



keyassets

SERVING CHILDREN, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

Impact Report  
2024



## Acknowledgement of Country

Key Assets Australia deeply honours and celebrates the rich and enduring cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, recognising them as the oldest continuing cultures in the world.

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work. We recognise their profound spiritual connection to the land and pay heartfelt respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

We acknowledge the deep trauma, grief, and loss experienced by these communities, both historically and presently, and commit to walking alongside them in support and solidarity.

# Table of Contents

Chair’s Message .....	2	<b>New South Wales</b> .....	32
CEO’s Message .....	3	Case Study: Building trust so children thrive. . .	34
Our Pledges To You. ....	4	<b>Queensland</b> .....	36
We Are All Key Assets .....	5	Case Study: Supporting kids to understand their life story. ....	38
Strategic Plan 2020–2025 .....	6	<b>Norfolk Island</b> .....	40
Strategic Impact Reflection .....	8	Case Study: A creative therapeutic approach. . .	41
Impact on Children and Young People .....	9	<b>Disability Services</b> .....	42
System Impact .....	10	Case Study: Disability support to reach goals and milestones. ....	44
Collaborative Impact with the Martin James Foundation .....	11	Cultural Practice Collective .....	46
2024 Annual Statistics Highlights .....	12	Allies for Children .....	50
Services Map of Australia .....	13	Harnessing Virtual Reality .....	49
Chrysalis Transformation Hub .....	14	Martin James Foundation .....	50
<b>Western Australia</b> .....	16	Marketing .....	52
Case Study: The Importance Of Building Trust .....	19	Quality Practice and Safeguarding .....	54
<b>South Australia</b> .....	20	People & Culture .....	56
Case Study: Connecting kids and carers to culture .....	22	Staff Stories .....	60
<b>Victoria</b> .....	24	Board of Directors .....	62
Case Study: Caring runs in the family .....	27	Senior Executive Leadership .....	66
<b>Tasmania</b> .....	28	Operations Directors .....	69
Case Study: A child-centred approach to family restoration .....	30	Financial Summary .....	72
		Funding Partners .....	73

### About Us

Key Assets Australia (KAA) is a non-government, not-for-profit children, family and community services agency which works in partnership with the Martin James Foundation, a global charitable group delivering services and support across Europe, Asia Pacific and Canada.

KAA was founded in 2007 and has grown to provide a wide range of services to children, families and communities in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia, Victoria and Norfolk Island.

We strive to continue our work in developing an innovative range of services for children and young people, partnering with statutory bodies, foster carers, families and people with disabilities to understand and meet their unique needs, enabling them to succeed.



# Chair's Message

**In a year marked by significant challenges for Australians, our commitment to achieving positive and lasting outcomes for children, young people, families and communities has never been stronger.**

**I am immensely proud of the accomplishments of Key Assets Australia's (KAA) dedicated staff, carers and the children and young people in our care.**

The 2024 financial year was tremendously busy for KAA. Our team focused on getting our own "house in order" while achieving goals and objectives in our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, planning for the next five years and most importantly, supporting the many children and families who rely on us.

Organisationally, we leveraged our reputation and experience to collaborate with our partners to influence much-needed change within the human services system and specifically the Out-Of-Home Care (OOHC) sector. Serious challenges are hindering the ability of service providers like KAA to deliver the best support for individuals and families. Reform is urgently needed to address long-standing issues, such as the national shortage of foster carers and the safe transition of First Nations children to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).

KAA works in an increasingly complex system, highlighted by multiple inquiries impacting the way we deliver our services and support.

We draw on our national reach to understand what works best for children, young people and families. While the issues KAA faces are multifaceted and cannot be solved by any single organisation, the investments we are making to mature as an organisation and enhance our operations position KAA as a stronger, more influential and impactful player moving forward. A prime example of this is our focus on the carer journey, and our application of research and data analysis to bolster national foster carer sustainability.

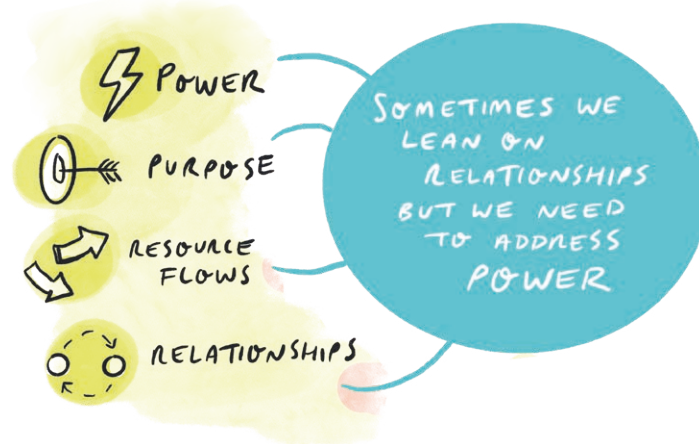
Another example is KAA's innovation hub, Chrysalis Transformation Hub (Chrysalis), which has delivered benefits at both organisational and systemic levels. One Chrysalis project is sharing the voices of the children, young people and carers we support to help us reshape our practices and influence the broader system. Our upcoming Strategic Plan will further elevate this work through a new pillar dedicated to the Voice of the Child.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my fellow Board Directors for their contributions this financial year. I was delighted to welcome Jessica Oostenbroek, a First Nations woman, to the Board in May. Jessica's cultural perspective is fostering a deeper understanding of First Nations issues amongst the Board, and combined with our exciting new Cultural Practice Collective, is directly impacting the support we provide to this important cohort of children, young people and carers.

We are committed to listening to our staff and to our carers. I continue to be humbled by the love and care they show. To Dianne and the entire KAA Executive Leadership Team congratulations on another successful year. We are united in positively impacting the lives and outcomes of children, young people, families and communities we serve.



**Craig Lawn**  
Chair



# CEO's Message

**The 2024 financial year has been both busy and impactful for KAA. Our commitment to building a more cohesive and effective organisation has brought positive outcomes for our staff and the thousands of children, young people, carers and families we support.**

This year was the last full financial year of our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan which centres on three key objectives: growing and expanding our services; transforming our systems and processes; fostering innovation and leadership. I am immensely proud to report that we have not only advanced in these areas but achieved far more than we set out to. At the same time, we have remained focused of delivering lasting, positive outcomes for those in our care.

From an operational perspective, KAA had some notable success in FY2024, including winning contracts in several jurisdictions, expanding our reach and growing our impact.

Internally, a highlight of the year has been our establishment of the Cultural Practice Collective, initiated by our Cultural Practice Leads. The Collective aims to facilitate enhanced sharing of knowledge, experience and resources across the organisation which directly impacts our First Nations children, young people, carers and families, and enables and enhances their ongoing connection to culture. In just a few months, the group developed a vision and integrated their collaborative approach into several key priority areas, including the development of our next Reconciliation Action Plan. The Board's endorsement of the Collective and co-sponsorship by myself and KAA's Group Director of Operations highlights the significance we place on this essential work.

I have also been pleased to see the investment in our Chrysalis Transformation Hub paying off, particularly in amplifying the voices of the children and young people. Listening to the lived experiences of children, families and carers is vital for creating an organisation – and wider sector – that is child-centred, empathetic and accountable.

We have also invested heavily in our employees, continuing to equip them with the tools, systems and training they need to deliver the highest quality support to children and families in our care. Our Quality Practice and Safeguarding team have published several new practice guides and a safeguarding framework, all of which provide a

national, consistent approach to delivering support. Additionally, our new Key Assets Academy offers training and development opportunities for leaders, as well as mechanisms to ensure that knowledge is cascaded throughout the organisation.

On a personal note, it has been my privilege to represent KAA as a member of two national strategic alliances within our sector. The first, Allies for Children, is a partnership of seven chief executives working across the child, youth and family sector who have a shared vision to advocate for better policies and systems to support positive change in Australia's child protection system. The second is a group within the peak body, Families Australia, focused on tackling the pressing nationwide issue of attracting foster carers. Both alliances aim to create significant change for the sector that can only be achieved with collective, rather than individual efforts. Exciting developments are on the horizon for both groups – watch this space.

Guided by the Board, we have also spent time refreshing our Strategic Plan to drive our work over the coming years. Rather than develop a completely new plan, we have built on the three strategic pillars in our current strategy and introduced a fourth pillar that centres the voices and experiences of children, young people and carers at the heart of everything we do. This will no doubt strengthen our capability to deliver services that meet the needs of those we support.

Finally, I extend my deepest gratitude to KAA Chair Craig Lawn and the Board of Directors for their invaluable guidance and wisdom. To the Executive Leadership Team, thank you for your commitment to KAA and the thousands of children, young people and families we serve. Last, and certainly not least, to our dedicated and compassionate carers and employees, thank you for everything you do. Your hard work enables KAA to make a positive and lasting impact of the lives of children, young people and families.



**Dr Dianne Jackson**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Our *pledges* To You



## Children and Families



1. Set high standards for ourselves and the care and support we provide for you
2. Be on your side and accept you for who you are and what you want to be
3. Prioritise your safety, connections and build your resilience
4. Be passionate, caring and respectful in everything that we do
5. Listen to and learn from you so that we can do things better

## Customers, Carers and Staff



1. Deliver excellence through quality service provision, collaboration and measuring outcomes
2. Act with honesty and transparency
3. Deliver innovative services in cost effective ways
4. Challenge the norm, ask questions and keep our promises
5. Conduct our business with financial integrity to achieve sustainability and value

## Communities



1. Build a socially responsible and friendly presence in each of our communities
2. Value diversity and inclusion and act with cultural sensitivity and respect
3. Be creative and flexible to respond to each community's unique needs
4. Recruit, train, support and retain the best people to deliver services
5. Contribute to shared learning through research and partnerships

# We Are All *Key Assets*



**Our purpose is to achieve positive and lasting outcomes for children, families and communities.**

We will achieve our purpose by positively impacting the lives of children, young people, their families and carers through quality services and expert advice designed to provide support, build confidence, improve skills, develop relationships, and strengthen resilience.

**Key to what we do are our culture and our core values**

## Our Culture and Core Values



**Recognising everybody counts and is accountable**



**Providing high quality and safe services**



**Achieving excellence through continuous improvement**



**Cultivating knowledge, innovation and learning**



# Strategic Plan 2020-2025

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

### Continue To Safely Grow And Expand Our Services

We are excited about the future and have a vision to expand the positive impact we make on the lives of children, families and communities with a particular focus on vulnerable and at risk and communities.

- 1.1. We will embed a child centered and family focused approach across everything we do
- 1.2. We will increase our focus on building evidence of the positive outcomes
- 1.3. We will continue to grow and diversify our services
- 1.4. We will grow geographically seeking new opportunities in areas of need and collaborate with partners to achieve our purpose
- 1.5. We will strengthen our relationships with all levels of government and identify more opportunities to work in regional and remote areas
- 1.6. We will continue to deliver quality services through growing and development programmes for our staff, carers and volunteers
- 1.7. We will continue to build on our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and opportunities to partner to further our reconciliation journey
- 1.8. We will ensure that the voice of children is heard in everything we do

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

### Innovate And Lead

We will use our strengths and experience to demonstrate how our innovative solutions make a difference for the children, young people, families and communities we support, and help lead and share best practice.

- 3.1. We will develop thought leadership and best practice methods for care
- 3.2. We will explore changes to our business models to maximise our resources across the continuum of services
- 3.3. We will remain abreast of developments in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- 3.4. We will work with Aboriginal partners to support transitioning services to Aboriginal children and families to Aboriginal providers
- 3.5. We will continue the implementation of the Key to Care Practice Framework for Foster Care and Working with Families
- 3.6. We will trial innovative new services and regions
- 3.7. We will continue the development of innovative approaches to child safe organisations
- 3.8. We will continue to build the capability and governance of our Board and Executive Leadership Team

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

### Transform Our Processes And Develop Our Systems And Skills

We will invest in our people and systems to transform our skills, processes, and technology to deliver quality services to enable us to be more effective, efficient and flexible in maximising our impact.

- 2.1. We will continue to refine our skills, processes and systems to meet the demands of innovation and diversification
- 2.2. We will invest in the best technology and available solutions to improve our network, systems, and hardware
- 2.3. We will build staff capacity and create opportunities for succession planning and talent mapping
- 2.4. We will invest in learning and resources for staff and carers
- 2.5. We will engage in a customer and competitor analysis to better understand our customers' expectations, opportunities, risks and future direction
- 2.6. We will engage internationally to showcase our outcomes and to learn from contemporary trends worldwide
- 2.7. We will review the carer journey to identify opportunities to improve our carers' experience
- 2.8. We will review and learn the lessons from our response to COVID-19 as it informs our strategic objectives



“

Our purpose is to achieve positive and lasting outcomes for children, families and communities. We will achieve our purpose by positively impacting the lives of children, young people, their families and carers through quality services and expert advice designed to provide support, build confidence, improve skills, develop relationships, and strengthen resilience.



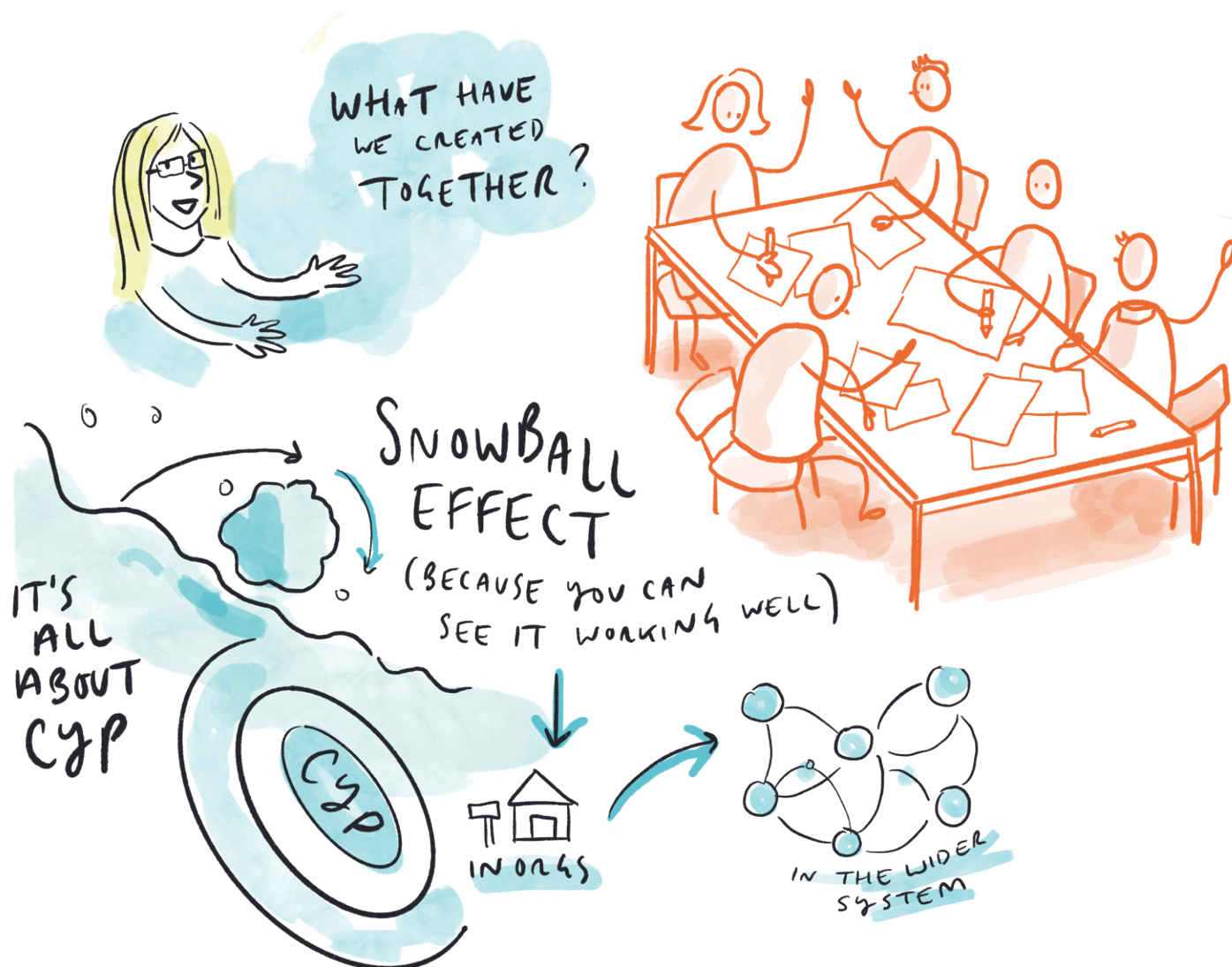
# Strategic Impact Reflection

Under our current strategic plan, KAA has been committed to achieve its strategic objectives of safe growth, transformation of skills and systems, and leadership and innovation.

We have made incredible progress against these objectives, ensuring children and young people are supported throughout all efforts. We also recognise that a significant proportion of those we serve are First Nations people and have committed to further developing our cultural confidence and embedding understanding, respect and cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users, staff, and carers across the organisation.

KAA's commitment to achieving its strategic objectives has ensured that the organisation can adapt in an ever-changing environment while increasing our impact throughout Australia.

For 2025, KAA will release a refreshed strategic plan, continuing to strive for safe expansion of services, systems transformation and innovation, ensuring that lived experiences are at the centre of all we do.



## Impact on Children and Young People

KAA has achieved significant milestones in improving the lives of children and young people.

Our commitment to a child-centred and family-focused approach ensures that the voices of children and young people (CYP) are heard in everything we do.

By combining quantitative data with key research led initiatives, KAA continues to strengthen its ability to provide lasting outcomes to vulnerable CYP across Australia.

### Key Initiatives and innovations

#### Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI):

Conducted over three rounds between November 2021 and March 2023, the survey involved over 400 children aged 5 and above and revealed:

- **9 out of 10 children** felt safe while in care
- **3 out of 4 children** were happy with their personal achievements
- **3 out of 4 children** felt satisfied with their social connections.

These insights also highlight that within the first 6 to 12 months in care with KAA, young people feel safe and supported, reaffirming our commitment to improving children and young people's wellbeing while ensuring a long-term sense of safety.

♥ Thank you to all the young people who shared their feelings with us.

#### Cultural developments and initiatives

Our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) highlights our dedication to working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and community members. A key element of our commitment to cultural development has been the establishment of Cultural Practice Lead (CPL) roles in each jurisdiction. This has led to the creation of a National Cultural Practice Collective, which focuses on ensuring that KAA effectively meets the needs of all children who identify as First Nations.

➔ Read more about the Impact our Cultural Practice team have achieved on page 46-47

#### Disability Services

As a registered NDIS disability service provider, KAA continues to offer disability services in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families with highly individualised support.

➔ Read more about the Impact our disability services have achieved on page 42

#### Chrysalis Transformation Hub:

The Chrysalis Transformation Hub, launched in 2023, has been instrumental in driving innovation and systemic change throughout our services. Two key initiatives launched through Chrysalis include:

- **'Voice of the Child':** This initiative ensures that the perspectives and experiences of children are central to our service development and delivery.
- **'Kinship Care Discovery':** Focused on understanding and enhancing the experiences of kinship carers and the children in their care, promoting stability and well-being.

These initiatives not only strengthen our ability to deliver quality services but also reinforce our leadership in creating a better future for CYP and carers.

➔ Read more about the Impact our Chrysalis team have made on page 14

#### Practice Framework and therapeutic supports

The implementation of the Key to Care Practice Framework across all states in 2019 marked another milestone in the organisation's efforts to standardise and advance the care provided to children and young people.

This framework was developed in collaboration with the Parenting Research Centre and the Martin James Foundation to support stabilising placements and support long-term therapeutic outcomes. This coaching approach is particularly effective for CYP with trauma backgrounds, helping them to build essential, trusting relationships. The model continues to evolve as studies and research are undertaken to measure the effectiveness of the framework in terms of outcomes and impact.

➔ Read more about the Impact our Quality and Practice team have achieved on page 54-55



## System Impact

**KAA has made significant strides in transforming how it operates, supports its workforce and implements best practices to achieve impactful results.**

The systems KAA has built have enabled us to be at the forefront of care innovation, embedding a continuous improvement model in all areas of operations that will continue into future years.

### Transforming systems and processes

KAA's commitment to improving its internal systems has been fundamental to streamlining processes and ensuring consistent delivery of high-quality services. The introduction of a new Case and Carer Management System in 2022 has streamlined our customer relationship and case management processes. Furthermore, the implementation of new IT systems across the organisation has improved efficiency, allowing staff and carers to focus on delivering frontline care.

The adoption of these systems is part of boarder digital transformation that includes enhanced privacy, compliance monitoring and streamlined reporting processes. By adopting the latest technology solutions, we continue to streamline our operations, enhance data management, and improve communication across our organisation.

### Development for our people

In 2021, KAA launched the Key Assets Academy, which is a national leadership and cultural development program available to all teams across all jurisdictions. The academy aims to deliver a broad spectrum of learning opportunities from frontline management strategies to tools to overcome biases in workplace and social settings. It supports staff at all levels with skills and knowledge, provided via a range of materials and immersive experiences.

KAA recognised that the development of our workforce and the way we serve our carers is central to achieving our purpose. The creation of the Key Assets Annual Learning Fund in 2021 marked a major step forward to professional development of staff, supporting the pursuit of external certifications in a variety of areas to strengthen the overall skill base within the organisation.

### Enhancing the carer journey and supports

Recognising the critical role of carers in providing quality care, KAA has heavily invested in training initiatives like our Care2Learn online training platform. The platform offers carers a range of targeted modules that equip them with essential skills, from trauma-informed care to managing complex behaviours. The platform ensures carers have access to on-demand training and support from our team to continuously improve their care practice.

In 2023, we undertook a comprehensive review of our marketing and recruitment systems, leading to the development of the Carer Journey Project. This initiative aims to provide a seamless and ongoing supportive experience for carers.



[Read more about the systems Impact our Marketing team have accomplished on page 52-53](#)



## Collaborative Impact with the Martin James Foundation

**Over the past five years, KAA's ongoing support of our founder and member, the Martin James Foundation (MJF), has significantly amplified our impact.**

By integrating global insights, this collaboration has empowered us to expand our reach, innovate our practices, and enhance the quality of care we provide to children, young people, and families. This partnership has also helped generate resources to support projects and relationships with likeminded organisations worldwide.

### Expanding our reach

Our collaboration with MJF and our global affiliates has provided valuable input into the expansion of our services to more communities across the country. Leveraging these relationships and connections, we have launched new programs and initiatives aimed at supporting the most vulnerable and at-risk populations. This expansion has enabled us to provide essential care and assistance to more children and families, ensuring they receive the support they need.

### Innovating our practices

Innovation has been a cornerstone of our partnership with MJF. Together, we have developed and implemented new care approaches informed by the latest research and best practices in the field.

This includes the introduction of therapeutic life story work, which helps children and young people understand their personal histories and build a positive sense of identity. Together the organisations have piloted new services and approaches, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of child protection practices.

### Improving quality of care

Our collaboration with MJF has added to our investment in the professional development of our staff and carers. Through joint training programs, workshops, and resources, we continue to equip our team with the skills and knowledge necessary to deliver high-quality, trauma-informed care. This commitment to continuous improvement has translated into better outcomes for the children and families we serve.

### Collaborative projects and initiatives

At the heart of our work with MJF is collaboration. The global network of charitable organisations connected by MJF is united by a shared vision: to provide family-based care alternatives so that children can grow up and thrive in safe and loving families. This vision has facilitated the exchange of best practices and insights at Community of Practice meetings and through various projects and initiatives. MJF's projects in Madagascar, Uganda, Indonesia, Thailand, India, and Nepal, which KAA has supported and collaborated on, are prime examples of how our partnership is making a difference globally.



KAA NSW team with Daniel Croft (2nd from left) and Calum Sawford (3rd from left) from Martin James Foundation.



# 2024 Annual Statistics Highlights



\*All statistics valid as of June 30, 2024.

# Services Map of Australia



## Western Australia:

- 📍 Foster Care
- 📍 Family Support Services
- 📍 Complex Care
- 📍 Disability Services

## New South Wales

- 📍 Foster Care
- 📍 Kinship Care
- 📍 Guardianship
- 📍 Foster Care to Adoption

## Victoria

- 📍 Foster Care
- 📍 Kinship Care
- 📍 Family Preservation and Reunification
- 📍 Intensive Family Support
- 📍 Early Help

## Queensland

- 📍 Foster Care
- 📍 Kinship Care
- 📍 Disability Services
- 📍 Family Support Services

## South Australia:

- 📍 Foster Care
- 📍 Disability Services

## Tasmania

- 📍 Foster Care
- 📍 Sibling Care
- 📍 Intensive Family Preservation and Restoration
- 📍 Early Intervention

## Norfolk Island

- 📍 Children and Family Wellbeing





# Chrysalis Transformation Hub

After an initial set-up phase that included organisation-wide workshops and the recruitment of specialist team members, Chrysalis, our transformation hub, has become a fully operational autonomous part of KAA.

Through bringing human-centred design approaches and new capabilities to KAA, Chrysalis began to drive organisational change across KAA through two key inaugural initiatives. With its goal to enable positive, lasting outcomes for children and young people in care, Chrysalis is embedding change across KAA through working with staff and the children, young people, carers and families we support to transform our services and the service system.

## Building the team

Initially operating with only a CEO, the Chrysalis team grew this financial year to include a Design and Innovation Lead and Service Designer who provide expertise in human-centred design and engagement. We also added a Cultural Advisor to the team who is a member of the Cultural Practice Collective (CPC) and responsible for providing a First Nations perspective to our work and initiatives.

## The Chrysalis Roadshows

Following the launch of Chrysalis in early 2023, the team undertook a roadshow across the country to inform and educate staff about Chrysalis, the concepts of human-centred design and upcoming initiatives.

Multiple workshops were run in each state with more than 300 staff members taking part.

The workshops were an effective way to embed Chrysalis into the organisation and raise awareness about the team and human-centred design process.

## Feedback from the Roadshow:

“Engaging, informative and focus kept coming back to voice of the child. —WA

“Opportunity to step away from the work and think creatively and have input into KAA future. —NSW

“I love that KAA has an innovative approach to practice and is striving to learn and grow as a whole. —QLD

“Appreciate that our opinions and ideas matter in the decision making of the future of KAA and young people. —VIC

## Partners

Chrysalis formed several new partnerships across the year to ensure the team could deliver on its objectives.

To assist with establishing an evaluation and learning approach to measure the impact of Chrysalis' work in transforming systems, a learning partnership was formed with Clear Horizon.

In the area of accountability, the team is working with the Accountable Futures Collective to ensure KAA and Chrysalis are held accountable for their role in the lives of children and young people. The team is also working with lived and living experience expert Morgan Cataldo from Morgan&Co to embed the lived experience of children and young people in its initiatives and across KAA.

Chrysalis also partnered with social enterprise design agency, Innovation Unit, as part of the user research Kinship Care initiative.



## The Voice of the Child initiative

Work on this initiative kicked off in late 2023 and has progressed significantly over the course of 2024. The goal is to embed the voices of children and young people at the centre of KAA's work by engaging directly with them about how this should happen.

One of the first outcomes of this initiative was to create a working group of young people from across KAA jurisdictions to be part of the design process and to explore with us better ways to hear from children and young people in care about their views. The group reflects the diversity of the children and young people we work with at KAA, with a range of ages, genders, cultural backgrounds, care types, and support needs. We put safe and meaningful participation at the heart of our work with the group.

A staff working group was also formed to provide support to and work alongside the young people in the working group. The staff group shares outcomes and learnings from the working group back to each jurisdiction and participates in the design process.

A key activity driven by the young person working group has been the postcard activity to seek feedback from children and young people across the organisation about the things that matter to them and how they want adults to talk to and support them. Through a collaborative process, both the young people and staff working groups were involved in designing the postcards as well as formulating questions on the cards. Working with our Cultural Advisor, a First Nations postcard was also created.

The postcards were offered to children and young people in our service and programs as a voluntary activity to share their views. Once they are returned to Chrysalis, the team will analyse the answers with the working groups and provide insights back to KAA.

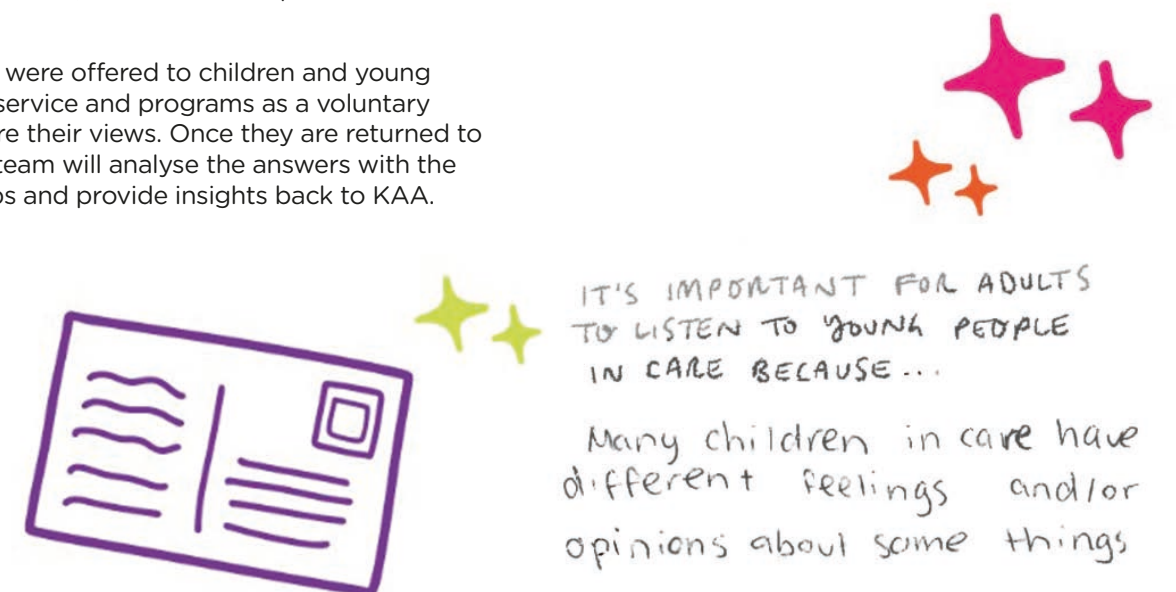
## Kinship Care initiative

In this initiative, our partner Innovation Unit designed a collaborative engagement methodology to explore what is important in kinship care relationships and placements. Chrysalis engaged with 16 staff members, six kinship carers and several external people to get an understanding about kinship care from different perspectives. The information gathered has been analysed by the Chrysalis team, who are now planning the next stage of work.

## Looking ahead

In June 2024, Chrysalis facilitated a two-day Theory of Change workshop with KAA Chair, Executives and staff to begin exploring what change will look like for KAA. Insights from this workshop are being analysed by Chrysalis, with the next stage being further consultation with the organisation and alignment with the refreshed organisational Strategic Plan.

In line with the Chrysalis Framework, the Chrysalis team continue to gather transformational ideas through our engagements and initiatives. We put the ideas through our Innovation Governance process to identify and prioritise future initiatives for the year ahead.





# Western Australia

**Building a team to support the expansion of services in the three regions where KAA delivers support has been a focus for our Western Australian team.**

## Out-of-Home Care

In October 2023, as part of the Department of Communities Out-of-Home-Care reform agenda, KAA was awarded a new contract to continue delivering Community Foster Care, Complex Care and Emergency Foster Care services in three regions of Western Australia. Under the new agreement, our Community Foster Care service grew modestly, while funding for our Complex Care service increased from 11 care arrangements to 23 across the Kimberley, Metropolitan and South West regions.

**As part of the reform, we have been able to work with the Department to provide more flexible Community Foster Care arrangements, with our case workers having greater control in how funds are spent to meet the individual needs of children in care.**

Our team has already been able to use this arrangement to creatively support children, young people and their carers and meet immediate needs more quickly. For example, the team has facilitated timelier access to suitable cars for families caring for children with complex behaviours and a young person with a disability. The new funding arrangements have also made it easier for our case workers to directly refer children in KAA's care to the Allied Health team within KAA's disability service.

Our Out-Of-Home-Care services include:

- Community Foster Care services in the East Kimberley
- Complex Care services in the Kimberley
- Complex Care and Community Foster Care services in Metropolitan
- Complex Care and Community Foster Care services in the South West
- Emergency Foster Care services in the Metropolitan.

## Family Support and Wellbeing service

We have continued to provide a Family Support and Wellbeing service in the East Kimberley region with many positive outcomes for families. Our approach is to intensively support parents to overcome challenges so their children can safely remain living in the family home or be returned home after a period in care due to concerns about their safety. In one example, our case worker worked closely with a mother whose children were at risk of being taken into care due to the unhygienic and unsafe condition of their home. By supporting the mother to address these concerns, the children were able to remain at home in her care.

The pilot Early Intervention Service (ESI) we have been delivering in the East Kimberley region over the last 12 months has been a success. As a result, the service has been extended for another two years, until June 2026. Our partnerships with Jungari-Jutiya Indigenous Corporation and Wunan Foundation to deliver this support have been effective in recruiting local First Nations staff to support families in a culturally safe way. Our team has collaborated with these organisations to provide training and support to staff to help them work effectively with vulnerable families and children. As part of this work, we also set up an Early Diversionary Support Network (EDSN) supporting families in the navigation and coordination of services to prevent them from becoming involved with the Department. In Halls Creek, the EDSN has facilitated a local partnership meeting to reduce the siloing of services within the town and has taken part in community engagement activities to promote the service to families.



## Our staff

It has been a big year in terms of staff growth for our Western Australian team, primarily to meet the needs of the expanded Out-of-Home Care services. We have created several new positions and been able to promote many of our experienced social workers, youth workers and case workers to more senior positions, ensuring valuable organisational skills and knowledge is retained.

To support the increase in complex care homes, we employed KAA's first Property and Assets Manager, whose role has been to identify and negotiate lease arrangements for seven new properties. We also brought 64 more youth workers/senior youth workers on board to support children living in these properties. A Therapeutic Care Trainer also joined the team to assist with training and inducting new youth workers and senior youth workers in KAA's practices and approaches.

Upskilling social workers to use Mentalisation Based Therapy (MBT) as a way of connecting with foster carers and supporting them to understand and reflect on their own and their foster child's mental state and behaviours has been another initiative implemented within the jurisdiction. We also employed an Operations Manager for the Metropolitan region, ensuring we have operational leadership across our three regions. The team has recruited a Quality Practice Lead and Complex Care Therapeutic Lead, both of whom will join the team in FY2024/25. Our ability to attract suitable applicants to fill all these positions is a vote of confidence in our reputation within the sector.

## First Nations research project

Our project with research organisation, Telethon Kids Institute, has continued with Life Without Barriers and Mackillop coming on board as partners. This has enabled a larger cohort of carers and children to contribute to the project. The research aims to measure the impact and importance of cultural connection for First Nations children living in non-First Nations foster care. Over the past year, the research team has conducted a bench line engagement survey and run several truth telling sessions and cultural activities with staff and carers, to explore their attitudes and confidence around keeping children connected to culture and increase their cultural awareness. At the end of 2024, carers will be invited to complete another survey and participate in more activities to track the impact of cultural planning, awareness activities and connection over time. KAA will use findings from this research to inform its cultural practices for First Nations children in non-First Nations care.

## Supporting First Nations children

Aligned to KAA's national approach to supporting the transfer of First Nations children into the care of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), we have continued to work in partnership with ACCOs in the regions where we deliver services. Our approach is to listen to the wants and needs of children and carers and support transfers that are in the best interests of the child, aligned to the Child Placement Principle. Part of our role is to also support staff in ACCOs to gain experience and skills, and for our staff to learn culturally safe and appropriate practices from their First Nations counterparts.

## Family Finding

Family Finding is now embedded as a formalised practice within our Foster Care and Complex Care services. Our Family Finding Social Worker has supported several children to connect with relatives and form new bonds. In one case involving a 4-week-old baby in emergency care with KAA, our social worker identified two older brothers of the baby living with a different foster carer. With permission from the Department, a visit was arranged so the siblings could meet. The visit included bonding time with cuddles and photos taken for the baby's life story. After the visit, the foster carer of the brothers expressed a willingness to have the baby join them in her home. KAA was able to communicate this information to the Department.





# Western Australia Statistics



206

Children Supported Through Foster and Kinship Care Programs



122

Children in Care



107

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children Supported



43

Families Supported



98

NDIS Participants Receiving Services



52

Children Exited from Our Care



24

New Carers Recruited



121

Carers Supported

# The Importance Of Building Trust

“ One of the biggest things that has helped Peter\* is the team that he has. The same four youth workers have worked with Peter since he first came to KAA. He has great relationships with them, and they are always doing their utmost for him.

—Sharna Nadebaum, Team Manager Complex Care South West Region

Peter, who is diagnosed with autism and Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), came to KAA's Complex Care Service, with challenging behaviours, difficulty managing his emotions and suicidal ideation. Through building trust with him – and adopting a therapeutic approach to their support – our team of youth workers are having a life-changing impact on Peter.

“ We've been working collaboratively with the Department of Child Protection and the youth workers who provide day-to-day care with Peter to get him to a good spot and support him with his self-harm and suicidal ideation, explains Sharna.

Using a therapeutic crisis intervention approach, the team has reached a point now where Peter is comfortable, views them as safe for him and sees his placement as his home.

Peter's Senior Youth Worker explains:

“ From the beginning, we were intentional in making the placement a sanctuary for Peter. We understood that the multisensory environment at school and with family were triggers so we maintained a low sensory, calm and cheerful environment at the placement. When Peter would get triggered, he would request to be collected and come to the placement to de-escalate.

One of Peter's other triggers was shame from constantly being corrected. We decided to influence Peter's behaviour through positive enforcement - verbal praise, hurdle help, caring gestures such as cleaning his room and taking his input seriously.

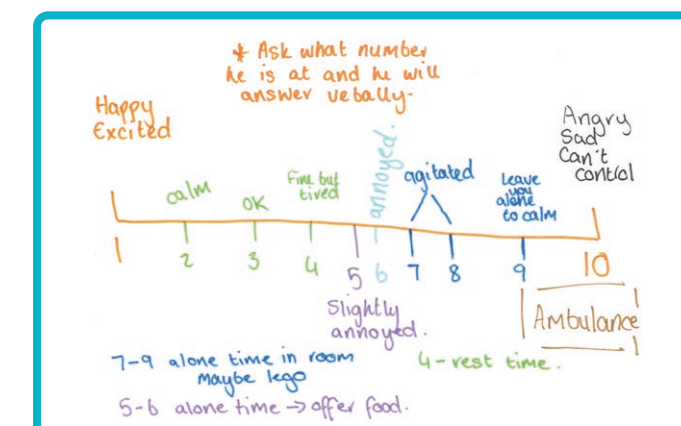
These small but meaningful actions have helped to build trust between Peter and his youth workers, enabling Peter to learn to regulate his emotions and manage his feelings.

More recently, the team has worked with Peter to co-design a 'mood scale' or risk management plan for when Peter is feeling dysregulated or having suicidal thoughts. Acknowledging that asking questions

can be triggering, Peter and the team developed a scaling system whereby Peter puts numbers on the fridge to let staff know how he is feeling and what level of support he needs.

Giving Peter control and working with him in a way so he feels comfortable has led to a raft of other new developments in Peter's behaviour.

“ Peter's mental health has improved, and the occurrences of suicidal ideation have significantly reduced. He is handling situations a lot better when they are out of his control. He's able to verbalise himself more to his team, rather than result to self-harm or suicide ideation, Sharna explains.



Peter's co-designed mood-scale to communicate what type of support he needs

He's also now requesting unsupervised time in the community to see his peers and, on his request, we're planning a holiday or overnight stay out of town with his carers. These are massive changes for Peter.

Sharna says the positive developments in Peter's behaviour are a good indication of what's possible in the years to come.

“ Peter has around two years left in our service. The team is now working with him on developing his independent skills around the house and supporting him to expand his social network by getting out in the community.

The team should be extremely proud of what they've achieved with Peter. Everything has been because of the work they all do with him and the way they have approached it. I have no doubt they are going to continue to achieve great things before Peter leaves KAA.

\*Name changed for privacy reasons

\*All statistics valid as of June 30, 2024.



# South Australia

A focus on raising our profile in the community has seen our South Australian service provide care and support to an increasing number of children, young people and carers.

## Supporting our carers, children and young people

The team invested heavily in connecting and engaging with our carer community through social activities such as events and family days, as well as providing training opportunities and support groups. Highlights included an Amalfi Coast themed carer day in December, and our Autumn Fest family day, held in May. For children in our care, key events included a Christmas Party and a farm day. We capped the year off by sending over 100 carers and children to the opening night of Cirque du Soleil in June. These initiatives provide an opportunity for our staff to spend time with children and carers in a relaxed and informal environment, and for our carer community to connect and build relationships with each other over shared experiences.

To ensure our carers feel equipped to provide the very best support to children in their care, we ran support groups throughout the year in a variety of locations. These included soup days, movie outings, yoga and creative activities targeted at different cohorts and geographic areas.

We refreshed the training opportunities offered to our carer community and delivered sessions with a range of external facilitators on topics including autism, online safety and accessing Centrelink support. We worked collaboratively with universities and a range of other not-for-profit organisations such as Carly Ryan Foundation to offer informative workshops to foster carers.

## Partnership with Adelaide 36ers

A new partnership with the Adelaide 36ers helped us to spread the word about foster care and KAA in South Australia while also providing our children and carer community with the chance to attend some home games. Through the partnership, KAA had a presence at three 36ers home games at Adelaide Entertainment Centre, hosting an information stand in the Orb with fun games and giveaways including a 36ers jersey signed by the team. Over the course of the season, we entertained hundreds of children with

our basketball activities and were able to engage with key stakeholders, other partners and the general public about foster care and our services.

We were also delighted to invite foster carers to several home games, including the sold-out final game of the season where 20 carers, children and young people had access to a sensory room in the dedicated corporate box. This made attending the game possible for some children who would otherwise be overwhelmed by the noise and action of the game. We thank the Adelaide 36ers for their support throughout the year.



KAA SA team at the Adelaide 36ers pre-game event.

## Working collaboratively with CREATE Foundation

We strengthened our relationship with CREATE Foundation by working with them on several events and activities for children and young people.

This included supporting 15 young people in our care to participate and complete the CREATE Your Future program. This program equips teenagers aged 15 years and over with practical skills and knowledge for a successful transition from Out-Of-Home Care to independence after they turn 18.

We are also working with CREATE Foundation to deliver an expo for children and young people later in 2024.

## Staff growth

As the number of carers, children and young people in our care has grown, so too has our team in South Australia. We have been able to attract new expertise and experience to our team, ensuring we can continue to provide the children, young people and families in our care with the support and services they need.

## Disability

We re-aligned our South Australian disability service to focus on providing Allied Health services to wrap around the Out-Of-Home Care we provide to children and young people. This is in line with KAA's national disability service strategy and allows the potential for KAA to provide Allied Health support to children and adults who may not have NDIS funding packages.

## Supporting our Aboriginal cohort

In South Australia, we now support around 60 children and young people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. To ensure this cohort – and their carers – can connect with country and learn about their cultural background, we have developed and implemented several tailored programs, with support from our Cultural Practice Lead. One of our most successful initiatives has been a new culturally significant school holiday program for children of all backgrounds.

## South Australia Statistics



235

Children Supported Through Foster and Kinship Care Programs



48

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children Supported



37

Children Exited from Our Care



8

NDIS Participants Receiving Services



172

Children in Care



21

New Carers Recruited



122

Carers Supported

\*All statistics valid as of June 30, 2024.



# Connecting kids and carers to culture

“Thank you for such a great day at Culture Club! The children’s story book connected to the art made lots of sense for the kids and they were talking about the magic boomerangs all the way home! It was nice to hear some songs connecting to culture too. That’s a great idea I hadn’t utilised before. We’re looking forward to the next one!”  
—Grace, Carer

“The kids absolutely loved Culture Club – and I did too! Great learning and teaching and follow-up activity, which was hands-on.”  
—Angela, Carer

Our new Culture Club is giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their carers the opportunity to connect to their Aboriginal heritage in a fun, educational and culturally sensitive way.

Chrystal Newchurch, the program’s coordinator and our South Australian Cultural Practice Lead, couldn’t be more delighted with how the program has kicked off.

“I’m so excited to be running it. I love spending time with the kids, sitting in a yarning circle and connecting. You can see their little faces come alive and that they want to be engaged in their identity and culture,” she says.

Culture Club is a one-day cultural workshop run in the school holidays for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their foster carers. It consists of 12 stand-alone lessons developed by Chrystal and aligned to the South Australian Department of Education’s Early Learning Years Framework (EYLF) and the concepts of Belonging, Being and Becoming which focus on connecting kids to the world around them.

“All our lessons are also centred around the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ cultural ways of Being, Doing and Knowing, which enable children and their carers to grow their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and identity. Belonging is about knowing where and to whom you belong; Being is about children knowing themselves and

developing their identity; and Knowing is about enhancing children’s connections and capabilities,” explains Chrystal.  
  
“We’re finding carers really want support with how to engage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture with the children in their care, but they don’t know where to start,” Chrystal says.

“Through Culture Club, my objective is that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in foster care will have a connection to culture that can be shared with their carer and foster family.”

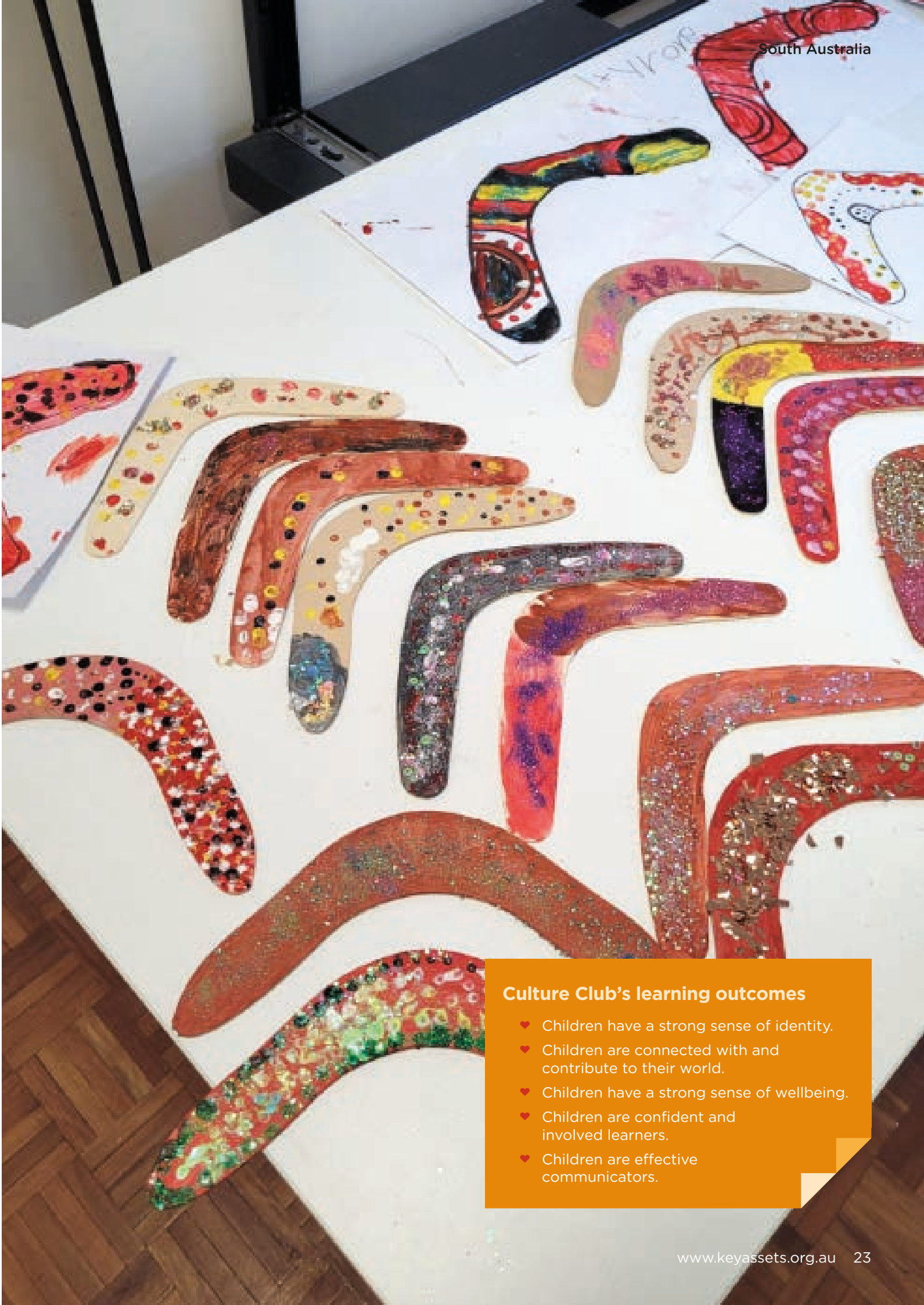
“We also want to build our carers’ knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ dreamtime stories, so they can share the importance of cultural ways with the children in their care,” she says.

Culture Club combines dreamtime storytelling with interactive, sensory and artistic activities that support children to learn about their culture while also giving carers the confidence to share and talk about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ culture within the home.

In the program’s first session, participants learnt about the boomerang through storytelling, studying artefacts and decorating their own boomerangs. Each participant designed their own boomerang artwork, and carers were encouraged to do follow-up activities with the children in the family home.

“Culture Club is about kids learning in the environment in which they live and being open and exposed to all sorts of learnings. We want carers to feel confident in organising activities at home to connect the child back to culture. This instils pride in the child to showcase their ability as a leader in the home when they do that activity,” Chrystal explains.

With 12 lessons already planned out, Chrystal, KAA Support Worker Koebyn and the Child and Young People Support Service (CYPSS) team will continue to deliver this important cultural practice during school holidays to connect with carers and children and grow cultural knowledge and understanding.



### Culture Club’s learning outcomes

- ♥ Children have a strong sense of identity.
- ♥ Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- ♥ Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- ♥ Children are confident and involved learners.
- ♥ Children are effective communicators.



# Victoria

**As KAA approaches 10 years of providing child and family services in Victoria, our team has continued to go from strength to strength.**

A spirit of collegiality and working collaboratively with other community services organisations has become a hallmark of our way of working across the state, with many positive outcomes achieved for the children, young people, carers and families in our care.

## Delivering positive outcomes

We are incredibly proud of our frontline team of social workers, case workers and youth support workers who are on the ground working with foster carers, children and families. We consistently receive positive feedback, and a recent audit recognised their high-quality service delivery. Across the sector, the work this team delivers is becoming increasingly complex requiring theoretical underpinnings, creative practices and collegial support to achieve successful outcomes.

This year we supported more than 300 children in short-term care placements, as well as over 100 children in longer term placements. Our placement team and social workers supported these children and young people to seek temporary care to achieve safety and promote ongoing stability.

One of KAA's core offerings in Victoria is delivering intensive family support services through a hands-on approach with parents, carers and children. In the initial stages of support, our social workers visit families, sometimes several times a week, observing and understanding the needs of each family. Through early invention, our goal is to equip families with the skills they need to navigate and manage the issues and challenges that are important to them, with the view to being able to provide safe care for their children.

## Child and carer support

To create a channel for our foster carers to connect and share ideas and feedback with the team, we set up a Carers Advisory Group. Around 17 carers from across our locations in Victoria now regularly connect via this virtual group, providing input to our team about how KAA can better support their carer journey. Insights from the group have been used to inform our bespoke 'Intro to Caring' training modules, as well as identify gaps in support such as

during the period between completing Shared Lives training and becoming an accredited carer.

KAA Victoria's State Director introduced open door sessions where carers are invited to meet with her virtually to provide feedback or ask questions. These sessions have been well received, proving beneficial for both carers and the organisation.

Our team hosted several informal activities and events for children and families from our foster care service. One highlight was our Christmas Family Day, postponed to January 2024 due to bad weather. This was held in the Domain Gardens and was well attended by children, young people and carers. There was a coffee cart, food truck and sports activities for kids. The relaxed setting made it easy for carers and staff to connect and share experiences.

## Carer Gala

Our Victorian team was delighted to celebrate their amazing community of carers in a special gala event in September at the Melbourne Arts Centre.

**The event was an opportunity to recognise the dedicated service our foster carers give to the children and young people in their care and KAA. More than 70 carers attended, including several long-term carers whose decades of service were acknowledged.**

Comedian Nelly Thomas was the MC, putting carers at ease with her wit and humour. Leadership expert Isabella Phillips, Director and Owner of Mackerel Sky, shared her own parenting experiences. A special touch on the night was a gratitude wall created using messages from children in care who were asked to write a certificate for their carer.

## CREATE Your Future

Through KAA's partnership with the CREATE Foundation, several Victorian staff members were trained to deliver the CREATE Your Futures program for young people in our Out-Of-Home Care service. These staff have been supporting several young people to complete the CREATE Your Future modules and prepare for adulthood. It is an opportunity for young people to share their experiences with each other whilst learning new skills.

## Collaborations

Our best services are delivered in collaboration with a range of other community services organisations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers, all of whom share our commitment to meeting the unique needs of each child or family.

Our team and Allambi Care reached the five-year mark in our partnership to deliver a continuum of care service model. Our team provides early intervention and home-based services, whilst Allambi Care provides Residential Care Services. The model has achieved significant positive outcomes. An evaluation by the University of Melbourne found that various services in partnership can achieve better outcomes for service users. Together with Allambi Care, the model has been presented at several conferences, including the 2023 European Scientific Association on Residential and Family Care for Children and Adolescent (EUSARF) Conference held in Brighton, England.

Our partnership with First Nations provider, Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation, in the Gippsland area, also celebrated five years. This collaborative family services work has involved developing and delivering a new Family Preservation and Reunification Response and Early Help services in Morwell specifically to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

## Switch to Social Work

The Switch to Social Work innovative two-year program is a collaboration between the Victorian Government, The Centre of Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, La Trobe University and community service organisations to attract more qualified social workers to the Out-Of-Home Care industry. People who already have a bachelor's degree but are looking for a career change are supported to 'switch to social work' through the program which combines study, training and paid work. While undertaking academic study, participants complete work experience in their first year and a paid internship within a child and family services organisation such as KAA in their second year. Students gain hands-on experience and are exposed to a pathway for them to continue to be employed after graduation. Two students are undertaking the program with KAA.

## Cultural awareness

This year, our team further deepened its understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture with several activities aimed to connecting all staff to country. Highlights were two cultural walks. In January, Uncle Trevor Gallagher led staff on a walk in the Darebin Parklands, and in May during National Reconciliation Week, Uncle Lionel Lauch shared stories about First Nations culture on a walk at The Briers in Mount Martha on the Mornington Peninsula.





# Victoria Statistics



## 296

Children Supported Through Foster and Kinship Care Programs



## 117

Children in Care



## 45

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children Supported



## 16

New Carers Recruited



## 140

Families Supported



## 170

Children Exited from Our Care



## 106

Carers Supported



\*All statistics valid as of June 30, 2024.

# Caring runs in the family

“ Sheryl and Simone are incredible foster carers. They are also a loving mother and daughter. The support they provide one another as well as their regional community is truly amazing. Each of them has made a positive, lasting difference to so many children's lives.

—Simone Carr, Assistant Director for Victoria.

Sheryl first began foster caring 34 years ago, taking in a young mum with a newborn. There's been a steady stream of children and young people through her home ever since.

“ When I was a child, we were briefly in care and kinship care. I've always wanted to help either aged people or children. I thought I could make a difference to give these children a better start in life, Sheryl explains.

For her daughter Simone, it seemed only natural to follow in her mum's footsteps.

“ My husband and I started fostering when our daughter was 13 months old. She's now 18, says Simone. At that time, I was primary school teaching. I had kids in the classroom that I wanted to take home. Kids not getting sleep, living in poor circumstances. Seeing mum already fostering gave me the idea to try it.

With half a decade of fostering experience between them, Sheryl and Simone are a fountain of knowledge when it comes to caring for vulnerable children. Regardless of whether they are providing one night of emergency care to a young person in crisis or fostering siblings in a long-term placement, their approach is the same: show compassion and do everything you can do to help.

“ I try to do as much as I can for the children so that they've got the tools later on, especially when it comes to having children of their own, getting jobs and so on. I work on that with the children so that hopefully some of the things that happened to them, don't happen again, Sheryl explains.

I tell them, whatever happened in the past, put it aside, move forward. This is your life. It's what you make of it.

Living next door to each other, Sheryl and Simone are never far from support, sharing and bouncing ideas of each other. Sheryl says a good relationship with the fostering organisation is also crucial for successful placements.

“ It does have ups and downs. I find the most important thing as a carer is to have good workers around you. If they hear you, are understanding you and are on the same page, that's all you need. That's an incredible amount of help, Sheryl says.

For Simone, having access to a community of like-minded people is also helpful.

“ With KAA, we enjoy the Christmas party, social events and all the different activities they put on during school holidays. It makes you feel like you are part of something, not on your own. It's good for the children too. They see they are not the only ones, she says.

With every child that comes into their homes, Sheryl and Simone try to leave a lasting impression. Nothing makes them prouder than to see a child or young person who was in care with one of them thriving as an adult.

“ One young man in my care for several years moved out a year ago. He's living independently now with some supports through NDIS. Before he left me, he had his licence, a car, a job, money in the bank. My goal is to set them up so when they leave, they can keep moving forward, Sheryl says.

As a carer, even one night can make a difference in a child's life.



Carers Simone & Sheryl attending the 2023 Carer Gala in Victoria.






# Tasmania

In Tasmania, KAA provides Out-of-Home Care and Family Support Services that are child centred and focused on strengthening families.

This year, in recognition of our strong reputation in the family support space, we were delighted to be awarded a new contract to deliver a pilot Family Restoration Service in the coming financial year.

### Out-of-Home Care



Siblings are the only ones who will truly know and understand each other's stories later on in life. Keeping siblings together supports a stronger sense of belonging and support, not only while they're in care, but as adults,

—Sascha, Sibling Group Carer

Children who live with their brothers and sisters in care feel safer. We know this because they tell us, and we see this through the achievement of placement stability, school engagement (which is on par with rates for children who are not in foster care) and the high uptake of extracurricular activity. When children live with their brothers and sisters in care, and feel safe and engaged in their community, they are also more likely to maintain positive contact with and be reunified with their parents.

Our Tasmanian Out-of-Home Care team supports an amazing community of foster carers who look after children and young people in need of short or longer-term care. Within this community we have foster carers who specialise in supporting siblings, ensuring the relationships between brothers and sisters are prioritised and preserved. This year, working collaboratively with carers, our Sibling Care program continued to deliver positive outcomes for the children we support. We thank these wonderful fostering families — some of whom are reaching nine years as a KAA carer — for their ongoing support. Foster carers commit to a role and purpose that is life-changing for the children in their care. We are grateful to all our foster carers whose dedication to the role and understanding of nurturing childhood as a key developmental phase to positive outcomes for children in their care.

Our Fostering Team also provides direct support for the children and young people in our care and this year again, our Support Work Team were pleased to facilitate the CREATE Your Futures Camp for young people. Uptake has been strong with participants sharing with us how much they enjoy being with their peers who are in foster care at the program.

### Family Support service

Our skilled social workers and support workers provide Tasmanian families with tailored parenting education and therapeutic support to help them manage the challenges and obstacles that get in the way of effective parenting. Our social workers partner with parents, working with them in the family home. Family support networks are developed, and intensity is stepped up or down as needed. The relationship that develops between the social worker and the parent and family is the essential ingredient to create sustained change.

This financial year, we supported more than 60 families through our family preservation program. Additionally, our team supported 13 infants to remain in the care of their parents or kin through engagement with our Bringing Baby Home Team.

### Intensive Family Restoration pilot

In June, KAA was awarded grant funding through the Tasmanian Department of Education, Children and Young People to provide Intensive Family Restoration as a pilot service for 12 months. Our team is very excited to be supporting children and young people transition from Out-Of-Home Care to their families.

The introduction of this service means our Tasmanian team now offers a continuum of support and care. We support families to maintain the care of their children. We support children in foster care when it is not possible to live at home. Now we will also be supporting family restoration, working with families and kin, foster carers and children and young people to support the safe transition of children from foster care to the care of family.

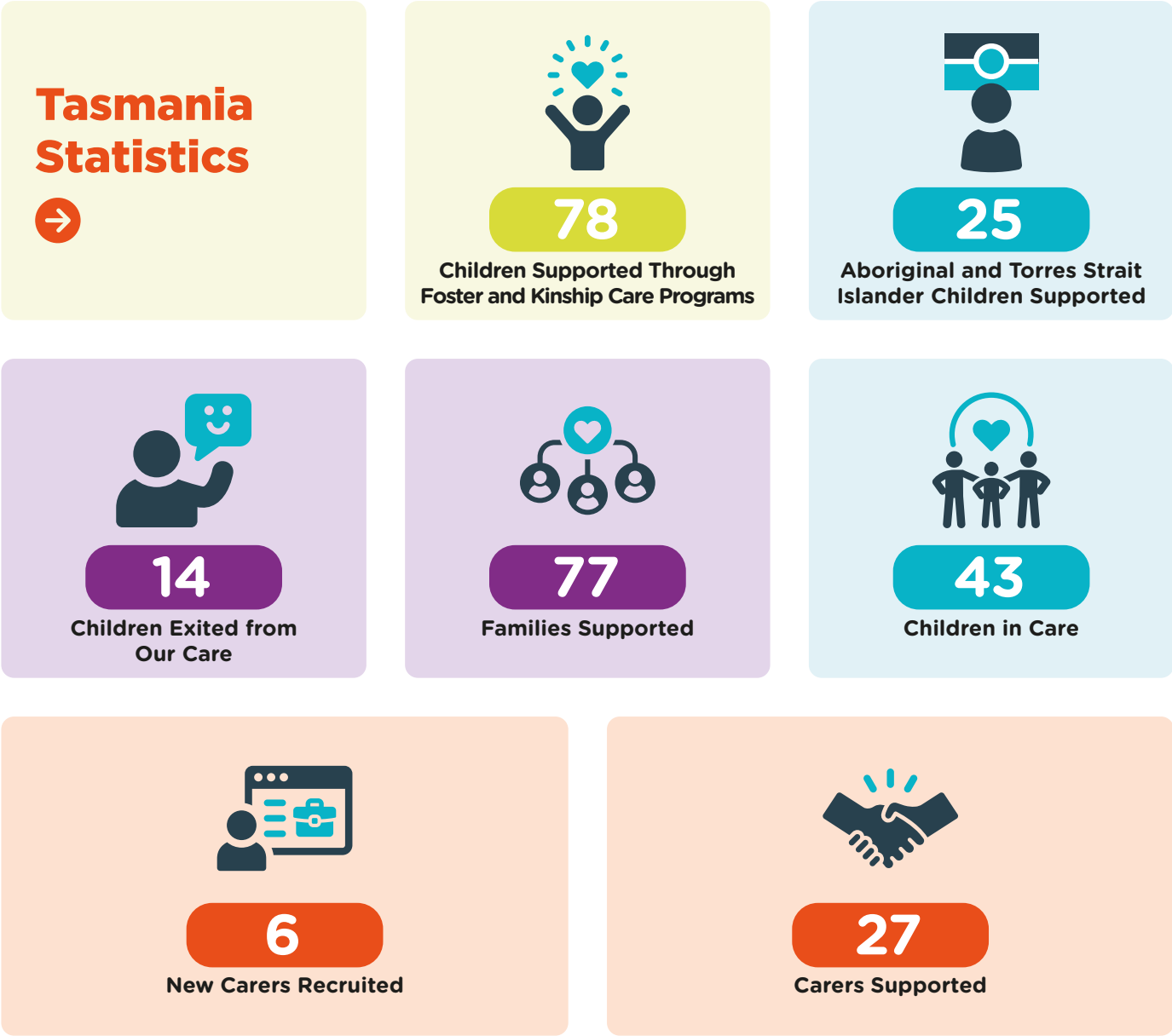
The new Restoration Practice Model recognises the essential role foster carers play in family restoration work, supporting children during a period of significant change, uncertainty and expectation and acting as a resource for the family.

### Supporting First Nations Families

Our Cultural Practice Lead in Tasmania works directly with First Nations children, young people and families who are referred to KAA. This role is an integral part of ensuring the services we provide are culturally aware and culturally safe. In addition to being a frontline social worker, the Cultural Practice Lead also supports the team to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and how best to work with children, families and communities in a respectful way.

### National Conference

In September, our team were delighted to connect with KAA colleagues and carers from across the country at the Foster and Kinship Carers Association National Conference in Hobart. The event was an opportunity for the KAA community of staff and carers to connect with each other as well as foster carers and staff from many other organisations. KAA staff from NSW, Western Australia and South Australia presented at the conference on Cyber Safety; the Grief Tool Kit; and Trauma: Virtual Reality. KAA was proud to be a sponsor of the conference.



\*All statistics valid as of June 30, 2024.



# A child-centred approach to family restoration

**“** We always want to hear children's voices as a priority in our work. It's the most important thing. This family restoration case is a great example of how we can be flexible, family-focused and support children to be at home safely.

—Demi Lambert, Program Manager, Families Programs North.

When the Department of Child Safety approached KAA for assistance with a family restoration case, our Family Support Service together with social workers and a foster carer in our Out-Of-Home-Care service saw an opportunity to work collaboratively to support the mother and her children to come together.

**“** Because we were already supporting the children in a KAA placement, we knew them well and we knew that their KAA carer had positive regard for their mum and the possible restoration, we felt positive about the request. We also knew the carer had a supportive relationship with the mum and would play a key role as a resource parent, providing safety and stability for the children during assessment and restoration if it went ahead. This gave us the confidence to proceed with an initial restoration readiness assessment with their mother, explains Demi.

The Families for Life team began an assessment with the mother in late 2023, exploring her suitability, capacity and readiness for restoration.

**“** The children's mother engaged incredibly well with us. She was motivated and ready for her children to come home. Of course, there were areas we identified that she needed to work on, but she was willing to do that. She was also able to engage in some tough conversations with us, Demi says.

When this went well, the next important step was to hear from the children involved.

**“** Instead of bringing another unknown worker into the child's life to hear what they wanted, we were able to draw upon the existing relationships with our Out-of-Home Care workers and use that space to hear what the children wanted.

When it was clear the children were open to moving back home, KAA's social worker began a period of intensive support, helping the mum to prepare to have her children back in her life full-time. This included facilitating more purposeful contact between the mother and children, including overnight stays, with support from the children's carer. Throughout the process, KAA checked in with the children, mother and carer to ensure everyone felt supported and comfortable.

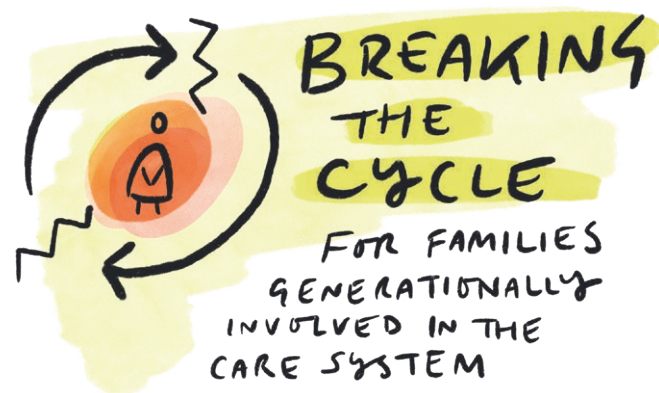
**“** What we saw surprised us. The kids were thriving between the two homes. They felt safe, loved and cared for in their home with their carer, but they were also feeling safe, loved and cared for at home with their mum, Demi says.

KAA's social worker supported the children to move back home, often spending six hours a day at the house, several times a week intensively supporting the mother and helping her build her confidence.

Demi is incredibly proud of her team for what they have achieved for this family.

**“** This wasn't a pre-existing program with established intervention protocols and assessment framework. We had to build it on the run with this family.

My team's ability to do that and be so flexible and creative in their service, as well as child centred, reminds me why I work for Key Assets Australia and why we do the work we do.





# New South Wales

This year, our New South Wales team was focused on family restorations, connecting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to country and culture and preparing young people leaving care for the leap to adulthood and independence.

In recognition of our growing reputation as a quality service provider, our team was increasingly involved in working groups and projects aimed to improving the Out-Of-Home Care sector across the state.

## Out-Of-Home Care

It has been a positive year for the children and young people within our care, with several successful family and sibling restorations and many uplifting placement outcomes. As a result of thorough family finding work, our social workers were able to unite siblings, locate birth parents and return some of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to country. In one case, an eight-year-old child who has been in care since birth was united with four siblings after our social worker was able to confirm her paternal family.

We also supported a steady stream of adolescents aged 15 years and over to successfully participate in the CREATE Your Future program and gain vital skills to support their independence and transition to adulthood.

## Staff development and training

Social work forums were introduced to formally bring our social workers together three times a year. These gatherings provide opportunities for team building and open discussions about cohesive practices and approaches to enhance support for our children, young people and carers.

## Adoption services

Although our adoption service achieved full accreditation with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian in the previous financial year, we have continued to participate in the Direct Evidence Program. By the end of 2024, the team hopes to have finalised three adoptions, completing all requirements of accreditation.

## Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

At KAA, we believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children need strong connections to country, kin, culture and community to build their sense of self. This year, four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their carers were successfully transferred across to ACCOs. This involved significant time and effort from our team to ensure a smooth transition in the best interests of the children. Our staff continued to support the children and ACCOs staff after the transfer. The team is working towards another 10 transfers by the end of 2024.

## Carer support and retention

Building positive and meaningful relationships with the families, carers and children and young people we support is vital to the success of our work. This year, the NSW team hosted a range of events for targeted groups including carers, children and young people. The team also had success in attracting a record number of carers to training opportunities, with a 350% increase in participants. In a new initiative developed from feedback received in our foster carer engagement survey, the NSW State Director and Assistant Director held regular sessions with carers. Around 25 carers participated in the sessions across the year.

## Celebrating our community

In April, our NSW team was delighted to celebrate 10 years of providing support and services to children, young people, families and carers in and around Hunter Central Coast region. A special event was held for staff, carers and children, acknowledging the milestones and many positive outcomes achieved over the past decade.

We also celebrated five staff members across the state who marked 10 years of service to KAA. These staff members have a wealth of knowledge and experience with our carers and are much-valued members of our team.

Sadly, our team said goodbye to much-treasured carer, Joan, who retired from foster caring after 40 years of dedicated service. Joan cared for Mark (a young man with disability) since birth and KAA supported the pair up until and just past Mark's recent 19th birthday. Our Botany team was delighted to host a morning tea to farewell Joan.

## Sector involvement

Representatives from our NSW team participated in a range of external committees and interagency working groups. These have included the Carer Re-Engagement Project, Carer Utilisation Project, Industry Placement Program, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Emergency Project and the High-Cost Emergency Arrangements Forum. Our team co-presented industry forums on Guardianship and Adoption, with some of our carers involved in the Q&A section the Guardianship forum. KAA staff were also involved in forums on topics including Restoration and Leaving Care. Additionally, the NSW State Director represented KAA at a ministerial roundtable, sharing insights from KAA's successful carer recruitment process.

## Social worker placements

Through a new partnership formed with Australian Community Workers Association, eight social work students began placement opportunities with KAA in June 2024. With a shortage of social work graduates entering in the sector, the project aims to encourage students to pursue a career in Out-Of-Home Care by offering first-hand experience with a service provider that they can join after graduation.

### New South Wales Statistics



266

Children Supported Through Foster and Kinship Care Programs



60

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children Supported



38

New Carers Recruited



215

Carers Supported



233

Children in Care



25

Children Exited from Our Care



\*All statistics valid as of June 30, 2024.



# Building trust so children thrive

“ Alex\* has made some big changes in a very short time. As a social worker, I see the progress. I give Alex’s carers credit for their bravery and commitment. They’ve been personally invested. It’s good to see what can happen if carers feel supported and listened to.

—Samuel Wanjama, KAA Social Worker

In December, Alex was supported to move to a new foster placement after being with his foster carers for nearly 10 years. Alex’s long term respite carers stepped in to look after him full-time. Despite the familiarity, the move was a big change for everyone involved. Nine months down the track, thanks to the trust his carers cultivated, Alex is thriving in his new home.

Diagnosed with autism, Alex has a robust support system around him. KAA Social Worker, Samuel Wanjama began working with him in April last year, helping to manage the uncertainties about his future and then supporting his transition to the new placement.

Samuel went above and beyond to provide Alex’s carers with a high level of support and coaching to help them better understand how to navigate the impacts of the long-term trauma Alex has experienced and provide him with a safe environment to grow. Samuel’s approach of walking alongside Alex and his carers to offer support, guidance and evidence-based learnings was key to the success of the transition.

“ Before the transition, I organised meetings between Alex’s former carers, the new carers and Alex’s extensive support network including the school, behavioural support practitioner, NDIS support coordinator, therapists and respite carers, Samuel explains.

At first, adjusting to the change wasn’t easy for Alex and it took the family time to adapt to the new way of life.

“ Alex’s carers showed great empathy and understanding for him during this time. They navigated his challenging behaviours and emotional dysregulation as he tried to establish himself in his new environment, says Samuel.

They committed to giving Alex a fresh start by lifting previous restrictions and providing him with reasonable access to activities he wanted. They adjusted their working hours to prioritise spending time with him, participating in activities such as fishing, swimming, going to the movies and dining out together to create a supportive and caring bond.

“ The carers have done everything they could to accommodate Alex and his complex needs, including interviewing support workers and therapists themselves, Samuel says.

*They’ve taken ownership of Alex’s care and invested in finding activities, therapists and support workers that are best suited to his needs.”*

This proactive approach has positively influenced many aspects of Alex’s life.

“ We’ve seen a reduction in his previous fixations. His eating habits have improved, he’s not fixated on his PlayStation and we’ve seen fewer sexualised behaviours. Overall, he’s happier and he feels more confident in himself because he knows that others trust him.

*He’s now also very good at catching public transport so he can take himself school. He’s also more open in his communication. He’s not as withdrawn and quiet and is more vocal about what he wants, says Samuel.*

The carers are also encouraging a positive relationship between Alex and his parents and supporting Alex to connect with his culture. They facilitate unsupervised video calls every fortnight between Alex and his parents and take him to visit his family on country in the school holidays.

“ Alex continues to grapple with the trauma of being separated from his family and understanding life from his unique lens. However, his carers have provided him with a safe home and unconditional love which has made life more enjoyable, filled with hope for a great future ahead.

\*name changed for privacy reasons







# Queensland

KAA’s service in Queensland has had a transformative year, with the number of children and young people in care almost doubling in the last quarter as the result of changes in the sector.

This urgent transition has seen our team grow to meet the needs of carers, families and children now in our care.

### Out-Of-Home Care

In March 2024, Mercy Community, one of Queensland’s largest children and family services agencies, announced the closure of its fostering and residential care services. Around 900 children and young people – and their carers – were supported to transfer to other providers. More than 100 children and families, mostly located in the southwest region of the state, nominated KAA as their new provider. Our Ipswich and Toowoomba offices have grown substantially because of these transfers, doubling in social work staff and carer numbers.

To ensure a smooth transition for children and carers, our team created bespoke foster care induction packs for the transferred carers explaining KAA’s approach and practice frameworks and welcoming the carers to our community. Our staff were also visible within the community, providing opportunities for carers to connect with KAA to learn more about our approach before making their decision.

We are excited to have some extremely experienced staff and carers joining KAA as a result of the transfer. Our staff will benefit greatly from this wealth of knowledge and experience.

### Accreditation

The service successfully completed the maintenance audit requirements of the Queensland Government’s Human Services Quality Framework accreditation process, meeting all minimum standards with no further observations. The auditors reported overwhelmingly positive feedback from carers, a reflection of the hard work staff have put into the quality and compliance space in recent years.

### Recruiting and supporting carers

In the past few years, KAA has experienced record growth in carer recruitment taking a different approach to recruitment and marketing in this space. The team invested in tailored training of our Recruitment Coordinators, with a focus on ‘ruling in’ carer enquiries as part of KAA’s national Carer Journey Project.

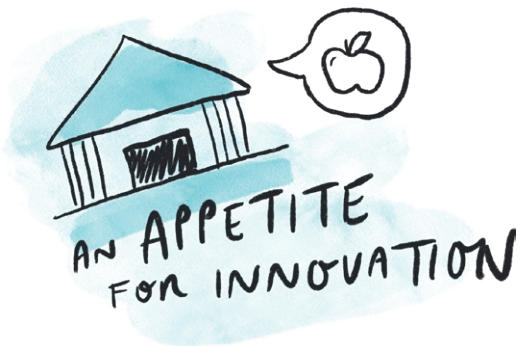
This year, 10 of our Queensland foster and kinship carers completed their Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention. KAA, in collaboration with two other agencies, supported the carers through the qualification. The training included one day of learning each week with an accredited trainer, in addition to completing assessments and activities in their own time. After completing the certificate, several carers are now undertaking a Diploma in Community Services. KAA was delighted to celebrate these dedicated and passionate carers at a graduation ceremony in November 2023.

We also continued to offer our bespoke fostering training program to carers, as well as Community of Practice sessions for our kinship care support group on topics of interest.

### Virtual Reality training in schools

Our team continued to work with the Queensland Department of Education to deliver trauma-informed care training in schools using Virtual Reality technology. This hands-on, practical training enables participants to better understand behaviours of children who have experienced trauma and respond effectively and appropriately in the classroom. With around a quarter of school-aged children referred to KAA not participating full-time education, we have focused this training on schools where children are excluded due to behaviours.

The success of this training has been recognised in the sector with our Education Lead presenting to key stakeholders, as well as at industry conferences.



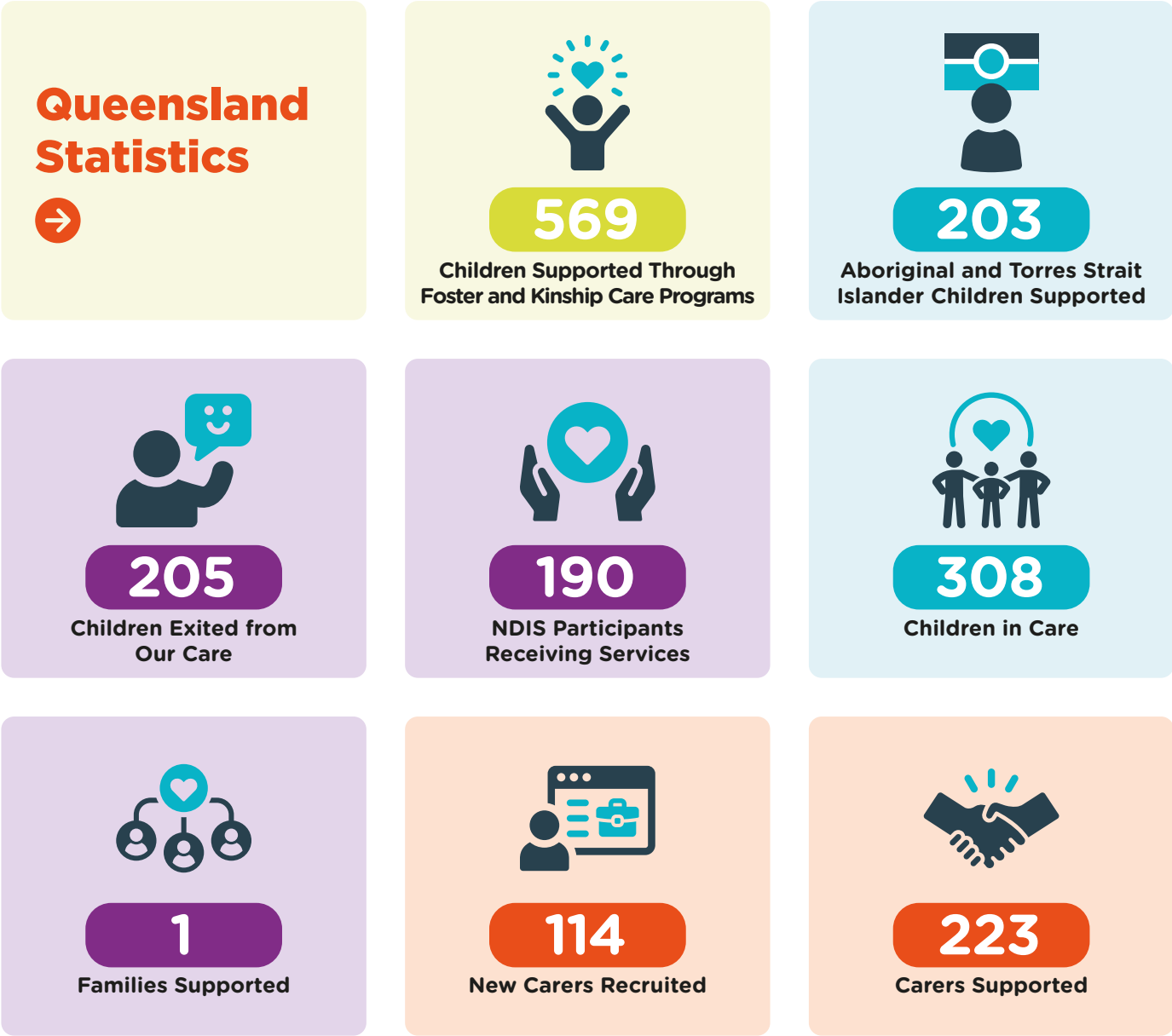
### Cultural practice

In Queensland, KAA supports a high number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families. This year, our Cultural Practice Lead developed an online learning module focused on cultural journey planning. The module covers topics including intergenerational trauma and connection to country and teaches carers about the importance of talking about cultural journey planning with young people and meeting each individual’s unique cultural needs.

We have been working collaboratively with ACCOs. Our team has supported several young people to be successfully reunified with family on country.

### Staff training and development

For staff, training and development has been focused on quality and practice development, predominantly in the social work space. Four staff members completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Families (TCIF) and are using their skills to support carers to learn how best to help children manage their emotions and improve their coping strategies.



\*All statistics valid as of June 30, 2024.



# Supporting kids to understand their life story

“Therapeutic Life Story Work is a model I’m very passionate about. It helps children piece together all parts of their life and make sense of it in a safe, supported and therapeutic way. It’s more than a collation of pictures and stories. It’s the child’s own voice and their own understanding of their story.”

—Debbie Milne, Social Worker

With more than a decade of experience working closely with children and young people in care, Debbie knows first-hand how little information many kids have about their past and how this can impact them throughout their lives.

“Children in Out-Of-Home Care often have very fragmented lives. They’re not living with their family of origin. They’ve often had many different placements and moved around schools. They may have lost all connection with family, siblings, extended family, previous carers that they’ve lived with, and friends from school, she explains.

Every child has a right to know their story. It breaks my heart to see that children don’t know this information and then, at 18, they have access to their case files, however, have nobody to help them process it.

Motivated to ensure children in care have the opportunity to learn and understand their story, Debbie is pursuing training to become a certified Therapeutic Life Story Work Practitioner, with support from KAA. Over the past year, she has taken a deep dive into the practice, travelling to Sydney for workshops, attending international symposiums and learning new techniques and tools such as narrative trees and cultural trees. She has also been working with a young child and her carer from her caseload to put the therapeutic model into action.

“It’s very intense work. We have sessions every fortnight, but it’s been lovely to see this child open up, start talking about her past and thinking about things she would like to know. I’ve also seen the attachment between the carer and child strengthen as they embark on this journey together, she says.

Although Debbie is yet to complete her training, she has already started to share her new skills with her colleagues. Additionally, she has plans to train carers in some aspects of the practice, so this work can reach as many children as possible.

“My hope is that at Key Assets Australia we can deliver elements of Therapeutic Life Story Work, particularly when we have children aging out of care, gaining permanency and when we’ve got placements that are under pressure. This work plays a crucial role in supporting the emotional well-being, identity formation, and resilience of children in Out-Of-Home Care, ultimately helping them to heal, grow, and thrive despite their early adversities.

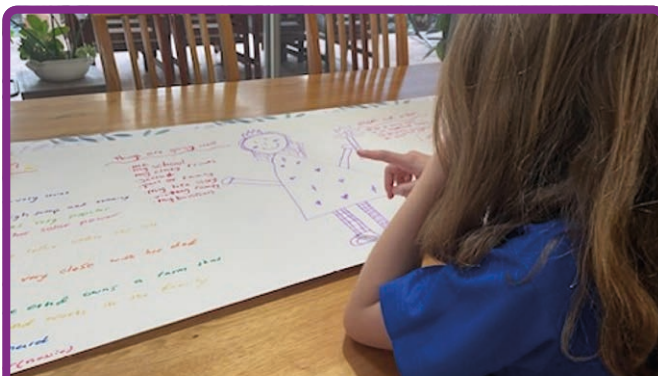
KAA is supporting Debbie to complete the diploma in Therapeutic Life Story Work through the Annual Learning Fund.

“It’s really helpful and hopefully it is going to help me have my questions answered. The activities we do together are fun.”

—Child

“The activities have been fun for us all to do as a family. This work is giving us the bigger picture when it comes to understanding the child in our care.”

—Carers



Debbie applying the Therapeutic Life Story Work with her young person.





# Norfolk Island

KAA has provided child and family support on Norfolk Island through the NI-Connect Child & Family Wellbeing Unit since June 2018.

This year, the service continued to attract a growing number of referrals from individuals and families seeking a range of support and assistance.

## Family and Individual Support

Over the past six years, our team of administrators, social workers, a family support worker and a youth engagement officer have fostered meaningful and effective partnerships achieving significant growth in the service and raising our profile.

This year, the service experienced an increase in referrals for psychosocial counselling from families and individuals, reporting its highest ever growth in family support cases. While some of these were referrals from other agencies, many were self-referrals from individuals who have heard about NI-Connect's services through a friend. This is an indication of our positive standing in the community.

In addition to providing services to more families and individuals, our team actively participated in more local events and inter-agency activities, fostering enhanced collaboration with other service providers and agencies. We have also continued to provide support to the broader community through crisis accommodation services, breakfast club, parenting programs and our Holiday Wellbeing Program.

## Holiday Wellbeing Program

One of our most successful initiatives on Norfolk Island is the Holiday Wellbeing Program for primary school children. This is offered free of charge for eight days every school holidays. This year, with input from families, we refined the activities on offer. Each term, the holiday program consistently attracts high numbers of participants, with 60-70 children - or approximately two thirds of the island's primary school-aged children - attending all or part of the program. We also continued to receive positive feedback from families.

## Norfolk Island Youth Wellbeing Strategy

Over the past 18 months, KAA has been collaborating with a local consultant, young people and the community to co-design a strategy to enhance the wellbeing of young people on Norfolk Island and

support them to thrive and have a good life. Young people have participated in surveys and face-to-face workshops to share their ideas and provide input on their needs and interests. Key objectives of the strategy include empowering youth as active participants in strategy development, integrating Norfolk Island's unique heritage and culture into all aspects of the project and identifying relevant programs and engagement strategies to meet the needs of young people living on Norfolk Island.

In July 2024, the community was invited to review and comment on the strategy through an online consultation process. Following this, the strategy will be finalised, and further actions and consultation will be part of the upcoming implementation phase.

As part of this work and in response to community need, NI-Connect set-up a dedicated youth space at the end of the 2023. This space, which is open three times a week, is for young people who may benefit from accessing youth-specific services after school. Around 10-15 young people regularly visit the space when it is open. So far, the space has been used to deliver social and recreational activities. NI-Connect plans to deliver a range of youth-focused emotional and health programs in the future.

## Staff learning and development

We have provided opportunities for our staff to upskill to enhance their practice for the children and families they support. This included staff completing the National Association for Prevention of Child abuse and Neglect's (NAPCAN) Love Bites Respectful Relationships facilitator training and 'Tuning into Teens' parenting program facilitator training as well as several team members accessing our internal leadership program. Several staff on Norfolk Island are also being supported through the KAA Annual Learning Fund to undertake external study related to their job role. This includes Certificate IV and Diploma qualifications in child, youth and family intervention and post graduate counselling qualifications.

## Researcher in Residence project

Through KAA's partnership with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) Centre for Community Child Health, a researcher was embedded with our Norfolk Island team. Part of the researcher's work involved exploring the unique benefits of help seeking in remote and island communities, as well as assisting our team to develop a new theory of change to ensure they can better meet the needs of the Norfolk Island community.

# A creative therapeutic approach

“As a practitioner, you need have a toolbox of techniques and be able to jump between different approaches. If you rely on the same therapeutic approach every single time with every single child, you'll hit a lot of brick walls and not achieve breakthroughs. I was elated when introducing the owl puppet worked for one of my clients.

—Kate Miller, NI-Connect

NI-Connect Program Manager Kate had been working with a young client for some time but hadn't made significant headway despite trying numerous different therapeutic approaches.

When an owl puppet in the office caught Kate's eye during one session, she decided to introduce the toy as way of creating a new connection.

“This child had always been very quick to use humour to divert away from the serious topics that we were there to discuss. I didn't want to force her to discuss things, but I wanted to help her find the words to be able to talk about what had brought her to the counselling, Kate explains.

While there had been moments when the child opened up to Kate in the car, getting her to talk openly in the office space had been challenging.

“Then in one session, I saw the puppet on the shelf. While she was distracted, I grabbed it and walked out of the room. I stood at the end of my door where she could only see the puppet and introduced him that way.

“She had such a cute reaction and very quickly wanted to use the puppet to talk. It was a beautiful interaction because she stayed on topic and kept talking. She was still using her words, but because of the dissociation, it wasn't her speaking, it was the owl speaking.

With her client using the puppet to communicate, Kate found it easier to introduce and explore sensitive topics and began to make progress.

“The owl worked, and I couldn't get rid of him after that. He became a third party in our session every week. The child was happy to keep talking so long as he was the one doing the talking.



Program Manager Kate's owl puppet, used to form a deeper connection while communicating with her young person.

Kate was able to encourage her client to use the puppet when her mother was in the session, enabling more open communication between the two.

“At the end of the session, the child's mum would join us for the last 15 minutes. The child used the owl to bring up topics with her that had come up in the session, talking about them in a light-hearted way, explains Kate.

“As a practitioner you're elated when you get a breakthrough. In this case, we cracked through the shell enough for this child to open up and talk. There's still a shell, but it's a lot more fragile and we can move into the more serious conversations much sooner and cover more content before the session ends.

Kate says the most positive outcome, however, has been the improvements in the child's relationship with her mother.

“This client is talking a lot more with her mum. They already had an open relationship in terms of communication, but now her mum has figured out how to introduce strategies to help those conversations be more productive so that she can do what she needs to as a parent.



# Disability Services

**KAA offers Disability Services across South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia.**

## Staffing and systems

We employ Allied Health practitioners including occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists and positive behaviour support practitioners.

We also have an Allied Health Assistant who is guided by practitioners to deliver therapy plans, and in Western Australia, we offer Home and Community Support services through our cohort of experienced support workers. Our Disability Leadership Team guides the service with a national approach to delivering consistent services and supports.

This year, a Positive Behaviour Support Practitioner joined the disability team in South Australia. As our first clinician in that jurisdiction, this role is crucial in establishing our Allied Health service for NDIS participants not connected to KAA, as well as children in our foster care service in South Australia.

We also recruited a Quality Lead who has been focused on redefining our practises and ensuring our service offerings nationwide are compliant with the National Disability Standards. This staff member introduced a Pocket Guide app for our support workers, allowing them to complete tasks on their mobile phone while out in the community.

An internal referral process between KAA's Out-Of-Home Care services and the disability team was developed, making it easier for carers to access the therapeutic funding and support children in their care.

## Growth in Queensland

The number of families accessing KAA's Disability Services in Queensland now sits at around 170, a significant increase in the past year. We have doubled the size of our Allied Health staff and attracted a client base of NDIS child participants as well as children in Out-Of-Home Care placements with KAA. This shift aligns with KAA's overall strategy for Disability Services, which is to provide Allied Health support to wrap around our Out-Of-Home Care services across the country.

Through a partnership with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Health Service, we have also been able to reach more First Nations children and families with our disability support. Referrals from the service have resulted in around 25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children coming on board. We are exploring opportunities to expand this into a partnership with the Deadly Kindies program, Aboriginal-based kindergarten centres in the southeast region of the state. Supporting more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families to access disability support is a key action within our Disability Strategy.

KAA is now the children's Allied Health service provider on Macleay Island and Russell Island in the Redland Bay district. Our team is working closely with the Bay Island Early Learning Centre to provide a therapeutic screening program to facilitate children receiving funding packages under Medicare or the NDIS. Once funding is secured, families can access the services from KAA. Our team working on the island provides occupational therapy, psychology and speech therapy services.

## Participant Advisory Group

In Western Australia, our Participant Advisory Group (PAG) has continued to be an effective way to hear from our participants. Representation within the group has grown in the last year with members meeting in person every quarter. Our team listens to the group for feedback and suggestions to inform our practice and service offerings.

One success story from the PAG has been the introduction of a parent-child playgroup for parents with disabilities in Ballajura. This playgroup was initially requested by members of the PAG who were not comfortable in a mainstream playgroup setting. The model has attracted interest from local councils and our team is exploring opportunities to expand into other local government areas across the city.

Parents in the playgroup are part of the Parent Child Program within KAA's disability service, an initiative aimed at building the capacity of parents with disability to live independently and successfully raise their child. Fourteen parents have been receiving services from KAA to increase their parenting capacity. This support has proven to be a great success. Since inception seven cases have closed with the Department of Communities and there have been three reunifications of the family unit via the program.

## Medicare provider approval

KAA was granted approval as a Medicare participating provider of disability services, enabling our Allied Health practitioners to support children in our Out-Of-Home Care services who may not have an NDIS plan. The disability team has begun the process of setting up systems to accept Medicare payments. This approval will further increase referral pathways for our Allied Health team so families with children without a diagnosed disability will be able to use Medicare funds for assessment and therapeutic services.



## Individualised Living Options funding

In Western Australia, we supported young people with disability in our Out-Of-Home Care service to access Individualised Living Options (ILO) funding under the NDIS and remain living with their foster carer after turning 18 years old. ILO is a package of NDIS funding tailored around a person's specific needs, that allows them to be supported to live in the home of their choice.

Our staff were able to support these young people to successfully apply for ILO funding and nominate their foster carer as their host carer. Once in place, the host carer receives funding from the young person's NDIS Plan for providing support. For several of our young people, this host carer model has been a stepping stone to more independent living arrangements.

KAA's Director of Disability, Kerrie Maxworthy, presented about the host care model at the Martin James Foundation Communities of Practice. There are plans to expand this model to Queensland and South Australia.





# Disability support to reach goals and milestones

“Cherry has come from an extremely traumatic background with many complex issues. KAA has supported her through a range of different transitions and goals. And now, we’re sitting in her very own unit. To watch her grow and get through those changes has just been absolutely amazing.

—Megan Inguanez, KAA Disability Coordinator.

Cherry began her journey in foster care with KAA when she was 16. At the time, she also received drop-in supports from KAA’s Disability Services team in Western Australia. At 18, KAA supported Cherry to transition into a NDIS-funded host care arrangement with her full-time carers. This ensured she could continue to be supported until she was ready to live independently. This year, with the support of her KAA host carers, her Disability Coordinator Megan, and a team of support workers, Cherry achieved her goal of moving into her own home.

“Cherry has always wanted to reach those big milestones. Over the years, we’ve helped her reach a lot of them, explains Megan.

*To work with her host carers and be able to help Cherry get to the point of independent living is very exciting.*

Megan first started working with Cherry as a senior support worker six years ago, helping her to set and reach her NDIS goals. Since then, Megan and a team of KAA support workers have worked with Cherry and her host carers to build her skills and confidence.

“Cherry’s host carers provide her with an amazing amount of support. KAA has also provided drop-in supports through a team of support staff. They support Cherry to participate in community access. She does karate and belly dancing. We’ve supported her to go to balls and to go to the gym, Megan says.

Sitting in the unit she will soon call home permanently; Cherry is excited about her future.

“I’m proud of myself, and I feel very happy, she says.

“Moving into my own place was one of my massive goals. At first, I thought I wouldn’t be able to achieve that goal. But with my supports around me, I eventually did. And look where we are!”

To ensure Cherry feels confident and safe to live on her own, KAA has been supporting her to slowly transition into her new home. She first started staying over the weekend with support from her KAA respite carers and support workers, returning back to her host carers during the week. As her confidence grows, the team will support Cherry to spend more nights in the unit until she reaches a stage where she is comfortable staying alone overnight with her KAA drop-in staff visiting every day.

Cherry says her host carers and support team have all been helping her to develop important skills including cooking and cleaning and what to do in an emergency at home.

“They’re giving me techniques on how to cook and how to hold a knife properly. Sometimes I can lose my memory [due to seizures], so they remind how to chop and peel vegetables, she says.

The staff have also helped Cherry to create a blackboard of her activities and routine and are supporting her to learn about on-call services and who to call when she needs support overnight.

As for her next goals, Cherry says:

“After I have moved in, I’d like to get my cat here. And once I’ve got myself settled and my anxiety calmed enough to venture outside into the world, my goal is to get a job in the area.

As she tackles these next milestones, Megan, the KAA support team and her host carers will be right by Cherry’s side.

“My KAA team is like my second family. They drive me up the wall sometimes, but that’s what I need, because I will forget how to do things. I don’t know what I would do without them, Cherry says.



Cherry turning the key into her own home for the first time!



# Cultural Practice Collective

## Vision

**To create a culturally grounded and empowering collective dedicated to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our First Nations children. We envision a future whereby every First Nations child grows up in an environment free of harm, where their cultural identity is respected and celebrated and where they have equal opportunities to succeed.**

At the end of 2023, we were excited to launch the Cultural Practice Collective (referred herein as Collective), a National initiative focused on ensuring KAA is meeting the needs of all children who identify as First Nations.

Drawing on the expertise of our Cultural Practice Leads (CPLs) from each jurisdiction, the Collective brings together these seven staff members to ensure KAA is taking a national, cohesive approach to supporting First Nations children, families, communities and staff. With endorsement from the Board and CEO, in its first six months the group has worked on priority areas directly impacting our First Nations community, while also providing advice and a cultural perspective on key organisational matters.



KAA Cultural Practice Collective with KAA CEO and Group Director Operations.



In FY2024, the Collective focused its attention on seven portfolios, with each area assigned to a CPL who drives initiatives in collaboration with the Collective.

## 1. First Nations Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Alliance (Chrystal Newchurch)

Through KAA's involvement in Allies for Children (see page 48), a representative from the Collective sits on the First Nations NGO Alliance. This self-determined group comprises First Nations representatives from the seven organisations in Allies for Children. Members of the Alliance and the CEOs in Allies for Children are working together to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system. The Alliance meets every two months, with KAA's CPL providing input from the Collective on initiatives being undertaken by the Alliance. Insights and knowledge from these meetings are also shared back to KAA's Collective to ensure our practices are aligned across the sector.

## 2. Reconciliation Action Plan

(Lead Aislinn Bury, Aunty Beryl Wilson and Elaine Tanaka)

Led by the Collective, KAA is now in the early stages of developing a national Stretch RAP following endorsement from Reconciliation Australia. Only 5% of organisations are accepted to develop a Stretch or Elevate RAP, so reaching this stage is a significant achievement.

The KAA Stretch RAP will incorporate locally based reconciliation actions and initiatives from each jurisdiction to deliver a consistent, national reconciliation approach. A steering committee and working group, with representatives from each jurisdiction, have been established to oversee and guide this work to ensure it is collaborative and meets our governance standards. We plan to launch the Stretch RAP in FY2025.

## 3. Chrysalis

(Aislinn Bury)

The Collective works closely with Chrysalis, with a member of the group embedded in the team as Cultural Advisor. In 2024, the Collective contributed to two Chrysalis projects: The Voice of the Child and Kinship Care.

For the Voice of the Child project, the Collective developed a cultural postcard to collect information from First Nations kids in care about how they experience culture. As the project progresses, this data will be used to identify gaps in cultural knowledge and develop strategies to better support First Nations children to have a strong identity or connection to their family or community before leaving KAA.

In the Kinship Care project, the CPL interviewed First Nations carers about their experiences of kinship care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship systems. This knowledge and practice will be incorporated into KAA's national approach.

## 4. Cultural safety and training

(Elaine Tanaka)

The Collective is working with KAA's Learning and Development team to develop a new organisation-wide cultural induction program for all staff. The Collective is also providing input on locally based cultural training to ensure staff at all levels and from all jurisdictions have the same foundational understanding. One significant addition to the national training program will be the introduction of a self-assessment tool which staff can use to monitor their own progress in relation to cultural understanding.

The Collective is also working with the Learning and Development team to ensure KAA is a culturally safe space for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members, where they feel welcomed and can have their voices heard.



## 5. ACCO transitions

(Lead Seraphina Brown, Kylie Pickett)

KAA is deeply committed to supporting the transition of First Nations children in care to ACCO. To ensure a consistent and national approach to how we support these transitions, the Collective, with endorsement from the Board, developed and rolled out a set of principles to assist discussions and action plans. Developed in collaboration with the Board, Executive Leadership Team and CPL, the principles provide a framework for staff when discussing transitions and the suitability of placements.

## 6. Cultural plans

(Lead Kylie Pickett and Seraphina Brown)

To improve the way we create cultural plans for First Nations children, and embed a national process and structure, the Collective collaborated to develop a cultural plan framework for the whole organisation. Taking the best elements from the three cultural plans that were previously in place and in consultation with Chrysalis, the group created a new document to be used across jurisdictions. To support uptake of this, a tip sheet was also developed, and the Collective will soon provide training to social workers and case managers so all staff can complete the documentation themselves.

## 7. Marketing

(Aunty Beryl)

The Collective worked closely with the Marketing team throughout the year on internal and external projects aimed at promoting KAA's commitment to supporting First Nations children, young people, families and communities. This has included the development of an intranet page for the Collective, as well as consultation on social media content and key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples events such as Reconciliation Week and National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week. Staff uniforms depicting local artwork from each jurisdiction are also being produced, with significant involvement from the Collective.



# Allies for Children

**KAA is one of the founding members of the Allies for Children, a group united to inspire positive change, in the belief that all children and young people deserve to be protected and nurtured.**

This is a committed partnership of Chief Executives working across the Child, Youth and Family sector to ignite long term, positive outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and families. Through collective wisdom and genuine collaboration, our organisations and the child, youth, and family services sector can drive real and sustained change to benefit generations now and into the future.

Together, Allies for Children will advocate for better policies and systems to ignite genuine reform in child protection that moves service responses towards early intervention and family support. The groups' immediate responsibility is to respond to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Out-Of-Home-Care (OOHC).

KAA's CEO Dr Dianne Jackson is an active member of the CEO group, and we have representatives on the Public Affair sub-group and the First Nations NGO Alliance. This Alliance sits alongside the Allies for Children and was established as a cross

organisational group to provide collective cultural leadership and advice to the member agencies. The group reflects the principle of 'nothing about us without us' and is focused on reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in OOHC.

As part of the Allies work, we participate in frequent collaborative discussions and strategy sessions to continue to advance and support our common initiatives and policies. We continue to approach and emphasise the applicability of our work through the 'Model, Influence and Advocate' evidenced based framework. Sharing insights, case studies and resources unites our organisations and expertise to create a compelling 'Model for Change', improving existing child, youth and family services across the sector.

By collectively growing the Allies for Children brand, identity, digital presence and representing a united front, together we can amplify, influence and ensure the voices of our community are heard to enact positive, sustainable change.

**The Allies for Children provides a respected platform for KAA to actively advocate and support positive, political and governmental policy reform.**



Chief Executives working across the child, youth and family sector partnering to form the Allies for Children (KAA CEO Dr Dianne Jackson far right).

# Harnessing Virtual Reality

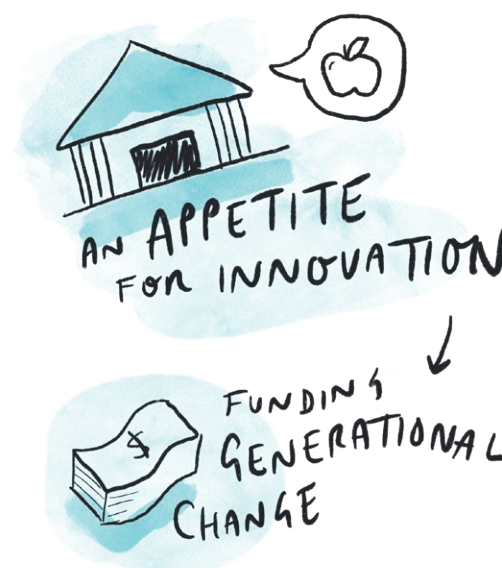
**Virtual Reality (VR) technology is revolutionising training at KAA, especially in carer education and professional development.**

Partnering with Antser, KAA piloted VR-based trauma-responsive training for social workers, youth workers, educational personnel, foster carers, and NDIS therapists.

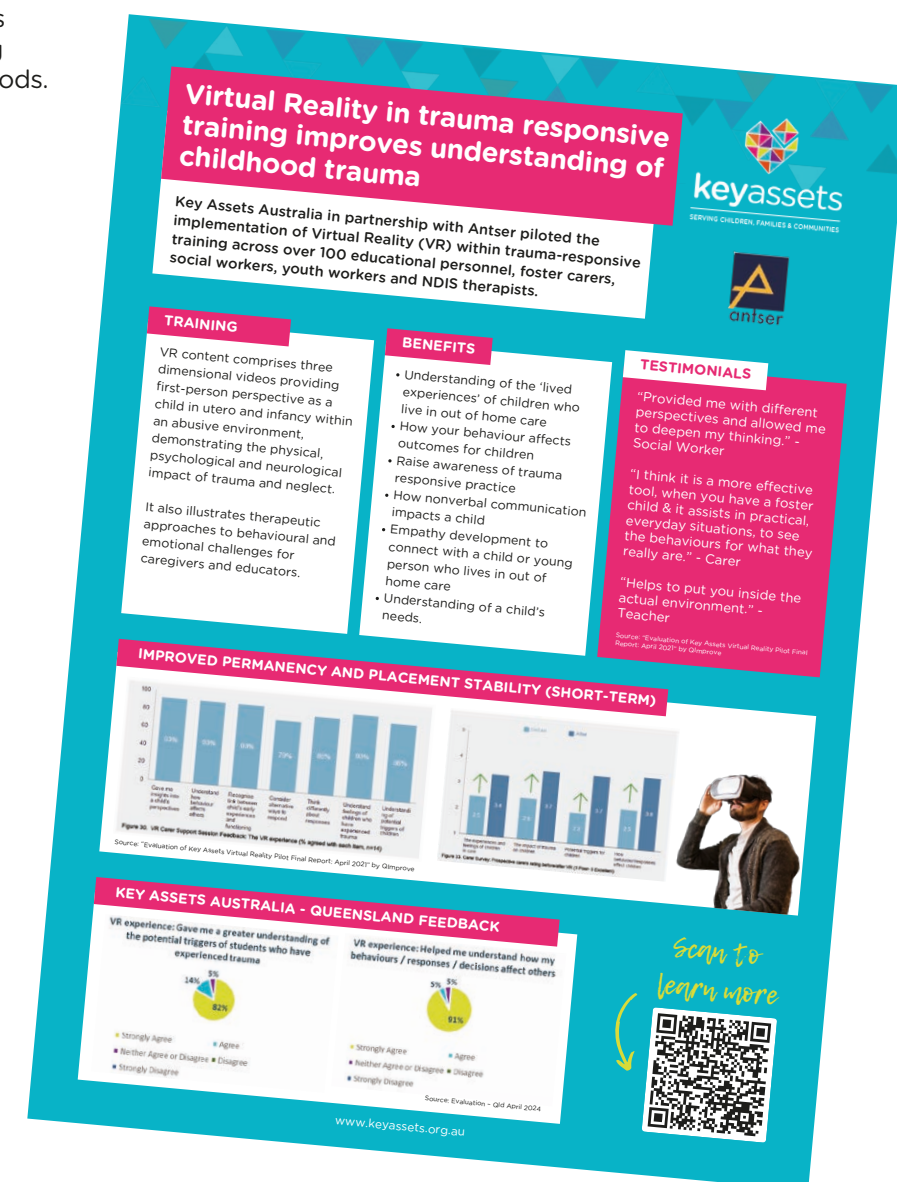
This successful pilot allowed KAA to showcase VR capabilities at the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) conference in June 2024. Following a successful abstract submission, Therapeutic Practice Lead Nadine Sudborough delivered a 15-minute presentation, highlighting the profound impact VR has on trainees' understanding of childhood trauma. Nadine explained that VR creates a more powerful and empathetic learning experience compared to traditional methods.

KAA Program Manager, Carole Boswell, shared her own VR experience, noting how the simulated scenarios felt incredibly real, triggering emotional responses similar to real-life situations. This visceral engagement is crucial for training caregivers to navigate the complex emotional landscapes experienced by traumatised children and young people with greater sensitivity and effectiveness.

Ongoing discussions aim to tailor VR content to be culturally sensitive and reflective of diverse family dynamics. As KAA continues to refine and expand VR applications, we remain committed to leveraging this technology to empower caregivers and educators, ensuring the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.



*KAA poster developed and presented at the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) conference in June 2024.*





# Martin James Foundation

## Vision

**A world in which children grow up and thrive in safe and loving families.**

KAA is part of the Martin James Foundation (MJF), a global network of charitable organisations united by a shared vision: a world where children grow up in safe, loving families and have the opportunity to thrive.

MJF is our member, and we collaborate closely to deliver innovative solutions and provide high-quality, family-based care to vulnerable children and families. KAA continues to benefit from these international connections by exchanging best practices, research, and innovative approaches. MJF and its global affiliates in Australia, Canada, Japan, and New Zealand are dedicated to delivering top-tier family-strengthening programs, foster care, and support services to foster families.

In August 2023, Daniel Croft, MJF Vice Chair and Key Assets Group Europe CEO, and Calum Sawford, MJF Chief Operating Officer, visited several of our teams in Australia.

Our teams in NSW (Botany and Blacktown) and Tasmania had the opportunity to meet with Daniel and Calum, providing updates on their current projects, practice developments, and case studies. The MJF team shared an overview of their current projects and activities, which Calum later presented at an online National Staff meeting.

This visit and the subsequent presentation reinforced a valuable opportunity to see how KAA fits into the broader MJF family, and how, together, we are creating better futures for children worldwide.

In May 2024, MJF hosted the inaugural MJF Symposium 2024, titled “The Whole is Greater than the Sum of its Parts.” Global Key Assets teams from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand joined MJF Co-Founder Jim Cockburn, MJF Vice Chair and Key Assets Group Europe CEO Daniel Croft, as well as MJF Trustees, staff, and the Fostering First Ireland CEO for several days of insightful collaboration.

The symposium featured a mix of presentations and panel discussions, with ample opportunities for all affiliates to share and learn from one another which will be taken forward to increase global innovation and identification of best practice to secure positive, lasting outcomes for the children and families we serve.

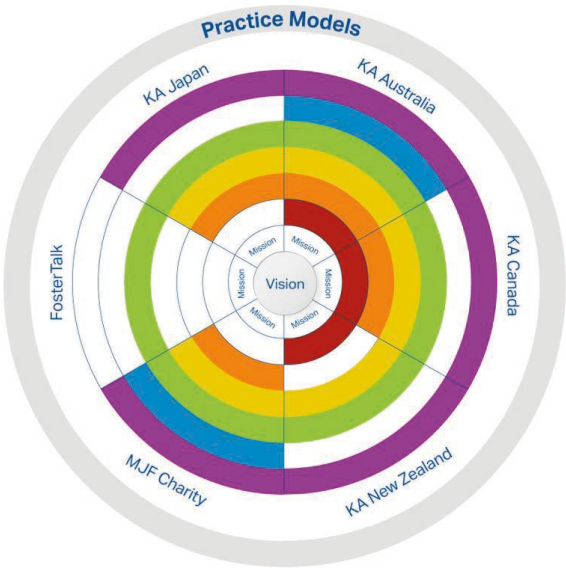
KAA is also a strong supporter and active participant in the MJF Communities of Practice (COP). These sessions offer a platform for global presenters to discuss current issues, research, challenges, and solutions in the child and family services sector. This year, KAA employees led two COP sessions, attended by participants from Australia and around the world. We presented on Children with Additional Needs and Independent Living. Additionally, KAA engaged in presentations from Canada, New Zealand, Uganda, and the UK on various fostering-related topics. These sessions provided valuable reflections on the common challenges we face globally, and the creative strategies employed across the world to address them.



## Strategy

As a global Foundation, we work together to achieve six key objectives:

- Deliver trauma-informed alternative care
- Strengthen child protection systems
- Enhance family-strengthening practice
- Strengthen practice of alternative family-based care
- Advocate for prevention of unnecessary family separation and promote family-based care
- Inspire and build the resilience of young people impacted by trauma



Each organisation within the Foundation has its own mission and strategic plan, which dovetail into the MJF’s vision. Key Assets Australia have all-six objective focus areas within our area of operation.



# Marketing

## Intelligent Carer Recruitment & Retention

The marketing and recruitment department's strategic direction for the year included launching new systems to support our carer journeys. Through the launch and implementation, an increased focus was placed on measurable outcomes and return on investment of time, money and resources internal to the business.

Reviewing our approach across the entire journey of a foster carer has led to productive collaborations with jurisdictional recruitment teams. This has resulted in measurable outcomes in the following areas:

- advertising,
- communication,
- data analysis,
- onboarding,
- automation,
- reporting.

## Investing in Intelligent Technology & Integrated Systems

An extensive review and analysis of our marketing and recruitment systems in late 2022/23 identified opportunities to improve our carer recruitment and retention strategies. In line with this review, it was determined that benefit could be achieved by enhancing our approach to media advertising.

Utilising technology, we are working on alleviating recruitment resourcing inefficiencies through intelligent, scalable automation of repetitive tasks.

KAA's commitment to reinvest in carer recruitment and retention, is positively influencing practice. Efficient project management and collective collaboration has led to the successful implementation of several key systems and workflows.



NSS Marketing team with special guest from SA (Recruitment & Marketing Coordinator Emilee Waye, National Marketing Manager Melissa Alexiou, Digital Marketing Partner Annabella Dean, Marketing Coordinator Flavia Souza).

### Marketing Performance



10.52M

Ad Impressions



2.74M

Unique Ad Interactions



424,492

Website Visitors



68,068

Explored Eligibility via KAA Quiz



9,002

Enquiries Received

## Return on Advertising Investment

Our advertising efforts focused on the urgent need for Foster Carers and our success extended into driving significant visibility for our Disability Support Services. Optimising our social media and search advertising campaigns led to increased brand visibility. More than 2.74 million people discovered Key Assets Australia online. Across our social media campaigns, the number of 'Fostering Matters' brochure downloads increased by 179%.

Through the implementation of new advertising campaign strategies, KAA has been able to better manage our campaign performance data and integrate these campaigns with our in-house digital assets. This integration has resulted in better identification and definition of our target audiences and in turn resulted in improved quality of enquiries received.

Complementing our advertising strategies, was the release of new reporting dashboards. These dashboards provide key insights, in close to real-time, on the success of our advertising campaigns and carer recruitment practices. This ensures the marketing team can make dynamic and rapid decisions based on trends and data-insights at the time, benefiting our jurisdictional teams.



## Designing an Optimal KAA 'Experience' for Prospective Applicants and Carers

Applying our technology solutions and using the data insights generated, in parallel with our carer journey project, has allowed our teams to make more informed decisions relating to all stages through our carer journey. This means that a prospective and new carer will have an enhanced experience through the enquiry, application and onboarding stages.

To continue to compliment this activity, a Carer Recruitment Communication Strategy is in development, with outcomes focused on delivering prospective and approved carers with a consistent, timely KAA experience, delivering the 'Right Message, Right Channel, Right Time, Right Audience'.

## Disability Support Services - Enquiry & Referral Growth

Throughout 2024, we continued to build upon the work of the KAA Disability Services team across three states - QLD, SA & WA, by creating and optimising advertising campaigns to increase brand visibility within the sector, generating successful enquiries and referrals. Key activities throughout the year included digitising multi-step referral forms to enhance the user-experience as well as promoting exciting disability career opportunities within Key Assets Australia to recruit and grow service delivery capacity.



## Building a Better World - Embracing Environmental Sustainability

In line with our Environmental Sustainability Policy released in Q2 of 2024, to support building a better world for the children of tomorrow, the Marketing team reviewed the organisation's merchandise offering. This review included a focus on reducing landfill by guaranteeing 50% of all merchandise, gifts and printing were eco-friendly and/or recyclable.

The review exceeded our eco policy target, achieving an impressive 65% reduction, decreasing our footprint and potential landfill waste. This was accomplished by eliminating plastic merchandise offerings, removing plastic product packaging, and seeking eco-friendly and recycled alternatives where available.



# Quality Practice and Safeguarding

The work of our Quality Practice and Safeguarding team has been crucial in developing KAA's national approach to keeping children safe and delivering high quality, consistent services.

The team works collaboratively across jurisdictions, projects and services to ensure continuous improvement across the organisation in alignment with the needs of the children, young people and carers we support.

## National Safeguarding Framework

This year a significant achievement was the development of a National Safeguarding Framework that defines how we approach safeguarding across the whole organisation and what we believe is important in keeping children safe. The collaborative development process began in the previous financial year with a workshop involving the Executive Leadership Team. Over several consultation phases, which have included a staff meeting, online survey as well as invitations to submit feedback, staff from all levels and departments contributed insights to the framework. Workshops were also held with specific staff groups, including the Safeguarding Leadership Group and Cultural Practice Collective.

The next stage of the project is to support staff to understand and implement KAA's approach so, as an organisation, we continue to improve and ensure our services are as safe as possible and delivering the best possible outcomes for children, young people, carers and families.

## Practice Guides

Our Practice Team worked collaboratively with relevant staff to develop or update practice guides where resources were lacking or a need for more consistent information, resources, policies and practices was identified. When a new or updated practice guide was released, the team held training workshops to ensure staff are aware of the resources available and updated practices.

### Emerging Sexuality - new

We developed KAA's first Emerging Sexuality Practice Guide to help our social workers and case workers better support young people – and their families and carers – when they begin to explore and develop their sexual identity and orientation. This guide was developed after a case review identified a gap in resource material for our staff.

The guide highlights that children's gender identity and sexual orientation develop from birth and includes resources and information about all stages of development as well as more detailed guidance for the teenage years. A multi-disciplinary working group contributed their experiences and expertise to create the comprehensive suite of resources and information.

### Carer Assessments and Carer Recruitment - new

Two new practice guides were developed to support the Carer Journey Project which has been focused on improving our interactions with foster care applicants and newly approved and recruited carers. The Recruitment Practice Guide covers topics such as how and when to communicate with applicants and enquirers in the early stages of their exploration into foster care and the importance of listening and understanding their motivations. The Assessment Practice Guide provides information and resources to ensure our Recruitment Panel can make fair and accurate decisions about applicants, including properly assessing their suitability to working with KAA and their alignment with our values and approaches.

## Record-keeping - in development

We have begun developing a Record-Keeping Practice Guide to improve the way staff write about their involvements with the children, carers and families they support, such as presenting issues and actions agreed and identified. The guide covers the principles of record-keeping including why it is important, the different audiences who may access the information and guidelines for consistent use of language, style and terminologies.

## Unannounced Visits - updated

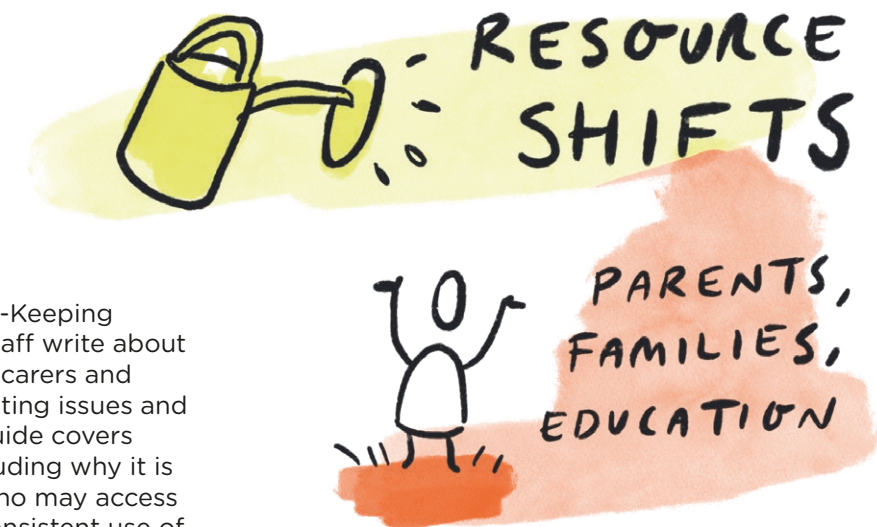
Our Unannounced Visits Practice Guide was reviewed following extensive consultation with staff who work directly with carers and families. The updated practice guide is part of a new Carer Support and Accountability Policy that launched on 1 July 2024.

## Onboarding carers

This year, we launched a manager's guide and staff toolkit for onboarding carers. These documents bring together the good practices adopted across KAA in supporting carer applicants through the assessment phase and into their first year of fostering with us. Both the guide and toolkit incorporate KAA's Framework for Excellence and demonstrate how staff can put this into action with applicants and new carers.

The team is also reviewing our onboarding training course for carers. Currently, applicants are invited to access all our training resources on the online Care2Learn training platform in any order and stage throughout the recruitment process. To determine which courses are most useful and effective at keeping applicants engaged during the assessment phase and first year of fostering, the Practice team is running a trial with the Tasmanian recruitment team and their carer applicants.

The project is assessing how KAA can better guide applicants and whether the order in which applicants' complete courses can help to keep them focused in their learning during this process.



## Personal Wellbeing Index

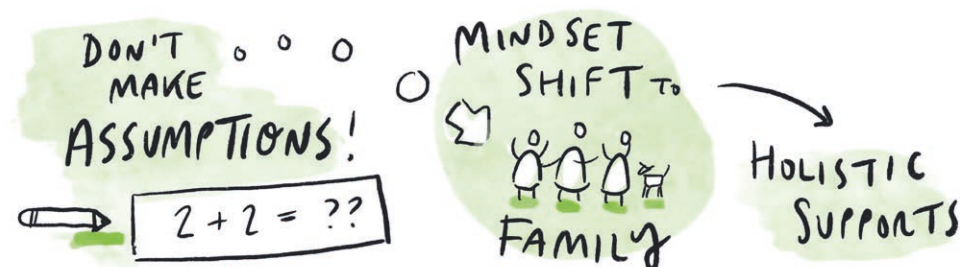
Understanding and monitoring the outcomes of our work is important for driving service improvements and demonstrating the impact of the services we provide. In the past 12 months, we have used the Personal Wellbeing Index as a measurement tool for children and young people in our care. Analysis of the data collected throughout the year found that children in our care are safer and feel safer and happier the longer they are with us.

## Policy Framework

Significant work has been done on developing a policy framework to establish guidelines on the way we consult with staff about policy development and reviews as well as how staff are made aware of new policies. This piece of work has included creating a policy register listing all policies in use across the organisation and developing a system to ensure these are regularly reviewed and updated.

## Children's Complaints Guide

The Practice Team developed a leaflet to help children and young people in our care understand how to make a complaint, why they might need to make a complaint and what to expect. Before the guide is launched it will be shared the Chrysalis team and young people to get their feedback.





# People & Culture

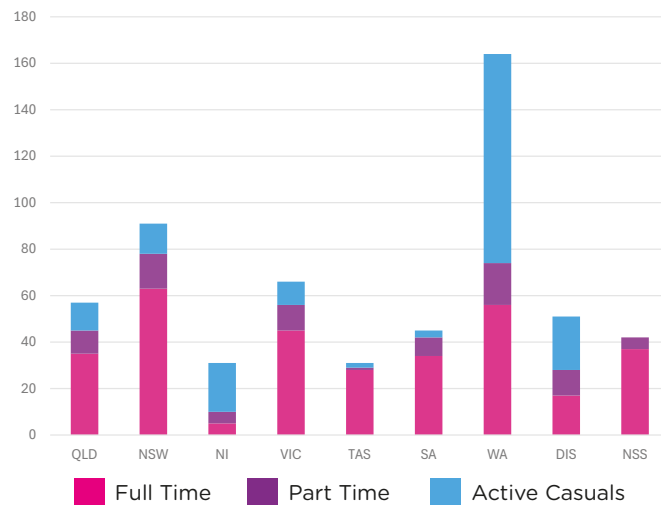
## People and Culture

KAA's dedicated employees are the heart of our organisation. Without their knowledge, skills, commitment and passion, KAA would not create the positive outcomes and lasting change that is so important for the children, young people and families we support.

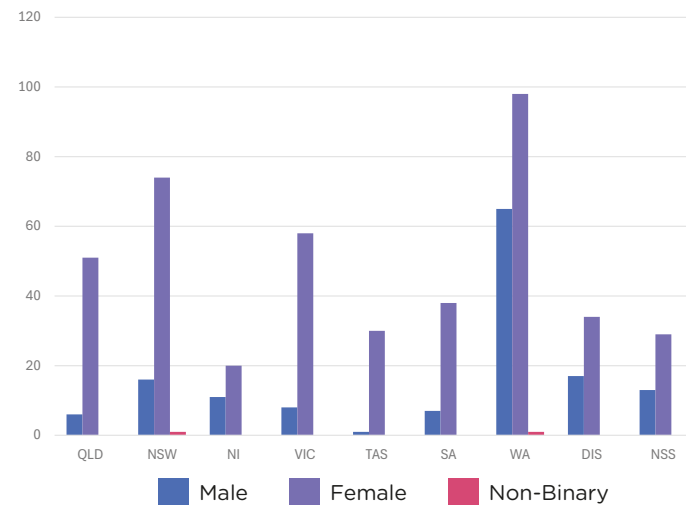
In FY2024, we made some significant changes in the People and Culture space to better support our workforce, improve our ability to attract and retain employees, support professional learning and development, provide a safe and inclusive workplace and encourage positive health and wellbeing.

## Workforce profile

Workforce Employment Type



Workforce Gender Distribution



## Attraction and Retention

As a community services organisation, KAA continues to be impacted by recruitment challenges. To enhance our employee value proposition and enhance talent attraction and retention, we introduced several new benefits. These new strategies align with our goal of becoming an employer of choice for those choosing a career in the community services sector.

In the health and wellbeing space, we formed a partnership with Bupa to provide discounted private health insurance to employees. Through the partnership, employees can now access a 6% discount with Bupa.

We also revised the Parental Leave Policy for primary and non-primary carers. Changes included doubling the paid leave entitlements, reducing the service period for entitlement and introducing pre-natal leave, pregnancy and infant loss leave and foster carer leave. These changes were in response to feedback gathered through our most recent Employee Engagement Survey.

To enhance awareness of KAA's employer brand, the People and Culture team attended career expos in Adelaide, Brisbane and Melbourne, with combined visitation of over 45,000 attendees. This has allowed us to grow awareness of the great work our organisation does and careers at KAA.

Like many disability services organisations, KAA has been impacted by the sector-wide shortage of Allied Health professionals interested in pursuing a career in disability. To overcome this challenge, this year we introduced incentives for the successful appointment of eligible Allied Health professionals, including sign-on bonuses and relocation allowances.

**Our Employee Referral Program has also contributed to supporting our talent attraction and retention goals. In the last 12 months, 13 new employees joined us via our referral program, and an additional 3 new employees joined via direct sourcing (LinkedIn/events).**

KAA provides a range of professional development and training opportunities so employees can enhance their skills, stay updated with best practice approaches and feel equipped to support the needs of the children, young people, families and communities they work with.

## Building leadership and capability

### Annual Learning Fund

FY2024 was the second year of our Annual Learning Fund, an initiative providing funding support for employees who wish to further develop skills and knowledge for their current role or as part of a career progression plan. In this time, KAA has provided more than \$72,000 to fully or partially fund short courses, workshops, certificates, diplomas, bachelor's and master's degrees undertaken by employees across a range of job roles.

Across this year's two funding intake rounds in November 2023 and April 2024, 38 applicants applied for \$105,086 in funding and KAA approved funding for \$50,212. As of 30 June 2024, \$25,432.90 had been issued, with some approved funds from FY2024 not yet reimbursed.

Topics of the courses requested included:

- Therapeutic Life Story Work
- Leadership and Management
- Creative Therapies
- Community Services
- TCI-7 Train the Trainer
- Children's Law
- Performance Management
- Counselling
- Youth Work
- Professional Supervision
- Psychology
- Human Resource Management
- Developmental Trauma

### Key Assets Academy

The Key Assets Academy was launched in the second half of 2023 as a new learning and development initiative for all KAA employees. Developed in partnership with leadership organisation, Mackerel Sky and founder Dr Isabelle Phillips, the Academy consists of four key pillars:

- Academy** – representing formal learning
- Lab** – representing informal, on-the-job experiments
- Podium** – representing collaborative learning via story-telling
- Village** – representing connection

Prior to the launch, the facilitator, Dr Phillips, delivered similar training to our Senior Executive Leadership and Executive Leadership teams.

Running from November 2023 through to December 2024, the Academy sessions include:

- Leadership in a VUCA World – multiple face-to-face workshops with a total of 45 participants combined
- Leader as Coach – 15 coaches assigned a coachee to mentor
- Better Meetings – online sessions with a total of 21 participants
- Sustainable Brain – online sessions with a total of 34 participants
- Strength Based Leadership for Self and Others – blended delivery with a total of 18 participants
- Appreciative Inquiry Networks – Sessions held September – December 2024

While some sessions are targeted at frontline managers and the Executive Leadership team, there are opportunities for employees across all areas of the organisation to participate in the learning to build their professional capacity and capabilities.

### Participant testimonials

*"I've been lucky enough to experience coaching as the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) do their Leader as Coach training. After each coaching session with my coach, my head is sore! I have been trying to solve some problems for over a year. I sit with my coach for one hour and leave with new thinking and a raft of actions. My coach sits back, listens and provides a safe space and time for me to think and problem solve."*

—Caroline Dunne – Quality & Practice Specialist

*"Thank you for the amazing opportunity to take part in the Sustainable Brain training. I have learned so much and have a totally different perspective and lens in which to view not only my working life but also my personal life. I am very grateful for this. My manager is taking part in the afternoon sessions, and we share the session with the team and have conversations around the subjects."*

—Rebecca Karr - Family Services Practitioner

### Feedback following the training sessions:

*"It was all very valuable and I have learnt so much. I enjoyed all of it and cannot isolate any one particular module. All very beneficial."*

—Participant in Leadership in a VUCA World

100% of participants said they could see themselves talking to employees and colleagues about better meetings. (Better Meetings)

*"Connecting with peers and thinking about thinking. I think sometimes we rush decisions which can hinder relationships, so using blue to slow down was nice. I liked hearing from diverse roles about their experiments and I appreciated everyone's vulnerability."*

—Participant in Better Meetings



## People and Culture Masterclasses

We commenced the roll-out of a series of in-person masterclasses commencing with a one-day leadership course - Crucial Conversations. This training provides a framework to support leaders to have effective conversations where there are opposing views, the stakes are high and emotions may be involved. KAA's Director of People, Ben Winduss, is a trained Crucial Conversations facilitator and is delivering the program throughout the organisation upon request. In FY2024, employees in South Australia and Victoria completed the training.

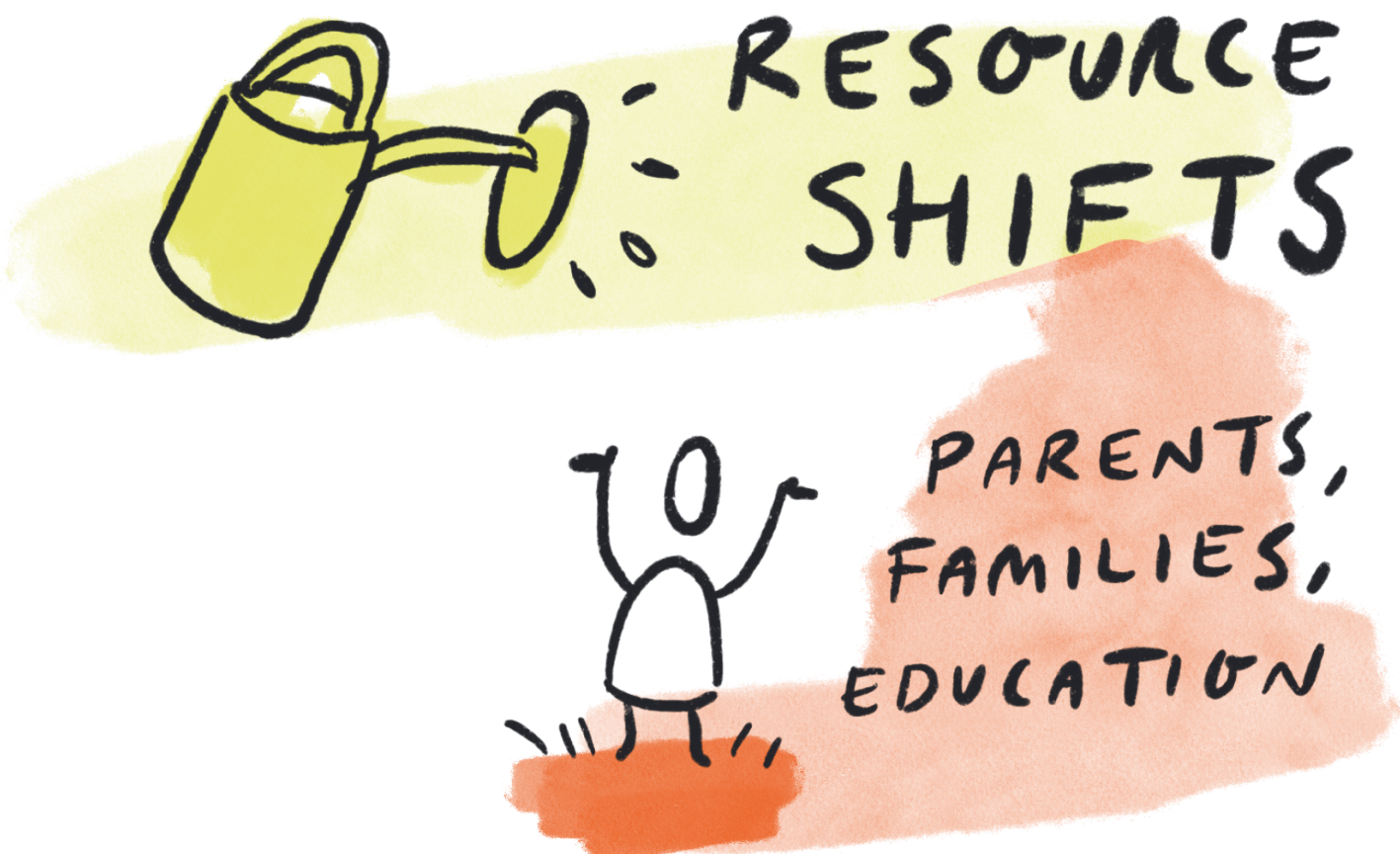
The People and Culture team has also been facilitating one-day, in-person masterclasses focused on best practice talent management and people management for our leadership cohorts in each jurisdiction. So far, this has been delivered to our Tasmanian, Queensland and Disability teams. We intend to continue rolling this out to all jurisdictions over the next six months. This training complements the principles of our newly established Recruitment and Selection Procedure and suite of documents created to support our hiring managers in delivering an excellent candidate experience.

## New structure

We expanded the People and Culture team and established the 'business partner' function whereby each jurisdiction has a dedicated Business Partner to support their People & Culture needs. This tailored approach has enabled the People and Culture team to better respond to the individual needs of each jurisdiction, whilst providing leaders with support on recruitment needs, employment relations and health and safety matters, to enhance capability.

As part of this new structure, the People and Culture team now has multi-state presence and has expanded to include a locally-based People Business Partner and People & Culture Coordinator in Western Australia.

Recognising the challenging nature of the work our employees are engaged in, we also established the Health, Safety and Wellbeing function as part of our People and Culture team.





# Staff Stories



## FRANCES BONDAD-HEAD

Quality Lead – National Support Services

With a resume that includes professional golfer, early childhood educator and support worker, Frances brings a wealth and breadth of experience to her role at KAA.

*“I loved life as a professional golfer. I did it for seven years, mainly on the ladies European Tour, and retired in 2013.*

*While I was on tour, I came across a little boy who looked like he was studying under a streetlamp. He had all these books falling out of his backpack. I thought to myself, I’m going to make a commitment to help kids be the best they can be after playing golf, whatever that might look like.*

*When I retired, I earned my diploma in early childhood education and worked in the sector for seven years. While working, I studied psychology part-time and then spent time working as a youth worker and mental health worker after finishing my degree.*

*I came to work at KAA because I felt my values aligned closely with theirs and I was also attracted to KAA’s commitment to innovation.*

*As a Quality Lead, my role primarily involves overseeing compliance, continuous improvement activities and undertaking internal audits. I also love working with data and my role involves a lot of it! I do what I can to make sure we are meeting NDIS standards and things like that.*

*I love working behind the scenes on the systems that help our people do their job well. I have such an amazing group of people around me and Kerrie Maxworthy, Director of Disability, as a leader and mentor. Everyone is so passionate about what they do.*



## JANE RABIE

Therapist – New South Wales

A key member of our team for the last five years, Jane uses her expertise in play therapy to support and strengthen relationships between children and their foster carers.

*“I’ve always worked in the family space, and I specialised in play therapy quite a few years ago. I was really inspired by the idea of supporting children and families from a trauma lens.*

*My job is to help foster parents better understand their child’s behaviour. I support them to understand how to attach, connect and find meaning in their relationships with their foster children.*

*I use an approach called Theraplay. It’s all about playing fun and quirky games to create joyful moments between children and their foster carers. Those moments are vital to creating safety, building meaningful connections and repairing relational trauma. All those things increase the chances a foster placement will be successful, which is our goal at the end of the day.*

*There are always therapeutic goals in the work I do. We’re not just playing. Often that goal is for children to trust and be able to receive nurture. When children feel safe, they can learn, they can be in relationships, and they can be the best versions of themselves.*

*I love working at KAA. I feel like my skills and expertise are valued, and the flexible, open-minded culture here has enabled me to bring my creative, therapeutic techniques to my role.*



## KOEBYN WILTON

Support Worker – South Australia

Having grown up in foster care himself, Koebyn always knew he wanted to use his experiences to help other children living in Out-Of-Home Care. After a brief stint in the army, he found his calling working as a support worker for KAA in South Australia.

*“Kids in foster care has always been something that I’m really passionate about because it’s so close to home for me. All the kids that I work with, I see a bit of myself in.*

*When I left the army, I was looking for something that was fulfilling for the soul and the work I do at KAA really feels like that. I love it. It’s so rewarding, it doesn’t even feel like work.*

*What my job looks like from one day to the next really depends on the kids. It’s all about working on skills and goals that they want to build. For some kids it’s about learning how to cook. For others, it’s about playing basketball.*

*An important part of my work is building relationships with the kids I work with so they can trust me and feel safe. I try to be a role model for them because a lot of the time there’s not a lot of male role models in their lives.*

*KAA is an awesome place to work. It just feels like everyone cares about me. I’m really very lucky to be where I am.*



## LISA WRAY

Team Manager – Western Australia

When Lisa immigrated to Western Australia from the UK, KAA provided the stable and supportive work environment she needed to settle into her new life. After a decade of working with children and foster carers as a social worker, Lisa was supported to step up to Team Manager in May 2023.

*“When I joined KAA, my role was to support carers to manage their placement and sit alongside them in that journey of caring for the children. Because I was new to Australia, it was nice to have carers who knew the system better than I did. They supported me as much as I supported them.*

*I thought I would miss the face-to-face interaction I have with carers and children when I became Team Manager. However, because my team update me and I go to meetings and visits, I still feel involved, and I haven’t lost that connection. Everybody is working together for the same goal, which is the best outcomes for the children that we are supporting.*

*My team are absolutely phenomenal. They are such a good, supportive, connected team. We all come from different backgrounds with different experiences, but everyone is so engaged with each other. I learn so much from them and their reflections, insights and knowledge. As much as I’m there to support them and their growth, development and curiosity, they do the same for me.*

*There’s not one big thing I’m proud of in my work. Watching new placements start and supporting carers with those children is very special. Being part of that and seeing children blossom from frightened little children or non-verbal autistic children to kids who are running around, getting amazing results in school and having connections and friendships makes me proud. They are heartwarming moments.*



# Board of Directors

The Directors present their report, together with the financial statements, of Key Assets the Children's Services Provider (Australia) Limited ('the company') for the year ending 30 June 2024.



## Craig Lawn CHAIR

**Craig is the Chair of the Key Assets Australia Board. He has been a Board member since 2019.**

He is also the Chair of Key Assets New Zealand. Craig is passionate about education, helping to build communities, deepening relationships between people and creating a sustainable and vibrant Australia. Craig is highly skilled at not-for-profit strategic reviews and designing innovative business models for numerous charities. He has extensive experience advising boards and executives and providing business advice to private businesses and not for profit scientific and educational institutions on business structure optimisation, commercialising opportunities, acquisitions and growth strategies.

Craig spent his career with PwC on the firm's National Tax and Private Business leadership teams and was the business leader for tax and private client teams in Brisbane and

Sydney. He dedicated over 31 years to the firm, 20 years of those as a partner, advising large and private groups, including charities, research groups and universities, before retiring in 2014. Craig advises a number of private companies and as well as his Key Assets Australia roles is on the board of Anglican Aid overseas development. He is also on the MIA research and ACEMID melanoma executive and is an investigator and consumer representative on multiple medical research projects.

Craig is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD). Craig was a Chartered Accountant until his retirement from PwC and has a Bachelor of Economics and Law from Sydney University.

**COMMITTEE ROLES:** Member, Quality, Safeguarding and Practice, Member, People and Culture



## Lisa Landon-Smith

**Lisa is a Non-Executive Director and joined the Key Assets Australia Board in 2021. Lisa is passionate about bringing her commercial experience to For Purpose organisations to help them create greater impact and become more resilient.**

Lisa has extensive finance and commercial experience in the corporate sector as well as expertise in corporate governance. She is currently the Director of Finance and Corporate Services at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA). Prior to joining the MCA in 2021, Lisa held a range of senior executive roles at Qantas Airlines including leading Finance, Strategy and Commercial Planning functions. She

has also led transformational change in commercial activities, customer experience and workforce planning, and worked with PwC in both Sydney and London.

Lisa is a Chartered Accountant and holds a Bachelor of Economics from Sydney University. She has also completed a Certificate in Business Sustainability from Cambridge University.

**COMMITTEE ROLES:** Chair, People and Culture.



## Jenni Hutchins

**Jenni has an extensive background in the child and family sector, governance, service delivery, executive leadership, fiscal management and asset and facility management.**

She is skilled at advocacy and engaging with State and Federal governments and key stakeholders to assist in the development of effective policies and regulations to aid the early childhood landscape.

Jenni has over 30 years' experience working across Not-For-Profits (NFPs) and organisations in the child and community services sectors. She is currently the CEO of Warrigal, a community-based organisation that operates community, retirement, and aged care services. Prior to this she was the CEO of Big Fat Smile, a not-for-profit organisation providing quality early learning and care, out of school hours care and community services for children and families, as well as national and state wide inclusion services.

For five years until 2022, Jenni was the co-Chair of the Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA) and was an active member of both the NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate (ECECD) and the Federal Government's Advisory Committee. Jenni also chaired the NSW Safeguarding Committee for Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate. All these committees focused on developing the best outcomes for children through social policy, advocacy, and collective action. She is currently the Chair of Tresillian Trust. In 2022 she received a Churchill Fellowship to study Best Practice Models in Out of School Hours Care.

Jenni is a registered Psychologist and has a Bachelor of Arts (Welfare Studies) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Psychology from Western Sydney University.

**COMMITTEE ROLES:** Chair, Quality, Practice and Safeguarding.



## Con Manos

**Con is a Non-Executive Director and the Company Secretary for Key Assets Australia. He has been on the Board since 2020.**

Con works closely with Australian and international businesses and organisations in the private and not-for-profit sectors. He has a keen interest in providing strategic advice on financial strategy, organisational governance, and process improvement to support growth and transformation.

Con has over 20 years' experience in accounting and finance services, specialising in audit, financial reporting, and CFO advisory services. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant with PwC and is currently the principal of Manos Tax and Advisory.

Con is a Registered Company Auditor and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Along with Key Assets Australia, he is also a Board Member of PlanNET SA Limited, a not-for-profit NDIS service provider.

Con has a Bachelor of Commerce (Major in Accounting and Management) from the University of Adelaide, a Graduate Diploma in Applied Finance and Investment, and an Advanced Diploma in Financial Planning.

**COMMITTEE ROLES:** Chair Finance, Risk and Audit.







### Daniel Croft MBE

**Daniel is a Non-Executive Director for Key Assets Australia and joined the Board in 2023.**

Daniel is the CEO, Key Assets Group (Europe) and Vice Chairman, MJF Foundation. Daniel is also the CEO of Children's Always First Ltd, and the current interim CEO of Key Assets Norway (Familiehjelp).

Daniel is a staunch advocate for children's rights and seeks to incorporate social responsibility and ethical practices into his business strategy. He is highly skilled in strategy, communication, social services, business planning and continuity. Daniel has over 20 years' experience and commitment to supporting vulnerable children. At a young age, Daniel

established his own independent fostering agency and collaborated with schools and national fostering agencies across the country. He is the founder of AutismTalk and serves as an ambassador for a Special Educational Needs tutoring service.

In 2024 Daniel was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his services to fostering.

**BOARD ROLES:** Key Assets Australia, Key Assets New Zealand, Key Assets Nova Scotia, Key Assets Ontario, Key Assets Norway (Familiehjelp), Key Assets New Foundland and Labrador, Martin James Foundation, Foster Talk, Key Assets Group Europe (KAG), Fostering First Ireland, Key Assets Finland (Avosylin).



### Calum Sawford

**Calum is a Non-Executive Director and joined the Key Assets Australia Board in 2023.**

Calum is the Chief Operating Officer of the Martin James Foundation (MJF). Calum is passionate about the theory of change and business transformation and is always seeking innovative ways to empower staff to achieve long lasting change and development.

Calum has a range of experience delivering successful outcomes in both the public and private sectors, specialising in hybrid project management methodologies. Before joining MJF, Calum worked within the Martin James Network as the Programme Director to support Network Programme Management and the successful delivery of all project-based workstreams. Prior to this, Calum

worked across both private and public sectors as a Programme Management and Business Transformation consultant, successfully delivering in a range of settings from Children's Social Services to privately owned Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with a constant focus on the realisation of tangible outcomes and measurable benefits for end-users & clients.

Calum has a Bachelor of Arts (1st class honours) in Ancient History from the University of Nottingham. He also has a PRINCE II Certificate in Project Management and is a Member of the Institute of Leadership.

**COMMITTEE ROLES:** Member, Finance, Risk and Audit.



### Jessica Oostenbroek

**Jessica Oostenbroek is a proud Aboriginal woman from the Yuggera peoples of South-East Queensland, bringing over 14 years of experience in leading strategy and reform in health and human services.**

As a respected executive in the Queensland Health system, she has played a key role in co-designing the Health Equity Reform Program and advancing initiatives for the First Nations workforce and sector development.

Jessica's expertise extends across health, mental health, and youth justice, where she has focused on improving access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection sector. She has been dedicated to implementing policies

and strategies that uphold the rights of First Nations peoples and address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Out-Of-Home Care.

Jessica holds a Bachelor of Psychological Science, a Graduate Certificate in Policy Analysis, and an Executive Master of Business Administration.

**COMMITTEE ROLES:** Member, People and Culture.





# Senior Executive Leadership

KAA is led by the Senior Executive Leadership Team reporting to the Board of Directors. They are supported by the Jurisdictional Directors and their teams; and our National Support Services.



## Dr Dianne Jackson CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Dianne joined KAA in 2020. Dianne is a passionate and strategic leader in the child and community sector, with a deep commitment to the wellbeing of children and young people.**

Throughout Dianne's career she has developed substantial national and international networks across government, philanthropy, business, research and the not-for-profit sector. These networks provide a conduit between practice, policy and evidence building that keeps the circumstances of children and families experiencing vulnerability front and centre of decision making, a cause to which Dianne is strongly committed.

Dianne has a deep understanding for the ecology of vulnerable children in families and communities. She has also provided thought leadership and practice expertise to the development of multi-faceted, integrated approaches that span the continuum of universal child and family services, early intervention and prevention, disability, family

preservation, child protection and Out-Of-Home Care. Having begun her career as a teacher, Dianne now has more than 30 years' experience in the education, government, community and philanthropy sectors. She has successfully led child and family services and national peak and start up organisations. This includes 11 years as the CEO of Connect Child and Family Services and CEO of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. She currently also sits on the board of Link Wentworth, one of Australia's largest community housing providers.

Dianne is also an Adjunct Professor at Western Sydney University where she chairs the Transforming Early Education and Child Health (TeEACH) External Advisory Board. She is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

She holds a Bachelor of Teaching, a First Class Honours Degree in Social Science and a Doctor of Philosophy from Western Sydney University.



## Jamie Hodgson CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Chrysalis Transformation Hub

**Jamie joined KAA in 2012. Jamie is a dedicated advocate for children's rights, driven by an unwavering passion to create a positive and enduring impact in the lives of children and young people. Central to Jamie's approach is the utilisation of Human-Centred Design (HCD).**

Jamie is passionate about engaging with children, young people, and families in a meaningful way. By valuing the lived experiences and insights of individuals, Jamie aims to create solutions that genuinely address their needs, promote inclusivity, and generate sustainable positive change. Jamie embodies a dynamic array of skills and attributes that defines his impactful approach to his work and driving positive change. With strong leadership acumen and exceptional interpersonal proficiency, he excels in uniting people and leading them through complex transformations in an environment of support and inclusivity. Jamie's adeptness in engagement and design thinking empowers him to connect with stakeholders deeply and navigate challenges innovatively. He places a premium on consultation, valuing

lived experiences and incorporating diverse perspectives to inform decisions.

Jamie has over 25 years' experience in Out-Of-Home Care, child protection and human services in Australia and the UK. With a proven track record in leadership roles, he has consistently championed community and individual interests while effectively collaborating with governmental bodies to influence policy and advocacy positions. His expertise encompasses the intricate landscape of nonprofit start-ups, encompassing service design, systems development, change management, recruitment, budgeting, and stakeholder engagement. Serving as a strategic advisor to both the Board and Senior Leaders, he has been instrumental in shaping organisational direction and executing strategic and business plans.

Jamie is a Member of the Institute of Company Directors (MAICD). He holds a Bachelor of Community Development, a Bachelor of Social Work, and a Graduate Diploma of Social Impact, from the Centre for Social Impact, UNSW. He also has a Diploma of Management.



## Wayne Box CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

**Wayne joined KAA in 2024. Wayne joined Key Assets Australia as CFO in March 2024. As the leader of the Finance, IT, and Governance, Risk and Compliance teams, he is passionate about contributing to an organisation whose values align with his own.**

Specifically, an organisation like KAA that delivers lasting community benefits through positive, impactful changes in the lives of children and young people, their carers, and families.

Wayne brings extensive experience in financial and technology strategies across media, performing arts, major events, government, and for-purpose sectors. He blends financial and organisational acumen

with a passion for social impact. With over 30 years of experience in operational and senior management roles, coupled with experience as a non-executive volunteer director, Wayne looks forward to adding the value of his expertise to the KAA team. Wayne anticipates that his skills in stakeholder engagement and innovation will be particularly valuable in delivering benefits to the organisation.

Wayne holds a Bachelor of Business - bBus (Accounting) from Deakin University. He is a Chartered Accountant (CA ANZ) and a Graduate of the Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) and Leadership Victoria's Williamson Community Leadership Program (WCLP18).



## Caroline Brown GROUP DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

**Caroline joined KAA in 2015. Caroline is passionate about child, family and person-centred practice, safeguarding, outcomes measurement and ethical practice.**

She is a strong believer in early intervention and keeping children with their families wherever possible. She believes in the importance of keeping siblings together in foster care as relationships with siblings are the most enduring of our lives. She is also a strong advocate of data and evidence to support sound decision making.

Caroline's top strength is curiosity, and she loves learning about the world around her. She has strong analytical and communication skills, and a substantive portfolio of operational experience that she loves to apply to policy development. Caroline is very creative and enjoys "thinking outside the box" when finding solutions to the challenging problems that can be faced working in and navigating complex systems.

Caroline has over 30 years' experience in operational, policy and senior management roles. Prior to her current role at Key Assets, Caroline was the Group Director, Operations and earlier the State Director, Tasmania. Before this, Caroline was state manager of

a child trauma counselling service which provided support to children in the child protection system. She has also held a state management role in a disability services organisation and worked at senior levels of government in South Australia and Tasmania focusing on child protection, Out-Of-Home Care, disability, family violence, youth justice and child health. Child and adolescent mental health and the wellbeing of the people she serves remains a key focus in all her roles.

Caroline was the chairperson of FACT (Family and Children) Tasmania, a peak body representing non-Government agencies in Tasmania involved in children and family services. This year, FACT merged with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare in Victoria to create a new entity that supports both the Victorian and Tasmanian sectors.

Caroline has a Bachelor of Arts, Psychology from the University of Adelaide, and a Master's in Clinical Psychology from the Flinders University of South Australia. She also holds a Certificate IV in Government Investigations, a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and a Graduate Certificate in Management.



# Operations Directors



## **Damion Lipman** GROUP DIRECTOR OPERATIONS

**Damion joined KAA in 2022.**  
**Damion is passionate about providing person-centred supports for people and leading the KAA team**

in the provision of current services, and the expansion of service delivery to other parts of Australia. He thrives in mentoring teams, driving objectives, organising and managing organisational transitions and transforming ideas into practical realities and productive results.

Damion has extensive experience in leading and achieving change objectives and organisational improvement goals. He has

over 25 years' experience working in the community services sector in a variety of roles in disability management. His Out-Of-Home Care experience includes working in the Queensland Public Service and not-for-profit organisations. Prior to working for KAA, Damion worked as a Director with the National Disability Insurance Agency (the commonwealth organisation responsible for administering the National Disability Insurance Scheme).

Damion holds a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Queensland and a Certificate IV in Frontline Management.



## **Clive Robson** DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

**Clive joined KAA in 2013.**  
**Clive prides himself on his overall ability and understanding of KAA's business.**

He has a passion for numbers and problem-solving, and excellent attention to detail. His primary goal is to ensure the accuracy and integrity of financial records, statements, and reports. Clive strives to provide valuable insights and analysis to help the business make informed decisions and achieve their financial objectives.

Clive has over 25 years' experience in financial management with over 10 years in not-for-profits. His expertise in evaluating,

forecasting and analysis assists KAA Board Directors make fundamental financial decisions.

Clive has worked in finance in the service industry for over 20 years. He has worked in South Africa, the UK and Australia across a variety of sectors including telecommunications, travel and tourism, and shipping and logistics.

Clive attended university in South Africa, and after emigrating to Australia in 2009 he converted his qualification to a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in 2013.



## **Melissa Hayes** STATE DIRECTOR, QUEENSLAND

**Melissa joined KAA in 2011.**  
**Melissa is a fierce advocate for change to improve outcomes for those involved in OOHC.**

Having spent many years working with families, she has developed a deeper understanding of the impact that a consistent, safe, stable, loving and nurturing family-based placement can have on everyone involved in OOHC. Her passion for child protection began while working in the UK and the Republic of Ireland where she delivered frontline child protection practices to families within inner city Dublin and Southampton in the UK.

More recently, Melissa has focused attention on research and investigation into kinship care and the possible outcomes for children and young people accessing family care arrangements.

Melissa has a strong focus on strength-based leadership and providing meaning and purpose to the work that KAA undertakes. She has found great success in working collaboratively to create goals, to encourage positivity and solutions while listening and empowering the team to develop practices that drives them to create a child safe environment.

Melissa has over 25 years' experience as a social worker in the child protection sector with a keen focus on OOHC. Prior to joining Key Assets, Melissa held management positions at other NFP providers and Local Government services in child protection, while also enjoying frontline work with families, children and young people most in need.

Commencing her career in the disability and health services, Melissa gained experience in dual diagnosis, geriatric care and women's health. She joined Key Assets to undertake foster carer assessments before being appointed a recruitment and panel manager in mid-2011. Since joining Key Assets 12 years ago, Mel has undertaken senior management positions within Queensland.

Melissa is a Member of the Institute of Company Directors (MAICD) and a member for Queensland Child Protection Week Committee. In 2020 she was awarded an Outstanding Leadership Award in the Courageous Team category.

Melissa holds a Bachelor of Social Work and a Diploma in Business Management. She also holds a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.



## **Brenda Yelland** STATE DIRECTOR, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**Brenda joined KAA in 2015.**  
**Brenda loves leading her fabulous team and is passionate about making a difference to the lives of children, young people and families.**

She is passionate about nurturing an emotionally and physically safe workplace culture where people can continue to improve, be curious, be innovative, grow their strengths and make a lasting difference to the people we serve.

Brenda started her career in the Northern Territory, working in several remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. She has since held social work positions at several community service organisations in

Western Australia prior to spending 10 years as a senior social worker for the Department of Communities (Child Protection). She then went on to become a Senior Practice Development Officer before assuming management of a respite programme, a permanent care programme and the local and intercountry adoptions teams. Brenda was appointed as the Assistant Director of Fostering and Adoptions in 2012 where she remained until coming to KAA in 2015. After four years as the Assistant Director, in 2019 Brenda moved into the State Director role.

Brenda has a Bachelor of Social Work from Curtin University and has completed the Finance module of the ACID's Directors Foundations Course.





### Joanne Hilliard STATE DIRECTOR, TASMANIA

**Jo joined KAA in 2015. Jo is passionate about service innovation and design in Child Safety. She has led the Tasmanian Team to further develop Tasmania's Sibling Group Program and in the development and implementation of new models of intervention in Edge of Care and Early Years.**

Jo is a qualified Social Worker with over 25 years' experience working in Statutory Child Protection, frontline and Senior Management positions, and in

therapeutic settings including Education, The Australian Childhood Foundation, and Veterans and Their Families Counselling.

Starting with KAA is, in Jo's opinion, the best career decision she has made to date. KAA offers a fantastic culture, challenge, diversity, and opportunities for creativity within a framework that is child centred and child safe.

Jo has a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Tasmania.



### Lisa Ranahan STATE DIRECTOR, VICTORIA

**Lisa joined KAA in 2018. Lisa has a strong passion for supporting the service system to ensure the care experience of children and young people is focused on the relationships that enable healing from trauma.**

In 1995, she established a children's resource service that built capacity in the homeless sector to identify and respond to the needs of children accompanying their parents in homelessness services.

Lisa began working in the UK, starting what has now become a 25-year career across a range of services that focus on the wellbeing

of traumatised and vulnerable children. Lisa was a senior practitioner in statutory child protection for two years, before moving to the not-for-profit sector. During her 13 years' employment with Australian Childhood Foundation, she held several positions from Senior Practice Consultant to National Manager, with the last six years as Program Manager across several services in regional Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

Lisa holds a Bachelor of Social Work from RMIT and a Master's of Business Administration from the Australian Institute of Business.



### James Isles STATE DIRECTOR, NEW SOUTH WALES & NORFOLK ISLAND

**James joined KAA in 2020. James is dedicated to the well-being of children and families ensuring that vulnerable children find safe and nurturing homes.**

His passion is ensuring a positive and engaging workplace culture for everyone to thrive in. James' key strengths lie in inspiring leadership, adaptability, collaboration, communications, change management and cultivating creativity and innovative service delivery.

James' expertise has developed over time through continuous learning, practical experience and a commitment to improvement.

James has over 20 years' experience in both the statutory and not-for-profit sector in child protection, OOHC, adoption and youth mental health in Australia and the UK.

His interest in youth mental health was sparked by his work as Service Manager for headspace Bondi Junction between 2014-2020; a hugely successful service supporting over 1,200 young people in 2019 alone. James has also worked at other not-for-profit organisations including The Benevolent Society.

James is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD). He has a Masters in Social Work from Lancaster University and an Honours Degree in Social Policy and Criminology from the University of Central Lancashire.



### Michael Ainsworth STATE DIRECTOR, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**Michael joined KAA in 2021. Michael is passionate about transforming the lives of children, young people and families and is motivated by influencing positive change in the sector.**

He is particularly driven to create more opportunities to provide support to vulnerable children and young people.

Michael has vast experience across multiple complex and challenging sectors bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to steer his team to success. He leads with infectious energy and enthusiasm, taking a mentorship approach to lead people and bring them on the journey.

Michael comes from a long line of family who have proudly worked in the human services sector. He began his career trajectory as a support worker and over the past 20 years has progressed to senior roles spanning allied health, practice, and leadership. Prior to KAA, Michael worked at one of Australia's largest not-for-profits as Victorian Director of Children, Youth and Families.

Michael has a Bachelor of Developmental Education, Disability Studies from Flinders University and a Bachelor of Behavioural Studies (Psychology), from Swinburne University. He also has a Certificate IV in both Mental Health and Disability.



### Kerrie Maxworthy DIRECTOR OF DISABILITY

**Kerrie joined KAA in 2022. Kerrie is passionate about enriching the lives of children and young people with and without disability, ensuring their voice is heard and independence maintained.**

Striving to build capacity and promote inclusion wherever possible, Kerrie focuses on supporting the entire family unit as this is where real change and positive impact can be made, particularly when navigating large government systems. Kerrie has lived experience of disability within her family unit and draws upon this as a driver to create change through her various career paths.

Kerrie assisted in establishing the Integrated International School of Singapore, an inclusive education model that allows children with disability and their families to thrive within an education environment. This passion has also led Kerrie to developing a childcare product that promoted

inclusion and acceptance in a mainstream environment for children with additional needs, ensuring their transition to the mainstream education system was a positive and accepting one. Inclusive early education is a passion and driver for all practices that Kerrie undertakes with the overall goal of developing a care and education system that caters and is accepting of all.

With over 10 years' experience in the children services and disability sectors Kerrie has undertaken leadership roles within the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), mainstream childcare chains, early intervention centres and large charitable organisations such as Autism Spectrum Australia in New South Wales. She also has experience within the Queensland Parliamentary system representing a State Member of Parliament. Kerrie is currently completing her MBA at Deakin University.



### Ben Winduss DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

**Ben joined KAA in 2023. Ben is passionate about developing people and challenging the status quo to enable exciting outcomes for employees. He loves mentoring staff and makes a concerted effort to understand and develop their professional skills.**

Ben is highly skilled at HR management, HR consulting and employee engagement. He uses innovative ideas to improve organisational performance and engagement in order to build a positive workplace culture. With a natural talent to engage and build rapport with stakeholders, Ben brings a unique style

to the HR environment and infuses his positive energy into the workplace. Ben has more than 15 years' experience in HR and recruitment, across the financial services, education and health sectors.

Ben is a member of the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI). He has a Master of Human Resource Management and Employment Law from Edith Cowan University, a Bachelor of Education and Business from QUT and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment from TAFE. Ben is also an accredited International Coaching Federation Level 1 Organisational Coach.



# Financial Summary

	2024	2023
	30 June 2024	30 June 2023
Revenue	AUD \$	AUD \$
Total revenue	89,415,542	70,708,363
Expenses		
Fostering allowances	9,030,894	8,069,433
Service delivery and support costs	12,484,141	9,929,452
Recruitment and placement costs	1,870,916	1,676,500
Employee benefits expense	50,575,142	37,571,416
Depreciation and amortisation expense	3,145,582	3,298,422
Occupancy	1,341,169	820,604
Administration	7,290,936	6,469,410
Finance costs	478,307	475,409
Total expenses	86,217,087	68,310,646
Surplus before income tax expense	3,198,455	2,397,717
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus after income tax expense for the year attributable to the members of Key Assets The Children’s Services Provider (Australia) Limited	3,198,455	2,397,717
Other comprehensive income		
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss		
Gain on the revaluation of land and buildings, net of tax	-	590,231
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	590,231
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to the members of Key Assets The Children’s Services Provider (Australia) Limited	3,198,455	2,987,948

\*The figures presented are extracted from the audited financial statements of Key Assets The Children’s Services Provider (Australia) Limited for the twelve months ended 30 June 2024. To view the financial statements in full, please visit the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission website at [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

# Funding Partners

KAA acknowledges and appreciates the funding support of the following Government Departments:



Communities & Justice



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Communities



Government of South Australia  
Department for Child Protection



Tasmanian Government  
Department for Education, Children and Young People



Queensland Government



VICTORIA  
State Government  
Families, Fairness and Housing



Australian Government



Registered  
NDIS Provider





PRODUCED BY

## Key Assets The Children's Services Provider Australia

### Key Assets Australia

🏠 Building 10, Freeway Office  
Park,  
2728 Logan Road,  
Eight Mile Plains QLD 4113

✉ PO Box 2466  
Runcorn QLD 4113

📧 info@keyassets.org.au

☎ +61 (0) 7 3722 9800

🌐 www.keyassets.org.au



*Scan the QR code  
to learn more  
about becoming a  
foster carer.*

