

Home-Start National Inc.

Annual Report

2019 -2020



Home-Start

A friend to parents with small children

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

“If children feel safe, they can take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust, share their feelings, and grow.”

(Alfie Kohn)



“History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children”

(Nelson Mandela)

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Acknowledgements

Home-Start National Inc. would like to acknowledge the support of our funding and community partners:

- *The volunteers and families involved in the program.*
- *The dedicated Home-Start staff*
- *The Members of the Board of Management*
- *The Department of Communities and Justice*
- *Sisters of Charity Foundation*
- *Department of Social Services*
- *City of Newcastle Council*
- *Lake Macquarie City Council*
- *Club Forster*
- *Hunter Valley Chain Coal Chain Coordinator*
- *Anita and Holly Ibbotson*
- *Essential Energy*
- *The Paragon Café – Goulburn*
- *Mark and Katrina Brooker "The Local"*
- *The Home-Start Worldwide Network and Board*
- *Or Service Network Partners*

Core Belief

Home-Start National believes that children need a happy and secure childhood and that parents play the key role in giving their children a good start in life and helping them achieve their full potential.

The Home-Start Approach

To Home-Start National every family is special, and we respond to each family's needs through a combination of home-visiting support, group work, parenting education and social events.

Home-Start programs are embedded in the communities they service. They are part of local service networks but are supported by the Home-Start national organisation. This support includes direction, training, information and guidance to programs and ensures consistent and quality support for parents and children wherever they are.

Home-Start services have a proven, lasting and positive impact on the development of children and the health and welfare of families.

Our Mission

Home-Start offers support, friendship and practical help to parents with young children, in local communities in Australia.

To help give children the best possible start in life, Home-Start supports parents as they grow in confidence, strengthen their relationships with their children and widen their links with the local community.

Our Vision

Home-Start National aspires to a society made up of child friendly communities in which every parent has the support they need to provide their children with a safe, loving and nurturing environment.

Our Core Values

At Home-Start National our core values help to define our organization, guide our behaviour, underpin operational activity and shape the strategies we use in our relationships with families and children.







Our Core values are

- Respect
- Integrity
- Social Justice







Home-Start National Inc. is concerned for the welfare of children and parents and committed to establishing and supporting Home-Start schemes throughout Australia.

A close relationship between Home-Start National Inc. and each local scheme is essential to ensure that high standards and methods of practice are maintained and that Home-Start everywhere retains a common ethos.

Home-Start National Board Of Management

	Chairperson Ann Fletcher		Treasurer Alyce Stones
	Secretary Susanne Thompson		Public Officer Rita Campbell
	Member of the Board Fiona Hope		Member of the Board Amy Barnes

Home-Start National Office and Management

	CEO Michelle McDonell		National Project Officer Val Watson
	Administration Gloria Buttsworth		Financials Jess Wilson
	Financials Mel Forster		Financials Kate Lacey

In 2019 – 2020 Home-Start Family Services has provided:

- Volunteer Home Visiting Services
- Family Worker Service
- Supported Playgroups
- Parenting Programs
- Community Capacity Building
- Emergency Aid (Fire and COVID)

In the following areas:

- Kempsey/Macleay
- Forster/Tuncurry
- Newcastle
- Lake Macquarie
- Cowra/Canowindra/Weddin
- Wingecarribee
- Southern Tablelands – Goulburn & Crookwell
- Tumut/Tumburrumba/Gundagai
- Hay/Murrumbidgee/Carrathool
- Bendigo Victoria (Auspiced by BaptCare)
- Yarra Ranges Victoria (Auspiced by Uniting)

Chairperson's Report 2019-2020

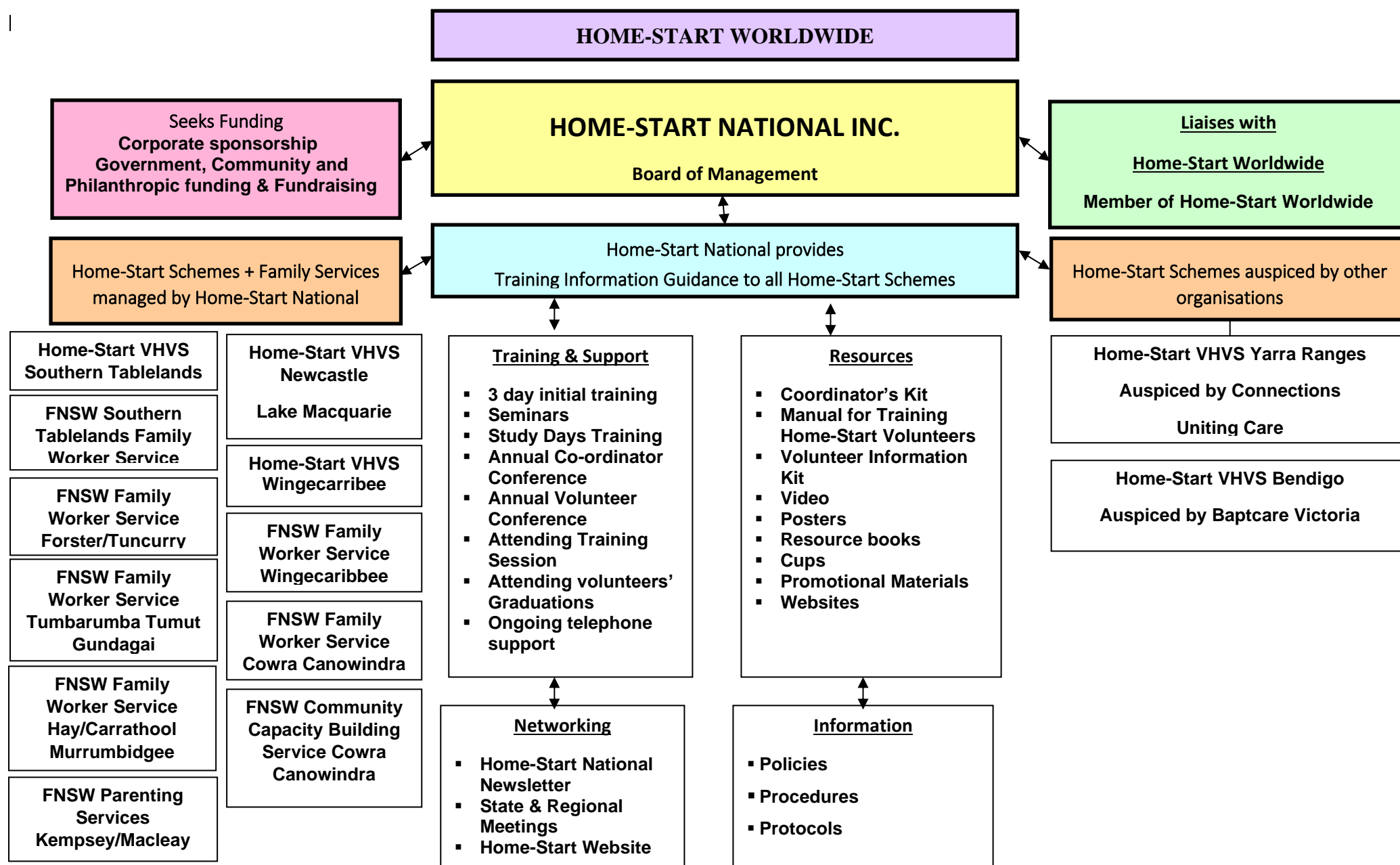
It provides me with great pleasure to reflect over the past year with Home-Start and the fabulous work we do in communities around NSW and VIC. We are adapting and overcoming the usual everyday difficulties alongside National and Global disasters. Our Management Team, Co-ordinators and Volunteers have worked tirelessly to continue supporting our Home-Start families in the most trying of times. My heartfelt thanks go to everyone that has kept everything running as smoothly as possible with the true Home-Start spirit of nurturing children, parents and communities. You are the backbone of this organisation and the reason we have celebrated so many years of success in Australia.



In December 2019 Michelle, Val and I were fortunate to be invited to attend the Home-Start conference being hosted by Prague Home-Start in the Czech Republic. It was attended by services from all over the world and it was a great opportunity to hear about projects and ideas for engaging with vulnerable communities. Michelle provided a presentation about working with Indigenous Communities and it was received very well with some great feedback from participants. Home-Start in Australia is very well regarded internationally, and this is in no small part due to the amazing efforts of Michelle and Val to keep the Home-Start spirit alive.

I would also like to thank my fellow board members for their dedication and commitment to the service regardless of their own challenges in these trying times. I warmly welcome Fiona and Amy onto the Board and look forward to the wealth of wisdom and experience that they bring to share with this amazing program. We sadly say goodbye and express our deepest gratitude to Alyce our Treasure, who has provided solid direction over our financial situation ensuring that Home-Start remains in an excellent position to continue its service to the community.

I wish all our Home-Start family the strength to continue with the important work we do in keeping children safe and growing well.



AUSTRALIAN SNAPSHOTS 2019 2020



Drought



Fire



Flood



Dust Storms



Storms



COVID 19



CEO's REPORT - HOME-START NATIONAL INC - 2019 – 2020

“WHAT A YEAR IT HAS BEEN”, We have all been sorely tested this year. It has, without doubt been one of the most challenging years for so many Australian families. Together we have experienced unprecedented drought, catastrophic fires, floods, massive dust storms, damaging coastal storms and then the big one – COVID 19. No wonder we are all a bit shell shocked and exhausted. **We have had to bend but we did not break!**



The accumulative effect of these events has been immense. The economic, emotional and health impacts on already struggling families has been devastating.

As an organisation, a service network, a community, and a Nation we have pull together to do whatever we could to get ourselves and others through these difficult times.

Every year I feel honoured and privileged to be a part of the Home-Start Organisation and to witness the dedication, compassion, commitment, and resilience of all involved. After 23 years working with Home-Start I can categorically say that I have never been more in awe of the Home-Start staff, the volunteers, the Board of Management, and the families. I sincerely thank you all.

Importantly I would like to thank the children of Home-Start who have at times kept us all afloat by constantly reminding us that “the world goes on” and that hope, and happiness abound regardless of what the world throws at us.

Once again, this year in Home-Start the “Welfare of the Child has been Paramount” We have focused our work on offering parents the support they need to be able to provide their children with a safe, secure, healthy and happy environment in which children can thrive and reach their full potential.

Home-Start has offered the following service models throughout 2019 - 2020

- **Volunteer Home Visiting** – *Home-Start recruits, trains, screens and supervises volunteers who are meticulously matched to a family to visit them in the family home. Volunteers provide informal and emotional support to parents with the aim of enhancing family and social life. Often volunteers role model good parenting practices, healthy nutrition, effective communication and relationship building. For many families, volunteers offer someone to talk with, someone who will lend a caring and non-judgemental ear. Home-Start supports parents to provide a happy, healthy, safe and nurturing environment for their children.*
- **Supported Playgroup** – *Home-Start Supported Playgroups offer an opportunity for parents to share their experiences of parenting and for children to socialise, play and learn in a structured and positive environment. The Home-Start Playgroups are a warm and encouraging place for parents to share time with other parents and to enhance their knowledge and skills around child development and the importance of play for children.*
- **Family Worker Services** – *In collaboration with families Home-Start Family Workers work to improve the outcomes and wellbeing of families with young children, by providing support for*

parents, facilitating informal support groups and access to appropriate community services. Our Family workers are highly skilled and able to offer support to families with complex issues, using trauma informed care, strengths based and solution focus practices.

- **Community Capacity Building** – Home-Start Community Capacity Building workers help to enhance the ability of a community to address problems or challenges within its own resources.
- **Parenting Programs** – Home-Start provides parents with effective activities, information and guidance to assist them to build successful and positive parenting skills. Home-Start workers are skilled practitioners in programs such as;
 1. Triple P
 2. Circle of Security
 3. Bringing up great kids
 4. 123 Magic
 5. Parents under Pressure



Home-Start Worldwide Meetings

In December 2019 Ann Fletcher (Home-Start National Chair) Val Watson (Home-Start National Project office and I were invited to the Czech Republic to meet with representatives from Home-Start Worldwide. Delegates at the Worldwide meetings came from Australia, Czech Republic, Romania, Japan, Norway and Malta. We met to discuss various topics impacting on Home-Start at a global level and the ways in which the Home-Start Model accommodate changes world and still maintain the integrity of the model.

The triennial Conference which was to be held during November 2019 in Malta was also discussed. However, this has now been tentatively rescheduled for late 2021



CHILD IN MIND CONFERENCE on innovative and effective methods of working with children and their families.

On the 3rd and 4th December 2019, I was privileged to be invited to speak at The Child in Mind Conference in Prague. This conference highlighted innovative and effective methods of working with vulnerable children in the child protection field. I delivered a presentation on Home-Starts work with the Aboriginal Community and Aboriginal Families in Kempsey. The presentation focussed on culturally safe and appropriate methods of working with Aboriginal parents with the aim of improving their parental confidence and capacity. I would like to thank Val Watson, Sheri Forster and Kylie Faulkner for their invaluable input into the presentation.

The conference was hosted by HOST Czech Republic and was a huge success and we learned a great deal from experts from all over Europe who presented at the conference.



Yukie Yamada from Home-Start Japan with the Australian Home-Start Contingent at the "Child in Mind" Conference in Prague



Sheri Foster: Home-Start Parenting Facilitator and Volunteer Co-ordinator



Kylie Faulkner: Manager of Many Rivers Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service and a proud Duguthuti woman

Government Contracting

Home-Start can proudly announce the signing of 7 new Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Contracts with the NSW Government (The Department of Communities and Justice).

The Vision for the TEI Program aligns with Home-Start philosophy, aims and objectives. The TEO Vision is that:

- Families, children and young people's needs are met early to prevent the escalation of vulnerability.
- Families are able to access support early in the lives of their children and young people.
- Risk factors that lead to child abuse, neglect, and domestic and family violence are addressed early and
- Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities have access to timely, effective, accessible and culturally safe support and services.

The Bush Fires

It has been estimated that more than one-fifth of Australia's forests burned during the 2019–2020 Black Summer fires – a proportion which is unprecedented anywhere in the world. At least 3,500 homes and thousands of other buildings were lost and 34 people died in thousands of fires between June 2019 and March 2020. The majority of deaths and buildings destroyed were in New South Wales,

The Home-Start program hardest hit by the summer fires was our service in the Southern Highlands (Wingecarribee). and I would like to make note at this point of the extraordinary efforts made by Home-Start Family Worker, Danielle Johns during this time.

Danielle worked 7 days a week and sometimes until late at night.

- supporting clients in hospital experiencing mental health episodes brought about by the trauma of the fires
- comforting parents who had lost the means to support their families
- locating, gathering and delivering food, toys and essential items to families throughout the community.
- Gathering up Home-Start Playgroup toys and taking them out to evacuation centres where she would amuse children for hours so their parents might get some relief.



Fire fighters battling flames on the Woombah to Iluka road during the Black Summer fires in 2019

Danielle, along with Catherine Buckle from the Southern program Home-Start Tumut, Tumbarumba and Gundagai and countless others were the unsung heroes of that bushfire season. Thank

you, Danielle, Catherine and all of the Home-Start workers who responded with such dedication and compassion at this challenging time.



COVID 19 Response

On March 17th all staff were instructed to cease face to face home visits, group work and centre visit. Working from home became the new norm for the weeks and months to come. This was particularly challenging time for both workers and families. The resilience of the families and creativity and stoic commitment of the Home-Start staff successfully overcame most barriers.

New policies, plans and protocols were drawn up to guide us safely through our work during the Pandemic. These included:

- **Home-Start COVID 19 Pandemic - Working from Home (WFH) Policy**
- **Home-Start National COVID 19 Risk Management Plan**

By June, all programs were beginning to transition out of lock down and slowly commence face to face visiting once again. COVID Safe Home Visiting Protocols were drawn up and implemented.

In terms issues for families there were some emerging trends like housing instability, trauma related mental health, child behavior, poor nutrition, excessive screen time, relationship difficulties. Many of these issues were expected and a few unexpected, however I believe we will see the true impact of this year's events manifesting in the months to come.

The Silver Lining and Learned Experiences this year

Without doubt we have profoundly changed the way we work. Although somewhat reluctantly at first, we have not only embraced some of the changes enforced on us by the Pandemic but we have discovered some unexpected benefits

Practice methods have broadened to include new and innovative strategies for supporting families that will be imbedded in our service provision into the future.

This year during lock down

- Volunteers supported parents virtually to home school children during lock down
- Volunteers had virtual coffee and chat sessions with parents to provide essentially mental health support and to break the monotony of lockdown.
- Workers used COVID Safe practices to gather and deliver essential supplies; children's craft and activity kits; seed raising kit; birthday cakes etc to families in our rural and remote areas.

- Workers provided families with accurate and up to date information regarding COVID restrictions and legal obligations.
- Workers continued to provide parenting programs and guidance via virtual platforms such as Zoom.
- Workers provided online newsletter for children in the programs.
- Workers and volunteers provided virtual playgroup activities, treasure hunts and stories etc to children – this often provided parents with the only mental health break in the day
- Workers provided reassurance and encouragement (virtually) to parents struggling with stress, anxiety and mental health difficulties.

The Transition out of lockdown also saw workers and volunteers developing new ways to stay engaged with families to help them feel connected to the community.

- Socially distant River, Lake and Beach walks
- Driveway chat sessions for parents
- Driveway story time for children
- Socially Distant Pram walks
- Picnics in the Park or the backyard

New I.T Support

I am very pleased to announce that Home-Start now has at long last some really effective I.T Support. DYN I.T. came on board late in the year and had an immediate impact. All programs throughout the state can access immediate I.T. support. As one worker expressed it was “a game changer for her” Staff feedback indicates that they feel much more confident with technology and the I.T equipment necessary for performing their Home-Start roles. Welcome to the DYN I.T. team - Kieran, Jordan and Tony.

Home-Start Volunteer Home Visiting Statistics 2019 – 2020



Challenges of families needing a volunteer

Mental Health

Isolation & Loneliness

Lack of Support

COVID 19, Fires, Floods,
Secure Housing

Unemployment and
Financial Stress

Home-Start Professional Family Services Statistics 2019 – 2020



Challenges of families needing Family Services



Home-Start National Funding Report

During 2019-2020, Home-Start programs were financially supported through a number of sources including small grants, donation tins, container recycling schemes, Entertainment Books and a Charity Theatre Night, but other scheduled events were cancelled due to COVID19.

Grants include:

Program/Service	Funding
Newcastle Volunteer Home Visiting Program	Sisters of Charity Foundation DSS Volunteer Grants City of Newcastle – Boost Our City Community Sector Grants Lake Macquarie City Council Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator
Home-Start Forster Volunteer Home Visiting Program	ClubGrants Great Lakes
Home-Start Tumut, Tumbarumba, Gundagai Volunteer Home Visiting Program	Essential Energy Community Choices Program DSS Volunteer Grants
Kempsey Volunteer Home Visiting Program	DSS Volunteer Grants

Home-Start ‘Sent with Love’ Fundraising Appeal for Bushfire Affected Families

Our Family Workers in Tumut and Wingecarribee areas identified 8 Home-Start families with small children who had been severely affected by the bush fires. They lost their homes, jobs, cars, pets, possessions and much more. They were being provided with food and a place to sleep in evacuation shelters in the midst of the fires but they would need to replace so much more to rebuild their lives.

To help them purchase other essential items for themselves and their children such as nappies, socks, underwear, toiletries, special dietary food, kitchen items, petrol, phone cards, towels and washers, school uniforms and supplies, etc, Home-Start National launched the ‘Sent with Love’ Bush Fire Appeal, from our family to yours. Families, volunteers and supporters not affected directly by the fires donated Coles or Woolworths vouchers and cash to the value of \$2980

These donations were distributed to each family by our local Family Workers who provided transport and ongoing emotional support to access what they needed.



Fundraising for:

Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Volunteer Home Visiting Program include:

- Return and Earn Recycling Kiosks – partnership in Newcastle for 3 months
- Cash4Cans – bulk recycling of cans and bottles
- Grill'd Healthy Burgers at Charlestown – Local Matters Program
- Entertainment Book – Newcastle and Central Coast
- Home-Start Donation Tins – in various outlets around Newcastle
- Individual donations from parents, volunteers and community members

Charity Theatre Night – Home-Start National partnered with Newcastle Theatre Company, to hold a fundraising event at the Preview night for the show 'The View from the Bridge' by Arthur Miller. Funds raised supported the Newcastle Volunteer Home Visiting Program.

Goulburn Volunteer Home Visiting Program fundraising:

- Return and Earn Recycling – partnership in Goulburn for 3 months
- Home-Start Donation Tins – in various outlets around Goulburn, with particular thanks to The Paragon Café

Tumut Family Worker Service fundraising:

- Return and Earn Recycling – partnership in Tumut for 3 months
- Home-Start Donation Tins – in various outlets around Tumut

Kempsey Parenting Programs and Community Readers fundraising:

- Home-Start Donation Tins – in various outlets around Kempsey

Fundraising impacted by COVID19

A number of our usual fundraising avenues have been affected or cancelled since restrictions in social contact and personal movement began mid-March 2020. These include:

Reduced funds from:

- Donation Tins – as venues such as cafes closed and fewer patrons allowed in
- Return and Earn Recycling Kiosks and Cash4Cans – due to risk of infection and fear of handling cans and bottles after others
- Entertainment Book sales – less opportunities to socialise in venues resulted in reduction in sales

Cancelled:

- Bunnings BBQs – not allowed by the company
- Charity Bingo Night – major fundraiser
- Charity Golf Day – Waratah Golf Club – major fundraiser

Program Reports

Home-Start Volunteer Home Visiting Service - Newcastle and Lake Macquarie

Home-Start Volunteer Home Visiting program is an evidence-based, award winning program that provides Early Intervention support to prevent mental health and parenting difficulties from escalating into crisis and leading to child neglect/abuse, and family breakdown.

The program provides strengths based mentoring by trained and supervised volunteers with the ultimate aim of improving parent's mental health, confidence, self-esteem and connections within their community.

Even during a pandemic, our local volunteers didn't miss a beat and continued to help children and parents in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. When they couldn't visit physically, they developed and used innovative ways to keep in touch every week such as connecting via phone, internet apps, Zoom, Facetime, and dropped food, household essentials and children's activities at the gate.

Volunteers and families taught each other how to use virtual connection, and sometimes school aged children provided the IT support. Volunteers provided critical mental health support to parents, and a listening ear and soundboard for harried parents to debrief. They provided hours of fun time via video for the children, including playing games, reading books, doing puzzles, meeting each other's pets, and garden tours of each other's gardens, looking at vegetables, flowers, birds and bugs.

During 2019-2020 year, we received 17 new referrals for families needing support, due to:

- isolation and loneliness
- anxiety, depression, Post Natal Depression
- mental or physical illness
- child or parental disability
- difficulty coping as parents
- new to the area
- multiple births
- having left domestic and family violence and starting again alone

We received 18 enquiries from potential volunteers about becoming a Home-Start home visitor, with the majority finding out about Home-Start Volunteer Home Visiting program through 'The Local', a monthly free community magazine which is distributed throughout numerous Newcastle suburbs. Our sincere thanks to Mark and Katrina Brooker, owners and publishers of The Local, for all your support and for providing free advertising every month throughout this year. Katrina is also one of our wonderful volunteers, who has been visiting a family every week since 2017.

In February 2020, seven new volunteers began the Volunteer Home Visiting Course being held at the Home-Start National office but in March their course was suspended midway through by the COVID19 lockdown.

After 4 weeks, all trainee volunteers had secured access to a video platform, and each had upskilled to use Zoom. They attended their last 4 weeks of the Group 9 course via Zoom, and all seven completed online. All have been matched with a family in need and have been visiting every week since June 2020.



Screenshot of Newcastle Group 9 volunteers completing their training via Zoom.

Comments from Group 9 volunteers about their Volunteer Preparation Course:

"It was great – opened my mind further. Looking forward to more!"

"Loved the opportunity to talk about boundaries, work on scenarios and get ideas and confirmation of ways to deal with them."

"Apart from informative, it was lots of fun."

"I learnt more about thoughtful, active listening."

"An informative course – discussed issues I hadn't thought of. We know that we will have lots of support if needed."

"I felt a rapport with the others in the group, and I felt included in the conversation and confident to share ideas."

"I feel interested and excited about the prospect of visiting a family."



For the second year running, we'd like to thank Sisters of Charity Foundation for their support and for providing the funding for the Volunteer Preparation Course for Group 9 and ongoing volunteer support meetings.

Thank you, Sisters of Charity Foundation, for showcasing Home-Start during National Volunteers Week.

<https://sistersofcharityfoundation.com.au/.../national.../>



Our 2019 Newcastle/Lake Macquarie family and volunteer Christmas Picnic was again the highlight of the year, with a special visit from Santa and a gift for all the children.



We were also very pleased to welcome back two Home-Start volunteers who had trained many years ago in Newcastle and had taken a few years' break from home visiting. They are ready to resume now and are keen to be matched with a new family.

During 2019-2020, our dedicated Newcastle and Lake Macquarie volunteers made 1,392 home visits, donating 4,176 hours of care, worth \$131,544.

Outcomes for children, parents and volunteers involved in Home-Start's Volunteer Home Visiting program:

- * Reduced isolation and depression in parents and volunteers
- * Improved child health, development and wellbeing
- * Increased confidence and skills in parenting
- * Reduced domestic violence
- * Reduced child abuse
- * Increased opportunities for friendships and inclusion for everyone involved
- * Increased use of community facilities, programs and activities
- * Improved skills and employability for volunteers
- * Increased community connectedness

Throughout the year volunteers were supported by the Program Coordinators, with regular phone calls, face to face and support meetings. Coordinators also provided regular phone calls and scheduled home visits to families to monitor the link between volunteer, parents and children, and to provide information and referral to other relevant services as needed.

CASE STUDY – NEWCASTLE VHVS

A family was referred by First Steps Parenting service. They had moved from Victoria to Newcastle for Dad Mitchell's work and didn't know anyone. Their first baby was 6 months old. Dad worked very long hours and mother, Rachel, was at home alone every day, feeling isolated

and was diagnosed with Post Natal Depression. Rachel also disclosed that she didn't know how to cook and they were living on take away food.

Volunteer Sarah was introduced in July 2019 and began visiting every week. She accompanied Rachel to do the grocery shopping, discussed meal ideas and ingredients, and then mentored her to develop basic cooking skills for the baby and adults.

Each week, Sarah provided a friendly face, listened to Rachel's worries, encouraged and mentored her in cooking, played and delighted in their baby, and filled the space left by their family so far away. Rachel has recovered from PND, her cooking skills are well honed now, and she has returned to part time work in her own profession.

Sarah and the whole family still meet for coffee occasionally, and Sarah has been now visiting and supporting another local family in need with twins.

Home-Start Family Worker Service Southern Tablelands (Goulburn Mulwaree LGA and Crookwell)

Volunteer home visitors and learning support volunteers provide companionship and community connection for parents and support to children's development in the following areas:

- Language development
- Social skills
- Exploration and play
- School readiness
- Managing ages and stages
- Modelling positive parental behaviour
- Homework, English conversation and learning support



Mhairi Fraser
Family worker

Number of clients serviced by family worker carried over from previous financial year: 18

Number of clients serviced by family worker, volunteer visitors & learning support carried over:
27

Number of new family worker client referrals: 2

Total family worker clients as at 30/6/2020: 20

Examples of good practice outcomes this year:

- Two children (age 3 and 4) are receiving Speech and OT services as a result of H-S referral and advocacy to the Healthy Bus Stop with noticeable improvement in language and behaviour.
- Kristina (age 8) is receiving volunteer learning support with homework in 2020 with positive improvement in homework completion and feedback from school.
- Two mothers are undertaking tertiary study as a result of family worker support.
- One mother returned to full time work after receiving family worker support for post-natal depression. Part of the process involved accompanying this mother through a hospital

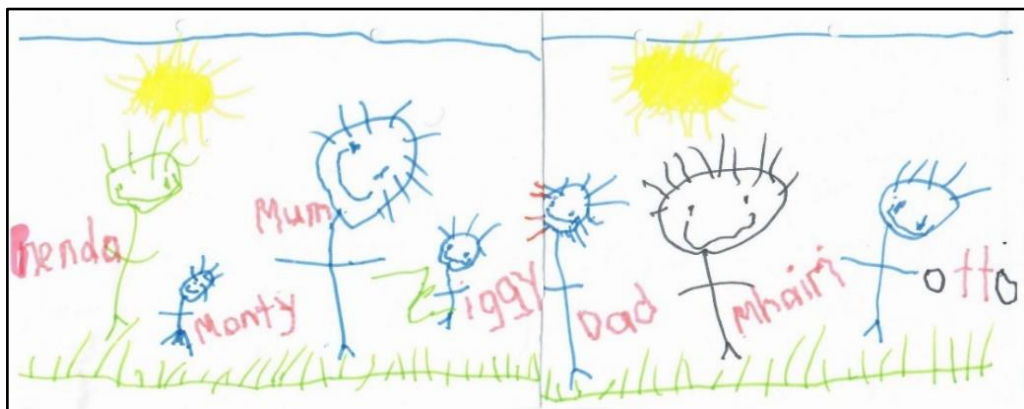
complaints process. She also received volunteer home visiting services to help her manage three children (aged 0 – 4 years).

- Family worker and volunteers take children seriously during visits and encourage their participation. This often involves exchanges of “cards” and drawings. When it comes to exiting the family, a careful transition is planned that includes the children as well as the parents. Otto (age 4) made two cards for the family worker and volunteer which expressed his way of holding the connection whilst accepting the end of our time together.

Card 1 below shows 2 maps! The map on the right (blue) links the volunteer’s home to his. The map on the left shows a quicker route for her to travel to his place – “jumping over fences”! Otto wanted to make sure that his volunteer didn’t forget how to find his house.



Card 2 - expresses how he sees H-S people (Mhairi and Brenda) in his family. Mum is smiling after a long period of depression.



Impact of COVID 19 on Home-Start Southern Tablelands

During the COVID lock down (March to early June) the family worker adapted her communications with families to include zoom sessions with parents and children and sending through resources such as parenting videos, newsletters such as playgroups@home and Home-Start’s (Bowral) Little Learners and video phone messages. Learning support volunteers helped two children with home-schooling via zoom.

During the lock down the family worker and volunteers marked mother's day and birthdays with cards that celebrated each mother's particular strengths. Birthday cakes were left at the front door by some volunteers. The purpose of these activities was to moments of joy to maintain mental wellbeing and helped cement the trust between Home-Start personnel and families.

For families struggling with excessive stress the family worker organised driveway visits or walks with families to allow for 1.5 m social distancing. Hygiene protocols were encouraged.

As we transitioned out of lockdown in June the family worker implemented H-S COVID home visiting protocols. This was difficult with some families so visits to the park or for walks was the transitional strategy.

A difficult issue for families with young children is the loss of supported playgroups and the slow return of children's activities in the area. Home-Start is considering linking some families by holding "teddy bears picnics in the park" as the weather gets warmer to enable young children to socialise with others beyond the family. Parenting resources continue to be sent out regularly. Here is feedback from one family received last week:

Hi Mhairi,

Thank you so, so much for your recent resources you've sent through. I've had some days where I've had parenting dilemma's and your resources came through at just the right time to help me. An outside perspective sometimes hits the spot perfectly. I'm very grateful for your help, and the home start service for boosting me up!

Have a great week!

Sally

The more damaging impacts and influences of the pandemic will be with us for some time and continue to emerge in unexpected ways. Economic uncertainty, job losses and job vulnerability have increased stress for many families. The winding back of Job Keeper and Job Seeker in the lead up to Christmas is frightening for many families. Border closures have disrupted contact for extended families with people feeling the loss of their networks.

In the Goulburn area approx. 20% Home-Start families reported increased tensions between adult partners and more controlling behaviours by male partners eg: withholding money, refusing to look after children, verbal put downs, criticism of how mothers are managing domestic responsibilities, opposition to return to work plans by the mother, opposition to the use of day care or preschool.

Two families have reported experiences of their separated/divorced partners (both male and female) refusing access visits under the guise of COVID risk. The Family worker has assisted with referrals to Legal Aid for Family Court advice with respect to access agreements.

The Family Worker and volunteers have become a safe place for parents to share this distress and gain support for the tough task of raising young children in a conflictual environment. The family worker has assisted families access Family Violence Support Services and counselling support during this time.

Home-Start Cowra, Canowindra & Weddin - Family Worker Service

The past 12 months have been a busy, successful, and innovative year for Home-Start Cowra, Canowindra and Weddin (CCW). Once again there have been many opportunities to provide individual and group support to a range of families, parenting groups, community activities and partnering with a diverse range of services.



Kirstin Stevenson

Home-Start CCW has supported 47 families in Cowra, Canowindra, and the Weddin Shire. Families are supported through home visits, community visits and telephone contact, referrals to appropriate services, and parenting groups and courses.

As always, Home-Start CCW has been a part of some successful family outcomes and some challenges.

Best Practice - Family Growth

The Home-Start CCW family worker has supported several grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren. In one family there has been ongoing conflict, between family members about the needs and care of a child and the wishes of the parent. Despite initial attempts to work with the parent, the child was voluntarily placed into the grandparents' care. Through ongoing conversations with the grandparents and participation in a Circle of Security parenting group, the grandparents have been able to clearly identify, articulate and prioritize the grandchild's needs. As a result, the grandchild is thriving, attending preschool, the grandparents are feeling empowered and better connected to and supported by their community and have reduced their engagement in the conflict with the parent of the grandchild.

Home-Start CCW has facilitated community consultations, groups and events in Cowra, Canowindra, and the Weddin Shire, including Curious and Creative Kids workshops, a Family Movie night at Erambie, Sensory/Messy play activities, and participated in Family Fun days.



Sensory Play



Erambie Family Night

Face Painting

Covid 19 Challenges

To celebrate Families Week in May this year, Home-Start CCW was collaborating with 4 other services to host a range of events including a Community Family Dinner & Games night and a 'pop-up shop'/information hub & family photo gallery. As with so many community events in 2020, these plans were disrupted and then cancelled due to Covid 19. However, we were still able to hold a small, online Family Photo competition. We are looking forward to going ahead with all our plans once community restrictions are lifted.



Family Photo entry – Families Week 2020



Zac & Eva Family Photo entry – Families Week 2020

Thank you to Home-Start National for the opportunity to continue to support so many amazing, resilient, and loving families. It is a privilege and pleasure to be a part of a wider community of services and workers who are dedicated to supporting families and children.

Kempsey – Parenting Worker

Kempsey is Dungutti land, set on the picturesque Macleay River. There is a high Aboriginal population in the town.

It has been - as we all keep saying - a challenging year, but there has also been great learning opportunities as well. Practice methodology has diversified, and we have all had to embrace technology a little more.



Sheri Foster

Kempsey Macleay Home-Start is a parenting service, funded by the NSW Government under The Targeted Earlier Intervention. Home-Start offers many parenting programs including Circle of Security, Positive Parenting Program, all the Triple P Pathways and Enhanced programs, Bringing up Great Kids, Parents Under Pressure etc. Home-Start also offers information and guidance to parents on issues such as

- Language development
- Early Literacy and Numeracy
- Bullying
- Child Nutrition
- School Readiness
- Household Routines

Many families in the district experience poverty and high unemployment. For some families there is 3rd and 4th generation unemployment. Kempsey also has high rates of drug use, crime, and family and domestic violence.

The main reasons for referred to the Home-Start Parenting service are

- Lack of parenting experience – young/new parents
- Anxiety around parenting – low parental confidence
- Poor parenting practices.

- Advised by DCJ to attend parenting courses
- Child Behavior management
- Lack of support in raising young children
- A genuine desire to be better parents
- During COVID – the pressure of home schooling and 24/7 care led to increased anxiety and relationship stress.

The Main sources of referrals were.

- Brighter Futures
- Casper
- Many Rivers Aboriginal Service
- Burrundali
- Uniting
- Self-referral
- The Buttery
- HSNet
- Court Support
- DCJ's Child and Family Team
- The Mental Health Unit
- New Horizons
- Parents Next
- Kempsey Women's Refuge.

COVID 19

Early in March all Home-Start offices around the state were directed to lockdown and workers commenced working from home. It was not until June that we began to transition, very slowly back to face to face support with families and working from the office. In line with State and Federal Health legislation, Home-Start National provided clear and detailed information and guidance on COVID safe practices.

The service changed drastically with Covid 19 and there were many technical issues to be dealt with

- getting My Gov ID
- Transitioning from the ARTD portal to DEX (data system)
- Learning how to use the DEX system
- Downloading and learning how to use Zoom - learning how to make appointments with families and how to add DVD and other resources to the appointments. (The parents were very comfortable with the Zoom appointments and some wanted to continue via Zoom even when the COVID-19 lockdown ended, and I had resumed working from the office.

Some Benefits from COVID-19

- Parents could still attend the parenting courses via Zoom even if some-one in the household wasn't feeling well. Zoom meant happy days in pajamas or trackees
- Being able to have zoom meetings and supervision with Michelle, our CEO. Not quite the same, but it is great to have a good catch up without 8-hours driving.
- I am so grateful for our new IT support team who have been amazing as I know I would have been in a lot of bother if not for this support.

A Case Study

A mum who was a serious drug user had given her 2 children to her mother (the grandmother) to care for. The service network in Kempsey wrapped around this mother offering support. She accessed help through a drug support service. This mum has now been clean for 2 years. Through a housing service she was able to secure housing and has had the house for the past 9 months. Recently the care of the children was reinstated to the mother with help and support from the grandmother, and a support worker from Kempsey. She enrolled her daughter in the Catholic school as she said she wanted her daughter to have a good education in a good environment.

This mother was never shown how to cook, and Home-Start linked a volunteer to her. She had virtually no cooking skills as she had never been shown. The volunteer worked out some health economical recipes and the mother shopped for the ingredients. Then they meet up at the family 's home and have a cooking day. Feedback from the mother indicated that she really enjoyed the cooking days, she was so surprised at what she could do and now her 2 girls are loving what she is cooking. This is giving this mum great confidence in herself as a mum to feed her children instead of buying take out each night, great life skills are being passed on from the volunteer to the mother and the children.

Volunteers

Home-Start currently has 2 volunteers linked to families. Their home visits ceased during COVID 19 lockdown but were reintroduce in July 2020 with COVID-19 safe practices.

The volunteers are making a great difference in the families they are linked with. They are assisting the families with shopping, attending appointments, helping a family shift into a new home, cooking, and encouraging healthy menus.

The volunteers have been trained in the basics of The Positive Parenting Program and Circle of Security Parenting program so are able to re-enforce positive parenting strategies that parents learn about when attending these parenting courses.

One of the last parents to attend face to face parenting program, receiving their certificate in person.

Due to COVID-19, parents attended parenting programs online and certificates were emailed or posted to parents.



Wingecarribee – Family Worker

Mittagong, Moss Vale, Bowral and surrounds

July 2019 – June 2020 saw our Home-Start Wingecarribee Family Worker program support over 41 families through ongoing family work, another 52 families through our Supported Playgroup program and over 100 families with our natural disaster assistance.



Danielle Johns

In July 2019 we farewelled our Wingecarribee Family Worker, Tania Tuagalu, who was a dedicated and excellent member of the Home-Start National team. We wish Tania the very best in her future and will miss her warmth and wisdom. In August 2019, we welcomed another

fabulous Family Worker, Danielle Johns. Danielle brings a wealth of skills and experience and has worked with tireless energy since her very first day with Home-Start Wingecarribee.

July to December 2019 we worked with families on a case management basis with home visiting and centre based support. We assisted families with a diverse range of issues from isolation, mental health challenges, parenting education, employment and adult education. We helped families to strengthen their skills and knowledge and reach their goals using programs and supports such as PPP, The Resilience Donut, Nutrition, Mentoring, Budgeting and Early intervention referrals.

We partnered with many other services to ensure families received assistance in all areas such as our partnership with Soul Warmers in Mittagong, where we held a weekly free café every Thursday. Families who attended received free weekly groceries, a hot meal and cuppa, and were able to meet new people and connect with each other. Weekly discussion sessions at the Café included topics such as children's nutrition, budgeting, services and support available in the Wingecarribee area and were aimed at increasing personal and family resilience. We also delivered groceries to families who were unable to attend Soul Warmers in person.



This year Home-Start Wingecarribee assisted in launching and delivering the Wingecarribee Community Services Outreach Project (WCSO). This is a group of Family, Youth and Aged services providing a monthly expo to outlying villages with low access to services and poor transport options to attend services in the major towns. The small towns and villages included Hill Top, Bellrose and Wingello.

At each expo, Home-Start partnered with Anglicare to provide Budgeting and Finance workshops. Danielle also held sensory craft workshops for parents, demonstrating and mentoring how to use sustainable and recyclable items from home, to engage with their children in simple and cost-free craft projects. Parents learned about the value of spending time doing craft with children and it's positive impact on their physical and emotional development, as well as the attachment between parent and child.



In December 2019, Home-Start partnered with Anglicare to provide Christmas food hampers and gifts for children to over 200 vulnerable local families. Each family also received a book of activities for families to do with their children that were free and local during the Christmas holidays. Danielle also put together a holiday services guide to assist families who may need urgent assistance over the Christmas break.

December 2019 – June 2020

During December and January, the Wingecarribee community dealt with trauma and tragedy due to massive Bushfires throughout the area. They were evacuated, and many community members lost their homes, cars and businesses. Home-Start National conducted an urgent fundraising appeal and collected much needed cash and vouchers which were distributed to families in need.

Whilst her own home and family was in imminent danger and being evacuated herself, Home-Start's Family Worker, Danielle, went above and beyond her role to assist others in need. She attended evacuation centres with donated supplies of food, water, toys, clothing and bedding. She spent time at the evacuation centres working with 100s of families helping them with paperwork for relief payments, assisting them with finding accommodation, referrals to other suitable services, meditation and self-care workshops and playtime and craft for the kids so parents could spend time with social workers.

When the fires had finally ended, she partnered with other services and held drop in and community workshops for those who had been affected. She held weekly workshops on increasing resilience in children, rainbow ritual (dealing with anxiety and fear) as well as assistance with Service NSW paperwork.

In March 2020, while still assisting with the bush fire trauma the community was going through, COVID 19 broke out. Many people in Wingecarribee lost their jobs and many families broke apart due to the isolation and stress of lock down so close after the fires.

Although face to face appts, groups and home visits were suspended, Danielle developed and delivered innovative online programs for parents and children, using platforms such as Zoom. She started a mobile library where families could have children's books dropped to them fortnightly, as well as other essential home-schooling items for children and parents in isolation.

As restrictions eased in June 2020, face to face meetings, parenting and support groups and home visits resumed.

Wingecarribee Supported Playgroup

Our weekly Home-Start Supported Playgroup continued to be well attended from July 2019 -December 2019. We regularly had 15 families attending with over 25 children between 0-5 years old, including many multicultural families.

Anne and Danielle engaged the children and parents in music, craft, story time and movement. Each week followed a theme and parents received information and support on a variety of topics such as cooking and nutrition, attachment-based parenting, children's developmental milestones, road safety, children's oral care and the importance of play. As usual, all cultures were included with each family's language being woven into songs and



Ann Barcicki
Supported
Playgroup
Facilitator

stories by Anne, and acknowledgement and celebration of each family's important cultural and religious days and ceremonies occurred regularly.

The playgroup was suspended from December 2019 due to the bush fires and COVID-19. During this time, Danielle put together a weekly newsletter which was emailed to each playgroup family. It included a different theme each week and was filled with songs, recipes, stories, craft ideas and Youtube addresses for dance and movement ideas. The newsletter also had information and easy fact sheets for parents on topics such as home schooling, self-care and welfare assistance news. Families then received a craft box each week to their front door so they could complete the projects in the newsletter. One craft project included planting a herb garden with the majority of items sourced by Danielle and donated from various local businesses. Back yard treasure hunts were another favourite project included in the newsletter that children and parents in lockdown enjoyed.

In June 2020, we planned to resume the Supported Playgroup but unfortunately could not return to our usual venue at Moss Vale Uniting Church. So, it is with sincere thanks to the Minister and volunteers who have provided the venue free, along with much needed hands-on help every week for many years. Unfortunately, being of retirement age and above, many of the wonderful weekly volunteers from the church are deemed to have increased vulnerability to COVID-19 so regrettably we had to source a new venue that is more COVID-19 safe for the 2020-2021 year.

Home-Start Forster/Tuncurry

The Forster Home-Start Family Worker program covers the Forster Great lakes area. The funding hours are twenty-eight (28) per week and are funded under Families NSW/Targeted Early Intervention. The program is primarily family work, including advocacy and parenting programs. Parenting programs include Triple P, Positive Parenting and Circle of Security and Attachment Parenting. The program is voluntary for the families to participate, with no cost to the family.



Tania Shakespeare

The Forster/Tuncurry Home-Start office is co-located with Homebase Youth Services, who manage the local supported playgroup. Referrals during 2019-2020 have been quite complex, with multiple needs, including diagnosis and assessment of childhood behaviours, intensive parenting support, domestic violence information, court attendance, family law matters, accommodation, and rental assistance.

Family case work numbers over this period are twenty-four (24), with approximately 41 children. Parenting referrals increased this year to twenty (20) included self-referrals and mandated clients. The referrals came from a variety of organisations including DCJ, Health - Child and Family, Catholic Care DV Support, Family Referral Service FSS, Homebase Youth Services and the Supported Playgroup, and local Pre-Schools.

The Referrals identified childhood behaviour impacting the family, poor child/parent relationships and low parental coping skills. Parents or carers were dealing with identified mental illness, depression, a child protection issue, family relationship issues, or domestic violence. These issues may not or be partly identified prior to referral.

The initial assessment identifies suitability for case work, and or parenting programs. Referrals to support the family that may be more appropriate to the needs of the family, are made to other

organisations. This could include Community Health, Mental Health Services, a disability service or DCJ.

Informal referrals through Homebase supported playgroup held every Tuesday, and Thursday were facilitated through the Home-Start Family Worker's regular attendance. by This is mostly parenting information, including developmental milestones, information regarding childcare, real estate, Centrelink information, access to welfare services (EPPA Vouchers) and Family Law.

Once again, we partnered with Home-Base Youth Services to deliver Home-Start's Eat Move Live children's nutrition program for 8 weeks at Nabiac Public School. Vulnerable children were identified by school staff and the Home-Base Youth Worker and were invited to attend each week. The sessions were also attended by Home-Start's nutritionist and developer of the program, Val Watson. Unfortunately, Covid-19 caused this program to close as the school was closed to outside services. We hope to resume during 2021.



The Great Lakes area was impacted severely by bush fires during 2019-2020. It was a frightening time and the smoke caused poor visibility and health issues for the parents and children and for our Family Worker. The great Lakes was isolated due to the ferocity of the fires on the highway and level 4 water restrictions made life difficult for everyone. Outside activities were cancelled and the families, in retrospect, were experiencing the beginnings of a change in life as we knew it.



The flooding, after the bushfires, and then Covid-19 has truly changed how we live and work in Foster/Tuncurry. Families continued to need reassurance and support with food shopping; toilet paper was hard to buy, and baby formula at times was difficult to obtain.

Covid-19 had a severe impact across all families. The struggle of family life was difficult, rental arrears were problematic, utility bills needed to be paid. Pre-schools and schools were closed which was a real struggle for vulnerable families who lacked laptops or PC access and data, along with difficulty with family law court orders or access to family law, and domestic violence. Community health service was closed and there was no access to AOD services, and we all learned to navigate services online.

Home-Start received many referrals in the beginning of Covid-19 mostly for parenting programs and some case-management. Perhaps a highlight was the many Circle of Security (COS)

Parenting sessions done one-on-one with clients online. All who complete COS demonstrate a change in their parenting and have a stronger relationship with their children. This is shown in their ability to enjoy their children, and my observations of the family dealing with big emotions. The key message that families return to me is their understanding of what makes a child feel safe and secure for their current and future wellbeing.

The Home-Start Family Worker attended Targeted Early Intervention meetings (TEI), and contract meetings. All training and staff development has been impacted by COVID-19 and now all meetings and training are held on online via Zoom. All Home-Start offices around the state were closed on the 16th of March and we began to work from home. Late in June the Forster/Tuncurry Home-Start Service began to slowly transition back to the office and to face to face or home visits. Home-Start Forster/Tuncurry worked under direction from Home-Start National and State and Federal guidelines in regard to the Covid-19 Pandemic and continues to do so.

Home-Start has a network of contacts, this network continues to grow, and based on Twelve (12) years of (mostly) continuous service delivery in the Forster/Tuncurry community. This includes individuals and partnerships, Local Psychologists and Social Workers, Homebase Youth Services, Forster/Tuncurry, Forster Neighbourhood Centre, Child and Family service, (TEI Funding), Family Relationship Centre, (Benevolent Society) Hunter New England Health Maternal Infant Team & Forster CFHN Team, Tobwabba Child and Family Service, (Children and Young People & Families Service), Catholic Care, Domestic violence Team, Department of Communities and Justice, (DCJ)

In conclusion, the most challenging year ever! However, thank you for the opportunity to work and be part of Home-Start National team, and thank you to the parents, and children who let me be part of their lives.

Home-Start Hay Family Worker Service (Hay, Carrathool, Murrumbidgee Shires)

The Hay, Carrathool, Murrumbidgee (HCM) Family Worker program experienced a challenging and rewarding year, supporting 21 families with 30 children under the age of 10yrs.

Prior to March 2020, the HCM Family Worker travelled up to up to 500 kilometres a week, to visit families and deliver groups in small towns, villages and on farms, in Hay, Hillston, Carrathool, Coleambally, Darlington Point, Maude, Booligal and Boorooban villages. Some of the challenges the family worker faced on a daily basis were unsealed, pot-holed roads, herds of cattle, mobs of sheep, dust storms, and heat (up to 46 degrees).



Michele Harrington

Isolation and distance are a constant challenge for parents and children living in remote areas of NSW and is a common reason that families struggle and are referred to Home-Start Hay, Carrathool, Murrumbidgee for support.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, Home-Start partnered with Hay Early Learning Centre and Haydays Aged Care Facility to deliver a Program called 'Young Haydays'. The Family Worker, parents and 6 children aged 4yrs visited Haydays Aged Care Facility each week and

participated in arts and crafts, music, exercises and enjoyed morning tea with the residents. Outcomes for all involved were excellent with aged care staff reporting improved mental health for residents, and parents and children saying it was the highlight of their week.

During the summer months, the Home-Start Pools n Puddles program was delivered over a period of 10 weeks. This is a water safety and drowning prevention program for parents with small children involving introducing children to water, baby first aid, infant resuscitation and information and awareness of the dangers around pools, dams, rivers, buckets and bath time.

Isolation and loneliness increased dramatically during the COVID19 lockdown and in later months of the Pandemic. Families experienced extra difficulties due to loss of jobs, financial pressures, home schooling, not being able to get to town to shop, health issues and parental mental health issues.

Families needed extra and innovative support to access essential needs and services such as groceries, medication, mental health support, financial counselling, as well as support for difficulties with parenting, household and sleep routines and school attendance.

The HCM Family Worker immediately upskilled in digital technology and was able to stay in touch and provide support and relief for families regularly through Zoom, Facetime, Skype, emails and phone calls. Parents were able to check in and debrief and were provided with COVID 19 updates, online programs, shopping pickups and drop offs. HCM Family Worker collected shopping from the grocery store and delivered it to the family's front gate, texted or phoned them and waited in the car until the groceries were collected. Parents reported that "Just seeing another person made me feel less alone".

The children were regularly occupied virtually via their phones and iPads with Storytime, My Garden tours and 'Where's Wally' where the children hid among things in their stripped shirts. Spending time with the children to play (virtually), helped to relieve the pressure on parents of keeping children occupied and happy during lockdown.

Family Work Case Study:

A single mother with mental health issues referred by the Community Health Nurse. The mother had very few skills in caring for her child as her baby has lived with her sister since birth.

The Family Worker has been providing home visits for 2-3 hours each week and regular phone calls, to facilitate time together for mother and child. She coaches her in how to care for her child to ensure all needs are met including physical, mental and emotional care with nurturing touch and affection.

The HCM Family Worker has also rallied a network of support for the mother and child including Aboriginal Medical Health Centre, Community Nurse, Relationships Australia, Parental Infant Mental Health Team.

The mother reports feeling more comfortable, capable and supported to work towards the next step of living together with her child.

"Each small outcome we have achieved just makes me go to work every day with a smile on my face." Michele Harrington, Home-Start Family Worker - Hay, Carrathool, Murrumbidgee

Tumut/Tumbarumba/Gundagai

Home-Start TTG provides a full time Family Worker offering strengths-based and flexible parenting support to vulnerable families with children aged 0 – 8 within the Tumut, Tumbarumba and Gundagai council regions. Services include home visiting, flexible provision of parenting programs, information, support and referral. Our family worker also organises and delivers parenting programs including the Circle of Security with groups and individual families, as well as facilitating child-friendly group activities support and strengthen families in our community and provide opportunities for families to connect.



Catherine Buckle

to

During the 2019-2020 financial year, Home-Start TTG provided ongoing support to 35 families as well as one-off individual or group support to almost 100 further families. We conducted a total of 108 home visits and centre-based sessions. Over the course of the year, we supported 27 children under 5 and 35 children over 5 making a combined total of 62 children benefiting from our service on an ongoing basis.

Overwhelmingly our families' reasons for referral relate to difficult behaviours from children and lack of satisfaction for parents with family relationships and family life. Many of our families are vulnerable due to feeling isolated with a history of trauma including Domestic & Family Violence, and/or struggles with mental health and drug & alcohol use. Commonly there is a lack of access to consistent or appropriate support for these issues within our communities and Home-Start is able to provide tailored support that fits in more easily with many of our families' unique needs.

Our family worker builds and maintains connections with local schools, childcare and health facilities and community centres and receives many of our referrals from these sources. Some of our clients are families who are actively looking for support to improve their situation and self-refer, having heard about Home-Start via one of our group activities or word of mouth.

Everyone in our region was directly impacted by the devastating bushfire season. As the fires were threatening our communities, particularly those of Tumbarumba, Batlow and Adelong, families were required to maintain vigilance and deal with constant threat and uncertainty. Many families across the region had to leave their homes due to direct evacuation orders or health concerns due to smoke inhalation. During this time our Family Worker ran a colouring competition children in our region to encourage parents to take a break from the relentless bad news and spend some time connecting with children who were stuck inside, and to give families a positive focus and build community spirit with the theme of thanking our firefighters and those supporting them. Thanks to the fundraising efforts at our head office, Home-Start TTG were also able to provide vouchers to our families directly impacted by the fires to ease some of the financial burden and our families were very appreciative of this practical support. After the direct threat passed, our Family Worker visited each of our community libraries to present a session for children called 'Let's Talk about Feelings' which included a guided body scan meditation and creative opportunity for children to share their feelings in a safe space as well as information for parents about Emotion Coaching in order to better connect and support children living through this traumatic time.

When the pandemic occurred it obviously became impossible to conduct home visits for some time and was important to offer unlimited phone support and the option to meet via video call or meetings. Our family worker spent a lot of time with clients on the phone listening to fears and challenges directly resulting from the pandemic and in some cases providing a more balanced and informed source of information. Encouraging and supporting strong and secure connections with children, emotion coaching and enjoying quality time was more important than ever throughout the traumatic events of this year. Information provision included many ideas for

connecting with, caring for and educating children in a new and challenging context of increased isolation at home.

Case Study

A great grandmother attended Home-Start's 'Let's Talk About Feelings' library session in Gundagai during January 2020. New to the area and caring for two great grandchildren with a traumatic background, this client had also recently lost her life partner and had to change her plans to travel Australia with him - instead moving interstate and setting up home in a new town in order to raise her great grandchildren. The client self-referred to Home-Start for further support and then attended our Circle of Security parenting group program run in Gundagai throughout February. This program allowed her to explore her own experiences of being adopted and living in foster care, her motivations and challenges in caring for her grandchildren and then great grandchildren in a supportive group environment. Home-Start also provided a friendly supportive source of information and referral and assisted this client to link with and communicate with supports in the community including other grandparents caring for young children, the local primary school and childcare, health services and DCJ. In May, the client received a wonderful and challenging new gift of a third child, a baby boy with a very difficult start to life. With ongoing behavioural challenges from the older children, Home-Start delivered 1,2,3 Magic and 7 Steps to Safety in a flexible format within the home and while supporting the transition of the new baby. Just one example of the positive impacts of this was the clients' ability to reduce screen time which had been a goal from the outset. This client has consistently given positive and grateful feedback about her experience with Home-Start throughout an exceptionally challenging time

Changing Families Lives

Home-Start workers this year have partnered with families, volunteers and other services to bring about some phenomenal and positive outcomes for families.

Services and Projects Provided by Home-Start National throughout the year included:

• Volunteer Home Visiting Services	• Family Worker Services	• Parenting Program Coordination
• Community Capacity Services	• Supported Playgroups	• Networking and Partnership Facilitation
• Pools and Puddles water safety program	• Winter Warmers – nutrition program	• Early Literacy Sessions
• Wellbeing Programs	• Community BBQs	• Eat, Move, Live Children's Nutrition Program
• Story Time Mornings	• Community Volunteer Readers	• 123 Emotion Training Coaching
Circle of Security Parenting Programs	Mindful Parenting Programs	• Triple P Programs and Seminars
Bringing Up Great Kids Parenting Program	• Virtual Home Visits	• Volunteer Graduations
• Walking and Pram Groups	• Virtual Learning Support Volunteer Visits	• Child Protection Events
• Service Expos	• I.T. Equipment Support	• Volunteer Support Days
• Family Picnics	• Community Reading Days	• Children's Health Information Sessions
Sensory Play Sessions	Community Gardens	Fire Evacuation Centre Support and Emergency Aid

Home-Start National Inc.

ABN 30 616 643 558

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH JUNE 2020

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
	\$	\$
Current Assets	215,146	181,159
Non-Current Assests	7,722	0
Current Liabilities	191,801	159,174
Non-Current Liabilities	2,482	1,592
NET ASSETS	28,585	20,393
EQUITY	28,585	20,393

Sincere thanks to our wonderful supporters this year!



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

