

MEDIA RELEASE

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Social inclusion on the agenda during Minister Butler's visit to Jesuit Social Services

Innovative ways to address the challenge of social inclusion for disadvantaged and vulnerable people were discussed during this morning's visit to Jesuit Social Services by the Federal Minister for Mental Health and Social Inclusion Mark Butler.

Minister Butler met with staff and participants from Jesuit Social Services' programs including Support after Suicide, the African Australian Inclusion Program and Jesuit Community College.

Sally Parnell, acting CEO of Jesuit Social Services explained the significance of the visit, "Staff and program participants were able to share their experiences of overcoming social exclusion. The Minister was also able to hear what we have learnt from our work with families and children bereaved by suicide, migrant communities, and people who have been excluded from mainstream learning and employment."

Discussing the importance of practical experience to the development of solutions to social exclusion, Ms Parnell said, "For the past 8 years our Support After Suicide program has worked closely with the loved ones of people who have committed suicide. We continually reflect on this experience to refine our practice and share what we have learnt throughout the community."

The importance of pathways to education and employment were also discussed, as Ms Parnell noted, "Jesuit Community College and the African Australian Inclusion Program have demonstrated how it is possible through partnerships between community, government and business to help disadvantaged people gain the skills necessary to achieve sustainable employment."

"The success of these partnerships is evident from the fact that 89% of graduates of the African Australian Inclusion Program remain in paid employment after completing the program. The success of the programs in building partnerships and working closely with vulnerable people must be learnt from and should influence the development of policies and approaches to addressing social exclusion."

Jesuit Social Services is a not-for-profit organisation which works to build a just society by advocating for social change and promoting the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged young people, families and communities.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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