

Position Description

Position title	Community Connector
Program/Unit	Family Preservation & Reunification Response
Classification	Level 5 - dependant on qualifications & experience
Position reports to	FPRR Practice Leader/Senior Worker

Organisational context

Established in 1997, MacKillop Family Services (MacKillop) strives to ensure all families are supported to provide children with a safe and permanent home, and the best possible start to their lives.

Continuing the child and family welfare programs of our three founding agencies - the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St Joseph and the Christian Brothers - we provide early intervention programs to support the most vulnerable families, and provide education, disability support, home-based care and out of home care for vulnerable children and young people in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia.

MacKillop has almost 1,500 staff, operating out of more than 50 sites, and has forecast annual revenue for the 2022/23 financial year of over \$213 million.

Like our founders, we are deeply committed to our work, and are driven by social justice. We believe every child should be protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and are a child-safe organisation that is committed to protecting and advocating for the best interests of children and families across all our programs.

Our work is underpinned by our values, and by a deep understanding of the impact of trauma, informed by the Sanctuary Model. Sanctuary is a blueprint for organisational change, which supports organisations to provide a safe, non-violent environment for people affected by trauma. It also supports staff and carers to form communities that are safe and caring, and to maintain a culture that reflects these qualities at every level within the organisation. MacKillop is the only licensed provider of training in the Sanctuary Model in Australia.

MacKillop is deeply committed to promoting diversity. Our diversity encompasses differences in race or ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, intersex status, sexual orientation, language, age, religion, socio-economic status, relationship status, physical and mental ability, thinking styles, experience, and education. We believe that the wide array of perspectives that results from such diversity makes us more creative, flexible, accessible and productive.

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 by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. 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. The 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 (FPRR) 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 Community Connector position provides support across the FPRR program in Mallee region, with the aim of connecting families to community and strengthening relationships with services in the local area by:

- taking a lead role in identifying and creating pathways to community services and resources that promote opportunities for employment, education, housing and social participation, including resource development
- supporting and encouraging families to become connected to groups and community activities
- working with FPRR providers to support families to build practical life skills that promote opportunities for social participation and skill building in an area of interest
- working closely with the FPRR providers to promote engagement with community services and resources, that promote opportunities for employment, education, housing and social participation, to achieve positive outcomes for families

The role also supports the connection with specific cultural groups to enhance families engagement in relevant community groups and activities.

Primary objectives

- To provide support for FPRR all providers in the region to assist families to develop links and interests in the community.
- To provide support for FPRR providers to support the age-appropriate development of life skills and links to supports
- Develop a local portfolio of services and contacts that directly address the complex needs of the families withing the FPRR response
- Building the skills of the FPRR providers to support the families to become active members of their community, building the families capacity to thrive independently of service system intervention.

Key result areas and responsibilities

The scope of work may include:

- Capacity building with FPRR providers to enhance their knowledge and relationships with the community
- Building strong relationship with FPRR providers, including co-location at FPRR providers across the region
- Building strong and effective relationships with services and community groups within the local community based on the need of families in the region ie. housing organisations, real estate agents, education and training providers, parenting groups etc.
- Encouraging families connection to clubs, groups, sports, recreation, universal services, leisure activities, events and volunteer activities in community

- Enhancing existing, and developing new, referral pathways and links to services in the community, such as local council services, housing support services, and/or social and recreational activities
- Enhancing quality relationships and partnerships with local services through active networking and collaboration
- Developing a thorough understanding of the service pathways and requirements to better support FPRR Response Practitioners and families in utilising these services.
- Strengthening understanding in service partners of the unique complexities and disadvantage within our families and how these barriers can impact their engagement with services.
- Supporting families to engage in the community through direct client work where required
- Ensuring cultural safety when working with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families and other cultural backgrounds
- Sitting within the FPRR Response teams when not networking or co-locating with other FPRR providers in the region
- Being flexible and working at peak times where additional supports are required including outside of business hours and weekends

Key selection criteria

The incumbent will have:

The role requires the incumbent to hold a relevant tertiary qualification, which may include a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, Child Development, Psychology or a related subject area. Candidates who are working towards their Bachelor degree or who hold a relevant Diploma qualification and have substantial experience, are also encouraged to apply. The incumbent is required to work flexible hours including outside of business hours and some weekends.

Preferred Experience:

- Significant work experience in a relevant field which supports an understanding of community development, key child development issues relating to young parents and their families who have complex needs.
- Well-developed understanding of the FPRR and/or family services and the needs of the families engaged in the program
- Excellent 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.
- A knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and values and an awareness of the current issues faced by Aboriginal children, young people and their families
- Ability to participate collaboratively and constructively within teams of peers, staff and other stakeholders, as well as initiative and effective personal judgement when working alone.

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.

Other information

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- Incorporate cultural safety into your practice with Aboriginal families.

The incumbent must possess a:

- Valid and current Driver's Licence.
- Valid and current Working with Children Card.
- Valid and current NDIS Worker Check (for NDIS risk assessed roles).
- Satisfactory criminal history check conducted by MacKillop Family Services.

Approval

Director or General Manager's full name:	Rhiannon Walker	Date:	2/06/2023
Director or General Manager's position title:	General Manager North Metro & Loddon/Mallee Divisions		
Incumbent's full name:			
Incumbent's signature:		Date:	



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.



MacKillop celebrates and draws strength from diversity and respects the dignity of all people. Every person at MacKillop has the right to be safe and to be treated justly. We value every person's ability, cultural or linguistic backgrounds, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, intersex status, relationship status, religious or spiritual beliefs, socio-economic status, and age.