

MEDIA RELEASE

18 July 2008

New centre helps eastern suburbs families

More than 826 outer eastern suburbs families have benefited from services provided by the Berwick Family Relationship Centre (FRC), which recently celebrated its first anniversary.

The centre is managed by a consortium involving Relationships Australia (Victoria) as the lead, and partner Windermere Child and Family Services.

Centre Manager, Lilia Chalfin, said the Berwick FRC had been established as part of the Australian Government's reform of the family law system. Its purpose is to strengthen family relationships, provide dispute resolution services, and be a source of useful information and referral to other appropriate services and agencies.

"We have been able to help families going through separation to achieve workable parenting plans which focus on the needs of children. It is also important to recognise that other family members, particularly grandparents, wish to maintain relationships with children and grandchildren."

Ms Chalfin said the Berwick FRC had a strong focus on community development and was particularly keen to provide family services, referrals and information to varied community groups.

"We have a dedicated Community Development Liaison Officer who works actively with the indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities to ensure they are aware of the wide range of help we can provide to families in need.

"We have also established an Outreach service in Wonthaggi to provide Bass Coast residents with local access to family relationship services. We currently operate one day a week in Wonthaggi and hope to expand in the future, subject to demand."

Ms Chalfin said the Berwick FRC looked forward to continuing to help families in the eastern region of Melbourne and to build better relationships within the community."

Media enquiries: Lilia Chalfin, 8768 4111

