



Melbourne Citymission
Building Inclusive Communities



Family Support Service at The Dame Phyllis Frost Centre

Presented by:

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Melbourne Citymission (MCM)

Family Support Service is a part of the Women in Transition Team which also includes the following justice programs:

- Women Integrated Support Program (WISP)
- Women for Work (W4W)
- Supporting Women Exiting Prison (SWEP)



Family Support Service at DPFC

ACCESS

- Referral form (Unit and Program staff)
- Direct referral (Peer educators, Unit and Program staff)
- Direct referral (Self)
- External agency referral

LOCATION

- Programs building at DPFC

HOURS OF OPERATION

- Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm



Family Support Service (FSS)

The FSS is designed to assist the women currently at DPFC to manage issues relating to their children and families.

FSS offers the following to the women at DPFC:

- An opportunity to have access to 2 workers
- Liaison, support, resources, encouragement, education, information, referral
- Practical assistance



Family Support Service continued...

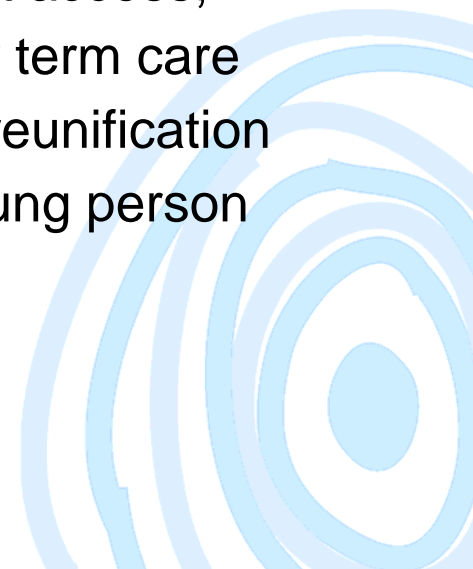
FSS offers practical assistance with the following:

- Department of Human Services (DHS), Child Protection
- Family Law Issues
- Links to community support agencies
- Maintaining contact with children
- Individual casework



DHS-Child Protection

- The responsibility to ensure children and young people are safe lies with their families, the community and the Government
- DHS-Child Protection becomes involved when it is assessed that a child or young person maybe at risk
- DHS can seek orders through The Children's Court which place conditions on families and children which may effect access, living arrangements, the day to day care and longer term care arrangements for children and young people and if reunification with parents is in the best interest of the child or young person



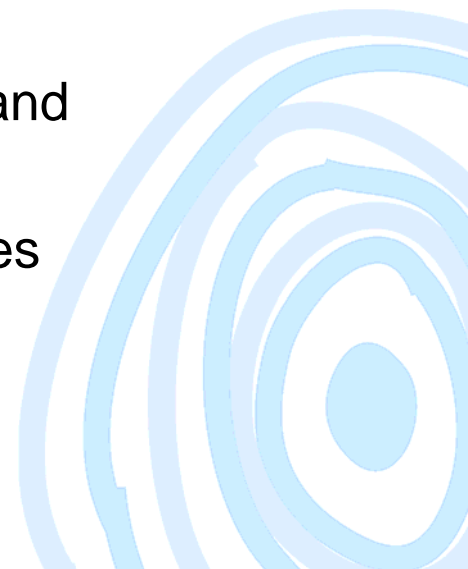
DHS-Child Protection continued...

FSS works towards achieving the best outcomes for mothers at DPFC and their children in the community.

We provide support and advocacy for mothers at DPFC who have DHS – Child Protection involvement.

We offer assistance with:

- Case Plan /Best Interest Plan meetings
- Access arrangements including contact visits and telephone links
- Access to Children’s Court legal representatives
- Support to address protective concerns



Family Law Issues

FSS can assist the women by arranging and / or facilitating contact with legal representatives regarding Family Law matters



Individual Casework

Based on a FSS assessment we offer one-on-one support to women with a range of family issues including:

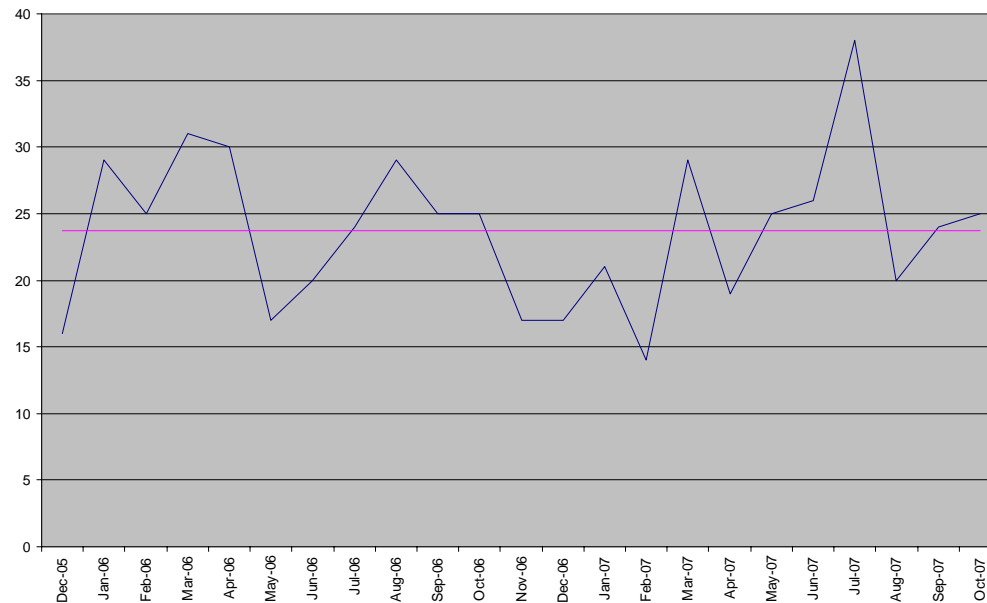
- Maintain contact with family members
- Liaison with children's schools and support services
- Parenting support such as understanding of children's development, separation, grief & loss and strategies for parenting from a distance
- Links to community agencies to strengthen ties and support towards family reunification



Key Performance Indicators

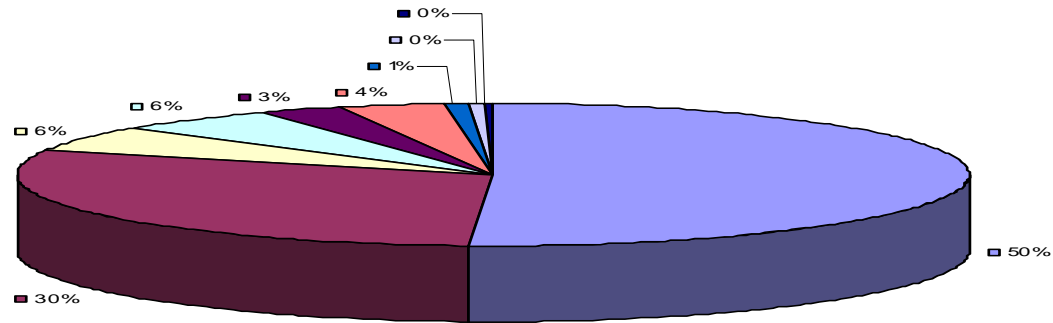
1. Monthly Referrals December 05 to October 07

(— Monthly average 23.7)



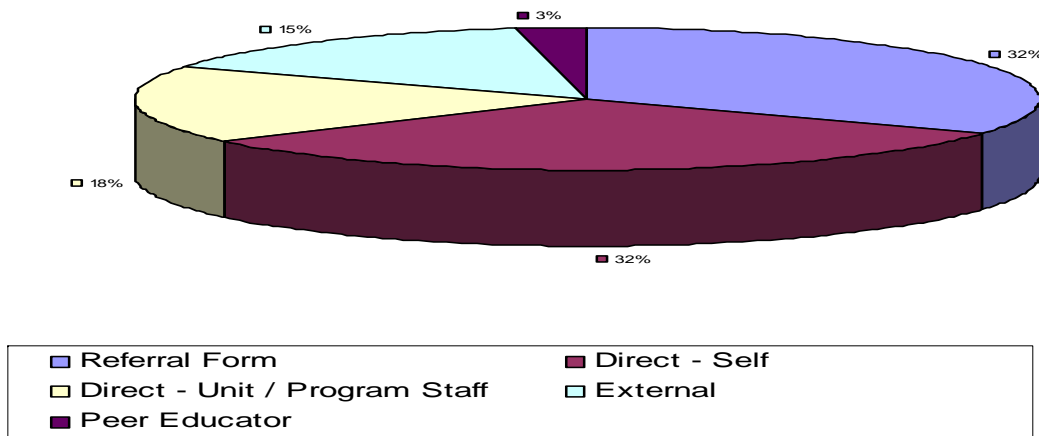
Key Performance Indicators

2. Nature of referrals



Key Performance Indicators

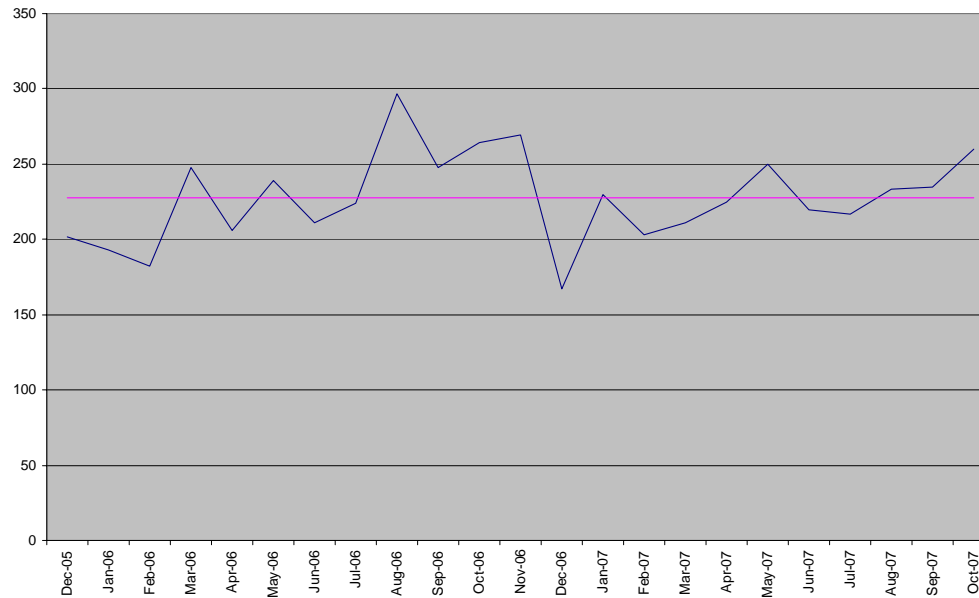
3. How referred



Key Performance Indicators

4. Number of Individual Client Sessions

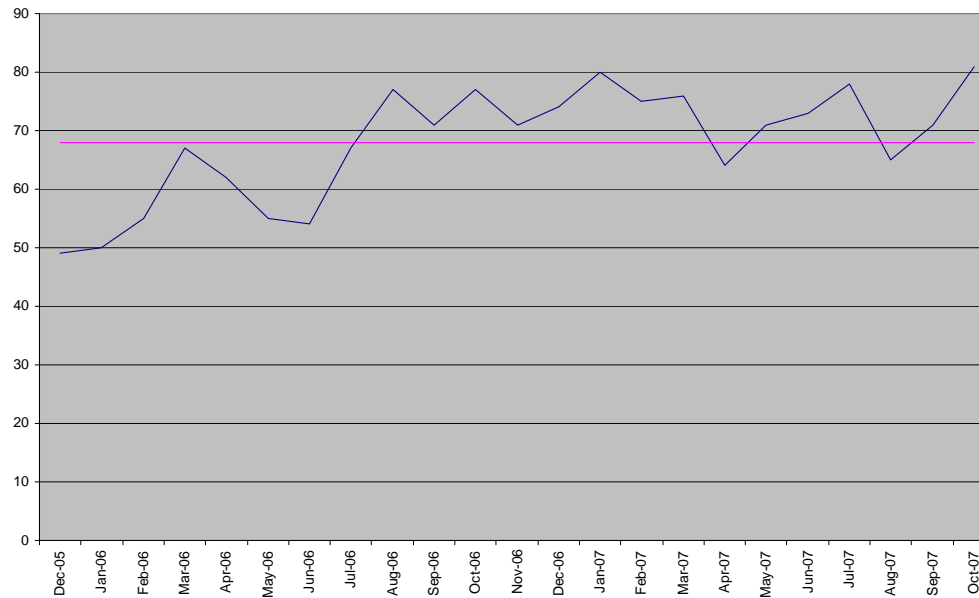
(— Monthly average 227.6)



Key Performance Indicators

5. Monthly worker caseloads

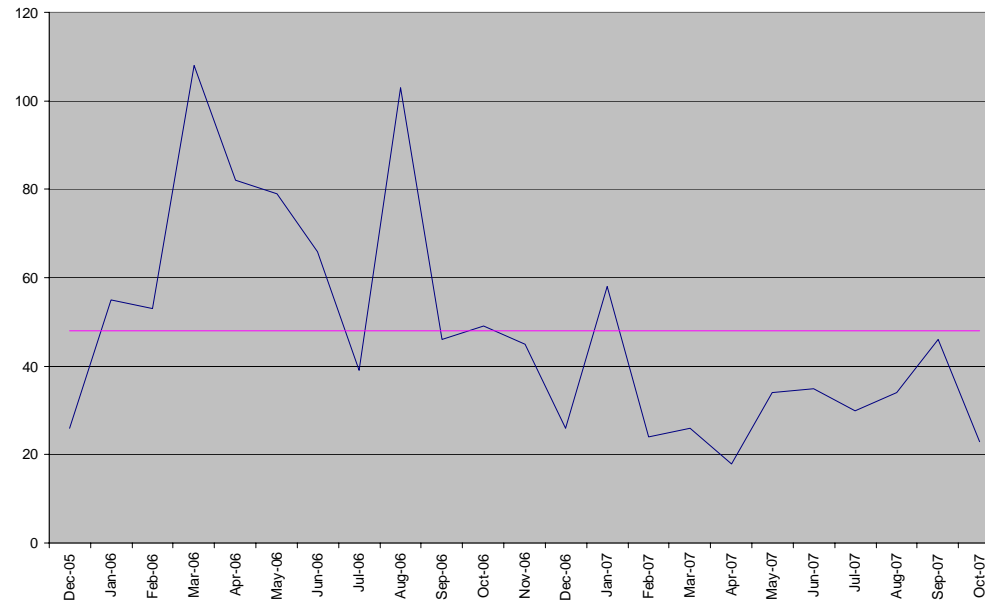
(— Monthly average 68.0)



Key Performance Indicators

6. Liaisons with Internal Service Providers

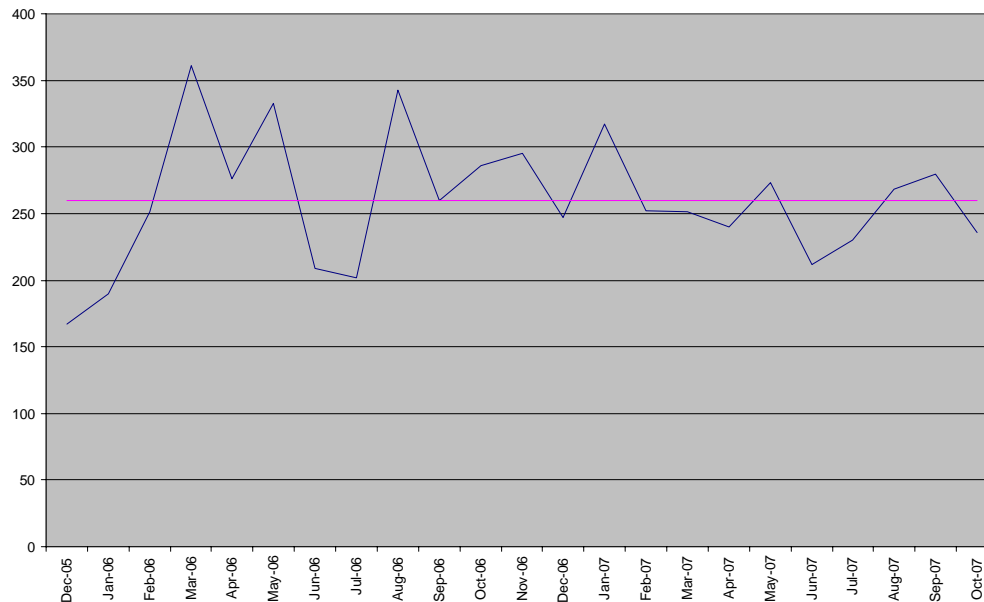
(— Monthly average 48.0)



Key Performance Indicators

7. Liaisons with External Service Providers

(— Monthly average 260.0)



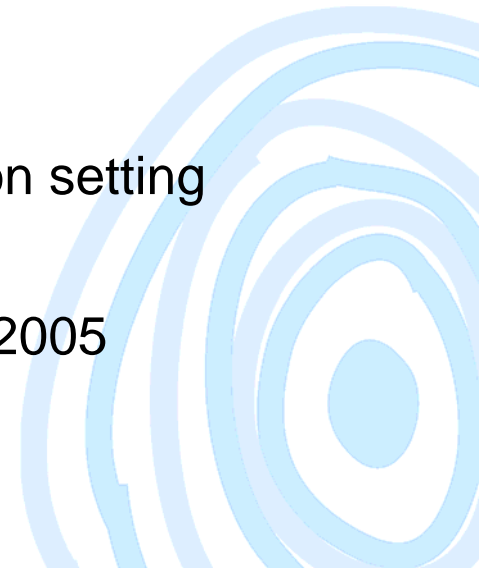
Strengths of FSS – based on practice experience

- Treating women with respect
- Work in partnership with women to enrich and extend existing parent-child interactions
- Provide opportunities for the women
- Program is independent of prison system
- Workers aim to engender a sense of belonging & understanding



Challenges – based on FSS practice experience

- Post release planning
- On-going commitment to support and value the needs of the women as mothers – communication ‘WoG’ approach
- Higher profile of programs with a focus on issues affecting women’s families and children
- Balancing level of information required within a prison setting
- Impact of Children, Youth and Families Act (CYFA) 2005



Feedback from Clients

“If you were to tell someone about FSS what would you say?”

- “the women helped me reach my family when I needed to hear their voices and re-assure them of my love across the miles between us”
- “your service helped maintain a vital lifeline to a very ill family member with advice, empathy, moral support and encouragement”
- “ideas on different types of play with my daughter and advice on how best to communicate my situation to my daughter at an age appropriate level. It was actually more informative than I imagined”
- “every phone call helped to put my mind at ease, for even when we didn’t get through I went to sleep knowing we tried”



“Rhiannon & Sasha Visit Mum” Written by Kerry Tucker

This children’s story book is also a colouring book and is the result of children asking lots of questions like:

“Where’s my mum?” & “What will happen when I visit my Mum?”

And what better way to answer these questions than a Mum herself?

So, Here is the story.....



Rhiannon & Sasha Visit Mum



Written by Kerry Tucker



Melbourne Citymission



Questions

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