

MEDIA STATEMENT – MAY 16, 2016

## **Most disadvantaged learners to benefit from Victorian Government's Navigator initiative**

Jesuit Social Services is proud to have successfully tendered to deliver casework and support to disadvantaged young learners as part of the Victorian Government's Navigator initiative.

Navigator, announced in September 2015, is part of the Victorian Government's state-wide Education State: Schools reform agenda. The \$8.6 million two-year Navigator pilot will work with disengaged learners aged between 12 and 17 to actively work with them and their support networks to return them to education or training.

Navigator will operate in eight regions across Victoria, with Jesuit Social Services to deliver the initiative in the Hume Moreland region.

"Education and employment are the lifeblood of social inclusion, and we commend the Government on its commitment to ensuring disadvantaged young Victorians have the opportunity to re-engage," says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

"Jesuit Social Services is committed to re-engaging vulnerable young people in educational, learning and employment pathways to give them the foundational skills and opportunities they need to flourish through the Navigator initiative."

The organisation's work will include the development of individualised learning and cultural plans and restorative practice including therapeutic and practical support.

Several postcodes within the Hume and Moreland areas were listed among the state's most disadvantaged in last year's report *Dropping off the Edge 2015*, produced by Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia. The report, which mapped disadvantage across the country based on 22 social indicators, found that the Hume postcodes of Campbellfield and Coolaroo are among the most disadvantaged three per cent of postcodes in Victoria.

Residents of the three per cent most disadvantaged postcodes are three times more likely to be experiencing long-term unemployment, 2.6 times more likely to have experienced domestic violence and 2.4 times more likely to be on disability support than the rest of the state's population.

"It is pleasing to see that the Navigator pilot program will operate in a number of areas where support is most needed to help disengaged young people back onto the right track. Jesuit Social Services looks forward to working with Government to deliver this extremely valuable work."

**Jesuit Social Services is a social change organisation working to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential.**

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