

FAMILY ACCESS NETWORK INC.

ABN 68473447026



FAN

Simon McMillan
Chief Executive Officer
City of Whitehorse
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading DC 3131

20 November 2019

Dear Mr McMillan,

Please find enclosed Family Access Network's submission in relation to the proposed tenancy of 1/2-10 Harrow Street, Box Hill

Taking on the tenancy of the Harrow Street office will make an enormous difference to the work of our organisation in support of young people, young families and children, experiencing or at risk of homelessness – I trust the attached submission captures both the benefit to FAN, the need of the client group and our strong collaborative history with the City of Whitehorse, including the foundation of the organisation emerged from a Council worker almost 40 years ago.

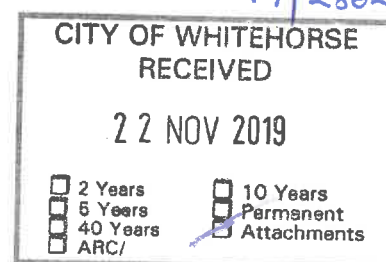
I would very much like to take up the opportunity of speaking to the submission at the Council meeting on 2 December and look forward to your confirmation and advice regarding timing and process.

If any additional information or clarification is required, please contact me on scarlile@fan.org.au or 9890 2673

Kind regards

 Sue Carlile

Chief Executive Officer



Making a Difference in Young People's Lives Since 1981



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Harrow Street Office Submission to City of Whitehorse from Family Access Network (FAN)

The Need

Family Access Network (FAN) is currently a tenant in an office owned by the Anglican Parish of Box Hill and while we have been appreciative of the space and attached car parking for many years, it has not been adequate for our needs for some time. It is located at 1030 Whitehorse Road Box Hill, and is the front section of the Saint Peter's Hall.

The opportunity to move to Harrow Street will make an enormous difference to the organisation, the services we provide now and into the future, and of course to the young people and children who access our programs. We are a small organisation and we do not have the capacity to pay commercial rents, so the rental proposed for Harrow Street ensures that the maximum resources can go towards client services. We appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the project development and design which will enable the flexibility of programs to be delivered onsite which has not been possible in our current office space. The organisation has outgrown the current site and the new facility will provide an upgraded environment for clients and staff and enable maximising of existing and emerging opportunities.

History with City of Whitehorse

FAN commenced in 1981 following the community awareness campaigns conducted by the then Box Hill Council Youth Worker, Stephen McLoughlin – Award in recognition of his significant contribution is presented annually to young people demonstrating success in working towards their goals. Refer to attached Annual Report for further information.

Family Access Network has been delivering programs to the constituents of the City of Whitehorse and surrounding areas in the Eastern Metropolitan Region for almost 40 years.

We are appreciative that over the life of FAN, City of Whitehorse has recognised and acknowledged the important work we undertake with a vulnerable client group, through project funding and other supports. Several clients from FAN have been successful with City of Whitehorse Young Person of the Month, and two clients from FAN were awarded City of Whitehorse Young Person of the Year.

FAN is an active participant in a number of City of Whitehorse Steering Groups including: the Whitehorse Reconciliation Action Group (WRAC); Children's Early Year's Network; Box Hill Outreach Program, Youth Issues Network, Youth Plan Implementation Review Committee and projects, and we were proud to be a partner again in this year's IDAHOBIT day, the wonderful chalk drawing is featured inside the Annual Report. We also, along with several other partners, worked with the City Of Whitehorse on the Rainbow Celebration in the East event at the Box Hill TAFE where over 80 young LGBTIQ people attended, held on Friday 15 November.

FAN has developed from the community, with an ongoing Volunteer Program that dates back to 1981 and many of our Board, as well as staff have been drawn from the community – I myself moved to Box Hill in 1977.

FAN has been successful in securing recurrent government funding since 1985, and throughout the life of the organisation we have been successful with other sources of government funding, philanthropic, individual donors/sponsors, and corporate support.

About FAN

1. Current programs

Family Access Network (FAN) provides support within a case management framework to vulnerable young people aged 15 to 25, young families, and their accompanying children in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). Many of the clients have experienced family violence and family breakdown prior to seeking assistance at FAN. The suite of programs works with the clients to address their identified needs and provide pathways out of homelessness and in many cases to re-engage with education and employment. Some former clients have gone on to tertiary studies and obtained employment in the Homelessness/Family Violence sector. Without the dedicated assistance from FAN these client's pathways may have been very different.

During the 12 month reporting period to June 2019 a total of 550 young people, young families and children accessed our services; of those children represent 191, with more than 90% aged between 0 to 5 years. FAN does not work in isolation, we are active partners in the broader sector and this results in effective outcomes for clients in an environment of collaboration.

FAN is underpinned by a strong client focussed, rights based approach that seeks to maximise positive intervention and strategic responses. FAN provides a range of services for young people, young families and accompanying children who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness including:

- Specialist Homelessness Support Service incorporating
 - Transitional Support Program – case management, crisis young families response, and post care initiative that responds to clients in crisis, provides transitional housing where support is offered to address key life issues, supporting access to therapeutic, education and employment pathways, ultimately leading to accessing long term housing and stability.
 - Private Rental Brokerage Program – tailored support to young people to assist with long term housing outcomes in private rental, through one on one support, workshops and brokerage funds
 - Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer (LGBTIQ) Young People Program – Statewide Program providing housing and support across all aspects of FAN's homelessness programs as outlined above
 - Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) including LGBTIQ HEF – financial support to access private rental or crisis accommodation
 - Homelessness Youth Dual Diagnosis Initiative – in partnership with Eastern Health, providing support to young people experiencing mental health, alcohol, and drug issues, this initiative also includes secondary consultation, training and support to direct service delivery workers.
- Life Skills and Volunteer Programs
 - Funded predominantly through City of Whitehorse funding
 - Offers Life Skill Development and social support through:
 - Young Mum's Group – weekly group, where parenting skills, child development, social support, activities and visits from other professionals e.g. dental health for children – currently held at the Mitcham Family Centre
 - Eastern Diversity Group – weekly group providing social support and life skills development for LGBTIQ Young People, currently held at Youth Connexions
 - Volunteers recruited, trained and supported as Lead Tenants, Mentors and Workshop supports
- Children's Program Early Years – one on one support to young families and accompanying children
- Equity Support Program – resources to assist young people, young families and accompanying children with medical, food, education and employment related costs – funded through donations, philanthropy
- Student Placements – FAN is committed to being a learning organisation and with that offering student placements, however the current office has made that more difficult due to lack of space so we have had to limit the number of student placements offered in 2019

2. New and emerging programs

The following programs are currently either early in their development or in the process of being implemented in the next six months, all of which will be made possible by the office space at Harrow Street. Several of these projects have capacity for expansion and demonstrate the need for more suitable office space, appropriate meeting/training room facilities.

- Engage – Employment and Education Pathways Program for LGBTIQ young people funded by Department of Premier and Cabinet
- LGBTIQ Capacity Building Project – supporting the sector to develop more inclusive LGBTIQ practice, to date more than 20 organisations have been supported – the project commenced in April 2019 and is funded by Department of Health and Human Services
- Peer Leadership Program – to support graduates of FAN's programs to develop peer leadership skills, to foster their own personal growth and to strengthen current client's contribution to FAN Programs and Development. Sponsored by Box Hill Rotary, three year project commencing July 2019
- Pathways to Resilience – FAN invited to provide LGBTIQ Therapeutic Response as part of a consortium with Uniting Wesley, EACH, Safe Futures Foundation and Australian Childhood Foundation – resulting from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The tender was successful and we are in the process of partnership development and implementation. This is recurrently funded by DHHS and Family Safe Victoria
- VCOSS Traineeship – we responded to a call for EOI from VCOSS to offer community services traineeship, due to commence 2020
- Art Therapy Traineeship – Requested from Latrobe University to offer an art therapy 6 month traineeship in 2020, a valuable enhancement to existing service responses which would include additional delivery of groups and workshops at the FAN office

Research and Innovation

Research and Projects – We are also currently involved in several key pieces of research and projects

- LGBTIQ Safe Housing Network – Melbourne University, funded by Vic Health
- Pregnancy and Homelessness Research – RMIT – due to be launched in November
- LGBTIQ National Guidelines – Due to be launched in 2020
- LGBTIQ Program Advisory Group – DHHS – FAN invited to join as the only organisation in the state providing an LGBTIQ Homelessness Response
- Voices for Equality and Respect Project: LGBTIQ Young People in the East – Women's Health in the East due to be launched December 2019
- Several others as noted in the attached Annual Report

Family Access Network has been a direct contributor and partnered in a variety of other research projects, inquiries and royal commissions, and is known as an innovator for a number of the programs we have established. We have also presented at Conferences, forums, and had numerous journal articles published, as well as the development of resource material and reports which we have shared more broadly with the sector.

Quality and accountability

As a specialist homelessness service our predominant source of funding is through the Department of Health and Human Services. FAN embraces the stringent reporting and accountability requirements conditional to this funding. Our last accreditation resulted in an independent auditor team analysing all aspects of service delivery, governance, management, finances and partnerships – consistently they rated our organisation as exemplary, granted 4 exceeded practice ratings and we met all DHHS, Quality Improvement Council and Rainbow Tick standards. It is often said of us that we punch well above our weight and we are proud of this reputation.

Outcomes and benefits

In summary the Harrow Street office will enable FAN to more effectively provide current and emerging programs for vulnerable young people and children; ensure all staff are on one site; provide capacity for growth; improved facilities for staff and clients and an expanded student placement program, all of which are not possible in our current space. FAN appreciates this opportunity from City of Whitehorse and I would very much welcome attending the Council meeting on 2 December to present this proposal and answer any questions.

Governance

The Board of Governance are elected by the members and are responsible for the overall governance of the organisation with day to day functions delegated to the CEO. The Board are skilled and experienced and committed to the best interests of FAN, they represent the following areas of expertise: senior community management, homelessness, family violence, strategic planning and finance, legal, business, education, art therapy and research. The current Board Chair, Diane Godfrey is Deputy Executive Officer at Safe Futures, former long standing DHHS State-wide Manager, Victorian Government Human Services, for Homelessness and Family Violence

Leadership Team

Sue Carlile, CEO, has over 30 years' experience in the specialist homelessness service system, as well as qualifications in youth work, family therapy, social sciences and quality accreditation, and is actively engaged in multiple regional, state-wide and at times national initiatives linked to service design, research and sector reform. Sue Carlile has been employed at FAN since 1985.

Michelle Thompson, Manager Client Services, is a member of the Leadership Team and shares higher duties with the Financial Administrator during the CEO absence. Michelle has worked in the Community Sector for over 20 years mainly working with young people and their families. Michelle has worked in a variety of settings including Alcohol and Other Drugs, Mental Health, Youth Homelessness, Family Services and Community Health. Michelle is a qualified Youth Worker and Counsellor.

Maureen Higgins – Financial Administrator, has been at FAN for 11 years and is responsible for all financial matters, acquittals, reporting and is a member of the Leadership Team, she shares acting higher duties with the Manager Client Services during the CEO absence.

FAN has a highly experienced staff team of ten. All staff have tertiary degrees in varying disciplines including youth work, social work, counselling, social sciences, criminology and community development.

Contact

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