



Melaleuca Committee Members:

Office Bearers

Chairperson: Jacinta Chartres
Deputy Chairperson: Kathleen Poel
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Public Officer: Christine Atkinson

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Meredith Hansen-Knarhoi
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Barbara Laurie
Yogan Sathianathan
Peter McGuire
Dominique Adjura

Melaleuca staff:

Director: Lava Kohaupt

Finance and Admin Manager: Ian Kirkby
Administration / Reception: Mie Mie Aung, Jen Basham

Team Leader Counselling: Karen Chugg
Counsellor/Advocates: Sara De Luca, Gregory Goodluck
Youth Worker: Savanna Holloway

Settlement Team Leader: Maria Koukouvas
Case Coordinators: Girma Seid, Steve Hebblethwaite, Sonya Schmidt
Volunteer Coordinator: Anna Greer
Housing Support Worker: Wek Athian, Esther Canmue
Housing Assistant: Logoro Kenyi, Edmond Kanzi
Health Worker: Alejandra Ragone
Bicultural Health Worker: Martin Lado

Educator/Trainer: Kaz Phillips

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE NOTES

2005/2006 has proved to be a great year for Melaleuca with the securing of a five-year contract under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. This provides us with the certainty required to plan and implement improvements to our services to humanitarian entrants. We have a Strategic Planning Day coming up to look closely at all aspects of Melaleuca's operation.

In addition, successful projects utilising a variety of funds have resulted in staff numbers increasing. This inevitably required the move to larger premises and I think everyone would agree that the Rapid Creek location provides a much improved working environment with the ability to provide privacy for clients.

As the arrivals numbers will remain at 200 per year, the Management Committee would anticipate that 2006/2007 will be a year to allow new staff to settle in and consolidate the gains achieved so far.

With the sound management skills of Lava Kohaupt (the Director) and Ian Kirkby (the Finance and Admin Manager), and the hard work of all the staff, the Management Committee see a positive year ahead for Melaleuca and would like to thank you all.

Jacinta Chartres
Chairperson

DIRECTORS SUMMARY

The 2005/2006 financial year brought many changes to Melaleuca Refugee Centre, enormous growth, change of premises and the implementation of a new contract with DIMA and additional funding agreements with FACSIA for a Youth Worker.

The new contract with DIMA came into effect on 1 October and meant changes to service delivery, staffing, organisational structure, reporting and invoicing requirements. As the DIMA contract provides 82% of our income these changes involved the whole of the organisation and the implementation of the new system dominated this financial year. Under the new contract we could create two new positions, a volunteer coordinator and an educator/ trainer position, both of which had enormous benefits for the organisation and for service delivery. Under the new contract Early Health Screening and Intervention became responsibility of the settlement team (previously it was the responsibility of the counselling team) which left the counsellor/advocates having to redefine their roles and duties. The new contract meant developing new procedures, forms, assessments, work plans, and reporting formats for all staff members. We also have put a middle management

structure in place and employed a finance/admin manager and a team leader for the counselling team, while retaining the team leader of the settlement team. The new contract allowed for further expansion of the settlement team in the housing, health and case coordination areas, and we feel that we finally have got the staffing levels with which we can manage our enormous task of initial settlement. On total the staff at Melaleuca has grown from 12 people to 23.

Melaleuca also moved to new premises in the Rapid Creek Shopping Centre. Despite the new premises being double the size of the premises at Pavonia Way we already have outgrown them again and we will have to extend into a vacant section of the Shopping Centre. The new premises have got dedicated counselling rooms, a large meeting room and a staff kitchen. Moving has given us the opportunity to upgrade telephone systems and to network our computer systems. Thanks to a contribution from the Community Benefit Funds of the NT we could sound proof our counselling rooms, so that client confidentiality is guaranteed.

We managed to secure funding from FACSIA under the NAYSS (Newly Arrived Youth Support Service) for a Youth Worker. The NAYSS Worker started in May 2006 and is a long awaited addition to the counselling team.

This year we saw 196 new arrivals, mostly from Liberia and Somalia, we had a few Rwandan arrivals, some Burundi and Congolese. Under the proposed visa category we also had arrivals from Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan. Some people have moved on to interstate to reunite with family members, but most newly arrived have stayed to call Darwin their new home.

The East Timor crisis also affected Melaleuca in the last few months of this financial year. We provided some household formation but mainly counselling services for East Timorese.

This year saw the beginnings of a community reference group which will enhance communication with the refugee communities and increase possibilities for input and feedback from the different communities.

In June we celebrated World Refugee Day with performances and speeches from not only the Sudanese, Somali and Liberian communities but also with a traditional welcome by members of the Larrakia people.

There off course are also ongoing difficulties:

The ongoing lack of rental properties on the private rental market has again provided a challenge to staff. Territory Housing has come forward with an additional allocation of houses to Melaleuca. These houses are used for initial accommodation when families first arrive but then relocation into permanent premises has proven to be difficult because of shortage of rental properties and price rises.

The other ongoing difficulty our staff faces is the shortage of GPs and in particular bulk-billing GPs in Darwin. The task of health screening has been taken on by RDH which has made the process of health care after arrival much more manageable. However the shortage of GPs makes the arrangement of ongoing primary care difficult.

These additional initiatives by the NT government on the housing and health front are certainly appreciated and make a big difference to service delivery.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their enormous capacity to accommodate change and grow with this organisation. It has been a privilege to work with such a diverse and optimistic team.

I would also like to thank the Management Committee for their commitment, hard work and support.

This is also the point where I would like to thank our volunteers, who never really get enough appreciation. Without them our settlement program would only be half of what it is now.

Also I would like to thank our funding bodies in particular the local DIMA staff for their availability and prompt response to endless phone calls and emails.

Melaleuca is approaching its 10th anniversary and we are looking forward to celebrating the achievements of our unique organisation next year.

Lava Kohaupt
Director

Finance and Administration

As noted elsewhere staff numbers have increased from 12 to 23 in the reporting period. And revenues have more than doubled in the past 2 years (\$792,000 to \$1,632,000) and budget planning for next financial year indicates that revenues are likely to exceed \$2,000,000 in 2006/2007. The escalating staff numbers and ever-increasing revenues have presented Finance and Administration with significant challenges over the twelve months to the end of June 2006 in the areas of human resource management, delivery of information and communication services to support staff, as well as the on-going administrative and financial management and reporting requirements

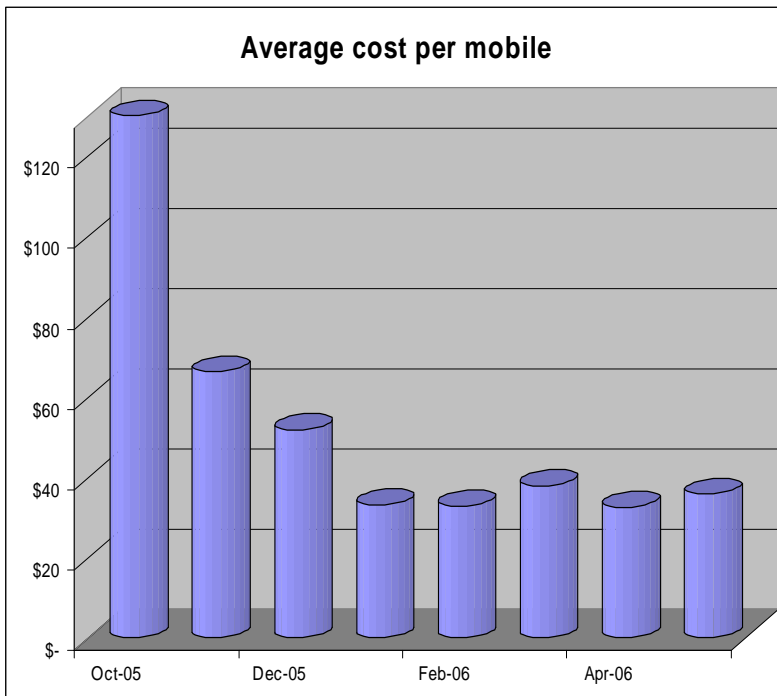
Over the past financial year, Finance and Administration has given particular emphasis to:

- understanding the underlying cost structure of the organisation and then subsequently exploring alternative service delivery models to deliver better value and more effective services to the refugee families we serve

A major project substantively completed by the end of 2005/2006 was the overhaul of the delivery of short-term accommodation and utility services that we provide to refugee families on their arrival in Darwin. This project

undertaken jointly with members of the Settlement Team has transformed the way the organisation manages the 15 properties we currently lease from Territory Housing to accommodate newly-arrived families. Benefits that have flowed from this project include:

- more reliable services for newly arrived refugee families
 - reduced demands on settlement workers
 - a 'smoother' settlement experience
 - more reliable and more timely information on the costs to the organisation of providing short-term accommodation and utility services.
- devising and implementing appropriate procedures and controls for the areas of finance, administration, human resources and information and communication technology, in particular to ensure that the organisation is receiving the best *value* for the services and products it purchases.



This exercise has been about enhancing the value the organisation receives from external providers rather than cost reduction, although these objectives need not be mutually exclusive. Changes in our contract for the provision of mobile phone services for example, has not only significantly reduced the cost of providing mobile telephone services to staff – down from an average of \$120 to around \$35 per mobile per month – but has resulted in an expansion of the services that are provided.

- reducing our reliance on external service providers in areas critical to the day-to-day operations; in particular financial management and reporting, and the management and delivery of information and communication technology services.

Thus, all financial reports to the Committee of Management are now prepared in-house. This translates not only into cost savings – more than \$20,000 on 2005/2006 budget estimates – but more importantly reduces our dependency and increases our capacity to make financial decisions based on relevant and appropriate information on a daily basis.

Other significant changes overseen by Finance and Administration during the period to 30 June 2006 include:

- Outsource of payroll function
- Development of an organisational intranet

Melaleuca Refugee Centre operates within the constraints of limited resources and Finance and Administration's core mission has been – and will continue to be – to support and resource staff in ways that provide maximum benefit to the refugee families we serve.

Ian Kirkby
Manager – Finance and Administration

The Settlement Team

As I write this report, I can't help but reflect upon the many changes that have occurred, the great stories that have been told, the laughter that has been shared and the tears cried.

The group of people which make up the Settlement Team as we know it today are some of the most compassionate, funny (that's a compliment), supportive and resilient people I have ever met. A day is yet to have passed by without my having learnt something from them. They are a true compliment to me as Team Leader and I thank them for putting up with my (at times) wacky behaviour and bad jokes.

It is also fitting to acknowledge all new and past staff members. Logoro Kenyi and Edmond Kanzi have become part of the Housing Team and work enormously hard at setting up households prior to families arriving. At the end of the year we welcomed Barbara Clarke our new Relief Worker to the team. Barbara has taken on the role of Health Worker temporarily and last but certainly not least, we have welcomed back two former staff members, our beloved Sonya Schmidt and Steve Hebblethwaite.

I also feel that I must acknowledge the clients of this service to whom we owe our very existence as an organisation and who inspire us to get out of bed most mornings and to 'get on with things' even when times get a little rough. Thank you.

Finally, the effort and commitment of our volunteers which is in so many ways invaluable must also be acknowledged.

The Function of the Settlement Team

You probably know that in recent times Melaleuca has undergone a major 'face lift' (no Botox involved) which has triggered an enormous amount of change. However rather than lay out in detail the functions of all the areas of the team, I have attempted

to demonstrate the process of service provision to all newly arrived refugees, using our newly revised serviced model.

It is important to note however that the example below will vary according to the needs of individuals and families. Our primary goal is to create a dynamic service which not only promotes independence but self-determination.

Example:

A referral is received from DIMA by either the Settlement Team Leader or the Director at Melaleuca. The referral is for a large family that has been granted resettlement to Australia and in this case, Darwin. Using the new DIMA-created database, the Team Leader nominates preferred dates of arrival for this family.

It is at this point that the Settlement Team becomes aware of the potential arrival of this family and can begin to make some plans. For example, the Volunteer Coordinator can begin to recruit and train new volunteers in preparation for the arrival of this family.

The proposed dates of arrival are picked up by the relevant overseas agents and a date of arrival is set, airfares are booked and flight details are relayed back to Melaleuca. At this point a series of processes are triggered within the Settlement Team.

A Case Coordinator, Housing Worker and Health Worker are nominated to work with this family. Each of these workers will work alongside this family for up to 6 months (or longer if necessary) after they've arrived.

The Case Coordinator communicates with key services as to the arrival of the family, organises appointments and compiles relevant information and resources. They will also book interpreters, inform existing community members of the arrival and coordinate a group to welcome the family at the airport.

A key component in preparations for the arrival of new families/individuals, involves the Volunteer Coordinator who in most cases has already recruited and trained volunteers and prepared them for allocation to a new family. The support group in turn will purchase initial food supplies for the family, cook a welcome meal, greet the family at the airport and work with the family in various capacities over the next 6 months. The most important role of all being to provide social support and a friendly face.

Our team of Housing Workers will then work together to prepare one of our transitional housing properties for the arrival of the family. The property is cleaned, checked for any maintenance problems and a condition report is completed.

The family soon arrives and is greeted at the airport by a Case Coordinator, volunteers and community members. The family is taken to the prepared accommodation where they will stay for up to 3 months before they are moved to long-term accommodation with the support of a Housing Worker.

Within 24 hours of their arrival, the family is registered with Centrelink and has some money, a Medicare number, a bank account, a phone card and a great deal of information.

Within 48 hours the family would have received a visit from members of their support group, a Health Worker to begin an introduction to the Australian health system and possibly even a Melaleuca Counsellor, Housing Worker or Youth Worker if needed.

Within 4 weeks the family is attending school or the English program, is receiving regular Centrelink payments, accessing their own bank account, making friends, involved in tenancy education, accessing the health system (with support) and connected with a member of the Melaleuca Counselling/Advocacy team.

At approximately 3 months, the needs of the family are reviewed by the Case Coordinator to ensure that the services provided thus far are meeting the current needs of the family and any other issues that may have arisen.

Toward the 5-month period (this time frame may vary based on need), a wind-down of Melaleuca services begins and the Case Coordinator is instrumental in ensuring that referrals and connections have been established with appropriate services. An exiting procedure takes place involving the family, Case Coordinator (and other relevant Melaleuca workers), the support group and new service providers.

At this point although the family may have been 'exited' from Melaleuca's settlement services, they may still be receiving support from a Counsellor or Youth Worker. The family is also given an opportunity to contribute to the organisation by providing feedback, comments and ideas with the intention to assist in the improvement of our services for future arrivals.

The point of importance however is that, in working with the family, the beginnings of settling into a new life has begun and will hopefully have assisted in positively shaping the experiences of all the individuals involved.

This, in a 'nutshell' is what the Settlement Team does – and does well!

Maria Koukouvas
Team Leader Settlement Team



Melaleuca Refugee Centre staff as of June 2006.

The Counselling Team

This financial year brought great changes to the counselling team. We moved to new venue, and experienced a tremendous growth within the team. We welcomed a new counsellor, a team leader and a youth worker and the team is predicted to grow further in the next financial year. Its also been a very busy year the new contract brought about huge changes, new intake and referral forms were developed by the team as well as new Assessment tools that comply with tender requirements.

The aims and commitment of team members still reflect and support torture and trauma frameworks that guide us in our commitment to our client group. The Early Health Intervention segment left the counselling team and is now delivered by the settlement team. Now the counselling team provide short term torture & trauma counselling and advocacy under the DIMA contract and long-term counselling and advocacy under the PASST program.

Referrals to the counselling team have increased substantially in the past year. The client profile was a mixture of some pre-existing Melaleuca clients from Sudanese backgrounds and some new arrivals from Sudanese, Somali and Liberian backgrounds and more recently some central African (Rwanda, Congo and Burundi) clients with just a handful of clients from the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Indonesia. Towards the end of the financial year we received referrals from Red Cross, the multicultural centre and centrelink of Timorese arrivals with temporary visas.

The Counselling Team also ran two therapeutic groups a Men's Group and a Music Therapy Group (Sing and Grow) aimed at mothers with young children.

The Sing and Grow Group

The Group was form as a partnership between Melaleuca and The Sing and Grow Group, facilitated by Karen Cregan a Music Therapist and Sara. The group ran for twelve weeks and included participants from countries like Somalia, Burundi, Congo, Liberia and Sudan

The Aim of the group was to facilitate positive attachment styles between parents and children that may have been affected by trauma through music therapy.

Songs from a wide repertoire of children's rhymes were introduced to the group as well as allowing mothers to introduce traditional children's songs from countries of origin. A wide range of instruments was used including African drums, a harp, a guitar and various children's musical apparatus. The Group started with 32 participants and ended with 25. The feedback from mothers was very positive and this group was considered a great success.

The Men's Group

The Men's group ran for 6 weeks, facilitated by Greg. Topics covered through lively story and discussions with input from guest speakers included: Men and Relationships; Men's Roles and Responsibilities in Family and Society; Legal Issues; Parenting issues; dealing with violent youths who harass and attack people.

The group was also a great opportunity for men from diverse refugee backgrounds to tell their stories, identify and gain positive solidarity in coming to terms with their new social environments.

The new team leader Karen Chugg started in May and her expertise of 9 years with the Victorian Foundation for the survivors of torture and trauma is highly valued within Melaleuca.

Our Youth worker Savanna Holloway working under the NAYSS (Newly Arrived Youth Support Service) began employment in June and is a long awaited addition to our team.

Overall this past financial year the counselling team has experienced many changes, increased workloads, increases in staff members, however this year has brought cohesion and positive dynamics to the team, as well a positive building blocks for the future.

Sara De Luca and Gregory Goodluck

Educator-Trainer

This newly created position came into being as a result of our new DIMA funding agreement late in 2005. Having previously been a Counsellor-Advocate at Melaleuca, I was delighted to be successful in my application for this position and keen to facilitate increased capacity within our local community to welcome and support the settlement needs of newly-arrived people of refugee background. The position is now full-time and a new position is currently being created to support the work being done.

Fortunately, Melaleuca has been able to grow in the last 12 months at a rate that meets the essential and immediate settlement needs of newly arrived refugees to Darwin. However, there continues to be on-going mainstream service gaps, accessibility issues and community education needs that require further identification and response.

Mainstream Service Sector Education/Training:

In response to both requests and identified needs, this position has been able to support mainstream service/sector development in a range of ways. Advocacy, consultation, program/project development support, education and training have been provided to a wide range of services/sectors. This has included Community Services, Health, Education, Police, Childcare and Youth. Of particular note, is the level support/training requested by mainstream schools and associated services in Darwin during this last 6 months. Currently, a Training Calendar is being created that will offer regular generic introductory training as well as sector specific and more advanced modules.

Networking:

In order to identify needs and prioritise strategies, networking is a significant component of this position. The focus so far has been on:

- developing &/or maintaining stronger collaborative working relationships with key funded service providers, community organisations and government agencies/departments
- encouraging involvement in and facilitating the quarterly Refugee Support Network Meetings
- linking with a range of other relevant network meetings and processes.

Communication/Consultation with Refugee Background Community:

In order to ensure that the activity and focus of this position represents identified needs of emerging refugee background communities, on-going consultation has been undertaken. This has taken the form of phone and face to face meetings with relevant Community Leaders and Key People and where appropriate, email links.

Melaleuca-Communities Reference Group:

As the size of communities has grown over the past 12 – 18 months, it became clear that Melaleuca needed a more formal mechanism for consulting with community leaders/members about the work being undertaken. Significant time and energy has been put into the planning and implementation of this reference group. The group had its first formal meeting in May and continues to meet bi-monthly. The group provides a mechanism for on-going intercultural dialogue, reflection and needs identification.

New Position:

In line with our commitment to ensuring best practice, it has become clear that the amount of time allocated to consultation mechanisms with newly emerging communities needs to be increased. Consequently, a new position with a focus on community engaging is being created.

Community Awareness-raising:**World Refugee Day:**

During this last 6 month period, the most significant activity supporting general community awareness-raising was World Refugee Day in June. This position supported both the establishment of the community reference group and the strategies implemented by the project coordinator.

Refugee/Indigenous Dialogue:

A number of requests were received from members of top End Indigenous Communities who were seeking support with increasing their understanding of refugee issues. Support was offered to facilitate these links. The meetings that followed included:

- A young Somali woman and her child met with the Senior Girls class at Xavier Community Education Centre, Nguiu (Bathurst Island) and were taken on a tour of their community, meeting many community members.
- A group of Lanapi Homelands (East Arnhem) Community Workers met with a range of refugee community representatives Darwin.

Collaborative support was also given to the Multicultural Solutions Project (MCNT) development of a pilot 'Indigenous Cultural Tour' day involving leaders of refugee and migrant communities in Darwin.

Kaz Phillips
Educator/Trainer