



Position Description

Youth and Family Caseworker

Wesley Community and Family Care

Agreement

Signed – Manager

Signed – Employee

Date

Date

Do all the good you can
because every life matters



Youth and Family Caseworker

1. Overview of Wesley Mission

Wesley Mission is a Christian organisation that has been caring for people for over 200 years, continuing the work of Jesus Christ in Word and deed.

Our Vision

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can”.

Our Mission

Continuing the work of Jesus Christ in Word and deed.

Our Values

Out of Christian love and compassion we are driven by:

- Christlike servanthood
- Unfailing integrity, and
- Courageous commitment.

The organisational plan is based on five key result areas, namely:

- our clients
- our people
- our stakeholders
- our financials.

Our position descriptions and performance plans are aligned with these four key result areas.

2. Overview of Wesley Dalmar Child and Family

Wesley Dalmar Child and Family is made up of numerous teams that support the communities and the people in need. The various teams build resilience and strengthen capacity in the local communities where we work. Providing support to people using trauma-informed person-centred approaches in a holistic manner. We will actively seek to “Do All The Good We Can, By All The Means We Can, In All The Ways We Can, ...” for the whole of community. We are committed to local communities, the traditional owners, the new arrivals, the local people and Wesley Mission’s meaningful presence within the local space. We are committed to finding ways to support and address the local un-met need. We will identify and respond to hidden and emerging needs in our local communities.

Service areas and contracts include

- Assistance with Care and Housing
- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Emergency Relief
- Emergency Response
- Financial Counselling
- Financial Capability programs
- Gamble Aware programs
- Getting it Together
- Newcastle Hub
- ParentsNext
- Specialist Homelessness Services
- Youth AOD Health
- Young Healthy Minds
- Wesley Dalmar, an Out Of Home Care Service accredited by the Office of Children’s Guardian and regulated by the OCG standards



3. Overview of the Role

The Youth and Family Caseworker role is funded by the Department of Social Services and under the Reconnect program. The Youth and Family Caseworker role will offer support to **48** young people and their families and communities experiencing or at risk of homelessness and vulnerability. The Youth and Family Caseworker will have the responsibility of using evidenced based approaches in a casework framework to engage young people and their families for meaningful, client led outcomes. The role is also responsible for facilitating **4** groups workshops and **2** community events, consequently improving overall community engagement and social participation for young people at risk of or are homeless. All programs will be underpinned by evidence informed principles and work with the Reconnect Activity Plan

Reconnect Program

The Reconnect Programme is community based early intervention program to support young people between 12-18 (12-21 for newly arrived young people) who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless and their families. By engaging youth and family early in need the Reconnect programs aims to stabilise and improve young people's housing situations and engagement with education, training, employment and their local community.

This is achieved through youth lead and trauma informed wholistic case work, family mediation, group work and practical life skills coaching. Ultimately, the Reconnect Program aims to reduce risk factors of homelessness and build protective factors for young people and their families.

Young people have the best chance of leading a full and happy life if they live within families who give them life-long, stable, loving relationships and housing, and if they belong to communities which cherish them.

The vision for the Reconnect program is that:

- Families, children and young people's needs are met early to prevent the escalation of need
- Families can access support earlier in the lives of their children and young people, and are empowered to live independent, meaningful lives
- Risk factors that lead to homelessness such as family breakdown, child abuse, neglect, educational disengagement and domestic and family violence are addressed early
- First Nations children, young people, families and communities have access to timely, effective, accessible and culturally safe support and services.
- Newly arrived, Refugee and culturally and linguistically diverse children, young people, families and communities have access to timely, effective, accessible and culturally safe support and services
- LGTBQA+ children, young people, families and communities have access to safe, effective and accessible support and services

With a focus on earlier intervention, the Reconnect program provides targeted services at the point where they can have the most impact - early in life and early in need. By encouraging community-based solutions, alongside tailored formal supports, Reconnect services can ultimately prevent children and young people from becoming homeless or entering the statutory child protection system



The Reconnect Program can achieve this by supporting at risk of homelessness or homeless young people and their families by working towards the Reconnect objectives which are:

- Young people re-engage or strengthen their engagement with education, training, employment and the community including:
 - Increased school attendance
 - Finish school or training
 - Smooth transition from primary to secondary school or further education
 - Increased social connectedness, such as with sporting groups
 - Improved employment options

- Family Reconciliation, wherever practical and safe, between the homeless or at risk of homelessness young person and their family. Family Reconciliation includes:
 - The young person returns home
 - Ongoing positive relationships are created which provide the young person with emotional and physical support
 - Conflict is reduced or dealt with more positively
 - Reconciling the young person with other family members, such as Grandparents and siblings
 - Both parent(s) and the young person accepting that independence is appropriate for the young person
 - Establishing a viable support system for the independent young person that includes a member of their family

- Fewer entries into homelessness including
 - Preventing homelessness
 - Effective early intervention for people who have recently been homeless
 - More young people in safe, secure and stable housing
 - Effective referral pathways to youth accommodation services

- Improved wellbeing and mental health including
 - Improved sense of self and positive self-worth
 - Young people are more resilient, feel supported and are self sufficient
 - Increased engagement with mental health services

4. Relationships

Reports to: Practice Specialist- Early intervention Team

Works with: Key staff across all of Wesley Mission

Local services and agencies



5. Major Roles & Responsibilities

5.1 Our Clients

Collaborate with Practice Specialist to work within the Reconnect guidelines and practice principles of:

- Being child, young person and family centred and build capacity for change
- Using a strengths based approach to planning and implementation
- Using a child wellbeing lens for holistic action
- Building social capital within communities
- Employing a life course approach, using natural development phases and transition points as 'triggers' for service delivery (becoming pregnant, first 1,000 days of a child's life, mothers returning to work, entry into early learning, starting school, transition to high school, and so on)
- Providing outcomes based services, utilising common screening, monitoring and assessment processes
- Recognising the impact of trauma and develop and implement trauma informed policies and practices
- Being flexible and reflect that families needs are not static, resulting in families transitioning in and out of hardship and disadvantage
- Providing assessment, supported referrals and information as foundational activities, provided in an effective and timely manner, including common assessments, supported referrals to other service providers, and information such as brochures, websites and other resources.
- Developing pathways and partnerships to continuously improve supported referrals, connections and sector capacity building within the local community and service system. This includes participating and engaging in local interagency groups or Reconnect governance committees
- Working within the NSW Care and Protection Framework, actively screening for children at risk of harm and reporting appropriately
- Working within the NSW Principles guiding the protection of children impacted by domestic and family violence
- Promoting Wesley Mission's principle of joined up thinking and practice

Work within evidence informed practice to provide services to the target group for the Reconnect Program – homeless or at risk of homelessness young people, families and their communities, within NSW.

Within this broad target group, the Reconnect Program has three priority groups:

- Young people (12-18)
- Newly arrived and/or refugee young people (12-21) and families
- First Nations Young People and their families

5.1.1 Performance Measures

- Achieve 90% client satisfaction
- Achieve or exceed all targets
- Evidence that domestic violence and child protection screening is common practice
- Evidence that screening for risk factors that lead to homelessness is common practice
- Evidence of priority target group accessing services and given priority access
- Evidence of quality partnerships and increased cross referrals across sector
- Evidence of quality partnerships and increased cross referrals within Wesley Mission



Measurement tools

- DEX Portal
- Wesley Communities bi-annual client satisfaction survey

5.2 Our People

Wesley Communities Principles

- We are empathic leaders; strong kindness and generosity of spirit define how we lead our people
- We work with our people from a strength based, solution focussed framework
- We encourage a culture of being loyal to those who are absent
- We provide clarity around roles and responsibilities
- We err on the side of 'catching our staff doing something good – and telling them'
- We extend the most generous interpretation to the intentions, words and actions of others*
- We believe people are doing the best that they can*, *until they prove otherwise* *Brene' Brown
- We work within Wesley Mission's Human Resources processes to address performance issues as soon as they arise

Responsibilities:

- Ensure all employees work in line with SCHADS 5 award characteristics
- Ensure all caseworker and therapeutic positions recruited at SCHADS 5 and above hold a tertiary qualification
- Ensure all staff supervisors hold essential qualifications for their specific discipline
- Include relevant SCHADS award characteristic on the final page of each position description and ensure employees understand the characteristics of their role and how they will be held accountable for fulfilling these characteristics
- Ensure all staff recruitment is compliant with Wesley Mission's policies and procedures and in line with Wesley Communities – Recruitment to Retention
- Provide positive and strategic support to all employees by:
 - Prioritising probation period meetings and addressing issues as soon as they arise
 - Organising and implementing external supervision and support in line with Wesley Communities Work Instruction – External Support
 - Developing and maintaining positive relationship with the Chaplain assigned to your area, and introducing the Chaplain to your teams as an important support member of the team
 - Implementing annual Training Matrix for each position
 - Ensuring all mandatory training is completed in specified timeframe
 - Introducing Flexible Work Arrangements in line with Wesley Communities Work Instruction – Flexible Work Arrangements
 - Encouraging and supporting all employees to take four weeks annual leave each and every year, ensuring annual leave balance does not exceed 8 weeks
 - Providing regular Lines Support Meetings in line with Wesley Communities Work Instruction – Line Support Meetings
 - Prioritising regular Team Meetings, ensuring agendas and actions distributed in timely manner



- Complying with Wesley Mission annual Employee Contribution and Development (ECD) program
- Encouraging and promoting participation in Wesley Mission events
- Provide quick and decisive responses to any performance issues, working in line with Wesley Mission's processes

5.2.1 Performance measures

- Provide effective casework support to 48 young people, per annum
- Facilitate 4 educational groups within schools or community centres, such as RAGE, per annum
- Plan and deliver 2 major community events, such as Youth Week, per annum
- Participation in Wesley Mission VOICE Survey
- Staff have current Working with Children Check and Criminal History Check
- Commitment to proactively planning our programs at the beginning of the year to minimise over or underspends at the end of financial year
- Wesley resources are maintained and serviced as required
- Commitment to retaining current funding through working within funding guidelines and providing a best practice service
- Proactively seek new funding opportunities

Measurement tools

- Annual Communities Staff Survey
- Case plans for 48 young people per year
- DeX data reporting adequate SCORES and reflecting 4 groups facilitated and 2 community events

5.3 Our Operations

- Ensure the reputation and integrity of Wesley Mission is maintained at all time
- Contribute to program performance monitoring through reporting systems leading to measurable accountability as required by Family and Community Services
- Advocate and communicate the Wesley Mission brand and key messaging strategy to stakeholders, ensuring brand compliance and use of correct templates
- Contribute to reviewing internal systems including policies and procedures to ensure more efficient and effective methods of delivery and to ensure continual improvement
- Contribute to evaluation and quality improvement of programs
- As an employee, be responsible under the Work Health & Safety Act for the health and safety of all persons you come into contact with, during employment. Perform WHS tasks as directed by supervisor
- Embrace new developments and technological innovations including CRM and Carelink+, relevant to Wesley Mission's work
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- Maintain industry specific standards and ISO9000 standards as per Wesley Mission's quality assurance policies
- Promote the grievance procedure to all clients and respond in line with the Wesley Mission Grievance Procedure.



5.3.1 Performance Measures

- Create partnerships with schools, agencies and other referral pathways
- Connecting with these organisations to promote engagement

5.4 Our Financials

5.4.1 Performance Measures

- Wesley resources are well maintained including centres, electronic equipment and other items
- Evidence of proactive program planning and reduced over/underspend
- Current funding maintained

6. Professional responsibilities

- Other activities to support the delivery of the Wesley Community and Family Care Business Plan and Wesley Mission Strategic Plan, as requested by your manager
- As an employee, be responsible under the Work Health & Safety Act for the health and safety of all persons they come into contact with, during employment. All hazards and injuries must be reported through the normal process as set out in Wesley Mission's Work Health, Safety and Rehabilitation Quality Management System and site procedures
- In relation to Wesley Mission and the Uniting Church in Australia, attend such functions, meetings, seminars, training courses as directed by your supervisor
- In relation to Wesley Mission attend worship services as encouraged by your supervisor
- Take responsibility for personal career development and training
- Participate in Wesley Mission's Orientation program, so as to gain an understanding of, and promote, the application of the EEO, Affirmative Action, Privacy Act, Work Health & Safety Act and other relevant legislation
- Administer Wesley Mission's philosophy of care and other relevant policy documents as appropriate
- Demonstrate responsible stewardship of all resources, and willingness to report impropriety in keeping with the values of Wesley Mission
- Ensure the reputation and integrity of Wesley Mission is maintained at all times.
- Maintain confidentiality



7. Selection criteria

To be successful in this position, candidates must possess the following:

Demonstrated behaviours

- willingness to affirm Wesley Mission's vision, mission and values and enthusiastically advocate our Word and deed ministry
- demonstrated ability to work unsupervised as well as an effective team player with a positive can-do attitude
- relates well to a range of people with sound listening and problem-solving skills
- confident professional with strong initiative and business acumen
- displays emotional maturity and resilience

Essential criteria

- degree in Social Work, Psychology, Social Science or other relevant Degree
- ability to engage children, young people and families at the point of initial service contact, and build relationships of trust and cooperation
- experience with providing flexible service to children, young people and their families via home visiting, schools visits and centre based care
- a passion for and experience in collaborating with young people experiencing complex disadvantage including racism, sexism, Islamophobia, transphobia and homophobia
- a commitment to and experience in centring young people's knowledge and voices through co-design
- proven ability to work with First Nations young people, families and communities and a strong knowledge of the impacts of colonisation and the subsequent barriers this creates for First Nations Peoples
- experience of working with people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds and an understanding of the strengths that lie within this community, whilst also acknowledging the systemic barriers these communities face
- high level written and verbal communication skills, with experience developing case summaries and completing child protection reports and entering this information into electronic client management systems
- the role requires highly organised, enthusiastic and self-motivated people. Please provide recent examples where you've demonstrated these qualities
- knowledge and experience of youth and family support work from a strength based and systems theory perspective
- proven experience and knowledge of supporting people who have experienced developmental trauma
- experience in facilitating group programs with young people
- willingness to affirm Wesley Mission's vision, mission and values
- current NSW or National driver's license and working with children's check

Desirable criteria

- working knowledge of the local child and family support sector
- have child protection knowledge and experience
- group work experience