



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**EMBARGO 27 Tuesday 2012**

## **Some kids just want to go to school**

To mark Social Inclusion Week, an innovative digital story-telling research project, *I Just Want To Go To School: Voices of young people experiencing educational disadvantage*, will be launched at a community school in Richmond next Tuesday 27 November.

The project, a collaboration between Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service, Jesuit Social Services and MacKillop Family Services, aims to further understand the factors that contribute to young people deciding to leave school by giving voice to young people themselves, to ultimately promote positive change in the education system.

Key findings from the project, included in the report, have again identified bullying and youth mental health problems, and the lack of sufficient strategies to effectively respond to these within the education system, as significant issues and deterrents to children engaging with their education.

A lack of understanding of the range of complex issues young people face, particularly those already vulnerable and involved in the child protection system, was also identified as a barrier for young people attending school.

The project, to be launched by Child Safety Commissioner Bernie Geary, centres on 13 young people sharing their stories, through digital video recordings, of wanting to attend school and the bullying, violence and social and financial barriers that have prevented them from doing so.

The accompanying research report also provides an overview of educational disadvantage in Australia and expert views from leading commentators.

MacKillop Family Services CEO Micaela Cronin said that the recommendations of the project were key to improving educational and life outcomes for vulnerable young people.

“It is crucial that we listen to young people to better understand the factors that prevent them from engaging with education and furthermore give them a meaningful voice in school decision making and policy direction and development.”

Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service CEO Robyn Roberts agreed, highlighting the importance of giving young people the opportunity to advocate for themselves.

“In telling their own stories in their own ways, and in having those stories heard in the wider world, they take a hand in influencing how schools respond to students with similar struggles in the future.”

While Jesuit Social Services CEO, Julie Edwards, emphasised that the stories provide critical support for a number of proposed reforms.

“The stories also provide evidence that can be used to advocate for improvements in the education system to ensure that all young people achieve their full potential within their education settings.”

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\***

**Details of launch event for interviews and photo opportunities:**

Tuesday 27 November

8.30am to 9.30am

Lynall Hall Community School, Corner Gleadell and Highett Streets, Richmond

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