



ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025



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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 Owners/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.

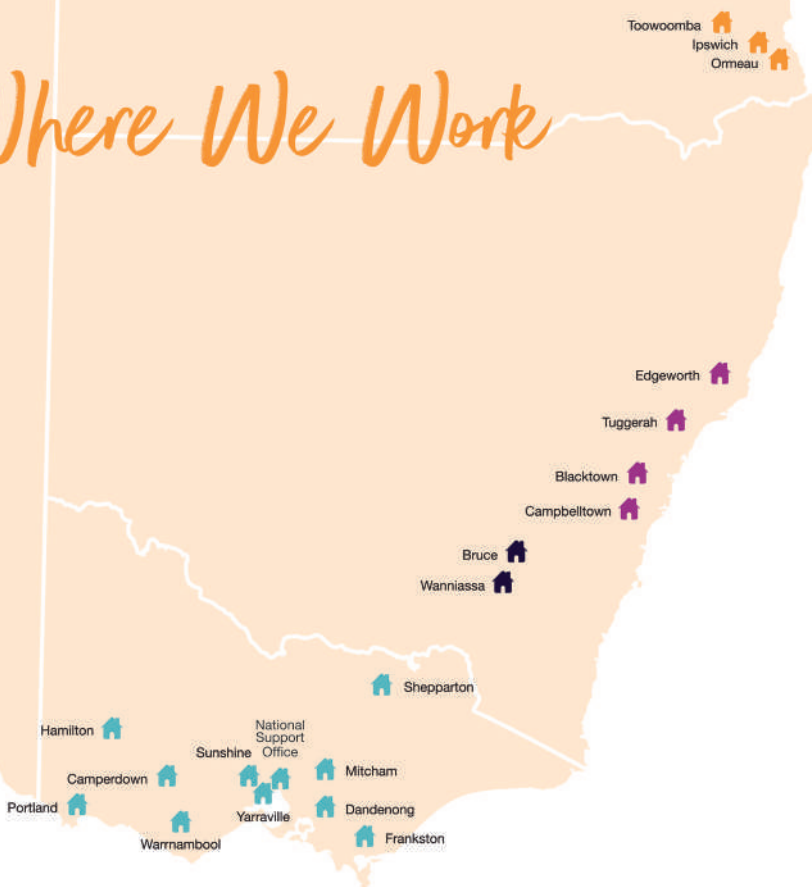
We are committed to supporting children, young people and families who are experiencing significant challenges, by strengthening families, providing healing, and preventing abuse and neglect.

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



National Support Services

ACT

- Foster Care
- Functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare (FFT-CW)
- Functional Family Therapy - Youth Justice (FFT-YJ)

NSW

- Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- FFT-CW
- Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN)
- Treatment Foster Care Oregon - A (TFCO-A)
- Treatment Foster Care Oregon - C (TFCO-C)

Qld

- Foster Care
- Kinship Care
- TFCO-C

Vic

- Access to Early Learning
- Family Law Services
- Family Support Programs
- Family Wox
- FFT-CW
- Foster Care
- Family Preservation and Reunification Service (FPR)
- Integrated Family Services
- Kinship Care
- Kinship Care First Supports
- Koorie Early Years Network
- Lead Tenant
- Multisystemic Therapy (MST)
- On-call Foster Care (Retainer)
- Orange Door Safety & Support Hub
- Permanent Care Funding
- Putting Families First
- SafeCare
- School Focused Youth Services
- Stepping Stones to School
- Targeted Care Packages
- TFCO
- Therapeutic Foster Care

A Message From Our President



The past year has been one of progress and purpose for OzChild as we continue to place children, young people, and families at the heart of all we do.

A major milestone during the year was the development of our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which commenced in September 2025.

This plan is a strong expression of our commitment to reconciliation and self-determination, and I commend the dedication and leadership demonstrated by every member of the RAP Working Group in bringing it to life.

I am especially proud of the organisation's steadfast commitment to self-determination for First Nations people, an effort I see realised as a member of the Cultural Competency Committee. The leadership demonstrated by our Executive Leadership Team, together with the oversight of our Director, National Aboriginal Practice & Partnerships, has been inspiring. This initiative is not only forward-thinking but also evidence of the advocacy and courage required to create lasting change.

The cost-of-living crisis is hitting families hard, particularly those already vulnerable. This makes OzChild's support programs such as Chance to Shine, Thriving Families, and Mockingbird more vital than ever. These programs fill the gaps where government and systems cannot always reach, offering practical relief, connection, and hope. To our partners and supporters: your ongoing investment in these initiatives is crucial, and I urge you to continue walking alongside us.

Early intervention remains critical when responding to the needs of our littlest people, with research showing that educational disadvantage can begin as early as age two. Through our Stepping Stones to School and Access to Early Learning programs, we are closing this gap by supporting children and families at such a formative stage, laying the foundations for lifelong learning. The growing number of families referred to these programs highlights the urgent need for continued investment to shape brighter futures for children.

I extend my congratulations to our Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa Griffiths, for her tireless advocacy at a federal level to improve support for carers and for ensuring OzChild's investments are guided by evidence. Under her leadership, we have achieved significant outcomes under our Delivering What Works Strategic Plan, with notable achievements in advancing self-determination, developing innovative care models, and strengthening our workforce.

This year, we farewell Catherine Dunlop from the Board after 10 years of remarkable service. Catherine's expertise in governance and work health and safety has shaped how we respond to challenges and supported the wellbeing of staff, carers, and the children we serve. On behalf of the Board, I extend our deepest gratitude to Catherine for her extraordinary contribution and wish her well for the future.

As we approach our 175th anniversary in 2026, we remain future-focused as we work together to shape the next chapter in OzChild's proud history.

Advances in artificial intelligence and technology will play a role in streamlining and improving efficiency, but we must also be prepared to embrace professional care models that reduce reliance on residential care and create sustainable alternatives.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our staff, carers, donors, funders, partners, our Executive Leadership Team, and my fellow Board members. It has been a privilege to witness the dedication, resilience, and innovation that define our work, qualities that give me great confidence and optimism as we approach our 175th year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Maxwell-Wright AM". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Helen Maxwell-Wright AM
President

As we approach our 175th anniversary in 2026, we remain future-focused as we work together to shape the next chapter in OzChild's proud history.



A Message

From Our Chief Executive Officer



This year has been one of both challenge and progress as OzChild continues to pursue our vision: giving children and young people every opportunity to thrive in safe, nurturing homes. It has also been a year that demanded stronger advocacy, deeper partnerships, and bold innovation, because the challenges before us cannot be solved by doing things the way they have always been done.

The facts are confronting. While the number of children entering care has remained steady, the number of active foster carers has declined by 21% since 2017. Today, almost 45,000 children across Australia are in out-of-home care, yet fewer carers are available to provide the family-based environments they desperately need.

In response, I have worked alongside colleagues in the [National Foster Care Sustainability Group](#) to shape the *Future of Foster Care* campaign – a national effort advocating for three essential reforms:

- **A coordinated carer recruitment and retention strategy,**
- **Stronger financial and practical supports for carers, and**
- **Targeted assistance for children with complex needs through a Gold Health Care Card.**

These reforms would transform the lives of children and carers alike. The campaign gained traction this year with the creation of the Parliamentary Friends of Foster Carers and Children in Foster Care, a bipartisan group of MPs and Senators committed to championing this cause.

I am grateful to co-convenors Sarah Witty MP, Senator Maria Kovacic, and Kate Chaney MP for their leadership.

The urgency is undeniable. In Queensland and Victoria, the number of children entering residential care continues to rise as foster care placements fall. If this trend continues, residential care will overtake foster care within the decade – a future that would see more children growing up without the stability and belonging of a family home.

At OzChild, we see the human cost of this every day. A system increasingly reliant on residential care is one that has lost its balance, it's costly, reactive, and too often fails to meet children's long-term needs.

We must act now. Governments and sector partners need to reinvest in what works: recruiting and supporting foster carers, strengthening prevention and reunification services, and scaling evidence-based models that keep children safely connected to family, culture, and community. The path forward is clear, but it requires courage, collaboration, and commitment to reimagine a system that truly serves children.

There is a better way. Evidence shows that home-based, therapeutic, and culturally led care delivers stronger, long-term outcomes for children, restoring relationships, supporting education, and building skills for life. Just as importantly, prevention and early intervention can keep families safely together, reducing the need for children to enter care in the first place.

OzChild continues to lead the way in delivering and expanding evidence-based programs across Australia.

- In September 2024, we celebrated the 100th graduation from our Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) program since its launch in 2016 – a testament to its transformative impact. We also welcomed Australia's first TFCO Consultant, solidifying our leadership in scaling this world-class model.
- In Queensland, we expanded into foster care and kinship care, complementing TFCO in the south-east.
- In the ACT, OzChild established itself as a standalone foster care agency, with 62 carers transferring to us from the ACT Together Consortium.
- Our partnership with Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal Corporation has enabled us to deliver Functional Family Therapy – Youth Justice, supporting young people to break cycles of offending and re-engage with education and employment.

Our investment in prevention and early intervention continues to be vital. Too many children and young people are being caught in cycles of disadvantage and, increasingly, youth justice involvement. Locking up 10-year-olds is not a solution. What works are evidence-based, therapeutic approaches like Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and collaborative, whole-of-family initiatives like the Putting Families First (PFF) consortium in Victoria.

Through MST, we are reducing offending and anti-social behaviour and re-engaging young people in education and employment pathways. Since launching MST in 2019, OzChild has successfully supported over 100 young people and families. In the 2024–25 financial year, 85 per cent of young people had no arrests in the final month of treatment and 82% reported improved peer associations.

And through PFF, we are working in partnership with agencies like Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), Youth Support Advocacy Services (YSAS), Australian African for Retention and Opportunity (AAFRO) and Charis Mentoring to tackle intergenerational disadvantage, address drivers of criminal activity, and keep families safely together.

These programs show what is possible when services are evidence-driven, coordinated, and family-centred.

A defining priority this year has been advancing our reconciliation journey and supporting the self-determination of First Nations people.

- **In Queensland, we are deepening our partnership with Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement Co Ltd through program delivery, while also supporting the transition of care and support for children, young people, and their carers into their hands as a community-led organisation.**
- **In the ACT, we are working alongside Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal Corporation.**
- **In Victoria, our partnership with VACCA continues to strengthen as we carefully plan the transition of Aboriginal children and their carers to VACCA's Nugel program.**

These partnerships reflect a profound shift: **solutions must be community-driven and culturally led.**

Our goal to no longer receive government funding or referrals for the care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families within five years is ambitious, but the progress being made is a testament to the leadership of our Bridging Cultures Unit, Executive Directors, and ACCO partners.

Internally our commitment to strengthening our vital organisation saw the launch of our *Evidence-Based Decision-Making* course this year, equipping staff with tools to make informed, ethical, and impactful decisions. This initiative strengthens our workforce and ensures we remain leaders in delivering programs that work.

Funding uncertainty has continued to challenge our sector, but our purpose has never wavered. Reform will demand courage and collaboration and OzChild is committed to leading that change.

None of this progress would be possible without the extraordinary commitment of those who walk alongside us. To every carer, staff member, volunteer, donor, and partner, *thank you.*

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Board and our President, Helen Maxwell-Wright, for the trust they place in me and their steadfast support of our investment in evidence-based programs.

I am equally grateful to our Executive Leadership Team for their tireless commitment, inspiring leadership, and unwavering dedication to innovation and continuous improvement.

Together, we will continue to fight for a future where every child grows up safe, supported, and surrounded by love.



Dr Lisa J. Griffiths

Chief Executive Officer

Outcomes & Impact

1,648 new referrals to our Prevention & Strengthening Families programs started during the year

2,544 referrals were active in prevention and strengthening programs

19% had a family member identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

EARLY YEARS PROGRAMS

111 NEW referrals and **178 ACTIVE** referrals participated in OzChild's Early Years Program **Stepping Stones to School**

57 active referrals for the **Access to Early Learning** service



MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY

53 young people were actively engaged with our MST program in Vic during FY24/25

22 families were active (or receiving support) in our **MST-CAN** program in NSW

82% of referrals to our **Family Worx** program in Vic completed treatment during the year

FFT-CW PROGRAM

1,037 referred families were receiving support from our FFT-CW program across NSW, Vic and ACT

This includes **546** new referrals in FY24/25

29% had a family member who is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

82% of clients within the **Integrated Family Services** program completed the service during the year



79 young people were accepted into our **FFT** program in NSW - **63%** completed treatment during the year

FAMILY LAW SERVICES

422 new referrals and **617** active referrals received support from Family Law Services teams across South West Victoria



Family Relationship Centre = 150
(224 active referrals)



Family Dispute Resolution = 91
(143 active referrals)



Children's Contact Service = 99
(136 active referrals)



Parenting Orders Program = 82
(114 active referrals)

HOME-BASED CARE

1,218 Children and young people supported through home-based care programs across Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT



97% of children and young people in OzChild home-based care arrangements reported feeling **'Completely safe'** where they live

72% of children and young people in OzChild home-based care arrangements reported that they felt **'Completely settled'** where they live now



THRIVING FAMILIES GRANTS



149 grants provided to carers and families for practical, physical, and emotional support

average grant = **\$981**

1,500 Individual family members benefited

1,500+ gifts

distributed at Christmas time for children and young people

251 Chance to Shine Scholarships awarded to children and young people

The average value being **\$732**



Celebrated 100 graduations

from our Treatment Foster Care program in September 2024

80% of First Nations children and young people felt the OzChild team recognises and respects their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture



Shaping a Bright Future Through Strategy and Action

This past year, we have continued to bring our strategic plan, *Delivering What Works*, to life. At the heart of every milestone is our commitment to leading the change we need to see, building a healthier, stronger, and safer society while delivering long-term cost savings to government.

These achievements reflect our determination to strengthen services, amplify voices, and ensure every child, young person and family has the chance to thrive.

A snapshot of what we
achieved in 2024/25



Advance what works

Responding to the Foster Care Crisis

At the forefront of our innovation is the development of a new professional care model, created in direct response to the sector-wide foster care shortage. Throughout 2024/2025, advocacy efforts were focused on building the model, identifying the areas of greatest need, and aligning with jurisdictions where government investment can drive real impact.

Embedding Inclusivity in Practice

Our commitment to continuous improvement was reinforced with the development of the Inclusivity practice principle, guided by an internal advisory board. As one of the nine principles within OzChild's National Practice Framework, this updated principle ensures fairness and full participation for all people—particularly those who have historically faced discrimination, disadvantage, or marginalisation based on identity or disability.

Investing in People and Leadership

The launch of Coaching Pods marked another milestone in our focus on staff learning and development. Through targeted coaching and tailored support, we are cultivating a culture of continuous growth and empowering leaders to uphold and advance best practice across the organisation.



Be a courageous voice for change

Advancing Self-Determination

Of significant note is the work undertaken to lay the foundations of our commitment to support self-determination for First Nations People which was announced in May 2025. While this initiative is focused on advancing our strategic goal of being a courageous voice for change, the hope is our actions over the next five years will result in significantly better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families while also serving as a catalyst for long-term reform across the child and family welfare sector.

Elevating the Voices of Children and Young People

Recognising the importance of children and young people having a greater say in decisions that affect their lives, a new training module on child participation was delivered to all In-Home Care staff in the final quarter of the year. This training strengthens our practice and reinforces our commitment to placing children and young people at the centre of all we do.



Grow for greater impact

Empowering Continuous Improvement

To support the efficient replication, rollout, and sustainability of high-quality, high-impact services, OzChild developed its first Business Improvement Framework during the year. This framework provides a self-service model that empowers teams across the organisation to identify and progress opportunities for improvement. Complementing this, a Business Improvement Register was established, allowing staff to log continuous improvement initiatives for review and prioritisation by the Planning and Performance team. Together, these tools strengthen OzChild's capacity for innovation and continuous learning. A test and learn phase of the framework will be completed in early FY26 to refine processes and ensure the framework delivers maximum impact.



Strengthen our vital organisation

Creating a Safe and Inclusive Workplace for All

OzChild's first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy was developed by an advisory committee made up of a diverse range of team members from within our support services teams and frontline staff. Following endorsement from the Board an implementation and action plan was created which will see the real work begin in FY26. Alongside this work after completion of the Rainbow Tick's How2 program OzChild will implement a plan specific for facilitating LGBTQIA+ inclusion.

Other Achievements

Introduction of Complex Case Panels	To support staff in any client-facing program at OzChild, who are working with people who are experiencing particularly challenging and/or complex issues.
Development of a data warehouse	Funded by the Department of Treasury and Finance and in Partnership with Murdoch Children's Research Institute this project aims to identify children and young people at risk of entering the youth justice system.
The Parent Daily Report (PDR) trial	Undertaken with a small number of carers to learn more about children and young people's challenging behaviours, and the stress carers experience in response to managing them. The PDR trial enabled targeted support to be provided for carers and children/young people to reduce behaviours that are causing stress and reduce the risk of placement disruption or breakdown.
Inclusive Employer listing with Diversity Council Australia	To be named on the Inclusive Employers list, organisations must exceed the National Index Benchmark across at least five out of six key areas: awareness, engagement, inclusive organisational climate, inclusive leadership, inclusive team and exclusion.

View OzChild's Strategic Plan to 2026 - 'Delivering What Works'

CLICK HERE







Growth is not the answer to *Closing the Gap*

OzChild Commits to Supporting the Self-Determination of First Nations People



In May 2025, OzChild made one of the most significant commitments in our history – to fully support the self-determination of First Nations people.

With the support of our Board and in consultation with our Director, National Aboriginal Practice and Partnerships, Chad Lofthouse, OzChild has committed that within five years we will no longer receive money, funds, or referrals from government for the care of Aboriginal children, young people, or families.

This decision is grounded in our recognition that Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) are best placed to deliver culturally safe, effective care and support. It also reflects our respect for the rights and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to determine their own futures. We know that keeping children and young people connected to culture, family and community is critical to their wellbeing and identity.

What This Means

- **OzChild will return funding received from governments for existing services supporting First Nations children, young people and families where a suitable ACCO is available.**
- **OzChild will not accept First Nations children, young people and family referrals and funding directly from governments without community and local ACCO endorsement.**

This commitment is aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the policy positions of SNAICC and other peak bodies, and the evidence-based solutions that have been developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations. It also strengthens OzChild's role as a courageous voice for change and a true ally in reconciliation.

Why This Matters

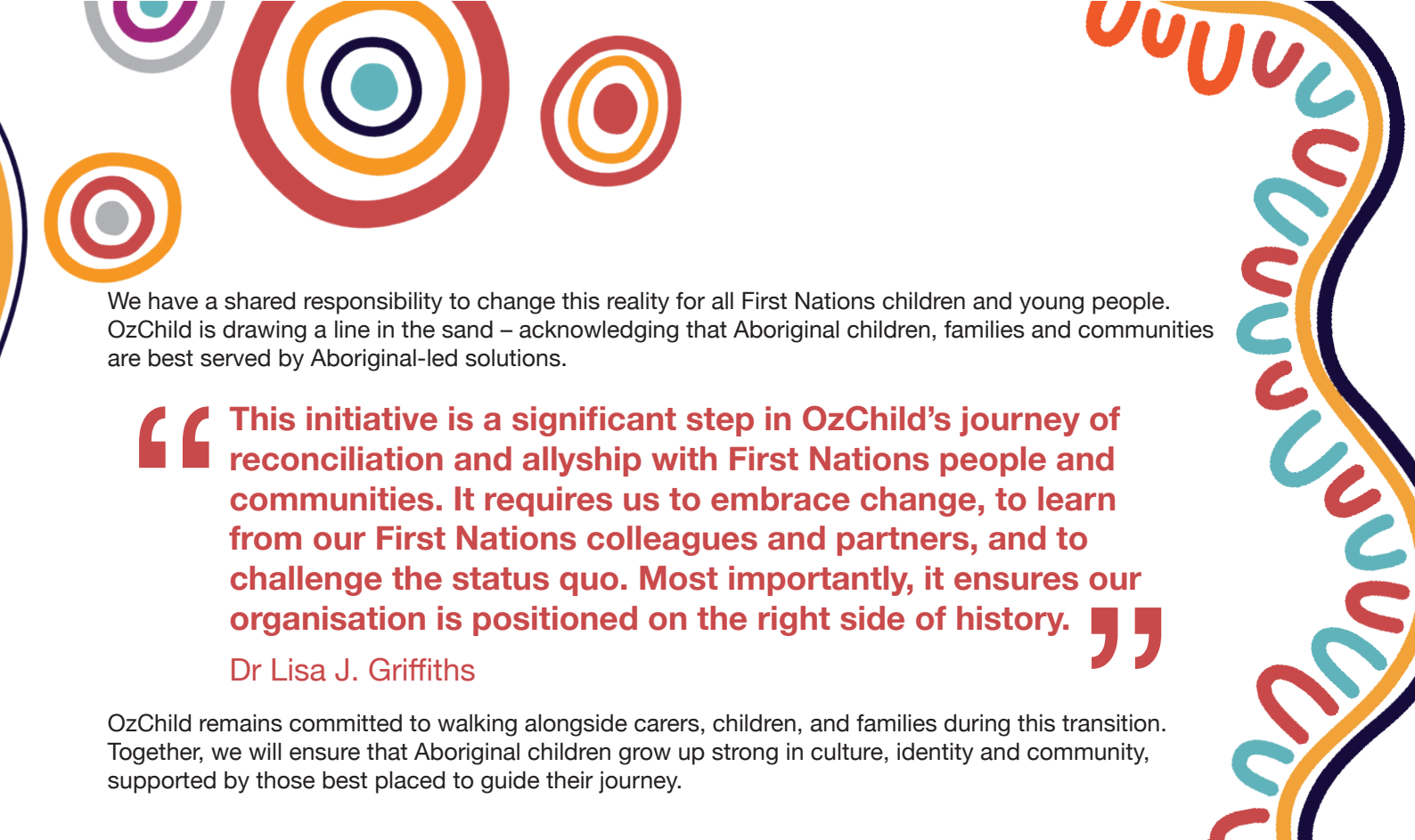
We recognise the deeply personal and vulnerable responsibility that carers take on - in particular, those caring for First Nations children and young people who navigate complex cultural responsibilities.

We are immensely proud of the culturally safe and respectful space OzChild carers provide for the First Nations children and young people in our care. Together, we have worked to grow our cultural responsiveness and have committed to honouring each child's right to grow up connected to their identity, community and culture.

Our commitment isn't just about respecting the rights of First Nations people; it's also because evidence shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who feel a strong sense of cultural identity and connection to their heritage, family, and community have better health, social, and emotional outcomes¹.

While it may be tempting to be content with our progress, it would be neglectful not to look at the bigger picture. Despite our best efforts and similar efforts of other leading organisations in the sector, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to be placed in out-of-home care at 10 times the rate of other Australian children. The overwhelming majority of First Nations children and young people in care are placed with non-First Nations organisations, who receive the lion's share of funding. The rate at which some Australian states are placing First Nations children and young people in out-of-home care is equivalent to the Stolen Generations. This will remain the status-quo unless action is taken.

¹Verbunt, E., Luke, J., Paradies, Y. et al. Cultural determinants of health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – a narrative overview of reviews. *Int J Equity Health* 20, 181 (2021)



We have a shared responsibility to change this reality for all First Nations children and young people. OzChild is drawing a line in the sand – acknowledging that Aboriginal children, families and communities are best served by Aboriginal-led solutions.

“ This initiative is a significant step in OzChild’s journey of reconciliation and allyship with First Nations people and communities. It requires us to embrace change, to learn from our First Nations colleagues and partners, and to challenge the status quo. Most importantly, it ensures our organisation is positioned on the right side of history. ”

Dr Lisa J. Griffiths

OzChild remains committed to walking alongside carers, children, and families during this transition. Together, we will ensure that Aboriginal children grow up strong in culture, identity and community, supported by those best placed to guide their journey.

This commitment is the foundation of our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan launched in November 2025.



Strengthening Cultural Safety and Connection

Spotlight on OzChild's First Nations Cultural Connections Review Tool and Panel

A key step in strengthening our support for First Nations children and young people in foster care has been the introduction of a First Nations Cultural Connections Review Tool and Panel. This initiative ensures that every child's cultural identity and connection to Country, kin, and community are upheld in line with best practice standards and ensures cultural safety is more than a policy; it's a lived experience.

The Tool was co-designed with our Bridging Cultures Unit, staff, and leaders across the organisation and is guided by 41 indicators that reflect what meaningful cultural support looks like in action.

Grounded in the national standards set by SNAICC's Child and Family Services Wellbeing Framework and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles (ATSICPP), the Review helps us to see how well we are walking alongside children in their cultural journey. It tracks progress, highlights where we can do better, and keeps us accountable to the young people and families we serve.

Most importantly, it reminds us that every connection to culture, every story shared, every visit to Country, every moment of pride in identity is a step toward healing and belonging.

This work sits within OzChild's broader commitment to supporting the self-determination of First Nations people. As we continue to strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and work toward transferring the care of First Nations children and young people to ACCOs, we remain steadfast in upholding cultural connection and safety for every child in our care.

“ Our journey toward self-determination begins with respect, respect for culture, for community, and for the voices that must lead the way. ”

– Chad Lofthouse, Director National Aboriginal Practice & Partnerships
– Bridging Cultures Unit



The success of the Review and Panels, which are held twice a year is founded upon the following key principles:

- ✓ **Inclusive Decision-Making**
Decisions concerning children and young people actively involve First Nations staff and community members, ensuring culturally informed and holistic outcomes for First Nations children and young people.
- ✓ **Comprehensive Service Review**
A structured evaluation of the support provided by OzChild's In-Home Care services, with a dedicated focus on identifying areas of non-compliance and implementing targeted strategies for resolution.
- ✓ **Cultural Support and Guidance**
Staff working with First Nations children and young people receive tailored guidance on the development and implementation of cultural support plans, with proactive measures taken to address and remove any barriers to their progression.
- ✓ **Safe and Supportive Environment**
A secure and inclusive space is provided for staff to seek support and guidance on challenges they encounter in their work with First Nations children and young people, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Highlights from OzChild's First Nations Cultural Connections Review March 2025



97 per cent of First Nations children and young people were identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in all OzChild case notes and documentation as well as in official documentation like Medicare Card, Health Care Cards and Health and Dental Records.



84 per cent of First Nations children and young people who had a sibling in care were in contact with them.



86 per cent of First Nations children and young people had a **completed** Genogram - which is a visual representation of a family tree that includes detailed information about relationships and connections among family members.



100 per cent of Victorian program staff had consulted with an Aboriginal Peak Body. This rate represents a **10 per cent improvement** since September 2024 and is the highest recorded, reaching the optimal 100 per cent.



To strengthen cultural safety for First Nations children and young people, program staff must consult with the Bridging Cultures Unit (BCU) within the first four weeks of each placement. As of March 2025, 10 of 12 children in care for less than six months had a BCU consultation completed within this timeframe. **23 per cent improvement since September 2024.**



74 per cent of First Nations children and young people had a Cultural Story Book or equivalent.



58 per cent of First Nations children and young people **participated** in weekly Aboriginal activities within the home. While this reflects a five per cent increase since September 2024, it remains at the lower end of rates recorded throughout the Tool, highlighting the need for continued encouragement and support for caregivers to consistently facilitate these activities.

Other indicators measured include:



Health



Learning and Skills



Mental and Emotional Wellbeing



Cultural Safety Training

The March 2025 review highlighted several modest, yet still noteworthy improvements since September 2024, including:

- nine per cent increase in the proportion of children and young people in care for under six months who have a completed Cultural Support Plan (CSP).
- eight per cent increase in carers participating in informal Cultural Safety Training.
- five per cent increase in children and young people participating in weekly cultural activities at home.
- four per cent increase in program staff advocating for and supporting children and young people to be consulted during CSP development (where OzChild was not responsible).

Outcomes are reported on twice a year with findings shared with the OzChild Board, Executive Leadership Team and National Services Leadership Team. Each review highlights achievements, celebrates progress, and identifies opportunities to build on our strengths and continue improving the quality of support we provide.



BRIDGING
CULTURES UNIT



A New Chapter for ACT:

Partnerships Continue to Build Stronger Families and Brighter Futures

In December 2024, OzChild entered a new chapter in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), relaunching its services as a standalone provider of foster care while expanding the delivery of Functional Family Therapy - Youth Justice (FFT-YJ) and continuing to achieve life-changing outcomes for First Nations families through the delivery of Functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare (FFT-CW). This milestone reflects our long-standing commitment to strengthening families, reducing child protection involvement, and creating brighter futures for children and young people across the Canberra region.

Strengthening Foster Care in the ACT

Following the wind-down of the ACT Together consortium, OzChild began operating independently in January 2025 as part of the ACT Government's Next Steps for Our Kids reforms. As a standalone provider, OzChild is now better positioned to deepen connections with local carers and communities, offering therapeutic, trauma-informed foster care backed by decades of national expertise.

Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa J. Griffiths, reflected on this significant step

“ For more than 170 years, OzChild has been building a legacy of care and innovation, grounded in deep respect for the critical role foster carers play. Every carer who joins OzChild becomes part of our team, and carers in the ACT are no different, they are now part of a community dedicated to ensuring they are set up for success, supported in every way possible, and that their voices are both heard and respected. It is only by working in true partnership with our carers that we can create safe, nurturing homes where children and young people can thrive. ”



Gugan Gulwan
Youth Aboriginal
Corporation



Supporting Families through FFT-CW with Gugan Gulwan

OzChild continues its partnership with Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation to deliver FFT-CW, a program designed to reduce the risk of child protection involvement and keep children safely at home. By strengthening parenting capacity and family relationships, FFT-CW ensures children remain connected to culture and community while reducing the likelihood of out-of-home care.

Since we began delivering FFT-CW alongside the team at Gugan Gulwan in 2018

+137 families have
successfully completed
the program with
88% achieving
some or all of their
therapy goals



Partnering for Change



FFT-YJ with Yerrabi Yurwang

Following a successful pilot program, in January 2025, OzChild relaunched the FFT-YJ program in partnership with Yerrabi Yurwang, a Ngannawal-led Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation. FFT-YJ provides intensive therapeutic support for young people aged 12–17 who are at risk of or involved in the youth justice system, working with the whole family to address the root causes of offending.

Co-locating with Yerrabi at its Macquarie Health Hub has created a culturally safe, holistic space where families can access both therapeutic and community-led support. Early results show promising outcomes, including reduced offending behaviours, improved school attendance, and increased engagement in pro-social activities.

In the first eight months of service delivery 13 young people and their family members engaged with our team.

85% of families who completed the service either fully or substantially achieved their therapy goals.

Our partnership with Yerrabi extends to our Foster Care program too. The team is generous with their cultural support, guidance and wisdom, sharing their knowledge with our team members and carers alike to ensure Aboriginal children have access to culturally safe and responsive services and care.

Yerrabi CEO Professor Dea Delaney-Thiele emphasised the partnership's importance:

“

At Yerrabi, our vision is grounded in early intervention, prevention, and healing – approaches that honour our ways of knowing, being, and doing. These differ from western systems that have too often failed our communities. Together with OzChild, we are committed to creating culturally safe spaces where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can thrive, stay connected to culture, and feel proud of who they are. While Yerrabi is not currently providing out-of-home care placements, we are actively building our capacity and recruiting cultural practitioners to support all providers, including OzChild. This partnership is about walking alongside each other – sharing knowledge, listening deeply, and ensuring that every child's cultural identity is respected and celebrated.

*Professor Dea Delaney-Thiele
Chief Executive Officer - Yerrabi*

”



Yerrabi, Marymead and OzChild team members at the official partnership launch, December 2024

Looking ahead

OzChild's relaunch in the ACT demonstrates the power of evidence-based practice, community partnerships, and cultural leadership. With strong collaborations in place through Yerrabi Yurwang and Gugan Gulwan, OzChild is not only delivering foster care and therapeutic support but also helping to create a system that values self-determination and honours Aboriginal ways of supporting children, young people and families.

Everyday Insights, Extraordinary Impact

Turning regular, structured check-ins into powerful tools that reduce stress, strengthen placements, and brighten futures.

In 2024, OzChild piloted the **Parent Daily Report (PDR)** trial within our general foster care program to explore new ways of supporting foster carers and strengthening placement stability.

What is the PDR?

The PDR is a tool originally developed as part of the *Treatment Foster Care Oregon* model. It involves carers taking regular phone calls—three times per week during the trial—to record whether a set of behaviours occurred and how stressful they were. This real-time information provided invaluable insights into the daily experiences of carers and children, helping practitioners identify patterns, stress triggers, and opportunities for tailored support.

Why was the trial needed?

Australia's foster care system is under increasing strain. Carers face complex challenges when caring for children who have experienced trauma, often leading to behaviours such as aggression, defiance, or emotional distress. These challenges, combined with systemic pressures, contribute to carer stress and, in some cases, placement breakdowns.

The trial was designed to test whether PDR-informed interventions—backed by case consultations, coaching for staff, and skills sessions—could:



Reduce carer stress levels



Decrease the frequency of challenging behaviours



Strengthen placement stability

What did we find?

Across the six-month trial



Behaviours declined significantly

After an initial peak, reported behaviours fell by 70% between June and November.



Carer stress reduced

Not only did challenging behaviours decrease, but carers reported feeling better able to cope with them.



Carers valued the calls

100% of participating carers said PDR calls were helpful, giving them greater awareness of behaviour patterns and a chance to feel heard.



Staff confidence grew

Staff reported improved skills, particularly in motivational interviewing and supporting carers to manage stress.



Critical risks were identified early

In some cases, such as self-harm behaviours, PDR data alerted practitioners to risks that might otherwise have gone unnoticed, enabling timely interventions.



Challenges and lessons

The trial also highlighted barriers—particularly systemic issues outside OzChild’s control. Carers noted that departmental processes and reunification schedules often caused more stress than children’s behaviours themselves. The trial also showed that data collection three days a week left gaps; daily calls may yield stronger results.

Long-term benefits

Despite these challenges, the trial demonstrated that embedding the PDR into practice could:

- Provide carers with ongoing, practical support
- Enable staff to respond faster and more effectively to emerging issues
- Strengthen placement stability by reducing stress and behavioural escalations
- Create a lasting shift in carer confidence and positivity, even beyond the trial period

Looking ahead

The evaluation recommends integrating the PDR tool more broadly into case management, expanding training for staff, and advocating for policy settings that reduce systemic barriers. By continuing to adapt and apply evidence-informed tools like the PDR, OzChild can ensure carers feel supported and children in care have every chance to thrive.

Delivering Stability,

Belonging and Long-Term Impact Through Home-Based Care

At OzChild, we know that children and young people do best when they are cared for in safe, stable, and nurturing family environments. Our home-based care programs: Foster Care, Kinship Care, Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO), therapeutic care (The Circle Program) and semi-independent accommodation (Lead Tenant) are designed to keep children and young people connected to family, culture, and community, providing the stability that residential care cannot while promoting a sense of belonging.

Evidence shows that family-based care delivers stronger long-term outcomes, supporting children’s healing, growth, and wellbeing while easing the pressures on the broader care system. By equipping carers with the right support, training, and resources, we not only transform individual lives but also strengthen families and communities, creating brighter futures together.

2024/25 Impact

1,218 children and young people were cared for within 733 carer households across Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT



17% of children and young people in OzChild In-Home Care programs identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Children and young people supported

Circle Program	25	TFCO - C Vic	18	TFCO - C NSW	8	Foster Care Vic	427
Kinship Care First Supports	298	TFCO - A Vic	6	TFCO - A NSW	8	Foster Care ACT	66
Kinship Care Case Contracting Service	157	TFCO Qld	25	Lead Tenant	8	Foster Care Qld	172

What children, young people and carers are telling us

Every year, OzChild actively seeks feedback from the children, young people, families, and carers we support. Listening to those with lived experience is not just important — it is fundamental to shaping our practice and is embedded in our Practice Principles. By hearing directly from the people at the heart of our work, we ensure their voices guide and strengthen the way we deliver services.

Children and young people (CYP) aged eight years and older are invited to share their views through tailored surveys, while all carers across every OzChild program are given the opportunity to provide feedback. These insights are critical in helping us understand what is working well, where we can improve, and how we can continue to create environments where children, young people, and families can thrive.



99% of CYP in foster care with OzChild had no more than two placements during the year

97% of CYP in OzChild home-based care arrangements reported feeling ‘Completely safe’ where they live and 72% reported feeling ‘Completely settled’ where they live now

95% of non-First Nations CYP reported that OzChild recognises and respects their culture.

80% of First Nations CYP reported the OzChild team recognises and respects their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture

89% of CYP felt that their OzChild worker listens to what they have to say ‘All the time’ or ‘Most of the time’

81% of CYP in OzChild home-based care arrangements reported that they ‘Always’ or ‘Most of the time’ had someone to talk to when it comes to their feelings and emotions

Giving carers time to recharge - the vital role of temporary carers

Behind every successful foster care, kinship care or TFCO placement is a network of support, and respite carers play a vital part in that system. By welcoming children and young people into their homes for short stays, they not only provide full-time carers with the chance to rest and recharge but also create new opportunities for children themselves.

Spending time with respite carers allows children to form new relationships, broaden their networks, and strengthen their sense of belonging. These short breaks can be filled with positive experiences — whether that's enjoying new activities, connecting with different family routines, or simply feeling valued in another safe and caring environment.

For full-time carers, respite care helps prevent burnout and ensures they can continue providing the stability and love children need over the long term. For children, it offers connection, enrichment, and the reassurance that there are more people in their corner.

Respite care reminds us that caring is not an individual effort but a shared responsibility. It is a community of carers working together to give children and young people every chance to thrive.

For 11-year-old Mia* weekends with her respite carer meant learning to bake, trying soccer for the first time, and discovering that she could make new friends outside of school. What began as short breaks soon became treasured moments that boosted her confidence and gave her a stronger sense of belonging.

**Name changed to protect identity of child*

During 2024/25 **123** carer households stepped up, giving full-time carers a break while creating new opportunities for children and young people



A Hundred *New* Beginnings

TFCO Celebrates 100 Graduates in 2024

When Natalie welcomed her first TFCO placement into her home in Toowoomba, she knew the road ahead would be challenging. The young person she cared for had already been through multiple placements, carried deep trauma, and struggled to trust adults. But throughout, Natalie and her foster child weren't alone - they were surrounded by a team of therapists, skills coaches, and educators committed to rewriting the story.

“ These kids have been through so much. Through the TFCO program, they learn to trust, heal, and build a future they couldn't imagine before. It's a chance to show them they matter, Natalie reflects ”

This year, stories like Natalie's reached a remarkable milestone: the graduation of the 100th child/young person from TFCO. For every graduate, this moment symbolises more than just the end of their journey in the program. It means reconnecting with family, succeeding at school, building resilience, and, most importantly, believing in the possibility of a brighter future.

Behind the statistics are children who might otherwise have entered residential care, or spent years in and out of a residential care placement where outcomes are often far poorer. Instead, 99% of TFCO graduates move on to lower levels of care, whether it be returning to birth families, joining kinship or foster carers, or stepping into semi-independent living.

Each graduation represents hope restored, family connections rebuilt, and the cycle of disadvantage interrupted.

Reflecting on nearly a decade of TFCO in Australia, Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa J. Griffiths, says the 100th graduation is proof that change is possible when children are given the right support:

“ Often, the problem is the system around the children, not the children themselves. Professional foster care models, like TFCO, equips both children and carers with the skills to change their stories. It's not just about providing a placement; it's about providing a pathway out of the system and back into family and community. ” *Dr Griffiths*

The milestone of 100 graduates is a celebration of every carer who has opened their home, every team member who has walked alongside families, and most of all, every child who has taken the courageous step toward healing. It is proof that when children are surrounded by care, belief, and opportunity, lives change — not just for a moment, but for a lifetime.



The many faces of our Treatment Foster Care teams
celebrating 100 graduations

Graduations from the program since 2016 (at 30 June 2025)



115 graduates from the TFCO program

40 per cent are First Nations CYP



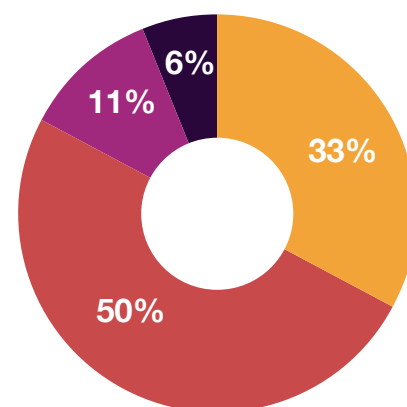
79 accredited carer households



During the 2024/25 financial year 18 children and young people graduated from the program. 100% remained in lower-level care arrangements post graduation

11 months average length of time in the program

Children and young people living arrangements after graduation



- Foster Care
- Living with Kith or Kin
- Living with Parents
- Supported Independent Living



Nurturing Foster and

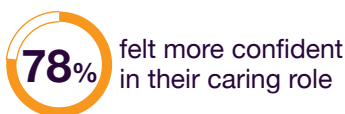
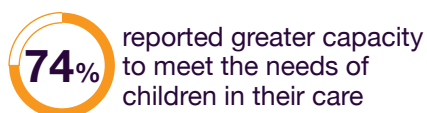
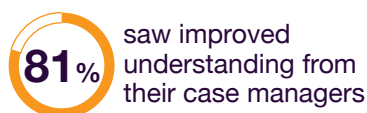
Kinship Care Families So Everyone Thrives

Since 2020, the Thriving Families program has supported thousands of Victorian foster and kinship carers and their family members through practical, emotional, community, and training grants tailored to their unique needs.

During 2024/25, over 1,500 people were supported through 149 Thriving Families grants, at an average value of \$981.

70 per cent of all grants provided were for practical support, up from 53 per cent in FY24 - a reflection of the growing strain on carer's household budgets. From replacement of a broken washing machine for a single kinship carer of six children, to a swag for a carer refusing to leave the side of a child during hospital stays, these grants are removing practical barriers to care.

What carers say about Thriving Families



Behind each of these numbers is a story of real families finding stability, feeling relief and hope, and building connection – giving children and young people brighter futures.

“

After receiving notice to vacate late due to letters and emails not arriving, gathering the funds to move rentals was a challenge. Thriving Families grant ensured I had the funds to promptly and properly make sure all children in my care have a safe and warm roof over their heads every day.

”

“

It's been critical.

We have care of two complex children and three of our own teenagers in the home - having a cleaner has made it feel like home is manageable!

”

“

...the support I received has made it possible for me to look after myself and be the best carer for M. With the Thriving Families support, I am able to pay a babysitter every week so I can attend therapy. It also allowed me to receive trauma-informed and culturally sensitive advice...

”

Thank you

The Thriving Families program would not be possible without the generous support of our philanthropic partners. Thank you to the Brian & Virginia McNamee Foundation, Eric & Elizabeth Gross Foundation, and the Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust for your generous support in FY25.

National expansion hopes for a lifeline when it's needed most

“ **Thriving Families is a critical program – it can be the difference between carers taking another placement or stepping away from foster care.** ”

– Dale Rogers, Director of Services Queensland

While Australians grapple with ever-increasing costs of living, OzChild's Thriving Families Program has continued to lighten the load for foster and kinship households across Victoria. Although carer allowances are reviewed annually, these often fall short of actual expenses which leave carers out of pocket – and make caring more challenging.

Carers continue to speak to the transformative impact of the Thriving Families program, which bridges financial gaps and offers much-needed emotional and practical support.

Dale Rogers, OzChild's Director of Services in Queensland, has seen the impact of the program while working in Victoria and is keen to see it expand nationally. Speaking of his experience in Victoria, Dale says it has been life-changing for carers and refers to Thriving Families as a 'lifeline'.

“ **It could be something as simple as a carer whose car has broken down and they've got to get kids to school. For us to say, We'll make an application for Thriving Families to have your car repaired. I just can't really put into words the gratitude that I've heard coming back from carers,** ” says Dale.

“ **Couldn't have coped financially without your help, has made all the difference between being totally stressed and relief all round, thank you.** ”

- OzChild Carer



OzChild is inviting partnerships with philanthropic and corporate donors in NSW and Qld to expand the Thriving Families program. Your support can help us reduce financial stress for carers and create brighter futures for children across Australia.

To become a partner, email hello@ozchild.org.au for more information.

A Village Approach to Youth Crime

Families Leading the Change

Youth crime continues to be a hot topic across Australia, particularly in Victoria, where the community is calling for answers that go beyond **“tough on crime”** headlines. At OzChild, we believe the most powerful solutions don’t come from harsher penalties, but from strengthening families, empowering parents, and building a village of support around young people.

Why Evidence Matters

Tough penalties might capture headlines, but they don’t create lasting change. Real solutions come from tackling the root causes of offending — family conflict, trauma, substance use, housing instability, and social isolation. That’s why OzChild invests in proven, evidence-based interventions such as Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy – Youth Justice, both backed by rigorous international evaluation, alongside the community-driven Putting Families First program. Together, these approaches focus on what matters most: strengthening families, empowering parents, and building a village of support around young people to create safer communities for everyone.

Multisystemic Therapy (MST)

Don’t Be Afraid to Parent

MST works intensively with families of young people at risk of serious or persistent offending. The program equips parents with strategies to set boundaries, rebuild trust, and keep young people engaged in school or work.

A Victorian mother, interviewed recently, put it simply: **“We’ve learned not to be afraid to parent.”** With MST, families discover their own capacity to create change and know they are not doing it alone.

The results speak for themselves. Since 2019, OzChild has supported more than 100 families through MST.

In 2024–25:



92% of young people remained out of care



100% of families showed improved functioning



85% of young people had **NO** arrests in their final month of treatment

These outcomes show that MST doesn’t just stop offending — it strengthens parenting and family relationships for the long term, while building a village around the young person and the parent.

“ There is no one root cause for offending. There’s a number of possible drivers, such as intergenerational trauma, disengaging from school, language barriers and peer groups, that need to be tackled.

- OzChild MST Therapist, Shaza



Read more about the team putting young people back on track through MST



Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

Repairing Family Relationships

FFT and FFT-Youth Justice (YJ) support young people aged 11–18 and their families when offending, family violence, or conflict has escalated. Delivered in the ACT in partnership with Yerrabi (FFT-YJ), and on the New South Wales Central Coast (FFT), these programs help families uncover the reasons behind behaviours and build new ways of relating.

Families often report reduced conflict, better communication, and greater stability.

Since launching FFT in 2019, OzChild has successfully supported over 174 young people and families.

Program snapshots*



79 referrals to the FFT NSW program
63% completed treatment during the year



13 referrals to FFT-YJ program in the ACT
8 families completed program during the year



85% were in school or work
at program closure



94% of young people
recorded **NO** further
law violations



91% had **NO** family
safety incidents

* OzChild 2024-25 outcomes report

“ FFT-YJ is short-term but deeply impactful. By helping families repair relationships and strengthen resilience, it reduces the likelihood of young people cycling back into the justice system. ”

- Jared Gillard, Director of Services NSW & ACT

Putting Families First

A Whole-of-Family Approach

In Melbourne's west, OzChild is part of the **Putting Families First (PFF)** program, a collaborative partnership with VACCA, YSAS, AAFRO, and Charis. PFF brings an interdisciplinary team together, from housing and legal support to health and cultural services to work with families facing multiple and complex challenges, including gang involvement and homelessness.

Since launching, the program has received a total of **119** referrals. Young people report that the service helps their family to get along better, while caregivers report improvement in the family's safety, conflict and support. More broadly, outcomes include stable housing, children returning to school, and reduced reliance on crisis services.

PFF's approach is for families to drive decision making by identifying goals and shaping plans. This builds self-determination, confidence, and lasting change.

Building Safer Communities Together

What unites MST, FFT, FFT-YJ, and PFF is their **focus on families as the key to preventing crime.**

By empowering parents, strengthening relationships, and connecting families to community, these programs deliver safer streets not through punishment, but through resilience, stability, and hope.

OzChild is proud to deliver these proven approaches in Australia. Every family supported is another step toward **breaking cycles of disadvantage, reducing youth crime, and building safer, stronger communities for all.**

Delivering Impact

Through Early Intervention and Prevention

At the heart of OzChild's work is the belief that timely, targeted support can change the trajectory of a child or young person's life. Our early intervention and prevention programs are designed to strengthen families, reduce the likelihood of children entering out-of-home care, and promote safer, more stable futures.

These programs also demonstrate measurable outcomes that reduce demand on more intensive and costly parts of the child protection system.

By tracking referral pathways and completion rates, we can clearly evidence the reach and effectiveness of these programs. High completion rates indicate strong program engagement and fidelity to evidence-based models, while referral volumes reflect the growing recognition of the value these interventions bring.



During the year 1,648 families (referrals) were supported in the following programs – 311 families engaged identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (FN).

Program name	Total No. of referrals accepted (FN)	Total No. of referrals who closed program (FN)	Total No. of referrals who completed program (during the financial year)
Access to Early Learning	27 (3)	28 (2)	27 (2)
Children's Contact Service	99 (25)	84 (16)	113 families had sessions (15 referrals completed program)
Family Relationship Centre	150 (20)	170 (19)	211 families had sessions (64 referrals completed program)
Family Worx <i>(without Family Worx Goulburn)</i>	172 (20)	171 (23)	98 (82%)
Functional Family Therapy NSW	79 (19)	79 (19)	33 (63%)
Functional Family Therapy <i>- Child Welfare (ACT)</i>	23 (3)	5 (1)	5 (100%)
Functional Family Therapy <i>- Child Welfare (ACT) FN program</i>	39 (39)	49 (49)	45 (100%)
Functional Family Therapy <i>- Child Welfare (NSW)</i>	360 (102)	320 (102)	170 (63%)
Functional Family Therapy <i>- Child Welfare (Vic)</i> <i>- with Family Worx Goulburn</i>	124 (24)	149 (22)	78 (79%)
Integrated Family Services	248 (10)	262 (11)	137 (82%)
Multisystemic Therapy	28 (3)	29 (3)	19 (76%)
Multisystemic Therapy <i>- Child Abuse & Neglect</i>	15 (4)	18 (4)	12 (86%)
Parenting Orders Program & Post-Separation Cooperative Parenting Program	82 (7)	68 (7)	93 families had sessions (29 completed program)
Regional Family Dispute Resolution	91 (16)	104 (12)	142 families had sessions (46 completed program)
Stepping Stones to School	111 (16)	86 (9)	56 (68%)
TOTAL	1,648 (311)	1,622 (299)	

Building Confidence

and Strengthening Bonds Through SafeCare

This story contains references to abuse and violence that may be distressing to some readers. Please take care while reading and seek support if needed.

Maria's story

When Child Protection referred *Maria** and her newborn baby to OzChild's SafeCare program, the odds seemed stacked against her. Maria had already endured the heartbreak of having seven children removed from her care. Her life had been marked by unimaginable hardship: migrating to Australia at age 14, a long history of alcohol and drug use, and surviving multiple relationships scarred by coercive control, physical violence, sexual abuse, and financial abuse.

On top of this, Maria lives with an acquired brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder—lasting scars from the trauma she has experienced. With such a history, many would have doubted her ability to parent safely. But SafeCare is designed for parents just like Maria: to build confidence, strengthen skills, and break cycles of harm.

A cognitive assessment helped shape the way OzChild's SafeCare Educator worked with Maria. Through the use of pictures, colours, simple words, consistent language, and one-step-at-a-time approaches Maria could learn and practise new skills in a way that worked for her. With patience, trust, and persistence, the Educator introduced SafeCare's model of *explain, model, practice and feedback*.

Before beginning the **Parent-Infant Interaction** module, Maria and her Educator spent time creating a safety plan around family violence and exploring ways Maria could regulate her emotions. By finding calm within herself, Maria was able to build confidence in connecting with her baby—something she had been fearful of. The Educator always gave Maria choice and control, even asking where they should stand in the room so she felt safe as she interacted with her child.

Over the months that followed, Maria completed all three SafeCare modules—**Parent-Infant Interaction, Safety, and Health**. At the beginning, she was hesitant but by the end Maria achieved mastery across each module. Her confidence soared, her parenting capacity increased, and she found joy in spending time with her children.

For the first time, Maria's three-year-old began visiting her home regularly, and she rebuilt bonds not only with her younger children, but also with her older children and even her grandchild. Today, Maria is continuing with community services, exploring housing and employment opportunities, and reconnecting with her cultural identity.

Reflecting on her journey, Maria said

I wish I had SafeCare with my other children. Children don't come with a manual—SafeCare is like having your own parenting manual.

Through SafeCare's trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and evidence-based approach, Maria has been given the tools and confidence to rewrite her story as a parent, one where healing, safety, and love take centre stage.

**Names changed and stock images used to protect the identity of the families we work with*



Impact Snapshot

SafeCare

OzChild's SafeCare program has been improving parenting skills to better protect little ones for 10 years. This evidence-based program addresses the need to improve the parenting skills of parents of children aged 0-5 who are at risk of or have been reported for child neglect or physical abuse - assisting with prevention of child removal and reunification of children within the out-of-home care system.

Parent: Maria (newborn + 3-year-old)

Modules completed: 3 (Parent-Infant Interaction, Safety, Health)

Outcome: Mastery achieved in all modules

Quick Outcomes



Increased confidence and parenting capacity



Strengthened bonds with newborn, 3-year-old, older children, and grandchild



Exploring housing, employment, and cultural connection



Regular visits with 3-year-old child for the first time



The SafeCare program is not only keeping kids safely at home but making sure Mum and/or Dad can make sustainable changes by building a strong foundation. Most importantly though it gives parents confidence they did not know they had, and belief in themselves again.



SafeCare Educator, Kaitlyn*

Building a Culture

of Evidence-Based Decision-Making

At OzChild, evidence doesn't just inform what we do, it drives how we do it.

In 2024, the organisation cemented its commitment to **strengthening our vital organisation** by launching our Evidence-Based Decision-Making (EBDM) courses, strengthening our commitment to embedding a culture of evidence-based management across all parts of the organisation.

Two courses were designed to do more than build skills; they set out to create a shared language and mindset where critical thinking, data, and research are the foundation of every decision we make that shapes the lives of children, young people, and families.

Two Courses, One Purpose

Under this initiative, we introduced two learning pathways:

- **The Principles Course** – A nine-week program first delivered in June 2024, designed for staff across OzChild. Combining interactive eLearning with live sessions, 67 people from across the organisation graduated during the financial year, helping embed evidence-informed practice at every level.
- **The Certificate Course** – A more advanced program for current and aspiring senior leaders, launched in November 2024. This 15-module course equips participants with the tools to navigate complex decisions through an evidence lens. Six senior leaders successfully completed the first round in May 2025.

Together, these courses represent a significant investment in our people and strengthening our collective capability, ensuring that evidence sits at the heart of how we design, deliver, and improve services.

More Than Training – A Cultural Shift

The impact of the program goes beyond the participants. Graduates represent every portfolio, highlighting the reach and enthusiasm of team members right across the organisation. What began as a professional development opportunity is fast becoming an organisational shift: a recognition that data and evidence are not the domain of a few, but a responsibility shared by all.

Importantly, this is not a one-off initiative. Both courses will continue indefinitely, ensuring every OzChild person, regardless of role or location, has the opportunity to build their skills and confidence in evidence-based decision-making.

Shaping the Future, Together

The early success of this initiative reflects the appetite within OzChild for continuous learning and growth. As participation grows, the ripple effects will be felt across programs, teams, and the communities we serve.

By embedding evidence into the DNA of our organisation, we are not only strengthening our workforce, but we are also shaping a future where every decision we make is grounded in what works. This ensures that OzChild continues to lead the way in delivering services with real and measurable outcomes and we can continue to change lives and create brighter futures for children, young people, and families.

By building a shared language of evidence, OzChild is strengthening decision-making at every level – ensuring our services for children, young people, and families are guided by what works.

Jarrold Edwards, Executive Director People & Performance

Evidence-Based Decision-Making at a Glance



73 staff trained in evidence-based decision-making since June 2024



67 graduates from the Principles Course

6 graduates from the Certificate Course for Senior Leaders



- Courses span **every program and service area** across the organisation
- Courses will continue indefinitely, ensuring all staff have the **opportunity to participate**
- **Embedding a culture** where data, research, and critical thinking guide every decision



At OzChild, we are committed to building evidence literacy across our workforce – encouraging staff to read widely, engage with researchers, and challenge their own biases. Our approach recognises that research, operational data, practice wisdom, and lived experience are not competitors but complements, each bringing essential insight to the table. Most importantly, we know evidence only makes a difference when it's put into practice. By equipping our people with the skills to apply evidence rigorously and thoughtfully, we are ensuring that the decisions we make are not only sound but also deliver real, lasting benefits for children, young people, and families.

Dr Lisa J. Griffiths



Growing Awareness,

Growing Our Village

At OzChild, the strength of our foster care and Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) programs lies in the dedication of families who open their hearts and homes to children and young people. Over the past year, we have seen remarkable engagement from the community, with thousands of individuals stepping forward to learn more about becoming carers.

From Victoria to Queensland, the level of interest has been inspiring, with hundreds of households attending information sessions, progressing through training, and ultimately achieving accreditation. This year also marked significant growth in TFCO, with more than 2,400 enquiries across three states and dozens of households completing the journey to accreditation.

Behind each number is a story of compassion and commitment, a family willing to give children and young people what they need most: safety, stability, and the chance to thrive. We are especially grateful to the carers who shared their personal stories at information sessions, and to those who supported Q&A events, helping others take their first steps on the fostering journey.

These achievements reflect not only the resilience of our carers but also the power of community when we come together with a shared vision to see every child safe, loved, and supported.

Foster Care Victoria

Accredited Households

25 new foster care households accredited in Victoria



Households Completing Shared Lives Training

41 households completed training



Information Session Attendance

186 households attended information sessions in Victoria



Meet and Greet Interviews

69 households completed a meet and greet/home visit



New Enquiries

961 across South, West, and Gippsland regions



Registrations of Interest

106 households completed a registration of interest form

Foster Care Queensland



New Enquiries

73 enquiries received



Accredited Households

8 new households accredited



Information Session Attendance

23 households attended information sessions

TFCO



New Enquiries

2,441 enquiries received



Accredited Households

32 NEW accredited across Vic, NSW and Qld



Registrations of Interest

187 households completed a registration of interest form



Information Session Attendance

288 households attended TFCO information sessions



NEW IN 2026

Introducing **TREATMENT FOSTER CARE AUSTRALIA**

For nearly a decade, OzChild has proudly delivered the Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) program in Australia — always striving for the best possible outcomes for children and young people. Over this time, we've thoughtfully adapted the model to our local context, introducing the Teacher, Case Coordinator, and Aboriginal Practice Lead roles to ensure it meets the unique needs of Australian communities.

2025 saw a long-held vision achieved in the appointment of an Australian based TFC Consultant - OzChild's Robyn Jackson. This is a positive development for the continued growth of evidence-based care in Australia, not only for OzChild, but for the broader sector.

Following consultation and endorsement from US model purveyors TFC Consultants, OzChild's TFCO program will be known as Treatment Foster Care Australia (TFCA).

This new name reflects our commitment to embedding national and local expertise to deliver a high-quality, evidence-informed alternative to residential care — tailored to the needs of Australia's children, young people, and families.

Investing in Hope

with Chance to Shine

In 2024/25, OzChild's Chance to Shine Scholarship Program provided 251 grants, with an average value of \$732. This vital support not only eases the financial burden on families and carers but also inspires us to continue building strong philanthropic partnerships with trusts and foundations who share our commitment to ensuring every child and young person has the resources they need to thrive.

The program offers more than financial assistance, it provides real relief for families connected to OzChild services, particularly those experiencing disadvantage that impacts a child's education or ability to participate fully in sporting, artistic, cultural, or community life.

From tutoring and transport, to uniforms, laptops, and music or sports lessons, a Chance to Shine Scholarship opens doors to opportunities that may otherwise be out of reach. It is a tangible investment in brighter futures, helping children and young people to engage, belong, and thrive.



“

As a single parent, I simply could not have provided my girls with the things they needed to feel comfortable attending school and have access to necessary resources without your support. The scholarship made a tangible difference in our lives by ensuring they had uniforms, school supplies, and other essentials that I would have struggled to afford on my own.

”

While the cost of living continues to rise, the cost of education is also growing sharply. The Investment in Education Index, released by the [Futurity Investment Group](#) in 2024 revealed that the average cost of a public school education through to Year 12 is now over \$92,700. This cost is driven largely by ancillary expenses, things like uniforms, technology, transport, extracurricular activities, excursions, instruments, and textbooks.

These are precisely the kinds of barriers the Chance to Shine program was designed to reduce.

Over recent years, the demand on Chance to Shine has risen. More families have turned to the program to help cover essential education expenses.



Recipient Snapshot

male **49%** female **51%**



Average age **11 years**

18% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

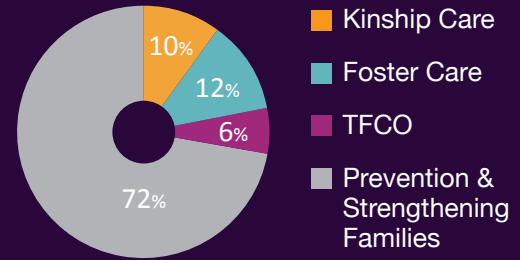


Average scholarship value **\$732**

Schooling level (%)

Primary school **39%**
 Secondary school **51%**
 Special school **5%**
 Other **0.8%**
 TAFE **11%**

What program are they from



Real Families = Real Outcomes



90% of care givers reported an improved feeling of optimism for the recipient's future



78% reported improved participation in further learning



60% reported improved participation in extracurricular activities



74% reported improved engagement at school

71% of carers experienced a decrease in financial stress

60% reported improved participation in out of school activities

For many carers and young people, this support has meant the difference between opportunity and omission. It eases financial stress, lifts morale, enables full participation, and fuels a sense of optimism about the future. Against the backdrop of escalating educational costs, such support doesn't just help, it changes trajectories.

We couldn't provide this critical support without our Partners.

Thank you to the funders of our **Chance to Shine Scholarship Program**

FGF Charitable Fund
 Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation Youth in Philanthropy Program
 Maddocks
 Matana Foundation for Young People
 McGregor Family Foundation
 MTD
 Nelson Alexandra

Newsboys
 Officeworks
 OneTomorrow Charitable Fund
 Pincus Family Foundation
 Reginald Buenaventura
 William Angliss Charitable Foundation
 Windsor Management Insurance Brokers
 Yorke 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 more than 30 years of senior leadership experience across the public sector and non-government organisations to her role as Chief Executive Officer of OzChild. For over a decade, she has steered the organisation through a period of significant growth and innovation, making a lasting contribution to improving outcomes for children, young people, and families.

A strong advocate for sustainable foster care and evidence-based practice, Lisa currently serves as Chair of Families Australia and the National Foster Care Sustainability Group, while also holding Non-Executive Director positions with several child welfare peak bodies and contributing to key government committees.

Alongside her executive leadership, Lisa is a Professor and Senior Fellow at the Australian Graduate School of Leadership and holds a Doctorate in Business Leadership, with a focus on evidence-based, ethical leadership. She is also a Fellow of both the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Centre for Evidence-Based Management.

Lisa's commitment to advancing child welfare is grounded in her passion for driving effective strategies and systemic reform that ensure children and young people have the opportunity to thrive.



Michelle Van Doorn

Executive Director Services & Practice

Driving real change for children and families, Michelle leads with proven programs, data-driven decisions, compassion and strategic leadership. With almost 20 years at OzChild, she brings rich experience and a dedication to practice development, helping to strengthen the organisation's ability to deliver evidence-informed services and achieve lasting outcomes for children and families.

Michelle oversees the strategic direction and operational delivery of services and programs across Victoria, New South Wales, the ACT, and Queensland, ensuring children, young people, and families receive high-quality, evidence-based support. Through her leadership of the Practice Development and Implementation portfolio, Michelle is focused on embedding proven interventions, strengthening workforce capability, and measuring impact to deliver sustainable change.

Michelle's passion for growth and leadership is reflected in her completion of an advanced women's leadership program, as well as training in leadership and executive coaching, and evidence-based management for human service leaders. Her dedication to professional excellence and her nearly two decades of contribution to OzChild make her a highly respected leader within OzChild and across the wider sector.



Mark Powell

Executive Director Finance & Infrastructure

Mark brings a wealth of experience and a forward-thinking approach to his role at OzChild, where he has dedicated more than 15 years to strengthening the organisation's impact on child welfare.

Recognised for his financial insight, strategic leadership, and drive for operational excellence, Mark has played a central role in shaping OzChild's commercial and business development capability.

Today, he leads a broad portfolio that spans Finance, Investments, Contracts, Infrastructure, and Business Support. His ability to balance big-picture vision with attention to operational detail ensures the organisation's financial sustainability and ongoing performance.

As Company Secretary, Mark also provides trusted guidance to the Chief Executive Officer and works closely with the Board, ensuring strong governance and accountability across all areas of the organisation.

With a commitment to innovation and a steady focus on the future, Mark continues to be a driving force behind OzChild's growth, sustainability, and success.



Jarroed Edwards

Executive Director People & Performance

Jarroed brings a unique blend of technical expertise and strategic leadership to OzChild. A graduate of the prestigious Williamson Community Leadership Program at Leadership Victoria, Jarroed began his career in engineering and regulation within high-risk industries before joining OzChild in 2017.

Today, he plays a vital role in shaping the organisation's operational and strategic landscape. His portfolio spans People and Culture, Innovation and Improvement, Planning, Project Management, Business and Services Intelligence, Safeguarding and Quality, Business Assurance, Emergency Management, and Business Continuity and Recovery Planning. Jarroed also collaborates closely with OzChild's Director, National Aboriginal Practice and Partnerships, and the Bridging Cultures Unit, strengthening culturally informed practice across the organisation.

With deep knowledge of corporate governance, strategic operations, and behavioural change, Jarroed is a driving force behind organisational resilience and performance. His leadership empowers OzChild's people to thrive, innovate, and deliver lasting impact for children, young people and families.



Mevan Jayawardena

Executive Director Engagement & Experience

Mevan brings more than a decade of cross-sector experience spanning community services, emergency services, financial services, and technology to his role of Executive Director of Engagement & Experience at OzChild. A graduate of INSEAD's MBA program and the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Mevan combines private sector expertise with a deep commitment to social impact. Currently, Mevan is completing the Executive Master of Public Administration through the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

Known for his inclusive leadership and adaptability, Mevan oversees OzChild's Communications and Fundraising, Marketing and Engagement, and Business Development and Information Technology functions. He excels in navigating diverse environments, turning challenges into opportunities, and is widely recognised for empowering teams, building collaboration, and driving meaningful change through thoughtful, evidence-based decision-making.

Before joining OzChild, Mev led key initiatives across organisational strategy, communications, business development, and digital enablement. His work has encompassed government funding strategies, social enterprise growth, and large-scale organisational transformation. In his own time, Mevan is also a volunteer director of CandleAid Lanka, a humanitarian organisation in Sri Lanka where he supports projects in areas including access to education, health needs and nutrition.



Alison Dall Stosic

Director, Office of the Chief Executive

With extensive experience in project management and executive operations, Alison serves as the trusted right hand to our Chief Executive Officer, providing strategic support to the OzChild Executive Leadership Team in her role as Director, Office of the Chief Executive.

Since joining OzChild in 2016, Alison has played a pivotal role in ensuring the Chief Executive Officer is positioned for success. Her leadership drives excellence in stakeholder engagement, organisational planning, performance reporting, and internal communications, strengthening collaboration and delivering outcomes that matter.



Board Members

Helen Maxwell-Wright AM

President

Helen 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. Currently Helen serves on advisory boards and committees, including the Australian Medical Council (SEAC), Medicines Australia (Panel of Chairs of the Monitoring Committee), the Australian & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, the College of Intensive Care Medicine and the Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria.

Helen is widely recognised for her contributions and leadership. She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (known for its Company Directors Course) 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. Steve 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, he then took charge of the North West Metropolitan Region in 2011, which delivers frontline police services for the largest region in the state. Steve was the Assistant Commissioner Crime Command from July 2012 until May 2018 when he commenced an appointment of Chief Information Officer for Victoria Police and in a dual-role Steve also led the Information, Systems and Security Command.

After 45 years of service to the community, Steve retired from Victoria Police in September 2020. He is self employed as a management consultant, works in a part time capacity for the Police Registration and Service Board as Deputy President Registration, and is also a member of the Victoria Police Audit and Risk Committee.



Catherine Dunlop

Vice President

Catherine is a Partner and Board member at Maddocks lawyers and a Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne, teaching Workplace Health & Safety Law in the Masters programme.

Catherine joined the OzChild Board in 2015 sharing the role of Vice President until her retirement from the Board 1 July 2025. As one of Australia's leading lawyers in work health and safety Catherine brought her expertise to both the Board and Finance, Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee.

Catherine has over two decades of working with clients on work and public health and safety, advising clients on workplace fatalities, inquests and Royal Commissions, psychosocial workplace risks such as bullying and sexual harassment, and safety compliance. She 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. Catherine is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and also serves as the President of the Victorian Health Complaints Commission Advisory Council.



Michael Wooten FAICD FCPA

Treasurer

Michael has over 30 years' experience in executive finance and leadership roles within the water, emergency services, and local government sectors. At the commencement of his career, 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 ten 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's most recent role was as the Chief Operating Officer for Greater Western Water, until stepping back from executive roles in August 2025 to focus on his various non-executive director/board commitments. Michael holds undergraduate qualifications in accounting and computing and a Masters in Business. He is a Fellow of both the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and CPA Australia.



Dr Sandra Heriot

Board Member

Sandra 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 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.



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 Review 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.



Kathy Karatasas

Board Member

Kathy boasts nearly four decades of executive and operational expertise in early intervention, child protection, and out-of-home care, spanning both government and non-government sectors. Her leadership roles extend to regulatory bodies ensuring children's wellbeing in care and senior government units dedicated to enhancing policies and services for children, young people, and families.

Over the past 10 years, Kathy spearheaded the development of a specialised multicultural child and family program. Under her guidance, the program experienced substantial growth, implemented robust quality and safeguarding procedures, and assumed a leadership role in promoting culturally responsive practices for diverse backgrounds. She also served as Deputy Chair of the Association of Child Welfare Agency in New South Wales and represented various Ministerial and sector-wide child and family leadership groups.

As a culturally sensitive leader, mentor, and advocate, Kathy's primary focus is on enriching knowledge, practices, and outcomes. She currently serves as the Founder and CEO of CulturalWorks and holds a Master's in Social Work, along with qualifications in Family Group Conferencing, Training, and Management.

Kathy completed a Winston Churchill Fellowship in 2024 investigating international practice tools to support children's cultural care, and in 2025 commenced a PhD to build on this research.



Liam Glover

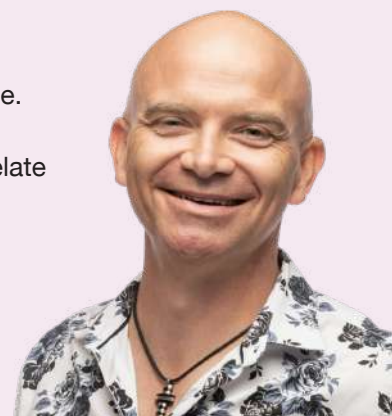
Board Member

Liam has almost 30 years of experience as an executive working in the Not-for-profit sector. He specialises in leadership, culture and effecting change.

Liam currently serves as the Executive Director of Australians Together, an organisation committed to listening, learning and finding respectful ways to relate as Australians, together. He has qualifications in commerce, law, finance and divinity, and a Doctorate focusing on missional leadership.

Liam loves his family, drinking exceptional coffee, teaching, learning, writing and exercising.

Liam joined the OzChild Board in 2023 and also sits on OzChild's Brand Committee and Cultural Competence Committee.



Dr Kerryn Moreira

Board Member

Kerryn is a highly experienced General Paediatrician with over 20 years of dedicated service in Victoria's public health system. Kerryn brings a wealth of expertise across clinical care, research, and medical education, with a focus on supporting vulnerable children.

Kerryn completed her subspecialty training in Paediatric Medicine with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 2018 and earned her Master's in Forensic Medicine from Monash University in 2024. She is currently practicing at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne and Werribee Mercy Hospital.

Her practice has increasingly focused on caring for children in out-of-home care. In 2020, Kerryn established a specialised clinic for these children, which continues to serve families in Melbourne's western suburbs.

Dr. Moreira joined the OzChild Board in 2024.



Paulleen Markwort

Board Member

Paulleen brings two decades of teaching experience across early childhood and primary school, along with 13 years working in Victorian Government in senior roles. She is currently the Executive General Manager at Ganbina and holds a Master of Public Administration.

Paulleen is a Murri woman, connected to her matriarchal heritage through oral histories, art, and family traditions. Her maternal grandfather was a Wiradjuri man from Young, NSW.

She has an established track record in driving innovation and reform. Paulleen focuses on improving education, health, and wellbeing outcomes. Known for her systems thinking, she excels in building partnerships across sectors to design and manage service models and policies that improve outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, young people and families.

OzChild was delighted to welcome Paulleen to the Board during 2024.



Thank You, and Farewell From the Board!

Catherine Dunlop

We are deeply grateful to Catherine Dunlop, who retired from the OzChild Board on 1 July 2025 after 10 years of remarkable service.

Catherine joined us in 2015, stepping into the role of Vice President and lending her expertise as part of the Finance, Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee. As one of Australia's foremost lawyers in work health and safety, Catherine has been a steady hand, guiding us through some of our most complex decisions with wisdom, clarity, and care.

What set Catherine apart was not only her professional expertise but also her deep commitment to ensuring work health and safety, accountability and integrity were at the heart of our work. Her advice has shaped how we respond to emergencies and challenges, always keeping the wellbeing of our staff, carers, and the children and families we serve at the forefront of our minds. Catherine's support was integral during our early COVID-19 response and in ongoing efforts to keep all of us safe during that time, alongside leading the development of working-from-home practices.

Beyond OzChild, Catherine's wider contributions, including her leadership as President of the Victorian Health Complaints Commission Advisory Council — reflect the same commitment to strengthening communities and safeguarding people's wellbeing.

“

On behalf of the Board, I offer our deepest gratitude to Catherine for her decade of dedicated service to OzChild. Her expertise and visionary leadership have left an indelible mark, while her unwavering commitment to safety and sound governance has helped shape OzChild's future. We wish Catherine every success as she continues to enrich both the professional and community spheres with her outstanding contributions.

— Helen Maxwell-Wright AM,
President, OzChild

”





Financial Report

During the 2024/25 financial year, support from federal, state and local governments, individual donors, community fundraisers, trusts and foundations, and corporate partners made an extraordinary difference in the lives of children, young people, and families.

These partnerships are the foundation of our work. Without the shared vision and belief of those who stand alongside us, we couldn't reach the many Australian households we support each year.

To all our supporters, thank you. Your commitment and generosity inspire us every day, and we're truly grateful to have you as part of the OzChild family.

Treasurer's Report



The 2025 financial year has seen OzChild invest into innovative practice, advocacy and evidence-based services whilst maintaining a solid core service delivery base to ensure financial sustainability.

This year's results saw OzChild deliver an operating deficit of \$1,019,489 (2024: deficit of \$614,686) and a comprehensive deficit of \$790,537 (2024: deficit of \$340,667).

The \$790,537 comprehensive deficit comprises of an increase in operational income, an increase in value of investment properties (\$15,000), an increase in endowment funds (\$53,476), gain on revaluation of office buildings (\$160,475), and a significant increase in the value of OzChild's Managed Funds (\$1.116M).

In Financial Year 2025, OzChild's operating revenue grew by 2.8%, effectively remaining stable when indexation increases are discounted. Operating expenditure increased by 3.4%, reflecting both investments into new finance software, national advocacy initiatives, evidence-based program trials, carer attraction activity, along with increased costs in the services OzChild delivered.

OzChild's asset base saw a small 2.9% decrease in Financial Year 2025 due to the \$790,537 comprehensive deficit result. This sees OzChild maintain a strong net asset position of \$26.47M (2024: \$27.26M).

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 with expertise by the Executive Director of Finance and Infrastructure, Mark Powell, for their unwavering support and assistance throughout the year.

With OzChild's balance between future investment and financial sustainability, I am confident we are positioned well to both deliver quality services within our existing programs and see transformation and innovation in future service delivery.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Wootten', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael Wootten
Treasurer

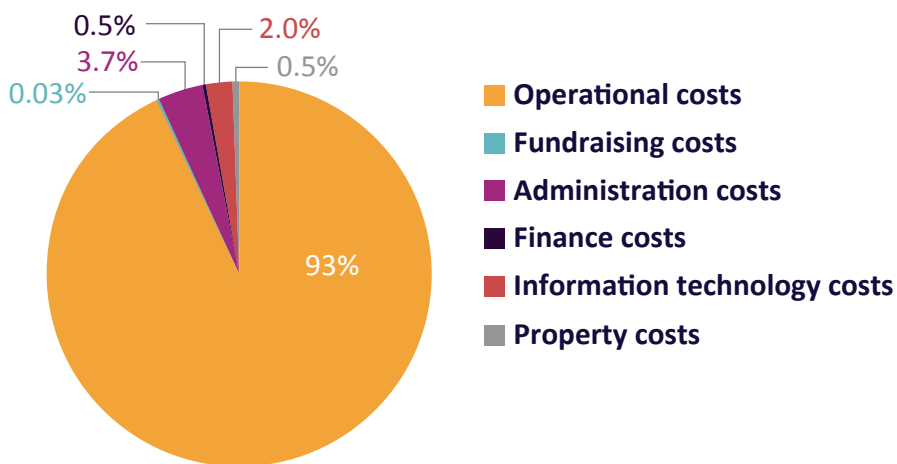
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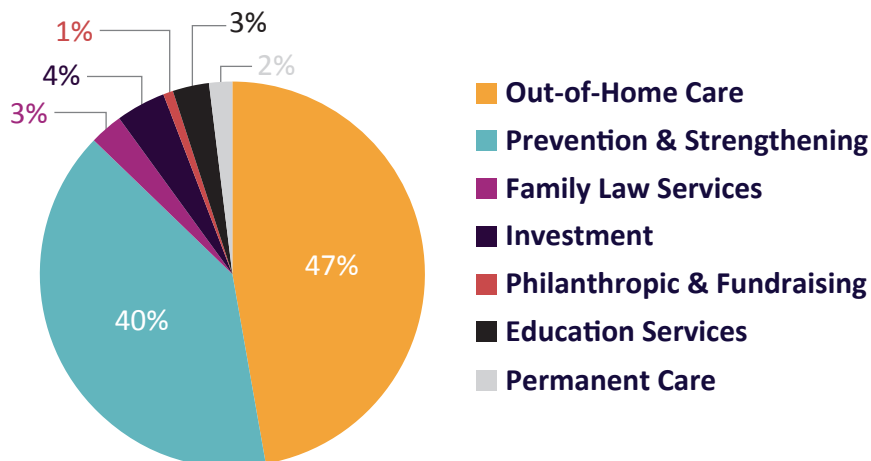
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Financial Snapshot

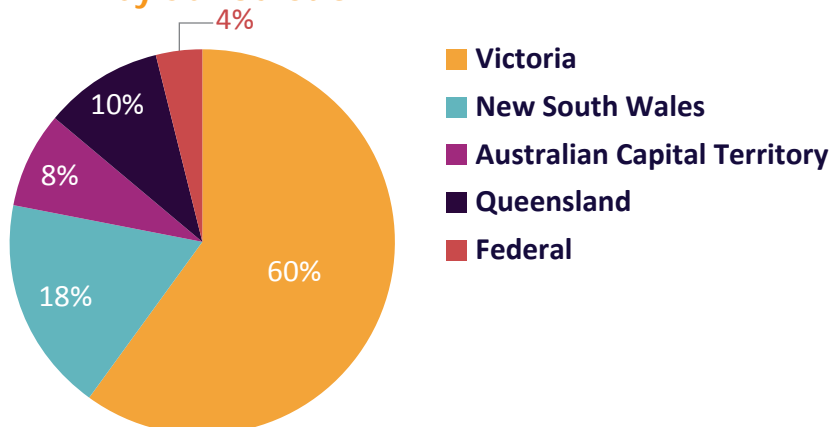
Operating Expenses



Service Mix by Income



Income by Jurisdiction



Comprehensive Income

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income as at 30 June 2025

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Operating revenue		
Government grants and subsidies	64,193,987	61,756,695
Donations and fundraising activities	556,852	655,928
Investment income	1,468,085	1,180,004
Investment movements	1,116,265	1,121,590
Fees for service	851,910	1,591,004
Other income	409,355	424,902
Total operating revenue	68,596,454	66,730,123
Operating expenses		
Operational costs	64,915,974	62,546,783
Fundraising costs	22,829	25,036
Administration costs	2,574,545	2,894,542
Finance costs	382,690	325,197
Information technology costs	1,367,084	1,197,800
Property costs	352,820	355,451
Total operating expenses	69,615,942	67,344,809
Operating deficit for the year	(1,019,489)	(614,686)
Non operating revenue		
Increment on revaluation of Investment properties	15,000	207,541
Increment in endowment funds	53,476	66,478
Non operating surplus	68,476	274,019
Net surplus (deficit) for the year	(951,012)	(340,667)
Other comprehensive income		
Gain on revaluation of office buildings	160,475	-
Other comprehensive surplus (deficit)	160,475	-
Total comprehensive surplus (deficit) for the year	(790,537)	(340,667)

Financial Position

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025

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

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,437,894	4,728,284
Receivables	880,298	1,332,435
Financial assets	3,955,900	2,953,426
Other assets	838,837	736,366
Total current assets	7,112,929	9,750,511
Non-current assets		
Financial assets	18,763,128	17,672,818
Property, plant and equipment	7,793,026	8,268,620
Investment property	4,955,000	4,940,000
Other assets	168,742	196,107
Right of Use Assets	5,530,831	7,826,198
Total non-current assets	37,210,727	38,903,743
Total assets	44,323,656	48,654,254
Current liabilities		
Provisions	4,637,805	4,399,143
Other liabilities	2,454,073	3,286,120
Payables	4,047,473	4,802,453
Right of Use Lease Liabilities	2,295,210	2,117,470
Total current liabilities	13,434,561	14,605,186
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	343,569	387,634
Right of Use Lease Liabilities	4,072,991	6,398,363
Total non-current liabilities	4,416,560	6,785,997
Total liabilities	17,851,121	21,391,183
Net assets	26,472,535	27,263,071
Equity		
Endowment funds	18,555,269	18,501,794
Asset revaluation reserve	160,475	-
Accumulated surplus (deficit)	7,756,791	8,761,278
Total equity	26,472,535	27,263,071



Give a
gift that
counts



Grant the *wish*
of a child in care this Christmas

The Kindness of Christmas Shines *Brightly*



As we reflect on the 2024 festive season, we acknowledge the kindness of our OzChild community who donated more than 2,000 gifts for the children and young people we support.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every individual and corporate supporter whose generosity made a genuine difference through the OzChild Wishing Tree appeal.

Granting the wishes of children and young people across our community and bringing joy to Christmas Day extends further than the smile on a child's face, this support also provides enormous relief for carers and parents who face the added financial pressure this time of year can bring, easing the burden and allowing families to focus on what matters most - togetherness, hope and celebration.



Stanley Black & Decker



Vaughan Constructions



Texco Constructions



THANK YOU!

Air-Met
Bay Building Group
Best of Home Care
BGL Corporate Solutions
BPI360
Commonwealth Bank - Waverley Gardens Shopping Centre
Decking out Melbourne
Edithvale Primary School
Focus Life
Franchise Council of Australia (FCA)
InLife Independent Living
Intrepid Travel
Jasco

Jessie Mcpherson Private Hospital
Kids Paradise Early Learning Centre
KKR Australia
Lilydale Rotary Club
Seymour Whyte Constructions
Shane Donovan Real Estate
Stanley B&D
Telstra Enterprise
Texco Constructions
TOSSIT
Vaughan Constructions
Victorian Building Authority
Windsor Management Insurance Brokers Pty Ltd



Bay Building Group



BGL Corporate Solutions



Commonwealth Bank



Shane Donovan Real Estate



Seymour Whyte Constructions



Thank you!

As we reflect on the year and look toward our 175th anniversary in 2026, we do so with immense gratitude for everyone who makes our work possible.

To our funders, partners, and supporters, your belief in OzChild's vision allows us to deliver evidence-based programs, strengthen families, and create brighter futures for children and young people. Your generosity ensures our impact continues to grow.

To our foster and kinship carers, you are the heart of the OzChild Village. Your compassion, dedication, and resilience transform lives every day, and your commitment inspires us all.

To our sector colleagues and community partners we thank you for walking alongside us in pursuit of shared goals. Together, we are advancing evidence, equity, and opportunity for every child and family.

And to our staff, volunteers, and Board members, your expertise, passion, and unwavering commitment to our purpose carries our vision forward for generations.

As we approach our 175th year, we are reminded that our legacy of care has always been built on partnership, courage, and hope. Together, we will continue to deliver what works, for the next 175 years and beyond.

Government

ACT Government Community Services Directorate
Australian Government - Attorney Generals Department
Australian Government - Department of Social Services
Australian Government - National Indigenous Advancement Agency
Emergency Management Victoria
Family Safety Victoria
Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - NSW Health WS & SWS
Joint Child Protection Response Program - NSW Health
Northern Sydney Local Health District - NSW Health
NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice
Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
Victorian Government Department of Education and Training
Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Victorian Government Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria
Victorian Government Department of Treasury and Finance

Peak Body Affiliations

AbSec - NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation
Association of Children Welfare Agencies
Australian Childhood Foundation
Centre for Evidence and Implementation
Families Australia
Family Relationship Services Australia
Foster Care Association of Victoria
Kinship Alliance Australia
Kinship Care Victoria
PeakCare
Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak
Queensland Foster and Kinship Care
SNAICC - National Voice for our Children
The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young Peoples Alliance

Thank you!

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations/Services and Elders

Barang Regional Alliance
Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services
First Peoples Health and Wellbeing Health Service
Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement
Gudjagang Ngara li-dhi Aboriginal Corporation
Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
ID. Know Yourself
Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health/Ipswich Queensland
KARI Ltd
Victoria LAECG Local Aboriginal Education Consultive Group
Nairn Marr Djambana Aboriginal Gathering Place
Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation
Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative
Sydney Region Aboriginal Corporation
Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Wandiyali
Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association Aboriginal Gathering Place
Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal Corporation

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

Australian Childhood Foundation
Bayside Peninsula Child & Family Alliance
Bayside Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership
Bayside Peninsula Orange Door (Support and Safety Hub) Governance and Operational Group
DART Institute
Link Up NSW
Macarthur DV Service (MWDVCAS) / Staying Home Leaving Violence
Mentha Consulting
Southern Melbourne Child & Family Alliance
Triple P Positive Parenting Program

Local Government Authorities

Blacktown City Council
Campbelltown City Council
City of Greater Frankston
Mornington Peninsula Shire
Penrith City Council

Putting Families First Consortium Partners

Australian African Foundation for Retention and Opportunity
Charis Mentoring
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Youth Support Advocacy Services

Supporters

Air-Met Scientific Pty Ltd
Antaeus Charitable Fund, a Charitable Fund Account of Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
A. L. Lane Foundation
Barhead
Barr Family Foundation
Bay Building
Bendigo Bank
Best of Home Care
Booran Motors
Brennan IT
Brian & Virginia McNamee Foundation
Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation
BGL Corporate Solutions
BPI360
Cetrola Legal
Commonwealth Bank Australia
Connecting Up
Cassandra Gantner Foundation
Cythera
DDS Group
Decking Out Melbourne
DOP
DREWBUILD
Eddi
Edithvale Pre-School
Edithvale Primary School
Equity Trustees
Eric & Elizabeth Gross Foundation
EQ
FGF Charitable Fund
Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
Focus Life
Fortress Melbourne
Franchise Council of Australia (FCA)
Greater Shepparton Foundation
Harvey Patterson Fund
Henry Brough Smith Charitable Trust
InLife Independent Living
Interleasing
Intrepid Travel
JASCO
JB Hi-Fi
Jessie Mcpherson Private Hospital
John Lambrick Trust
Joan of Hearts Foundation
Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust
Kenshi Candles and Diffusers
Kids Paradise Early Learning Centre
KKR Australia
Lilydale Rotary Club
Maddocks Foundation
Matana Foundation for Young People
McGregor Family Fund, a sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation
Mums Supporting Families in Need
Mutual Trust
Newsboys Foundation
Nelson Alexandra Foundation
O'Brien Electrical Carrum Downs
One Tomorrow Charitable Fund, a sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation
Our Village (prev. St Kilda Mums)
OzChild Op Shop Volunteers
Paul Edward Dehnert Estate
Perpetual
Pincus Family Foundation
R.E Ross Trust
R.M. Ansett Trust
Reginald Buenaventura
Rick & Elizabeth Tudor
SecureCorp
Seymour Whyte Constructions
Shane Donovan Real Estate
SISU Solutions
SOPE
Stanley Black & Decker
Telstra
Telstra Enterprise
Teska Carson
Texco Constructions
The Australian Venue Co
The Eighth
The Yorke Family Foundation, as managed by Equity Trustees
Thomas O'Toole
TOSSIT
Vaughan Constructions
Victorian Building Authority
VisitUs
Windsor Management Insurance Brokers
WorkSafe Guardian



Thank you!

OzChild Village of Carers

We extend our heartfelt thanks to every member of the OzChild Village of carers for the incredible contributions you've made throughout the year. Your commitment, compassion, and partnership continue to shape better outcomes for children, young people, and families across our programs.

We are deeply grateful for the carers who work alongside us in true collaboration - generously volunteering their time, lending their voices, and sharing their experiences to strengthen our work and inspire others to care. Whether helping to deliver events and activities, raising awareness, or offering wisdom gained through lived experience, your impact is felt across the entire OzChild community.

Carers from our foster care, kinship care, and TFCO programs played vital roles again this year, participating in accreditation panels, carer consultation groups, and recruitment processes, as well as contributing to pre-accreditation training and information sessions. Our TFCO carers also provided invaluable support in our promotion and recruitment efforts, helping to grow the village even further.

To every carer in the OzChild Village — thank you. Your dedication and generosity of spirit continue to change lives and strengthen families every day.

OzChild Op Shop Volunteers

We are deeply grateful to the incredible team of local volunteers who bring energy, kindness, and dedication to running the OzChild Op Shop. You are the welcoming faces our shoppers see each day and the proud ambassadors who share our vision with the Hightett community.

The Op Shop continues to be a vital source of income, helping OzChild deliver essential support and services to children, young people, and families in need. Every sale made, every item sorted, and every conversation shared helps us make a lasting difference, we couldn't do it without you.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this content includes the name and a photo of a deceased person.

Vale

During the year, we sadly farewelled several much-loved members of the OzChild Village – carers, friends, and supporters whose contributions and kindness left a lasting mark on our community. Each is remembered with deep fondness and appreciation.

We pay special tribute to Uncle John Delaney and Aub Gamble, whose legacy of care and commitment to others will continue to guide and inspire our work.

Vale Uncle John Delaney 1934 - 2024

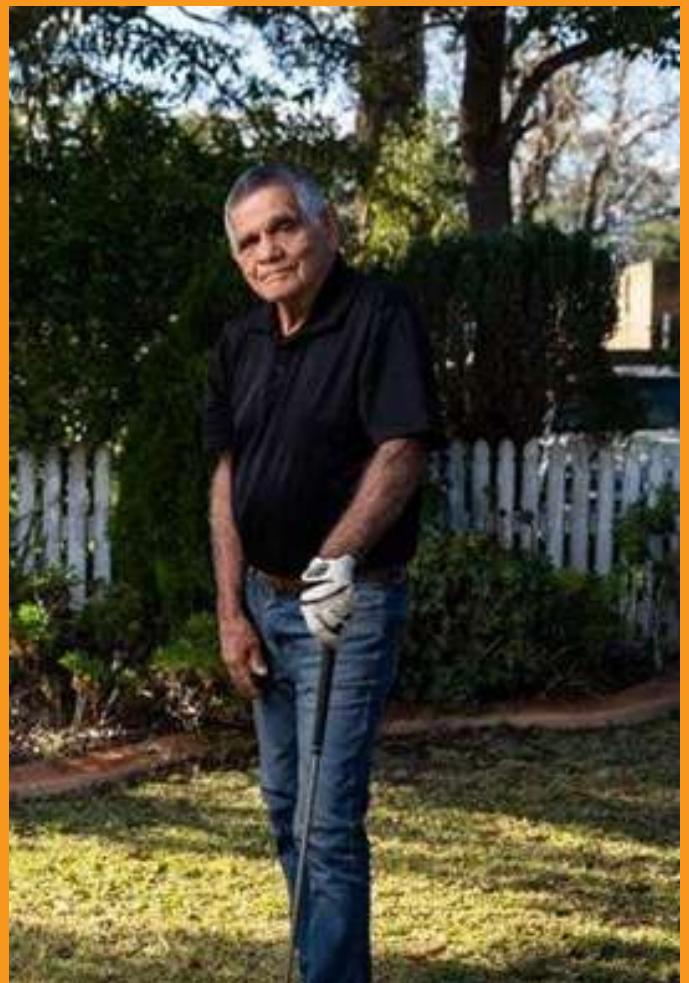
In late 2024, OzChild mourned the passing of Uncle John Delaney, the oldest living male Kamilaroi Elder, born on Burra Bee Dee Mission, Coonabarabran NSW in May 1934. Uncle John was a father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather – a remarkable legacy of family and love. Together with his wife, Aunty Pat, he also embraced the role of kin carer to four of their grandchildren, embodying the strength and resilience of community care.

Uncle John made an unforgettable contribution to OzChild. He was instrumental in the establishment of our Bridging Cultures Unit, guiding us on our journey to build cultural competence in delivering safe, responsive, and culturally grounded practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, and families.

As a valued member of OzChild's Cultural Advisory Standing Committee, Uncle John provided wise counsel on key initiatives, including the development of a Cultural Practice Guide for our Treatment Foster Care program, the Bridging Cultures Unit's Strategic Framework, and our Cultural Practice Guide. He also offered his guidance to the Local Aboriginal Reference Group in Campbelltown. His voice, wisdom, and commitment helped shape our work and improve outcomes for many families, then and well into the future.

Uncle John's impact will continue to be honoured through the John Delaney Dhiiyaan Mirri Award, which recognises OzChild staff who, like Uncle John, demonstrate excellence in improving the lives of First Nations children and families, and who champion First Nations issues in the wider community.

We extend our deepest condolences to his daughter, Dea Delaney-Thiele, his extended family, and the First Nations community. Uncle John's wisdom, generosity, and leadership will never be forgotten.



Vale Aub Gamble 1921 – 2025

It is with heavy hearts that we remember Aubrey “Aub” Gamble, who passed away on 1 September 2025 — just months short of his 104th birthday. OzChild lost not just a volunteer, but a cherished friend whose warmth, humour, and dedication touched every corner of our community.

Aub’s story is one of quiet commitment and joyful service. For more than 25 years, he gave his time each week at the OzChild Op Shop in Highett, showing up, tinkering, repairing, caring long after most would have thought to slow down.

Beyond OzChild, Aub’s spirit of service extended to many parts of his life. For two decades, he volunteered with Kingston City Council’s Meals on Wheels program and was an active member of many other community groups and sporting clubs and he led an active life, roller skating, playing golf, competing in skating championships (winning Victorian state titles in 1945, ’47, and ’49), in fact – he continued to lace up the roller skates until he was well into his 90s - a testament to his energy, courage, and zest for life.

Even in his later years, when mobility became more challenging, Aub continued to find purpose in giving. He only retired from his volunteer role early in 2025, sharing that staying active and engaged had always meant the world to him.

We remember Aub for his gentle humour, his generous spirit, and his steadfast loyalty. We honour his legacy by carrying forward that same spirit of care, patience, and generosity in all that we do.



Aub with OzChild CEO Lisa Griffiths celebrating his 100th birthday

My Dear Friends,

At 103 I never thought I'd be standing here with so many other hundred-year-olds - what a club to belong to!

We've seen a world change many times over, yet here we are, proof that resilience, laughter, and maybe a little stubbornness can carry you a long way.

We have lived not just years, but lifetimes within a lifetime. Let us celebrate the gift of today, the company of one another, and the joy of still being able to share stories.

May we continue to inspire those younger than us to live fully and may every day we have now be a day of gratitude and grace.

-Aubrey Gamble

Aub's family generously shared with us a speech he was preparing to give at his local Centenarians Luncheon which was to be held just four days after his passing. Aub's words remind us of the importance of connection and care for one another and the communities in which we live and work.



**Their Future is
in Your Hands**

**Enquire about
becoming a
*foster carer today!***

The care you give now will last a lifetime
fostercare@ozchild.org.au



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