

History of Xavier Children's Support Network

Xavier Hospital for Children began in a house purchased by the Xavier Society after World War II. Poliomyelitis was prevalent and this society of Catholic professionals and business men wished to provide care for children with disabilities. In October 1951, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary started services at the home and in 1952 they assumed complete responsibility for the property and service.

By June 1992, Xavier was a dynamic organisation providing accommodation and respite support services to children with multiple disabilities and their families. As a result of a Prescribed Services Review in 1990, a number of recommendations for service re-development had been presented to the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, the Advisory Board, children, parents and employees of Xavier Hospital. These involved a move towards establishing a range of community-based respite and support services which would better meet the needs of Xavier's children and their families and respond positively to the guidelines for service development under the Disability Services Act, 1986.

Xavier Hospital was funded via the Disability Services Program by the Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing and Community Services until June 1992. At this time, through the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement, Xavier moved under State Government authority through the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care.

In August 1992, Xavier began to actively respond to the recommendations of the Prescribed Services Review and the guidelines outlined under the newly introduced Queensland Disability Services Act. The organisation adopted a new philosophy and mission; planned for the development of a new range of services based on a flexible, individualised, community-based model and planned for the re-allocation of existing recurrent funding to the provision of services which would reflect the new mission.

Xavier's new service development was based on the philosophy that all children have the right to and are best placed in a family and community environment. Admissions to Xavier's residence were ceased, as new services, which focused on enabling and supporting families to care for their children in their family environment, were developed. Therefore, a two-pronged approach to service development was undertaken to fulfil Xavier's new mission – the development of family-based options for children living at Xavier's residence and the development of support services to new consumers living with their families in the community.

In February 1996, Xavier Children's Support Network relocated to new premises at 284 Pine Mountain Road, Mt Gravatt East. At this time, the Network had completed a major transition in its service provision, offering individualised, flexible support to families with children who have complex needs, entirely in home and community settings.

In March 1999 the Network established an additional office in Aspley which allowed expansion of Family Support services to children with disabilities and their families in Brisbane's northern suburbs. After extensive renovations to a property purchased at 1935 Gympie Road, Bald Hills, the north office relocated to Bald Hills in December, 2004.

In July 2000 Xavier was incorporated as a Public Company by guarantee and registered in New South Wales. This was significant, as Xavier Board now became responsible for the overall operations of Xavier whereas in the past the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary were the accountable entity. The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary remained however as the sole member of the company and responsible for appointment of the Board.

In June 2003, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary on agreement with Xavier Board handed the Trusteeship of Xavier Children's Network over to the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane. However to allow Xavier to remain independent yet become an entity within auspice of the Catholic Archdiocese a legal change was necessitated from its present status as a Public Company. On June 19, 2003, Xavier Children's Support Network was therefore incorporated under the Roman Catholic Church (Incorporation of Church Entities) Act 1994. The Catholic Archdiocese holds equal positions on Xavier's Board with parents and community representatives.

The work of Xavier Children's Support Network remains the same in providing flexible, individualised support to children and young people with disabilities who have complex needs and their families through its Family Support services and YLYC (InFocus) program.

In 2015, Xavier began to prepare for the organisation's transition to operating under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to be rolled out from July 2016 in Queensland. In January 2017, under a new trading name InFocus Disability Services, the organisation was approved for both a registered plan management provider and a registered provider of a range specialist disability services under the NDIS.