 2018. At the time Amanda was a stay-at-home mum caring for two children under the age of 10. Amanda had completed year 10 but had not been in the workforce, so she was somewhat concerned about her future.

When Amanda was referred to ParentsNext, she was worried about what the program would require her to do and she was not sure what to expect but had hoped that she would get some valuable information about education and employment to progress in a career.

Though Amanda is a positive person she is also very shy and was nervous about her first ParentsNext appointment. Amanda told us that from the moment she was welcomed by the reception staff she began to feel a bit more at ease, Amanda said; **"When I met my ParentsNext coach I was further relieved as she also made me feel welcome."**

As Amanda was caring for her 4 year old son, she initially wanted to participate in activities that would help her interact more with other people in the local community and also help prepare her son for kindergarten. Her participation plan included activities such as attending local playgroups, library book clubs and parenting groups to build up her confidence and also connections with local community and education providers.

The interim period of transitioning from being a stay-at-home mum was the perfect time to work with Amanda to explore many career and study options that were available and were of interest to Amanda.

Amanda and her ParentsNext coach continued to regularly evaluate her strengths and areas of interests and tailored a plan to help her achieve her goals and also celebrate progressive positive changes Amanda had made. Amanda said; **"I have felt very encouraged to set and reach my goals"**.

Due to the regular contacts and support from her coach, Amanda decided that Early Education and Childcare was the right career for her.

In November 2019, Amanda attended an information session with Victoria University and following the session, she decided to enroll in Certificate III in Early Education and Childcare as a full-time student and started the course in February 2020.

Amanda had just started the course when the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions started. Despite having no face-to-face training available, Amanda remained positive and determined to continue with her education through online learning and is now due to complete the course by June 2021.

When asked about her biggest achievement since starting with the ParentsNext program, Amanda said; **"Entering study and remaining in my course even when it was hard to keep going."**

Amanda also had a concern about entering study as a mature age student but with support from her coach and Victoria University, she felt more confident to proceed with her studies.

Amanda also wanted to share her experience with other parents who may be in a similar situation, Amanda said to us; **"No matter how old you are or where you are in your life you can succeed, you can do it; don't be negative. Don't be scared, you'll get support and help."**

Amanda has come a long way since she began with ParentsNext. From being a mother who had goals and wish for a successful career but was lacking formal support to materialise them; to a student who is now waiting for her work placement to begin which will eventually see her in the career of her choice.

During the course of time Amanda's outlook also changed as she told us; **"I thought I couldn't get into something. I never thought I could achieve what I have achieved."**

Amanda is a example of someone with determination and we wish her the very best for her future.



## In This Edition

- **Amanda's achievements despite COVID-19 pandemic**
- **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)

**From 23 November 2020, as is with all other states and territories, job seekers and participants in Victoria will be able to opt-in to face-to-face servicing.**



ParentsNext  
AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

## A Message From Our ParentsNext Manager

Dear Colleagues

I am very pleased to report that since our last Newsletter in October, Victorians have continued to make significant progress towards suppressing the virus in both metropolitan and regional Victoria. At the time of writing this Newsletter, Victoria has achieved 18 straight days of zero new coronavirus cases and has no cases with an unknown source in the state.

After a very difficult few months of tough lockdown conditions, it is great to see the removal of more and more restrictions and regaining of freedoms in Victoria, such as, no reasons to leave home, no limits on travel distance, removal of the regional 'ring of steel' border; along with changes to public gatherings, visitors to homes, and more access to in-store shopping, hospitality and other industries. It's also fantastic to hear that following the National Cabinet's meeting last Friday that all states, except for Western Australia, will open their domestic borders before Christmas with some states even opening up to Victorians before then.

Victoria is now well on track to reach the 'last step' of the State's Roadmap to Reopening on 23 November 2020 before moving to the final 'COVID Normal' step hopefully in time for Christmas and the end of year holiday season.

In line with the good coronavirus results in Victoria and the subsequent easing of most restrictions, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment has announced that from 23 November 2020, mutual obligation requirements for job seekers and participants will be re-introduced in Victoria to align with the arrangements in place in all other states and territories.

The mutual obligation requirements will apply to all Victorian job seekers in jobactive, Online Employment Services, Disability Employment Services and participants in the ParentsNext program. As part of the new arrangements, from 23 November 2020, Victorian job seekers and participants may be subject to income support payment suspensions or penalties if mutual obligation requirements are not met without a valid reason.

From **23 November 2020**, as is with all other states and territories, **job seekers and participants in Victoria will be able to opt-in to face-to-face servicing** in addition to the alternative methods (over the phone, online and by video conferencing). The opt-in approach is designed to provide job seekers and participants with safeguards while providing them flexibility to adapt servicing to their personal circumstances. Providers and Host Organisations are also required to have in place a COVID-19 Safe Plan for each service delivery site location prior to face-to-face activities commence.

In line with these new arrangements, the ParentsNext team at Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services is looking forward to the resumption of (opt-in) face-to-face appointments from Monday 23 November. Our team will be making contact with all our participants to advise them of these changes and the opportunity to opt-in for face-to-face services across our service locations in the Western Melbourne region.

Our ParentsNext management team will also be working with our partner organisations at all our co-located site locations in

Bacchus Marsh, Melton South, Laverton, Werribee, Hillside, Taylors lakes, St. Albans, Deer Park, and Footscray to ensure that all service locations have a site specific COVID-19 Safe Plan and are ready to have our ParentsNext program resume in-office servicing from Monday 23 November. Our ParentsNext sites who have a COVID-19 Safe Plan and are currently confirmed to resume face-to-face servicing from week commencing Monday 23 November are:

**239-241 Station Road Melton**  
**266 Hampshire Road, Sunshine**  
**41 Exford Road, Melton South**  
**229 Main Street, Bacchus Marsh**

We look forward to speaking with all our other partner organisations as soon as possible to finalise our plans to resume ParentsNext services from these locations in line with the new directives for Victorian providers.

After months of working from home, our ParentsNext team is very eager to phase our safe return back to our workplaces and begin the process of (opt-in) face-to-face participant servicing in a COVID-Safe environment. We trust that our participants are also looking forward to receiving face-to-face services where this is both safe and the best option for them.

In resuming mutual obligations and (opt-in) face-to-face appointments in Victoria, I want to remind all our stakeholders, our team members and our valued participants, that we will always have a safety first approach to our work, that we will continue to follow the advice issued by the Department of Health and our State Health Authority, and we will always demonstrate the utmost care and concern when supporting our participants achieve their goals and aspirations.

Our ParentsNext team is very proud of the level of engagement and seamless support provided to all participants during the COVID-19 pandemic and we now look to providing that same level of support and guidance as we work our way out of the crisis and towards a COVID Normal existence.

As always, stay safe and I look forward to reporting on more positive news in next month's Newsletter.

Yours sincerely,

Gengiz Soyturk

