



## **FAMILY ACCESS NETWORK INC**

***Family Access Network is committed to providing a child safe environment***

**POSITION: Volunteer Support Team**

**REPORTS TO: The Co-ordinator, Volunteer Program**

### **ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT:**

Family Access Network (FAN), providing services to young people since 1981, is committed to responding to the diverse needs of homeless and at risk young people and young families. Our service philosophy is underpinned by a client focussed rights-based approach, and operates in the belief that timely intervention maximises positive outcomes.

FAN's vision is for a community which acknowledges and values the dignity and worth of all citizens and enables individuals to deal positively with adverse situations in their lives. We contribute to this vision by providing support for homeless young people, including those pregnant and/or parenting and couples and accompanying children, in the form of access to accommodation and support options enabling them to achieve stability and empowerment to full independence.

FAN's Homeless Support Services (HSS) provides support to young people between the ages of 15-25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The client group consists of single young people, young same sex attracted transgender and intersex young people, young pregnant and parenting women and young families and accompanying children.

As part of HSS and through the Youth Homelessness Action Plan 2 (YHAP2) initiative funding, FAN offers the Private Rental Brokerage Program to assist and equip young homeless people to access, sustain and maintain private rental accommodation as a long-term option. FAN's Private Rental Brokerage Program provides services across the Cities of Whitehorse, Boroondara, Monash and Manningham.

The Children's Program – Early Years funded through The Alfred Felton Charitable Bequest provides the means to offer on-site children's worker resources to develop an integrated children's program including brokerage and equipment for accompanying children. The scope for the program is to ensure FAN's services, office site(s), equipment, policies and interagency processes are informed by a commitment to child-centred practices and philosophy.

The Life Skills Program funded through The William Buckland Foundation, City of Whitehorse, the Rotary Club of Box Hill and The Lord Mayors Charitable Fund, offers a variety of workshop based activities for at risk young people to learn new skills in a personal development framework. Volunteer Mentors, Child Play Supervisors, Lead Tenants and the Volunteer Support Team are recruited to assist in supporting clients and accompanying children including related activities attached to the Life Skills Programs.

Volunteers will be required to commit to FAN's Service Philosophy, Core Principles and Service Objectives and align their work to the organisation's practices, protocols and strategic objectives.

### **ROLE:**

The Volunteer Support Team (VST) comprises of several volunteers who are designated to a specific transitional house and meet with clients there on a weekly basis. The team encourages and supports the young person's entry or re-entry into mainstream community life, role modeling in relation to neighbourliness and good citizenship, assistance in developing independent living skills and personal support and the time to sit and listen and to share in the little things in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. The VST encourage young people to take pride in their home, offer assistance in relation to budgeting, home management and help resolve conflicts and disputes that may arise in any household. Being part of the VST involves being available as the needs of the individual and household require.

FAN has a team of professional workers who respond to the therapeutic needs of young people and the VST provide a positive adult role model in the context of everyday social activities and interaction and as such does not take on the role of a social worker, psychologist, babysitter, disciplinarian, family counselor or alternative parent.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. To work as part of a team in developing supportive friendships with young people by showing respect for and understanding of their individual needs.
2. To foster a sense of belonging, dignity and respect.
3. To assist in developing a sense of household cohesion
4. To encourage mutual support and co-operation in the decision making processes with house activities.
5. As part of a VST, to meet with clients on a weekly basis and engage in a range of activities, depending on the needs of clients
6. Where applicable to gain an understanding of the role of Lead Tenants and support their function within the household.
7. Recognise that clients (and Lead Tenants where applicable) have the same rights under the Residential Tenancy Act as they would have in a private rental situation. This includes showing respect for privacy.
8. Provide positive role modeling to tenants including appropriate and respectful interactions, language and behavior.
9. To adhere to Family Access Network's program boundaries and guidelines.
10. To act as Mentor for the young person and encourage new experiences and opportunities and to be a link to the wider community.
11. To be accountable to the Co-ordinator of Volunteer Program.

**FAVOURABLE ATTRIBUTES:**

1. Some experience and a genuine interest in the care and well-being of young people, and willing to offer trust and companionship.
2. Patience, understanding, acceptance, compassion, the ability to listen.
3. Ideally to be over the age of 25.
4. To have access to a reliable motor vehicle.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE POSITION:**

1. Minimum twelve month commitment.
2. Prepared to undertake appropriate references, Working with Children and Police Checks
3. Meet with clients for a minimum of 3 hours per week on allocated evening
4. All volunteers are required to undergo Volunteer Induction Training and to attend regular meetings including fortnightly Volunteer Support Meetings and ongoing training at FAN
5. FAN is committed to providing and supporting a child safe environment and acceptance as part of the VST is determined by successful completion of all components of the volunteer screening process.
6. A three month probationary period is a condition of this position.

Please sign and date this form in acknowledgment that you have read and understood the above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_