

Relationships Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

Media release

Embargo: Wednesday 14 July 2010

New Mt DrUITT Service To Help Children and Families

NSW Minister for Community Services, Linda Burney, today officially launched the Mt DrUITT Family Referral Service, a new pilot service to support the safety and wellbeing of children and families. Family Referral Services were also launched in Dubbo and Newcastle.

The Mt DrUITT Family Referral Service is part of the NSW Government, *Keep Them Safe* reforms to child protection and is proudly managed by Relationships Australia NSW.

Ms Burney said: "The role of Family Referral Services is to connect families to services in their local area. They will support families who make direct contact asking for help and they will also support people who have been referred by others in the community such as schools, hospitals and childcare facilities.

"The children, young people and families supported by Family Referral Services are those who don't need statutory intervention by Community Services but do need help before problems get bigger."

The Mt DrUITT Family Referral Service (FRS) is a telephone-only service and is the only metro-based service. It provides telephone referrals to family support services, mental health services, housing, supported playgroups, drug and alcohol treatment programs and domestic violence services among others. The FRS also maintains contact with families to review progress and follow up outcomes from a referral.

Anne Hollonds, Psychologist and Relationships Australia NSW CEO said: "We know that all families experience tough times, so the Mt DrUITT Family Referral Service provides a local service to help children, young people and families with the help they need to get back on track.

"Providing support and advice early is crucial to help people manage the often challenging tasks families face. Relationships Australia is proud to be managing the Mt DrUITT Family Referral Service and supporting the local community."

Ms Burney said: "Our goal is to refer children and families to support early, rather than see their problems grow, with the risk that they may escalate through the child protection system."

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Individual, Couple & Family Counselling, Relationships & Parenting Courses, Post Separation Services, Children's Contact Services, Family Relationship Centres, Adolescent Services, Family & Workplace Mediation
Corporate & Business Consultancy, Professional Training & Consultation

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Deputy Premier and Minister for Health Carmel Tebbutt said: "Using NGOs makes sense because they have a good understanding of their local communities. They know what is available on the ground and what appropriate Commonwealth, State or Local Government-funded support services there are in the area," she said.

"A strong, long-term partnership between Government agencies and NGOs means that together we can address the needs of families early and in a collaborative, holistic manner. The new services are piloted in three areas of high need so that families in these areas are given the opportunity to receive appropriate help to address their individual circumstances close to home."

Ms Tebbutt said: "The NSW Government has committed \$38 million over five years for the staged implementation of Family Referral Services across NSW, with \$3.6 million allocated to pilot the services for the first 12 months."

NSW Health is the lead agency responsible for the implementation of these services and future rollout across NSW. An independent evaluation of the pilots is being conducted over the 12 month pilot to inform the staged state-wide implementation over four years.

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Contact numbers and hours of operation:

Mt Druitt Family Referral Service

All callers: 1300 403 373

Opened from 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday

For further information on the *Keep Them Safe* initiatives go online to:

www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au

www.health.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/kts/frs.asp

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