

P.2 Ethos and Living Heritage Policy Statement

The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour
Luke: 4: 18-19

Introduction

On 1 July 1997, MacKillop Family Services (MacKillop) was formed as a new organisation by re-founding seven agencies operated by the Sisters of Mercy, the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart in Victoria. However, our legacy and inspiration is much older. From the 1850s, these three congregations, respectively founded by Catherine McAuley, Edmund Rice and Mary MacKillop, worked in Victoria to establish homes for children who were orphaned, destitute or neglected, and for families who were in need of care and support. Throughout the years, the original model of institutional care evolved into different forms of residential care, foster care, education, family support and disability services.

The seven works that came together to establish MacKillop were:

- Mercy Family Care Centre, North Geelong
- St Vincent de Paul Child and Family Service, Black Rock
- St Augustine's Adolescent and Family Services, Geelong
- St Joseph's Homes for Children, Flemington
- St Vincent's Boys Homes, South Melbourne
- St Anthony's Family Service, Footscray
- St Joseph's Babies and Family Services, Glenroy

St Vincent de Paul Orphanage, South Melbourne, 1855	St Augustine's Orphanage, Newtown, 1856	St Vincent de Paul Girl's Orphanage, South Melbourne, 1863	Our Lady's Orphanage, Newtown, 1864	St Joseph's Home of Destitute Children, South Melbourne, 1888	St Joseph's Foundling Hospital, Broadmeadows, 1901	St Joseph's Receiving Home, Barkley St, Carlton, 1902	St Anthony's Home for Little Children, Kew, 1922
St Vincent de Paul Boys Orphanage, South Melbourne, 1875	St Augustine's Orphanage, Highton, 1939	St Vincent de Paul Children's Home, South Melbourne, 1962	St Catherine's Orphanage, Newtown, 1912	St Joseph's Home of Destitute Children, Surrey Hills, 1890	St Joseph's Babies Home, Broadmeadows, 1967	St Joseph's Receiving Home, Grattan Street, Carlton, 1906	St Anthony's Home, Kew, 1943
St Vincent de Paul Boys Home, South Melbourne, 1967	St Augustine's Boy's Home, Highton, 1966	St Vincent de Paul Children's Home, Black Rock, 1966	St Catherine's Orphanage, Highton, 1928	St Joseph's Home for Boy's, Surrey Hills, 1925	St Joseph's Babies Home, Glenroy, 1975		
			St Catherine's Children's Home, Highton, 1960	St Joseph's Children's Home, Surrey Hills, 1967			
St Vincent Boys Home, 1990's	St Augustine's Adolescent and Family Services, Whittington, 1988	St Vincent de Paul Child and Family Service, Black Rock, 1992	Mercy Family Care Centre, North Geelong, 1975	St Joseph's Home for Children, Flemington, 1979	St Joseph's Babies and Family Service, Glenroy, 1985		St Anthony's Family Service, Footscray, 1975

The purpose and character of MacKillop as a Catholic organisation, continues to draw from the lives, works, spirit and inspiration of the three founders who provide a living model for the way our staff and volunteers approach their work. Woven through this ethos is the acknowledgement and recognition of the inherent Aboriginal spirituality of this country and respect for the cultures that have lived here for thousands of generations.

The passion and commitment to support children, young people and families to live their full potential and to deliver services in the areas where the need is greatest created MacKillop Family Services 23 years ago. It remains our core purpose and informs our identity. This has seen us expand our footprint across Victoria, NSW, ACT and WA.

These highlighted below are some key growth milestones:

- 2008 Opening of the Family Relationship Centre in Melbourne's North
- 2009 Former Christian Brothers Ministry, Edmund Rice Community Services joins MacKillop and expands into NSW
- 2011 St Augustine's and St Helen's specialist schools amalgamate to become MacKillop Specialist School
- 2013 MacKillop began delivering OOHC services in Western Australia
- 2016 Cara model of specialist care transfers services to MacKillop
- 2017 MacKillop Rural Community Services (MRCS) a ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph joins MacKillop
- 2017 Good Grief, a Sisters of St Joseph loss and grief education program joins MacKillop
- 2017 St Joseph's Cowper, a valued ministry of the Sisters of Mercy for more than 100 years in the Cowper and Grafton area of NSW joins MacKillop
- 2018 South West Emergency Care for Children (SWECC) in WA transferred to MacKillop
- 2018 Opening of MacKillop Specialist School Maidstone
- 2018 Gidgee Preschool opens in the Weilmoringle community in far west NSW
- 2019 MacKillop opened a residential care home in ACT
- 2020 MacKillop Education opens a 3rd specialist school in Caulfield VIC

Our Purpose

MacKillop Family Services continues our founders' passionate commitment to social justice – to work for the rights of children, young people and families to be safe, to learn, feel nurtured and connected to culture. We provide high quality services to promote healing from trauma and loss, and to enable hopeful futures.

MacKillop Family Services will care compassionately, respond large-heartedly and advocate courageously.

Our Vision

Children, young people and families are welcomed and supported by MacKillop Family Services to be empowered and thrive.

Today, we continue this work within the framework of Catholic social teaching and in the spirit of the Gospel - one of radical inclusion, restoration and accompaniment. MacKillop Family Services (MacKillop) is now a national organisation and a leading provider of services for children, young people and families across Victoria, New South Wales, ACT, Western Australia and to other organisations in every state and beyond. We offer services and programs in family support, foster care, residential care, disability

services, youth support, education and training, parenting, family therapy, mental health, family violence, early childhood, and support to women and men who, as children, were in the care of our founding agencies.

At MacKillop we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders – past, present and emerging – and acknowledge the importance of their stories, history and wisdom. They hold the memories, traditions, cultures, hopes and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are strongly committed to the ongoing work of Aboriginal self-determination, reconciliation, and cultural safety for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, staff and stakeholders.

MacKillop Family Services Values

The values of MacKillop emphasise attitudes and practices that respect the dignity of every person and establish a just social context. We commit to the following five foundational values which we continue to embed in the culture of our organisation and practice.

JUSTICE. We believe in the right of all people to experience respect and to have access to quality services irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, marital status, disability, sexuality or age. We advocate for inclusiveness and social justice in the wider community and commit to these principles across our organisation and all services we provide. ***We believe in the right of all people to be treated justly and fairly.***

HOPE. We commit to creating positive and hopeful relationships where people find meaning in their experiences and relationships and are able to learn, explore their strengths and create possibilities for growth and change. ***We seek to foster hope that assists people to find meaning.***

COLLABORATION. In our work with individuals, families and other organisations and groups, we commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination, partnership and empowerment. ***We commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination and partnership.***

COMPASSION. Compassion is an attitude of the heart, an expression of our shared humanity and a deep desire to alleviate another's suffering. We commit to creating an attitude of openness to others and to their circumstances. ***We seek to foster compassion, an attitude of the heart and a response to exclusion and suffering.***

RESPECT. We value ourselves and other people, the earth and all creation. We seek to listen and learn from each other and build relationships with respect, being proud of what we hold in common and with understanding and tolerance of our differences. ***We seek to act with respect with regard to each other, the earth and all creation.***

Catholic Social Teaching and 8th Work of Mercy

The MacKillop Family Services' purpose and vision have roots in these four key Catholic Social Teaching Principles and Pope Francis' 8th Work of Mercy 'Care for our Common Home'.

1. Human Dignity

Each person is created in the image and likeness of God, each one has a transcendent dignity that can never be taken away, even if it is not always respected. People are always more important than things. People must never be treated as a means or an instrument to be used for the benefit of another.

Our human dignity gives rise to human rights. Each person is equal in dignity and rights. In the same way, every human community, every race and culture is equal in dignity and rights. This aspect of human dignity is sometimes called the principle of the unity of the human family.

In a broader sense, all life has its own purpose and the right to exist and function according to its contribution to the well-being of the whole. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of the sacredness of life.¹ The universal dignity of all life gives rise to human and earth rights.

2. The Common Good

The principle of the common good reminds us that we are all really responsible for each other. We must work for social conditions which ensure that every person and every group in society is able to meet their needs and realize their potential. Every group in society must take into account the rights and aspirations of other groups, and the well-being of the whole human family.

Pope Francis in reflecting on the Common Good confirms that all living beings are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect.² The Common Good should be conceived as the sustenance and flourishing of life for all beings and for future generations.³

3. Solidarity

Human beings cannot survive without others and can only grow and achieve our potential in relationship with others – we are social by nature. It follows that our salvation is bound up with that of each other. Solidarity is not just a vague feeling of empathy or compassion. It is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good.

In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis calls all people of faith to reflect on the interdependence in all life, the spectacle of the countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other.⁴ We live in solidarity with all creation and all of life needs to grow and flourish in mutual relationship with each other.

4. Subsidiarity

Responsibility should be kept as close as possible to the grassroots. The people or groups most directly affected by a decision or policy should have a key decision-making role in it. More encompassing groups should only get involved to support smaller, more local groups when they need help. Sometimes this is necessary in order to coordinate their activities with the activities of other groups in order to promote the common good.

Further, we need to seek solutions which consider the interactions within both natural systems and social systems. All levels of life carry a unique insight into not only their own well-being but

¹ *Laudato Si* 92

² *Laudato Si* 89

³ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops *Building a New Culture: Central Themes in Recent Church Teaching on the Environment*, 8th April 2013.

⁴ *Laudato Si* 86

also the well-being of the whole. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.⁵

5. Care for our Common Home

Earth is home to a myriad of creatures, ourselves included. We are linked to all Earth's beings and to the planet itself, in an incredibly intricate array of delicately balanced ecosystems. The beauty, harmony and sacredness of Earth has been appreciated by indigenous cultures around the world for millennia. Today we are called to respond and adopt sustainable ways of living in caring for our common home.

(Italic quotes in bold by Sandie Cornish 2020: social-spirituality.net)

Principles

In the spirit of the three founders, the following principles will underpin all our actions and guide the work of animating the ethos and living heritage of MacKillop across the organisation.

A commitment to:

- Embedding and rigorously implementing child safe practices.
- Reconciliation and self-determination of Aboriginal peoples.
- Ritual, ceremony and formation in the Catholic tradition and welcoming inter-faith dialogue.
- A learning culture; evidence based, and evidence informed practice.
- Critical reflection and evaluation.
- Prevention of harm and early intervention to preserve families.
- Supporting former residents and families.
- Alleviating the impact of trauma in our communities.
- Organisational frameworks that support the ethos and living heritage such as the Sanctuary Model.
- Care of the Earth as an integral part of our interconnectedness.
- Daring and courageous advocacy for social justice, focussing on children, young people and families.

Policy

The Ethos and Living Heritage Policy Statement informs all other policies and procedures of MacKillop Family Services. Review of this policy is biannual.