

Position Description

Position title	Contact Worker
Program/Unit	Permanency Support Program
Classification	SCHCADS L3 - Dependent on qualifications & experience
Position reports to	Senior Contact 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

NSW/ACT Services

MacKillop's NSW/ACT Division consists of the following programs: Permanency Support Program Metro Sydney; Children Youth and Families Metro Sydney; Permanency Support Program Northern NSW; Children, Youth and Families NSW South and ACT; and MacKillop Rural Community Services.

- Permanency Support Program (PSP) Metro Sydney provides Foster Care and Intensive Therapeutic Care including Intensive Therapeutic Transitional Care, Intensive Therapeutic Care Homes, Therapeutic Supported Independent Living, Therapeutic Home-based Care and Therapeutic Sibling Option Placement. The program is based in Blacktown and operates across the Department of Communities and Justice' (DCJ) Western Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains and South West Sydney Districts
- Children Youth and Families Metro Sydney provides Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare, Family Preservation, Specialist Homelessness Services, Homelessness Youth Assistance Program and Targeted Earlier Intervention. The program is based in Blacktown and operates across the DCJ Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains Districts
- Permanency Support Program (PSP) Northern NSW provides Foster Care and Intensive Therapeutic Care including Intensive Therapeutic Transitional Care, Intensive Therapeutic Care Homes, Therapeutic Supported Independent Living, Therapeutic Home-based Care and Therapeutic Sibling Option Placement. The program is based in Grafton and Lismore and operates across the DCJ Northern NSW District
- Children Youth and Families NSW South and ACT operates across two jurisdictions. NSW Services include Foster Care and Intensive Therapeutic Care as part of the Permanency Support Program (PSP); Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare; and Family Referral Services. NSW services operate across the DCJ Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern NSW Districts from offices located in Wollongong, Nowra, Batemans Bay, Bega, Cooma, Queanbeyan and Goulburn. ACT services include Intensive Therapeutic Residential Care.
- MacKillop Rural Community Services (MRCS) Program has three main service streams, Child and Family Services, Youth Services and Disability Services. Services are based in Balranald, Brewarrina, Cobar, Condobolin, Coonabarabran, Coonamble, Gulargambone, Lightning Ridge, Nyngan, Walgett, Weilmoringle, and Dubbo.

Position purpose

This position is situated within the NSW OOHC Unit which is responsible for services including foster, kinship and residential care.

The Contact Worker reports to the Senior Contact Worker and is a member of the foster and kinship care team.

The position provides supervised contact to children and young people in out of home care with opportunities to maintain and develop relationships with their family in a safe, supportive environment under the supervision of trained staff. The Contact Worker is responsible for planning, supervising and reporting on contact visits.

Key result areas and responsibilities

- Ensure that the emotional, social, behavioural, developmental and educational needs of children and young people are met through the provision of trauma-informed care during contact visits;
- Review supervised contact documents and discuss issues and/or concerns with the Senior Contact Worker as required;
- Prepare age-appropriate activities which facilitate safe, enjoyable contact experiences for children, young people and their families;
- Transport children and young people to and from contact;
- Communicate with children, parents and carers in a respectful, open and culturally sensitive way;
- Role model and reinforce pro-social behaviour by providing safety, stability, predictability and consistency through clear expectations, boundaries, responses and sanctions;
- Provide guidance to support the strengthening of positive parenting skills;

- Monitor contact between children and their family and record observations regarding physical and verbal interactions, strengths, challenges and known risk factors;
- Respond to issues that arise during contact using crisis prevention and de-escalation techniques, behaviour support plans, professional judgement and after hours/on call support;
- Ensure that children and young people's wellbeing is actively safeguarded and concerns are reported immediately;
- Complete detailed contact reports at the conclusion of each contact visit using MacKillop's contact report template;
- Remain informed of policy and practice developments in out of home care, trauma-informed care and related areas;
- Participate constructively in learning and development opportunities, supervision and performance appraisals;
- Be available to work flexible hours including evenings, weekends and public holidays;
- Be available to undertake higher duties and/or secondment as required;
- Undertake other duties as required.

Key selection criteria

The incumbent will have:

- A diploma in a child-related field
- 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
- Demonstrated experience in supervised contact, out of home care, children's services, youth work or a related field;
- Demonstrated understanding of child and adolescent development, the impact of trauma, and the indicators of child abuse;
- Ability to manage challenging behaviour; and prevent and/or de-escalate crises;
- Demonstrated ability to build relationships with and engage vulnerable children, young people and their families, and carers;
- Strong interpersonal skills, written and verbal communication skills;
- Ability to work flexible hours including evening, weekends and public holidays;
- Ability to interpret and implement organisational policy;
- A strong commitment to the purpose and values of MacKillop Family Services, the Sanctuary model and the Sanctuary Commitments;
- Competence in Microsoft Office including Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint.
- Able to work flexible working hours.

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.
- 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.

The incumbent must possess a:

- Valid and current NSW Driver's Licence.
- Valid and current NSW Working with Children Check.
- Satisfactory criminal history check conducted by MacKillop Family Services.
- Valid and current NDIS Workers Screening Check or can provide proof of application

Approval

Approver's full name:	Jude Ekerick	D	June 2022
Approver's position title:	State Director NSW/ACT		
Incumbent's full name:			
Incumbent's signature:		D	



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.