

To the Chair of the Legislative Council Select Committee for Tasmanian Child and Family Centres.

(4) The outcomes and broader impacts of Child and Family Centres to the communities which they are located in.

I first became aware of the Burnie Child and Family Centre through their association with the Burnie Community House and their 'Kommunity Kids' program, where I worked as a volunteer.

In 2012 the Community Inclusion Worker of the Burnie Child and Family Centre was attending the Kommunity Kids program as was her usual practice and she was seeking a volunteer to assist her with some adjunct care for an upcoming Local Enabling Group Advisory Committee meeting to further discuss the community's input on the Burnie Child and Family Centre.

As a mature age student studying certificate 111 in Community Services I responded as I was keen to learn more about the community in which I live, and the services it provided.

I continued to volunteer with the Burnie Child and Family Centre after that, and became a member of their Local Enabling Group Advisory Committee; as an interested member of our community.

The Local Enabling Group Advisory Committee made it possible for me to learn more about the vision for the Burnie Child and Family Centre and its importance to the community in which it was situated; and the complex needs of the families in this vulnerable area; and what services it would possibly provide.

I completed my practical experience for Community Services at the Burnie Child and Family Centre, and began to learn about the amazing services available to parents and children aged 0-5 years.

At this stage the Burnie Child and Family Centre was being run out of an old classroom at the old Acton school, whilst the new build was being completed next door.

The Burnie Child and Family Centre opened in 2013, and I was pleased to play a part in the opening with the cooking, setting up and service of food. I was at this time completing my Certificate IV in Community Services and continuing to volunteer at the Centre.

In May that year I was offered some casual work with the "Water Awareness" Program which saw parents and their children spend quality time together building much needed skills around water and building trusting relationships.

I was then offered a backfill position and continued to study, also volunteering with the Burnie Community House and working between the two with an 'Arts Project' made possible by the "Better Futures, Local Solutions" funding grant.

This led me to the position of Project Officer and an opportunity to work with artists from the broader community who came to the centre and shared their knowledge and expertise with the parents and children who were involved in the project.

The Arts Project ran successfully for three years and culminated in the building of a secret garden and various large scale papier Mache projects, and the writing of a book about the journey. This project also had the assistance, input and support of our partners, the Burnie Linc and Tastafe.

The project provided opportunities for the parents and their children to complete tasks and learn new skills along with myself and gain a sense of self confidence, purpose and achievement and also some TasTafe qualifications along the way. It also gave the parents and their children a sense of ownership and belonging to see their works of art prominently displayed throughout the centre.

In 2014 I was offered a casual position as an adjunct carer with the Home Interactive Parenting Program for young people. (HIPPY) whose organisation is part of the Hub where the Centre is situated; and who also use our learning space; and share resources when requested.

Also in 2014 with the help of our Centre leader and Community Inclusion worker at the Burnie Child and Family Centre, I commenced an Internship through Tastafe studying a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, which I completed at the end of 2015.

I was offered a position as a Centre Assistant in 2016 which I interviewed for and successfully attained. I am still currently employed as a Centre Assistant.

The collaboration between the Community services with the Burnie Child and Family Centre has taken me from a volunteer, mature aged student to a Diploma holding paid worker.

I have been fortunate enough to also complete Family Partnership Training which provides a vital model for the work Child and Family Centres do, and I have also had numerous ongoing opportunities for training and personal development.

As such I am now a working and productive community member with a much greater understanding of the community in which I live, and the critical timeframe for brain development in the first 0-5 years; of a child's life. I have witnessed the importance of the Child and Family Centre's contribution to the communities in which they are situated; and of those families whose lives have been impacted and empowered through these life changing experiences, opportunities and ongoing support; which is not afforded by other single service delivery models.

Also the opportunities these Centre's offer families to gain access to services which they would not normally ever had a chance to be involved with, and the early intervention available to support these vulnerable, and at times at risk children to get the best possible start in life, so that they grow up to be, hardworking, lifelong learners and productive and valued citizens of our community.

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