

## 9. FIELD WORKERS IN SCHOOLS PROJECT

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The purpose of this report is to inform elected members of significant changes in the delivery of the Field Workers in Schools (FWS) programme.

### INTRODUCTION

The Field Workers in School Project was established in 1997 to provide a 'safety net' around primary school children who are placed 'at risk' and who, for a variety of reasons, could become 'at risk' of not achieving good health, education or welfare outcomes. The CCC employed three Field Workers in the Papanui, Mairehau and Hornby areas.

The project aims to:

- Identify the needs of 'core at risk' and 'fringe at risk' children and their families.
- Provide a safety net for at risk children and their families.
- Co-ordinate lead agency roles in liaison with service providers as per Strengthening Families model.
- Develop and support liaison between families, schools, agencies and community groups.
- Establish ongoing comprehensive interventions until all parties involved agree that no further actions are required.

Key components of the project include identifying the gaps and overlaps in services to 'at risk' children and their families and ensuring that the child's needs are met through existing government or community agencies. A collaborative and co-operative approach between agencies is encouraged through the co-ordinating role of the Field Workers.

Field Workers are assigned to three clusters of between five and 14 primary schools, selected by the Regional Principals' Cluster Groups. Priority is given to clusters of low-decile primary schools and may include intermediate schools.

The strengths of the project were identified in an evaluation report 1999 as follows:

- Its flexibility and adaptability.
- The emphasis on immediate response to referrals and requests.
- The long term involvement in cases.
- The focus on partnerships with families.
- The effective collaboration with other government and non government agencies.
- The holistic approach to interventions..

The involvement of families/parents in all aspects of planning and implementing interventions was considered by respondents to be critical. Respondents stated that positive outcomes for children are best achieved by improving family circumstances and skills.

The ongoing involvement of high schools in Field Workers in Schools Project clusters would be an advantage.

### FUNDING

Core funding until June 2002 for the Field Workers project has been from social initiatives. Ongoing funding is currently under review. Participating schools have been required to contribute financially to their local project, as part of the partnership.

### FAST TRUST

As from 2001 changes in CCC social initiative funding policy required that funding went to a community group.

In 2001 CCC core funding was directed to the newly formed FAST Trust. This trust was set up to attract funding to meet identified gaps in the provision of services for children and families. These have included anger management programmes for boys aged 7–9 and their families and camps for the child and parents.

The FAST Trust has formed the Steering Group for FWS project with Children's Advocate acting in an advisory and liaison role for CCC.

### **CHANGES**

As from 1 January the FAST Trust has contracted Glenelg Children's Health Camp for 12 months to run the FWS project according to the agreed practices and protocols. Glenelg is now acting as the employer of the three field workers.

### **BENEFITS**

The major benefits include:

- Community ownership and management.
- An opportunity to align the FWS project more closely with the Government's Social Workers in Schools project, which Glenelg is also contracted to deliver. The potential synergies of this partnership will be evaluated.
- Continued involvement of local clusters of schools and other groups in decision making and development and monitoring.
- Opportunity for ongoing participation by CCC, represented by the Children's Advocate in the project's steering group.

### **Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.