



ANNUAL REPORT
2022 - 23

IN THIS REPORT

Who We Are	3	Prevention & Strengthening Families Outcomes	24
Message from our President	4	Spotlight on Functional Family Therapy	26
Message from our Chief Executive Officer	6	Functional Family Therapy Child Welfare Case Study	29
Key Achievements	8	Chance to Shine Scholarship Report	30
A Collaborative Approach to Service	10	Our Leadership Team & Board	33
National Practice Framework	12	Financial Report	40
Strengthening our Support for First Nations Children & Young People	14	Financial Support for Families	45
In-Home Care Outcomes	18	Fundraising & Community Report	47
The Landscape of Foster Care	22	Thank You	50



Our Vision

All children and young people are safe, respected, nurtured, and reach their full potential.

We seek a society in which all children and young people, regardless of their background, religion, culture, sexual orientation, or socio-demographic standing, live happily in a safe and caring environment. They are respected, supported, and part of a family. They have their needs met, have a safe home, are engaged in education or work, are participating in their community, and have the supports they need to reach their fullest potential.



Our Purpose

OzChild supports children, young people and families who are experiencing significant challenges, by strengthening families, providing healing, and preventing abuse and neglect.

At OzChild, we start by asking the right questions. We look for the insight and evidence from multiple sources and critically evaluate our options, our actions, and our results. We are committed to creating better outcomes for those we serve and work with. We deliver a diverse range of programs and services which respond to different needs, from those that focus on prevention and family preservation, right through to complex, high-impact interventions. And while our services are diverse, our unifying philosophy is that what we do is backed by the evidence and will always be focused on achieving our vision.



Our Commitment

- We will safeguard children in all that we do
- We will continuously advocate to enable self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- We will act on the evidence, rigorously evaluate outcomes, and invest in what works
- We will continue to support those impacted by our care throughout our history

OzChild acknowledges the First Peoples of Australia as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work.

We acknowledge their cultures are living ones, which relate to their ongoing connection to all things living and non-living on land, sea and sky. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. May the children of today lead us to a brighter tomorrow.



WHO WE ARE

Keeping kids safe is at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to supporting children, young people and families who are experiencing significant challenges, by strengthening families, providing healing, and preventing abuse and neglect.

Through the delivery of a diverse range of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and services which respond to different needs; from those that focus on prevention and family preservation, right through to complex, high-impact interventions, OzChild is committed to achieving better outcomes by doing what works for each child, young person, and family. Our belief that home-based care is paramount to improving outcomes for children and young people drives us to provide exceptional support for foster and kinship carers to ensure they are able to meet the emotional and physical needs of the children in their care.

We are passionate about embedding evidence-led decision making in all we do, right across the organisation, and are focused on building our evidence-based approach, being a voice for change and growing our service delivery in areas of greatest need.

Through collaborative partnerships with like-minded community service organisations and key stakeholders we aim to lead the change needed within the child protection and youth justice sector.

Where we work

Program acronyms

FFT - Functional Family Therapy

FFT-CW - Functional Family Therapy-Child Welfare

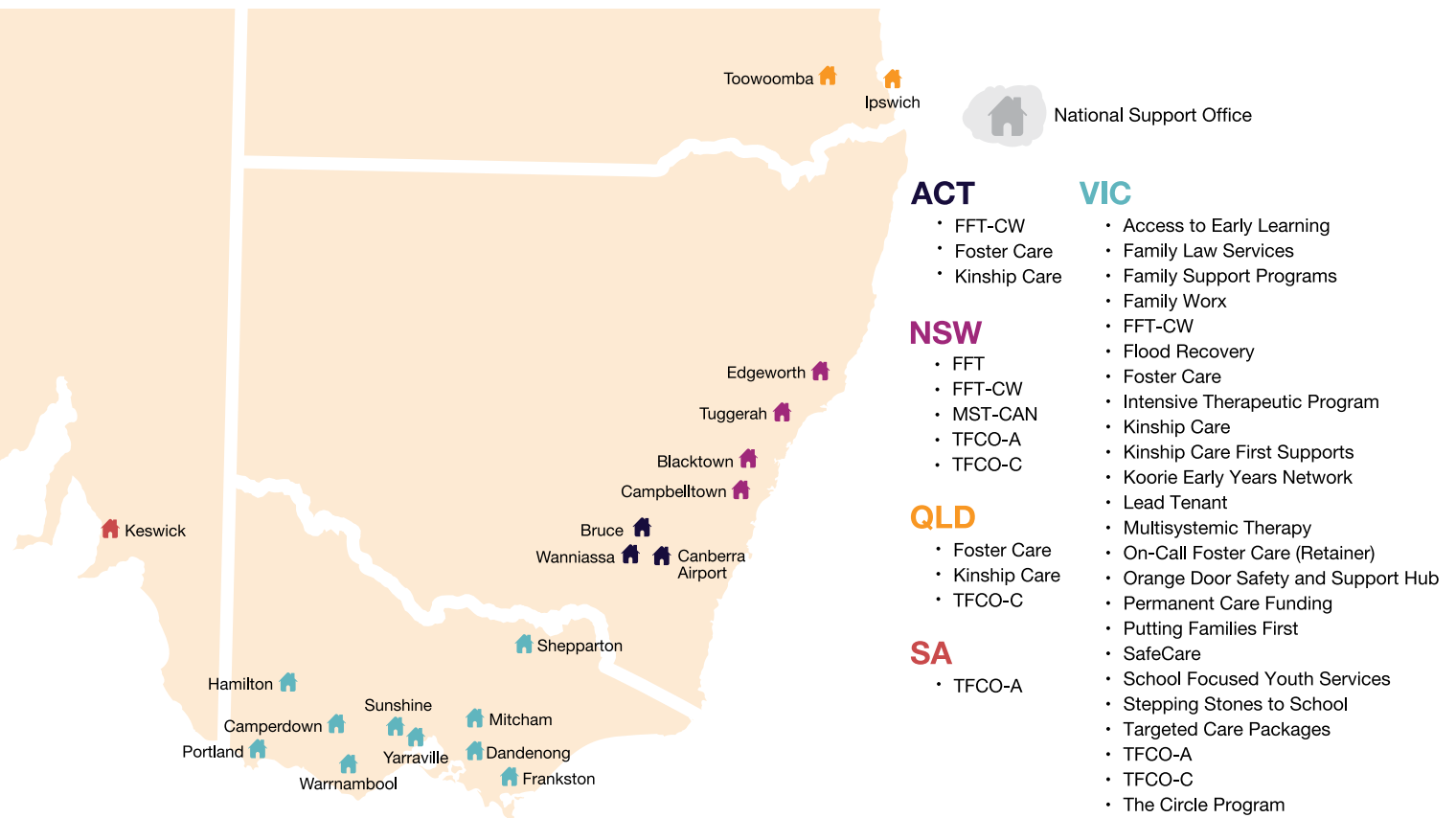
MST - Multisystemic Therapy

MST-CAN - Multisystemic Therapy-Child Abuse and Neglect

TFCO - Treatment Foster Care Oregon

TFCO-C - for children 7-11 years

TFCO-A - for young people 12-17 years



National Support Office

ACT

- FFT-CW
- Foster Care
- Kinship Care

VIC

- Access to Early Learning
- Family Law Services
- Family Support Programs
- Family Worx
- FFT-CW
- Flood Recovery
- Foster Care
- Intensive Therapeutic Program
- Kinship Care
- Kinship Care First Supports
- Koorie Early Years Network
- Lead Tenant
- Multisystemic Therapy
- On-Call Foster Care (Retainer)
- Orange Door Safety and Support Hub
- Permanent Care Funding
- Putting Families First
- SafeCare
- School Focused Youth Services
- Stepping Stones to School
- Targeted Care Packages
- TFCO-A
- TFCO-C
- The Circle Program

NSW

- FFT
- FFT-CW
- MST-CAN
- TFCO-A
- TFCO-C

QLD

- Foster Care
- Kinship Care
- TFCO-C

SA

- TFCO-A

MESSAGE

from the President



Over the last two decades, I have had the honour of serving the OzChild family as a Board member and in recent times as President. Throughout this time, we have accomplished a great deal, attained important milestones, and transformed our organisation to adapt to the evolving needs of children and families.

During the 2023 financial year support from federal, state, and local governments, individual donors, community fundraisers, trusts and foundations and corporate partners made an incredible difference to the lives of many. These partnerships are fundamental to our work, without others sharing our vision, and believing in the work we do, we simply could not support the many thousands of children, young people, and families we do each year.

The visionary leadership of our Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa Griffiths has firmly established OzChild as a driving force for positive change in the lives of children and families in need, having seamlessly woven our organisation's vision and purpose into the fabric of state advisory bodies, boards, and committees, such as the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare in Victoria, Association of Children's Welfare Agencies in New South Wales and various ministerial advisory bodies in each jurisdiction in which we operate.

Lisa's tireless efforts have not only advanced the organisation's interests but have fostered collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, cementing our commitment to being the change we need to see in our quest to transform the child and family welfare sector into an evidence-based and evidence informed, more effective arena.

2023 has been a year of exceptional outcomes, and a year in which we can be very proud of our collective achievements.

OzChild's unwavering commitment to reconciliation through our Second National Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), cultural training initiatives for our staff and carers, and the invaluable commitment from those who care for children and young people were, for me the absolute highlight of the 2023 financial year.

One of our four strategic goals is to be a courageous voice for change. We believe wholeheartedly in supporting systemic change to build and progress the central right of self-determination for First Nations peoples, both at a community and individual level.

A whole of organisation commitment to reconciliation remains steadfast, and the 2023 financial year marked significant progress in our Reconciliation journey, bolstered by our support for a First Nations Voice to Parliament. OzChild's support continues with us on our reconciliation journey, we will not stop advocating for systemic change to build and progress the central right of self-determination for First Nations peoples, both at a community and individual level.

Our RAP reflects our ongoing dedication to fostering meaningful relationships, respect, and opportunities for First Nations communities. This year, we completed our Second National Innovate RAP and achieved several key milestones, the most notable being the delivery of cultural training specifically designed for OzChild staff and delivered by our Dhiyaan Mirri team.

It was our hope that at least 30 per cent of staff would participate in full day interactive learning sessions. I was delighted that 90 per cent of all staff attended the training, which was held in each state and territory in which we operate. In 2024, all Board members will participate in this training too.

In addition to strengthening the cultural responsiveness of our workforce, our In-Home Care teams in partnership with Dhiyaan Mirri delivered Yarning Circle events with carers. These sessions develop the cultural awareness and increase cultural understanding of all attendees.

Through culturally safe practices and actions we can honour and support Aboriginal families, children, young people, and communities to advance our reconciliation journey together. Attendees learn more about OzChild's Bridging Cultures Unit – Dhiyaan Mirri, meet our Aboriginal Practice Leads and find out what the frequently used acronyms mean and what programs and services are available to support carers on their caring journey.

Foster and kinship carers are the cornerstone of our vision to support and nurture children and young people. Their commitment to providing a safe and loving environment is truly commendable.

In the 2023 financial year, many of our carers committed to learning and understanding and expanding their cultural knowledge and demonstrated an openness to supporting a child's cultural identity, their family, and their connections.

This also demonstrates their support of the work we are doing as an organisation to ensure our alignment and commitment to established frameworks and principles, like SNAICC's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles.

The Carer Yarning Circle events were held in New South Wales for our specialised foster carers, and in Victoria for specialised and general foster carers, and they were a tremendous success, with most carers rating the session '10 out of 10'.

By doing all this together we can say we are doing all we can to ensure we are not playing a role in past practices and policies being repeated, while giving First Nations children and young people the chance to grow up strong in culture, knowing who they are and where they are from.

The 2023 financial year was marked by significant progress and an ongoing dedication to our purpose of supporting children, young people and families who are experiencing significant challenges, by strengthening families, providing healing, and preventing abuse and neglect.

Almost 1,000 children and young people were supported in home-based care arrangements during the year, and 1,781 families received support through early intervention and preventative programs and services, and many hundreds more were supported through our School Focused Youth Services, the Orange Door and our Early Years Programs and Family Law Services.

During the year our Treatment Foster Care Oregon program expanded in Victoria and funding for continued delivery of our Functional Family Therapy program in NSW was secured. Both programs are playing a critical role in supporting the child protection and youth justice systems.

The success of the Putting Families First initiative in partnership with four other agencies to holistically support families engaged with the justice system has seen us strengthen relationships built with like-minded organisations as we grow our service delivery in areas of greatest need.

Our robust financial position enables us to invest in programs and services aimed at meeting the complex and changing challenges families are facing. With prudent financial management, under the guidance of our Treasurer, Michael Wootten and Executive Director of Finance & Infrastructure, Mark Powell, we now possess the fiscal strength necessary to drive transformative change. This financial stability is not just a testament to the organisation's fiscal prowess, but a manifestation of a commitment to delivering sustained, high-impact initiatives.

This means OzChild is well-equipped to drive positive change, secure long-term sustainability, and ensure the needs of those we serve are met with unwavering dedication and success.

I want to thank our dedicated team of almost 400 professionals across many disciplines for always striving to deliver the very best. Thank you for showing up, standing up and bringing the very best version of yourself to work, every day.

To our dedicated carers and volunteers, thank you for being so generous with your time, kind and caring with your actions. And our corporate and philanthropic partners, individual and regular donors thank you, you all play a pivotal role in shaping the lives of those we serve.

To my fellow Board members, I extend my deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation for your collective wisdom, diverse perspectives, and tireless efforts, which have been invaluable in supporting and shaping our wonderful organisation. I look forward to our continued collaboration in the future.

I want to thank Vice President Stephen Fontana and Angela Williams also for their commitment to OzChild's Cultural Competence Committee and the Quality and Child Safety Committee, respectively.

Both Steve and Angela have driven our commitment to practice and service excellence as Chairs of these committees and I thank you both for your incredible contributions.

And to our Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team, thank you for your exemplary leadership and vision. Your tireless dedication to our cause is truly inspiring, and it is evident in the progress we have made under your guidance.

As we look towards the future, I am filled with great optimism and enthusiasm, thanks to the continued support and commitment of so many. I look forward to many more years of growth and positive impact.



Helen Maxwell-Wright AM
President

MESSAGE

from our Chief Executive Officer



During 2023, the vision set forth by our board, leadership teams, and dedicated staff, with the release of our Strategic Plan to 2026 “**Delivering What Works**”, become a vibrant reality.

We’ve successfully realised many objectives through our four strategic goals: **Advance what works, Be a courageous voice for change, Grow for greater impact** and **Strengthen our vital organisation** and have achieved significant milestones.

Over the past three years since the conclusion of our previous strategic plan, we’ve achieved a remarkable 233 per cent growth. This exceptional progress is a testament to the collective efforts of every member of the OzChild team and reflects the dedication, ongoing learning, and investment in evidence-based practice that defines our organisation.

Our achievements this last financial year have been made possible through a commitment to collaboration and strategic partnerships, which have been at the heart of our success this year.

We firmly believe that no organisation can thrive in isolation, and by working together with like-minded entities, we can achieve more significant and sustainable results.

In an effort to grow for greater impact, during 2023 we strengthened our strategic alliance with sector leaders through the Allies for Children collaboration which comprises of a unique group of chief executive officers leading large child welfare organisations. The aim of this alliance is to influence and positively impact the Child Protection system, nationally.

Allies for Children have identified three consistent themes to where their future activities should focus:

1 Over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

2 Workforce challenges facing the sector.

3 Best practice (evidence-based) standards.

The initial focus of delivery, which OzChild will lead in 2023/2024, is the building of a content hub - a curated collection of branded content on a specific topic or subject. It will house articles, videos, infographics, and other forms of content that lets visitors take a deep dive into a specific area in which the Allies partner is an authority or expert. A Project Specialist has been secured to lead this work at OzChild.

Our participation in the disaster recovery efforts in North East Victoria, alongside various other agencies, is a wonderful example of collaboration to achieve significant results. Aimed to provide assistance to families affected by the destructive floods of 2022 in the Goulburn region, staff from across our Prevention & Strengthening Families teams were seconded to support families through this challenging time.

A partnership with The Parenting Research Centre saw the development of our very first National Practice Framework to strengthen our work with children, young people, and families. OzChild’s National Practice Framework highlights nine evidence-based practice principles identified as core to the work undertaken across all our programs and services.

The framework will encourage staff to reflect on how we view and understand children, young people, and their families - and the influence this has on our approach to our work. It will guide the development of policies, processes and systems that will support the approaches and practices outlined in the Practice Framework, to inform organisational decision-making, grounded by the ‘best available’ evidence.

This work was strengthened during the year with the introduction of a Practice Portfolio, led by a Principal Practitioner. This dedicated function will drive the development of a strategy within OzChild to strengthen service delivery through communities of practice and training. The Principal Practitioner provides clinical consultation across the organisation, particularly in the development of behavioural planning and safety plans for children and young people and lead practice improvement initiatives resulting from reviews, incidents, and outcomes data.

Another initiative realised during the year was a project aimed at empowering children and young people to have a greater say on decisions which affect them, and shape our broader work, by creating relationships and opportunities for meaningful participation.

The voices of children, young people, and families are so important and must remain a focus in the work we do. Lived experience is a critical part of the evidence system and plays a significant role in how we view and understand children, young people, and their families. The influence this has on our approach to our work, and impact on practice, policies, processes, and systems all contribute to achieving better outcomes for those we serve.

As a result of this work, a Children and Young People Engagement Advisor role was created thanks to funding provided by one of our generous philanthropic partners. Since the implementation of this project five children and young people have been engaged as youth consultants to provide integral insights on how OzChild can best empower children and young people to have their voices heard around the decisions affecting their lives.

A practice guide and learning module are set to be launched in the 2024 financial year alongside what might just be the very first app of its kind, one specifically designed for children and young people in care to bring to life our vision for empowerment and to capture, collate and integrate feedback into policy and practice.

During the year we strengthened our commitment to reducing the number of children and young people in residential care and prevent young people entering youth justice, securing funding to expand our Treatment Foster Care Oregon program, and undertaking work to develop a youth justice strategy.

Additionally, we established research partnerships as we began strongly advocating for a reimagined foster care system, aiming to create a system that genuinely sets children, young people, and carers up for success.

This vital system is under immense pressure, and at risk of extinction. Developing a more contemporised system, one that incorporates other models of support matched to the presenting needs of children and young people, and a system that provides a more enabling environment for carers is non-negotiable.

We must work collaboratively; peak bodies, governments, and agencies, to preserve this vital system and demand investment into evidence-based early intervention, prevention and professional care models that play a role in providing therapeutic support for children and young people.

From an external perspective, the publication of the findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study is poised to have a substantial impact on the efforts carried out within the child and family welfare sector. This is one of the most important studies ever conducted and gives us the evidence needed for change. I look forward to seeing state and territory governments rise to the challenges highlighted within this report, alongside those delivering crucial programs and services, to invest in social policy change to improve the well-being of Australians.

None of what we have achieved during the 2023 financial year would be possible without a talented, diverse, and highly committed workforce.

Strengthening our vital organisation is paramount to our success and developing practice that embeds our commitment to learning, advancing knowledge, and replicating what works across all that we do at OzChild is key to achieving the incredible outcomes we do.

Ensuring staff have access to resources, policies, and work instructions alongside contemporary, connected systems is something those working hard behind the scenes in support roles should be extremely proud of.

Our best work can only happen when we all contribute equally. And I see this every day, right across the organisation, whether that be those working on the frontline, directly with children, young people and families, or those who deliver business and administrative support, project management, planning and performance, people and culture, finance or marketing, each member of the OzChild team plays such an important role, set up for success by our leadership teams, program managers and team leaders.

I want to thank each and every one of you for the work you do.

I also want to acknowledge OzChild carers. Those across our foster care, kinship care, Treatment Foster Care Oregon program and Lead Tenant volunteer mentors. You all show up and you stand up, day in and day out for those who might otherwise have no one on their side.

912 children and young people were supported during the 2023 financial year through In-Home Care programs across VIC, NSW, QLD, SA, and ACT within 667 foster and kinship care households.

What is even more noteworthy is the outcomes that are achieved for the children and young people in your care. Children who get to grow up as part of a family, children who are connected to their culture and children who know you have their back. Your devotion is unwavering and absolutely deserves to be recognised.

The OzChild Executive Leadership Team and Board continue to provide exemplary leadership. Our organisation's success is a direct reflection of the collective efforts of these talented individuals, whose visionary thinking, strategic insights, and relentless pursuit of excellence have not only contributed to our success but have propelled us toward new heights of achievement.

I am excited for what 2024 and beyond will bring and could not be prouder to lead this wonderful organisation alongside each and every member of the OzChild family.



Dr Lisa J. Griffiths
Chief Executive Officer

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



1

Supporting Children & Young People in Foster & Kinship Care

912 children and young people supported during the year through In-Home Care programs across VIC, NSW, QLD, SA, and ACT within 667 foster and kinship care households

2

Supporting Children & Young People in Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO)

85 accredited/authorised TFCO carers were active during the year

49 children and young people supported during the year, 18 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

83 per cent of children and young people graduating from TFCO had school attendance rates above 80 per cent at program closure

3

Strengthening Families, Keeping Children & Young People Safe

1,781 families supported through early intervention and prevention programs, an increase of 7% on previous year

295 (17%) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

85% of families who were active in treatment during the year completed the service they were engaged in*

4

Additional Support for Children, Young People & Families

1,500+ gifts distributed during December as part of the OzChild Wishing Tree

172 grants provided to carers and families with practical, physical and emotional support – average grant = **\$1,250**

233 Chance to Shine Scholarships awarded to children and young people an increase of 70% on the previous year. The average value being **\$761**

10 young people aged 16+ received support via the Pincus Family Foundation Scholarship to ease the financial burden of continuing their education at TAFE, University or an RTO

2022-2023

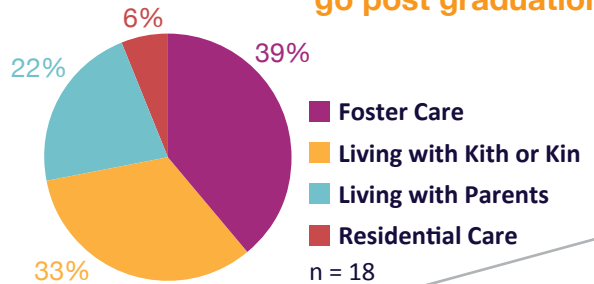


TFCO PROGRAM

18 children and young people **graduated** from TFCO program in 2022-23*

94% of children and young people who graduated from TFCO, remained in lower-level care arrangements

Where did the children & young people go post graduation



MST PROGRAM

30 new referrals were received for our MST program in VIC

100% of young people engaged in MST were **living at home** by the end of treatment



MST-CAN PROGRAM

19 families were active in our MST-CAN program and

11* families **successfully completed** treatment during the year

EARLY YEARS PROGRAM

98 families participated in OzChild's Early Years Program "Stepping Stones to School"

FFT-CW PROGRAM

601 families were active in our FFT-CW program during the year across NSW, VIC and ACT

191 families identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

FAMILY LAW SERVICES

446 families accessed support for Family Law Services from our teams across South West Victoria



Family Relationship Centre = 242



Regional Family Dispute Resolution = 40



Children's Contact Service = 71



Parenting Orders Program & Post-Separation Cooperative Parenting Program = 93



SAFECARE PROGRAM

Family Worx VIC team worked alongside **319 families** during the year which included families referred to our SafeCare program

93% of families engaged in SafeCare achieved at least a **60% reduction of safety hazards** in the home

100% of families had **improved Parent and Child/Infant interactions**

* many more children/young people/families continued with treatment into the new financial year

COLLABORATING TO ACHIEVE

unique outcomes

Forging and nurturing purposeful relationships, collaborating to achieve unique outcomes, and following the evidence to understand where we can make a bigger difference is not just part of our strategic goal to **grow for greater** impact, but is now part of the way in which we look to expertly tailor and target responses for different communities.

This approach has seen a successful partnership forged in Victoria alongside a consortium of five community service organisations to form the Putting Families First (PFF) program, which is now being delivered in Melbourne's Western Division and in the Goulburn Region.

This trial program is supported by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, and the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

In Brimbank/Melton OzChild leads the consortium alongside the Australian African Foundation for Retention and Opportunity (AAFRO); Charis Youth and Community; Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS).

PFF supports young people and their families who have been involved with the justice system and/or child protection and aims to build their skills and those of their families to improve family relationships, improve school attendance rates, maintain secure housing, connect to their community, training, and employment while reducing involvement in criminal activity and promoting pro social activities and peers.

The PFF service model is underpinned by drawing upon the practice (common) elements, the Ubuntu framework, Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing and other evidence-based approaches and practices while being relational and responsive to the individuals needs of young people and their families.

Family Led Practitioners are the key contact with young people and their families, and they are supported by eight broad interdisciplinary functions to support housing, family and domestic violence concerns, financial concerns, mental health issues, AOD, legal and community health.

This program, both as a concept and approach, holds a genuine belief that working with government in a multi-disciplinary, cross agency way has the potential to significantly improve the lives of families who intersect with the justice system. It is working hard to better integrate services across multiple sectors to improve outcomes for young people and their families.



“

It (the program) bypasses a lot of doors ... which is really good because you get sick of telling your story over and over ... a lot more doors (open than) would have been because normally I've just (been) slapped in the face.

- Putting Families First service user

”

BUILDING OUR PRACTICE

to strengthen our impact

Supporting a consistent approach to practice, one that is evidence-informed was the driving force behind the design, development and implementation of OzChild's National Practice Framework during the 2023 financial year.

A first for our organisation, the framework was developed in collaboration with the Parenting Research Centre to strengthen our work with children, young people, and families. OzChild's National Practice Framework highlights nine evidence-based practice principles identified as core to the work undertaken across all our programs and services.

The framework will provide a shared language and way of working and will encourage staff to reflect on how we view and understand children, young people, the adults who care for them and other stakeholders- and the influence this has on our approach to our work, guiding the development of policies, processes and systems that will support the strengthening of practice across the organisation.

Why is the Framework important?

The Practice Framework provides a clear understanding of what underpins our work, and how this informs our interventions with children, young people, and the adults who care for them. It captures and articulates the evidence-based approach to our service delivery and provides foundations for induction, training, development, leadership activities, such as supervision, while being embedded across broad organisational processes and practices.

Importantly the framework has been designed to be used by everyone within the organisation, no matter their role. The Framework is not a prescribed way of working or doing, rather it provides a 'shared mindset' that frames thinking, attitudes and behaviours across all levels of the organisation.

The framework, in many instances, will articulate what we already do and allows us to build on it.

The framework will support best practices and the goals outlined in the 'Strategic Plan to 2026'



Developed in collaboration with



What are the Practice Principles?

The practice principles have been designed to be implemented together when working to achieve positive outcomes for children, young people, and those adults who care for them. Each practice principle is viewed as equally important and essential to our work. They should not be viewed as 'standalone' or applied in isolation.

While the term 'practitioner' is used throughout the practice principles the information provided can and should be used across all roles and levels of the organisation with careful consideration given to interpreting the content through the relevant context or 'lens' (e.g., practitioner, therapist, clinician, team leader, manager, executive, policy, systems).

The nine evidence-based practice principles were identified and form the basis of the work undertaken across all our services and programs.

9 Practice Principles



Child centred

We keep children and young people in focus in all our work and support their meaningful participation.



Family focused

We empower families to have a voice as we partner with them on their journey.



Strengths-based

Children, young people and families hold the necessary strengths and resources to achieve positive change.



Skill building for sustained change

Through building the skills and self-efficacy of caregivers, we support children and young people to thrive in safe, stable and nurturing home environments.



Culturally responsive and safe

Children and young people are connected to their family, community, culture and Country to support a strong sense of identity and belonging.



Inclusivity

We welcome and support individuals from diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities, and perspectives. It ensures that everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to participate fully without fear of discrimination or exclusion.



Trauma informed

We keep trauma in mind in all we do to support hope, healing and positive outcomes for children, young people, and families.



Evidence-based

We critically evaluate the evidence to act on 'what works' and achieve positive outcomes for children, young people, and families.



Collaborative partnerships

Working together with internal and external stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people.

These nine principles will assist us to continue to view families as capable of positive change and as having the necessary strengths and resources to reach their goals with individualised support, and take a genuine approach to learning from children, young people and families. This includes viewing them as experts in their own lives and holding valuable ideas and solutions to achieve positive change.

By engaging in reflection and embracing a culture of continuous learning, we strive to strengthen our practice and optimise the support we provide. These nine practice principles highlight our commitment to children, young people, and the adults who care for them.

The Framework also serves as a guide for practitioners when working with First Nations communities, individuals from diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities and perspectives, ensuring inclusivity, connection, and understanding.

Our Framework is a living document, which will be continually reviewed and updated as needed to reflect the needs of children, young people, and families. The Framework also supports the fantastic work of OzChild staff whose contribution is crucial to its success.

BRIDGING CULTURES

for a brighter future

OzChild is committed to actively supporting and taking steps towards achieving real reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Our relationships with First Nations Peoples are relevant across various aspects of our organisation, including the children and young people and families supported through our programs and relationships built with Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations as we strive to make a sustained positive difference in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Our Dhiyaan Mirri team support the work we are doing across our organisation as we focus on ensuring the children we support receive care that is both culturally responsive and safe, and the families we work with receive a service that meets their needs and respects their culture.

Key Highlights from within the organisation

Delivered face-to-face cultural training for all OzChild staff - The training, intended to build upon the introduction to cultural awareness provided through OzChild's online learning module Moments in Time, is designed as an immersive program through the shared experiences of OzChild's First Nations team members and aligned to OzChild's purpose.



17 training sessions delivered over five-month period in all jurisdictions where OzChild provides services



336 staff attended (90 per cent of employees)





Yarning Circle events delivered for OzChild carers in New South Wales and Victoria

OzChild's Dhiyaan Mirri team has worked tirelessly to ensure resources, information and support is available to carers to ensure they are setup for success when caring for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

We are focused on advocating for self-determination and supporting First Nations children and young people in care to develop their identity safely and appropriately, through contact with their families, friends, culture, spiritual sources, and communities.

The Yarning Circle events held for OzChild Treatment Foster Care Oregon carers, and general foster carers in NSW and Victoria aimed to bring people together in a safe and supporting space to learn, understand and ask questions so they feel confident, motivated, and able to give First Nations children and young people the very best experience they can during their time with an OzChild carer.



Completed our Second National Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan



Exceeded our goal to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, across OzChild to 5% by March 2022



Increased purchasing of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through our Supply Nation membership, supporting an inclusive economy which generates opportunities for First Nation Peoples.



19% of recipients of a Chance to Shine Scholarship were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. **\$30,365** in scholarships awarded to **45** First Nations children and young people.

STRENGTHENING OUR SUPPORT

of First Nations children and young people

One way in which we have been working to strengthen our support of First Nations children and young people in foster care has been the implementation of a First Nations Cultural Connections Review Tool and Panel to monitor and strengthen cultural safety in accordance with best practice standards.

The First Nations Cultural Connections Review Tool (the Tool) was developed to monitor and strengthen cultural safety in accordance with best practice standards. The Tool provides an opportunity to review the cultural support provided to First Nations families, provide an oversight on the progression of cultural support plans, and identify areas of non-compliance. Following the implementation of the Tool, The First Nations Cultural Connections Review (the Review) is conducted twice a year to provide an insight of the findings of the Tool for all First Nations children and young people (C&YP) who are being cared for within an In-Home Care (IHC) service at OzChild.

Why develop the review and panels?

Our review tool is made up of 40 cultural support indicators mapped to the Well-being Domains extracted from the [SNAICC](#) evaluation and Well-being Framework and [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles](#).



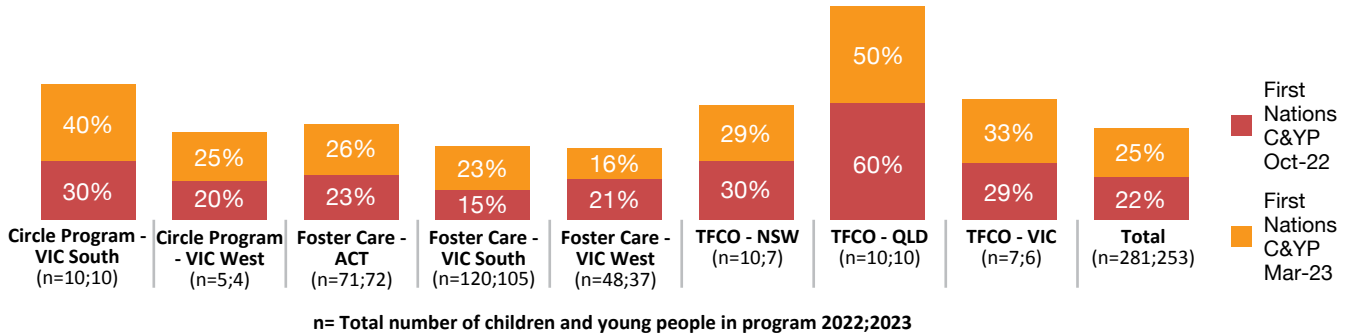
The review and panels are held twice a year for all First Nations children in OzChild's care and has been set up to:

- 1** Ensure First Nations led decision making, by having First Nations staff and community members as part of the decision-making process for First Nations children and young people.
- 2** Review the cultural support being provided by our in-home care services to First Nations children, young people, and their families.
- 3** Provide oversight and guidance to staff on the progression of cultural support plans, including assisting in the removal of barriers to their progression.
- 4** Discuss the biannual OzChild First Nations Cultural Connections Review results, with a specific focus on areas of non-compliance and how these can be addressed.
- 5** Provide a forum for staff to seek support in any areas they identify regarding their work with First Nations children and young people.

Two reviews were held during FY 2023

October 2022 - First Nations children and young people made up 22 per cent of all children and young people in OzChild's in scope In-Home Care programs and in **March 2023** First Nations children and young people made up 25 per cent of all children and young people in OzChild's in scope In-Home Care programs.

Percentage of First Nations C&YP in OzChild's in Scope IHC Programs by Program/State



Our work with First Nations communities is also measured through carer and children and young people feedback surveys, along with responses collected from the First Nations Cultural Connections Review Tool and Panels.

OzChild staff have access to a range of resources through our intranet portal, including information on how to support children and young people via 'What you need to know' resources that reference Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, children with disability, CALD and LGBTIQ+ cohorts.

Key highlights from FY 2023 reviews

October 2022



At least **96 per cent** of First Nations C&YP were appropriately identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in all official and OzChild documentation



94 per cent of First Nations C&YP had a **completed** Genogram



81 per cent of First Nations C&YP had engaged with Aboriginal Education Support Officers



92 per cent of First Nations C&YP were in contact with siblings in care

March 2023



At least **97 per cent** of First Nations C&YP were appropriately identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in all official and OzChild documentation



92 per cent of First Nations C&YP had a **completed** Genogram



85 per cent of First Nations C&YP had engaged with Aboriginal Education Support Officers

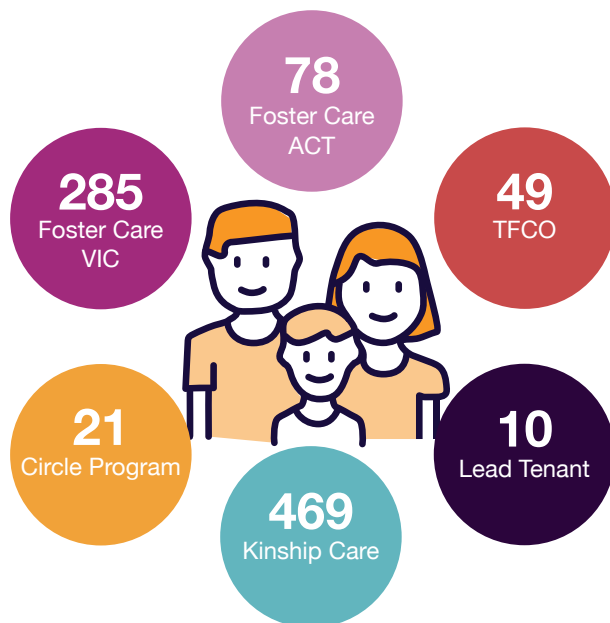


94 per cent of First Nations C&YP were in contact with siblings in care

IN-HOME CARE OUTCOMES

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), across Australia 45,393 children and young people were cared for in out-of-home care 30 June 2022. OzChild provides support to children and young people in home-based care settings through our Foster Care, Kinship Care, Lead Tenant and Treatment Foster Care Oregon programs in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia. In the ACT we are proud to deliver foster and kinship care services as part of the Barnardo's consortium.

Between 1 May 2022 - 30 April 2023 **912 children and young people** were cared for thanks to the OzChild village of carers, which comprised of **946 accredited and active carers across 667 carer households**¹



Each year, we assess the effectiveness of our programs through a comprehensive analysis that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data. For the 2022-23 reporting period, information was gathered through the use of validated outcomes tools: the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the Progress Achievement Test. Additionally, outputs such as placement data, the achievement of minimum requirements in Numeracy and Literacy, and insights gathered from the annual Feedback Surveys contribute to this assessment. The findings serve to inform and improve the work we do.

Measuring our outcomes is a crucial component in appraising the effectiveness of our In-Home Care initiatives. This assessment ensures we are making strides towards improving the lives of children and young people, while also aligning with our primary goals of enhancing **Permanency**, **Safety** and **Well-being**.

¹ Carer demographics did not include Foster Care ACT.



Permanency

OzChild aims to ensure that C&YP, if unable to live with their birth families or kin, are placed into planned and stable long-term or permanent care arrangements with families who can provide for their safety and well-being.



Safety

OzChild ensures the safety of C&YP in their care so they can live lives free from family violence, and child abuse and neglect.



Well-being

OzChild employs a variety of measurement tools to assess a broad range of outcomes relating to child and family well-being. These outcomes encompass areas such as education, emotional and physical health, identity, as well as social and cultural connections.



Stability: Children and young people are in stable placements

16

Children & young people had a Permanent Care Order granted



93%

of children & young people in foster care had two or less placements



Physical Health: Children and young people are supported with their physical health needs

95%

Proportion of C&YP who described their physical health as either 'Very good' or 'Good'



Education: Children and young people are engaged in and achieving in education

Results for C&YP in Foster Care Vic, Circle Program and Kinship Care Case Contracting Service

74%

Proportion of C&YP achieving national literacy benchmarks



75%

Proportion of C&YP achieving national numeracy benchmarks



Connection: Children and young people are supported to safely and appropriately maintain connection with family



Safety: Children and young people can live lives free from family violence and child abuse and neglect

94%

Proportion of First Nations C&YP who were in contact with their siblings in care



88%

of C&YP reported feeling completely safe where they live





During the year **152** households attended one of **48** foster care information sessions in VIC



29 households were accredited as new carers during the year



481 unique enquiries received about becoming a foster carer



567 people enquired about becoming a Treatment Foster Carer

What carers have told us

Understanding how carers are feeling in regard to the level of support they feel they receive; their training and development needs and overall satisfaction with their experience with OzChild is important to us and their ability to provide quality care. Surveying carers has provided valuable insight into areas where we could improve and how better to support those caring for our most vulnerable.



82% of carers reported feeling very satisfied or satisfied with the overall support and communication they receive about the child in their care.



95% of kinship carers reported feeling very satisfied or satisfied with the information provided by OzChild to meet the needs of the child in their care.



82% of carers felt OzChild 'Always' or 'Mostly' consulted them about decisions that would affect themselves, the child, or their family.



"We have always had **caring workers/staff** who have supported us throughout our fostering (over 14 years)."

"OzChild **support** has been amazing, I feel **respected** by the staff"

"I have been **so happy** with the support I have had through OzChild west. The team are **caring and thoughtful...**"





COULD YOU CARE?

Find out more

fostercare@ozchild.org.au

WHAT DOES FOSTER CARE

look like in 2023?

For some time, OzChild and other child welfare organisations in Australia and around the world have been facing a severe shortage of our most precious resource – our carers.

Previous years have consistently seen a higher number of carers exiting than entering the system. With escalating housing and cost of living pressures post-pandemic - carers increasing their hours of work, reducing their availability, and altering their care preferences. With more new carers open only to emergency and respite placements, the true decline in carers is under-represented as it does not factor in the decreasing number of short and long-term foster homes.

The foster care system in Victoria faces the alarming threat of extinction as early as 2026 if current trends persist, and in other states and territories, the landscape is not dissimilar.

Evidence tells us that home-based care produces the best outcomes for children - it is crucial that we take action to preserve this vital service. In 2023 OzChild launched a series of initiatives aimed at better understanding and addressing the challenges and needs of our carer network.



Pre-2020 Primary Carer Cohort



Average age of primary carer



54.3% accredited households with current placement



37% of households with primary carer at home during the day (not working full time)



18% of primary carers over 60 years of age

2020-2023 Primary Carer Cohort



Average age of primary carer



30.7% accredited households with current placement



13% of households with primary carer at home during the day (not working full time)



52% No biological children

The Changing Face of Carers

The pandemic led to a surge in carer recruitment, with a staggering 44 per cent of OzChild's accredited carer households being enlisted since 2020. Consequently, we have seen a demographic shift in carer profiles which has broad implications for how OzChild recruits and supports its carer network. This necessitates a re-evaluation of our approach to ensure that we continue to provide the best support for both children and their carers.



Increase in % of men as Primary Carers in OzChild's Western Division Foster Care program



70% employed within caring/public services professions or as stay-home parents. Other 30% office jobs or trades

What OzChild is doing

Understanding the Problem

Research by the Foster Care Association of Victoria, and our own research via a series of focus groups with carers, uncovered systemic and financial obstacles as the primary factors impacting our carer network. Carer needs reported include:



Practical Support

Responsive case managers, increasing the capacity of carers through training & skills building, establishing connections with other carers

Financial Support

Increased carer allowances / less out-of-pocket costs and faster reimbursements

Placement Support

Access to therapeutic and specialist services to meet the needs of children, support with family contact

Emotional Support

Access to respite care and support for the well-being of carers

Cultural Support

Support to nurture a child's connection with culture & Country

To understand factors that influence the behaviour of potential foster carers, OzChild has also enlisted the help of Monash University's BehaviourWorks and The Demographics Group to examine the motivations, beliefs and barriers to fostering in Australia from a behavioural science lens. We look forward to sharing the findings from this important research with you in 2024.

Supporting our Carer Network

OzChild has commenced a range of initiatives aimed at supporting carers. These include:

- Developing flexible training programs matched to the needs of carers throughout their carer journey, being mindful that a significant proportion of carers have under 3 years of experience and work full time.
- Carer capacity building through delivery of our Tuning in to Kids and Tuning in to Teens programs, teaching skills in emotion awareness, regulation, and coaching to promote emotional development in children.
- OzChild Carer Village peer support initiatives including the Buddy program, and piloting new evidence-informed peer programs such as the Mockingbird Family Model, connecting foster and kinship homes with other local carer families within a local community 'constellation' supported by an experienced carer.
- Financial support continues through our philanthropically funded programs such as Chance to Shine and Thriving Families that help relieve the financial burdens of carer families and provide valuable opportunities for children.

We will continue to be led by evidence and deliver what works – providing preventative interventions to help children stay safely at home and professional models of care matched to the presenting needs of children and young people.

Being a Courageous Voice for **Change**

OzChild will continue to use the insights from our analysis to seek support and cooperation from the sector, including peak bodies and government agencies, in line with our commitment to being a courageous voice for change. We will continue to advocate to create a more enabling environment for carers, championing financial, emotional and systemic supports and removing the barriers that pose ongoing challenges within the sector.

We all have a role to play in re-imagining the foster care system in Australia.

EMPOWERING FAMILIES

to improve safety for children and young people

All children and young people hold the inherent right, as stipulated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to be safeguarded from any form of abuse and neglect (AIFS 2017). Instances of child maltreatment are correlated with a wide range of adverse long-term health and developmental outcomes extending into adolescence and young adulthood (Strathearn et al. 2020).

These include deficiencies in cognitive development, reduced social functioning, challenges obtaining employment, decreased educational achievements, mental and physical health challenges, substance misuse, and reduced life expectancy (AIFS 2017; Strathearn et al. 2020).

OzChild's Prevention & Strengthening Families services aim to empower families by nurturing and strengthening relationships to ultimately create a safer home environment that ensures the well-being of children and young people. This is achieved through early intervention and prevention programs that target families experiencing vulnerability that may lead to (or are likely to lead to) child protection intervention due to the risk of child abuse and neglect.

These families experience factors such as mental health challenges, family violence, substance misuse, disability, homelessness, and intergenerational trauma, that heighten the probability and significance of abuse and neglect.

The programs use evidence-based, and evidence-informed decision-making principles to address these risks and enhance protective factors, aiming to improve parenting capacity, enhance family functioning and outcomes for children and young people.



Permanency

OzChild services support keeping families **together** to ensure continuity of **care arrangements and relationships**.



Safety

OzChild ensures the physical and psychological safety of children and young people in their care so they can **live free from child abuse and neglect**.



Well-Being

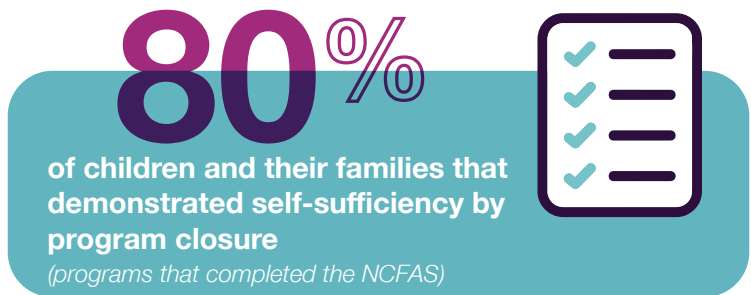
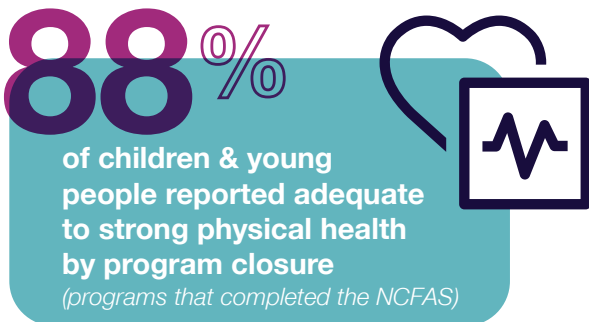
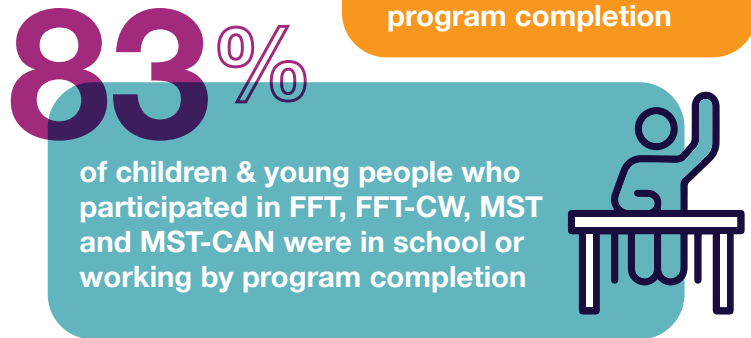
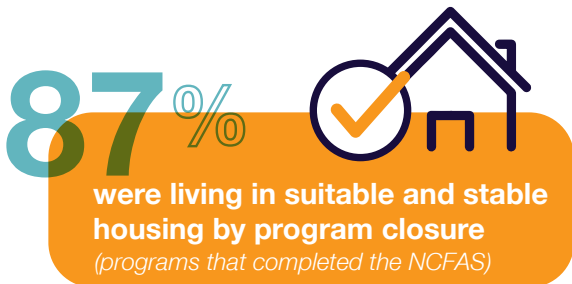
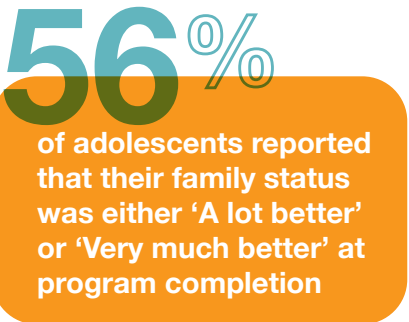
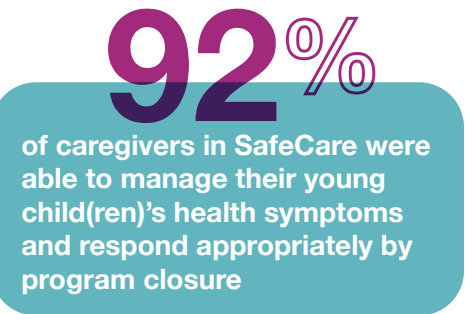
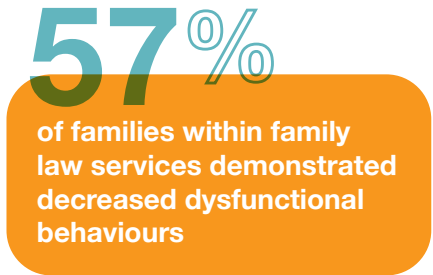
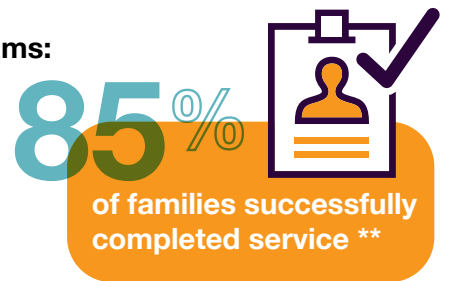
OzChild services ensure that children and young people are **healthy and happy**, and their parents are **mentally well** and able to meet their **child(ren)'s needs**.



During the year 1,781 families were supported in the following programs:

Program	Total No. of Referrals
Children's Contact Service	71
Family Relationship Centre	242
Family Worx	319
Functional Family Therapy	65
Functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare (ACT Gugan Gulwan team)	53
Functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare (ACT Together team)	74
Functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare (NSW)	392
Functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare (VIC)	82
Intensive Therapeutic Program	203
Multisystemic Therapy	30
Multisystemic Therapy - Child Abuse & Neglect	19
Parenting Orders Program & Post-Separation Cooperative Parenting Program	93
Regional Family Dispute Resolution	40
Stepping Stones to School	98
	1,781*

*17% of families participating in these programs identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



** Out of families who concluded service in the reporting period

SPOTLIGHT ON FUNCTIONAL

Family Therapy

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a well-established and highly effective therapeutic approach designed to address the complex dynamics within family systems and promote positive change. Originally developed in the 1970s, FFT has since undergone numerous adaptations and enhancements to better suit the evolving needs of diverse populations and various clinical settings. This versatile and evidence-based therapy has gained recognition for its success in addressing a wide range of issues within families, including substance abuse, delinquency, interpersonal conflict, and more.

FFT can be used to:

- 1 Prevent child abuse and neglect:** FFT helps families build better communication, problem-solving skills, and coping mechanisms, which can reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.
- 2 Reunify families:** When children are removed from their homes due to safety concerns, FFT can be used to support families in addressing these concerns and working towards reunification.
- 3 Support families with children in foster care:** For families with children in foster care, FFT can be used to address the underlying issues that led to the child's placement and to improve the family's functioning.
- 4 Reduce juvenile delinquency:** FFT has been effective in working with adolescents who have behavioural issues or are involved in delinquent activities, which can ultimately reduce the involvement of children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

OzChild is currently delivering Functional Family Therapy in New South Wales to address adolescent violence in the home. In Victoria, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory an adaption of Functional Family Therapy that focuses on family preservation is helping families navigate the challenges of our ever-changing society.

Functional Family Therapy Child Welfare (FFT-CW) is an evidence-based therapeutic approach that focuses on improving family dynamics and communication to address problems and challenges within the family system. It is designed to help families with various issues, such as substance abuse, delinquency, family conflict, and child maltreatment.



Decades of research shows that FFT is effective for children in child welfare settings. FFT significantly reduces out-of-home care placements into systems such as child welfare and foster care.



Different families have different sets of circumstances, so the counselling services are individualised to fit the specific needs, values, strengths, and challenges of children and their families.



FFT-CW addresses various factors that put families at risk of child welfare system involvement, including substance abuse, mental health issues, environmental influences, and prior system involvement.



FFT-CW Approach

Many families often struggle to cope with external pressures that affect their underlying motivation for change. FFT-CW Therapists address this uncertainty by consistently revisiting the goals and challenges faced by caregivers. This approach aims to foster alignment and cooperation at every stage of the intervention process.

Interventions are developed to shift the factors or symptoms which drive the caregivers' struggle to care for their child(ren) safely. Families work with therapists to design interventions that increase developmentally appropriate responsibility and encourage continuous effort. The interventions are reviewed and measured from session to session, and from week to week in a layered system of interpersonal and systemic work involving family, therapist, supervisor, and the whole team to ensure interventions are adhering to the FFT model but also are fitting the family context, culture, traditions, and ecology to achieve sustainable change.

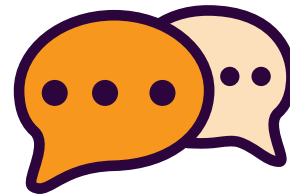
A Family's Journey

The FFT-CW program encompasses distinct stages or phases that encapsulate the family's progression addressing referral behaviours while ensuring sustainability.



STAGE 1 – ENGAGEMENT

Therapist engages with the family to establish credibility and trust, demonstrate respect for beliefs, feelings, and culture, and bring key players in the family into therapy.



STAGE 2 – MOTIVATION

Give the family a voice to tell their story, instil hope for change and get the family excited about making changes.



STAGE 3 – RELATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Making sure the therapist understands the family's relational and behavioural patterns, and what are the functions of the problem behaviours.



STAGE 4 – BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

The family learn new skills to improve family interactions and to address the referral behaviours (communication, coping skills, conflict management, family and domestic violence, parenting, etc)



STAGE 5 – GENERALISATION

The family apply learnings and changes to other situations. The family and therapist also develop together a sustainability plan.

FFT-CW FACILITATING CHANGE

In 2016 OzChild began delivering Functional Family Therapy Child Welfare (FFT-CW) in partnership with the Victorian Government, followed by implementation of the program in New South Wales in 2017 in partnership with the Department of Communities and Justice. The program expanded in 2018 to support First Nations families in the ACT, in partnership with Gugan Gulwan.



Since implementing this evidence-based model, **1,319 families** have successfully completed all phases of the program, **303** of which identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.



During the 2023 financial year more than **600 families** were referred to the program, of which **173** were First Nations families.

The goal of FFT-CW is to increase family safety, reduce family distress, reduce further child safety reports and prevent children from entering the out-of-home care system. Functional Family Therapy in child welfare aims to provide a supportive and effective intervention that can help families overcome their difficulties and create a safe, nurturing, and stable environment for their children.

Many families often struggle to cope with external pressures that affect their underlying motivation for change. FFT-CW Therapists address this uncertainty by consistently revisiting the goals and challenges faced by caregivers. This approach aims to foster alignment and cooperation at every stage of the intervention process.

Interventions are developed to shift the factors or symptoms which drive the caregiver's struggle to care for their child(ren) safely. Families work with therapists to design interventions that increase developmentally appropriate responsibility and encourage continuous effort. The interventions are reviewed and measured from session to session, and from week to week in a layered system of interpersonal and systemic work involving family, therapist, supervisor, and the whole team to ensure interventions are adhering to the FFT model but also are fitting the family context, culture, traditions, and ecology to achieve sustainable change.



Helen's* story

Helen's family were referred to OzChild's FFT-CW program in New South Wales after a domestic violence incident whereby her husband strangled her resulting in her two eldest children (aged 16 and 15) having to intervene to save her life.

During the process of intervention, dad physically assaulted their 16-year-old son and was incarcerated for two years.

The FFT-CW program worked with Helen and her children together. Initially the family were reserved and quiet during therapy, but with the use of engagement and motivation skills, the OzChild therapist was able to break through with the family using football as an analogy as the family played football.

The therapist began building rapport with each member of the family, aligning each with different positions such as forward, play maker, coach, assistant coach, and team mascot. Helen's 16-year-old son felt guilty for dad being incarcerated, all children had a strong relationship with their father and blamed Helen for the current circumstances.

Together, the family worked on family bonding, assertive communication, emotion regulation and problem-solving skills to provide space and safety to understand domestic violence and the impact on themselves and the family.

Both the 16 and 15-year old's school attendance was poor, Helen explained COVID-19 as the reason as the children did not apply themselves when learning from home. During lockdowns, the 12-year-old chose to attend school every day, he said he would rather be at school than at home.

Nine-year-old Bailey* was constantly in trouble at school for fighting with other students and swearing at teachers.

Working through the FFT-CW phases, Helen's ability and confidence grew, and she was able to better support Bailey at school. Helen met with the school and school counsellor, which resulted in having him formally tested and he began receiving trauma counselling from the school counsellor.

Introducing this intervention resulted in a shift in Bailey's behaviour at school, increased attendance and a decrease in suspensions.

In the final phase of therapy when working on hypothetical examples with Helen's permission, the family worked on accountability and responsibility for using aggressive behaviours or language, and they spoke about dad living elsewhere upon his release from prison.

Helen and her kids also worked on the difference between assertive, passive, passive/aggressive and aggressive communication styles. The family were able to identify and use assertive communication skills to communicate their needs with each other without the use of violence.

Each family member learned how emotions felt in their body, how to recognise triggers that activated their emotions and how to implement a breathing skill to manage overwhelming emotions. The family learned how to recognise and manage anger and how to be accountable for their behaviours.

At the beginning of therapy, the children often fought with each other at home and with peers at school. By the end of therapy, the children were actively playing and supporting each other, often helping each other complete chores, negotiating tasks and activities.

OzChild's FFT-CW team supported Helen to seek help from 1800RESPECT regarding individual trauma counselling and support to relocate her family before her husband was released from prison. Having ended the relationship with her husband, Helen remained supportive of the children maintaining a relationship with him and the family worked on understanding and recognising safe and unsafe behaviours with parents who have separated. For example, the family worked on options using hypothetical examples of parents asking investigative questions, how to respond appropriately and where to seek support or guidance if feeling unsafe.

At the end of the FFT-CW treatment, the family had a genuine understanding of domestic violence and the impact on individual and family relationships. The family recognised different hypothetical scenarios regarding relationships and controlling behaviours, all family members understood options and safe people to contact regarding appropriate support if they felt they were in an unsafe relationship.

Helen's 15-year-old son remained at school, his attendance increased, and he set himself goals to apply himself to school to achieve a job in IT.

The 16-year-old left school and signed an apprenticeship with the goal of joining the Army once he completes his apprenticeship.

The house feels so good and fun now, we all laugh together, play games with each other and help each other. Before the house was always quiet, everyone kept to themselves, stayed in their own bedrooms and never talked, especially when Dad was home. Now all I hear is laughter and it makes me feel good.

**Names changed to protect the privacy of individuals. Story shared with consent.*

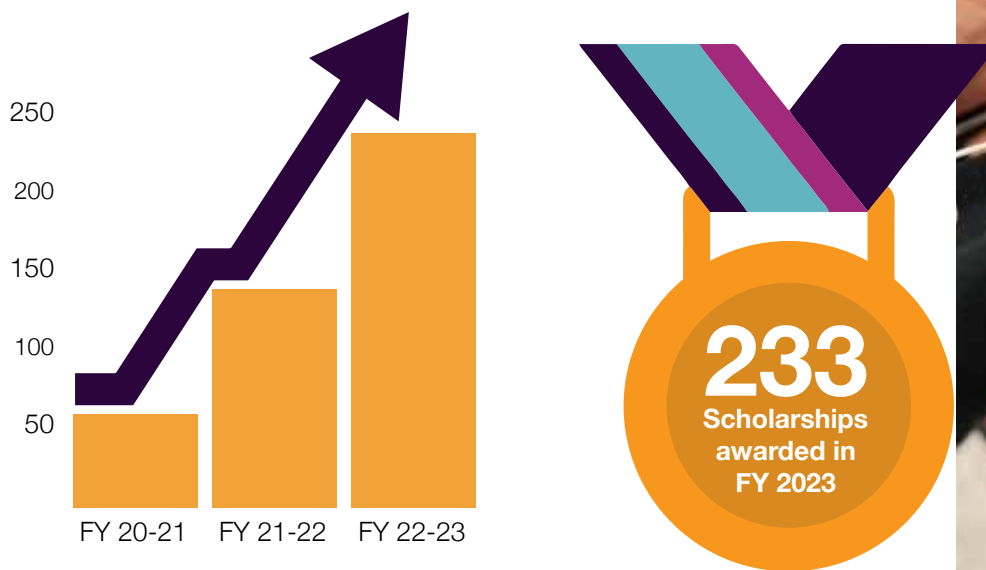
SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

for children and young people

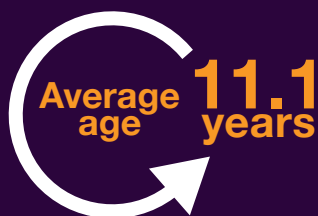
Founded in 2010, the [Chance to Shine Scholarship](#) program is made possible by the generosity of philanthropic, corporate, and individual donors. Its primary goal is to alleviate some of the financial challenges related to educational and training expenses for children and young people aged 5-18 who are connected to OzChild programs or services.

The ever-increasing cost of living saw another surge in applications for the program in FY2022-23, with many carer households seeking additional financial support. OzChild awarded a record-breaking 233 Chance to Shine scholarships to vulnerable children and young people linked to our programs – the most ever allocated in a financial year.

Chance to Shine Scholarships Awarded



2023 recipients were



Average scholarship value
\$761

male **52%** female **48%**



19.3%

of recipients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (n=45)

Schooling level

Primary school **54%**
Secondary school **45%**
Other **1%**

OzChild program

Kinship Care **12%**
Prevention & Family Strengthening Programs **73%**
Foster Care **15%**

Scholarships assisted with the cost of:

Public Transport to/from School

Out-of-school tutoring

Laptops

Swimming Lessons

Sports Club Membership Fees

Smart Phones

Play Therapy

Art Therapy

Music Lessons

Dance Lessons

Gym Classes

Dance Lessons

iPads

Exams

Reading Glasses

School Uniforms

School shoes

School Activities



The *impact* of receiving a scholarship

“

“He has loved the classes he is attending. I find they have given him more independence and helped him do an activity that he otherwise wouldn't have done.”
(Carer)

“Financial support for the parents has helped a lot. For the children, being more warmly dressed and feeling more accepted by their peers.”
(Educator)

”

“They have all commented how valuable having 1:1 support has helped them to understand concepts and working with fractions etc in maths. This will hopefully increase their knowledge and understanding and it is hoped that they will feel more confident as they learn.”
(Carer)

Feedback received from carers about the scholarship support

94%

of carers/parents had a much improved or improved feeling of optimism for the recipient's future

76%

report much improved or improved engagement at school

71%

report much improved or improved participation in sporting, community and cultural activities

82%

report carers having a decreased level of financial stress

Thank you to the funders of the
Chance to Shine scholarships in FY23

Austral Asia Freight
Equity Trustees workplace giving
Eric & Elizabeth Gross Foundation
FGF Charitable Fund
Howard McGearly Charitable Fund
Juno Fund
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
Youth in Philanthropy program
Matana Foundation for Young People

McGregor Family Fund
Milton Corporation Foundation
Newsboys Foundation
One Tomorrow Charitable Fund
Reginald Buenaventura
Stanley Black & Decker workplace giving
William Angliss Charitable Fund

Thanks

to the **Pincus Family Foundation Scholarship (PFFS)** program, 10 young people received financial support to pursue tertiary education or training during the 2023 financial year. By the end of 2023 the first of which will complete their studies, graduating in 2024.

Courses undertaken by PFFS recipients at a range of levels and studies in a variety of areas, include:

- Degrees in Education (both Primary and Secondary), Commerce and Psychological Science
- Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Cabinet Making
- Diplomas in Justice and Nursing.

We are enormously grateful for the ongoing support of the Pincus Family Foundation



Our Leadership Team and Board

Our Executive Leadership Team is focussed entirely on achieving better outcomes for children, young people and families, setting our workforce up for success, ensuring we can all achieve life changing results, while OzChild's Board of Directors are responsible for the overall governance of the organisation, including its strategic direction. All Directors act in an honorary capacity and are dedicated to seeing all children and young people are safe, respected, nurtured and reach their full potential.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



Dr Lisa J. Griffiths

Professor | Senior Fellow | Australian Graduate School of Leadership
Chief Executive Officer

Lisa brings over 30 years of senior leadership experience in non-government organisations and the public sector to her role as Chief Executive Officer of OzChild. Specialising in evidence-based services for vulnerable communities, Lisa holds Non-Executive Director positions with several Child Welfare peak bodies, and other key government committees.

Lisa is a Professor and Senior Fellow at the Australian Graduate School of Leadership and holds a Doctorate in Business Leadership and focuses on evidence-based ethical leadership. A Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Centre for Evidence-Based Management, Lisa is a passionate advocate for children's issues and strongly advocates for utilising effective strategies that benefit Australian children, young people, and families.



Michelle Van Doorn

Executive Director Services & Practice

Michelle is a dedicated advocate for the welfare of children, young people, and those who care for them. With a profound commitment to achieving positive outcomes in this vital sphere, Michelle stands as an impassioned and seasoned leader, driven by the pursuit of practice improvement and evidence-based solutions.

Having joined the OzChild family in 2005, Michelle oversees service delivery across multiple regions, including Victoria, NSW, ACT, Queensland, and in South Australia. In addition to her geographical responsibilities, Michelle also champions the practice portfolio for OzChild, further amplifying her impact on the organisation's mission.

Michelle's commitment to personal and professional growth is evident through her completion of an advanced women's leadership program, her engagement in leadership and executive coaching training, and her pursuit of development in evidence-based management for human service leaders. These achievements exemplify her dedication to furthering her expertise and making a positive impact within OzChild and the broader community.



Mark Powell

Executive Director Finance & Infrastructure

Mark is a dynamic and dedicated professional known for his astute financial acumen, strategic prowess, and unwavering passion for business development and commercial operations. With a career in child welfare spanning over 14 years at OzChild, Mark has demonstrated his deep grasp of the organisation's operational intricacies.

In his current capacity, Mark shoulders the pivotal responsibility of overseeing a multifaceted portfolio, which encompasses Finance, Investments, Information Technology, Contracts, Infrastructure, and Business Support functions within OzChild. His comprehensive understanding of the organisation's operational requirements places him at the helm of driving its financial sustainability and performance.

Mark's expertise extends to the crucial role of Company Secretary, where he provides invaluable support to the Chief Executive Officer and collaborates closely with the OzChild Board.

With a relentless commitment to excellence and a vision for the future, Mark's unwavering energy and strategic thinking has contributed significantly to the organisation's overarching success and growth.



Jarrod Edwards

Executive Director People & Performance

Jarrod Edwards, a graduate of the Williamson Community Leadership Program at Leadership Victoria, brings a wealth of experience to OzChild. With a background in engineering and expertise in regulating high-risk industries, Jarrod joined the OzChild team in 2017.

In his role, Jarrod oversees various critical functions including People & Culture, Planning, Project Management, Business & Services Intelligence, Innovation & Improvement, Safeguarding and Quality, Business Assurance, and Dhiyaan Mirri, OzChild's Bridging Cultures Unit.

Possessing a diverse skill set essential for fostering a resilient community organisation, Jarrod's profound grasp of corporate governance, government operations, and strategic planning empowers OzChild's workforce to achieve success. His strategic insights and ability to influence behavioural change play a pivotal role in the organisation's growth and impact.



Mevan Jayawardena

Executive Director Engagement & Experience

Mevan joined the OzChild team in October 2023 bringing more than 10 years experience in multi-disciplinary work across community and emergency services to OzChild as Executive Director Engagement & Experience. Mevan's background includes prior experience in global private sector organisations in financial services and technology and an MBA from INSEAD.

Mevan's greatest strength is his adaptability to embrace diversity, be it diversity of people, opportunities or challenges. As an analytical thinker and a decision maker who empowers and enables individuals and teams, Mevan stands out as an impactful leader at OzChild and in the sector.

Prior to OzChild, Mevan has led transformational programs centred around organisational strategy, communications and business development, including government funding strategies, social enterprise development and digital enablement. Currently, Mevan is in the final stages of completing the Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA) through the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZOG).



Alison Dall Stosic

Director, Office of the Chief Executive

With decades of experience in project management and executive organisation, Alison is the right-hand person to our Chief Executive Officer and provides invaluable support to the OzChild Executive Leadership Team (ELT) in her role as Director, Office of the Chief Executive.

Joining OzChild in 2016, Alison ensures Lisa, and the members of the ELT are set up for success, particularly in the areas of stakeholder management, planning, reporting and internal OzChild communications.

BOARD MEMBERS



Helen Maxwell-Wright AM
President

Helen Maxwell-Wright holds it as a profound privilege to be a dedicated member of the OzChild Board, where she actively contributes to the betterment of the lives of vulnerable children, young people, and families. Helen joined the OzChild Board in 2001, taking on the role of President in 2015. Currently, Helen serves ex officio on all Board Committees and exercises leadership as the Chair of the Board Executive and Brand Committee.

Throughout her professional career, Helen has seamlessly bridged the realms of both purpose-driven and commercial sectors. Her diverse portfolio includes involvement with organisations such as Firefly Health and leadership roles in the JDRF State Leadership Group. Moreover, she lends her expertise to several advisory boards, including the Australian Medical Council (SEAC), MBS Taskforce, Medicines Australia (Panel of Chairs of the Monitoring Committee), Australian & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, and the College of Intensive Care Medicine.

Helen is widely recognised for her contributions and leadership. She is a Fellow of the AICD (Australian Institute of Company Directors) and has received numerous accolades throughout her career. In 2001, Helen was awarded the Centenary Medal for her remarkable service to health and politics. Most notably, in 2021, Helen was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia, a prestigious recognition that honours her significant contributions to child welfare, diabetes research, and her outstanding commitment to the community.



Stephen Fontana APM
Vice President & Chair
OzChild Cultural Competence Committee

Awarded the Australian Police Medal in the 2002 Australia Day Honours, Steve's career has been filled with many achievements since joining the force back in 1975 where he spent most of his career as a criminal investigator. Stephen joined the OzChild Board in 2014, where his experience and expertise in governance, strategic direction, information technology and communications systems and applications and management has been of enormous benefit to the organisation.

Promoted to the rank of Assistant Commissioner in charge of the State Emergencies and Security Department in early 2008, Steve then took charge of the North West Metropolitan Region in 2011, which delivers frontline police services for the largest region in the state.

Stephen was the Assistant Commissioner Crime Command from July 2012 until May 2018 when he commenced an appointment of Chief Information Officer (CIO) for Victoria Police and in a dual-role Steve also led the Information, Systems and Security Command (ISSC).

After 45 years of service to the community, Steve retired from Victoria Police in September 2020 and is now self employed as a management consultant.

Catherine Dunlop
Vice President



Catherine has over two decades experience in assisting clients addressing safety and compliance risks. She is a Partner at Maddocks lawyers, heading the Employment, Safety & People team in Melbourne and specialising in work and public health and safety. Catherine joined the OzChild Board in 2015 and shares the role of Vice President.

As one of Australia's leading lawyers in work health and safety Catherine brings this expertise to both the Board and Finance, Risk & Audit Committee.

Catherine advises clients on psychosocial workplace risks and investigations, safety compliance, workplace fatalities, inquests and Royal Commissions and has worked on a wide range of high profile and sensitive matters.

Catherine has undergraduate degrees in law and economics, and a Masters and specialist Graduate Diploma in Law. She is a Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne, teaching Workplace Health & Safety Law in the Masters programme. Catherine is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and serves as the Deputy Chair of the Emergency Services Foundation, and the President of the Health Complaints Commission Advisory Council.

Michael Wooten
FAICD FCPA
Treasurer



With over 25 years' experience in executive finance and leadership roles within the water, emergency services, and local government sectors, Michael worked in the water sector as a Chief Financial Officer for six years and was appointed Director of Finance and Administration at the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in 2001. Joining the OzChild Board in 2014, Michael's financial acumen has seen him succeed in his role as Treasurer of the OzChild Board for the past nine years.

Michael's work with the CFA in finance and leadership roles saw him take on the role of Executive Director of Business Services then Chief Executive Officer.

Michael served as Chief Executive Officer of the City of Whittlesea, prior to becoming Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Secretary of City West Water.

Michael is currently the Chief Operating Officer for Greater Western Water, and he holds undergraduate qualifications in accounting and computing, and a master's degree in business. He is a Fellow of both the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and CPA Australia.

Dr Angela Williams
Board Member



Angela joined the OzChild Board eight years ago and Chairs the Quality and Child Safety Committee.

A Consultant Forensic Physician with the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine and Senior Lecturer for Monash University, Angela has enjoyed a career in Clinical Forensic Medicine for over 20 years. She has provided forensic medical services to many

adult and child victims of sexual, physical, and family violence as well as having examined alleged offenders. This includes the preparation of medicolegal reports and the provision of evidence in court.

As an expert in her field, Angela has worked in advisory roles to the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Football League and Ambulance Victoria regarding the recognition and prevention of interpersonal violence. She has delivered international programs on behalf of DFAT and AusAid and has been a consultant to the Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service on suspected child abuse cases.

Angela's qualifications include a Masters of Forensic Medicine, an MBA, Masters of Public Health/Health Management and a Bachelor of Laws. She holds Fellowships with the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (UK) and the Faculty of Clinical Forensic Medicine (RCPA) for which she is the Chair.

Whilst it seems in professional bios that life is all about work, Dr Williams finds it a personal highlight to be part of a large family, welcoming foster children into her home. "We have been more than blessed to have met and cared for some incredible children and young people. It is a privilege to walk with them in a small part of their journey in care."

Dr Sandra Heriot

Board Member



Dr Sandra Heriot brings a broad range of experience and expertise in clinical, research, academic, public administration, and executive areas to her position on the OzChild Board. Joining the Board in March 2019, Sandra's professional success spans the health and human services sector in both private practice and consultative roles and has worked in NSW university and government positions.

Sandra holds an Executive Master of Public Administration and is a registered psychologist with an approved area of practice in clinical psychology and has a PhD and postgraduate degrees in psychology.

Sandra currently provides consultancy services and high-level advice to health and human services in government and non-government organisations.

Sandra's last government role was at the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (previously FACS) where she contributed to several key reforms including the NSW Government's Their Futures Matter and the Targeted Earlier Intervention program. She oversaw the design, commissioning and large-scale implementation of reform funded evidence-based programs and services.

Penny Beeston

Board Member



Throughout her career, Penny has worked with vulnerable children, adults, and families, initially as a special needs teacher before growing an extensive leadership career across a diverse range of for-purpose organisations in the disability sector. Joining the OzChild Board in August 2018 Penny has a background in education, management, and leadership, and has been

Leadership and Executive Coach Consultant and Director at Strategic Options since 2015.

Penny now helps people on leadership journeys across all sectors through her executive and leadership coaching programs and her leadership podcast, 'What Leaders Know', and serves as a non-executive Director on the Board of Sheldon College, a non-denominational K- 12 co-educational, independent school.

In the decade before establishing her own business, Penny was Chief Executive Officer of a complex statewide for-purpose organisation supporting children and adults on the Autism Spectrum and their families.

The Honourable Justice McEvoy

Board Member



The Honourable Justice Timothy McEvoy has been a Judge of the Federal Court of Australia since April 2022, he is also a Judicial Deputy President of the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Justice McEvoy joined the OzChild Board in 2021, sharing his legal experience with fellow directors.

Formerly a Judge of the Family Court of Australia, having been appointed to that Court in March 2019, Justice McEvoy had been a member of the Victorian Bar since 2002, taking Silk in 2016.

As a barrister his Honour practised in the State Supreme Courts, the Federal Court and the Family Court at trial and appellate level in Australian and international commercial law, in public law, and in major torts, including defamation. He appeared before boards of inquiry, disciplinary tribunals, the Coroners Court and State Supreme Courts in disciplinary matters, investigations, and criminal proceedings, as well as in financial and parenting matters in the Family Court of Australia. Immediately prior to his appointment to the Family Court he was senior counsel assisting the Aged Care Quality and Safety Royal Commission.

From 2010 to 2016 Justice McEvoy was on the Board of the Parenting Research Centre. He has been on the visiting faculty at the University of Virginia School of Law in the United States since 2001 where he teaches a course annually on contemporary issues in private international law.

Farewell to two OzChild Board Members

During the 2023 financial year two much loved members of the OzChild Board, Dr Angela Williams and Penny Beeston resigned from their voluntary roles after serving on the board for nearly 11 years and four years respectively.

Serving on the board since November 2012, Angela was Vice President for six years. With a sound understanding of the complexities of the child protection system, but most importantly the very real needs of children and young people as well as carers, because Angela was a foster carer herself, Angela's background in forensic medicine has helped many women, children, and families in crisis and ensured her success in the role of Chair of OzChild's Quality and Child Safety Committee.

Angela's interest in tangible programs that concentrate on the emotional and practical well-being of children has been invaluable as she has provided exceptional advice, shared her extensive knowledge, contributing so much to the organisation while at the same time being a wonderful friend and an inspirational role model to many.

Throughout her career, Penny Beeston has worked with vulnerable children, adults, and families, initially as a special needs teacher before growing an extensive leadership career across a diverse range of for-purpose organisations in the disability sector. Joining the OzChild Board in August 2018 Penny's background in education and management, and her exceptional leadership skills and experience were invaluable to the Board during her four-year tenure.

Penny and Angela will be enormously missed by the Board, and our Executive Leadership Team, and we wish them both the very best and every success in their professional and personal lives.





Financial Report

During the 2023 financial year support from federal, state and local governments, individual donors, community fundraisers, trusts and foundations and corporate partners made an incredible difference to the lives of many.

These partnerships are fundamental to our work, without others sharing our vision, and believing in the work we do, we simply could not support the many thousands of children, young people and families we do each year.

We extend our sincere thanks to all our supporters, we are extremely grateful to have you on our team.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The 2023 financial year has seen OzChild improve on its previous year financial performance, allowing us to continue leading the way in delivering innovative, evidenced-based services, with financial sustainability providing the foundation for these types of services, and for our services more generally.

The 2023 result was highlighted by an operating surplus of \$1,983,050 (2022: surplus of \$1,169,259) with a comprehensive surplus of \$2,469,058 (2022: surplus of \$1,242,814). The \$2,469,058 comprehensive surplus reflects an increase in operational income, increase in value of investment properties (\$470,000), and an increase in the value of OzChild's Managed Funds (\$771,344), due to a strong end to the year for domestic and international equity markets.

The increase in operational income reflects OzChild's success in a number of government tender opportunities, and in organic growth.

Financial year 2023 also saw OzChild's operating revenue increase by 13.99% (impacted by the increase in the value of OzChild's Managed Funds) alongside an increase in operating expenditure of 12.79%, which is linked to additional services being delivered.

OzChild's asset base has increased by \$2.47M in Financial Year 2023, a 9.82% increase from the previous year. This sees OzChild in a strong net asset position of \$27.60M (2022: \$25.13M).

On behalf of the Finance, Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee, I would like to extend my thanks to Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa Griffiths, and the finance team led very capably by the Executive Director of Finance and Infrastructure, Mark Powell, for their support and assistance during the year.

I am confident that OzChild's evidence-based approach, combined with a sustainable and innovative growth agenda, will allow OzChild to continue to offer quality service delivery for children, young people, families and carers.

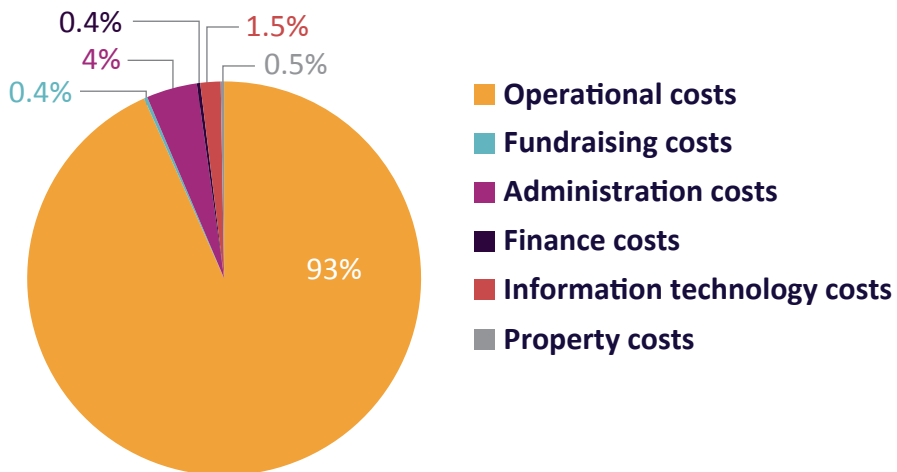


Michael Wootten
Treasurer

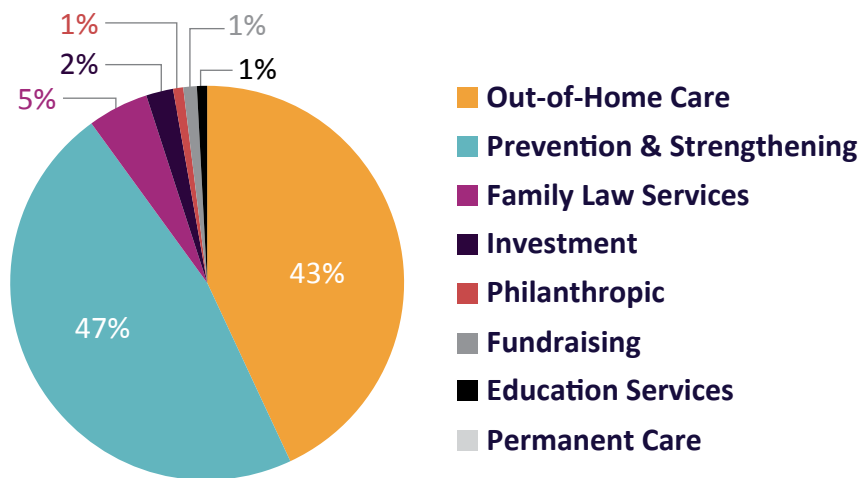


FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

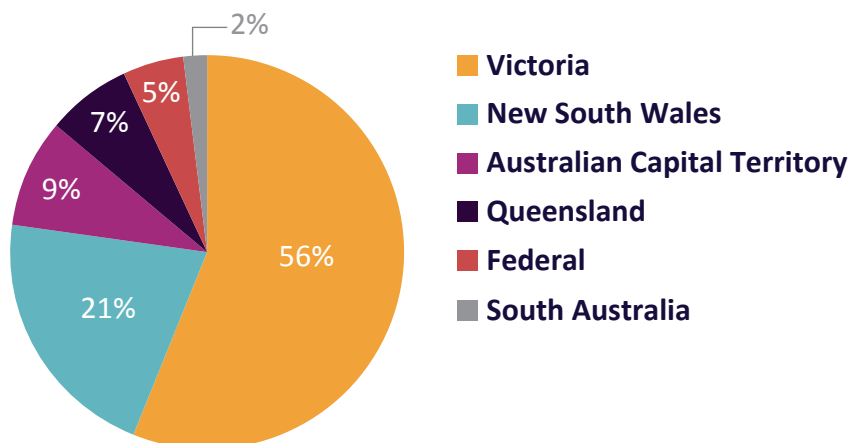
Operating Expenses



Service Mix by Income



Income by Jurisdiction



COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income as at 30 June 2023

	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Operating revenue		
Government grants and subsidies	57,721,639	50,745,261
Donations and fundraising activities	534,629	859,526
Investment income	1,273,963	1,029,480
Investment movements	771,344	-
Fees for service	2,262,751	2,022,413
Other income	356,701	541,458
Total operating revenue	62,921,027	55,198,138
Operating expenses		
Operational costs	56,790,941	49,484,335
Fundraising costs	222,492	157,614
Administration costs	2,538,560	1,666,117
Investment movements	-	1,561,689
Finance costs	220,749	262,602
Information technology costs	895,894	823,775
Property costs	269,341	72,747
Total operating expenses	60,937,977	54,028,879
Operating deficit for the year	1,983,050	1,169,259
Non operating revenue		
Increment on revaluation of Investment properties	470,000	30,000
Increment in endowment funds	16,007	43,555
Non operating surplus	486,007	73,555
Net surplus (deficit) for the year	2,469,058	1,242,814
Other comprehensive income		
Other comprehensive surplus (deficit)	-	-
Total comprehensive surplus (deficit) for the year	2,469,058	1,242,814

FINANCIAL POSITION

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023

This report includes a summarised version of the audited financial statements. A full version of the financial statements is available on our website at ozchild.org.au

	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,381,048	11,757,065
Receivables	1,538,428	1,142,180
Financial assets	6,605,775	353,499
Other assets	482,349	421,818
Total current assets	15,007,600	13,674,562
Non-current assets		
Financial assets	16,521,741	15,536,837
Property, plant and equipment	2,673,113	3,676,577
Investment property	4,670,000	4,200,000
Other assets	626,411	197,792
Right of Use Assets	4,343,115	5,013,315
Total non-current assets	28,834,379	28,624,521
Total assets	43,841,979	42,299,083
Current liabilities		
Provisions	3,493,923	3,496,535
Other liabilities	2,930,753	4,564,965
Payables	4,589,041	3,333,604
Right of Use Lease Liabilities	1,525,535	1,545,399
Total current liabilities	12,539,252	12,940,503
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	286,160	170,223
Right of Use Lease Liabilities	3,412,828	4,053,677
Total non-current liabilities	3,698,988	4,223,900
Total liabilities	16,238,241	17,164,403
Net assets	27,603,738	25,134,680
Equity		
Endowment funds	18,435,316	18,419,309
Accumulated surplus (deficit)	9,168,423	6,715,371
Total equity	27,603,738	25,134,680

EASING THE COST OF LIVING

Welcoming a child or young person into your home, embracing them as a part of your family, and showering them with love and kindness represents an incredibly selfless gesture. Although many carers take the ups and downs in their stride, the significance of such an act cannot be overstated.

Throughout the year, we work hard to fill gaps in carer reimbursements provided for those caring for our most vulnerable, carers who work tirelessly putting the needs of the children they care for above their own to provide a safe and loving home for them.

OzChild’s Thriving Families funding plays a crucial role in supporting our Village of Carers. Introduced in 2020, the primary objective is to provide additional support to caregivers by offering financial assistance for practical needs, physical necessities, and emotional well-being support for all household members.

Having a team of supporters means we can provide carers with much needed financial support to help pay for essential items like prescription glasses for children, driving lessons for young people, childcare or after-school care fees. Donations and grants we receive make it possible for us to help with household repairs, medical expenses, and other out-of-pocket expenses related to caring for a child or young person in foster or kinship care.

Making ends meet is getting harder for so many people, and those caring for our most vulnerable are really feeling the pinch.

During the 2023 financial year



172 applications for funding were approved



The average grant size

Breakdown of support provided

Community Domain

Supports community connections, events and activities for the OzChild Village of carers.

Emotional Support

Provides access to debriefing and counselling services for carers, and emotional support services for children and young people.

Practical Support

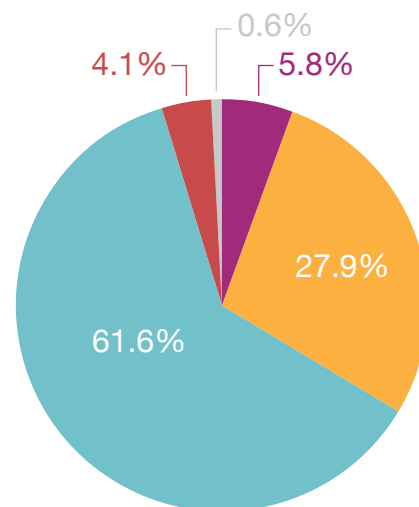
Aims to remove practical barriers to ongoing care placements and offsetting daily hardship (e.g. household items, small home modifications, access to vehicles).

Training

Facilitates access to a wider range of training for carers (e.g. dealing with trauma, child development, managing challenging behaviours, grief and loss).

Administration support

Supports the administrative duties associated with the brokerage service.



Each year Thriving Families beneficiaries are anonymously surveyed so we can understand the impact of the support provided. Since receiving support through Thriving Families:



75% of carers reported that their **sense of feeling valued** was improved or much improved.

18%
↑

This reflects a 4% increase from the previous year (71% in 2022) and more significantly, an **18% increase since 2021** (57%).



63% of carers reported that their **capacity to meet the needs of children in their care** was improved or much improved.

13%
↑

This rate remains consistent with the previous year, whilst still upholding a **13% increase since 2021** (50%).



75% of carers reported that their **case manager's understanding of their needs** was improved or much improved.

39%
↑

This demonstrates an 18% increase since 2022 (57%) and more significantly, a **39% increase since 2021** (36%).

“It has **made a huge difference** by reducing the worry over finding money to pay large, unexpected bills at a time when my ability to work was impacted by the need to care for a child with significant needs.”

“It was very thoughtful to receive funding for a washing machine the same week my husband hurt his back at work. Being that my hubby was in a new job he only had 2 days sick leave, but needed 2 weeks off work. As you can imagine a washing machine is hard to be without as a family of 6. Thanks to Thriving Families the financial pressure was really reduced.”

“It **helped me** to care for my granddaughter better with less stress and worry.”

THANK YOU!

Thriving Families is made possible thanks to the generosity of philanthropic and corporate partners, and individuals including Booran Motor's Cars4Kids, Brian & Virginia McNamee Foundation, Collie Foundation, Collier Charitable Fund, Eric & Elizabeth Gross Foundation, Flora & Frank Leith Charitable, The Tudor Family and the William Buckland Foundation.

TOGETHER WE CARE



FY2022-2023 saw an outpouring of support from community fundraisers that left us humbled and truly grateful. The year was marked by a plethora of creative and generous fundraising activities that warmed our hearts and made a significant impact on our vision to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families. Let's take a journey through the outstanding efforts of our supporters, highlighting just a few of the events that defined the year's fundraising success.

Dave Collins, a familiar face in his community, took the opportunity to support OzChild by having a haircut and shaving his beard. Dave's family and friends had been nagging him to lose his wild hair and beard for years. While this may seem like a routine event for some, Dave saw it as an opportunity to turn a haircut into an act of immense generosity. Dave pledged to shave his beloved beard to raise funds for OzChild. Thanks to his family, friends, and even strangers, Dave not only managed to get a new look for himself, but he raised

\$5,750 for OzChild.

In the spirit of giving back to all local communities, OzChild was voted both first and second place at the **Grill'd Local Matters Jar campaign** at the South Yarra, Frankston, Toowoomba, Tuggerah, Yarraville, Rouse Hill, and McArthur Square restaurant locations, receiving a total

donation of \$2,100

Birches Early Learning Centre in Bunyip organised a fun **"Pyjama Week" fundraiser**, that saw children and educators host a bake sale in their cosiest pyjamas to raise funds to help children in foster and kinship care. Through their collective efforts, a **total of \$300** was raised, reminding us that generosity and compassion really can begin at an early age.

\$300

\$1,100

The **Rotaract Club of Whitehorse**, known for its devotion to community service, stepped forward with a generous donation. Their members, motivated by a shared desire to make a difference in the City of Whitehorse, **contributed \$1,100** in support of OzChild.

The **Australian Venue Co's** commitment to giving back to the community is exemplified through their ongoing support of OzChild. Their **monthly donations** through their **'Local Heroes'** charity partnership program is a testament to their dedication to social responsibility, helping us continue to improve the lives of at-risk children, young people, and families.

If you'd like to join our support crew by hosting a fundraising event or activity, we'd love to hear from you, email fundraise@ozchild.org.au

On behalf of OzChild, we extend our sincere gratitude to Dave Collins, The Rotaract Club of Whitehorse, Australian Venue Co, Birches Early Learning Centre in Bunyip and Grill'd for their support and commitment to OzChild throughout the year. Because of you, we can continue to build a brighter future for children and families supported by OzChild's programs and services, and we look forward to continuing to welcome others to the OzChild family.

13

Regular donors contributed

\$3,735



donated through Workplace Giving programs



379 donations were received via individuals or through fundraising activities

\$75,078.53

During 2022-23 everyday people, just like you, donated over

\$92,000!



OZCHILD WISHING TREE



The ozchild Wishing Tree

Thanks to the incredible generosity of numerous individuals and corporates, the OzChild [Wishing Tree](#) concluded another exciting year on a heart-warming note! Throughout November and December 2022, over 1,500 gifts were donated to OzChild through our online gift store, with countless additional donations received and dropped off at various OzChild office locations across the nation. This remarkable outcome ensured that no child, young person, or family went without a gift on Christmas Day, and for this, we are truly thankful.

Year after year, these gifts bring happiness to so many on Christmas Day, the children and young people supported through our programs and services across Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, the ACT, and in South Australia are made to feel special thanks to the generosity of strangers.

On behalf of the OzChild family, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who demonstrated such kindness during a season that can often be stressful and challenging. Words cannot express how much this means to us and to the families we support.

209 donations were made to
the online gift store valued at

\$16,820

DONATE



1,500+

gifts distributed to children
and young people

Amongst the many individuals, partners, and supporters who ensure the success of this annual appeal, we'd like to make special mention of those who not only showed their support during the year but opened their warehouses for our teams to collect gifts to distribute.

Air-Met Scientific Pty Ltd, APT Travel Group, Beaumaris Secondary College, Chelsea Primary School, Deloitte CBO, Edithvale Pre-School, Edithvale Primary School, Endeavour United Soccer Club, Focus Life, InLife Independent Living, Jasco Consulting, Lilydale Rotary Club, Little Acorns Childcare Mt. Martha, Lush, Nu-Pure Beverages, Papercut, PZ Cussons, Ray White Narre Warren, Seymour Whyte Constructions, Stanley Black & Decker, Texco Constructions, The Sixth Child, Vaughan Constructions, Victorian Building Authority, Vulcan Steel, and Windsor Management Insurance Brokers Pty Ltd .



THANK YOU!

Government

ACT Government Community Services Directorate
Australian Government - Department of Social Services
Australian Government- National Indigenous Advancement Agency
Department of Child Protection, South Australia
Family Safety Victoria
NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice
Queensland Government Department of Children, Youth Justice, and Multicultural Affairs
Victorian Government Department of Education Victoria
Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Victorian Government Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria

Peak Body Affiliations

AbSec – NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation
April Lawrie, Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People, South Australia
Association of Children Welfare Agencies
Australian Childhood Foundation
Australian Children Contact Services Association
Centre for Evidence and Implementation
Centre for Evidence and Research Evaluation
Family Matters Strategic Alliance
Family Relationship Services Australia
Foster Care Association of Victoria
Kinship Care Victoria
Meena Singh – Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young people, Victoria
PeakCare Queensland
SNAICC - National Voice for our Children
The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare



Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations/Services and Elders

Aboriginal Catholic Care Services
Aboriginal Counselling Services
AECG NSW
Aunty Elaine Taylor – Wemba Wemba / Bunnerong Elder
Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation
Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place
Bronwyn Ferguson – Kooramook playgroup, Gunditjmara Warrnambool
Butucarbin Aboriginal Corporation
Casey Aboriginal Gathering place
Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place
Dhauwurd-Wurrung Portland
Dreamtime Festivals QLD
First Peoples Health and Wellbeing Health Service
Gabrielle Walker - Winda mara - Willarn Playgroup
Gippsland & East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-Operative Ltd
Goodradigbee Cultural and Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement
Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative, Horsham VIC
Greater Western Aboriginal Health Service NSW
Gugan Gulwan Aboriginal Corporation
Gunditjmara Warrnambool
Healthy Koori Kids Monash Health
Indigenous Workforce Consultants
IUIH Institute for Urban Indigenous Health/Goodna Queensland
Judith Ritchie, Thookay-tya Keerna-Ke Coordinator
Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health/Ipswich Queensland
Kari Ltd
Kimberly Harridine, Kirrae Health Playgroup
Kimberwalli Aboriginal Corporation
Kirrae Whurrong Health Services
Kirrip House Aboriginal Corporation
Koolyangarra Child & Family Centre
LAECG Local Aboriginal Education Consultive Group
Legal Aid NSW
Link Up NSW
Marin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation
Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place
Muru Mittigar
Nairn Marr Djambana Aboriginal Gathering Place
Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation
RAJAC Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee
Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative
Spirit Dreaming Training and Education Solutions
Sydney Region Aboriginal Corporation
Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation
Two Worlds Consultancy, Shirley Young and Dana Schen- South Australia
Uncle Daryl Rose – Department of Education (VIC)
Uncle Peter Webster - (Kirrip House)
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service – Warrnambool Hub
Wadja Unit Heath Clinic at Royal Children’s Hospital
Warinwarin Child & Family Centre
Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association Aboriginal Gathering Place
Winda-Mara Heywood / Hamilton
Yenu Allowah Child & Family Centre

Evidence-Based Services Model Purveyors

Functional Family Therapy LLC
Life Without Barriers
MST Services
National SafeCare Training and Research Center
Treatment Foster Care Consultants

Service Affiliations/Initiatives

ACT Together
Baw Baw Latrobe Local Learning & Employment Network
Baw Baw Latrobe Local Learning Network
Baw Baw, Latrobe Valley and Wellington Valley Regional Youth Network
Bayside Peninsula Child & Family Alliance
Bayside Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership
Bayside Peninsula Orange Door (Support and Safety Hub) Governance and Operational Group
Beyond the Bell Great South Coast
Brimbank Melton Children and Families Alliance Strategic and Operational Group
Child Welfare Governance Group Eastern Metropolitan Region
Children & Family Services
Children's Contact Service Vic State Network Meeting
Family Law Pathways Network
Koorie Early Years Network
National Indigenous Australians Agency
Partnership Victoria FRC Managers Meeting
Shepparton Infant Intensive Response Panel
Smart Justice
Southern Melbourne Child & Family Alliance
Triple P Positive Parenting Program
Western Melbourne and Brimbank Melton Continuing Care Alliance
Western Melbourne and Brimbank Melton DET/DFFH Operation group

Local Government Authorities

Blacktown City Council	Glenelg Shire	Shire of Mornington Peninsula
Brimbank City Council	Ipswich City Council	Shire of Mornington Peninsula
Camden City Council	Liverpool City Council	Southern Grampians Shire Council
Campbelltown City Council	Melton City Council	Toowoomba City Council
City of Greater Frankston	Moyne Shire	Warrnambool City Council
City of Maribyrnong	Penrith City Council	Wollondilly Shire Council
Corangamite Shire	Richmond Valley Council	Wyndham City Council

Putting Families First Consortium Partners

Australian African Foundation for Retention and Opportunity (AAFRO)
Charis Mentoring
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)
YSAS Western Division -Youth Support Advocacy Services

Putting Families First Interdisciplinary Team Members

Good Shepherd – Financial Services
Legal Aid NSW
North West DVCAC
Orygen – Youth Mental Health
The Royal Children's Hospital – Child Psychology Services
The Salvation Army – Family Violence and Homelessness Programs
West Justice – Legal Support
Western Health – Nurse Co-ordination Services
YSAS – Drug and Alcohol Services

Supporters

AHA Consulting
Air-Met Scientific Pty Ltd
Alice Letitia D'Estere Taylor Estate, as managed by Equity Trustees
Antaeus Charitable Fund, a Charitable Fund Account of Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
APT Travel Group
Attfield Projects
Austral Asia Freight
Australian Higher Education Industrial Association
Australian Venue Co
Barr Family Foundation
Bass Strait Charity Fund
Beaumaris Secondary College
Bendigo Bank
BGL Corporate Solutions
Birches Early Learning Centre - Bunyip
BlueNRG
BNI-Peak Performance
Booran Motors
Brian & Virginia McNamee Foundation
Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation
BRM
Cablex Pty Ltd Aircraft and Components Bentleigh East
Capture Point Media
Cetrola Legal
Chelsea Primary School
Collier Charitable Fund
Commonwealth Bank – Endeavour Hills
Compass Community Care
Connecting Up
CPA Australia-Education Team
Dave Collins
Deloitte CBO
Dentsply Sirona Pty Ltd
eClicks
Edithvale Pre-School
Edithvale Primary School
Edward Davies Trust
Endeavour United Soccer Club
Equity Trustees
Eric & Elizabeth Gross Foundation
FGF Charitable Fund
Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
Focus Life
Food Link Shepparton
Fortress Melbourne
Franchise Council of Australia (FCA)
Fully Promoted Mount Waverley
George Warman Charitable Fund, managed by Equity Trustees
Greater Shepparton Foundation
Grill'd Macarthur Square
Grill'd Rouse Hill
Grill'd South Yarra
Grill'd Toowoomba
Grill'd Tuggerah
Grill'd Yarraville
Grill'd Frankston
Harvey Patterson Fund
Henry Brough Smith Charitable Trust
HWA Insurance Brokers
Hyundai Mobis
InLife Independent Living
Isabella Stooke
Jasco
JB Hi-Fi
JBWere Charitable Endowment Fund (DOG Foundation)
John Lambrick Trust
Joseph Kronheimer Charitable Fund, as managed by Equity Trustees
Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust
Little Acorns Childcare Mt. Martha
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation Youth in Philanthropy program
Lush Retail Ltd.
Mandy & Carl Soderlund
Matana Foundation for Young People
McGregor Family Fund, a sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation
Media Partners
Meg & Frank Sims Fund, a charitable fund of Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
Microsoft
Mills Oakley Brisbane
Milton Corporation Foundation
Moonland Group
Moray & Agnew
Mums Supporting Families in Need
NCR WIN
Newsboys Foundation
Nu-Pure Beverages
O'Brien Electrical Carrum Downs
One Tomorrow Charitable Fund, a sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation
OzChild Op Shop Volunteers
Papercut

Paul Edward Dehnert Estate
Paul John Office National
Perpetual
Pincus Family Foundation
PZ Cussons Australia Pty Ltd
R.E Ross Trust
Ray White Narre Warren
Reginald Buenaventura
Rick & Elizabeth Tudor
Rohan Iqbal
Rotaract Club of Whitehorse
Rotary Club of Lilydale
Royal Blend Barber Shop Campbelltown
Schepisi Communications
Septimus Jones & Lee
Seymour Whyte Constructions
SOPE
Stanley Black & Decker workplace giving
Telstra
Teska Carson

Texco Constructions
The Collie Foundation
The Shannon Company
The Sixth Child
The WashRoom
The Yorke Family Foundation, as managed by Equity Trustees
Vaughan Constructions
Verve Travel Management
Victorian Building Authority
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Social Club
VisitUs
Vulcan Steel
William & Bessie Lennox Fund, as managed by Equity Trustees
William Angliss (Vic.) Charitable Foundation
Windsor Management Insurance Brokers
WorkSafe Guardian

OzChild Village of Carers

Every year we are fortunate to have the unwavering support of numerous carers who collaborate closely with us, fostering a true partnership. These individuals play a vital role in assisting with both internal and external events and activities, as well as in raising awareness about the crucial role of carers. They generously volunteer their time, share their invaluable expertise, and share their own personal stories.

Carers from within our foster care, kinship care and Treatment Foster Care Oregon programs actively participated in various capacities throughout the year, such as serving on carer accreditation panels, participating in carer consultation groups, and contributing to staff recruitment panels. Additionally, carers offered their expertise during pre-accreditation training and informational sessions held throughout the year. Our Treatment Foster Care Oregon carers also played a pivotal role by providing indispensable support for promotion and recruitment efforts.

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every member of the OzChild village of carers who made significant contributions throughout the year. Your unwavering support has truly made a profound and positive impact on the outcomes we have achieved.

OzChild Op Shop Volunteers

For more than three decades, the OzChild Op Shop has held a cherished position within the Highett community. This enduring presence has been made possible by the dedicated efforts of a remarkable group of local volunteers who not only extend a warm welcome to shoppers but are also eager to engage in friendly conversations.

Every transaction at the Op Shop contributes significantly to the work we do, and the funds raised help provide additional support and essential services to families in need.

GET INVOLVED

For more than 170 years we have been focused on creating brighter futures for children and young people, but we can't do it alone, we need a support crew of people like you, who care as much as we do to help make a difference.

Your support makes it possible for us to deliver our life-changing programs as we strive to make sure no child, young person or family gets left behind.

Fundraise

One of the best ways to support OzChild is by fundraising. Whether you want to run a marathon, hold a bake sale or organise a casual clothes day, no matter how big or small your fundraiser is, every little bit will make a real difference to the lives of young Australians. Visit ozchild.org.au for information about organising a fundraising event.



DONATE

Show your care by making a tax-deductible donation today. ozchild.org.au

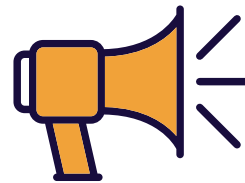
Become a regular donor

Monthly donations are so important to us and are greatly appreciated. By committing to a regular monthly donation, no matter the size you are helping us plan our work with greater certainty. Monthly giving is simple, easy and makes a long-lasting difference. You nominate the amount you would like to give, then once a month it will be debited from your bank account or credit card. All donations of \$2 and over are tax-deductible.



CONTACT US

Let us help you with a fundraiser to continue the important work we do. fundraise@ozchild.org.au



SPREAD THE WORD

Word of mouth is the greatest gift . . . tell people about OzChild's work, share OzChild's posts, tweet your support, advocate for children and young people, advocate for what works.

Join our regular giving army, email us today to find out more fundraise@ozchild.org.au

In Australia more than 45,000 children and young people need a safe place to live. Do you know someone who would make a great foster carer? Maybe you've considered becoming a carer yourself? We are currently looking for carers to support at-risk children and young people in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia.



Follow us on social media



Find Out

about becoming a foster carer today fostercare@ozchild.org.au



NATIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE

ozchild.org.au

PO Box 1312

South Melbourne

T: (03) 9695 2200

F: (03) 9696 0507

E: hello@ozchild.org.au