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Introductory letter to the Evaluation

18 June 2012

Berry Street and Effective Change Pty Ltd are pleased to provide you with a copy of the evaluation of the CARTWHEELS in the Cathedral Ranges project. Berry Street is the largest independent not for profit child and family welfare organisation in Victoria. Berry Street works with children, young people and families with the most challenging and complex needs.

Following the devastation of the Victorian bushfires in 2009, Berry Street approached the Royal Children's Hospital to explore the possibility of collaborating to assist in the recovery process in the Murrindindi Shire. The result of this was a partnership between Berry Street and the Royal Children's Hospital's 'Festival for Healthy Living' working with seven schools and communities in what is known as the Cathedral Cluster in the eastern half of the Murrindindi Shire. The majority of funding for the project was provided by the Victorian Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, with additional support from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Berry Street and assistance from the North East Victorian Division of General Practice.

Effective Change was engaged to evaluate the CARTWHEELS project.

The aim of the project was to assist with recovery, and develop mental health and social-emotional wellbeing of young people, working through visual and performing arts.

The evaluation of the project found significant outcomes for students, for the participating organisations and communities.

More significantly however, we believe that the evaluation provides important learnings in the context of disaster recovery research. This recognises the need for children and young people to participate in everyday activities which can be both healing, reduce stress and give pleasure and to take place over a period of years.

Community development is a critical part of the spectrum of activities that can assist individuals and communities in their recovery following trauma. The unique structure of the CARTWHEELS project demonstrates an important and successful model for disaster-recovery work with young people that has also shown that benefits also emanate through to schools, community partnerships and families.



We hope you find the evaluation report of interest. We would be happy to discuss with you this project and the emergent lessons with you. Please feel free to contact either of the authors below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrice Jackson'.

Patrice Jackson
Regional Director
Berry Street

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. T. Keating'.

Clare Keating
Director
Effective Change