

ANNUAL REPORT 2007



Victorian Person Centred Services

Live life your way!

www.vpcs.org.au

About VPCS

Victorian Person Centred Services is a leading provider of one-on-one support at home and in the community.

VPCS is a partner organisation of the EW Tipping Foundation, named after the journalist Bill Tipping, who wrote passionately about social issues including disability.

The Foundation was one of the first organisations in Victoria to adopt a person-centred approach to its services, including sponsoring the formation of VPCS in 2005. Both organisations have contributed significantly to the adoption of new methodologies and philosophies for supporting people of all abilities.

VPCS services are available to people of all ages. We provide support to people with disabilities, older Victorians, children and families.

We say to people we support: “Live life your way” – and then we support them to do so!

OUR YEAR IN SUMMARY

Live life *Your way* 2007

Our organisation is about assisting people to live life their way. We support people to pursue their dreams and goals. We foster changing attitudes within the community to allow people to live the life they want. We support people to develop themselves and their capabilities.

2007 has been another busy and exciting year of growth and achievement for Victorian Person Centred Services, for many of the people we support and our staff.

Among our key achievements:

- *We have increased the number of people we support by over 25%*
- *We have become accredited as a child protection provider, a Transport Accident Commission provider and a provider of community Aged Care*
- *We have embarked on the first year of our communications strategy, including coverage of disability issues through statewide press and radio*

We are now almost half way into our Strategic Plan 06-09 – a plan that was shaped and developed by the expectations of the people we support, families and carers, our staff and the broader community. Our projects and initiatives are our way of responding to these needs and expectations.

The most exciting challenge for the next few years will be making sure that “person centredness” also means “customer choice”. We will need to continue to work hard to provide the support people want, while still upholding important community values. This will be in the face of enormous challenges: a forthcoming tidal wave of demand for services, ever-present workforce and recruitment challenges, and increasing expectations from funders and customers.

We can only continue to achieve our mission through the commitment, passion and dedication of our staff and networks of volunteers: congratulations to each of them, and on behalf of people we support, our heartfelt thanks.

OUR YEAR IN SUMMARY

Thanks also to the support and partnership of many organisations and individuals in helping us to achieve our mission: our funders, the Department of Human Services, the Transport Accident Commission, the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and others. Particular thanks to our many donors, supporters and community committees and community service groups.

Our Board is a dedicated team of community members who volunteer their time, skills and experience, to guide us. The Board ensures we maintain our sound financial base, while remaining at the forefront of the delivery of high quality support services and still upholding the values and philosophies that are so important to our identity as an organisation.

*We provide support to:
children, young people, adults, older people,
families, people of all abilities*

Our achievements, our growth, the way we provide our services and our exciting initiatives for 2007 reflect the ever changing expectations of all our stakeholders. Many of these stories are highlighted in the following pages.

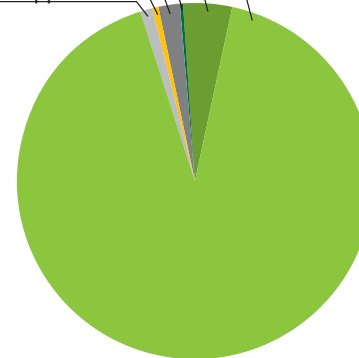
As we plan ahead for 2008 and beyond, we need to be ever mindful of the need to recognise and meet challenges in what it means for people to “live life their way”. In turn, we will only uphold our vision and mission if, on behalf of the people we support, we exist so that people can live the life they choose.



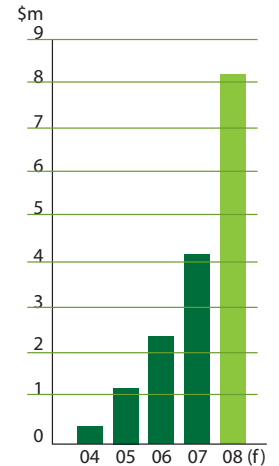
Above Left: CEO, Richard Dent and Above Right: Board Chairman, Bernie Flood

Funding Expenditure

- Salaries Oncosts
- Vehicles & Travel
- Communication
- Property Expenses
- Service Participant
- Service Support



VPCS Service Expenditure 2004-2007



The graphs and statements on this page are intended to be easy-to-read summaries of key financial indicators. For a full financial statement, please contact us.

Supporting *People*

Our approach

Victorian Person Centred Services, as is implied in our name, has a strong person centred approach.

What does “person centred” mean?

Being person centred is an approach which puts as much choice and control as possible with the person being supported.

We believe passionately that everyone needs to respect all people regardless of their life circumstance, and to support them in their choices, as long as those choices do not cause harm to themselves or anyone else.

Our services



Victorian Person Centred Services

Live life your way!

One-on-one support services

- Independent living skill
- Attendant care
- Rehabilitation and occupational therapy assistance
- Maintaining independence
- Support in educational and work settings
- Skills development
- Some day programs

Recreational and leisure alternatives

- One-on-one support for personal leisure activities
- Weekends away
- Holidays
- Special interest groups
- Camps
- Supported activity days

Flexible respite options

- In-home
- Community-based

Child protection services

- Crisis support from when a child is removed from a family to when they are placed in permanent care or returned to the family home

This is *my place!*

Brendon is very proud of his unit. For him, it's his own home, where he can have visitors over for barbecues and chats.

For other people, it's a symbol of things to come – that people with disabilities can live with as much independence as possible, in the way they want to.

Brendon has Prader Willi Syndrome, which causes a very strong urge to eat, as well as an intellectual disability. He also has BiPolar disorder. Living independently is a difficult proposition.

But thanks to the persistence of his parents, David and Jenny, Brendon has been able to live successfully away from the family home.

The Department of Human Services funds one-on-one care for Brendon, VPCS employ staff and administer funds, and his parents govern the project, take care of rosters, staff training, and food supplies.

As a result, Brendon is the happiest and healthiest he's ever been. "This project is supporting Brendon to live in his own place and in his own community," said David. "He knows more people in town than we do!"

"Brendon is the happiest and healthiest he's ever been."



Brendon at his unit with his parents Jenny and David.



Dennis and Janet have gradually learned the skills they need to live independently.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE – ONE-ON-ONE

The freedom to *make mistakes!*

Most people would not think that the ability to make their own mistakes is a freedom.

“Independence means we can make our own choices.”

Most people are not Dennis and Janet.

Dennis and Janet are great examples of how people with disabilities can live life their way.

Now married, they live happily – and independently – in Sunshine, with only three hours of support each week for tasks like shopping and attending appointments.

Both have lived with family, in an institution, and in a shared house. Twelve years ago they started in our outreach and transition program – developed with the dream of supporting people so they could grow to true independence.

Gradually, the couple learned to cook, clean, shop, problem solve, find out answers by themselves, manage their time, communicate well, socialise – and make mistakes.

“Independence means we can make our own choices,” said Dennis. “We can go out when we want to; we can have privacy. We don’t have to share all our possessions.”

Since Clay's plan was completed a few months ago, he has grown significantly in confidence.

This is *my life!*

“This is my life, Mary – this is what I’m about”.

Those are the words of 34-year-old Clay from Swan Hill after a visit to the local pheasant farm.

Clay is intensely interested in birds. Thanks to the VPCS team at Swan Hill, he’s been able to visit the Olson Pheasant Farm once a month as a volunteer working on site.

Clay helps out with collecting eggs, placing them in the incubator, and feeding the birds. He relishes the opportunity to talk to the owner Kevin O’Byran, who has been amazed at Clay’s knowledge about different types of pheasants.

The visits have come about as a result of a VPCS PATH plan for Clay, a tool which staff use to help people work out their dreams and goals, and how to achieve them.

Since Clay’s plan was completed a few months ago, he has grown significantly in confidence. The visits to the pheasant farm are just one result of his plan to live life his way!



Into the *real world!*

Because of illness, Julanne's world had shrunk to her one bedroom unit, with the company of her two beautiful cats Jessie and Fanny.

A few months ago, with the help of a friend, she was referred to Victorian Person Centred Services – and she began to live life her way.

Her staff member Moisei Furman visits Julanne every week, taking her out to go shopping. "He takes me out into the real world!" said Julanne.

"I am able to negotiate my service and communication is always open"

It's not just the trips that Julanne appreciates, but also the attitude of VPCS staff.

"They are enormously patient and totally capable of seeing if I need anything extra," said Julanne.

"I am able to negotiate my service and communication is always open rather than closed, which is lovely.

"That negotiation with the organisation allows me to be confident – I know I can ring VPCS if anything was worrying me."

Julanne now enjoys weekly trips out and about with VPCS staff.

“We want to involve the children in the community.”

Mum’s *treasures*

Once a fortnight, a group of children in Swan Hill know they’re in for a treat.

They belong to our “Mum’s Treasures” group, run by our Swan Hill team.

The group was formed after discussions between the VPCS team and parents in a local support group about how we could help them live life their way. Not surprisingly, it was named by the mums!


Children between 5 and 12 participate, enjoying everything from ten pin bowls to picnics in the park.

In school holidays, the group has traveled as far as Mildura for a day the Park for Play (an All Abilities park) and the Orange Farm, and to Echuca for a ride on a paddle steamer.

“We want to involve the children in the community, as well as providing parents with a few hours’ respite,” said Team Leader Mary Uebergang. “Mum’s Treasures has been a great success and we’ve had some very positive feedback from parents.”



The Mum’s Treasures group have a great time on one of the Echuca paddlesteamers.



Michael with his mum
Bonnie; respite is good for
everyone in the family.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE – RESPITE

Respite for us, *fun for him*

When a member of the VPCS team arrives every Saturday and Wednesday afternoon to take Michael out, it's good for everyone.

The rest of the family gets a break, and Michael, who is 16 and has autism spectrum disorder, has a great time out and about.

“He really loves having that one-on-one attention.”

“He really is a social butterfly,” said his mum Bonnie. “He really loves having that one-on-one attention.”

Andrew and Sam take Michael out swimming and for lunch. Occasionally they also go out on a day trip – to Puffing Billy, for instance, or the Melbourne Zoo.

“It’s a chance for Michael to develop his social skills and independence, and it encourages him to do something physical,” said Bonnie.

The excursions give the family some respite from caring for Michael. It means Bonnie can work on weekends, and it means dad Tom and sister Kate can have some quality time together. The family can live life their way.

“VPCS have done their best to accommodate our needs and they are very approachable – I know I can always phone them to discuss things.”

Our people

A large team of people are responsible for delivering the programs of Victorian Person Centred Services.

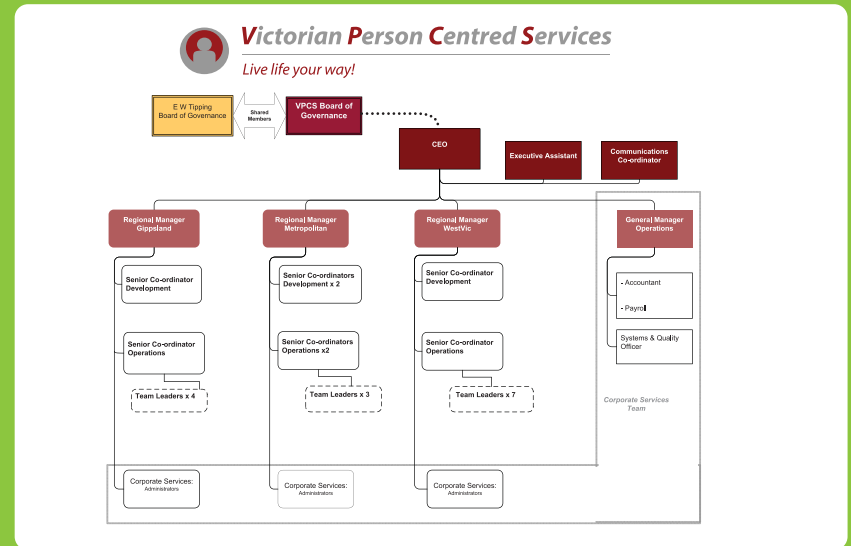
We employ more around 500 staff in a variety of roles ranging from our frontline team working directly with the people we support, to our management and support team assisting in the background.

Many staff work beyond the call of duty, often in isolated and demanding circumstances. They are assisting people to live the life they choose – to get out into the community, to take on employment, to live independently, to enjoy fun activities.

We recognize and applaud our team's dedication and commitment to providing "people first" services, and are proud of the way staff so often think outside the square.

Our staff are supported by a range of equally committed volunteers, including our community committees and our Board.

Thank you all for your contribution to helping people live life their way!



Governance

The Board of Governance of Victorian Person Centred Services is made up of community members who volunteer their time, skills and experience to support the mission of the organisation. All members of the Board are unpaid.

The Board has the responsibility of ensuring VPCS achieves its objectives effectively and efficiently, that its financial reporting is reliable, and that it acts in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.

The Board selects and appoints the Chief Executive Officer, who is accountable to the Board for the performance of the organisation.

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