

**INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND FUTURE PROVISION OF
HEALTH SERVICES IN THE SOUTH-WEST SYDNEY
GROWTH REGION**

Organisation: The Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers & Babies - trading
as Tresillian

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Tresillian response to the *Inquiry into Health Services in the South-West Sydney Growth Region. (Western Sydney Aerotropolis)*

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CEO Tresillian**

22nd March 2020

Tresillian would like to thank the Hon Greg Donnelly MLC and the NSW Government for the opportunity to respond to the inquiry into health services in the South-West Sydney growth region and to platform the work of Tresillian for children, young people and families across NSW and in particular our residential unit and day service located in the Nepean Region.

The response is made on behalf of The Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies also known as Tresillian Family Care Centres.

Tresillian is a public health organisation positioned in a very strategic area to influence long term health outcomes. Tresillian's brand is known as a national and NSW centre of excellence and operates within a larger health service context.

Tresillian is very well positioned to address critical state and national policy goals – in particular early intervention and prevention services to support healthy attachment relationships and optimal development in early childhood.

Tresillian's objectives, first and foremost are about children and their best interests with a focus on matters of Child and Family Health, early parenting, perinatal mental health, health promotion and early Intervention and prevention.

Tresillian's guiding principle is to deliver the highest quality service to children and families and to provide children with their right to safety, stability and healthy development. Tresillian provides a strong framework that ensures the quality of service and care are provided to children and families of NSW and ACT.

Our guiding principles focus on available research, literature, and Tresillian best practice which will continually inform our best service and strength based approach when supporting families.

Sincerely,

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CEO Tresillian
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new Western Sydney Aerotropolis will be a hub across a range of industries, including healthcare and research; with opportunities and challenges presented by the extraordinary growth in the greater western Sydney region. Development in Western Sydney is far greater than investment in infrastructure with a growing population forecast of \$2.5 million by 2021 within the five health and education precincts of Nepean, Westmead, Blacktown, Liverpool and Campbelltown requiring solicitous planning opportunities to best allocate health and education services.

Tresillian is well placed to support families with children 0-5 years across NSW and the ACT with particular focus on our trusted Tresillian Family Care Centre located on the grounds of the Nepean Hospital.

Tresillian has a 20 bed (10 for parents and 10 for babies) residential and day service unit co-located in the grounds of Nepean Hospital, with a well-established commitment and reputation of supporting families in the region for the past 27 years. The service is trusted by the community and has a reputation for meeting family's needs. Through our sustainable and personalised service model, over the years we have demonstrated that families supported by Tresillian Nepean benefit in the short and long term, specifically in regards to improved physical and mental health outcomes. Tresillian has strong partnerships and connection with services in the area such as Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, Primary Health Network, government agencies, non-government agencies and local business.

Tresillian has demonstrated the organisation's capacity to partner with Government and local health services to deliver services that focus on the early years of a child's life, enabling the identification and appropriate timely response to factors that contribute to vulnerability such as mental health, domestic and family violence, substance misuse, homelessness, disability, low educational attainment, parenting issues and concerns.

A secondary level referral pathway for families identified by primary level services, including Child and Family Health Nursing services and General Practitioners, is needed to provide timely, accessible, evidence-based help and support for families and to avoid escalation of the distress the family is experiencing and impact on acute care services. Many parents attending Tresillian Family Care Centres present initially reaching out for help for early childhood sleep difficulties with research indicating that 15-35% of children in infancy and early childhood have been found to have clinically significant persistent sleep disturbances (France, Blampied & Henderson, 2003). Early access to help and support is vital if left untreated, these sleep difficulties can persist into childhood and adulthood as well as having significant impact on mental health and wellbeing, education and work life balance.

Tresillian's discussion will be framed around the priorities identified in the Submission Media Release to identify current and future provision of health services in the South-West Sydney Growth Region around the new Western Sydney Aerotropolis.

ABOUT TRESILLIAN

Tresillian understands that “one size does not fit all” and provides tailored individualised support services to families including at risk families. Tresillian has centre based (residential and day units), home based services, allied health support, group programs, specialist services for families with vulnerabilities across NSW including mental health issues, alcohol and other drug issues.

Tresillian works with NSW Health organisations to minimise inequities of access to care that are often encountered by vulnerable families. Tresillian’s residential facilities and family care centres, located in strategic locations across NSW, Victoria and The ACT operate on a hub-and-spoke model to maximise the number of communities we can support with our services which is centred exclusively on families with young children experiencing early parenting issues, many of whom are living with complex risks such as mental illness.

This responsiveness to families’ changing needs, particularly those experiencing challenges in the crucial early years with their children, works to address the social determinants of health and wellbeing. Tresillian operates seventeen sites in NSW, plus one in both Victoria and ACT, providing state-wide, regional and local support services.

Prevention, health education, health promotion are activities involved in reducing risks and modifying behaviours with the aim of improving quality of life. Engaging with families (including families from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Background and Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds) in priority settings with program implementation in a respectful and culturally competent way has been identified as a key success factor for programs that support healthy lives.

Tresillian provides effective and inclusive services that are user friendly with referral pathways that are flexible, accessible, culturally safe and responsive. Tresillian provides a culturally sensitive service, to support and guide families with individualised/ personalised plans and works from locations that are considered accessible and safe by the community.

Pregnancy, birthing and early parenting are profoundly important life experiences. As well as the physical, social, practical and emotional dimensions of these experiences, the time leading up to birth, the birth itself and the postnatal period are for many women and their families filled with deep emotional, spiritual and/or cultural significance.

Tresillian highlights the significance of the provision of safe, sustainable, high-quality parenting, early intervention, prevention and perinatal mental health services in the Nepean Region and across NSW, which is dependent on the creation of formal networks of health professionals including specialist child and family health nurses and midwives, GPs, obstetricians, Allied Health Teams, who work as an integrated team to ensure a seamless and holistic approach to service provision along the continuum of care. Strong clinical governance, guidelines and clear transfer and referral protocols are required to support babies, children and their families.

Tresillian Family Care Centres provide a service that is responsive to the changing needs of families, particularly those experiencing challenges in the crucial early years of their child’s development to address the social determinants of health and wellbeing. Feedback received

from families accessing the services at Tresillian Nepean over the past 27 years shows that through the delivery of primary health care and working in partnership with families using a holistic strengths based approach, the Tresillian Nepean Family Centre has made a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of families.

TRESILLIAN TRUSTED SERVICE PROVISION

TRESILLIAN FAMILY CARE CENTRES (RESIDENTIAL UNITS)

Tresillian's Residential Programs operate in NSW at Tresillian Nepean, Canterbury and Willoughby and in the ACT at the QEII Family Centre. The residential service is a state-wide 4-night, 5-day inpatient service for families experiencing significant parenting challenges that require intensive intervention and strategies to promote family health and wellbeing.

Families obtain a referral from a health professional such as your local Child and Family Health Nurse, your Family Doctor, or Paediatrician.

The Tresillian team of specialist child and family health nurses, psychologists, social workers, paediatricians and psychiatrists work in partnership with families to increase confidence; resolve concerns; and provide guidance and information.

In 2018-2019 The Tresillian Nepean Family Care Centre had an occupancy rate of 10,992 bed days and staff supported 1,460 mothers and 1,479 babies. Staff also gave support to 1,566 fathers during their family's residential stay or day service admissions. The centre also recorded a total 3034 (non-admitted) nursing and psychology occasions of service.

TRESILLIAN – PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH MODEL OF CARE - EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE IN ACTION

Mental health care in the perinatal period: Australian clinical practice guideline

Tresillian has adopted the Mental Health Care in the Perinatal Period Guideline 2017 (MHCPPG) as a clinical practice approach to providing evidence-based family centred care. The guideline is the gold standard in best practice in the area of perinatal mental health.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PERINATAL MENTAL SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Timely and accurate perinatal mental health screening is key to further psychological assessment, responsive management and treatment. The MHCPPG informs attachment-based knowledge, values, principles and assumptions which are embedded into Tresillian's organisational culture. They set out evidence-based strategies and best practice tools that support the accurate identification of perinatal mental health symptoms, in paper form and digital form.

Pre admission screening assists in the standardisation of the clinical processes and streamlines important referral pathways for further assessment, management and treatment.

A differentiating feature of the MHCPPG is the use of an interactive and user-friendly digital platform called iCOPE which is designed to facilitate the accurate detection and identification of symptoms of perinatal mental health symptoms. The iCOPE contains questions pertaining to psycho-social risk factors and symptoms of perinatal depression and anxiety using a digitalised version of the Edinburgh Post Natal Depression Scale and psycho-social screening. This is typically completed within a consultation by a clinician and a clinical summary report can be generated in real time to further inform clinical assessment and referral pathways. This digital screening option could be considered as part of strengthening the screening and identification of parents as part of the admission process.

GROUP INTERVENTION THERAPY

Clinical pathway and or individual parenting experience to include participation in the following group intervention:

- Circle Of Security-P;
- Postnatal Depression; and,
- Postnatal Mindfulness and Wellbeing Groups.

The benefits of involvement in group interventions has been widely researched and strong evidence supports enhanced social connection, confidence, self-esteem, decision making, self-care, reflective capacity and parent/ infant relationships.

FATHER INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN THE PERINATAL PERIOD

Evidence acknowledges that 1 in 20 fathers in Australia also experience depression during their partners pregnancy and up to 1 in 10 new fathers struggle with depression following the birth of their baby (2018, PANDA). Ensuring that clinical practices and referral pathways are inclusive of fathers can lead to timely identification and treatment.

TRESILLIAN WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Tresillian's capacity to deliver a wider range and scope of services for child and health services, a program of education and training has been developed over many years.

Tresillian continues to strengthened partnerships with existing education providers in vocational and tertiary sectors to enhance the recruitment and retention of a suitably qualified workforce for child and family health which will ensure ongoing quality of service delivery.

Tresillian has an established track record in the delivery of post-graduate courses for Registered Nurses in child and family health. A twelve-month, part-time Graduate Certificate of Child and Family Health Nursing has been conducted in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney since 2009. The program is offered in blended mode (online and block) with clinical placements in universal child and family health and Tresillian Centre's.

VALIDATED ASSESSMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

Tresillian is a leader in the provision of child and family health education and training, including validated assessments and interventions that can support an increased scope of practice. These include: Family Partnership training, Keys to Caregiving (NCAS) and NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Scale.

HOME VISITING PROGRAM

Tresillian has developed and implemented the Advanced Nurse Practice program for Sustaining NSW Families (SNF) program nurses. This twelve-month professional development program is delivered by Tresillian on behalf of the NSW Ministry of Health for nurses employed in SNF – a nurse-led evidence-based sustained health home visiting program from pregnancy until child's second birthday.

TRESILLIAN CENTRALISED INTAKE and REFERRAL PROCESS

All referrals to Tresillian day service or a residential service require a referral from a level one primary care provider or non-government agency. Referral agents include hospitals, child and family health nurses, general practitioners, paediatricians, allied health worker, maternity units, extended/early intervention programs and child protection services.

TRESILLIAN DAY SERVICES

The aim of the Tresillian Day Services Model is to standardise key elements in order to provide consistent, high quality services across Tresillian outpatient services providing a Level Two service response. These elements have been informed by a review of the literature, benchmarking, consultation and process mapping to identify best practice principles and guidelines.

SERVICE PACKAGE OF CARE

Tresillian day services (centre-based, home-based and via telehealth virtual consultations) and residential services provide a level two service response. The dosage or service being offered is dependent on a comprehensive assessment of the family's needs and circumstances and commences at Centralised Intake. The day services model incorporates centre based, home-based and telehealth modes of service delivery. The service model will utilise a 'package of care' approach to promote responsive service provision to meet the needs of families across a continuum of care. Centre based services are not necessarily location specific; home based services by necessity will be location specific for delivery of services.

TRESILLIAN EXTENDED HOME VISITING SERVICE

The Extended Home Visiting service provides an intensive, targeted and coordinated home visiting service for families (with children 0-5 years of age) identified as having vulnerabilities and/or complex issues that potentially compromise the primary carer-child relationship and/or the parent's ability to provide a safe nurturing environment. If an opportunity arises, the home visiting nurse will partner with the community agents to support parenting education sessions or assist in the development of parenting resources for vulnerable families.

REFERRALS

Referrals accepted from community child and family health nurses and allied health workers, local doctors, perinatal mental health and drug and alcohol services; criminal justice services, Children of Parents with a Mental Illness, Brighter Futures and non-government parenting support services.

TRESILLIAN'S ICT ENABLED SERVICES – EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

PARENTS HELPLINE

The Parents Help Line service offering parenting advice & psychological support for over 30,000 parents with small children per year.

The Tresillian Parents Helpline offers immediate support via a 1300 Phone Number is operational from 7am to 11pm – 7 days per week all year with the exception Christmas Day.

The callers are supported by specialist child and family health nurses and will address issues such as night waking, newborn routines, sleep and settling, breast feeding, general feeding, toddler management.

Staff will also support parents with concerns of postnatal depression and anxiety, parental distress, child protection concerns, domestic violence, families are a phone call away for post discharge advice and bridging advice pending admission to a Tresillian residential or day service.

TRESILLIAN LIVE ADVICE – WEB BASED SERVICE

Tresillian Live advice is a free on-line service offering support for over 4,000 parents with small children per year. The service operates Monday to Friday between the hours of 5pm to 11pm and provides convenient, accessible specialized support.

The Tresillian YouTube Channel, with over 153,000 views to date, offering short focussed parenting support videos for families.

The Tresillian Facebook page has over 38,000 followers where families can connect for more support and to share stories.

TELEHEALTH VIRTUAL CONSULTATIONS

Consultations provided by a day service clinician may be provided via telehealth virtual consultations for families unable to access the centre who live outside the home-visiting service delivery radius. The challenges to access may include distance, lack of transport and socio-economic disadvantage. Virtual consultations may be utilised as a mode of delivery for both initial assessment consultations and follow-up support.

Virtual consultations may be delivered within the client's home via their personal computer/device or within a local health service facility to enable reliable connectivity. The initial consultation may be undertaken as a joint-appointment with the local primary care provider, enabling introduction and the building of rapport while also facilitating joint care planning.

The benefits of telehealth include consultation with Specialist nurses with a thorough understanding of and connections with the local service network, families receive up-to-date

knowledge of the local services available, with established inter-agency relationships to enable comprehensive case planning to address a wide range of needs, including families with a parent/child with a disability and the enabling and provision of effective care navigation for families with complex needs experiencing vulnerabilities in the early years of their child's life.

SLEEPWELLBABY APP

This is a digital application created by a partnership with Tresillian and “SleepFit” called “SleepWellBaby”; which will support parents to navigate the diverse early parenting issues. The interactive App is scaffolded by the full range of Tresillian services as appropriate.

TRESILLIAN - A FATHER INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION

“dads don't babysit – it's called parenting” the Dads Network 2016

By including fathers in the Tresillian organisational activities, services, resources or programs our organisation becomes more equitable by not only appealing to the needs of mothers and children, but also being equally accessible to fathers. In turn this will result in more enriched and effective programs, with higher client participation and appreciation.

Tresillian's father-inclusive practice aims to value and support men in their role as fathers, our organisation actively encourages their participation in programs, and ensure they are appropriately and equally considered in all aspects of service delivery.

Tresillian have introduced father specific programs for the encouragement and endorsement of father's involvement in the care of their children – some of the Tresillian programs offered include:

- Hello Dad – Dads Matter Group;
- Parenting as Dads (Residential Stay); and,
- Circle of Security

TRESILLIAN 2U MOBILE PARENTING SERVICE – meeting families where they live

Tresillian's unique Tresillian 2U Mobile Van provides a culturally sensitive service, to support and guide families with individualised/ personalised plans for their children and family. This service works from locations nominated by Aboriginal communities to be accessible and safe – e.g. Aboriginal Medical Services, Community Pre-Schools, Council Chambers and Neighbourhood Centres.

At Tresillian, our goal is to ensure all expectant families and those with young children, regardless of where they live, have access to parenting advice, mental health support and parenting services, enabling them to raise healthy families and build healthy, resilient communities.

The Tresillian 2U Van provides a non-stigmatised, trusted environment for parents within familiar locations within their own community, enhancing their participation and control of the interaction with support staff. The service provides a high quality, accessible and flexible program that can mitigate the impacts of adversity and stress on babies and young children and support families to manage stressors and improve parent-child attachment during the

pivotal time from birth to age five years when the risk of child abuse and neglect is at its highest.

Many families may benefit from the Tresillian 2U mobile service - the families with high needs and complexities such as the families currently in the child protection or out of home care sector, the service can be a strategic investment that can yield savings for government by reducing costly negative social and educational outcomes over the long and short term.

Tresillian Aboriginal Health Workers consult with the local Aboriginal Elders and other community members, informing the adaptation of service response and programs to ensure suitability and acceptability for local Aboriginal families through a community co-design approach.

Tresillian has undertaken consultation to inform service design and adaptations to provide culturally safe and acceptable services with local Aboriginal Elders, services, workers, families and community members that brokers the right service, for the right family at the right time. Tresillian has also coordinated and enabled Cultural Competency training to enhance the knowledge and capacity of health professionals to effectively and respectfully work with and support Aboriginal families and communities.

Mobile parenting and family support from the van includes a specialised team of child and family health nurses and Aboriginal health workers with access to Tresillian based psychology/perinatal mental health support in the form of liaison consultation by the Clinical Nurse Consultant Perinatal and Infant Mental Health, Director Allied Health and the psychiatric team. The team collaborates with other agencies involved in the family's health care and other community agencies supporting families' complex needs, requiring this medium to long term multi-agency response and investment.

PLEASE NOTE: The Tresillian 2U Mobile Parenting Service is operational in Northern NSW and with funding support Tresillian is well placed to implement this unique service in the South West Region and Western Region Growth Area

THE FIRST 2000 DAYS OF LIFE MOVEMENT

There is a case to be made for the implementation of a First 2000 Days Project (NSW Ministry of Health Initiative) across NSW where gaps in service for vulnerable and disadvantaged families are identified. Tresillian will work in collaboration and consultation with motivated and willing government and non-government agencies in the implementation of the program to address the needs of families and to support vulnerable families in the new Western Sydney Aerotropolis growth area.

As leaders in child and family health, Tresillian recognise that broad, community partnerships are essential to providing optimum health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young families.

It is well-proven that the first 2000 days of life are vital to the positive trajectory of the life course and health outcomes of individuals, their families and communities. With operations aligned to this same preventative approach, Tresillian has the experience and demonstrated capabilities to assist government in delivering on its commitments to families.

The 'first 2000 days of life' encompasses the period from conception through to the age of five. Framing this period in terms of days emphasises the message that each day and each event occurring during this time period has a significant impact on the physical, social, emotional and psychological health of children. These impacts are carried throughout their adult lives and have flow on effects for the next generation.

Additionally, there is extensive economic argument for supporting children and families early with a worldwide body of research demonstrating the effectiveness of early intervention in the promotion of schooling, reduction in crime and promotion of adult mental and physical health.

In conclusion, families would greatly benefit from the “wrap around” services that Tresillian Family Care Centres can offer. The opportunity to support families from conception and into the early years, address the needs of families and support vulnerable families will have a significant impact on the physical, social, emotional and psychological health of children. These impacts are carried throughout their adult lives and have flow on effects for the next generation.

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