

MB-07/458

NOTE:

Read this
Submission
together with
West Belk Inter
Agency Liaison Group
Submission

UnitingCare Kippax - as they are linked.



Submission for the 2008 ACT Budget

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1. INTRODUCTION

UnitingCare Kippax welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the ACT Government's consideration of the 2008 budget. This submission provides the Government with a brief overview of our organization, the successful models and mechanisms used to meet the needs of the West Belconnen community in particular and the factors that we have found to be critical to our success. We conclude by outlining a number of ways we believe Government can further improve their support of the community through community organizations such as ourselves.

2. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND

UnitingCare Kippax

UnitingCare Kippax is a respected local community organisation with a history of over 15 years of high quality community service provision. The community arm of its activities is currently funded largely through grants from the ACT and Commonwealth governments.

It has a highly skilled and professional staff team with a long history in ACT service delivery, as well as national and international experience.

In addition, there is a large dedicated team of over 100 skilled, trained and supervised volunteers that provide community care under the oversight of our Community Care Worker.

Currently there are over 1400 people accessing one or more services per week. A description of the current suite of activities that we provide are outlined at Attachment 1.

UnitingCare Kippax has a unique place regarding service delivery and co-ordination in West Belconnen and has taken the lead role in establishing networks of agency and Government co-operation.

It has a proven track record in an integrated capacity-building approach to care, and was the winner of a number of relevant community service awards, including the 2006 Early Intervention Award for Excellence in Service Provision, the 2005 Early Intervention Peer Award for Service provision, and the 2005 ACT Health Award for Community Development and Capacity Building.

It is part of the UnitingCare network, the largest non-government provider of community services in Australia.

Needs Of West Belconnen Area

West Belconnen is an area of geographic disadvantage and high need, as demonstrated by statistical evidence of social exclusion. It has the lowest average income level in the ACT (source: 2006 Australian Taxation Office). In addition, on average it has:

- more poverty and financial disadvantage (up to \$500 per week less than the Canberra average weekly income)

- a substantially higher rate of single parent households (more than twice the Canberra average in some areas of West Belconnen)
- lower rates of home ownership
- higher levels of public housing and
- significantly lower levels of post secondary education.

(Source: Figures drawn from ABS Census 2006.)

UnitingCare Kippax has undertaken a detailed demographic study of key aspects of West Belconnen, the services that are provided and the perceived gaps, which will be submitted separately to ACT Government for their consideration within the 2008 budget context.

3. SUCCESSFUL MODELS / MECHANISMS

A Presence In The Local Community

Kippax Uniting Community Centre was purposely situated across from Kippax Fair in Holt so as to promote our presence within a local community setting. This active relation-based community centre enables people to build personal relationships with other groups and individuals in the community, reducing social isolation and exclusion. This has proven to be a great success.

Person-Centred, Holistic, Assets Building Model of Care

UnitingCare Kippax takes an early intervention, community development and capacity building approach to service delivery based on the 40 Developmental Assets Model. This is a paradigm shift from a welfare model to a model that focuses on building the strengths of the individual.

Early Intervention And Preventative Care Focus

UnitingCare Kippax programs and services work with a strong preventative care and early intervention approach to issues of social exclusion and personal development. This approach reduces the incidence and impact of social exclusion, isolation, poverty and their related compounding effects.

These efforts are most evident in our strong focus on children and young families. Playgroups in particular are a well-known child protection strategy as they provide an opportunity for promoting healthy parenting behaviours and choices.

Inter-Agency Alliances and Partnerships

The links that UnitingCare Kippax has actively developed over the years, have been another factor that has contributed to our success with flow on benefits to the community. UnitingCare Kippax has continued to actively pursue an integrated approach to care and service delivery, with genuine partnering arrangements across a wide range of services and Government portfolios.

UnitingCare Kippax is the convener of and lead agency in the West Belconnen Community Agency Liaison Group – a group that was designed to promote and develop cooperation and shared learning among the community service agencies in the area.

UnitingCare Kippax is also a member of the Belconnen inter-agency forum, and is on the steering committee for the Belconnen Community Services Good Beginnings Program and the ACT Playgroups Management Committee.

In addition, UnitingCare Kippax has developed strong alliances with other key agencies such as YMCA and Lifeline in order to provide mutual support, referral and share in training opportunities, thereby complimenting one another and reducing duplication of effort.

Strong links with, and support from agencies such as the Belconnen Community Services, the Kippax Health Service, Domestic Violence Crisis Service, ACT Therapy, Volunteering ACT, Carers ACT, the Heart Foundation, Canberra Institute of Technology, Centre Link, ACT Playgroups Association, Karinya House for Mothers and Babies, SupportLink, and Fabric are also well-established.

4. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Strong Volunteer Base

The strong volunteer base that UnitingCare Kippax has established over the years has been integral to our success. The challenge for us as well as other community agencies nationally and internationally is to continue to recruit, retain and sustain a volunteer base.

Trust

Trust is an intrinsic asset. It is hard won and easily lost. UnitingCare Kippax has developed strong and trusted relationships with members of the community as well as the community and government sector.

For the community, they have developed a trust that UnitingCare Kippax will provide assistance and support using a holistic, integrated and asset-building approach.

Our relationships with other community agencies are based on the trust that we will engage with them in an open manner and act with integrity.

Our relationships with government agencies are based on our ability to deliver on promises and our accountability for both our stewardship of funds and transparency of operation.

5. WAYS GOVERNMENT CAN BETTER SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

Longer Term, Sustainable Funding

Long-term, sustainable funding for award-winning programs would allow community agencies such as ours, to plan further into the future and provide a more stable employment environment for our skilled employees. As articulated in the recent "Dropping off the Edge" study by Tony Vinson, in order to be effective, organisations require longer term funding to establish effective programs to meet community needs.

Recurrent, ongoing, financial investment by Government in these type of programs would provide a crucial component to building, retaining and sustaining the critical volunteer and informal carer component to the provision of care, support and service delivery for members of the ACT community.

The challenge for government of all political persuasions is to develop mechanisms which enable longer-term commitments of both funding and policy development to flourish. These longer-term relationships have trust at their heart. Community-based organisations are keen to explore these areas for development but await the initiative of government.

Mechanisms To Align Policy And Funding To Meet Community Needs

UnitingCare Kippax recognises that specifically targeted services – while both valuable and essential – are often unable to adequately respond to the breadth of people's needs in a holistic way, and run the risk of losing sight of the individual as a whole.

The fact that these targeted services are often funded from different Departments within ACT Government makes it even more difficult to match the needs of clients who present for assistance, to the services that are required.

UnitingCare Kippax urges the ACT Government to examine ways in which funding may be aggregated across agencies and allocated to individual community organisations in order to better meet the holistic needs of individuals. Community groups would still be accountable to both Government and the community for the use of these funds using a streamlined approach.

Investment in Carers and Volunteers

Carers and volunteers are critical to meeting emerging and increasing demand for support services.

UnitingCare Kippax has used short term Government funding to support carers and provide volunteer training and development opportunities.

We urge the ACT Government to consider a longer-term investment-based approach to supporting carers and volunteers.

6. ORGANISATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

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ATTACHMENT 1 – ABOUT UNITINGCARE KIPPAX

UnitingCare is the community services arm of the Uniting Church in Australia. It is a network of about 370 centres and agencies providing services to their local community, supported at State and National level by policy, research and advocacy. It is the largest non-government community services organisation in Australia, providing aged, health and assisted care, and children's support. It provides a wide body of experience and support with policy, management and implementation skills to local groups. This complements the partnership with ACT government.

UnitingCare Kippax, operating from the Kippax Uniting Community Centre (opposite the Kippax Fair Shopping Centre in Holt) provides a range of community services to West Belconnen residents. UnitingCare Kippax operates with the following 5 principles:

- Long term commitment to people in need
- Relationship based
- Valuing the whole person (i.e. the value and integrity of each person)
- Addressing presenting and underlying needs, across many aspects of a person's life
- Application of the 40 Developmental Assets strength-based model

We implement these principles by being community centred; by working in close co-operation with government, business and community bodies; by being a centre for reference and information; and by educating all staff and volunteers in the 40 Developmental Assets building model.

The services provided at UnitingCare Kippax have become a benchmark for other ACT service providers looking to work with families and communities. All our activities are based on building medium to long-term relationships within the West Belconnen area.

UnitingCare Kippax has a proven track record in providing an integrated capacity-building approach to care and has won a number of relevant community service awards, including the 2006 Early Intervention Award for Excellence in Service Provision, the 2005 Early Intervention Peer Award for Service provision, and the 2005 ACT Health Award for Community Development and Capacity Building.

UnitingCare Kippax operates within the legal framework of the Uniting Church in Australia (Australian Capital Territory) Property Trust, which was incorporated in 1977 in the ACT through an Act of Parliament (see <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1977-15/default.asp>).

Current Activities

Activities run by UnitingCare Kippax are based around mutual respect and support, and model truly supportive practices well beyond business hours.

There are currently over 100 regular volunteers working in the provision of community care under the oversight of the Community Care Worker. This established and trained team proves the solid basis for *Caring locally, building community*.

UnitingCare Kippax brings an integrated, needs based approach to service delivery and regularly establishes links with other community based groups reducing social exclusion and isolation.

Due to a strong volunteer base and financial support from the Uniting Church, and both the ACT and Commonwealth Governments, services to the local community are able to be provided by UnitingCare Kippax for no or minimal charge.

Current existing services that focus on young families and others in need include:

- **Kippax Kids Playgroups.** UnitingCare Kippax is the largest single provider of playgroups in the ACT with 13 currently running over 5 days a week and has been providing this two times award winning service for 15 years. There is a Multicultural Playgroup, the only Blokes Playgroup in the ACT, and two Babies Playgroups.

Playgroups are a well-acknowledged primary child abuse prevention strategy and they offer an ideal forum for promoting healthy behaviours and choices. Early childhood care and playgroups that are well supervised and supported by the wider community are important to family welfare.

The relationships established between volunteer helpers and the families in Kippax Kids playgroups also provide ongoing support beyond the life of the playgroup. In addition, the playgroups provide specific occasional time outs where additional volunteers provide child minding while the care-givers are freed to engage in specific courses or educational times, in a familiar setting at a convenient time.

- **Rock, Rhythm and Roll Program** (which runs over 10 weeks). This is an early intervention approach to relationship building between the parent primary care giver and their baby (0-2 years) or toddler (2-4 years). First run as a pilot program in the ACT at UnitingCare Kippax in 2005, the take-up rate by local families has been overwhelming.
- **CARE Now!** (known as Keeping Children Safe in NSW) and **Creating the Future**, two programs aimed at improving parent-child relationships and reducing the risks and effects of domestic violence, abuse, neglect, and raising child self esteem.
- **Parenting education classes** offered regularly throughout the year (e.g. 1-2-3 Magic courses run 4 times a year, Parent Head Space events, occasional Parent Time Outs run during playgroup session).
- **Counselling, information, advocacy and training for young families** through UnitingCare Kippax's Community Care Worker. This position has been in place for over ten years.
- **Access to a community facility, and a body of people that hold the safety, inclusion and importance of children and families as paramount** (based on the Uniting Church's national policy document and manual/workbook, *A Safe Place for Children* 2000).
- **Intergenerational, relational activities** such as the Holiday Happenings events held each school holidays for primary school age children.
- **A strong inter-organisational community relationship** offering joined-up approaches to care and referral for families with specific needs.
- **Exercise classes for adults and children** through our ongoing relationship with YMCA Canberra.

- **Financial and material aid, including crisis meals, food hampers including Christmas hampers.**
- **Budgeting support and financial management counselling (including a referral arrangement with Lifeline and Care Financial services).**
- **A Christmas presents service for children in need in conjunction with Target stores.**
- **A bereavement support group**
- **Mentoring programs for teenagers, aimed at assisting transitions from primary to secondary schooling, from secondary to college and from schooling to other pathways. Young people are also encouraged to be involved in the decision making of Kippax Uniting Church, through encouragement at meetings and inclusion on decision-making bodies.**
- **Education and leisure classes (craft group, spinning group, Singing for Pleasure, U3A etc)**

UnitingCare Kippax has a capacity building approach to service delivery that is based on the 40 Developmental Assets model used successfully locally by the YMCA, nationally and internationally.

Past clients of our services often choose to contribute to the community through their own volunteering – both at UnitingCare Kippax and through other service agencies. This means that the investment in the services has a double flow on effect – reducing future results of social disadvantage for the client themselves, and also increasing the volunteer service hours contributed to the community.

Our facility is also hired out to other organisations to use as a venue for their programs (eg AA) which affords a useful link in the event that referral to such services and support is required.



Simon Corbell MLA

ATTORNEY GENERAL
MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Ms Kim Sattler
Secretary
UnionsACT
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Dear Ms Sattler

Thank you for your Submission to the ACT 2008 Budget Process received in Minister Gallagher's office on 4 October 2007.

Your Submission will be considered as part of the Budget process.

Yours sincerely

Simon Corbell MLA
Acting Minister for Disability and Community Services

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ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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