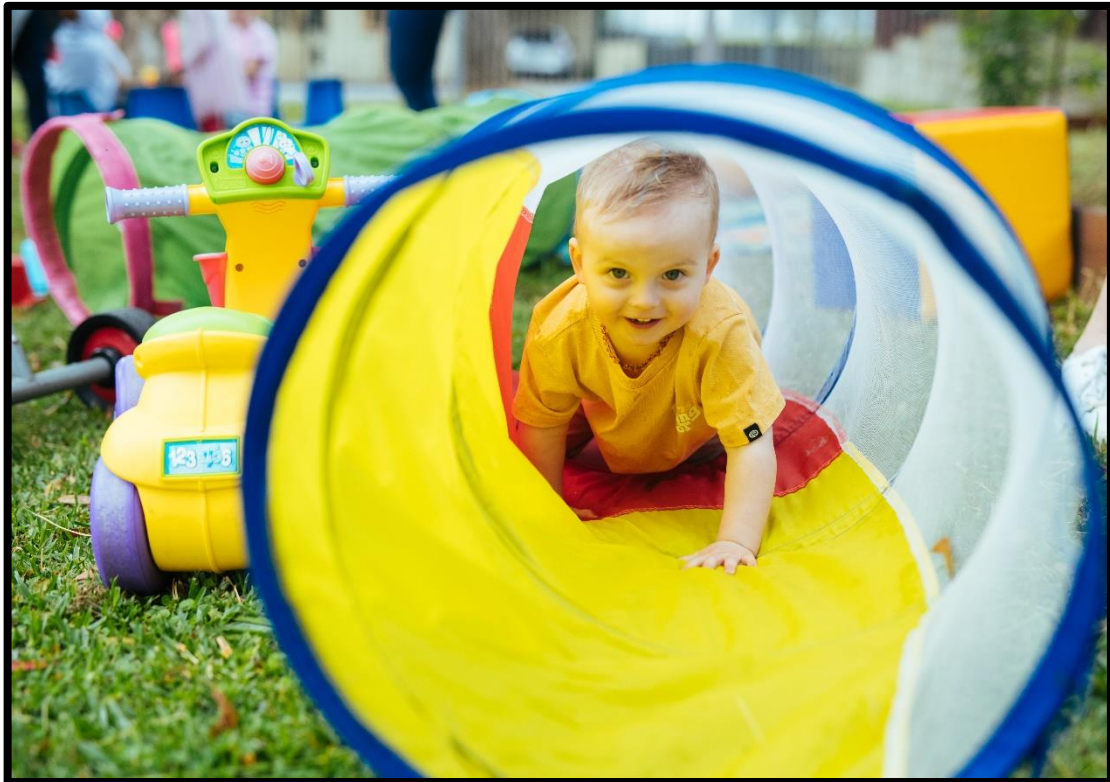




Home-Start
National Inc.



Annual Report 2022 - 2023



Home-Start National Inc.
values and recognises
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
culture and heritage



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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*
- *Department of Social Services*
- *Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group*
- *Lake Macquarie City Council*
- *Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator*
- *Orica*
- *4Kids Bowral*
- *The Inger Rice Foundation*
- *Australia Post*
- *FRRR and Resilience NSW*
- *FRRR – Donor – Sydney Myer Fund*
- *Goulburn Workers Club*
- *Cowra Services Club*
- *Wingecarribee Community Assistance*
- *Mark and Katrina Brooker “The Local”*
- *Grill’d Restaurants*
- *The Marketing Side*
- *The Home-Start Worldwide Network and Board*
- *Our Service Network Partners*

Home-Start National Inc. values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.



We understand and accept the wrongs of the past and the enormous impact these wrongs have had on generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As an organisation we will, at all times, strive to make amends for these wrongs and ensure that they are never repeated.

We will be guided by and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure their rights are recognised and upheld.



Core Belief

Home-Start National Inc. (Home-Start) 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, 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 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, our core values help to define our organisation, 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

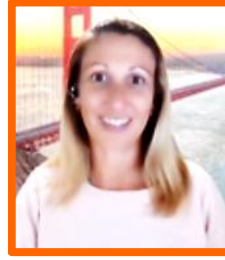
Home-Start National Inc. is concerned for the welfare of children and parents and committed to establishing and supporting Home-Start schemes throughout Australia.

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
Belinda Finn



Secretary
Susanne Thompson



Public Officer
Rita Campbell

Home-Start National Office and Management



CEO
Michelle McDonell



National Project Officer
Val Watson



Administration
Gloria Buttsworth



Home-Start Newcastle Co-ordinator
Katrina Brooker



Financials
Mel Forster



Financials
Jess Wilson

Chairperson's Report 2022-2023

Ann Fletcher – Chairperson

It gives me great pleasure to write my annual report for another successful year of Home-Start operations. This organisation keeps going from strength to strength and we are so fortunate to attract incredibly talented and passionate people to share the work of keeping children safe and families well-resourced and supported in the communities that we are funded to work in.



Our CEO and National Project Officer have worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth day to day operation of each program. They both travel so many kilometres every month to support our wonderful program co-ordinators and their volunteers, and I want to take this opportunity to express my admiration and thanks for all that they do. In addition, the dedication of the co-ordinators, support staff and volunteers to provide a quality program to support vulnerable families is second to none and Home-Start is successful due to the efforts of these people. Thank you for your work.

Our National Project Officer Val attended the International Conference this year and did Home-Start in Australia proud representing us at meetings and providing a wealth of knowledge and resource to our international colleagues. The work of the Home-Start programs in Australia is very well respected around the world and we are considered a senior member of the international movement.

I thank from the bottom of my heart my fellow board members and congratulate them for their ongoing commitment to keeping this fantastic program buoyant and thriving. Your work is highly appreciated.

I am so proud to be involved in an organisation that supports the spirit of volunteering in all areas of its operations as we continue to provide this valuable asset to our community. Volunteers are the backbone of everything we do and we should never underestimate the impact we have on the lives of the young children and their families we come into contact with.

I look forward to our continued success in the coming years.

Michelle McDonell Head Office – Awabakal Country



“What is Hope”

“Hope provides joy, peace, protection and strengthit also provides a way forward when times are bleak” (*Molly Edmonds*)

Home-Start delivers **“HOPE”** to families every day, all around the world – this is how we change lives.

Through Volunteer Home Visiting, Family Capacity Building, Supported Playgroup, Parenting Programs, Social Participation Events, Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Projects, Community Connection Activities, Nutrition Programs, Sensory Play and Inclusion Sessions Home-Start supported 1,471 families in this reporting period.



In August 2022, we were able to purchase a dedicated vehicle for Newcastle Volunteer Home Visiting program through the NSW Government Community Builders program. The vehicle is now being used by the program coordinator to drive to the homes of client families each week, drive to new volunteers' homes for interviews, transport children and parents to appointments, activities, and community facilities, attend relevant service sector meetings and pick up supplies for volunteer training and program activities.

July/August 2022 saw five Home-Start staff members attend the five-day International Childhood Trauma Conference in Melbourne. Sessions included:

- Dan Hughes and John Baylin - The Emerging Self: Psychological and Neurobiological Origins
- Cindy Blackstock - Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation: Engaging children in social justice
- Tina Champagne - Developmental Trauma & Sensory Integration: Where Have We Been and Where are We Going

Staff feedback from all five staff members indicated that it was a phenomenal learning experience.



Natural Disasters

November 2022 saw our Central West and Riverina district suffer horrendous flooding. Towns were cut off, families were isolated on remote properties, houses and businesses were lost. Our staff once again stepped up to the mark and tirelessly supported families and whole communities through this crisis.

COVID, floods, fires are all still impacting on our communities, but we have learned that with dedication and care we can manage all that nature throws at us. How have Home-Start staff, volunteers and families managed one crisis after another? – With:

- flexibility
- kindness
- creativity
- imagination
- determination
- relentlessness and compassion.

COVID, floods and fire taught us many things not least of which is how to ZOOM!!! What a fabulous thing that is, in a country this size, where people are sometimes hundreds and hundreds of kilometres from others. We are still using zoom to contact sick or isolated families, to have meetings, for training and to catch up and see the faces we know and love.

Government Contracting

Once again, this year we have worked alongside the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to achieve our contractual obligations. All quarterly Contract Review Meetings have gone ahead very successfully. The Department not only provides us with financial backing but also a great deal of operational and training support for which we are very grateful. A special note of appreciation must go to our DCJ Contract Manager – Vanessa Willis. Vanessa is a joy to work with and she supports Home-Start in so many ways. She is always there for us, encouraging and helping us to improve our service practice and to ensure that we have all the information and guidance we need.

All staff have continued to work on data entry into the Data Exchange. We are getting there slowly but surely. Thank you to our fabulous DEX mentor Danielle Santry who is the Family Worker from Wingecarribee.

Video Project

In August 2022, we were very lucky to be approached by Megan Adams – Graphic Designer and Videographer about the possibility of a Home-Start Volunteer/Family Video. Megan was finalising her degree at university and thought this would be a valuable way to finish off her degree and produce a documentary style video that would help promote a worthy organisation.

This is still a work in progress with about half of the footage already taken. A family who received help from a Home-Start volunteer when they most needed it, agreed to be interviewed and talk about how Home-Start changed their lives. We are so grateful to Kelly and Tom Jefferies who gave up hours of their time to tell their story. Not always an easy thing to do. The project is expected to be finished by the end of this year, and I cannot wait to see the final result. Thanks once again to Kelly and Tom

Home-Start National Visual Identity and Marketing

Jodie McEwan and her amazing team at The Marketing Side have achieved amazing things with our website this year. On 27th of September 2022 the Marketing Side team held a photographic shoot at one of our Newcastle playgroup sessions. We now have a spectacular library of photos, some of which you can see on our website. Jodie is a fabulous person to work with and she is a staunch supporter of Home-Start in so many ways.



Home-Start Farewells

This year we send our very best wishes for the future to our fabulous outgoing Forster Family Worker – Tania Shakespeare. We will miss her tremendously. Tania has been a phenomena in the Greats Lakes district and has given 15 years of commitment and compassion to vulnerable families and children as a Family Worker.

Thank You

To the amazing Home-Start Board of Management, my heartfelt gratitude for your support and guidance throughout the year. Your commitment to Home-Start is unwavering and an inspiration to me.

Val Watson, the National Project Officer, encompasses all of that is great about Home-Start. Her passion and dedication to the families, volunteers, and other staff members is boundless. She works tirelessly to promote Home-Start and to build strong, healthy relationships with our community partners, funding bodies and supporters.

To keep everything running smoothly, we all rely on the fabulous Gloria Buttsworth, not just for her administrative skills but for her kindness and patience with all staff members.

A huge thank you also to our Home-Start staff who inspire us every day, and to the remarkable families who welcome us into their homes.

Finally, to all our volunteers – the life blood of Home-Start. We are so grateful for your time; your energy and the care you show to the families you visit. Thank you.

Home-Start Programs and Services: 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.

In 2022 – 2023, Home-Start National provided the following programs and services:

• Volunteer Home Visiting Services	• Family Worker Services	• Parenting Program Coordination
• Community Capacity Services	• Supported Playgroups	• Wiradjuri Story Poles Project
• Pools and Puddles water safety program	• Curious & Creative Kids Program	• Early Literacy Sessions
• Wellbeing Programs	• Community BBQs	• Eat, Move, Live Children's Nutrition Program
• Wiradjuri Flash Cards	• 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 Volunteer Training	• Child Protection Events
• Service Expos	• I.T. Equipment Lending	• Volunteer Support Days
• NAIDOC Day Celebrations	• I.T Equipment Support	• Children's Health Information Sessions
• Sensory Play Sessions	• Community Reading Days	• Emergency Aid

In 2022– 2023 Home-Start Family Services provided:

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

In 2022 – 2023, Home-Start Family Services provided services in the following areas of NSW:

- Kempsey/Macleay
- Forster/Tuncurry
- Newcastle
- Lake Macquarie
- Cowra/Canowindra/Weddin
- Wingecarribee
- Southern Tablelands – Goulburn and Crookwell
- Tumut/Tumbarrumba/Gundagai
- Hay/Murrumbidgee/Carrathool

Affiliated Home-Start Members:

- Bendigo Victoria (auspiced by BaptCare)
- Melbourne Metro Western Regions (auspiced by BaptCare)
- Greater Shepparton (auspiced by Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project)

Our Service Models

Home-Start has offered the following service models throughout 2022 – 2023.

- **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 who will lend a caring and non-judgemental ear. Through our volunteer programs, Home-Start supports parents to provide a happy, healthy, safe and nurturing environment for their children.
- **Supported Playgroups:** 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. They also provide a comfortable introduction to the Home-Start Family Worker which facilitates easier professional referrals and support.
- **Family Worker Services:** In collaboration with parents, Home-Start Family Workers strive to improve the outcomes and wellbeing of families with young children. They provide individual support for parents, facilitate informal support groups and assist 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, family-led, solution-focused 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. They work with community members to improve inclusion and connection to create collective solutions in each community.
- **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:



Triple P



Circle of Security



Bringing up Great Kids



Black Box Parenting



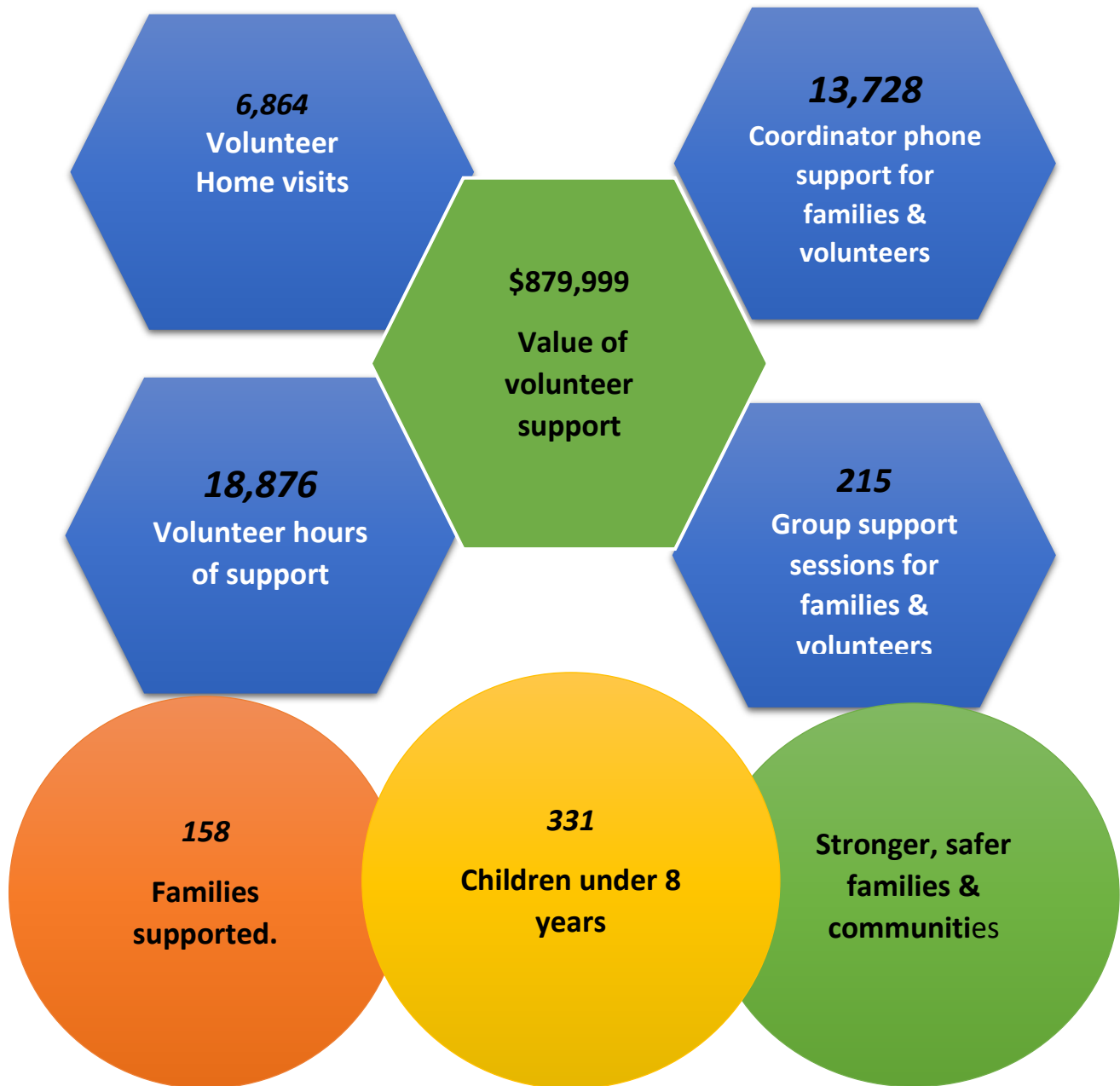
123 Magic Emotional Coaching



The Resilience Donut



Shark Cage



Challenges of families needing a volunteer

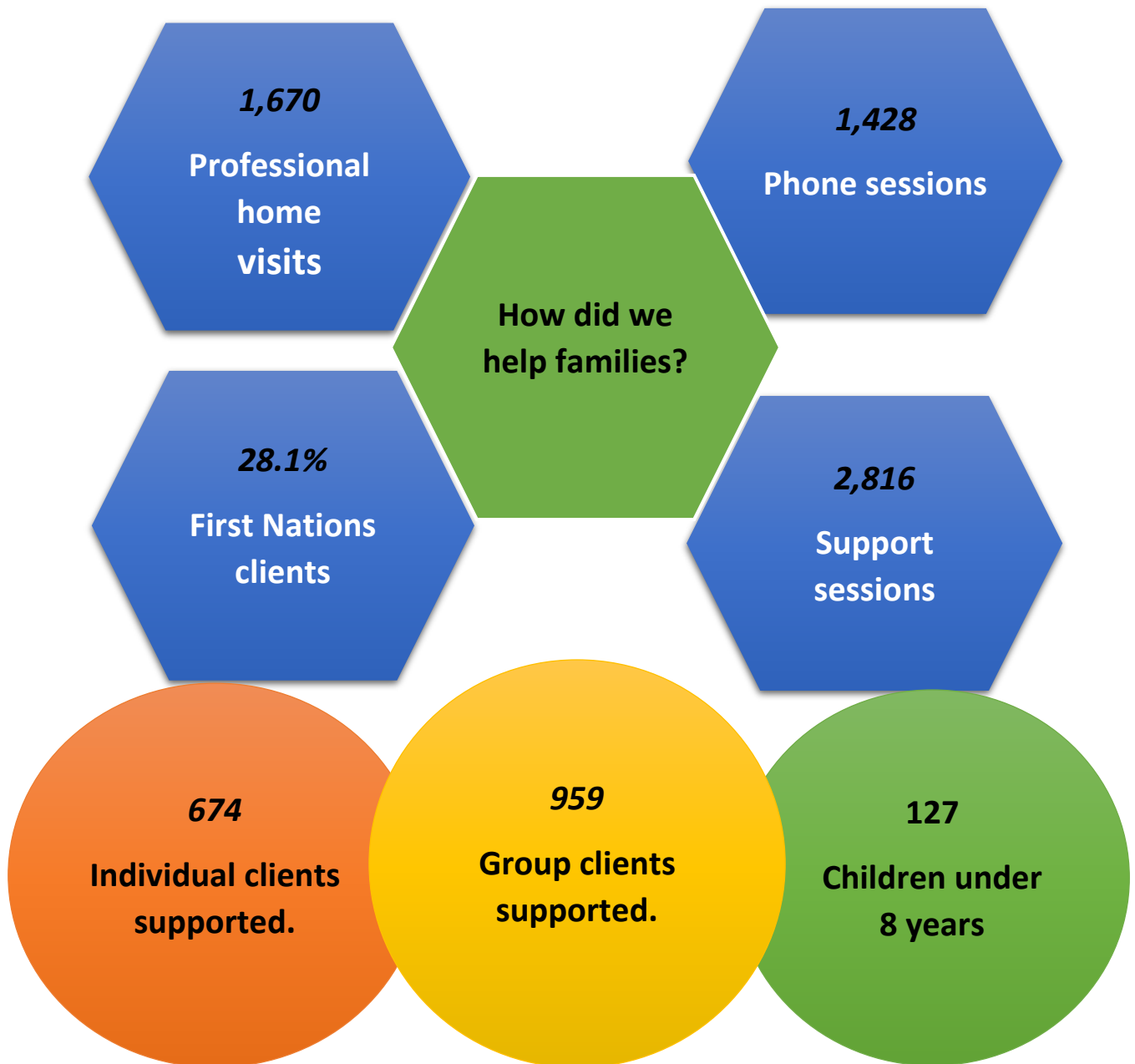
Mental health

Isolation & loneliness

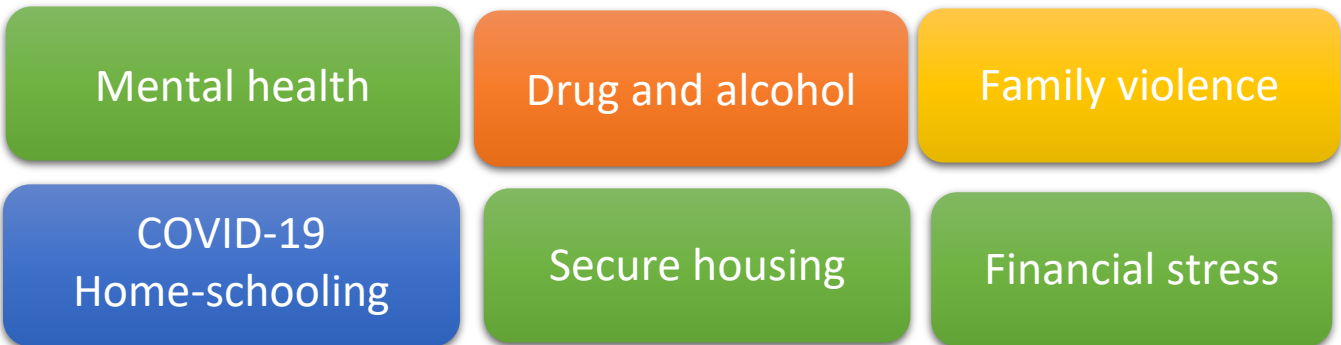
Lack of support

COVID-19, fires, floods, secure housing

Unemployment and financial stress



Challenges of families needing Family Services



Program Stories: Activities and Achievements



Val Watson – National Funding and Project Officer
Awabakal Country

On 7th-11th November 2022 I represented Home-Start Australia at the triennial Home-Start Worldwide Conference in Malta.

The conference provided opportunities for members to develop and re-energise their practice. Speakers from 22 countries where Home-Start operates, as well as guests from prominent international agencies delivered presentations to support positive work with children and families around the world.

Hosted jointly by Home-Start Worldwide and Home-Start Malta, the 2022 conference fostered collaboration, sharing of best practice and high-quality networking among colleagues from across the globe.

The launch of a new Home-Start Worldwide video and Service award presentations were two highlights of the conference.

Link to the video: [Celebrating our Volunteers: The Essence of Home-Start - YouTube](#)

At the conference countries and individuals were recognised for their commitment and contribution to Home-Start. Home-Start Australia featured in almost all categories and even came out as the overall winner from 22 countries.

Overall Winning Country -Australia est. 1989

Ann Fletcher – Longest Serving Volunteer/Co-ordinator/Chair
– 21 years

Michelle McDonell – Longest Serving Co-ordinator/National CEO
– 25 years

Jane Worthington – Longest Serving Scheme Leader
– 29 years

Sheri Foster – Longest Serving Co-ordinator
– 23 years

Valerie Watson – Longest Serving Co-ordinator/National Project
Leader – 15 years



During 2022-2023, we broadened the scope of funding and service delivery by applying for 29 different grants to fund extra projects such as Volunteer Home Visiting in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Goulburn, Wingecarribee, Tumut, Casino and First Nations Kinship Carers, Aboriginal projects in Weddin Shire, Eat Move Live sessions in Goulburn, Sensory Toys and Play Sessions in Wingecarribee, Tumut, Tumbarrumba and Gundagai, Multicultural Volunteer Home Visiting project in Newcastle, Water Awareness and Play project in Cowra, international video and photographic project, and Parents Week events.

We applied to many different foundations, councils and corporations, and are working on building Corporate Community Partnerships. We were successful in receiving 9 different grants and also raised funds through a market stall, recycling bottles and cans and at Grill'd Restaurants.

We continue to lobby relevant Ministers, seeking meetings and support for our award-winning Volunteer Home Visiting program, and speak at local service group meetings such as Zonta and business networks such as BNI (Business Network International).

Thanks again to Holly Ibbotson and the wonderful staff of HVCCC (Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator) who supported Newcastle/Lake Macquarie Volunteer Home Visiting program again this year through a fundraising drive in their workplace.



**Home-Start Volunteer Home Visiting Service,
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie
Awabakal Country
Coordinator - Katrina Brooker**

Last year was very busy for the Volunteer Home Visiting Program with demand for the service in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie areas continuing to grow and exceed the availability of volunteers.

In the 2022/2023 financial year we received 31 new referrals, up from 24 last year. We had 7 new volunteers graduate. Throughout the year, we had 25 active volunteers, 5 of our active volunteers visiting two families to help cover the referrals coming through, resulting in 50 parents and 81 children receiving weekly emotional support and practical help. Multiple births were the theme this year, with 7 referrals from the local Multiple Births club. We currently support 7 families with twins or triplets. We have also seen referrals from families where the fathers are dealing with mental health and medical issues. We managed to link 3 families with a volunteer before their baby was born to help alleviate some of the stress associated with having a baby and no support. The most common theme continues to be families that have moved to the area for work and have no friends or family close by.

With funding from the State Government, through a Community Builders grant, we were able to purchase a new Toyota Hybrid Corolla in August 2022 specifically for the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Volunteer Home Visiting program. We held a Celebration Launch at the Home Start Newcastle office in October inviting Tim Crackanthorp, State Member for Newcastle and our wonderful volunteers and families. We even made the NBN news and The Local Magazine.

Home-Start on the road with grant



Newcastle MP Tim Crakanthorp presents CEO of Home-Start Australia Michelle McDonell with the \$20,000 Community Building Partnership grant that provided a new vehicle for the volunteer program



The program participated in a Home Start Worldwide initiative to create a video, photoshoot and short film to promote the Volunteer Home Visiting Service in Australia and Worldwide. We had many of our families and volunteers come together to support this initiative with wonderful results. The video, featuring some of our Home Start volunteers and families, was launched at the biennial Home-Start Worldwide Conference held in Malta in November 2022.

[The Marketing Side - Home Start Volunteer Vid WithCTA.mov - Frame.io](#)

HS World Wide Video: [Celebrating our Volunteers: The Essence of Home-Start - YouTube](#)



In November 2022, Coordinator Katrina Brooker and volunteer Agnes Rosewarne attended the Volunteer Expo at the Newcastle Yacht Club, hosted the Hunter Volunteer Centre. We received a wonderful response with 10 people registering their interest in becoming a Home-Start volunteer.

December 2022 brought about lots of celebrations. Home-Start Newcastle held our annual family and volunteer Christmas Party with 70 people in attendance. This was an amazing turn out and our NCIG supporter Wade Covey, stepped in to play the very important and busy role of Santa on the day. Each child received a gift made possible with generous donations from Good360.



In February 2023, we ran a Volunteer Home Visiting Preparation Course, where we had 7 Volunteers graduate. All volunteers were quickly linked with families waiting for weekly practical and emotional support in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. We held their graduation ceremony in April 2023 and had the privilege of Sonia Hornery MP, local member for Wallsend, and Wade Covey, representing NCIG, attending the morning celebrations.



Our sincere thanks to NCIG, FRRR and Resilience NSW, Orica, HVCCC and The Local Magazine for the generous financial and media support, without which this program could not continue.



Home-Start Kempsey Macleay– Parenting Service Dunghutti Country Sheri Forster - Parenting Educator

Kempsey Macleay Home-Start has supported 52 families this year. Some of the families have intergenerational parenting issues, but with a lot of work and a commitment from the parents, great changes have been made.



Home-Start Kempsey continues to provide our Community Reading program for the 19th year. We had 12 reading volunteers who read with children at 16 different locations this year. It



was great to be able to hold a reading event for Book Week again this year as the world returns to 'normal' after Covid.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my work this year has been delivering parenting programs at Shine for Kids which supports parents who are former prisoners and/or their partners. Parents were keen to understand and learn about the importance of their role as parents, and how to repair and enhance their relationships with their children. Thank you to Barbie and the team at Shine for Kids for all your support at the parenting courses.



Our monthly Young Parents Support Group restarted after Covid and provides a safe and welcoming space for young mums and dads to connect and share their challenges and highlights of parenting as a young person.

I find working with Home-Start very rewarding. I enjoy working with Aboriginal families and have developed a strong and accepting partnership with the local Aboriginal Community after more than 21 years with Home-Start. I am still inspired when I see families achieve their chosen outcomes, with hard work and commitment.

Case Study: a couple had their 6 children placed into Out of Home Care due to not being able to provide a safe and secure home for them. The family worked with me for 3 years and were able to have their youngest child restored to them this year. They then had a new baby who is thriving and now they are working towards having the other 5 children restored to their parents.



Home-Start Family Worker Service - Wingecarribee Gundungurra and Tharawal Country

Danielle Santry – Family Worker

July 2022 – June 2023 saw Home-Start Wingecarribee assist over 200 community members through ongoing family assistance, 45 families through our Playgroup program and 25 families with our parenting programs.

Families were assisted with a diverse range of issues from isolation, parenting difficulties, unemployment, education, and mental health. We worked with families to strengthen parenting and self-care skills, knowledge and planning and reaching goals using programs such as PPP, The Resilience Donut, Nutrition, Mentoring, Budgeting, and Early Intervention referrals.

Our partnership with Soul Warmers in Mittagong continued. We held a weekly free café where families were able to obtain free weekly groceries and a cuppa and chat each Thursday. We delivered groceries to families that were unable to collect them and held weekly sessions at the Café on topics such as children's nutrition, time management, and increasing resilience.

We partnered with Anglicare to provide workshops on Budgeting and Finance which ran monthly through our community outreach in various areas in the Highlands throughout the year, and in December over 200 families received Christmas food hampers and gifts for their children, as well as a book of activities that families could do with their children that were free and local during the Christmas holidays.

In partnership with the Wingecarribee Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, we held 2 family open picnic days and Dhungang share and were involved with the women's yarnning circle where our first nation elders shared knowledge and stories with younger first-nation mothers.

Home-Start Wingecarribee held a stall at the Community Service Expo and gave community members take-home packs of information about nutrition for families with young children, information flyers on local family services, craft projects, Little Explorers newsletters, sensory recipes, and do-it-yourself toys as well as large craft kits.

We enjoyed the support of 13 volunteers over the period of July 22 to June 23. We held training days for our volunteers with guest speakers from various services, training on cultural differences, toy and craft creation, and self-care and resilience workshops. A surprise Christmas party for the volunteers was held, and with the help from many local businesses, we were able to provide a Christmas lunch and gifts for each of our dedicated volunteers.

Our weekly Playgroup was well-attended, where children and parents engage in music, craft, Storytime, and movement. We held our weekly sessions at a range of community play centres through various villages within the Southern Highland and had weekly themes and education for parents on a variety of topics such as nutrition, parenting education, time management, milestones, cultural

awareness, etc. Monthly playgroup outings to other playgroups in different villages were also held so parents could meet and share time with other families and services. Twenty-one playgroup families attended our annual easter rock hunt and picnic, where children and parents painted rocks and hid them in the local park, after which the children went on a treasure hunt to find them.

We continued our monthly book swap and mobile library, which saw local families have books delivered to their homes and then swapped for new books. We also started a technology library and sensory toy library for families to borrow IT and sensory toys free of charge.

We have held numerous donation drives utilising social media requesting the public to give back to their community. We have received vouchers, toys, food, household items, and baby needs for families in the community.

We partnered with Good360 and Northern Beaches Peninsula Toys to receive large amounts of donations to be handed out to families in need. Many of these donations will be used for our Christmas hampers for families who are vulnerable.

We have partnered again with the 4Kids committee, NDIA, local public schools, and Daycare Centres to hold workshops for families raising young children with a disability. The workshops are assisting carers to build resilience and increase wellbeing, referrals to other services, and assistance with early intervention and NDIS.



We have also started our Inclusive Kids Play Workshops, where kids with disabilities can experience sensory and messy play. These are held each school holidays and also include a silent disco and movement and yoga classes. We will increase to holding 2 workshops each week of the school holidays in the near future.



Home-Start also attends the monthly morning tea at POP IN, a DV service in the Highlands, to chat with mums with young children and have fun activities and craft packs, as well as engage with the mums and assist as required through various parenting programs and support.

It has been a fantastic year and we have been able to close so many gaps within the Wingecarribee LGA and support 65 families and over 270 individuals.

Home-Start Family Worker Service - Great Lakes Worimi Country



Tania Shakespeare - Family Worker

This program is primarily family work, including advocacy and parenting programs including Triple P - Positive Parenting, Circle of Security - Attachment Parenting and Black Box Parenting.

The referrals made to this service for family case management and parenting over this period have been very complex. The families and children that have been referred have multiple needs, including diagnosis and assessment of childhood behaviours, intensive parenting support, domestic violence information, including court attendance, family law matters, accommodation, and rental assistance.

Home-Start Great Lakes has provided family case management for thirty-six (36) families, including fifty-five (55) children and received twenty five (25) referrals for parenting programs, including self-referrals and mandated clients. The referrals came from a variety of organisations and were inclusive of Department of communities and Justice (DCJ), TAFE, Tobwabba and Homebase Youth Services.

Home-Start attended Targeted Early Intervention Meetings (TEI), and quarterly contract meetings, training and staff development training. Covid again impacted my service delivery as I contracted Covid in August 2022.

One of the biggest challenges of the year was the unrelenting lack of housing, which has had an enormous impact on local families. The difficulties in getting a rental property include a lack of supply and the high cost of rent, which continues to rise. This has put many vulnerable families into dire circumstances. The cost of living, food, utility bills, and fuel all have an impact on both parents and children.



Parents at Swimming
Lesson



Grandma and
Granddaughter on her
Birthday



Retirement Flowers from
Home-Start - Thank you.

Home-Start Great Lakes has worked hard to meet all objectives of TEI funding requirements, including Home-Start National's objectives and policies. At the end of this financial year, I am retiring. Thank you for the opportunity to work for fifteen years (15) and be part of Home-Start National, and thank you to the parents, and children who allowed me be part of their lives.



Home-Start Family Worker - Hay, Carrathool, Murrumbidgee (HCM)

Nari Nari, Wiradjuri and Yitha Yitha Country

Michele Harrington - Family Worker

Home-Start HCM continued to provide vulnerable families with individual home visits, offering support, friendship, and practical help to families with at least one child under the age of 8. Families also visited the Home-Start office in Hay, for information, ideas and general advice.

Encouraging families to improve their parenting skills, reduce social isolation, increase parenting self-esteem as well as maintaining self-care towards each other. Being a parent is the most important job in the world, but it can also be the hardest, especially living on farms in very isolated areas with long distances to travel for support and essential services. Finding that support network and social interaction is often just too hard and parents can become mentally and emotionally withdrawn.

On top of that, in 2022, floods created even more isolation and helplessness. Families were totally isolated from the world with water all around them, roads cut off for a long period of time and plenty of panic in the house for stock needed to be helicoptered out, feed and food to be boated or helicopter in.



Home-Start HCM's flexible service provided supportive phone calls and facetime chats at morning, noon and night to maintain ongoing support to the families by: -

- Listening to their needs and concerns
- Providing practical and emotional support
- Encouraging their parenting strategies
- Providing relevant information and educational needs

Over the past 12 months Home-Start HCM has helped families move forward in a more positive and beneficial way, with:

- Home Visiting
- Child development concerns and well-being
- Finding ways to help families deal with stress,
- Healthy living and children's nutrition
- Referrals to specialist e.g.: financial, drug and alcohol, speech therapy
- Parenting programs

Opportunity

Home-Start HCM along with 5 other Home-Start workers had the opportunity to attend the "2022 International Childhood Trauma Conference in Melbourne" which provided masterclasses, keynote presentations and networking with professional who work with people affected by trauma associated

with abuse, violence and relational disruption. Attendees heard from world experts on neuroscience, trauma, attachment and therapeutic intervention.



Home-Start on the first morning of Conference



Checking in with Head Office

Families

Families have attended our yearly Pools and Puddles program, Parenting Programs, mums and bubs walking group. In this reporting period Home-Start HCM has supported over 101 clients with 21% being Indigenous. 41 parents attended our EAT-MOVE-LIVE community event at the 54 Reasons Playgroup where they learned about healthier options for feeding children and the family.



Beaus cooking time with Grammy.



Treats after Pools N Puddles

Home-Start HCM receive referrals from Hay Clinical Child Health nurse, local General Practitioners, the education system, Aboriginal Medical Centre and self-referral. Majority referrals include a need for: -

- Family Capacity building
- Age-appropriate learning
- Mental Health and Self Care
- Routines and Early literacy
- Social interaction and play.
- Identifying Family Issues

Covering the Murrumbidgee and Carrathool areas involves a lot of time is spent in the car on long stretches of roads, both dirt and bitumen, slowing down for mobs of cattle, sheep, kangaroos and emus, which can create a problem for very early starts.



10-minute hold up!!



Gumboots out for the walk up the driveway

Highlights

I have been working with a lovely family whose little girl has Cerebral Palsy & Movement Disorder. They live 65km from Hay on the family farm. Once a week mum travelled into the Home-Start cottage in Hay to do a Triple P course using our computer and for physio appointments for her little girl. They are made welcome and supported through her online learning, while the child reads story books, plays ball games and educational games with me. We have been doing this since the end of 2022 and the progress we are making is so exciting to watch. The little girl was unable to stand for long periods of time without support and is now standing alone as well as taking steps on her own without support. The smiles say it all... Every fortnight, I also travelled to the farm to check in on mums' mental health and self-care and help with any current issues they were experiencing.

I regularly attend the 54 Reasons Playgroup to keep up-to date with what is happening. It's becoming a great little playgroup. This provides a great opportunity to meet parents and children in an informal setting and through general conversations, learn if there are any resources or information that parents want, or referrals needed.

Eat Move Live – Children's Nutrition

Every year Home-Start's Eat-Move-Live program has its wonderful Nutritionist Val Watson and our amazing CEO Michelle McDonnell do the big drive to outback Hay to deliver our annual community event. E.M.L was welcomed this year at the 54 Reasons Playgroup. We had 41 parents and children attend, to listen and learn about the benefits and ideas for healthy eating in both the home and lunch boxes for school. Healthy platters and lunch box ideas were there to offer ideas for families to take home and introduce to their meals and school lunches.



Val Watson – EML Author and Facilitator



EML participant tests the goods.



H/S staff with Tara from 54 Reasons Playgroup -Hay



Home-Start Cowra Canowindra & Weddin Wiradjuri Country

Kirstin Stevenson - Family Worker

The past year has, as always, been successful, challenging, and innovative for Home-Start Cowra, Canowindra and Weddin (CCW). As with most of NSW, communities in Canowindra, Cowra and the Weddin Shire have experienced natural disasters over the last 12 months including severe flooding. Home-Start CCW was involved in the provision of material aid and food in Canowindra, Eugowra, and Cowra, and in supporting families and the community in their recovery. The flooding directly impacted planned activities in Canowindra and Cowra including Water Awareness and Play, as well as affecting people's ability to travel as roads were both flooded and then severely damaged.



Flooded Belubula River,
November 2022



Flooded main street of
Canowindra, November 2022

Despite the challenges, Home-Start CCW has continued to seek and create opportunities to provide individual support to families, parenting groups, community activities, community events and partnering with a diverse range of services.

Targeted Support/ Family Work

This year, Home-Start CCW has supported 32 families in Cowra, Canowindra, and the Weddin Shire. Families were supported through home visits, community visits, telephone contact, online meetings, referrals to appropriate services, and parenting groups and courses.

Community Support/Community Building

Over the year, Home-Start CCW organised, facilitated, and participated in many community activities including community consultations, groups and events in Cowra, Canowindra, and the Weddin Shire. These activities have included Messy/Sensory play in Cowra, Canowindra and Grenfell, Curious and Creative Kids in Cowra and Grenfell, Water Awareness and Play, Community Family Fun Day, participating in the Cowra Festival of Understanding, morning teas in Cowra and Quandialla and a Family dinner and Games night in Canowindra to celebrate Families Week.

Home-Start CCW has continued to innovate and evaluate the services provided to the community. Despite community and service requests for a social support group for 1st time parents, the group was poorly attended and failed to attract new participants. Following community consultation, Home-Start CCW again partnered with Live Better and relaunched the group as a fortnightly Sensory Playtime for 0- to 5-year-olds. Sensory Playtime is a supported messy play session with a range of sensory based activities including sensory bins, water play and crafts. Our informal motto is “You bring the kids and we bring/clean-up the mess!” An unexpected outcome of the Sensory Playtimes has been the natural inclusion of children with additional needs and supporting their families.



Sensory Playtime fun and exploration

Wiradjuri Story Poles and Ngiyang Flashcards Project

In the past year, Home-Start CCW has continued to work in partnership with elders and members of the Wiradjuri community in Grenfell to facilitate the Wiradjuri Story Poles and Ngiyang Flashcards project, as well as participate in the inaugural NAIDOC Day celebrations in Grenfell.

In early 2023 we travelled to Quandialla Public School, where we were warmly welcomed by the staff and students. The teachers and students enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to work with Aunty Julie, learn about Wiradjuri language and culture and create their own set of Story Poles. After initial discussions, the students decided to give each pole a theme based on the extreme weather events of drought, fire, and flood. The students used both Wiradjuri symbols and language to tell the story of each experience. The completed Wiradjuri Story Poles are outstanding and have been proudly placed at the front of the school.



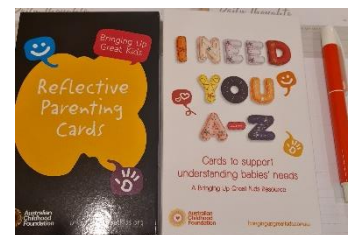
Wiradjuri Story Poles project at Quandialla Public School

Once again, thank you to the staff and students at Quandialla Public School for their enthusiasm and support of the Wiradjuri Story Poles project. Thank you also to the many people and agencies who helped to make the Wiradjuri Story Poles and Ngiyang Flashcards Project possible, especially Aunty Julie Ferguson – Wiradjuri Elder, artist, and teacher, Chrystal Galea, Vanessa Willis at Department of Communities & Justice and Garry Halloran.

I would like to thank Home-Start National for the opportunity to continue to work with and learn from many loving, dedicated, and resilient families in Cowra, Canowindra, and the Weddin Shire. It is a privilege and pleasure to be a part of a wider community of services and workers who are committed to supporting families and children.



**Home-Start Family Worker Service
Tumut/Tumbarumba/Gundagai (TTG)
Wiradjuri, Walgalu and Ngunnawal
Catherine Buckle Family Worker**



Over the course of this year, we have supported over 200 parents, carers, children and support staff across the Snowy Valleys and Gundagai region. Sessions included Intake & Assessment, Information/Advice & Referral, Family Capacity Building, Mentoring & Peer Support and Community Education & Skills. Reasons for seeking assistance included primarily: Community Connection, Mental Health Wellbeing & Self-care, Family Functioning, Education & Skills and Age-Appropriate Development. Other reasons for seeking support included Personal & Family Safety, Material Wellbeing and Basic Necessities & Physical Health.

Referrals to Home-Start TTG this year came from regular sources such as local GPs and Child/Family Health Nurses, DCJ, Neighbourhood Centres and Educational Facilities. New sources of referrals included 54 Reasons and Mission Australia’s new Family Preservation team. Referrals out were typically diverse and often intensively supported by Home-Start, including referrals to: DCJ, Mission Australia, 1800RESPECT, Tumut District Neighbourhood Centre, Community Pantry, Tumut Regional Family Services, Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre, Gundagai Medical Centre, Kate Ludford @ Emotional Wellbeing, Psychologist Lisa Buckley, Wagga Women’s Health Centre, Cooee Cottage, DV Legal Aid, WDVAS, Aboriginal Tenancy Service, VERTO Tenancy Advice and more.

ACF International Childhood Trauma Conference, September 2022

This week in Melbourne was rich with learning about trauma and healing with a focus on Indigenous perspectives and ways of healing, and delivered so many insights and techniques to apply with the vast majority of clients having some kind of trauma that impacts their wellbeing day to day. The theme of Connection & Healing was particularly rich and relevant to the trying times our communities have experienced and our families' needs moving forward. Some beautiful resources were also purchased!

Feelings Storytimes



During the Summer Holidays, we ran another series of 'Let's Talk about Feelings' sessions in the local public libraries, welcoming parents and carers to enjoy some Feelings-themed storybooks and activities with their children. Information about Emotion Coaching and Transition to School was provided alongside these activities.

Some mothers, a grandmother and children enjoying a Body Scan Meditation followed by drawing their feelings inside their bodies, with Family Worker Catherine at Tumbarumba Library.



Parenting Programs

High quality parenting programs such as **Circle of Security Parenting & 1,2,3 Magic & Emotion Coaching** were delivered to parents and carers in flexible ways including group settings, sessions with couples and individuals in the Home-Start office, as well as with couples and single parents in their own homes. Feedback for these programs was overwhelmingly positive as always. Highlights included supporting two single fathers to work towards restoration with their children and helping a very anxious first-time mother to bond with her baby and find confidence in her ability to parent.



"I was feeling very alone and increasingly anxious by the time my baby was 2mths old. I am so glad I reached out to Home-Start. Catherine visited me on our farm weekly for about 3 months and delivered the Circle of Security Parenting Program in my home, usually while Nick was sleeping but sometimes we would play and interact with him in between learning the program. I gradually became more confident in making decisions and trusting my instincts as a mother. I was able to give myself credit for what I was achieving and I began to enjoy my baby more. Now we are sleeping and feeling wonderful and I tell everyone how much this program, and Home-Start, changed our life."

Child Directed Play Workshops



In some families there is a need for support with learning how to play and enjoy quality time together. To assist, we provided Child Directed Play workshops for parents and children in their own homes or at community venues. Child Directed play is a simple concept requiring parents to observe and follow their child's cues during play, building confidence in their child and trust in the relationship. Many parents find that learning to do this takes the pressure and the stress away from doing everyday activities with their children, where previously they weren't confident to let their child take the lead or to



support their child's creativity without being in charge or distant.



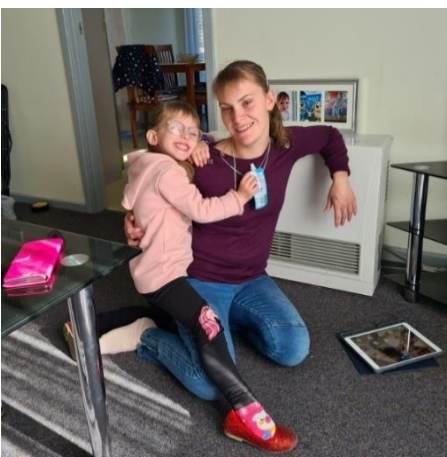
**Home-Start Family Worker Service Southern Tablelands
(Goulburn Mulwaree LGA and Crookwell)**

Gandangara and Ngunnawal Country

Moira Ritchie - Family Worker

Families

Home-Start Southern Tablelands assisted 16 families during the reporting period. 2 families finished with our program during this reporting period, in February 2023 and March 2023. Parents asked for support with parenting, mental health, budgeting, playgroups, referrals to other services and domestic violence support.



Case Study 1

A young Aboriginal mother Chantelle with an intellectual disability was in a serious Domestic Violence relationship with her ex-partner at the time she was referred to Home-Start.

Home-Start has been able to support Chantelle to engage with Police, resulting in a 2-year ADVO. Chantelle was also linked with DV specialist support.

Chantelle and Lilly have engaged with therapy to assist with their recovery from trauma and continue to attend therapy fortnightly.

Chantelle has gone from strength to strength and is very active in the community, ensuring Lilly attends age-appropriate activities in the community, for example music program, playgroup, school readiness program and local community events.

Chantelle has completed Circle of Security and Triple P programs and has gained confidence in parenting her daughter.

When Lilly starts school next year Chantelle is looking forward to working part time and becoming a Volunteer with Home-Start.

Volunteers

Southern Tablelands currently has 6 Volunteers, including 2 newly trained Volunteers. Welcome to Shayela Mohib from Goulburn and Janelle Hunt from Crookwell.

2 of Home-Start's long standing Volunteers Sherryl Broderick and Sylvia Purcell are currently caring for elderly parents and have reduced capacity, despite which they continue to assist with Case Conferences, attendance at Volunteer Expo's, Volunteer training and Community events.

I attended the Volunteer Expo at Goulburn and Crookwell in May 2023 with Volunteer Sherryl Broderick.

Our volunteers continue to catch up at support meetings regularly, and receive one on one support and supervision, including joint home visits as required.

When attending an exit interview in February this year with a family and volunteer the mother stated that the Volunteer "was such a help and so lovely". The family was very happy with Home-Start support and service, and the father thanked Home-Start for being there for his wife during a very anxious and stressful time in their lives. Prior to being linked with a Home-Start Volunteer the mother of twins was suffering from anxiety and was unable to leave the home. With the consistent, longstanding gentle support from the Volunteer this mum was able to start getting out in the community building up her confidence and reducing her anxiety.

During the reporting period 6 families were linked with Volunteers. I will be continuing to recruit Volunteers from The Goulburn Mulwaree Shire.



March 2023 - Eat Move Live Children's Nutrition



In March 2023, we delivered an Eat, Move, Live session, which was facilitated by Home-Start's National Project Officer and Nutritionist Val Watson at the local PCYC.

When parents are struggling and overwhelmed with so many issues, feeding children and themselves with nutritious, affordable food tends to fall by the wayside – instead offering unhealthy, low-quality food and long hours of screentime become a daily habit. Poor nutrition, high sugar, high fat diet and low physical movement in early childhood can set

children up for a lifetime of problems and cause: * poor child development – physical, mental, social, and emotional, * child behaviour problems, * low energy and concentration at school, * poor dental health, * child obesity and poor physical health.

Feedback from parents

Q1/ Did you learn anything new about good nutrition and activity for your children?

YES - 100% of parents • Healthy snack and meal ideas • Portion control for kids/meal sizes • High sugar levels in food • I'm feeding my children too much sugar • More aware of sugar content in packaged food • Sugar content advice was very interesting and alarming • Behaviour has a lot to do with food • Importance of water, more water • First three ingredients – look for sugar with other names.

Q2/ Will you make any changes to your children's food, drinks and activity?

YES - Change away from fruit juice to water • Less processed food • Sugar is in everything • More fruit and veg • Less sugar • Change sandwich fillings to protein • Ideas for healthier lunchboxes • Meal planning and prep saves money.

Q3/ Comments - • Very educational • Was amazing and fun • It was so informative, and I took a lot away from it.



Training

During this reporting period I attended the following training events

- Building the evidence base for community wellbeing.
- Gamble Aware – Care and Connect
- Online digital approaches to support wellbeing in Aboriginal and TSI children and Families.
- Let's Read.
- 16 Days of activism - Services Australia interactive - Family and Domestic Violence.
- It takes a village - supporting families with parental mental illness.
- Information security forum
- Attended International Childhood Trauma Conference in Melbourne with Home-Start colleagues, which was a very valuable and informative opportunity.

Trends in referrals

During this reporting period I have received a notable increase of Indigenous referrals including single mums and single dads. Approximately 40% of current case load is Indigenous families.

Profit and Loss

HOME-START NATIONAL INC.

For the year ended 30 June 2023

National Office	2023	2022
Income		
Donations National	18,119	10,575
Interest Received	1,986	117
Community Grants	265,751	151,179
Other contract related income	6,982	3,782
Telstra Dividends	51	24
Administration/Management Fees	-	176,349
Fundraising Income	791	-
Miscellaneous Income	4	60
Total Income	293,684	342,086
Expenditure		
Salaries and Wages		
Wages & Salaries	118,821	189,461
Total Salaries and Wages	118,821	189,461
Other employee-related expenses		
Annual Leave	(629)	1,400
Long Service Leave	532	5,474
Superannuation	12,476	18,806
Recruitment	445	520
Training & Development (Staff)	136	6,750
Travel & Accommodation	10,268	2,347
Workers' Compensation	2,439	4,252
Total Other employee-related expenses	25,668	39,549
Direct contract related costs		
Utility Expenses	33,368	17,987
Rent and related outgoings	-	22,620
Utility Expenses	145	880
Total Direct contract related costs	33,513	41,487
Indirect Contact Administration Costs		
Accounting Fees	-	22,000
Assets/Inventory Purchased (Below \$2000)	13,306	-
Audit Fees	-	1,415
Bank Charges	-	386
Computer Expense	7,303	6,635
Contribution from Entity	5,880	36,923
Insurance	1,104	1,591
IT Costs	8,320	3,055
Postage, Freight and Courier	196	215
Printing & Stationery	1,531	571
Rent and outgoings	2,778	-
Repairs & Maintenance	28	981
Security Expenses	-	563
Subscriptions & Memberships	-	632
Telephone & Fax Charges & Internet	109	6,997
	40,555	81,963
Total Expenditure	218,558	352,461
Net Profit	75,125	(10,374)

Detailed profit and loss statement does not form part of the audit report

Sincere thanks to our wonderful supporters this year!

