

Media Release

Wednesday, 10 October 2007

Melbourne disability support service launches new name

Major Melbourne disability support service St John of God Services Victoria is being renamed St John of God Accord to better reflect the nature of the support it provides clients.

The service, established in 1953, is a major provider of day, accommodation, respite, employment and outreach services supporting over 500 people with disabilities from 38 locations across metropolitan Melbourne. It supports clients with accommodation, lifestyle and occupational choices reflecting their individual needs and aspirations.

The Chief Executive Officer of St John of God Accord, Ms Liz Bishop, said the new name, St John of God Accord, reflected the way the service and its clients work together in a supportive, cooperative fashion. "The word accord means harmony and agreement, which is at the heart of the relationships we form with our clients as they choose the types of services and support they need and want to access," Ms Bishop said.

"The word is also suggestive of community and as a society we have witnessed the move from insititutionalised care to community integration and inclusion. Together with our clients we are working to facilitate a supportive, accepting community enabling people with a disability to fully participate within their community, rather than in isolation of it."

Ms Bishop said the new name was also in alignment with the principles of the new *Disability Act* 2006, which came into operation on 1 July 2007. The Act focuses on individuals and their place in the community, recognising that people with a disability have the right to enjoy the same civil, cultural, economic, political and social opportunities as all other members of the community.

On 2 July 2007, St John of God Services, as it was previously known, merged with St John of God Health Care, Australia's largest Catholic not for profit private health care group, which operates hospitals, pathology and outreach services in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia as well as in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The Group Chief Executive Officer of St John of God Health Care, Dr Michael Stanford, said that apart from better reflecting the highly regarded services that St John of God Accord provides, the new name coincided with the start of a new chapter for the service.

"As a result of the merger, St John of God Accord is now part of the St John of God Health Care group, which is committed to expanding and developing services to ensure they remain at the forefront of service quality and continue to meet community needs. Our common goals and shared resolve to work together to bring unity and strength to all services will bring current and future benefits to the clients and communities we serve," he said.

Launch of new name: 9.45am on Friday, 12 October 2007 at The Manningham, 1 Thompsons Road, Bulleen (Melways – Map 32 D10). Media are welcome to attend.

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