The Cottage Family Care Centre is an Intensive Family Support program supporting families with children aged 0-15 years who have been identified at risk of significant harm. We are funded through Family and Community Services Early Intervention and Placement Prevention Program.

The Cottage Centre is currently funded to support 16 families at any point in time. The lower number of families allows us to achieve this increased level of intense family intervention to best support the complex issues that our families are experiencing which place the child at risk of significant harm.

**Aims:**
The Cottage Family Care Centre Intensive Family Support Service aims to:

- Keep children at home in a safe, stable and nurturing family environment
- Improve family functioning
- Improve children’s well-being
- Prevent families from re-entering the child protection system and prevent unnecessary placement in Out of Home Care

**History:**
The Cottage Centre has been in operation since 1981 offering a child and family support service for children and their families caught in the generational cycle of abuse and neglect. There have been many changes over the years to our service delivery. Over time, our knowledge and skills have developed to represent current research around the impact of abuse and neglect on brain development and functioning. The result of this new knowledge has seen much growth and change in our methods of supporting children and families. The beginning of July 2011 began our transition into the new Intensive Family Support service.
What We Offer
The Cottage Centre’s Intensive Family Support Service accepts referrals from Family and Community Services for children identified at risk of significant harm. Once referred to the service, families will be allocated their own Parent Caseworker to assist them in establishing and meeting goals for themselves, the family and the child. We also offer the support of a Child Caseworker to establish the developmental and therapeutic needs of the child. When families are initially referred to us they are often in significant crisis and therefore require an intense level of support to quickly reduce child protection issues. For the first 12 weeks of our intervention, families are offered 24 hour support 7 days a week. The family remain in our program for 12 months allowing for the level of support to gradually reduce over time as other networks or support agencies step in to support the family in continued growth.

parenting of the child/ren. Parents are supported to make positive changes in their lives enabling them to improve their parenting skills. We offer support in practical parenting, assistance in budgeting, understanding child development, behaviour management techniques, court support and referral to specialist services.

Kids Group
The Cottage Centre continues to hold a licence for a children’s service. When required, children can attend one or two days a week for up to 4 hours per day. This is available for the first 12 weeks of our intervention. We use this program to complete developmental assessments for the child and establish any other intervention/children’s service that the child may require.

Playgroup
A community Playgroup operates from the Cottage Centre once a week. Participants of this playgroup are families from the local community and it allows for a soft entry point into the community for families that attend our Intensive Family Support program.

This Year….
19 Families and 38 Children participated in our Intensive Family Support Program.

20 Children participated in our Kids Group Program.

Networking with other Agencies
Due to the complex issues that the families are experiencing, there are a number of agencies that we work closely with in order to best meet the needs of the families. These include: Family and Community Services, Macarthur Area Health Service, Focus on New Families, DET, Claymore Early Intervention Service, Campbelltown Family Support, Burnside, mainstream children’s services, Department of Housing, Macarthur Diversity Services and many more……

Volunteers
We greatly appreciate all our volunteers who support our program. This year we have had two fantastic volunteers assisting to provide child care and one volunteer who drives our van when required. All three volunteers show commitment and dedication to the needs of the program, children and families.
Hopes For The Future
Within our new Intensive Family Support program there are restrictions on how much is being offered from our Early Childhood Service. In order to best meet the needs of our children we offer support for the child in other Early Childhood services and this allows for discussion around education methods focused on meeting the therapeutic and emotional needs of our children who have experienced trauma. However, we hope to source alternative funds in the future to offer a more extensive early childhood service that complements the IFS program currently operating.

‘The challenge to make a difference in the lives of our families ....’

Farewell
At the end of 2011 we sadly said farewell to John Bleyerveen who has been the Chairperson of the Cottage Centre Management Committee for 10 years. He has contributed invaluable support and dedication over these years and has ensured the continued success of the Cottage Centre. He has been a driving force behind the research and implementation of the Neuroscience approach to assisting children who have experienced trauma. John, we thank you so much for everything you have contributed over the years.

Management Committee
We welcome Coral Ison into the position of the Chairperson of the Cottage Centre Management Committee.

Coral has been a member of The Management Committee and continues to offer knowledgeable support and advice, demonstrating great commitment to the needs of the families and children that we support.

Thank You
I would like to thank the members of Campbelltown Uniting Care Board of Management and the Cottage Family Care Centre Management Committee. Your enthusiasm and commitment to the children and families of the centre is much appreciated. We thank you for your support and guidance as we continue the implementation of our new model of service delivery.

Thank you to all our community partners who also endeavour to create positive change in the lives of our families and children.

I would also like to say thank you to Rachel Dutton who coordinates the community playgroup. We look forward to a continued partnership.

Thank you to our team of staff who tirelessly commit all of themselves to supporting the children and families. It is your dedication and passion to keep children safe in the community and provide a positive experience and outlook in a child’s life that is the driving force of the Cottage Centre. I thank you for consistently taking up the challenge to make a difference in the lives of our families for better outcomes for the children.

Lauren Broughall
Manager
Children & mums taking part in the Supported Play and Education Sessions