

# **Submission to the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry**

**Department of Social Science  
Holmesglen**

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Holmesglen is one of the largest TAFE Institutes in Victoria and one of Australia's most accomplished providers of Vocational Education. Holmesglen's mission is to deliver educational programs that are enhanced by relationships with key Industries. Holmesglen's Department of Social Science is recognised as offering vocational programs relevant to educating Industry and Community in relation to Child Protection.

## **Background**

Holmesglen is a Vocational and Higher Education provider located on three campuses in the Eastern and South-Eastern suburbs of the Melbourne metropolitan area (Chadstone, Glen Waverley and Moorabbin). The Department of Social Science specialises in providing courses in the community services and justice areas. The courses in community services are based on those specified by the CHC08 Community Services Training Package (NTIS). Current courses offered from the training package are:

- Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drug Work

- Certificate IV in Mental Health

- Certificate IV in Youth Work

- Certificate IV in Mediation

- Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)

- Diploma of Community Services Work

- Diploma of Community Services (Case Management)

- Diploma of Youth Work

## **Australian Qualification Framework: characteristics of learning outcomes**

In the vocational education sector, the Australian Qualification Framework has outlined the characteristics of the learning outcomes at each level of accredited training. These learning outcomes describe the breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge that contribute to the learner's competency. Description of leadership roles and levels of responsibility act as a guide to requirements in the workplace.

### Certificate IV level:

Characteristics of learning outcomes/competencies include:

- performance of a broad range of skilled applications including requirements to evaluate and analyse current practices, develop new criteria and procedures for performing current practices, and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of the skills;
  - breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies would cover a broad range of varied activities or applications in a wider variety of contexts most of which are complex and non-routine. Leadership and guidance are involved when organising activities of self and others as well as contributing to technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature; and
  - applications involve responsibility for, and limited organisation of, others.
- (AQF, 2007 page 32)

### Diploma level:

Characteristics of competencies or learning outcomes include:

- the self-directed application of knowledge and skills, with substantial depth in some areas where judgement is required in planning and selecting appropriate equipment, services and techniques for self and others;
- breadth, depth and complexity covering planning and initiation of alternative approaches to skills or knowledge applications across a broad range of technical and/or management requirements, evaluation and coordination; and
- applications involve participation in development of strategic initiatives, as well as personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations or organising others. It may include participation in teams including teams concerned with planning and evaluation functions. Group or team coordination may be involved.

The degree of emphasis on breadth as against depth of knowledge and skills may vary between qualifications granted at this level.

(AQF, 2007 page 39)

### Vocational graduate certificate level:

Characteristics of competencies or learning outcomes at this level include:

- the self-directed development and achievement of broad and/or specialised areas of knowledge and skills building on prior knowledge and skills;
- substantial breadth, depth and complexity involving the initiation, analysis, design, planning, execution and evaluation of technical and/or management functions in highly varied and/or highly specialised contexts; and
- applications involve making significant, high level, independent judgements in major, broad or specialised planning, design, operational, technical and/or management functions in highly varied and/or highly specialised contexts. It may include responsibility and broad-ranging accountability for the structure, management and output of the work of others and/or functions.

The degree of emphasis on breadth as against depth of knowledge and skills may vary between qualifications granted at this level.

(AQF, 2007 page 56)

Certificate courses can be usually completed in twelve months of full time study and Diploma courses in two years of full time study. Prerequisites to entry are either the completion of Year 12 secondary education or significant practical experience in the field. Thus vocational education is able to provide accredited tertiary qualifications in a short time span to a wider section of the community than is able to access or commit to higher education.

Each course consists of ten to nineteen units of competency that describe the required knowledge and skills and the vocational context for the area of expertise. Competencies attained with one qualification can be transferred for credit in another qualification. Thus vocational education is able to provide a pathway for the community sector workforce to up-skill and develop their professional expertise.

### **Promotion of child protection issues in the Department of Social Science, Holmesglen**

For each course, the training package describes compulsory units of competency and elective units of competency. In the Department of Social Science at Holmesglen we select the elective units to provide students with the widest range of knowledge they are likely to need going into the field. This decision is reached with industry collaboration. For example, in the Diploma of Community Services Work senior educators and teachers when planning the course having selected the following units concerned with children at risk and family violence:

- CHCCHILD401A *Identify and respond to children and young people at risk*
- CHCDFV404C *Promote community awareness of domestic and family violence*

Together with legal and ethical practices (CHCCS502A *Maintain legal and ethical practices*), these units provide the most direct training dealing with child protection issues in the community. However, family and child protection issues are also employed as teaching examples and points for discussion in other units in the course. The Diploma of Community Services Work in a general qualification for entry into the work place in the community sector and graduate find themselves in a variety of positions with different job descriptions. For example Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers lists the following job titles as typical of positions in the community sector:

Table 1: Occupation titles listed by the Australian Institute of Welfare and Community

Workers (source: [www.aiwcw.org.au/content/who-community-worker](http://www.aiwcw.org.au/content/who-community-worker) accessed 10th March 2011)

Assessment Officer	Family Court Counsellor	Team Leader
Careers Counsellor	Family Support Worker	Trauma Counsellor
Case Manager	Grief Counsellor	Welfare Officer
Case Worker	Housing Officer	Welfare Worker
Child Protection Worker	Intake Officer	Youth Accommodation Support
Children's Service Worker	Juvenile Justice Officer	Youth Officer
Community Development Officer	Outreach Worker	Youth Support Worker
Community Educator	Parole Officer	Youth Worker
Community Support Worker	Program manager	
Community Worker	Rape Crisis Counsellor	
Crisis Intervention Worker	Rehabilitation Counsellor	
Disabilities Service Officer	Residential Care Officer	
Drug and Alcohol Counsellor	Student Counsellor	
Family Counsellor	Supervisor	

**Specific vocational education courses from the Community Services Training Package**

However, the CHC08 Community Services Training Package does specify courses aimed at services for vulnerable children and family with a pathway of accredited qualifications

(Figure 1):

Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Family Support)

Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Child Protection)

Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)

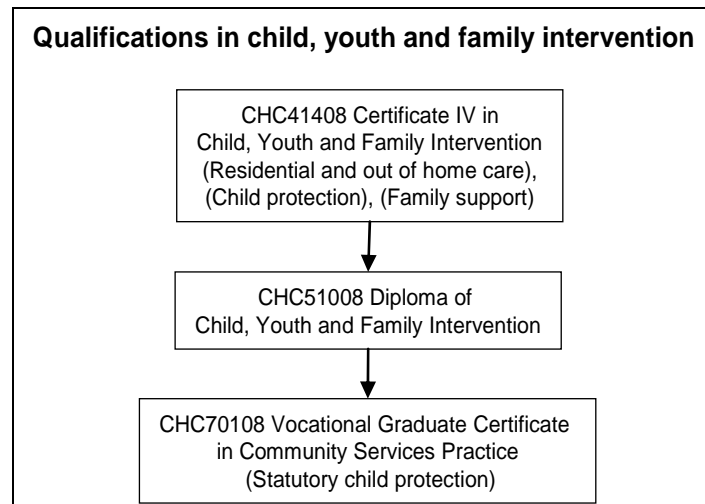
Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention

Diploma of Family Intake and Support Work

Vocational Graduate Certificate in Community Services Practice

(Statutory child protection)

Figure 1 Qualifications Framework for Child, Youth and Family Intervention (source: CHC08 Community Services Training Package, Volume 2 page 6)



Current education providers of these courses in Victoria (TAFE courses directory) are:

- Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Interventions (Residential and out of home care):
  - Holmesglen
  - Kangan Institute
  - Swinburne University of Technology
  - Education Training and Employment Australia Pty Ltd
- Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Family Support)
  - Education Training and Employment Australia Pty Ltd
- Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Child Protection)
  - Sunraysia Institute of TAFE
  - Education Training and Employment Australia Pty Ltd
- Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention
  - Currently no known education providers in Victoria
- Vocational Graduate Certificate in Community Services Practice (Statutory child protection)
  - Currently no known education providers in Victoria

**Specific recommendations for the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry**

In the terms of reference for the inquiry subsection 7 asks about “measures to enhance the government’s ability to: plan for the future demand for family services, statutory child protection services and out-of-home care; and ensure a workforce that delivers services of a high quality to children and families”. Subsections 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 then ask about the effective recruited of services providers and work force development and retention strategies.

**Recommendation 1.1** Our suggestion is that the committee consider and explore existing mechanisms in the vocational education sector to make training opportunities available to more workers in the community services sector. This could be achieved by prioritising specific training objectives either through nominating qualification requirements, providing incentives for public sector and not-for-profit agencies to provide professional development to their existing workers or some form of sponsorship or incentive to encourage new workers into the field. Many providers in this field have had an established track record of catering to the demands of the sector and have developed an expertise in training the workforce. For example, our students at Holmesglen come from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and we have built up an expertise in adapting our teaching to student needs to achieve successful outcomes. As providers of adult education the mix of our student profile includes:

- i. Young adults progressing from secondary education to the tertiary sector
- ii. Workers who have gained experience in the field but who need an accredited qualification
- iii. Workers within the sector that identify the need to up-skill
- iv. Older workers looking for a different career direction
- v. Recent migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds wanting to enhance their skills by participating in the Australian education system
- vi. International students taking the opportunity to gain an Australian qualification

Graduates of our courses aim to translate their learning into paid employment in the sector or enhance their existing job skills to advance their careers. At Holmesglen, we have an

established staff with wide ranging expertise and also access workers in the field to teach part time.

**Recommendation 1.2** Government promotion of targeted vocational education to up-skill the workforce could include:

- i. Promotion of double qualifications such as concurrent study for a diploma and certificate IV
- ii. Sponsored students with some or all of the fees discounted
- iii. Sponsoring work place professional development where full certificate or diploma courses are provided or alternatively tailored certificates of attainment.

**Recommendation 1.3** At the present time only teachers and medical staff are mandated to report child abuse under the current legislation. This mandated responsibility has had a marked effect on professional development of those professions. In a similar way, skilling up more of the workers within the community services sector would have a beneficial effect on dealing with vulnerable children and families at risk in a wider range of community settings. More expertise more widely available should enable the problem to be dealt with more effectively. More incentives for staff to work in the area and support other staff should have a beneficial effect on long term retention of staff and continuity of services. In our experience, it is not a lack of interest in child protection issues but lack of opportunity to train and find fulfilling positions within the sector that is preventing many of our students from making a contribution to this problem.



## References

Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers [www.aiwcw.org.au](http://www.aiwcw.org.au)

AQF Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board, 2007 4<sup>th</sup> edition, *Australian Qualifications Implementation Handbook*,  
[www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AQF\\_Handbook\\_07.pdf](http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AQF_Handbook_07.pdf) (accessed 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011)

CHC08 Community Services Training Package version 2.1  
[www.ntis.gov.au/Default.aspx?/trainingpackage/CHC08/qualification/CHC70108/rules](http://www.ntis.gov.au/Default.aspx?/trainingpackage/CHC08/qualification/CHC70108/rules)

NTIS National Training Information Service [www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au) (accessed 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011)

TAFE Courses Directory, [www.tafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.tafe.vic.gov.au) (accessed 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011)

## Appendix A: Comparison of Diploma and Vocational Graduate Certificate training courses (source: \*CHC08 Community Services Training Package version 2.1, volume 2)

<b>CHC51208 Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention</b>	<b>CHC70108 Vocational Graduate Certificate in Community Services Practice (Statutory child protection)</b>
<p><b>Role expectations:</b>          “These workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work under limited supervision or within a team and are responsible for planning and prioritising their own work program to achieve targets</li> <li>• May supervise other workers</li> <li>• Depending on the focus of their role, may carry out activities related to improvement of personal living and emotional circumstances of a child or young person at risk</li> <li>• May exercise legal authorities and delegated decision making on relevant statutory matters.” *p 188</li> </ul>	<p><b>Role expectations:</b>          “These qualifications cover those workers who are advanced practitioners in the two specialised fields identified and who require a high level of knowledge and skills in their area of specialisation for application in the following contexts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide specialist services to clients with complex and diverse needs</li> <li>• Act as a resource for other workers</li> <li>• Provide practice supervision of staff including volunteers</li> <li>• Work intensively with clients.</li> </ul> <p>Workers at this level are making high level, independent, complex judgements in highly specialist contexts. Their role may also involve full responsibility and accountability for all aspects of work of self and others and functions including service planning, delivery and evaluation.” *p 274</p>
<p><b>Entry requirements:</b>          1. Core units from <i>CHC41508 Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Child protection)</i>:  <b>OR</b>          2. Have sufficient relevant work experience to indicate likely success at this level of qualification in a job role involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application of knowledge with depth in some areas and demonstration of a broad range of technical and other skills</li> <li>• A wide range of tasks and roles in a variety of contexts, with complexity in the range and choices of actions required</li> <li>• The exercise of discretionary judgment and decision making under general guidance. *p 188</li> </ul>	<p><b>Entry requirements:</b>          “It is recommended that candidates have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An undergraduate degree or postgraduate qualification in a discipline related to work in the community sector</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant previous experience working in a community sector organisation, in a job role involving the self directed application of knowledge with substantial depth in the specialist area of practice and exercise of independent judgement and decision making.” *p 274</li> </ul>
<p><b>Occupational titles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child protection worker/practitioner</li> <li>• Protective case worker</li> <li>• Child safety officer</li> <li>• Residential care worker</li> <li>• Family support worker / protection planner</li> <li>• Therapeutic worker</li> <li>• Non-residential case worker/team leader</li> <li>• Youth support case worker *p 188</li> </ul>	<p><b>Occupational titles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child protection worker</li> <li>• Child safety officer</li> <li>• Social worker *p 274</li> </ul>

## **Course Structure**

### **CHC51208 Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention**

#### **Core units**

CHCCS422A Respond holistically to client issues and refer appropriately

CHCCS502A Maintain legal and ethical work practices

CHCPR0T526A Work in a child protection environment

HLTHIR403B Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers

HLTHIR404B Work effectively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people

#### **Relevant electives**

##### ***Recommended electives for statutory child protection work:***

CHCCM503C Develop, facilitate and monitor all aspects of case management

CHCCS601B Work with clients with unique needs

CHCPR0T430A Develop and implement a multi agency investigation and child risk assessment strategy

CHCPR0T502D Undertake and implement planning with at-risk children and young people and their families

CHCPR0T532A Interact with the legal system to protect children

CHCPR0T533A Work with children and young people with complex trauma and attachment issues and needs

#### **Electives for other areas of work**

##### **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child protection practice**

CHCPR0T422A Undertake child protection work within an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander framework

##### **Intensive family support**

CHCPR0T411C Provide for care and protection of clients in specific need

CHCPR0T512C Coordinate work integrating statutory requirements and responsibilities

CHCRF402B Provide intervention support to children and families

##### **Work with children and young people**

CHCCHILD404A Support the rights and safety of children and young people

CHCPR0T510D Support the progress and development of young people

CHCRF402B Provide intervention support to children and families

**CHC70108 Vocational Graduate Certificate in Community Services  
Practice (Statutory child protection)**

**Core units**

CHCCS805A Undertake professional reflection  
CHCORG701A Provide leadership as a practitioner in community services  
CHCPOL701A Use research evidence to advance policy and practice  
CHCPROT701A Conduct complex child protection risk assessment  
CHCPROT702A Apply for and implement child protection orders  
CHCPROT703A Facilitate incident prevention strategies in child protection work

**Other relevant electives for statutory child protection**

CHCCM506B Undertake case management in a child protection framework  
CHCCW604B Design and supervise family intervention strategies  
CHCDFV402C Manage own professional development in responding to domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV510C Facilitate workplace debriefing and support processes  
CHCDFV811B Respond to domestic and family violence in family work  
CHCDFV812B Assist users of domestic and family violence to accept responsibility for their behaviour  
CHCDFV813B Promote accountability of uses of domestic and family violence and abuse  
CHCDFV814B Establish change promoting relationship with users of domestic and family violence and abuse  
CHCDFV815B Establish and maintain the safety of people who have experienced domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV816B Undertake safety planning with people who have been subjected to domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV817B Manage domestic and family violence and abuse screening and risk assessment processes  
CHCFAM518B Work with involuntary and mandated clients  
CHCFAM801B Develop an understanding of child inclusive practice  
CHCFAM802B Work within a child inclusive framework (*Note pre-requisite: HCFAM801B*)  
CHCFAM806B Assist clients to develop parenting arrangements  
CHCIC620C Manage complex behavioural situations  
CHCPROT603A Plan and manage provision of out of home care  
CHCYTH501A Develop and implement procedures to enable young people to address their needs  
CHCYTH502A Work with young people to establish support networks  
CHCYTH503A Undertake youth work in specific communities  
CHCYTH504A Support young people to take collective action

## Appendix B: Example of the essential knowledge and skills to be acquired for a unit of competency from the CHC08 *Community Services Training Package*

**CHCPR510A *Design, implement and evaluate programs and care routines for children*** is an elective unit in the Diploma of *Child, Youth and Family Intervention* recommended in the training package to develop skills when developing interventions for children and young people:

<b>CHCPR510A</b>	<b>Design, implement and evaluate programs and care routines for children</b>
<b>Descriptor</b>	This unit describes the knowledge and skills required to design, implement and evaluate programs and individual care routines to foster and enhance the development of children

CHC08 Community Services Training Package volume 7 p 350

### **The Role of the Essential Knowledge and Skills**

Each unit of competency describes the essential knowledge and skills required to be equipped by the trainee worker. For CHCPR510A, the essential knowledge covers theories of child development and strategies to enhance early identification of children at risk. This knowledge may be utilised to develop programs such as effective early prevention strategies that would suit the needs of individual families within a best practice and legislative framework. The development of these skills would be used by trainee workers to assist with out-of-home care which includes permanent and transitional assistance to the children and families. Acquiring essential knowledge and skills outlined equips trainees to deliver high quality services within the workforce to improve outcomes for children.

**Essential Knowledge:** CHCPR510A *Design, implement and evaluation care routines for children* from the CHC08 Community Services Training Package volume 7 p 352

*Essential knowledge:*

The candidate must be able to demonstrate essential knowledge required to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

These include knowledge of:

- Theories of child development
- Different approaches to program planning and development
- Criteria for selecting a specific programming approach
- Assessment tools to guide decision-making about programming
- Respect for different family expectations
- Detailed knowledge of facilitating a variety of learning and play experiences e.g. art, music, sport
- Up to date information and a range of sources of information is accessed as resources for program development
- Organisation standards, policies and procedures
- Location of resources and materials
- Identification of range of resources required
- Criteria to review setting and environment
- Evaluation methods and reflective practice
- Stakeholders who need to be involved in evaluation
- Relevant quality improvement and accreditation system principles
- Regulatory and legislative requirements

**Essential skills:** CHCPR510A *Design, implement and evaluation care routines for children*  
from the CHC08 Community Services Training Package version 2.1 volume 7 p 353

*Essential skills:*

It is critical that the candidate demonstrate the ability to:

- Gather information and use as a basis for designing and planning programs to address identified needs
- Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate developmentally appropriate routines and programs to foster and enhance children's development
- Apply a defined philosophical approach to delivery of services to children and to continuously improve services through reflecting on effectiveness of practices
- State and outline a personal philosophy about children's development through programming which considers theories of child development and learning and social justice and equity
- Organise and coordinate a range of experiences at one time and undertake appropriate evaluation of effectiveness of programs
- Apply criteria to evaluate programs in relation to:
  - short term and long term goals of the program
  - progress of individual children
  - progress of the group of children
  - philosophy and goals of the service
  - cost effectiveness
  - appropriate practice
  - daily programs, weekly programs

In addition, the candidate must be able to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

These include the ability to:

- Demonstrate application of skills in:
  - planning
  - contingency management
  - effective communication with target groups
  - analysis and reflective thinking
  - selecting and administering appropriate assessment and evaluation tools

### **Value adding to the training package**

This framework of essential knowledge and skills is used by teachers in the Department of Social Science who would then add context to achieve learning outcomes specific to the needs of a particular Australian jurisdiction. Thus at Holmesglen we often use the Victorian context to illustrate and identify key issues affecting Victorian families and children. We teach about current practices and programs used in Victoria and liaise with industry organisations to ensure our course content and hence our graduates are ready for work in those community service organisations. We also take examples of other practices operating in the other Australian States and Territories to ensure our students are up to date with both the best practices and are aware of the worst issues of concern.