

## Reconnect

### Contact details

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**Hours of service:** Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

**Coordinator:** Liz Price

**Regional Manager:** Vacant

**Director Operations:** Vivien Tait

### About the program

Reconnect has operated in Dubbo for five years from Grace Cottage. In 2006, UnitingCare Burnside successfully tendered for the program for the Dubbo Local Government Area and it now forms part of the UnitingCare Burnside Youth Services Team in Orana Far West region.

The free service provides support, advocacy, referral and mediation for young people aged 12 to 18 and their families where the young person is about to become homeless or has recently become homeless.

### Eligibility

Young people aged 12 to 18 and their families living in Dubbo.

### Objectives

#### Social justice

- Undertake effective social action to achieve positive change for vulnerable children, young people and their families.
- Young people and their families will have access to any services available in their community, which meet their needs.

#### Protection of children

- Help children and young people have safe, nurturing and enriching relationships and environments in which to develop and thrive.
- Children will be less exposed to abuse and neglect as a result of use of our services.
- Young people with children will have a wider range of accommodation options.

#### Opportunities for young people

- Young people will have the assistance they require to develop into independent and contributing adults.
- Young people maintain and strengthen positive connections with family and significant others.
- Young people and their families using our services will have the social and living skills and resilience to assist them to become independent adults.

#### Building strengths in vulnerable communities

- Help young people and their families become active participants in the growth and development of their local community.
- Local communities will become more aware of, and responsive to, the issues faced by children, young people and their families.
- Service users are actively involved in the development of their own services.

#### Focus on education

- We emphasise a focus on education, thereby encouraging and assisting young people to remain at school.
- This assistance can take many forms such as negotiating school suspensions, organising tutoring and offering general support to both young people and their families.

### **Referral**

Self, government and non-government agencies.

### **Services**

Each young person's history and needs are individual. Reconnect Dubbo attempts to tailor a package of support to meet these needs and encourages young people to stay in their communities so that they can maintain and strengthen ties with school, work, family, friends and other support networks.

### **Funding**

90% FaHCSIA;10% UnitingCare Burnside

### **Key facts**

Reconnect is a voluntary service. No young person is forced to accept a service from Reconnect. Workers at Reconnect believe that access to services, supports and accommodation is a right and should not be used as a punishment or reward.

Stability of accommodation and consistency of support is often an issue for young people. Workers attempt to ensure that young people are always able to identify and develop options or alternative supports. Workers at Reconnect offer options to young people and their families, supporting them to make decisions

regarding their own lives. They use modelling and negotiation as the primary ways of encouraging appropriate or desirable behaviour.

**Self-referral:** Reconnect actively promotes the service among young people and families with the intent that they refer themselves. This ensures young people are not dependent upon the professional networks of service providers to find us. Young people are not required to retell their story to a series of workers, and are able to describe their needs rather than depending on the interpretation of a service provider. Self-referral also endorses the voluntary nature of the service.

**Planning:** Reconnect believes that effective service delivery to young people must be well planned, adequately resourced, proactive and service user driven. Action plans are used as tools to empower the young person by encouraging them to take control of their own goals and supporting them in measuring their own progress. This is a dynamic and constantly evolving process and one in which staff are continually involved.

**Key worker:** Reconnect operates with a key worker system. One worker is responsible for working with a young person or their family on meeting their needs, and for coordinating that young person's activities towards achieving their goals. The key worker is the young person's or the family's main advocate within the service and builds the strongest relationship with the young person.

**Stakeholder relationships:** Community relationships enhance access to a range of accommodation and support options, a broader referral network, a firmer understanding of the needs of young people and families and our own credibility.