

together we achieve

stories celebrating five years of Gateway Services



Baptcare

MISSION
AUSTRALIA



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Since its establishment in 2009, Gateway Services have provided a visible entry and assessment point for vulnerable children, young people and families in Tasmania. The service expanded in 2010 to include assessment and referral for people with disability, providing more choice of service for individuals. Most importantly, Gateway Services provides a stronger, more integrated and person-centred approach which has responded more effectively to people's needs, as well as access to the most appropriate support and services to best meet their needs.

Gateway Services can justly be proud of the achievements that are set out in this book. A great deal has been accomplished in the first five years of operation. We have been able to reach thousands more people with supports that strengthen families, promote community inclusion, and link individuals with service providers.

Since coming into operation, Gateway Services have provided support for more than 11,400 people living with disability and vulnerable families, responded to more than 54,000 calls for assistance or information, diverted an estimated 2,500 children from the child protection system, assisted over 600 families facing or experiencing homelessness and over 4000 parents have received support in improving their parenting skills.

Since becoming the Minister for Human Services, I have felt privileged to hear the many success stories of these Tasmanians and therefore want to acknowledge all of those who participated in bringing this wonderful book together. I would also like to pay tribute to all those who help support vulnerable Tasmanians right across the state - thank you for the valuable contribution that you are making in so many people's lives.

We now can look forward to more success stories over the next five years, as we work together towards creating a more welcoming and inclusive Tasmania and, most importantly, changing the lives of so many Tasmanian's for the better.



Hon Jacquie Petrusma MP
Minister for Human Services

It is with great pride that Baptcare presents this anniversary book in partnership with Mission Australia, to celebrate five years of the Gateway Service in Tasmania. The Gateway, as a single point of entry to all family and disability services, has been fundamental to our work with individuals and families in Tasmania.

As an organisation with a rich history of caring for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community, we are driven by the belief that achieving the best outcomes for people with disability and for families, young people and children, involves taking a shared approach to planning and service delivery. This shared approach places the person at the centre, and is inclusive of carers, family and other service providers.

I have to acknowledge the strong relationships our dedicated staff have built over the past five years, not only with the individuals we work with, but with the families as well as our organisational partnerships, that ensure the best tailored approach for each person.

Baptcare continues to support and encourage greater choice and individual control for people with a disability, and provide practical, tailored support and advice for families, through the Gateway and associated programs.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our Tasmanian staff for their dedication to the services we provide through the Gateway. I also want to thank Mission Australia and our Alliance partners for their valued partnership in this journey.

We hope you enjoy reading through the heartfelt stories of the Gateway in this anniversary publication and that it will continue to inspire you to support this significant program.

Graham Dangerfield
Baptcare CEO

On behalf of Mission Australia, I am delighted to present this five-year anniversary book to celebrate Gateway Services, the single point of entry to family and disability services in Tasmania.

Mission Australia is committed to building a more inclusive society for all Australians, regardless of disadvantage. We have always sought out others who share our vision, working alongside them to create a better future for people in need. We are proud to work in partnership with Baptcare and the Department of Health and Human Services to deliver an innovative range of community services in Tasmania.

During Mission Australia's 155-year history of meeting human need, supporting families has been at the core of our work. We are committed to the early interventions and prevention that support vulnerable parents and promote children's safety and development. Families play a crucial role in providing a safe and nurturing environment for children to grow and thrive. They act as a network of support when people face challenges in their lives – whether they are physical, emotional or economic.

Through Gateway Services, we are supporting families, in all their many forms, to raise strong, healthy and resilient children. With our partners, we are also changing the experience of people with disabilities and their families by providing the supports they need to pursue their goals and interests and participate fully in life.

The freedom to make decisions which affect our lives is a fundamental right that each of us should enjoy. The Disability Gateway Service supports people with disabilities to exercise as much choice and control as possible over their life. Our focus on client-choice has enabled individuals and their families to become active participants in planning and quickly obtaining the supports they feel will best meet their needs and goals.

A sense of shared endeavour is at the foundation of everything Mission Australia does. Together we are stronger and together we can achieve so much more. We are proud to be part of Gateway and all that it has achieved so far. It has become a model for best practice in community service and has been fundamental to the success of the National Disability Insurance Scheme trial in Tasmania.

With the support of our wonderful partners, Mission Australia looks forward to transforming more lives through our work with Gateway Services.

Catherine Yeomans
Mission Australia CEO



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In regards to this publication the Gateways would like to thank the Human Services Minister Jacque Petrusma, the former Minister Cassie O'Connor, the dedicated staff of Bapcare and Mission Australia, Child Protection Services, Disability and Community Services, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Gateways acknowledge and thank the following Alliance Partners without whose significant work with families and children this publication would not be possible:

Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House
Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation
Glenhaven Family Care
Good Beginnings
Hobart City Mission
Jordan River Services
Northern Suburbs Community Centre
Pittwater Community Centre
Ravenswood Neighbourhood House
St Helens Neighbourhood House
West Coast Council
Youth, Family and Community Connections

To the disability service organisations, our non-Alliance Integrated Family Support Service agencies, and the broader sector, the Gateways would like to acknowledge the important work of all the organisations we have worked and partnered closely with, and to thank them for their continued collaboration and dedication in achieving quality outcomes for our clients.

We would especially like to thank all the clients and their families who have shared their amazing stories of resilience and courage, and wish them all the best in their continuing journeys: Maggie, Louise, Barry, Andrea, Kyra, Chad, Damon, Julia and Tania.

Readers may find some of these stories upsetting or confronting.



Maggie



Maggie

There is a teenager on the streets of Hobart right now.

They might have a few friends, acquaintances: a little bit of money in their pocket. They could be crashing at a friend's house, even sharing a room, but they are struggling to pay for the basics.

They spend their few dollars to buy some takeaway food, a small comfort when they know they are slipping behind in the rent. Family connections have become strained, and they have become part of a culture of drugs and alcohol. It is not long before a small crisis leads to becoming homeless. It could be just a broken agreement, an eviction notice or debts, or more seriously domestic violence or abuse.

Now imagine trying to put your life together with no stable home and limited finances: with your only acquaintances continually pulling you back into the cycle of drugs and poverty.

Maggie doesn't have to imagine.

Three years ago she found herself between the streets of Hobart, a tent, the Hobart Women's Shelter and her parent's homes, all while providing for her daughter Jodi.

"I was lost: I had family problems and very limited choices."

The ensuing instability quickly created a cycle of disconnection and poverty, even though all the while Maggie kept her daughter at school.

"We can only make our own choices and learn from them, and I did."

While Maggie accessed various services through her own determination, what was missing was access to consistent 'hands on' assistance to achieve stability for her family. It was when she was pregnant with her second child and coming to the end of her second six-week stay at the women's shelter that Maggie was referred to the voluntary Gateway Service as a possible answer to her needs.

Enter case worker Samantha.



"I thought this is different – we're not in an office, I'm at home, she's seeing how I live"



"She came to my mother's house in the middle of family domestics, and so much was going on."

Maggie remembers they went up the street for a coffee, and spent time to get to know each other.

"I thought this is different – were not in an office, I'm at home, she's seeing how I live, meeting my kids, and there is a personal contact that is reliable."

"We have our business days where I have to do my paperwork or look at housing issues, but I see the visits also keep me sane."

"I know she is going to be here visiting again next week, so if I have problems I know I can work it out - the process of guiding me through my thought processes was something I did not get elsewhere."

Samantha is quick to share the credit.

"Maggie is incredibly capable and resourceful, and you just have to point her in the right direction and she takes off."

"The beauty of our Family Support is we are able to put clients into contact with a range of other services."

This includes brokerage for furnishing the private rental house she is now in, counselling for her daughter, potential study and a driver's licence for Maggie. While this support continues to address Maggie's needs as they arise, and her family continue to achieve their

goals, she is now looking forward to the day that she will not need the support anymore. Maggie has since had a baby boy, and the three are a solid family unit.

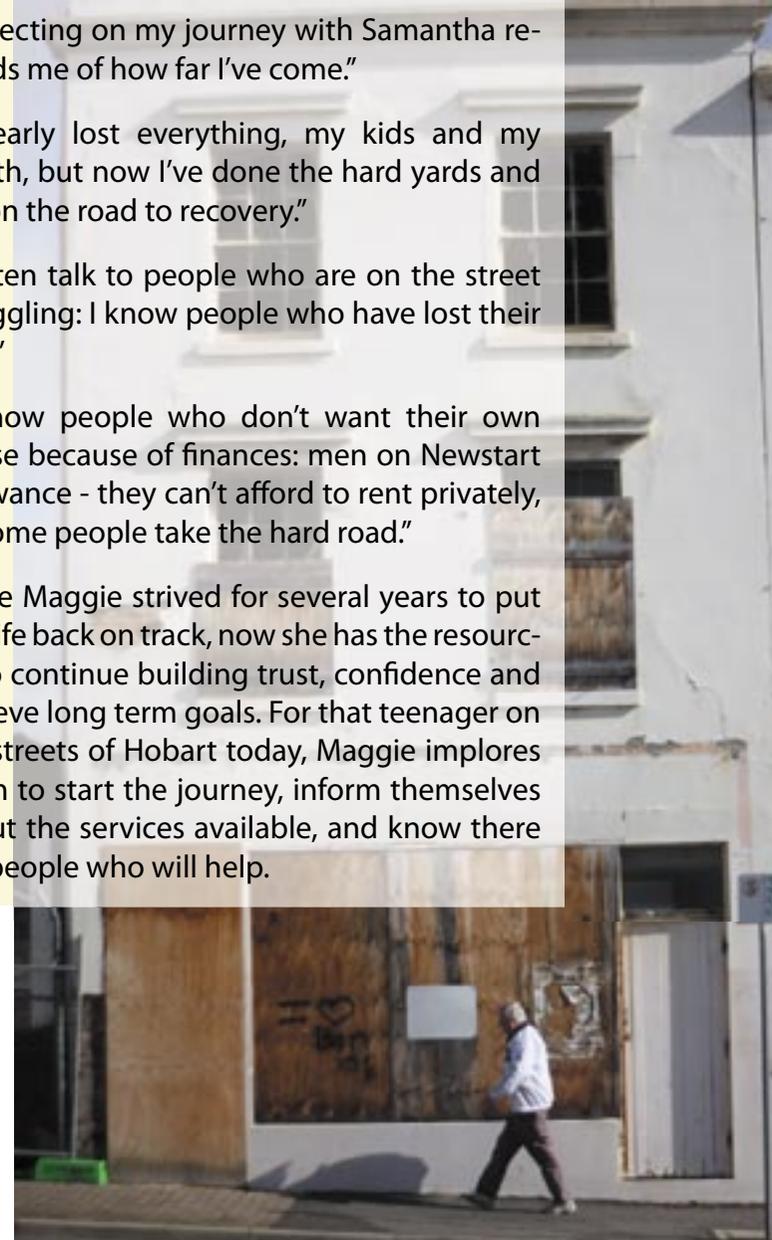
"Reflecting on my journey with Samantha reminds me of how far I've come."

"I nearly lost everything, my kids and my health, but now I've done the hard yards and I'm on the road to recovery."

"I often talk to people who are on the street struggling: I know people who have lost their kids."

"I know people who don't want their own house because of finances: men on Newstart allowance - they can't afford to rent privately, so some people take the hard road."

While Maggie strived for several years to put her life back on track, now she has the resources to continue building trust, confidence and achieve long term goals. For that teenager on the streets of Hobart today, Maggie implores them to start the journey, inform themselves about the services available, and know there are people who will help.



Louise

Louise's busy household includes four very happy and active children, however for a long time she endeavoured to handle the extra responsibilities that go with two of her children having higher needs.

While those two are busy cooking with a carer in the kitchen, the younger two are running around in the garden picking strawberries.

"I kick myself for not having done something sooner, and that I took it all on board myself: I just didn't know that the services were out there."

Four years ago, through relationship pressures, trying to pay a mortgage, and then a separation, Louise found herself with three children living in a granny flat at her parent's house.

"It was the beginning of not being able to cope: having two children with muscular dystrophy and then having an 18-month old on top of that, I found it very difficult to cope."

"I didn't have a great deal of family support because it is a lot to take on and unless you're living it and understanding the amount of work that is involved, you would just run away."

"I'd hit rock bottom to the point that if I didn't get help, I was ready to hand my kids over to the services: I knew I wouldn't but I couldn't see a way out, and that's how I felt."

Louise's barrister at the time had sourced an advocate for her who sought more support for Louise, a process that led to meeting case worker Claire, and more recently Fiona.

Claire made the initial assessment that led to a support package that initially provided three hours of

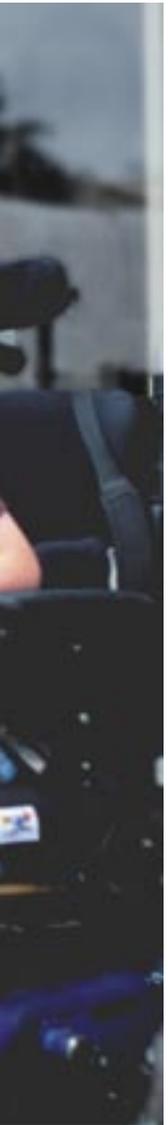


"I felt I was splitting myself trying to juggle the whole



Louise

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assistance each per week for Brittany and James, her two children with higher needs.

“We initially started up with a local nursing service, but at that time there weren’t a lot of agencies that worked in this area. Prior to that I didn’t know about extra assistance that could have been available from the start.”

The three hours slowly built up to around ten hours over a period of 18 months, which is when Fiona came on the scene.

Fiona explains, “once we’d fulfilled a certain level of requirements, the family was wait-listed for further hours.”

“When more funding became available, the family was contacted and Louise’s case was allocated to me at that time.”

“While I became the direct worker, there is also the team resource which supports the guidance of services for the family.”

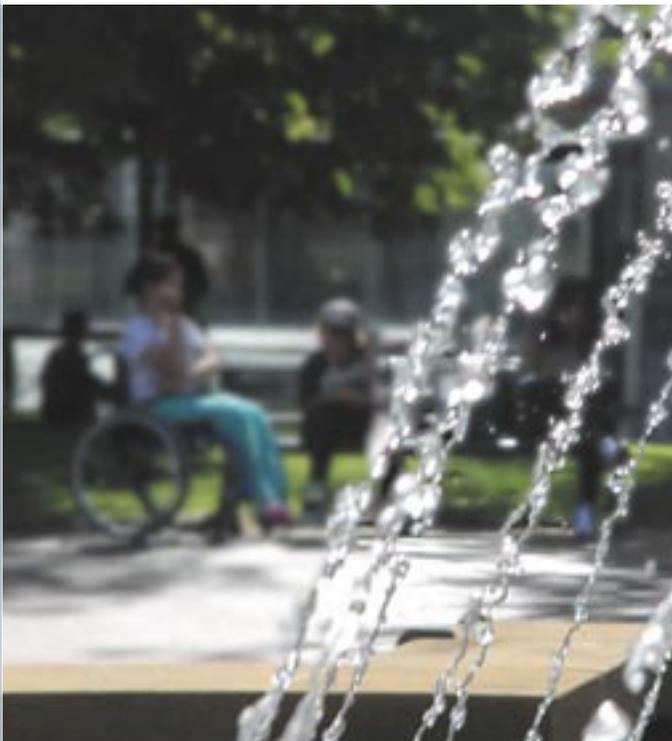
“That’s the beauty of having a such a complete service: I was able to see what Claire had worked on, what had already been tried and what had succeeded.”

Louise says proudly that Fiona excels in her role, and the knowledge she brings gives her more choices for her family. More opportunities have arisen from various community groups that have assisted Louise with fundraising for transport and equipment costs.

Louise is still getting used to sharing her home with the carers the funding allows the family to have, but she is discovering that it is giving her the time to be the mum she wants to be for all her children.

“For me to juggle being a carer, a worker and a mum, I don’t enjoy my children as much as I should.”

“I lost myself in all of that: I had Brittany when I was nineteen, and then James, both with a disability, and now two more children, I felt I was splitting myself in two, trying to juggle the whole mix.”



Now Louise finds that the children are beginning to help each other, which gives her the freedom to be able to not have to be in the room all the time.

“Fiona and I have ended up with a good, safe bond that I can trust: it’s like an extension of family now.”

Asked if she has any time to herself, Louise says, ‘we’re working on it’.

“The kids now have the support they need, as well as extra support in the school holidays, meaning our needs are being met during that time.”

Louise’s eldest Brittany is now 13, and she sees the independence that has come with the support they have had received.

“As a mother, that’s the most important thing here: to see the things that they have been able to achieve within themselves, through the support we have received, it has been remarkable.”



Damon

Damon

Damon has a love of cars: he has the Commodore in his driveway and is working towards getting his licence in the next few months. The young man looks and sounds as relaxed as any other teenager; blue jeans and a t-shirt, a laconic style and a cheeky smile.

While still waiting to get his wheels sorted, Damon had another baby to look after: his newborn son Blaze. When he was 16, Damon was caught by surprise when his ex-partner handed over care of six month-old Blaze. What followed was a steep learning curve in things most teenagers are yet to discover: nappies, baby formula, childcare, and caring for someone with higher needs.

His first-born Blaze has cerebral palsy.

When he first became the primary carer for Blaze he was at risk of homelessness: no longer able to afford his accommodation at the time.

"I had all these people knocking on my door, they were handing me cards, telling me to do this do that - I was young and I just didn't know what to do."

Integrated Family Support Service case worker Rachael can remember meeting Damon when all of these changes were happening.

"The referral came through the nursing service that had been working with Damon and his young family at the time."

"Damon was overwhelmed with all responsibilities: he was a young man with a lot on his plate."

Damon adds, "then you knocked on my door, made sure I had the right appointments, provided transport for me to get to

"I had all these people knocking on my door... I was young and I just didn't know what to do."



my door...
what to do."



the appointments, and actually followed everything through."
Rachael followed up on the things that needed to be done in conjunction with the nursing service including immunisations and other health services, and helped Damon secure a new home a few weeks before Christmas.

"At that time we weren't really sure what was going to be needed for Blaze's additional needs and equipment, but we ended up getting him a three bedroom house through Housing Tasmania."

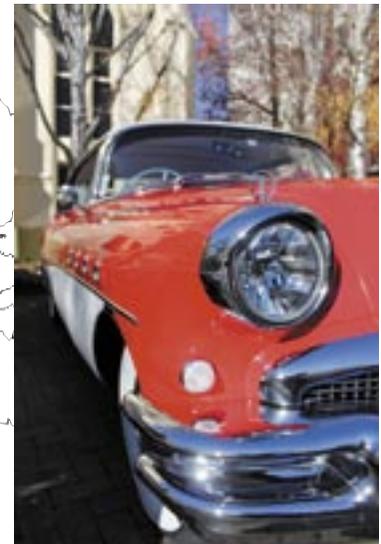
Damon began the journey of learning what his son's extra needs are: hearing tests and speech therapy, mobility, and learning.

"I went from being able to do whatever I wanted to do, to looking after my child every day; trying to fit him into my routines."

"It was hard, providing for what we needed, but now I don't wake up every morning thinking 'how am I going to pay for everything'."

With his new partner Kara, Damon now has a newborn daughter, a stable home and income: a long way away from the situation he was in two years ago.

"I've got everything I need, and I want Blaze to have a better childhood than I did."



"Blaze loves his sister, and now he is always helping out with her."

"The best thing about the second time around is that I know a bit more about being a parent."

While he's still working towards the day when he gets his licence and the car on the road, Damon is proud of his achievements with his young family.

Asked what he is like at seeking help now, Damon says with a wry smile, "Mate, I'll take any help I can get, but I can see a time soon when we won't need the same level of support."



Andrea

Appearances in relationships can be deceiving.

A crisis had been a long time coming, although it was still a surprise for some friends who thought of Andrea and her husband and daughter as the ideal family. Walking into her modern home in a quiet street in Launceston's Northern suburbs, it's hard to imagine the emotional turmoil they suffered in the months leading up to her marriage breaking down.

To compound matters Andrea only discovered the extent of the financial abuse when she began looking at the bank balances. Foremost in her thoughts was protecting her daughter from the fallout, but she had no idea how that would be possible. Andrea proudly shows some photos of her daughter as a baby and during holidays playing on Green's Beach.

"She loves to go wading and skipping rocks at the beach."

The events not only left her emotionally broken: Andrea was also dealing with recently diagnosed health issues during that time.

"In the big scheme of things I should have walked away a lot sooner: you get married and you think, 'this will be for the rest of my life'."

When her husband finally moved out, Andrea was left confused, emotionally drained and broke. It was only because of a casual acquaintance with a social worker that, in desperation, Andrea made a phone call that led to her being referred to Gateway Services.

"I didn't have a clue what they did, or what they stood for."

"I started to become more confident and then I started to access resources... I thought, 'I can make that phone call on my own.'"

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find this money."

and we could apply for brokerage through
o cover the cost, and that was approved."

e that were a massive help: also being
er me to other services around town while
s were being chased up."

as far as being referred to City Mission to
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e, and allowing her to go into their toy
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ull of praise for the strengths she identi-
rea, even when Andrea was not at all con-
er next move.

s the capacity to negotiate what she
especially what she needs for her daugh-
really a matter of me providing the re-
d then she can take it from there."

initial assessment with Andrea worked out
of her immediate needs and goals might
irected towards achieving those goals."

It is a little more than three years since Andrea
made that phone call and met Joanna, but since
then she has stabilised her health condition, gone
back to work, and has even had the trust and confi-
dence to enter a new relationship. All along Andrea
knew that there would be solutions, she just didn't
know how she would get there.

"There are skills of coping and managing affairs
that I had to learn through this process."

"I actually became aware of the strengths that I
had."

"Having the assistance made it easier for me to
work through a lot of the day-to-day stuff on my
own."

"I started to become more confident and then I
started to access resources on my own: I thought,

'I don't need to ask Joanna about that, I can make
that phone call on my own!'"

Andrea's case file has been closed, something she
and Joanna both speak proudly of.

"I'm a lot happier now to not have set plans in life,
to take it one day at a time."

"Having Joanna in our lives has been great for my
daughter too, and now it's like we are old friends."



Kyra

While Kyra has a pet cat, she has discovered through her new job that she is definitely a 'dog person'. Looking after owner's dogs while they are at work is a world away from the crisis the Hobart young woman was facing two years ago.

Struggling with self-harming, aggressive behaviour and a difficult home life, a crisis moment in Kyra's young life could easily have been her last. While at home alone she made a spur of the moment decision to go to Hobart's Tasman Bridge with the intention of killing herself. Luckily she was talked down by police and taken to hospital: the beginning of a process of recovery.

Understandably, Kyra's memories of events at the time are a little hazy, but the Hobart woman overcame her anxiety and depression to begin living her life to the full.

"I was a different person then, I was feeling lonely and unloved."

Kyra and her siblings were getting in trouble by being abusive and aggressive, ending up getting charged by police on a number of occasions.

"We were throwing rocks at school, breaking things, and being cheeky."

"I would 'go off' at the police when they approached my family, I would get in their face and tell them to leave us alone."

She knows now that her anger was misdirected from other unhappy things in her life. When police took Kyra to hospital after her crisis, she was introduced to Targetted Youth Support Services case worker Kym.

"Kym was very nice, she was caring and patient, and she helped me all the way through, until I became the better person I am now."



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ould call her whenever I needed help, and she would
t up with me to have a chat."

cites the building of trust with Kym as vital to
eiving some of the goals they set together. This in-
ed getting her licence and finding a fulfilling job.
been really good for me to get out of home and
nd the day with animals.

play games with them, take them for walks, get to
w them and do introductions with new dogs.

also take photos of the dogs and share them so the
ers can see them getting along with the other dogs."

also did a first aid course and now volunteers regu-
with St Johns ambulance.

really good, keeps me busy and we go out on week-
s to sporting events."

now graduated from the cadets into the adult group
olunteers."

also helped Kyra access the resources to gain her
er's licence. Also, being diagnosed and medicated
anxiety and depression has meant that Kyra does
suffer the ups and downs that took her towards self
n. It has been twelve months now since Kyra has
ded the Targeted Youth Support Service that Kym
vided through their regular meetings.

"I know she is there if I ever feel the need to access the
service again."

"I'm a lot different, I've moved out of home and have my
independence - I enjoy cooking and the responsibilities
that come with having your own place."

Kyra thinks about studying at university to become a
full time paramedic, although asked where she sees
herself in another two years time, Kyra's thought go
back to the dogs.

"When I first got to see all the cute dogs, I said to my
boss I'm staying in this job: I'm not leaving!"

*If any reader finds this story upsetting or confronting and
is experiencing feelings of suicide or has lost someone to
suicide, they are encouraged to contact Lifeline on 13 1114*



Chad

"To be honest when we first started with the Integrated Family Support Service I didn't have any trust because I'd been let down so much."

Chad's father Peter reflects upon the long path they have travelled to get the life-changing assistance they needed for their son Chad, now aged nine.

Living on a quiet road in the hills above the Huon Valley, the family struggled for years to access the consistent service and support for Chad's behavioural issues that were affecting all aspects of their life.

"I knew there were some services available, because I had some of the same history as Chad growing up; the outbursts and the violence.

"I could see he was going down that path and that's when I kicked up a stink.

The family noticed his flighty moods and anger problems by the time he was two, and first sought help with managing them when he was four.

"It fell on deaf ears for a while: you talk to one person, then another, and it goes around in circles."

After getting referred from one specialist to another it became difficult to continue appointments living in the country and on a low income. By the time Chad was six, his behavioural challenges were affecting the family's health, his schooling, and their relationships with each other and the community. It was a referral by one of the Doctors that led the family to begin working with their Intergrated Family Support Service case worker Jennifer.

"I kept saying to my partner Angela, 'I don't know about this one', but after the third or fourth visit from Jennifer we started getting talking about different things, and now I feel like I can talk to her about anything."

"Chad picked up that I feel comfortable with her, and so when he



"I like living out in the country, but I find you don't get the help that you would in the city - that gets my goat."



Chad



took a liking to Jennifer, I knew that it was working.”

When Chad was attending the local school a misunderstanding led to him directing anger towards a relief teacher with a pair of scissors. Jennifer explains some of the steps she has taken with the family and broader community to create greater support.

“One of the things we’ve done is a ‘one-to-five, keep it calm’ strategy, I’ve educated the teachers on that, and they are implementing it throughout the school, not just for Chad.

“The scale is something he can understand to describe his anger level, and because everyone else uses the same language we can avoid him getting to a ‘five’

“He is quick to anger – don’t get me wrong – but through regular meetings the support staff have begun to understand him a lot more.”

Apart from regularly participating in class now, Chad helps with the gardening at school and is growing his own vegie patch at home. Jennifer has arranged for speech therapy through the school, and Chad recently finished the swimming program with the school.

Peter adds, “Our next door neighbour who also works at the school has taken a liking to Chad and took him regularly to after school care, and that has had a huge positive influence. Chad’s mother joins

in with more examples of Jennifer’s strategies.

“Whatever Jennifer suggests Chad will listen to – she has organised a boxing bag for his anger, and he really enjoys that.

“At the moment we trying to organise his own little bootcamp in the backyard to get him to direct his energy there.”

If the family need to go to an appointment, Jennifer can arrange to meet them there, and assist with some of the paperwork and terminology. Peter is confident that they are on the right path after years of struggling to deal with their son’s issues without guidance.

“Chad is helping me around the garden, and he is able to stay with other relatives overnight now.”

The family are looking forward to when they can go away camping or fishing together without having to worry about Chad’s behaviour impacting on the experience.

“I like living out in the country, but I find you don’t get the help that you would in the city - that gets my goat.”

“Three years ago, if we didn’t start getting the help we needed I don’t know where we’d be now.”

Julia

As the sunlight streams into her modern Eastern Shore home in Hobart, Julia proudly shows off her new life next to the water. It is a long way from living on the mainland in a long-term abusive relationship three years ago. She is not unique in trying and failing to leave a destructive relationship.

The eventual catalyst for leaving was coming back to Tasmania with her two children to nurse her dying mother: and then deciding she would not be going back.

However from there, rather than improving her life, things spiralled further downwards. For one thing the harassment that Julie received from her ex-partner and his family was wearing her confidence down. Also contributing was her continued alcohol dependence that led to losing her driver's licence, and difficulties with her daughter's behaviour. Without the confidence or skills to deal with everything, Julia described herself at 'breaking point'.

Her family was in a crisis.

"I had no idea what was available: I thought I was hitting my head against a brick wall."

Through initial contact with a local counselling service, Julia was given a referral to Integrated Family Support Services worker Rachel - the first positive step along the path of recovery.

"She was really up against it, so the actual thing that Julia needed most was advocacy to help her have the strength to build her life again", Rachael said.

"Julia had to stand her ground with her ex-partner's family who were also involved with the situation."

Julia became very good at hiding her alcohol addiction from Rachael, and it took some time for this to be fully addressed. Rachael remembers confronting Julia on one occasion saying, "I can't help



"It was as if a weight had been taken off my shoulders: knowing that I was not on my own."



Julia

you if you are lying to me - I'd rather that you be honest and say 'Look, I've had a bad night.'"

"It was a teary day but Julie just lay it all out on the table."

"It's all about being non-judgemental because we have all got our stuff to deal with."

It took around six months for Julie to get to the point where she went to detox.

Rachael adds, "We had a plan, first the detox, then the licence, and at the same time addressing Bianca's behaviour with other support."

One of the most significant recommendations Rachael made for Julia was to Self Help and Empowerment, a group focussed on women who have been through similar experiences.

"It was as if a weight had been taken off my shoulders: knowing that I was not on my own."

Without Julia having a licence, Rachael made sure she had transport to her appointments and lots of follow up conversations whenever they were needed.

For Julia the most devastating effect of all this was on her daughter Bianca who be-



came wilful and aggressive, disengaged with school, and constantly leaving home.

It was another difficult situation Julia had to deal with, and sees now that a lot of her daughter's anger had come from knowing what was going on without being able to do anything about it, including her mother's alcohol abuse.

Julia agrees, "The police wouldn't help you a lot because she would ring you up when she ran away and say 'I love you.'"

At that point the support was increased to involve a Targeted Youth Support Worker to assist Bianca with her anger and behaviour. Julia has spent the last twelve months doing some of the things that she wants to do: having the time to finally put herself first, doing short courses, getting her driver's licence back, spending quality time with her children and even starting a new relationship.

"I have had the realisation that I am worth something, and knowing that there was someone there made that journey possible."



Barry

Barry always had a clear idea of what he wanted from married life.

"If you can try as much as possible to live a normal life, to keep a regular routine, it's how I've always operated here."

When Barry married Maria in 1985, he did so with the full knowledge of the condition that would require him to increasingly care for her. Maria has lived with the increasingly debilitating effects of multiple sclerosis for the past 30 years.

So when case manager Amber helped access funding to allow a weekend trip away to Launceston from his Hobart home, it was another small step along that road to maintaining a normal lifestyle.

The disability funding allowed full time care for Maria while Barry visited some old stomping grounds and went out to the pub for a meal with old friends.

Barry has waited 10 years for the short break from his life as a full time carer.

Of course the road has not always been an easy one, not because of Maria's multiple sclerosis, but because accessing the right services at the right time has not always been forthcoming.

"When I married Marie she was in a wheelchair with MS, I knew what I had to deal with", Barry says at the kitchen table of the Glenorchy home they share.

"When I married Marie she was in a wheelchair with MS... I knew what I had to deal with"





Having worked for 17 years as an orderly at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Barry had some idea of the services available, but experienced a lot of 'knocking on doors' to try and access them.

But a lot of that has changed since 2010 as the variety and level of support began to increase to match their specific needs. Barry proudly shows off his garden flowers as he describes the pleasure Maria gets from sitting in the sun on their balcony looking at the colours. They are now assisted by a team of support staff through a package put in place by Gateway Services.

"The ones we've got, who rotate in and out, I cannot speak highly enough of them."

It is important for Barry and Marie to have their own home to ensure the privacy, security and comfort that goes with maintaining a normal married life.

Since becoming a part of their lives, Amber has assisted with one-off and ongoing funding applications, appropriate care assistance, referrals and that all important friendly face.

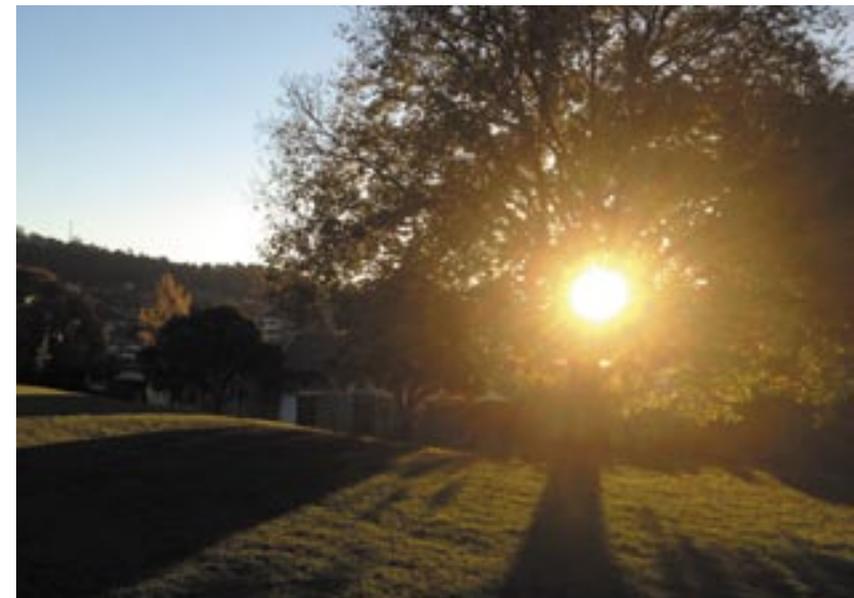
"Working with Barry, I have made another referral for respite care that has resulted in funding for respite care that will allow another well deserved holiday."

This time it's off to Melbourne for a weekend, something Barry could not have contemplated if

he did not feel confident that his wife's needs were being met.

Barry knows that his thirty-year marriage to Maria has been a journey of challenges and change for both of them, but he has the quiet determination to continue doing things his way, with a little support from an understanding team.

"I wouldn't change a thing - I've got everything I want right here."



Tania

Tania has experienced a long history of domestic violence, extending from her childhood through to her adult relationships.

Her suburban home in a quiet Northern Tasmanian country town is still full of happy children and grand children, but heartache has followed from the difficulties she has endured.

While Tania has eight children, she has previously suffered when her children were removed from her care. For someone who has been through so much, she is surprisingly candid about the details surrounding these events in her life.

As the close-knit family busily interact around us, Tania calmly talks about the low points she reached in her journey. As recently as her last pregnancy only four years ago, she felt as though she would not be able to go on, admitting to her caseworker Penny that she felt like taking her own life.

“My ex-partner was still around, and nobody thought that I could stay away from him.”

He continued to breach domestic violence orders, and it was a painfully familiar pattern that Tania felt would just keep repeating. She credits the relationship that was built with Penny as putting her life on a new path of hope.

“From the first day I met Penny, I felt like I could relate to her and trust her.”

“She shared things about herself with me, didn’t judge me, and was such a warm and consistent person.”

“Where there is a will there is a way,
and the support has made me feel so
much more determined to succeed.”



Tania



"I was frightened that my unborn baby would also be removed after she was born, and nobody knows what it is like to lose your child straight from hospital."

"It's never that easy to cut all ties, but Penny had conversations with the department and advocated for me, also making them aware that it doesn't matter what I do, I am never going to be fully free of him."

"I feel sometimes that the department used the situation against me until then. I don't feel that way anymore, I can contact them and tell them that I am being harassed and I feel they don't use it against me."

While Tania still has children in care, her three daughters are a strong part of her life, and they form a close network of support for each other. Her two eldest daughters are now also mothers, and there was a residual family fear that the same could happen with them. However the family has moved beyond the fear and distrust that was caused by years of violence.

"Now I will ring the police if I ever see my ex-partner near the house – once upon a time I would not have done that."

As a family, they have moved through various stages of the service, also working with another caseworker, Bec. While her daugh-



ter Jennifer has had a different experience than Tania, she too found herself at risk of having her children placed in care because of the family's domestic strife.

"In my case, I couldn't live with my parents, and Bec has helped me to access day care, my first house, as well as some funding for necessities."

Tania and her daughter are quick to add that the feelings of trust have been the same in both situations.

After two years with the service the family no longer needed the assistance, and Tania adds, "other places I have been through have helped, but the ongoing assistance I have been given has made all the difference."

"I've been back to school, I've done some courses – I can get over the hurdles now."

"I'm happy with my life, I've got my kids and regular to access my children in care, and I'm able to focus on study and seeking work."

"Where there is a will there is a way, and the support has made me feel so much more determined to succeed."

A Background to Gateway Services

A review of the Tasmanian Family Support Service in October 2005 and the Child Protection system in 2006 led to the development of the "New Directions for Child Protection in Tasmania: an Integrated Strategic Framework" (January 2008). The Tasmanian Government, responding to the issues raised and proposals for reform put forward in the Framework, committed to reform the system, and to provide services for up to 3400 families per year.

Features of the reformed service system included a community based "Gateway" access point where family issues and needs are assessed and then matched to tailored services provided by Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS) which was established in 2009. In addition, in 2010 the Disability Gateway was established in response to a need to institute a more contemporary disability services sector in Tasmania. It was intended that the new model would be more responsive to the needs of people with disability and that it would deliver high quality services in partnership with a wide range of mainstream and specialist disability service providers. Targeted Youth Support Services (and Supported Youth Services) as well as Supporting Grandchildren Living with Grandparents (and other relatives) programs launched in 2011, have been added to the suite of programs offered within Gateway Services.

Gateway and its associated services are delivered by lead agents Bapcare and Mission Australia in partnership with their Alliance partners: Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House, Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation, Glenhaven Family Services, Good Beginnings, Hobart City Mission, Jordan River Services, Northern Suburbs Community Centre, Pittwater Community Centre, Ravenswood Neighbourhood House, St Helens Neighbourhood House, West Coast Council, and Youth, Family and Community Connections.

This strong collaborative Alliance partnership has strengthened family support practice across the state. This approach, mirrored within the disability sector, has also fostered a collaborative approach to delivering innovative and responsive services in Tasmania.

Which programs did our clients access?

Gateway Services

Accessed by all clients.

Funded by the Department of Health & Human Services, Gateway Services links individuals and families with appropriate information and advice, brief intervention and referrals to assist people to the pathway they are seeking. Staff work collaboratively with individuals and families to ensure their needs are recognised and the appropriate service

response is given. This could include referral to one or more of the following programs:

- Mainstream services in the community
- Local Area Coordination (LAC)
- Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS)
- Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS)
- Family Support for grandparents and relatives raising children
- Early Years Intervention Service

Integrated Family Support Services

Accessed by Andrea, Julia, Chad, Maggie, Damon and Tania.

Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS) is a voluntary service focused on increasing the well-being and safety of children, young people and families by providing support and resources to build family strengths, resilience and capacity. IFSS works closely with Child Protection Services to prevent children entering the child protection system. IFSS case workers assess the individual situation of each family to help strengthen relationships, develop communication skills and facilitate referrals to appropriate services. Families are referred to IFSS from Gateway. IFSS workers provide a comprehensive range of case management services for children, young people and families including:

- Early intervention strategies for families
- A flexible approach to meet families' needs

- Practical support and skill development
- Support to assist the strengthening of positive relationships
- Parenting skills
- Outreach support
- Case management
- Advocacy

Local Area Co-ordination

Accessed by Louise and Barry.

The Local Area Co-ordination service offers community members living with disability the support to access services they may need to maintain or improve their quality of life and continue to live independently in the community... Local Area Coordination works to achieve positive and quality outcomes through casework and case coordination in partnership with individuals, their families or carers and their support networks. The program operates throughout Tasmania including rural and remote communities, linking people with disabilities to a range of support networks and services depending on their individual needs. Gateways work closely with the community-based Disability Consultant and Disability Services to provide the best services for individuals. We are flexible in our approach to providing service in that we will meet people in an environment of their choosing; somewhere they feel comfortable such as their home, Gateway office or a location within their community.

Targeted Youth Support Services

Accessed by Julia and her daughter Bianca, and Kyra.

This service offers intensive case management and therapeutic support for vulnerable young people aged 10-18 who are identified as having significant and/or multiple risk factors and where without support, it could result in requiring child protection or possibly escalation into the youth justice system. Working alongside individual young people and collaboratively with family, community members, service providers and government departments, this service aims to:

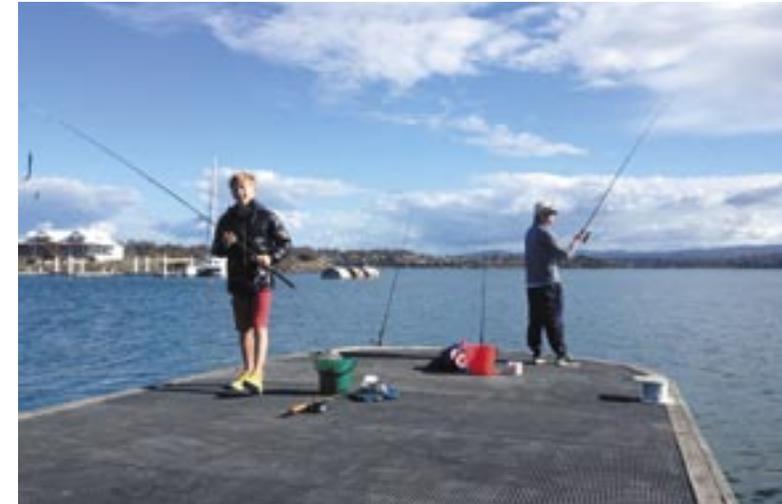
- Reduce young people's involvement with Youth Justice and Child Protection
- Improve family and peer relationships, self-esteem, health and wellbeing
- Decrease occurrence/risk of homelessness or inappropriate accommodation
- Increase engagement in education and community
- Lessen the number and intensity of risk factors

Targeted Youth Support Service responds to young people as individuals and supports them to make choices and decisions that meet their needs and empower them.

Supporting Grandchildren Living with Grandparents (and other relatives)

The Gateways Supporting Grandchildren Living with Grandparents (and other relatives) program helps provide information, advice and referral options to grandparents and other relatives who have taken up the role of primary carers of their grandchildren or related children.

The program delivers a variety of different information sessions and group activities and assists to strengthen support for relatives taking on a caring role.



Alliance Partners

It has been a pleasure for Good Beginnings to be involved in the Gateway / IFSS alliances. For the past five years heads of agencies and practitioners alike have been working collaboratively, striving for an integrated service system that supports children, young people and their families in Tasmania. We are committed to continuing this valuable work as we believe an early intervention approach to supporting families achieves the best outcomes for children.

Good Beginnings

St Helens Neighbourhood House is part of the Family Service Alliance partnership with Gateway Services. We have found this collaborative partnership to be of invaluable support in assisting the House in maintaining our primary goals of supporting people and their families and enhancing choices. The partnership meets regularly, shares and disseminates information which assists in identifying gaps and developing community solutions which is of huge benefit to our organisation due to our remote location. In addition, we have the privilege of providing permanent office space to an IFSS Worker who is extremely well respected in our community as an essential service provider.

St Helens Neighbourhood House

The Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation believes that a healthy family means healthy children and provides the support to ensure the family can bond together for family success. In today's hectic lifestyle it is important to support families in connecting and bonding with each other. Children are our world's greatest asset, therefore supporting families means supporting the child.

Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation

Pittwater Community House has been working with families for over 20 years. We initially formed an alliance with Jordan River Services, which helped to mould the current model. Working with Mission Australia and Gateway has allowed us to continue to work collaboratively and give great service to our clients whilst being supported and provided with additional funding and training opportunities. We will always strive to seek better outcomes for children and families. Long may our alliance continue!

Pittwater Community Centre

The model which we work under as Alliance partners through Gateway is extremely successful and has proven to be the most suitable for our workers and client families. The strong partnerships formed has been mutually beneficial and we all learn from and support one another. As our Family Support Service is based within a neighbourhood centre, we have the added bonus of often immediate support and/or referral being available and easier access for client families to be engaged in other programmes and activities.

Jordan River Services

Gateway Services offer a solid foundation, with ongoing support, to provide families with a holistic approach to practical parenting. After 5 years we continue to grow and share our skill sets and expertise as Alliance Partners.

Hobart City Mission

We have been part of Gateway since it's conception. We feel that this model has improved outcomes for children and families. Families are able to access support and increase their networks.

Ravenswood Neighbourhood House



During our five year association with Gateway we have had nothing but positive experiences with all those concerned, which has benefited the community in this rural and remote area. We have also developed a close working relationship with Child Protection during this period.

West Coast Council

The Gateway/IFSS Alliance is a supportive partnership where everyone has an opportunity to participate in service design and delivery. We listen to what is happening on the ground and continue to be innovative. In this way, we are able to be responsive to the needs of our client group.

Youth, Family and Community Connections

Gateway and the Integrated Family Support Alliances have been privileged to work together in true collaboration and partnership in developing services that are responsive to the needs of vulnerable and at risk families in our community. Working from a strength based framework has resulted in amazing outcomes for families and children showing sustainable change in family relationships from building capacity across all the domains of wellbeing. It has been an honour for Glenhaven to be part of this service delivery in Tasmania.

Glenhaven Family Care

Being a member of Gateway and the Alliance provides Northern Suburbs Community an opportunity for families to connect with their local Neighbourhood House in their local community which enables a holistic approach to family support.

Northern Suburbs Community Centre

Other Partners

The work of Gateway Services to help children and youth to live in safe and supportive families and communities is so important. In Children and Youth Services we are immensely appreciative of the work you do with our vulnerable families; I have heard some wonderful stories of families who have been helped by Mission over the past five years. We strongly value our partnership with you, and the collaborative approach that we take together to protect children and young people. Thankyou, and I look forward to the years to come, and the further learnings as we grow stronger together.

Liz O'Malley, Director of Children and Youth Services Operations.

The Gateway Services has achieved a quick and smooth process for accessing specialist disability services. To have a person phone and require specialist disability support, have their eligibility determined and receive service provision in a short period of time, is a positive outcome for individuals and families in need of urgent support. My experience in working with Gateway Services has been extremely positive. I believe my role and function is highly valued. As a Disability Consultant I work in collaboration with the Program Managers and Local Area Coordinators with the aim of strengthening partnerships with the disability sector as well as working towards effective support options for people. The Local Area Coordinators and Program Managers with support from the Disability Consultant has achieved positive outcomes when a cross agency response is required to meet the complex needs of an individual.

Karen Keogh, Disability and Community Services





Five years of Gateway Services... 54 000 calls responded to and counting...



Baptcare



MISSION
AUSTRALIA together
we stand