



capable communities, strong families, thriving children



annual report 2007-2008



## Our Values

Respect

Inclusion

Empowerment

Community

## Our Mission

To create caring, capable communities by:

Supporting and strengthening the most vulnerable families, children and young people.

Innovating and advocating for social inclusion.

Growing community connections and contributions for the benefit of all.



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## Our Patrons

### Mr Justice (John) Fogarty AM

John was a Family Court Judge and Head of the Child Support Consultative Group from 1976 to 1998. During this period he delivered major Child Protection Reports and in 1991 was awarded an AM for work with children. John has been a supporter and Patron of Family Life for over 10 years.

### Mr Graeme Disney OAM

Graeme is a former Mayor of Bayside and his contributions and service to our community have been recognised by many awards including the Attorney-General's Department Award for his voluntary work as a Justice of the Peace and a Federation Medal in 2002.



## Our Board

### Mark Vassella – President

Elected September 2004

Retiring 2008

Mark is Chief Executive, BlueScope Distribution P/L. He has been an active member of the organising committee of the Family Life Charity Golf Days 2003 to 2008 and the Children's Services Centre Appeal Committee. He lives in Bayside with his wife Anna and two daughters. Mark is active in school and community groups

### Robyn Leonard – 1st Vice President

Elected October 2006

Retired June 2008

With a background in administration, training and community relations, Robyn has worked in the mining, advertising, petroleum and management education industries. She is an Administration Manager and Executive Officer of a small philanthropic foundation. Robyn resides in Bayside with her husband and two children.

### Anthony Hurd – 2nd Vice President

Elected September 2004

Tony is an experienced General Manager with extensive local and international experience in manufacturing, marketing and retailing 'blue chip' icon brands which include ACI, Nylex, Black and Decker and Wesfarmers. His current position is Global Sourcing Manager with Bunnings Group Limited. He is a local bayside resident enjoying the challenge of rearing a young family aged 3, 5, 7 and 9 years!

### Graeme Seamer – Treasurer

Elected September 2004

Graeme has a teaching background and was formerly a Senior Education Officer with the Southern Metropolitan Region of the Department of Education. He continues to work with schools and the Department as a consultant. Prior to joining the Board of Family Life, Graeme was a member of the School Focussed Youth Service Reference Group. Graeme is a resident of Glen Eira.

### David Edney – Secretary

Elected November 2005

David is a Partner at CE Family Lawyers, a legal firm specialising in family and de facto law. David is Chair of the Family Law Advisory Group of the Law Institute of Victoria. He works as an Independent Children's Lawyer in the Family Court and Federal Magistrates' Court. David is also a member of the Family Law Assessment Group FLAG which is a group of psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors who prepare family reports in the Family Court and Federal Magistrates' Court. David lives and works in the Bayside community.

### **Rosemary Addis**

Elected November 2007

Rosemary is Assistant Director, National Reform in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet. Prior to taking this role she had a portfolio of Board and consulting work leading governance, social and policy initiatives for a range of organisations, building on a background as a senior executive in law and management. She has helped shape the strategic thinking of a number of corporate, philanthropic and community organisations. Rosemary is an internationally accredited broker of cross sector partnerships and a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### **Joseph Cauchi**

Elected October 2006

Joe is a social worker, having worked in Canada with the Children's Aid Society, the statutory child welfare agency in Ontario. On his return to Australia he joined the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau's adoption program. In 1991 he was appointed Regional Director of Counselling at the Family Court of Australia. Joe is currently Director of Sustainable Communities at Mornington Peninsula Shire. Joe lives in Parkdale with his wife; they have three children and recently became grandparents.

### **Ann Corcoran**

Elected November 2007

Ann is currently the Interim Student Ombudsman at Monash University and works at De La Salle College in Malvern as the Data Manager. She was a Member of Federal Parliament, representing the seat of Isaacs for the Labor Party from 2000 to 2007. Ann is an accountant and has worked in senior roles in public hospitals, universities and schools over the last 20 years. Ann has four adult children and a growing team of young grandchildren.

### **Jennifer Douglas**

Elected November 2007

Jennifer is Director of the Operations Strategy Group of Telstra, having responsibility for operational strategy, business improvement and strategic support services. Prior to this role, Jennifer spent many years practising as a corporate lawyer including as the General Counsel of Sensis and in researching areas of law and policy requiring reform. Jennifer loves living in Bayside with her husband and three young boys and is an active member of school and community groups.

### **Len Gill**

Appointed to vacancy June 2008

Len is a professional engineer, with a career in management in the electricity and gas industries. He is currently Chairman of Babcock and Brown Power and has his own energy and management consultancy. Len was previously CEO of TXU Australia TRUenergy. He is convenor of the Family Life Enterprises Sub Board. Len has three adult children and lives in Bayside with his partner Yvonne and her son.

### **Vivian Keating**

Elected September 2002

Retiring 2008

A resident of Kingston and former staff member of Family Life, Vivian operates her own investment business and property management company called Balcombe Apartments, in Kingston.

### **Felicity O'Shannassy**

Elected December 2003

Felicity is a consultant with SMS Management and Technology. She has experience across both the public and private sectors, particularly in the areas of strategic planning, change management, project and program management, strategic procurement, relationship and risk management, policy development and service delivery. Felicity resides in Glen Eira.

### **Stephen Tickell**

Elected October 2006

Stephen is a Licensed Estate Agent and Director of the Hocking Stuart Real Estate Franchise Group, having worked in the industry for over 20 years. Stephen plays an active role in Bayside community life and has always been passionate about creating the best possible environment for youngsters in our community. He lives with his wife Eileen and four children in Sandringham.

# From the President



As President of Family Life it is my pleasure to commend to you, the Annual Report for 2007/2008. The effectiveness of Family Life's work responding to the needs of those at risk and vulnerable, and promoting wellbeing for all families, children and young people, has been recognised by increased support from Federal and State Government and community and philanthropic donors.

From 2006 to 2008 we have experienced a total financial growth – from \$1,967,852 to \$4,346,479 = 121% increase.

Our volunteer growth in number of contributed hours valued at \$25 per hour grew from \$750,000 to \$1,060,000 = 114% increase.

And in October 2007 Family Life realised the great Australian dream and became the proud owners of a property gifted to the agency to develop as

a community house for the benefit of families in the city of Kingston. This timely donation supports the opening of the new service centre in Chelsea, planning for which has been underway for most of 2007/2008.

This increase in financial support and acquisition of an enduring asset has been a critical goal for the CEO and Board over the last forward plan from 2004 to 2008. As we undertook to clarify and prepare our strategy ready to start the 2008/2009 financial year and next three year focus, it is indeed reassuring to be able to present to you a community agency which has applied best practice in governance and financial management to ensure the continuity of our great work in the community.

All Board members have had the opportunity to meet those who have benefited from Family Life and receive regular reports about the quantity, quality and impact of services. These people and their stories are all inspirational, as is the work and expertise of our staff and volunteers. They get alongside people in local neighbourhoods to help the vulnerable become able and create a legacy of change. We hear and see how those who have become "able" pass on their learning and growth with strengthened self-belief and skills, contributing as community volunteers and local leaders: others take up a course and become employed. Other families tell stories of the relief that flowed from timely access to an education program or qualified counsellor to help them through a stressful period.

It is the consistent evidence of the value of Family Life as a community agency, finely attuned to what is needed in the communities we serve, that motivates the individuals who form the Board of Family Life. As President I was present for the feedback from the external quality auditors appointed by the Federal Government in June 2008. It was an impressive report of a highly accountable, quality organisation. Family Life achieved a rating of 100% compliance on all required standards and operational practices.

If you read this as a member of Government or current supporter or donor, I congratulate you on your support for Family Life. Your confidence is well placed that people are receiving the help they need and problems are being prevented from escalating. You can also be confident that Family Life will act when we believe people, and particularly children and young people, are at risk of harm, violence, neglect or abuse. This is a big responsibility which brings stress and the need for a highly skilled, well supported workforce. Our newspapers too regularly report on the tragic consequences which can occur when the quality services and the skilled staff are not available.

On a personal level due to a relocation overseas with my family, it is with great sadness that I have resigned from the position of President and from the Board of Family Life.

I am confident from my brief time involved in this sector that we have a Board, CEO, Management Team and Staff that are second to none. Given our role in society it is all about our human assets and we are blessed.

Being involved with Family Life is a humbling, inspirational and educational experience. I urge you to continue to support this wonderful learning organisation and to get involved, as the experience is truly a privilege.

I look forward to watching the continuing growth and success of the agency and I encourage you to join me in supporting Family Life by making a donation to help us finish building our Family Life Centre in Edithvale. Please make a donation today, phone 8599 5433 or visit [www.familylife.com.au](http://www.familylife.com.au)

**Mark Vassella**



# CEO's Report



## capable communities strong families thriving children

This is Family Life's vision for our communities and society; that all neighbourhoods have the networks and relationships for looking after all community members; that all families are supported through normal life changes as well as times of stress, risk and vulnerability; and that by working with communities and families, we help to provide the context where all children can thrive, now and throughout their development to adulthood and full citizenship responsibilities.

This new Vision statement was finalised as an outcome of our consultations and discussions to set the Family Life Forward Plan for 2008 to 2011. We also reviewed our Mission to ensure relevance and focus for applying knowledge and practice innovations in pursuit of our vision.

*Our Mission is to create caring capable communities by:*

*Supporting and strengthening the most vulnerable families, children and young people*

*Innovating and advocating for social inclusion*

*Growing community connections and contributions for the benefit of all*

The new Vision and Mission statements evolved from staff planning days, reviews of research and social issues, consultations with Local Government, surveys and feedback from clients, volunteers, Government and community agencies. This all occurred over a number of months to ensure we considered the feedback and ideas of key stakeholders about the best role our community agency can play to help the most vulnerable and promote wellbeing for everyone in the communities we serve. We sought feedback on what we do well, what we can do better and anything else we could be doing.

In translating our Vision and Mission into action based on the feedback provided, Family Life has committed to the following six key Strategic Outcomes with action plans and measures to track how much we do, how well we do it and what difference we make.

1. Vulnerable families children and youth have improved quality of life in the communities Family Life serves.

2. The Family Life whole-of-community model is implemented in the communities we serve.
3. Family Life provides a range of services for all families, families at risk and vulnerable families.
4. Family Life is recognised as a provider of innovative effective quality services.
5. Family Life has capacity for innovation and advocacy.
6. Family Life is recognised as an employer of choice.

Our Forward Plan for 2008 to 2011 builds on the achievements and learning from the past years. We have grown our capacity to respond to needs with increased funding from Federal and State Government and community supporters extending our reach across the southern suburbs from the City of Port Phillip to the Mornington Peninsula Shire. Family Life service centres are located in Sandringham and Frankston with Chelsea to open soon. Each service centre is the hub from which staff and volunteers go out into homes, schools and community venues to provide education and skills programs which can benefit any family, counselling and support services for those experiencing stress and risks, and community engagement with extended support services for the most vulnerable, where child protection intervention may have occurred. Our comprehensive approach is documented in our whole of community model.

Examples of the inspirational outcomes achieved by our staff and volunteers can be found on our website and in recent publications such as *Creating Capable Communities: celebrating a journey* and the *Community Bubs* research report.

To our Family Services expertise we have added the SHINE specialist pilot programs targeted to improving mental health for children where there are risks of anxiety, depression and conduct disorders. Family Life has a track record for innovation to resolve social issues and for sharing our learning for broader dissemination, adaptation and replication. With this significant funding from the Australian Government we are excited about the early evidence from SHINE that these serious and growing problems for children can be successfully prevented and treated.

Most significantly our Forward Plan surveys (conducted by an independent consultant) returned a finding that **95% of the people surveyed are either satisfied or totally satisfied with their experience of Family Life**. Respondents welcomed Family Life maintaining our strong community links whilst growing significantly. This was seen to be a distinctive achievement which enhanced the value of services and delivered benefits for the whole community. **Clients, volunteers and service partners all provided feedback that “Family Life does a good job of helping the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.”**

However, as reflected in our Mission statement and strategic outcomes, helping the most vulnerable is not enough. Our business model requires us to work to meet needs and promote wellbeing. Beyond protecting children from abuse and neglect, we believe all neighbourhoods and families should have the support and services they need to ensure children's wellbeing. If we provide a healthy, growth-promoting and empowering context, our experience is that most parents and adults rise to the opportunity to improve their skills, parenting and community participation.

Certainly the levels of complexity of problems multiply what is needed to create an impact and sometimes we are not successful. In particular, drug and alcohol abuse associated with family violence, poverty and homelessness can create the most isolated and dangerous situations for children and young people. Whilst we continue to pursue the possibility for change with every individual, it is society's obligation to change the conditions which contribute to creating these problems. And sometimes this will require courageous advocacy and legislative change. Family Life is an active participant with sector colleagues in constructive advocacy for community benefit.

*...while many Australian children and adolescents are faring well, some experience considerably worse health, poorer developmental and learning outcomes and generally reduced wellbeing... Children and young people living in*

*socioeconomically disadvantaged areas also have worse health and education outcomes... Australia has the second highest percentage of children living in jobless families in the OECD and ranks in the bottom third in the under-5 mortality rate.*

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2008. Making progress: the health, development and wellbeing of Australia's children and young people. Cat. no. PHE 104. Canberra: AIHW. Page 2.

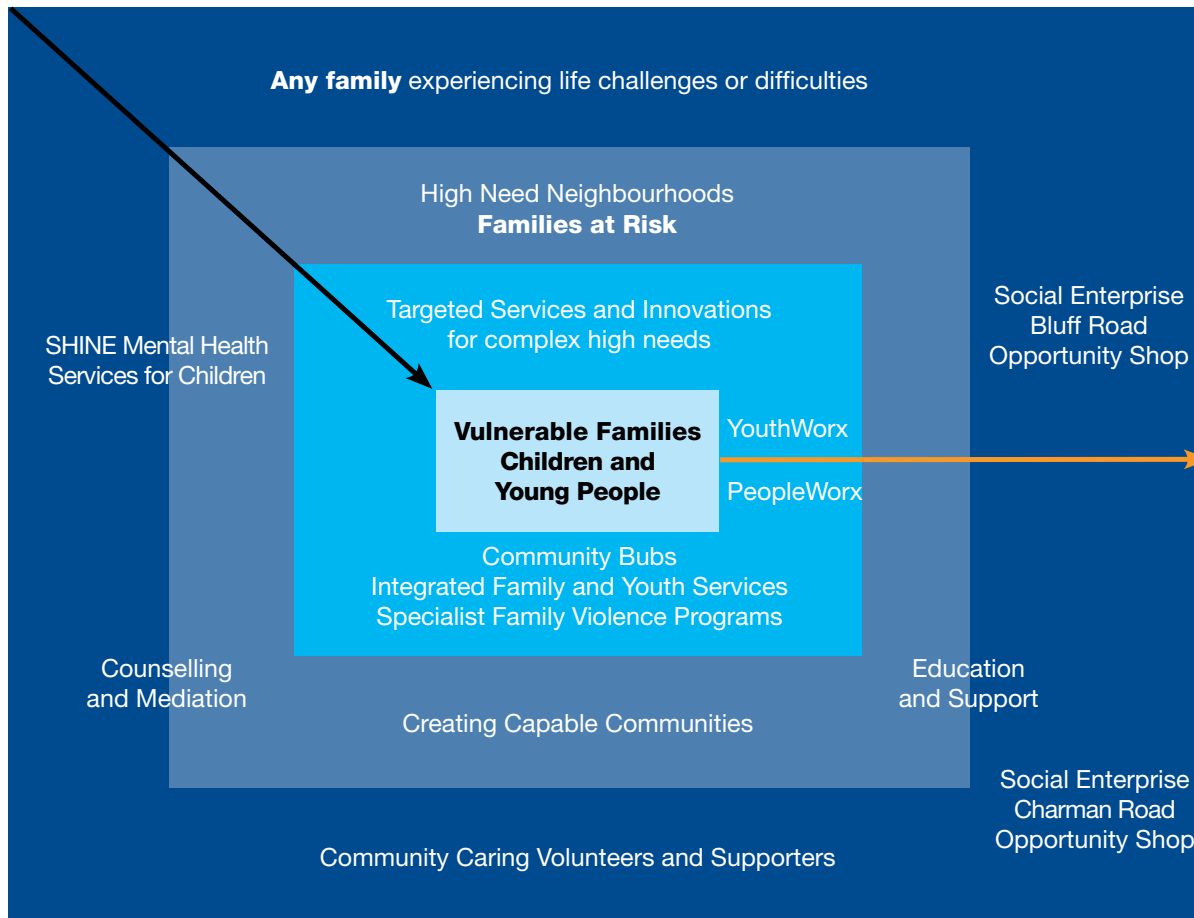
The same compassion and commitment the community gives to curing preventable diseases must apply to addressing these critical problems and promoting safety and wellbeing for all children and young people. It is in everyone's best interests for all our children to do well and grow into healthy and responsible citizens able to meet the challenges of the future, including the care required for an ageing population. It is in everyone's interests to create capable communities and strong families to nurture and develop thriving children for the benefit of all.

Thank you to all who have supported our work over the past year and I encourage you, your families, friends and colleagues to join with us to do even better in the coming years.

Best wishes  
**Jo Cavanagh**

# Capable Communities

## Whole of Community Model



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↓ Working through the community context, to respond to needs and promote wellbeing.

↓ Creating opportunities and pathways for social and economic participation with support.

## Community Service and Enterprise Model

Across all Family Life Service Centres and outreach programs, we have responded to needs and helped more than 5,000 families in 2007/2008 through:

- Information and referral
- Parenting and skills seminars
- School and community education forums
- Community events and activities
- Home-visiting
- Centre-based counselling
- Therapeutic groups
- Mediation and dispute resolution
- Training and employment programs

In addition, Family Life has participated in numerous consultations with Government, taking our knowledge from services into advocacy and policy development opportunities, to promote wellbeing for the most vulnerable, the at-risk and all families who can face challenging life transitions and problems.



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Family Life operates within the legislative framework of our national and state governments. Both levels of Government have based the Family Law Act (1975) and Children Youth and Families Act (2005) on ensuring “the best interests of the child.” This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) to which Australia is a signatory. Adults are the decision makers who translate this responsibility into creating the environment in which children can grow and develop. Adults have the responsibility for ensuring a society which provides the resources, services and skills at the local neighbourhood level where this nurturing environment is needed.

**Creating Capable Communities** is a Family Life program which translates this understanding and responsibility into action with a particular focus on children living in vulnerable and disadvantaged environments. The story of the evolution of the program and participants over the past 10 years was published in May 2008 in the *Creating Capable Communities: celebrating a journey* story book. The book includes inspirational stories of personal journeys, from:

*Isolation to friendships*

*Fear to safety*

*Listening to action*

*Hoping to happening*

The book is a moving testament to the changes in people's lives when they receive timely support through difficult times, and when they have the opportunities to contribute and participate.

*“I want to show families that they don't have to be in a dark place – there are things to look forward to and opportunities to grasp that will help them.” Resident*

Importantly the adults who tell these stories have responsibilities for children. And the staff, volunteers and supporters of the program are also adults, who are helping to make sure these parents are resourced and enabled to provide the best environment they can for their children, for them to be healthy, meeting their developmental milestones and bridging the gap between home to the diverse opportunities available in the broader community. Some parents have very complex challenges and problems which interfere with their parenting. Through Creating Capable Communities they can develop personal and social skills necessary to be a healthy, active, participating parent and member of the community.

30 families participating in Creating Capable Communities returned questionnaires in 2007.

- 100% made new friends
- 61% were more aware of their child's needs
- 72% had increased self-confidence
- 88% had a better knowledge of community services and supports
- 88% were more able to use those community resources
- 66% had learnt new skills to assist with further education and employment
- 33% had started a job, course or voluntary work

These responses indicate the importance and value of the program in improving the lives of families and children living in disadvantaged circumstances.

In 2007/2008

- 50 families attended Community House programs
- 30 families per month used Family Life Family Support services provided from the Highett Child and Family Services Hub
- 140 families participated in community events

# Capable Communities

**Community volunteers** support the Family Life workers to run playgroups and activities at two community venues; the Keith Street Community House and Dunkley Avenue Community Centre. Volunteers provide invaluable relationships and support for parents and children, helping with learning new skills and about the opportunities available in the wider community.

Baby showers, children's birthday celebrations and BBQs are celebrated at the community houses which have become hubs and special places for people to come together.

*"I feel so much pride in being able to make a small difference in families' lives. Having been involved for a number of years I see how the parents and the children have better lives and the possibility of a brighter future."* Volunteer

The documented success of Creating Capable Communities has inspired Family Life to strive to replicate the program across all the communities we serve, focussing on the identified high need neighbourhoods where families may be struggling with daily life and the care of their children. Chelsea, Frankston and Rosebud West are our priorities for 2008 to 2011.

Examples of activities we are seeking to replicate include the following:

- A community house where local families socialise
- A Breakfast Club providing a nutritious breakfast for children prior to school
- An After School Club where children and teenagers receive support and assistance with homework and recreation
- Community events and BBQs where people make friends and build networks of support
- Parent education and support programs

**Creating Capable Leaders** supports parents living in public housing to build leadership skills for running local projects to benefit themselves and their community.

In 2007/2008 two Leadership training programs were conducted, with 15 residents completing the training. Partnerships with local community organisations, Sandybeach Centre and Hampton Community Centre provided pathways for residents wanting to enrol in additional courses and learning opportunities.

Projects developed by the graduates included:

- An introductory one-day forum for single parents returning to work. Topics included self-confidence, resumé writing and interview skills
- Introducing parents to Family Life's PeopleWorx return to work program and other local education and employment services
- Planning for a follow-on eight week program for single parents wishing to return to work jointly run with PeopleWorx to commence early 2009

Participants reported gaining:

- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Learning new skills such as project planning, presentation skills, public speaking, networking and evaluation
- Increased networks and pathways for development of training and job skills

*"By focussing on helping others, people are actually helping themselves and the issues they are facing in their own lives. The opportunity to allow dreaming and goal setting in a person's life can have a dramatic impact on their sense of purpose and hope for the future."* Leadership Trainer

The Board, CEO and Management Team wish to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions, expertise, and dedication of Family Life staff who every day work to achieve capable communities, strong families, and thriving children. Without our staff, all the special work documented in this Annual Report could not happen. Thank you one and all.



# Strong Families

## Parenting and Relationship Skills

Part of the Australian Government-funded services for **Frankston** and the **Mornington Peninsula** includes parent and relationship education and skills development. This is a welcome and significant contribution to helping to build strong families.

Family Life provides these services within our community model, maximising what we can do through schools and early childhood services as well as ensuring we reach those families less likely to ask for help and living in high need neighbourhoods.

Family Life Frankston has developed a range of education and support programs, responding specifically to local needs and often provided in partnership with other key service agencies in the area. This cost effective, collaborative approach is a great example of the capacity of community agencies to deliver best value for Government funding for the benefit of the community.

Examples include:

**Living In a Step Family** – advice and strategies for parents and step-parents to support children in blended families.

**Challenging Behaviours** – parenting strategies for parents of children with challenging behaviours. Partnership with Anglicare and Parent Zone.

**Parenting After Separation** – seminars providing advice and strategies for being effective and caring parents, post separation.

**Crossing the Bridge** – relationships education focusing on communication skills to improve key relationships.

**Within My Reach** – Relationship Education in Schools for year 7 students. Six week relationship education skills program including dealing with conflict, problem solving and building relationships.

Family Life was among the sponsors of the **Men's Health Forum** organised by Men's Health Matters, a local group concerned with promoting good health and wellbeing for men. The forum was attended by a capacity audience of 400 who were treated to an evening of quality presentations from some of Australia's biggest names in men's health and sport.

Family Life provided a display to promote our services and activities for Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. We spoke to 70 participants and enrolled men for our **Men's Communication Workshop**.

The workshop provided a rare and much needed opportunity for men in the Mornington Peninsula area to gather to discuss and develop their communication skills. Men attended for different reasons; some to develop their communication with their partners, others, who were recently separated, were motivated to develop more helpful and respectful communications with their children and the other parent. Several men were experiencing communication difficulties with children, while others were wishing to develop skills in conflict resolution with work colleagues and employers.

*"It is really hard, when I feel like I want to explode and all I can feel is anger – I'm practising going for a walk when I start to feel my neck and head get hot."* Participant

**Three Men and A Baby** – support group for young dads run with the Maternal Health Centre in Rosebud.



**My dress, My image, My choice**<sup>1</sup> – Family Life supported Frankston Council in engaging members of the Afghan, Greek, Italian, Russian, Polish, South American, Bosnian and Chinese communities to attend an educational community day. During the day, Muslim women modelled their own clothes including bridal and swim wear, and talked about their choices of clothing. The ingredients of this program are what made it so popular... great food, conversation and of course fashion! Following on from the success of the day, the program was adapted for year 7 girls at three secondary schools.

<sup>1</sup>My dress, My image, My choice is a non profit project operating under EVE, a women's only community initiative aimed at initiating and promoting dialogue between women of different faiths and backgrounds to create a truly harmonious intercultural Australian society.

**Parenting Group for Africans** specially targeted to new arrivals from African communities where they can discuss parenting strategies in their new Australian context and be helped to link into additional community support networks.

Similarly, Australian Government funded services for the Bayside and Kingston areas have enabled Family Life to deliver a range of community forums, for both students within schools and the general community. Themes of the forums include developing healthy relationships and understanding and preventing family violence.

Examples include:

**Men's Behaviour Change** and family violence at Chisholm TAFE.

**Anger Management** for year 11 students.

**Respectful and Abusive Relationships** for year 11 students.

**Bullying** and the collusion of 'seeing and not doing anything' for children aged 9 to 14.

**Parenting Your Teenager** provided parents with education, skills, support and the opportunity to network.



# Strong Families

## Family Dispute Resolution

The Family Law Act since June 2008 requires separating couples to attend dispute resolution and develop a parenting-plan for how they will care for their children, post-separation.

Family Life is implementing a specific “theory of change” program to optimise the potential for this process to be successful in helping parents to resolve immediate and future conflicts.

Our theory of change is that parents need knowledge and new skills to be able to act differently from the past, interact more respectfully and constructively in the present, and learn a new way for approaching difficulties in the future.

### Step 1.

At the ‘Consider The Children’ two hour seminar parents learn about the ages and stages of children, the impact of conflict on a child’s development supported by international research, and what they need to be able to do to make a workable parenting plan.

*“I learnt that the conflict is really bad for my child and I didn’t realise it was affecting them.”* Parent

### Step 2.

The ‘Working it Out’ two hour seminar provides an interactive process for learning new communication skills for listening and speaking.

The objective is to demonstrate what constitutes good communication, understanding one’s own communication style and that of the other parent, and how to look for ways of improving communication. If parents progress to mediation, the mediators will use a coaching method to help them apply this knowledge and learning, to the particular issues they need to resolve.

*“I learnt that my communication style is opposite to my ex’s and I might need to change the way I approach things.”* Participant

*“I learnt I need to think before I speak and to talk more slowly.”* Participant

*“The value of listening.”* Participant

Attendance at these compulsory seminars assists parents to shift their focus from feeling angry at the other parent to thinking about the wellbeing of their children.

Consider the Children: July 2007 to June 2008  
– 246 participants

Working It Out: September 2007 to June 2008  
– 214 participants

*“I learnt that I’m not the only one going through this. That even though I hate my ex, I love my kids and we will always be parents so we have to work something out to make sure they’re ok.”* Participant

### Step 3.

Further assessment and mediation. Family Dispute Resolution services were attended by 101 parents during the year. They developed skills and strategies, not only for resolving existing issues, but also for resolving some of the future challenges they might face as their children grow older.

*“I learnt that I can’t send messages to my ex through my children.”* Participant

*“I wish I had this information before getting married.”* Participant

*“The most important thing I have learned is how to handle separation better as my child gets older.”* Participant

## Who could use the service?

Any family, mum or dad wanting to improve the way they communicate with their loved ones.

Parents who are separating.

A mum or dad wishing to relocate overseas or interstate.

A parent or grandparent with guardianship, wishing to change the surname of a child.

A parent who has not had contact with the child/ children for a period of time, wishing to have contact.

Issues affecting some of these families include:

- Drug and alcohol problems
- Family violence

- Mental health concerns
- Transient housing
- Low income and/or unemployment

Where appropriate, children are being interviewed as part of the Family Mediation process. This enables children and young people to have the chance to speak to a practitioner about what they are thinking and feeling in relation to their separated parents. Themes from the session are fed back to both parents at a separate appointment.

*"I hadn't realised how much our fighting was affecting our children. I thought they didn't even know what was happening."* Parent

### Family Counselling and Support

Over 400 families with dependent children received a specialist counselling and support service, with priority given to those most at risk. Help was provided for:

- Relationship issues
- Separation
- Parenting
- Major life changes
- Communication with family members
- Family violence
- Loss and grief

While some families found that they only needed a one hour consultation, others benefited from an extended service.

**Family Life Chelsea** has been under development for the past year with help from key community supporters committed to helping us to increase our capacity to respond to local needs in the City of Kingston.

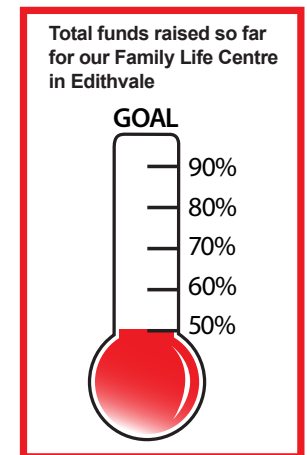
Thanks to an extraordinary gift from Roger and Pat Riordan, Family Life owns a property in Edithvale. Brian Lowe and local supporters are helping with renovations to create a Family Life Community House on the site (the environment needed for replicating Creating Capable Communities and Community Bubs), where local families can meet to make friendships, learn skills, and increase their connection into their own community.

A needs analysis of Chelsea and Edithvale recommends we focus on:

- Children and families at risk and subject to the increased reports received by Department of Human Services Child Protection Unit
- Young people and families in conflict
- Support for single and separated dads (aged 30-45 years) needing support to have quality contact with their children and experiencing isolation with few supports and networks
- Education and support services for separated parents

- Mental health services for both children and parents
- Post-natal depression services
- Social enterprise, employment and social engagement

**If you would like to be part of this exciting community project by making a donation or volunteering your time, please contact Family Life phone 8599 5433 or [www.familylife.com.au](http://www.familylife.com.au)**



# Strong Families

**Violence** takes many forms in our society: it occurs at the individual and societal level and constitutes a violation of human rights. Violence in families and relationships damages people's lives and can lead to loss of life.

*...Australians are most likely to be killed by someone they know. Male victims are most likely to be killed by a friend or acquaintance, and are most likely to be killed following an argument or altercation involving alcohol, drugs or money or other reason (51%). Females are most likely to be killed by a male intimate partner, and the killing is most likely to be a result of a domestic altercation (58%), which includes arguments based on jealousy, separation or termination of a relationship, infidelity, children and custody issues, alcohol fuelled domestic altercations or other issues between intimate or past intimate partners.*

Homicide in Australia : 2005-2006 National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) annual report 2007.

Violence is a serious issue in our community and a preventable problem.

In the past year Family Life has worked in partnership with a range of key agencies across the southern suburbs to grow service responses for preventing and treating family violence.

The Victorian Government has implemented a key commitment to stop family violence and the Chief Commissioner of Police, Christine Nixon has had a critical role in leading the drive for reform.

Family Life has been a pioneer in this field with our first program for men, MATES commencing in 1986 followed by the groups for women. Our report Through the Eyes of the Children: Families and Violence published in 1998 made a significant contribution to the development of whole of family responses and was recognised with a national award in 1999. The STAR program for children affected by violence is still identified as an Australian good practice program. These were all new approaches in their time. Now they are part of standard practice.

**This is a great example of Family Life's history of innovation and advocacy for contributing to effective practice models and service system development.**

Family violence and child abuse know no boundaries, occurring in households across the socio-economic spectrum. Disturbing emerging trends include an increase in violence being perpetrated by adolescents against their parents. In some instances the adolescent is mimicking the abuse he or she has observed being perpetrated by an adult while in other instances the abuse may be triggered by substance abuse or an inflated sense of entitlement.

During the past year, Family Life Sandringham received an increased number of referrals where family violence was an issue. Specialist family violence services were provided to 92 women, 119 men and 15 children and adolescents.

**Women report that it takes considerable courage to seek help; for many, fear of retribution by their partner looms ever present, but the over-riding impetus to seek help, is to create a healthier environment for their children.**

Women participating in the Making Choices and Creating Connections groups provide powerful feedback about the value of the skilled support over time for them to make and sustain change for the benefit of their children and themselves.

*"I feel more confident and assertive."* Participant

*"My children are much happier now."* Participant

*"I don't take anger out on those who love me. I talk to them about the situation and how it has affected me."* Participant

*"I am not blaming myself now, and I am avoiding situations where the violence may occur."* Participant

Family Life has a partnership with Intimo lingerie dedicated to preventing violence and promoting healthy relationships. Family Life helped develop the messages that Intimo consultants deliver to thousands of women every week across Australia and New Zealand about what is violence and how to get help. (see [www.intimo.com.au](http://www.intimo.com.au) – Intimo Aware)

In return Intimo provide funds to support our services which this year included a therapeutic mosaic art project. This produced outstanding results both in the women's sense of achievement and pride and the beautiful artwork shown here.



*"Learning mosaics gave everyone a common connection with others and a sense of achievement."* Participant

**The MATES** program includes men mandated by the Courts to attend with a requirement to change their abusive and violent behaviour which is usually harming women and children.

Groups ran throughout the year from the Sandringham service centre, with each group running for 16 sessions of 2.5 hours. Men learned to identify their abusive behaviours and strategies they could use to stop their violence.

*"I need to be curious and ask questions of my wife, not react with criticism – explore her ideas."* Participant

*"I need to take time to calm down and talk back to my negative thinking and feelings."* Participant

*"Her negative qualities don't cancel out her positive qualities."* Participant

*"I want to be independent and not isolated."* Participant

*"I will work on being calmer."* Participant

Most men reported that they were less violent, however the most significant indication of improved behaviour was the feedback from their partners.

*"Things are a bit better at home now – and the kids seem more settled."*

**M.E.N.S. – (Men Exploring Non-Violent Solutions)** is run in Mornington by Peninsula Community Health Service, supported by Family Life and includes a weekly support group to help men manage their anger and develop non-violent strategies for responding to everyday situations and conflict. 112 men participated in this program over the past year.

The Family Relationship Centre at Frankston had 1,453 clients over the past year with family violence present in approximately 60% of cases.

Our work with separating families includes helping parents to understand the impact of violence or any ongoing conflict on their children and coaching them to learn new communication skills. A structured approach for which staff receive additional accredited training through In Process Inc helps parents learn to manage their anxiety and emotions during negotiations and conflict resolution.

*"The whole session was very, very worthwhile and has given me many insights especially in regard to how our communication/parenting/conflict impacts on our children."*

"Mum and dad were unable to reach agreement over the amount of time each would spend with their 3 year old son. Dad initiated Family Dispute Resolution... After several communication coaching sessions in which they learned to control their emotions, mum and dad developed a new parenting plan which included a shared pick/up drop/off for their child and an increase in the amount of time dad could spend with his son. By the end of the session, mum had invited dad to share the child's birthday celebration which dad eagerly accepted."

# Thriving Children

## Caring for Vulnerable Children

In recognition of the need for a more co-ordinated response to the care of our most vulnerable children, significant Government reforms were legislated with the Child Youth and Families Act (2005). In the past year, Family Life Sandringham has been intensely involved in the implementation of these reforms for the communities in the five Local Government areas of Port Phillip, Stonnington, Glen Eira, Kingston and Bayside. This has been a very challenging time as we work with an Alliance of seven Government funded family service agencies to streamline responses to vulnerable families and promote their smoother progress and engagement with the services they need.

During the last year, Family Life was part of the leading group of agencies which achieved a successful contract to develop a new centralised phone referral and intake service, located at our Sandringham centre with increased family services staff to serve Bayside, Kingston and Glen Eira. During the two months of operation from May to June 2008, we received 247 referrals. Of these cases, 129 were assessed to be appropriate to receive services provided by our partner agencies whilst others were connected to another appropriate service for their needs.

As the lead agency, Family Life accepted 49 of these referrals including vulnerable families needing support from universal and specialist services (eg, drug, mental health and maternal welfare).

Caring for these families is complex and requires co-operation and a high degree of professionalism from the network agencies.

In these two months we received 31 child protection referrals, a 50% increase in the number of child protection cases. This is of course the major purpose of the reforms, to close the gap between child protection and family agencies and keep families out of the statutory system wherever possible. This is a shared, desired objective where it is in the best interests of the child. However, the closed integration creates the possibility of differences of assessment as to the need for statutory involvement. Family agencies can find themselves working with families where they assess the need for the involvement of a child protection worker and the statutory authority has a different view.

This is a challenge which all parties have committed to overcoming. We are seeking to achieve an improved system where families can get help to do better as parents, children can be kept safe from harm, and professionals can work together to provide the service which meets the best interests of the child. However, risks to children are dynamic – what is a risk but holding together one day, may fall apart the next and result in harm. An effectively resourced service system is essential for community agencies such as Family Life to do our part in protecting vulnerable children. Current funding has not kept pace with costs and this is a major concern to be addressed by the Victorian Government in the coming year.

*Mary, an indigenous grandmother, rang for assistance as she was caring for her own three children in their late teens and had recently taken on care of her four grandchildren, two of whom have medical and learning disabilities. Through the support of the integrated network of agencies Mary received assistance finding public housing and help getting the children connected into schools.*

The risks for these children are that the service system fails to support the grandmother who is the key to helping these children to thrive. Government has the responsibility to ensure that adequate services are funded and available to meet the universal and special needs of this family; the funded services must work flexibly and effectively to support grandma and the children, whilst a local network of extended family, friends and neighbours will be key to providing the day to day practical physical and emotional support to meet the extraordinary challenge this grandma faces to care for seven children.

## Article 19 Protection from Abuse and Neglect.

*The State has an obligation to protect children from all forms of maltreatment perpetrated by parents or others responsible for their care, and to undertake preventive and treatment programs in this regard. (our emphasis)*

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990.

**Community Bubs** is an innovative program for vulnerable (high-risk) families and their infants.

Through a model of intensive community-centred support, the program has achieved significant outcomes for vulnerable families. Evaluation by Monash University (2003 to 2006) found that for parents who completed the program 100% of the babies were able to remain safely at home in the care of their families.

This is a significant outcome, both for the wellbeing of the infant and the community.

Key features of the program include:

- Intensive professional support for the families
- Ongoing support for the families, provided by trained Family Life, Family Support volunteers
- A community house – where parents can meet, develop friendships, establish community connections and learn new skills

During 2007/2008 the Community Bubs program was expanded from the Bayside area, to include families living in the City of Kingston. A greater number of families with more complex needs and high-risk factors, including those families referred by the Department of Human Services, were included in the program.

During the year 27 families were referred to the Community Bubs program. Following assessment, 16 of these families went on to join the program. Some of the families were facing difficulties including financial problems, drug and alcohol dependence, low parenting skills, isolation, intellectual disability, relationship difficulties, mental health issues and family violence. All families referred were connected to another appropriate service.

Families were provided with an individually-tailored program, with the average length of support for each family being nine months. Volunteers have played an important role in providing eight of the families with ongoing care, support and assistance with their young families. The Community Bubs program provided pre-natal support to several young women; workers have assisted the mothers to prepare both physically and psychologically for the birth.

*“Casey” a 17-year-old pregnant mother commenced in the program at the very end of her pregnancy. Through support from the worker she managed to secure stable housing and ended a violent relationship with the baby’s father. She now attends a young mothers parenting group and has attached well with her new son.*

One mother who has previously been involved with the Community Bubs program continued to attend Keith Street Community House after she finished with the program. After experiencing a difficult transition in her life, she found herself unable to cope with her children for a period during which time she was assisted to place them into alternative care. The mother continued to keep her connections with Keith Street and re-engaged with a Family Life support worker to assist the return of her children – which she has been able to achieve.

The wellbeing of Community Bubs babies is measured against the following criteria and goals. Of the 16 families:

- 13 created and maintained community connections
- 12 infants were living safely at home
- 12 had reduced risk factors
- 13 showed an improvement in their bonding and attachment to their baby
- 12 achieved their goals
- 9 babies reached normal development milestones

Through the process of action research, the Community Bubs model continues to develop and improve.

# Thriving Children

## In 2008/2009 we will:

- Work in additional neighbourhoods, supporting more families and linking them into their local neighbourhood community centres
- Expand the range of ante natal support services for young women
- Develop programs that help dads to bond with their babies, increase their parenting skills and enjoy their families

The Community Bubs program is made possible by the generosity of Roger and Pat Riordan and their Cybec Foundation. From all of the babies who are now living safely in the care of their families and communities – ‘thank you’.

To download a copy of the Community Bubs research report visit [www.familylife.com.au](http://www.familylife.com.au)

## In Australia we have:

- *increasing numbers of child protection substantiations*
  - *the number of occasions where authorities found that a child either was or was likely to be harmed, abused or neglected increased by 45% from 40,416 in 2002/2003 to 58,563 in 2006/2007*

- *a high percentage of very young children involved in the child protection system*
  - *on average, 65% of children involved in the child protection system across Australia are younger than 10*
  - *the largest proportion of children admitted to care and protection orders in 2006/2007 were between 1 and 4 years of age*

Australia's Children Safe and Well; A national framework for protecting Australia's Children Australian Government May 2008 p6.

The Royal Women's Hospital referred a young pregnant mum, with mental health issues, to the Community Bubs program. The Family Life worker assisted the mum-to-be to:

- Identify the warning signs of her impending mental health problems
- Carefully plan her medication
- Learn about the effects of the medication on her unborn baby

Family members were encouraged to step in to support the mum especially after the birth when postnatal depression was likely to occur. This level of intensive planning, preparation and caring support enabled the new baby to be able to stay safely in the care of its family.

The risks for child abuse and neglect are increased by problems such as poverty, homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, domestic violence, mental health issues and social isolation. The substantial national and international research which confirms the clustering of these issues demands that we provide more intensively focussed and proven programs such as Community Bubs, integrated with family and neighbourhood supports, and access to the range of health, early childhood and parenting supports that **any family might need to ensure their children can thrive.**



## SHINE for Children

In 2007 Family Life received three years funding from the Australian Government to pilot an innovative program for improving mental health for children aged 8 to 14 and their families. SHINE – Support Help Information Networks and Education – reaches out to schools offering resilience programs which can benefit all children, provides additional support for children identified with early onset of symptoms of anxiety, depression and conduct disorders, and works with mental health services to support children whose parent is being treated for a mental health condition.

Importantly SHINE adds additional mental health expertise to our existing range of family services and community networks. This means we can “get in early” to prevent difficulties for children becoming an enduring problem and strengthen the coping skills and supports for families where mental health is an issue. Parenting Research Centre is working with Family Life to evaluate the impact of the range of services developed for the Australian Government to then share more broadly as part of the national initiative for improving mental health in Australia.

### Why SHINE?

*13.5% of 10 to 14 year olds in Australia have a mental health issue and most are not receiving professional help.*

Child and Adolescent component of the National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing (Sawyer et al 2000)

*73.8% of 21 year olds with a mental health disorder had a developmental history of a mental disorder.*

(Zubrick et al 1999:572)

*International research recommends targeted interventions for children and adolescents, to mediate specific risks and enhance protective factors.*

(Giesen, Searle and Sawyer 2006)

The SHINE projects cover Frankston/Mornington Peninsula and Bayside, Kingston and Glen Eira.

Specialist Family Life staff are providing:

- Mental Health information sessions in schools and community settings – for all the family
- Resilience programs in schools – helping children to develop positive strategies for coping with difficult situations

- Counselling, family support and advocacy integrated with specialist mental health providers

The SHINE projects have prioritised services for children and families living in areas identified with a clustering of the issues associated with higher incidence of mental health problems. These areas are targeted by the Victorian Government for community renewal investment.

Schools are the key setting for engaging with children at risk of developing mental health concerns where we are working in partnership with teachers and parents to build resilience training into the ongoing school program.

SHINE is already achieving great feedback from schools and parents about the benefits for children. We look forward to reporting on our results for all families, those at risk and the most vulnerable in coming years.



Kids SHINE brochure



# Thriving Children

## School Focussed Youth Service (SFYS) for Bayside and Kingston.

Funded by the State Government and led by Family Life, the School Focused Youth Service (SFYS) assists schools and agencies to develop partnerships to support young people 10 to 18 years old. The goals are to help young people continue their education and reduce the risk factors associated with self-harm, mental health issues and suicide, through developing integrated service responses and providing brokerage funding. The Family Life SFYS Coordinator plays a vital role in linking various service providers with schools, undertaking needs-analysis, identifying emerging issues and reporting to the State Government.

Services provided in the past year to 898 vulnerable young people include:

- Uniforms, books and a Met ticket to ensure a young person could get to school
- 5 day camp to Ballarat – to promote social development and connections to community, school and family
- “Girls on the Go” program for girls living in local public housing estate. Topics included body image, health and nutrition

## Y Space – Youth Participation and Access Program

(January to June 2008)

The Y Space youth group focussed on young people living in public housing in Bayside with tenuous connection to school.

Weekly activity sessions were held at the Family Life, Sandringham Centre, with regular excursions in our community bus.

Themes of particular interest to the young people were body image, alcohol and other drugs and mental health.

Family Life has unfortunately had to advise State Government that we can no longer continue to deliver this contract. Whilst the community need is there, and we have the expertise, we do not have the resources for the contract management of a separate small Government contract with yet another data collection and reporting system.

The onerous nature of compliance and regulation of the community sector needs attention at both national and state government levels. Family Life has been proactive in peak body leadership forums in contributing to calls for reform as well as providing constructive suggestions for alternative ways of moving forward with simplified and more effective accountability systems.



On behalf of the babies, children, young people and families whose lives are enriched and strengthened, we say an enormous 'thank you' to our team of 280 volunteers, who give so generously of their time, expertise and compassion.



# Volunteers

## Volunteering

280 volunteers contributed 42,500# hours. Valued at \$25 per hour, this equates to a contribution of \$1,060,000 in work effort, donated back into the community.

Thanks to our volunteers, Family Life provides a broader range of services to vulnerable families, children and young people and leverages the best value from our employed staff expertise.

## Volunteer Satisfaction Survey

As part of Family Life's forward planning process for 2008 to 2011, we surveyed our volunteers. Of the 260 surveys distributed, 76 replies were received.

- 95% of the volunteers who returned a survey were either satisfied or totally satisfied with their volunteering experience at Family Life
- 11 volunteers have been volunteering with Family Life for more than 15 years
- 4 of these 11 people, have been volunteering with Family Life for more than 30 years!

**Our Board** who are all volunteers, provide strategic advice and governance, ensuring that Family Life is run ethically, responsibly, holds true to its Mission and plans for a sustainable future – ensuring that generations to come will continue to benefit from our Founders' vision.

# Estimated

## Family and Community Support Volunteers – 24

- Support families living in public housing estates through the Creating Capable Communities program
- Provide care and support to vulnerable families through regular home visits
- Provide support and long-term care for vulnerable families and their new babies
- Co-facilitate training sessions

## Opportunity Shop Volunteers at 355c Bluff Road Hampton East – 76

Run by volunteers, aged from 16 to 85, this enterprise raised \$196,301, providing much needed funds to support programs for vulnerable young people, including counselling, outreach, family mediation, housing support, training programs and youth activities. This was indeed a stellar year for the Bluff Road team; in May they achieved an all time record of \$20,000 in sales. This enterprise also provides an important social value to the local community, many of whom live in the local public housing estate. Having a friendly place to visit, making an inexpensive purchase and having a chat, all help people to feel connected and belonging, not to mention the vital role the shop plays in recycling.

## Opportunity Shop Volunteers at 316-318 Charman Road Cheltenham – 40

This opportunity shop hosts the PeopleWorx and YouthWorx social enterprise programs. These innovative programs provided 42 people who were not connected with school or work, retail training, work experience and personal support. The 40 adult volunteers at this enterprise help to run the business and provide essential mentoring and personal support to the program participants. Since opening in August 2007, the newly relocated enterprise has made \$219,311 in sales, putting it well on track to become fully sustainable by 2009.

*“Ben\*” – 27: unemployed for many years. Engaged with PeopleWorx program for 12 weeks, receiving personal coaching, training and support. Has taken a job as a fruit picker.*

*“Jenny\*” – 32: referred to PeopleWorx by Family Life counsellor. Experiencing grief at recent loss of a family member. Has become an eager participant in the program and who, according to her counsellor, is making positive personal progress.*

*“Grace\*” – 18: was being bullied at school and had low self esteem. With a passion for fashion, she has ‘blossomed’ thanks to the support of the adult mentors, learned retail skills and feels ready to apply to attend a TAFE course in retail marketing.*

\* Details have been modified to protect the identities of participants.

Raising a significant \$100,000, the volunteer events teams are a major asset to the agency. Whilst raising much needed additional funding they helped to promote the community's awareness of Family Life. Our **Events** demonstrate how communities can rally together to support those amongst us who need help.

Organised by a core team of eight volunteers, and supported by many more people, the Bollywood themed **Ball** was a great success with guests praising the happy atmosphere, great dancing and delicious food.

Held in Sandringham and organised by a core team of four volunteers and supported by a further 60 volunteers, the **Open Garden Day** provided

over 800 guests the opportunity to visit six delightful gardens, many of which had water-saving features and to socialise within their community.

Run by a team of five volunteers, the Family Life **Golf Day** is quite a fixture on business people's calendars. It was indeed another fantastic day; guests enjoyed a great game of golf and socialising at the beautiful Victoria Golf Club, who were most generous in their support of Family Life.

A team of **12 Youth Support volunteers** work at our **Breakfast Club** and **After School Club** on the Dunkley public housing estate in Highett. They provide crucial support to the local young people ensuring they start their school day with a nutritious breakfast and have somewhere safe and supportive to go after school.

**Maintenance** of our sites is supported by two dedicated volunteers, whose skilled labour has saved the agency thousands of dollars.

### Reception and Administration

Three volunteers in our reception and administration team provide loyal, efficient and professional work supporting the management of files, enabling the front office staff to attend training and meetings and completing numerous administration tasks.

And to our wonderful **Patrons**, Mr Justice (John) Fogarty. AM and Mr Graeme Disney. OAM, we say thank you for your wisdom and guidance.

Please visit [www.familylife.com.au](http://www.familylife.com.au) for information about how you can volunteer.



# Community Relations

**Community Relations** is the operational unit responsible for enabling individuals, groups and businesses to participate in creating caring capable communities for the benefit of all.

Whether by volunteering, donating or sponsoring community events, the role of Community Relations is to promote and facilitate involvement. Over the past year this has included expanded opportunities to document and share what Family Life does, as well as opportunities to participate.

Key achievements in 2007/2008 for the Community Relations team included:



## Enterprise Development

- Relocated and refurbished the PeopleWorx and YouthWorx social enterprise to Charman Road Cheltenham
- Increased and supported the volunteer team to achieve sales of \$219,311 during 11 months of operation
- Supported 42 program participants to achieve positive social and educational outcomes
- Managed Government contracts relating to funding for social enterprise
- Supported the volunteer team at the Bluff Road Opportunity Shop to achieve sales of \$196,301
- Represented Family Life at the Social Enterprise Alliance Conference in Boston USA

## Volunteer Services

- Expanded to achieve a 40% growth in volunteer contributions from 2006 to 2008
- Achieved an equivalent value of \$1,060,000 in work effort for Family Life's services
- Provided quality assurance and knowledge management – policies, practices and systems – to support best practice volunteer services

## Communications

- Implemented agency communication strategy and brand management across all sites, programs and services
- Grown agency awareness with 37 print and radio articles and speaking engagements
- Presented at the Australian Institute of Family Studies conference on community engagement achieving national profile
- Managed web content to promote access to the services available at Family Life
- Commissioned range of brochures for promoting Family Life services
- Supported the communication of the new agency Vision and Mission

## Community Events

- Supported three major fundraising events (Ball, Golf Day and Open Garden), raising \$100,000 and growing community engagement and awareness

## Grants and Submissions

- Engaged and managed donors, sponsors and philanthropists – achieving \$300,000 in support

# Thank you – Grants, Donations and Sponsorship

## Foundations, Funds and Trusts

Bennelong Foundation Pty Ltd  
Community Enterprise Foundation  
Cybec Foundation  
Freemasons Public Charitable Foundation  
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust  
Myer Community Fund  
Schieber L & M bequest  
The Agape Charitable Fund  
The Gandel Charitable Trust  
The Queens Fund

## Clubs

Beaumaris Bridge Club  
Kiwanis Club of Hampton  
Lions Club of Beaumaris  
Lions Club of Brighton  
Lions Club of Sandringham  
NSAA – Bayside Sub-branch  
Rotary Club of Brighton  
Victoria Golf Club

## Donors

Allison A  
Allison R & D  
Armond M  
Armstrong T  
Bird K  
Black Rock Traders Association  
Bridging the Gaps  
Brighton Grammar School  
Brighton Primary School  
Byrt E  
Chieng L  
Conway L  
Cook B  
Corcoran A  
Davidson M  
Davies J  
Davis D P/L  
Dowel A  
Edney D  
Empowerment Healing  
Esplan A  
Ferguson J  
Fox FM  
Gill L  
Hadwen D  
Hamilton N & J  
Harris C & Thursday Girls  
Hearnes J  
Hofmann F & M  
Holy Trinity Church Hampton  
Honecker R

Intimo Lingerie  
Jennings B  
Jiang S  
Judson W & P  
Kay S  
Kett W  
Launder K  
Lea D  
Leach L & A  
Lee L  
Magistrates Court  
Martin J  
McAulay A  
McCullough T  
Meridien Classic Golfers  
Morris R  
Dowel A  
Neighbourhood Watch  
Ong E & Co Pty  
Pennicuick S MLC  
Perry G  
Pye V  
Ramsay J  
Ronstan International Pty Ltd  
Sandringham Inter-Church Council  
St Augustine's Southern Opportunity Shop  
Star of the Sea College  
Teeuwesen A  
Uniting Church Moorabbin  
Wieringa O  
Wightwick I

## Sponsors and Supporters

Be A Bayside Water Saver – Bayside Council  
Balcombe Apartments  
C E Family Lawyers  
CityWide  
Crop Care  
David Marshall Property  
Earth Design  
Hocking Stuart  
Inform Construction and Design  
M G F Financial Services  
Me, Myself & I – Graphic Design  
Meridian Essential  
Middletons Lawyers  
Netship Brokers  
New Zealand Steel  
OneSteel  
Plants Plus Bay Road Nursery  
SAP Australia  
Selection Steel  
Senetas  
Trojan Specialised Structures  
Water Guys

## Government Funding Bodies

Australian Government  
Victorian Government  
Bayside City Council  
Kingston City Council

# Treasurer's Report

In this the final year of our current Strategic Plan, with its key objective "Growth for Sustainable Community", we have seen remarkable income and asset growth on the back of the two previous growth years for Family Life.

## Operating Income

The graph on page 32 illustrates significant increase in operating income in the two years from 2006 to 2008, in particular from Federal Government (513% increase), State Government (76%) and our social enterprises (127%).

The total budget for the year reached \$4.3m and is projected at around \$6m for 2008/2009. Our success in becoming the provider for the SHINE Mental Health Community Based Programs in both Frankston Mornington Peninsula and Middle South regions (Federal Government) and the Community Based Intake and expanded Integrated

Family Services programs (State Government), were primarily the reasons for the growth.

## Assets

Due to the incredible generosity of the Cybec Foundation, Family Life now owns its first property asset, 8-12 Lochiel Avenue Edithvale. Together with our strong net current assets and cash backing for all employee and other liabilities, this provides a more secure and stable financial position. I would like also to acknowledge the contribution of the Finance and Property Sub-Board and agency management in ensuring this sound financial management through a period of significant change and growth.

It is important to understand that increased income and a strengthened financial position do not mean accumulated wealth, but rather, increased levels and quality of services. We are contractually bound

by our program agreements to return any funds unexpended on those designated programs. Family Life's consistent near break-even operating results evidence that this has been well managed and achieved over many years. Asset and reserve growth comes from specific community contributions such as bequests and donations. Only these contributions enable us the flexibility and discretion needed to target expenditure toward those areas we determine will best achieve our vision of: capable communities, strong families and thriving children.

I join with our President, Mark Vassella, in encouraging you to support the great work of Family Life across all the communities we serve. Donations may be made online at [www.familylife.com.au](http://www.familylife.com.au)

**Graeme Seamer**

Treasurer



# Financial Statements

## Income Statement for the year ended 30th June 2008

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
<b>Income</b>		
Government Grants	3,398,262	2,460,709
Non-Government Grants	200,180	142,000
Fundraising and Donations	186,649	236,485
Social Enterprises	415,613	208,117
Services Income	41,226	60,260
Other Income	104,549	33,866
	<b>4,346,479</b>	<b>3,141,437</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staffing Expenses	3,257,992	2,408,334
Program Expenses	253,857	210,090
Operating Expenses	302,123	215,652
Property Expenses	523,902	249,152
	<b>4,337,874</b>	<b>3,083,228</b>
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	8,605	58,209
Capital Grants, Bequests and Appeals (Net non-operating income)	1,416,540	92,488
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>1,425,145</b>	<b>150,697</b>

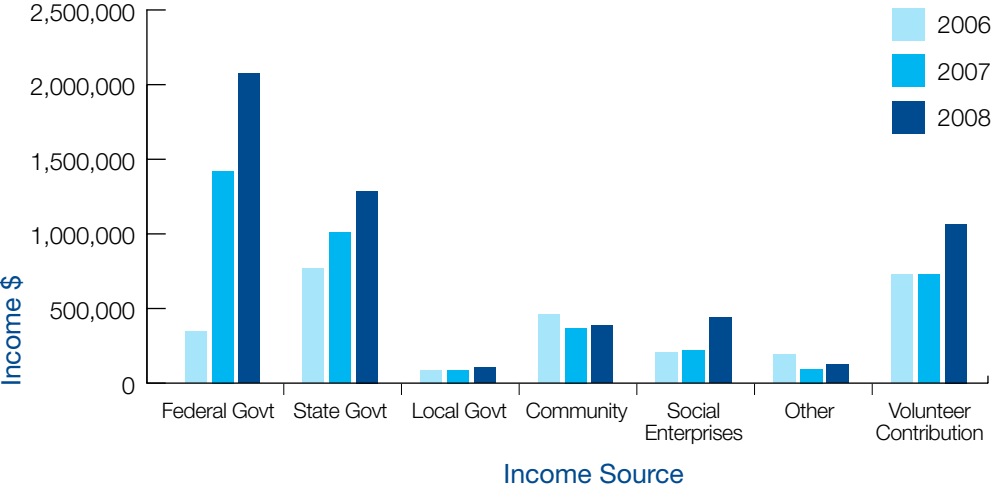
## Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2008

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
<b>Members Funds</b>		
Accumulated Funds	2,605,429	1,350,201
Reserves	593,397	423,480
	<b>3,198,826</b>	<b>1,773,681</b>
<b>Represented by</b>		
Cash and Investments	2,070,741	1,378,373
Other Current Assets	54,725	45,142
Property, Plant and Equipment	2,459,966	1,218,591
	<b>4,585,432</b>	<b>2,642,106</b>
Liabilities	1,386,606	868,425
	<b>3,198,826</b>	<b>1,773,681</b>

This summarised financial information has been extracted from the Annual Audited Financial Statements of the Association. A copy of the full statements is available upon request.

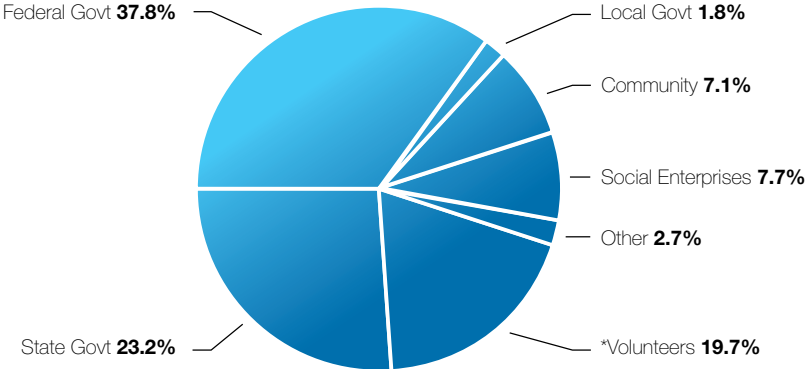
# Financial Graphs

**Income Growth by Source 2006 to 2008**



**Contributions to Services 2007/2008**

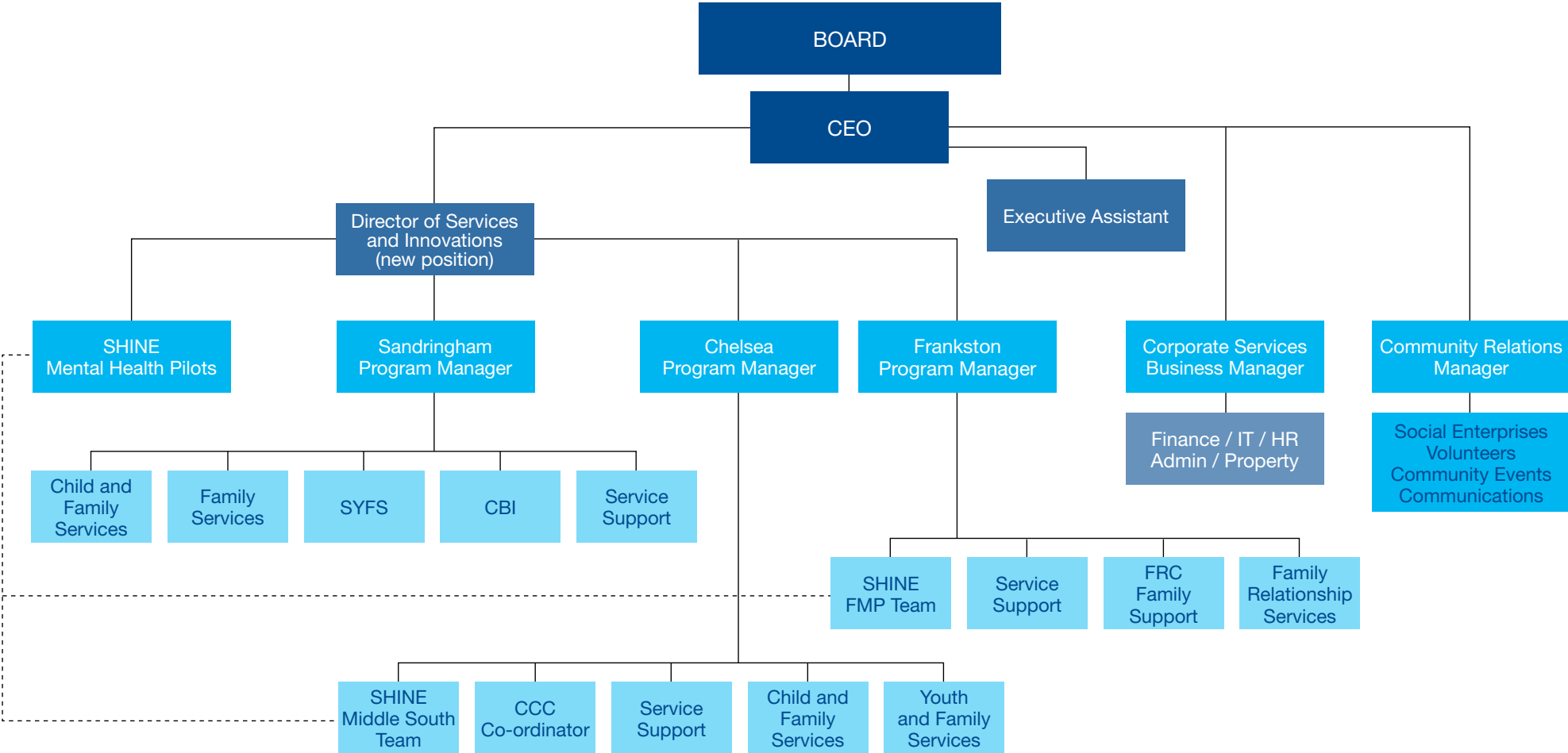
Family Life provides services for the community by bringing together funding from Government contracts, grants, donations (in kind and financial) and social enterprise.



\* Equivalent to 21.5 full-time workers



# Organisational Structure



SFYS = School Focussed Youth Service Bayside/Kingston  
 CBI = Community Based Intake Bayside/Kingston/Glen Eira/Port Phillip/Stonnington (Child FIRST by February 2009)  
 CCC = Creating Capable Communities community development innovation for replication to Chelsea and Frankston 2009/2010  
 FRC = Family Relationship Centre  
 FMP = Frankston Mornington Peninsula

Organisation Structure – as at September 2008

# Volunteer Feedback

**Robyn Rehn** – Charman Road Opportunity Shop volunteer

*“Frequently customers will share a confidence, reveal a secret, disclose a desire, discuss a sorrow or have a good chinwag – these times make selling a 50¢ pot really special.”*

**Bob Standaloft** – volunteer in the YouthWorx program and maintenance

*“I volunteer because I get to meet new friends and do something which helps some in the community who are disadvantaged.”*

**Beverley Harvey** – Family Support volunteer

*“The opportunity to pass on constructive life-learned experience to families in need, and the joy of watching the families develop it.”*

**Deb Lee** – volunteer on the Ball Committee

*“Having volunteered on many committees in different capacities, I have always enjoyed both the challenges and the rewards of being a volunteer. Not only do I have the chance to meet new people who share my passion and drive, but I know that our actions can support social change and contribute to an organisation we value. Volunteering is a great way to get to know your community.”*

**Marjorie Griffiths** – Reception/Admin volunteer

*“In retirement volunteering at Family Life brought fulfilment and new friendships.”*

**Gai Humphris** – Open Gardens volunteer

*“It is fun putting myself out of my comfort zone and learning new things and meeting new people. (I did not run fast enough and got roped in!!)”*

**Colleen Cassar** – Bluff Road Opportunity Shop volunteer

*“I love being a volunteer... it fills my Mondays with laughter, great company and a job well done. It's great to know that my help behind the scenes can help others. I've learnt through volunteering that everyone has an amazing story to tell.”*

**Margaret Parsonson** – Founder

*“When I volunteered in 1970, I could never have imagined that I would be part of a team that has helped turn the lives around of so many families, and have seen the expansion of Family Life programs to what we have today, with the added bonus of having made wonderful friends. Volunteering keeps you young!!!”*



# Thank You

Our thanks to the many generous people who contributed to our:

Christmas Hamper and Toy Distribution Appeal

Annual Ball – Bollywood

Open Garden Day – Sandringham

Charity Golf Day – Victoria Golf Club, Sandringham

Opportunity Shop at 355c Bluff Road, Hampton

Opportunity Shop at 316-318 Charman Road, Cheltenham  
(where we run the YouthWorx and PeopleWorx training and support programs)

Design and artwork – [www.memyselfandi.com.au](http://www.memyselfandi.com.au)

## Family Life has a new phone number

To enable Family Life to help more families and provide a faster, more responsive service, our phone system has been upgraded to include additional phone lines and a computerised system. The new phone system came with a **new number**

**8599 LIFE**  
8599 5433





capable communities, strong families, thriving children

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