

Making education a reality



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www.ardoch.asn.au Patron: Sir Zelman Cowen, former Governor General of Australia

Kathy Hilton OAM Founder & Director, Ardoch Youth Foundation

Kathy Hilton was a student counsellor and teacher at Ardoch High School in 1988, when a homeless 16-year-old year 11 student asked her for help to stay at school. Finding that no government support was available, Kathy took responsibility to help the student herself. This was the beginning of the Ardoch Youth Foundation, a community development organisation that supports homeless and disadvantaged young people to access a relevant education and stay at school through a range of proactive programs based in early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools, and from the Ardoch Education Support Centre.

Through community partnerships, strategic alliances and lobbying government, Kathy, is helping to change the way the community views youth homelessness, disadvantage and education. An extensive community volunteer program (approx 400 per year) supports Ardoch's work, as well as a corporate program, which was recognised through the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships and has approximately 3,000 corporate volunteers participating annually.

Today under Kathy's leadership Ardoch is a highly professional organisation with programs running in thirty partner sites in four regions in Melbourne and four states. Kathy's ability to galvanize the community and individuals alike has seen her gather together a highly skilled voluntary Board of Directors and dedicated staff that assists Kathy in the day to day operations of Ardoch.

Kathy's commitment to innovation has seen Ardoch's support projects and programs be developed as demonstration models which can be implemented in schools nationally supported by our Training and Consultancy arm. As well as the development of the Ardoch LinCS (Linking Communities & Schools) Project which is a self-sustainable model of support that replicates Ardoch's work up to 10 schools in a geographic area supported by a local Ardoch Education Support Centre. This strategic direction to roll out Ardoch programs more broadly in a self-sustaining model is a direct result of Kathy's passion and vision of 'making education a reality for all children'.

Kathy's commitment to young people has been widely recognised and she has received many awards and honours. She was made an Honorary member of the Golden Key National Honour Society by Monash University in 1998, awarded an Australian Humanitarian Award in 1999, a Centenary Medal for Services to the Community from the Federal Government in 2003, an Order of Australia Medal in 2005 and the City of Stonnington Citizen of the Year Award in 2005.