

# JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES

## APPLICATION FOR

### 2006 INTERNATIONAL SPIRIT AT WORK AWARD

#### 1) *Basic Data:*

a) Name of Organization (can be a division of a larger organization):

Jesuit Social Services

b) Date of founding:

1995

c) Number of employees (NB: minimum of 60):

110

d) Nature and scope of business:

We provide a range of direct services designed to highly disadvantaged young people, families and communities. Our primary focus is young people with complex problems associated with their offending behaviour.

In addition to direct service delivery, our work spans social enterprises, mentoring, restorative justice conferencing, parenting and creative arts.

We work to effect social change at a local, state and national level through our research, social policy and advocacy work.

e) Location(s):

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia (several sites)

f) Website address (if applicable)

[www.jss.org.au](http://www.jss.org.au)

## 2. Contact Information

a) Contact Person's Name:

Julie Edwards

b) Position:

Chief Executive Officer

c) Phone:

+61 3 9427 7388

d) Email:

[Julie.Edwards@jss.org.au](mailto:Julie.Edwards@jss.org.au)

e) Cell phone:

+61 (0) 418163539

f) Address:

371 Church Street  
Richmond Victoria 3121  
Australia

Please provide full contact information for a back-up contact person in case we cannot make contact with you for any reason.

g) Backup Contact Person's Name:

Lisa Maddocks

h) Position:

Director, Business Support

i) Phone:

+61 3 9427 7388

j) Email:

[lisa.maddocks@jss.org.au](mailto:lisa.maddocks@jss.org.au)

k) Cell phone:

+61 (0) 418 874 652

l) Address:

371 Church Street  
Richmond Victoria 3121  
Australia

Note: It is essential that all this contact information be provided so that we can follow up with you.

### 3. A Brief Description of Your Organization:

- a) What are the vision and mission; philosophy and core values of your organization?

**Mission:** Standing in solidarity with those in need,  
Expressing a faith that promotes justice

**Vision:** To build a more just society

**Characteristics:** Respecting the value, dignity and rights of each person  
Establishing robust programs to enhance social inclusion  
Shaping public policy through research, advocacy and action  
Advocating with and for marginalized members of society  
Being committed to working in areas of unmet need  
Embracing differences of race, culture and faith  
Expressing Christian values and the mission of the Jesuit Order  
Working collaboratively for greater good.

**Practice Framework:** Jesuit Social Services engages disadvantaged young people, families and communities and the wider society to promote health and well-being and to address social exclusion.

- b) How your organization defines "Spirit" or "Spirituality". How do you talk about the "vertical" and "horizontal" dimensions of spirituality?

We define spirit as the whole self our people bring to work, and share with others. As our work focuses predominantly on forging respectful relationships as a basis for all interactions and interventions, the quality of these is the measure of how 'spirit' is traveling internally.

The vertical dimension hinges on our lived experience. Jesuit Social Services has a vision of faith that is inescapably social in its implications, impelling us to cross boundaries of culture, religion and social class.

The horizontal hinges on self-awareness (a core Ignatian principle). Our organizational values guide everything we do, and always come down to being conscious of who we are, what we do and how we do it. If we focus primarily on forming relationships of trust and respect with the people who use our services but do not do the same with ourselves and each other, the spiritual dimension of our work is greatly diminished.

- c) How do you handle concerns about diversity of religions and what boundaries do you set around employees trying to convert each other, or in any way making others uncomfortable?

There is a great diversity of belief and faith backgrounds among our staff. In the Ignatian tradition, much value is placed on being 'a home for all faiths'; as such, we ask only that people make themselves aware of our values and mission, agree to work within that framework and treat each other's journey with respect.

#### **4. Core Application:**

**The response to this section should be the heart of the application.** What policies, programs, or practices **explicitly promote or enable spirituality at work**? "At work" refers to your workforce. For the purpose of this award, the Committee is and clients. But if your practices do not include employees they more interested in how your workforce is treated. We also want to hear about your customers will not be sufficient. Explain the nature and scope of the organization's activities; when these practices were implemented and by whom; relevant background; public visibility; etc. Finally do you believe these programs will sustain over time? If so, why?

- a) What has been the effect of policies, programs, or practices on stakeholder community? Stakeholders include employees, owners, customers or clients, suppliers, communities in which business has a presence, etc. **A separate attachment with verbatim testimonials is allowed.** Please email this attachment separately and limit to 4 pages (in addition to the maximum of 12 pages on the Application)

Since the current CEO (Julie Edwards) commenced her role in May 2004, there has been a conscious move to highlight the importance of reflective practice, and to create opportunities for conversations and actions that highlight the spiritual element of work.

In consultation with the new leadership group, Julie began focusing on a range of priorities, which have since been articulated in our People, Leadership and Culture Strategy (attached). A primary goal is to build capabilities that will sustain and develop our people in the face of difficult, complex but ultimately satisfying work.

Through the development of our People, Leadership and Culture Strategy (2005), we have a framework that guides the integration of our values into daily practice. There are three discreet, but interdependent areas of focus:

- 1. Personal/Spiritual** – who we are, how we conduct ourselves. This supports us to consistently reflect on how we embody our values in relationship  
**striving for respect in all our encounters;**
- 2. Practice Framework** – our model of engagement and intervention underpinned by an understanding of the person as part of a family, a community and a wider society, with each level requiring focus. This support us to consistently reflect on whether we are consistent in our practice and if we achieve what we set out to do  
**striving for compassion and rigor in our professional practice;**
- 3. Business Process** – This supports us to consider how we meet our professional, financial, legal and business standards  
**striving for accountability and excellence in all our processes.**

A focus on leadership has been important in achieving this integration of values into practice. The leadership aspect of the strategy stresses the following Ignatian principles:

- We're all leaders & we're leading all the time, well or poorly;
- Leadership springs from within. It's about who I am as much as what I do;
- Leadership is not an act. It is a way of living;
- I never complete the task of becoming a leader.

What we're articulating here is that the focus on relationship in our work at JSS starts with ourselves, ie. I can't be of real use to others until I've first formed a healthy relationship with myself. Healthy, constructive leadership then becomes possible.

Specific practices that have a visible impact on our workplace culture include:

**Leadership Development** – This has been carried out on personal, interpersonal and group levels. It includes exploration and building of reflective practice, processes for agreeing and collaborating on a shared vision, spiritual direction (optional) and substantial one-on-one time between CEO and senior managers.

Most recently (April, 2006), 24 executives, managers and coordinators prepared for a 2-day Leadership Forum with a 2-week period of reflection, where they pursued a series of solo activities designed to bring them to clearer understanding of what motivates and inspires them, what they value and how they lead.

After the two days, many participants commented that they were surprised at what they found out about themselves and how comfortably the group absorbed this 'new' view of them. The style of facilitation and modeling from the CEO was considered to be a major factor in making this possible.

**Induction** – Redesigned to have a primary focus on our vision/values, and delivered by the CEO. The format seeks to communicate the JSS culture, to understand what people are driven by, to explore what they can expect/contribute, and why

*The feedback from our induction groups (November 2005 and March 2006) indicates that they are excited to be joining a values-based organization where their whole selves will be respected and developed (see verbatim attachment, Induction').*

**Reflection** – we use reflections in many business processes, including meetings, pre-work for staff forums and a CEO Reflection at the beginning of every monthly staff communication.

*Staff have reported becoming more comfortable about leading reflections, especially those who have participated in reflection training. They see it as both a way to share their perspective, and a good way to focus a group on the matters at hand.*

**Allocated reflection days** – we encourage staff to take up to 2 days for some form of reflective practice

**Program delivery** – we have strenuously sought to acquire funding to run programs that require all stakeholders to become aware of, and take responsibility for, their actions (eg, restorative justice conferencing).

The process of ongoing reflection is marbled through our activities, providing opportunities for staff across the organisation to consider the impact of their interventions with program participants.

Staff have reported that due to the visibility and regular reinforcement of values they are more likely to:

- be tenacious and not give up on program participants
- advocate on behalf of program participants
- 'go the extra mile' in their work.

b) What has been the effect of policies, programs, or practices on nominee's business success? Please tell how you feel these programs have helped you. For example: Has it contributed to growth? Has it improved employee retention? Please provide statistics whenever possible.

The individuals and groups with whom we work are characterized by such complex disadvantage that traditional measures of success are often irrelevant. In the 2005 Annual Report, CEO Julie Edwards wrote:

"In our context, (success) means looking beneath the activities, the statistics and the achieved targets to reflect on what of lasting value has been achieved. The former informs us and is a measure of accountability, but it is the latter that indicates whether our work actually takes us forward towards our goal of building a more just society."

The most powerful indicators of our success come from the stories of our program participants, like Jeff:

*"You were the rock for me when I was on the inside.... Damn, you really are a gift to those living in hell, and a road map out of hell. Thank you for showing me a way out through inner change."* (Jeff)

We believe that our People, Leadership and Culture Strategy, which is grounded in Ignatian spirituality, has great potential for professional and personal benefit ... and this of course is a powerful contributor to the success of our work. People are our only resource, so it is fair to say that the investment we make in them is the greatest single influence on the value of what we deliver.

Our spiritual heritage highlights 'freedom through discernment', promoting a detachment from what is familiar and promoting a mobility and flexibility that prompts us to shape our future, rather than passively observe its unfolding.

This approach is evidenced in our capacity and willingness to try bold and innovative solutions in response to old problems. This has led to growth, eg attracting independent philanthropic funds to deliver new interventions, and once successful, wider support for ongoing development.

- c) How the organization has been a model or inspiration for others companies in your industry or outside of it? For example, is your CEO often asked to speak at industry conferences and does he or she speak explicitly about spirituality?

**Recent conference presentations:**

- Centacare – ‘Leadership and Spirituality in the Workplace: Values in Action’ (04/06)
- Jesuit Australian Province Gathering - Reflection (12/05)
- RSWAG Conference – ‘Ethical Leadership in the Human Services Sector (07/05)

**Additional:**

- Social Ventures Australia has requested an outline of our People, Leadership and Culture Strategy (attached) and has expressed interest in adapting it for their environment.
- CEO quoted spirituality in the workplace as a special interest when interviewed for the Who’s Who of Australian Women.

**5. Stakeholder References**

A minimum of two references are recommended. Stakeholders may be owners, employees, suppliers, customers, strategic partners, community representatives, or environmental representatives, who are not leading your Spirit at Work initiative but can attest independently and genuinely to at least one of these:

- Vertical and horizontal dimensions of Spirituality demonstrated at the organization
- The explicitly spiritual project, policy or practice being acknowledged
- Any impact this person/group has observed resulting from the organization’s Spirit at Work program, policies, practices, etc.

Please include name, contact information and the relationship to the applicant.

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Relationship – Facilitator for 2-day JSS Leadership Forum, April 27-28, 2006

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Relationship – contracted at JSS from November 2005-May 2006

**6. Sources of additional information on the applicant:**

Here you may mention documents which you attached to the email containing this application but which are not part of this 12 page application. You may also list websites that can be accessed by the committee if needed.

1. People, Leadership and Culture Strategy
2. Induction summary
3. CEO Reflection (November, 2005)
4. Sample of a response to CEO Reflection
5. Mission, Culture and Practice Framework handout (Orientation, March 2006)