



Home-Start
National Inc.



Annual Report 2023 - 2024



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



Contents	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Home-Start National Inc – Our Vision and our Mission.	4
Home-Start National Board of Management	5
Home-Start National Office and Management	5
Chairperson’s Report 2022-2023.....	6
CEO’s Report 2022 – 2023	7
Home-Start Programs and Services: Changing Families’ Lives	11
Our Service Models.....	12
Home-Start Volunteer Home Visiting Statistics 2022 – 2023.....	14
Home-Start Professional Family Services Statistics 2022 – 2023	15
Program Stories: Activities and Achievements.....	16
Home-Start Volunteer Home Visiting Service -Newcastle/Lake Macquarie	18
Home-Start Kempsey/Macleay– Parenting Service.....	19
Home-Start Family Worker Service Wingecarribee.....	21
Home-Start Family Worker Service Hay/Carrathool/Murrumbidgee	22
Home-Start Cowra/Canowindra/Weddin.....	25
Home-Start Family Worker Service Tumut/Tumbarumba/Gundagai	26
Home-Start Family Worker Service Southern Tablelands	28
Home-Start Family Worker Service Great Lakes	30
Financial Reports	32

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 (NCIG)*
- *Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator*
- *4Kids Bowral*
- *The Inger Rice Foundation*
- *FRRR and Resilience NSW*
- *Goulburn Soldiers Club*
- *Mittagong RSL and Moss Vale Services Club*
- *Wingecarribee Shire Council*
- *Southern Highlands Community Foundation*
- *Carers NSW*
- *Veolia*
- *Kempsey RSL*
- *ISPT and Warners Bay Shopping Village*
- *Mark and Katrina Brooker “The Local”*
- *Grill’d Restaurants – Charlestown and The Junction*
- *Beyond Business Solutions*
- *The Marketing Side*
- *DYN-IT*
- *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

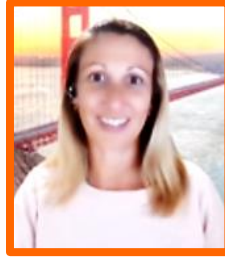
Home-Start National Inc. is concerned for the welfare of children and parents and committed to establishing and supporting Home-Start schemes throughout Australia.

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 2023-2024

Ann Fletcher – Chairperson



Another wonderful year of successful Home-Start operations in Australia and we continue to make a difference in the lives of families with young children. Our CEO and Senior Project Officer have worked tirelessly to support the co-ordinators and staff, travelling far and wide to attend meetings, offer training and supervision of staff, meeting volunteers and families. My fellow Board members and I are incredibly proud of their achievements.

One of our long serving Board Members, Susanne Thompson retired from the Board this year and we thank her for her unwavering support of Home-Start for over 20 years. Suzanne started with Home-Start in an administration role in 2001. After securing a role in the teaching profession, Susanne agreed to serve as a Board member as Secretary and then as an ordinary member. Home-Start is eternally grateful for your service Susanne, and we wish you all the very best for your retirement.

In November 2023 we were fortunate to be able to hold a three-day training event for our Home-Start staff in the wonderful Hunter Valley region. It was a great opportunity for co-ordinators to connect with each other, share stories, learn some new skills and build their confidence as solo workers in remote locations. Some members of the Board were able to attend, and we appreciated the chance to get to know the staff we employ and for them to understand our role in the organisation.

This year has been an absolute whirlwind of activity, and we are looking forward to another successful year ahead.

Michelle McDonell

Head Office – Awabakal Country

What a fabulous but exhausting year it's been. As always our staff and volunteers have moved mountains to support the vulnerable families in our communities.

It has been a year of celebrations, awards and recognition for Home-Start in Australia.



Home-Start all around the world celebrates the care and commitment of our amazing volunteers who are the life blood of our organisation but in November we wanted to celebrate our staff as well so - to say "Thank you" for their outstanding commitment. To celebrate these superb workers Home-Start National held a Staff Retreat in November which was combined with the 50-year anniversary celebration of Home-Start across the globe. The theme for the retreat was "Relax, Rejuvenate and Rejoice".

The retreat was held at Kirkton Park in the Hunter Valley NSW on 13th, 14th, and 15th of November 2023. We were so lucky to have 3 representatives from the Board of Management attend the conference. It was really valuable for the staff to put a name to faces from the Board and to get to know them a little. Other special guests included Aunty Cynthia Morris – Wonnarua Elder who welcomed us to Country and Aunty Julie Ferguson who is a Wiradjuri elder from Central West (NSW) Aunty Julie has contributed a great deal of time and creative energy to Home-Start in the Weddin Shire. Aunty Julie and the Home-Start Family Worker from Cowra/Canowindra /Weddin have formed a fabulous and respectful partnership which has resulted in the success of the Wiradjuri Story Poles and Flash cards projects in the Central West.

The highlight of the conference was the program presentations. Each worker presented an outline of what they do in their program and described what their areas were like. It was fabulous to see not just the hard work that they do but also how different each area is to work in.



Moiria Ritchie from Southern Tablelands videoed a family and their volunteer to demonstrate the power of Home-Start



Kat Brooker from Newcastle talk about the importance of volunteer training and retention.



Home-Start Board Members and staff gathered in November to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Home-Start. 50 years ago, in Leicester UK Margaret Harrison founded the Home-Start Model and for the past 50years Home-Start has been offering support and hope to vulnerable families with little children all around the world.



In March 2024 Home-Start gave a PowerPoint presentations to DCJ (Department of Communities and Justice) staff in Wagga Wagga – This resulted in a request from DCJ for Home-Start to give a Best Practice presentation at the Targeted Earlier Intervention Forum in Wagga on 27th March. The presentation was titled “It takes Time” The presentation outlined four important areas of Home-Starts practice model

- the importance of not putting a timeframe around family healing
- not retraumatizing families with an endless parade of different services and having to continually retell their story to strangers
- the power of trusting long term relationships
- the benefit to workers



The Home-Start Family Worker from Tumut/Tumbarrumba/Gundagai - Catherine Buckle, also presented a case study which demonstrated to perfection the power of working this way. The presentation was received with overwhelming enthusiasm. The CEO from FAMS (Susan Watson) was at the Forum and was convinced that it was important that the Minister for Communities and Justice (Hon Kate Washington) heard about Home-Starts practice methods. Consequently, Home-Start, along with 3 other services

was invited to a Round Table Discussion with the Minister in Sydney on the 2nd of May 2024. The Round Table discussion with Minister Kate Washington was hosted by FAMS. And provided Home-Start with the opportunity to discuss our best practice and some of the barriers faced by service providers. The discussion went very well. Catherine Buckle again presented the case study example of a family she worked with in Gundagai. Catherine did a marvelous job and at the end of the presentation there wasn't a dry eye at the table.

On the 6th of June 24 the National Project Officer and I attended the ACWA (Association of Children's Welfare Agencies) Gala Dinner in Sydney at Dolton House, Darling Harbour. Home-Start was one of only three services shortlisted for the Excellence in Service Award sponsored by the Parenting Research Centre. It was great recognition for Home-Start to be shortlisted for such a prestigious award.



(Above) Michelle and Val with delegates from Casper (Northern Rivers)
 (Left) Michelle and Val with the Hon Kate Washinton. (Minister for Communities and Justice)

We are so proud of the work that all of our Home-Start Staff offer to their local communities. This year we are delighted to announce that Danielle Santry – Family Worker for Wingecarribee was recognised by the NSW Government for her tremendous contribution to her local community. Wendy Tuckerman MP (Member for Goulburn) presented Danielle with the NSW Community Services Award. Danielle is a force of nature in her community, with a very strong sense of Social Justice and a commitment to helping vulnerable members of the community.



Government Contracting

With the approach of TEI recommissioning on our doorstep in June 2025 the world of DCJ contracts has been a whirlwind of Recommissioning Forums, District Priority Meetings, Contract Review Meetings, and Portal Training and TEI Webinars. Once again, this year I would like to acknowledge the support of all of our Department of Communities and Justice Commissioning and Planning Officers and in particular I thank our DCJ contract Manager Vanessa Wilson for her steadfast support and guidance.

HOLD THE PRESS

On the 28th of June 2024 Home-Start National received confirmation from the Department of Communities and Justice that we were successful in our tender for a new Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Service in Goulburn Mulwaree and Yass Valley. This contract allows us to employ a Specialist DFSV Worker and an Aboriginal DFSV Trainee. Both positions are full time, and we are very excited about having the opportunity to support victim/survivors of DFSV in the Southern Tablelands in the next financial year. These workers will join our dedicated Goulburn Family Worker, Moira Richie, and the Goulburn Home-Start Volunteer team to provide safety and support to vulnerable families in the local community.



Home-Start Farewells

After more than 20 years of commitment, dedication, and loyal support we say farewell and a huge THANKYOU to our beloved Board Member and previous staff member – Susanne Thompson. Susanne has had several roles in Home-Start over the past two decades, including Administration Officer and Secretary of the Board of Management. Susanne is retiring to spend more time with her family. Everyone at Home-Start wishes you every happiness for the future Susanne.

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 2023 – 2024, 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 and Family Wellbeing Nights	• 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 and Flood Recovery

In 2023– 2024 Home-Start Family Services provided:

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

In 2023 – 2024, Home-Start Family Services provided services in the following areas of NSW:

- Kempsey/Macleay
- Forster/Tuncurry
- Newcastle
- Lake Macquarie
- Cowra/Canowindra/Weddin and Eugowra
- 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)








Our Service Models

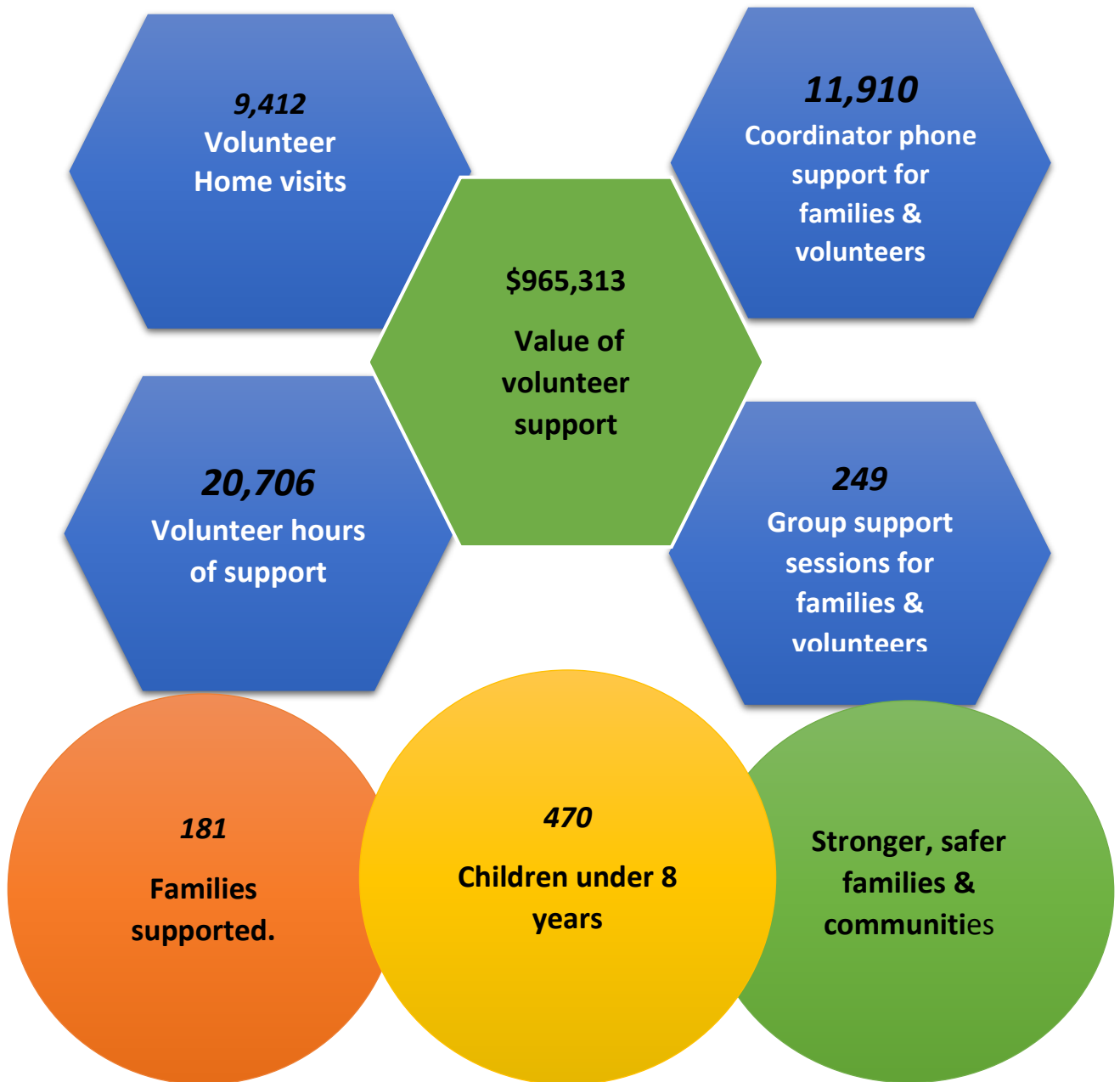
Home-Start has offered the following service models throughout 2023 – 2024.

- **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

Cost of Living, fires, floods, secure housing

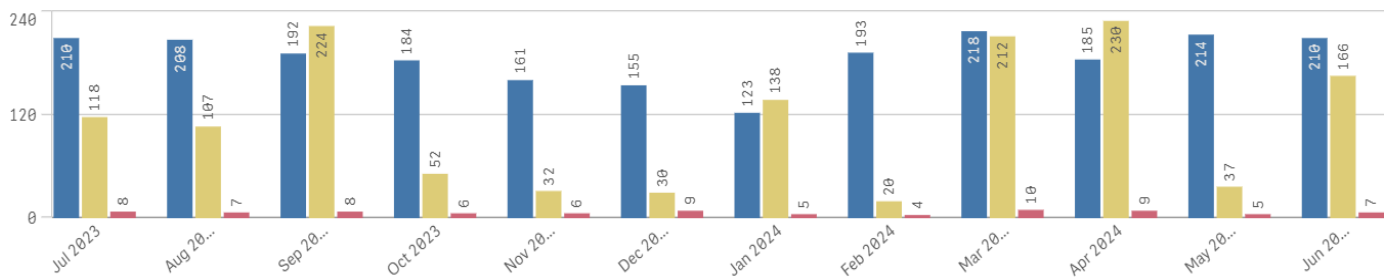
Unemployment and financial stress

Overview of Client Numbers – DCJ Targeted Earlier Intervention

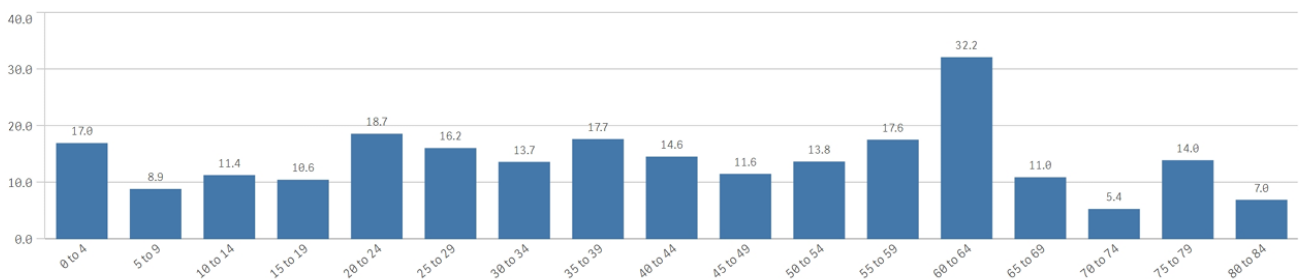
Total Number of Clients Supported 1,471

Activity	Service Type	Individual Clients	Unidenti... Clients	Combined total Individual and Unidentified Clients	Support Persons
Totals		511	960	1,471	18
TEI - Community Support	Education and Skills training	43	226	269	1
TEI - Community Support	Social participation	103	661	764	2
TEI - Targeted Support	Family Capacity Building	263	11	274	13
TEI - Targeted Support	Information/advice/referral	144	36	180	0
TEI - Targeted Support	Intake/assessment	145	15	160	0
TEI - Targeted Support	Mentoring/Peer Support	81	11	92	5
TEI - Targeted Support	Parenting programs	166	0	166	0
TEI - Targeted Support	Supported playgroups	58	0	58	0

Overview of clients and Support Persons per Activity and Service Types



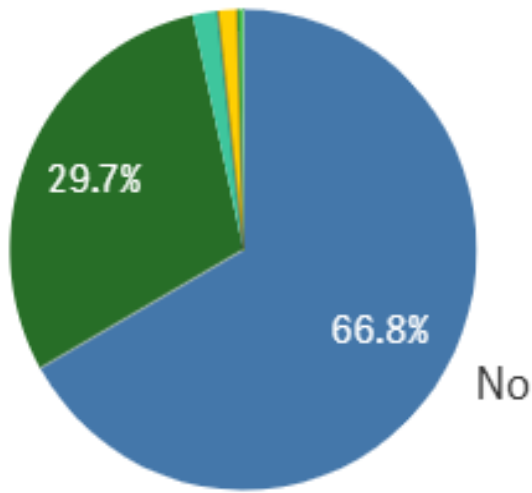
Clients and Support persons per month



Clients and Support Persons by age at Referral

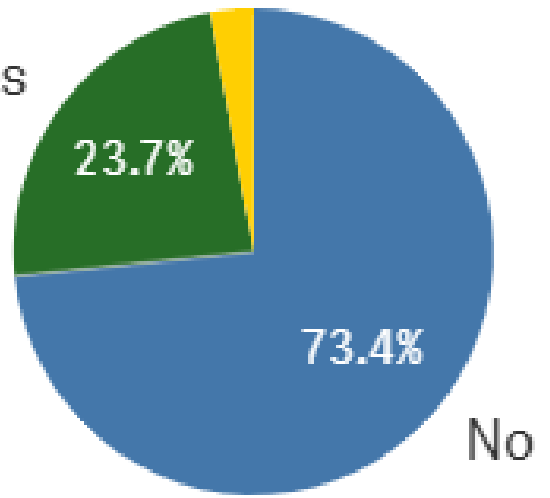
Client Demographics

Aboriginal

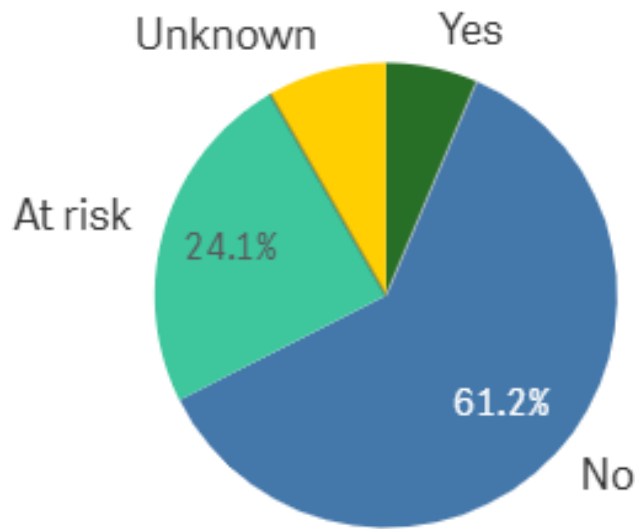


Individual Clients and Support people by
Aboriginality

Yes



Individual Clients and Support people
by Disability



Individual Clients and Support people by Homelessness



Val Watson – National Funding and Project Officer Awabakal Country

During 2023-2024, we supported our service delivery in NSW by applying for 30 grants of which 14 grants we successful. We applied to deliver projects such as Volunteer Home Visiting in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Goulburn, Wingecarribee, and Tumut. We received grants to provide children’s books for Goulburn and Kempsey Early Literacy projects, extra wages and equipment for Goulburn and Cowra, Circle of Security Parenting training for Newcastle, Mentoring Playgroup in Tumut and a Bush Tucker Garden in Caragabal.

Due to many towns across 8 LGAs being severely impacted by floods in November 2022, we received a grant from Dept. Communities and Justice to provide Flood Recovery support in Hay, Carrathool, Murrumbidgee, Cowra, Canowindra, Weddin (including Eugowra), Tumut, Gundagai and Snowy Valleys.

This grant allowed us to provide:

- Mental health care to our 3 workers living and working in flood affected areas
- Distribution of essential items lost in the floods to families in need
- community days to bring local adults and children together, to connect, debrief and have fun.
- Community Wellbeing Nights – with food, fun and learning about disaster preparedness
- Eat Move Live sessions in Hay
- play sessions for children traumatized by floods – Tumut, Cowra, Canowindra, Eugowra

Michelle (CEO) and Val (National Project Officer) travelled to Eugowra with Kirsten Stevenson, (Family Worker – Cowra, Canowindra, Weddin) to help deliver a Wild Messy Play session for children whose preschool was swept away in the flood.



Community Wellbeing
Night - Cowra

We also liaised with many different councils and corporations to promote Home-Start and are building Corporate Community Partnerships.

We raised funds through monthly donations, donation tins, recycling bottles and cans, and through Grill’d Healthy Burger Restaurants at Charlestown and The Junction.

Home-Start National was nominated and shortlisted for a Service Excellence Award through ACWA (Assoc. for Child Welfare Agencies).

Newcastle/Lake Macquarie Volunteer Home Visiting Program was nominated and shortlisted for Volunteer Team of the Year Award, and Kat Brooker was recognised for her dedication to Home-Start and her local community with a nomination for Westfield Local Heroes Award.

We continue to lobby relevant Ministers, seeking meetings and support for Home-Start National and our award-winning Volunteer Home Visiting program, and speak at local service group meetings such as Rotary to promote Home-Start and seek supporters and champions.



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

During 2023-2024:

- The Volunteer Home Visiting Program received 39 referrals
- 10 of the families referred had twins
- We linked volunteers and families from Brantton to Toronto.
- At our busiest point this year we had 30 active volunteers visiting 34 families. This was made possible by some of our wonderful volunteers visiting two families.

Challenges and Highlights



This year we focused on supporting and retaining our current volunteers by arranging:

- regular volunteer support sessions at Wests New Lambton. Made possible by a donation by AVID constructions.
- Our volunteers enjoyed tours of local services such as Survivors R Us
- We partnered with Good Life Church at Wickham and Jesmond Neighbourhood Centre to attend and run a Suicide Prevention workshop through Living Works Australia for our wonderful volunteers. This provided valuable training regarding a difficult subject.





In March 2024 our long-term supporter and funder Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group sponsored a Soccer Clinic run by the female Newcastle Jets Team. This Clinic was offered to 18 lucky children of our Home-Start families and volunteers. A very special experience that many would not normally have access to.

One of our wonderful volunteers, Mary, helped us organise through her contacts at Good Life Church Wickham some wonderful Easter and Christmas Hampers for some of our Home-Start families that needed a little extra help this year. 30 people attended our Easter Picnic at our H Start Office. The children enjoyed making some Easter hats and water play.



In Dec 2023 we held our annual Christmas party at the Home Start Office for 60 plus people. Warners Bay Shopping Village ISPT were very generous and donated \$1000 to assist in the purchase of Toys and catering for our Christmas party.



A lovely quote from one of our families.

To Katrina and the lovely, supportive staff at Home-Start.

“The girls and I couldn’t have done it without you. Thank you for the opportunity to have assistance from the lovely Amy. (Pseudonym) There are no words to describe the ongoing support she has provided my family and I. Thank you for providing a service that supports so many families on an ongoing basis”.



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

Parenting Programs offered by Kempsey this year

- The Circle of Security Parenting Program seems to still be very popular program
- Positive Parenting Program with Trauma informed practice, and
- Parents not Partners program also another program sought after is Understanding children on the spectrum the importance of dads in families,
- Bringing up Great Kids - having good attachments to a newborn,
- the effects of parent’s poor mental health on children,
- the effects of Domestic Violence on children and families, and many other programs

Referrals come from all community organisations including DCJ, the Samaritans Women’s Refuge, The Uniting Church, Pathfinders, Many Rivers, the Courts, all community partners

This year I continued to partner with the Benevolent Society in Shine for Kids which supports children and young people affected by the criminal justice system. Home-Start regularly delivers parenting programs through the Shine for Kids program which is connected to the Kempsey Correctional Centre.

Donations

West Kempsey Post Office and the West Kempsey Newsagency still provide Home-Start with amazing support by providing us with spaces for our donation tins. Donations from these tins are used to buy books to pass out to the children in the Community Readers program and when at Book Week Activity stands outside IGA in Kempsey. This year 75 books were given to children in the community to encourage early literacy awareness and skills.

Thank you also to the Kempsey RSL club for the generous donation of \$1,000 which we will also use to purchase books for disadvantaged children

Early Literacy Awareness

The Kempsey Macleay Home-Start Community Readers for the past 12 months the Home-Start Community Readers have read to 13 School and have read to approximately 300 children, the group



continues to grow strong, and the readers still have a passion for what they are doing. The ABC did a wonderful story on our youngest reader Liam Fulford

To see Liam's full story, click this link:
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-05-17/liam-fulford-community-reading-literacy-volunteer-kempsey/103848632>

Training undertaken

Men's Behaviour Change training, Relationships Matters, Walking along side Aboriginal and Torres Strait Parents, how to support Parents with intellectual disability to meet parental goals, helping children adjust to the daycare setting Family Relationship Law National in regard to changes in Family Law. Supporting Fathers.



**Home-Start Family Worker Service - Wingecarribee
Gundungurra and Tharawal Country
Danielle Santry – Family Worker**

July 2023 – June 2024 saw Home-Start Wingecarribee assist over 225 community members through ongoing family assistance and parenting programs, Home-Start Wingecarribee also assisted over 58 families through our Playgroup program and over 28 families with our parenting programs.

Wingecarribee worked with families on a case management basis assisting families with a diverse range of issues from isolation, parenting workshops, employment, education and mental health. We are working 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.

We partnered with other services such as our partnership with Soul Warmers, where we held a weekly free café that gave families free weekly groceries and a cuppa and a chat each Thursday. We delivered groceries to families that were unable to collect and held weekly topics at the Café on topics such as children's nutrition, time management, and increasing resilience.

We partnered on Budgeting and Finance workshops with Anglicare that we ran monthly at our community outreach in various areas in the Highlands.

We partnered with the Wingecarribee Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer to hold 2 family open picnic days and Dhungang share. We were involved with the women's yarn circle where we had our first nation elders share knowledge and stories with younger first-nation mothers.

We attended the Community Service Expo where we assisted community members with 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 recruited 9 volunteers over the period of July 23 to June 24 and 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.



Volunteer Training at the Bowral Office

Home-Start held a weekly Playgroup which saw families attend and engage in music, craft, Storytime, and movement. We held our weekly sessions at a combination of community play centres through various villages within the Southern Highland. Each playgroup had weekly themes and education for parents on a variety of topics such as nutrition, parenting education, time management, milestones, cultural awareness, etc. Once a month our playgroup would go on an outing to visit another playgroups in different, isolated villages of the Southern Highlands so parents could engage with other families and services.

We partnered with Anglicare to bring over 200 families 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.

I held our annual surprise Christmas party for the volunteers who work with my families with the help from many local businesses, we were able to provide a Christmas lunch and gifts for volunteers.

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.

Home-Start now has a technology library and sensory toy library for families to borrow IT and sensory Toys free of charge. These resources are very well utilised by families.

We held our annual easter rock hunt where our playgroup families painted rocks and hid them in the local park and the children went on a treasure hunt to find them. We all enjoyed a wonderful picnic and crafts day after. We had 23 families attend.

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.

We partnered with Goods 360 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 and families who are vulnerable.

We have partnered again with the 4k 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 attend 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.



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

**Nari Nari, Wiradjuri and Yitha Yitha Country
Michele Harrington - Family Worker**

2023-24 What a Year, Parenting programs, Bush walks, Pools n Puddles, morning walking, farm visits and plenty of Family Building. Most of HMC Home-Start families receive one on one home visits offering support, friendship, and practical support to families with at least one child under the age of 10. Engaging parent and their families towards a more rewarding outcome by reducing 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 being on farms in very isolated areas and a distance to travel. Finding that support network and social interaction is often just TOO HARD and then you become mentally and emotionally withdrawn. Isolated families both distanced and detached from friends and family become more prone to mental health issues.

Home-Start HCM's flexible service provided plenty of supporting phone calls and facetime chats morning, noon, and night times to keep 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 had the ability to help families move forward in a more positive and beneficial way towards improving their young family’s needs and wants.

- Home Visiting
- Child development concerns and well-being
- Find ways to help families deal with stress, and healthy living.
- Referrals to specialist e.g.: financial, drugs and alcohol, speech
- Parenting programs

Celebrations and Training



In November 2023 we had the pleasure of celebrating Home-Starts 50th Anniversary with all the team in the Hunter Valley. In the mornings we would go through our individual Areas with slides shows of our programs so we could take in what we all do in our areas to support families, even had a couple of guest speakers to help with making sure we have our down time and are looking after our own health and wellbeing too. In the

afternoon we enjoyed team bonding with Drumming and slow movement exercising with gentle breathing to rid of any anxiety that we may be feeling. To top it all off we had a celebration dinner after a little wine tasting in our VERY PINK outfits to celebrate 50yrs of Home-Start.



We also had the chance of Sustainability in Service online training with the bubbly Katrina Mason. Helping us to maintain work and own family life while maintaining a balanced working environment for our families. Making sure that we are recognising when it is, when we need to step back, take a breath, and refocus on what is achievable for both you and for the families you support.

This year I attended the regional Domestic and Family Violence Conference in Griffith end of May 2024.



We listened to DFV victim survivor Simone O Brien (DV Victim), Dave Kramer behavioural scientist who has dedicated his life empowering individuals to contribute to community safety, since the tragic loss of his best friend Hannah Clarke, and her 3 children in 2020 from domestic violence. We heard the new Family Law Amendments presented by David Davidge and Jason Crook (Family Lawyers) and educated about online safety risks and help to remove harmful content such as cyber abuse and intimate images or videos shared without consent.

Programs

Over 30 families were supported by Home-Start Hay/Carrathool/Murrumbidgee this reporting period (26% indigenous). Some of the activities offered include Family case work, Pools N Puddles– water awareness program, Parenting Programs, Mums and Bubs walking group, Back to Nature and Eat, Move, Live – Nutrition Program. Many more dropped into the Home-Start Hay Cottage for information, general advice, and referrals.



Pools N Puddles



Bush kids – Nature Play

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

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



Family Cotton Farm

Covering the Murrumbidgee, Carrathool area involves plenty of time on large farms with the everyday farm work still needing to be done. So, it is out into the paddocks to see how the family works side by side. Home-Start HMC works in, with the family requirements of that day. I may have a plan of attack but my usual saying “I can work with that!” comes in several times a month. But for us, it is all about the family’s needs, their Mental Health and their wellbeing.



Family Sheep Station

Eat Move Live

This year for our Eat Move Live Program, I worked with KS Kindy Class at the Hay Public School (Thankyou to Sarah Houston and Ms Slattery) to do an interactive session on healthy eating and movement. We spoke about Rainbow Fruit and Vegetables and what they do for our growing bodies and brains. We also talked about why we need to exercise.. We played card matching, guess the reason it



helps, colour our fruit and vegetables in their colours and we even managed to learn the “Walk Like Granny” dance. Had a wonderful time interacting with KS, They are amazing with amazing questions.



We also were asked by the 54 Reasons play group to come back this year to talk to local parents about nutrition. For growing families. This was conducted by our Brilliant Home-Start Nutritionist Val Watson who travelled from Newcastle with our CEO Michelle McDonnell.



Working for Home-Start is a highlight all on its own, but the main highlight is being able to work along-side the amazing parents and their families. From Complex issues to daily routines, to being out in Nature or singing and reading with the little ones in their homes. It makes it all worth going to work and seeing the difference you can make by just supporting and reassuring parents.



Home-Start Cowra Canowindra & Weddin Wiradjuri Country Kirstin Stevenson - Family Worker

The past year has, as always, been successful, busy and innovative year for Home-Start Cowra, Canowindra and Weddin (CCW). 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.

Target Family Support

Home-Start CCW supports families, carers and children in Cowra, Canowindra and the Weddin Shire. The families, carers and children are supported through home visits, community visits and telephone contact, referrals to appropriate services, and parenting groups and courses. During the past 12 months Home-Start CCW has provided support through:

- Ongoing coordinator contact – Case Work (over 35 individuals)
- Parenting groups including Circle of Security and Triple P (over 15 families)
- One third of individuals supported identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (12 individuals)

Community Support/Community building

Over the year, Home-Start CCW organised, facilitated, and participated in many community activities including Family Fun Days, participating in the Cowra Festival of Understanding, morning tea in Cowra, Family Games night in Canowindra and Sensory/ Messy play at Eugowra Preschool.

A highlight of the past year has the successful partnerships with LiveBetter and then Mission Australia to facilitate Sensory/Messy Play in Cowra. The fortnightly group has become hugely popular with families providing social support for parents, play ideas and a sensory/ messy play experience for the children. Home-Start CCW also provided Sensory Play and Curious & Creative kids activities during school holidays in Canowindra and Grenfell.



Water Sensory play in Cowra



Curious & Creative Kids in Grenfell

Wiradjuri Project – Weddin

Through 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 2nd Annual NAIDOC Day celebrations in Grenfell.

During the year, we travelled to Quandialla Public School, Caragabal Public School and the Grenfell Mobile Preschool at Quandialla to present the Ngiyang Flashcards and learn songs in language. We also began planning for the Bush Tucker Garden and yarning circle at Caragabal Public School. We are looking forward to seeing the garden and yarning circle completed in the next 6 months.

Once again, thank you to the staff and students at Quandialla and Caragabal Public Schools and the Grenfell Mobile Preschool for their enthusiasm and support of the Wiradjuri Project. Thank you also to the many people and agencies who helped to make the Wiradjuri Project possible, especially Aunty Julie Ferguson – Wiradjuri Elder, artist, and teacher, Chrystel Galea, Vanessa Willis at Department of Communities & Justice and Garry Halloran.

I would like to thank Home-Start National for the opportunity 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

Overview

Home-Start TTG operates across the Snowy Valleys & Cootamundra Gundagai LGAs and our full-time Family Worker, Catherine, is based in Tumut but travels from Tumbarumba through Batlow, Adelong,

Brungle, Tumut and Gundagai. In 2023/24 financial year Home-Start TTG worked with 136 Individual Clients (including 60 children) providing Intake & Assessment, Information Advice, Referral, Mentoring & Peer Support and Family Capacity Building. Catherine also provided Community Support to over 400 unidentified clients via activities such as Transition to School support, community events, Early Literacy/Numeracy Information, and Parenting Programs.

Referrals in & Out

Referrals in followed a similar pattern to recent years with many referrals coming from local education and health services, DCJ, CYFS, other community service agencies and self-referrals. Main reasons for seeking assistance were also in common with previous years including Family Functioning, Age-Appropriate Development, Mental Health Wellbeing & Self Care, Education & Skills and Community Connection. There was a noticeable increase this year in clients also seeking support and referrals for Material Aid & Financial Assistance as well as Housing due to the rising cost of living & housing crisis we are experiencing and the pressure that those services are under.

Partnerships

As always, Home-Start TTG collaborates with a range of other services such as Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre, local Primary Schools, Mission Australia Family Preservation & local health professionals such as O. T. and Mental Health. This year also saw further development of our positive partnership with the Tumut & District Neighbourhood Centre. Catherine was able to provide flexible support and receive soft referrals via regular days working out of the Centre. We also began a new Mentoring & Peer Support initiative, bringing vulnerable mothers and children together in a for a regular playgroup

The supportive friendships developed between both mothers and children through these sessions has been an absolute highlight. Watching the social, emotional and language development of children who would otherwise have very limited social interaction was hugely rewarding and the word is starting to spread with some new faces joining us recently.



It Takes Time It was a rewarding experience to be invited to present a Case Study at the Wagga TEI Recommissioning Forum as an example of best practise and then to be invited to present at the Minister Round Table with Kate Washington along with 3 other TEI services. Being able to talk about just one of our amazing clients and the really impactful and important outcomes we have been able to achieve due to our lack of time limit in working with families, was another highlight of the year.



At Left- Catherine, Minister Kate Washington & Home-Start CEO Michelle at the FAMS Roundtable Discussion



**Home-Start Family Worker Service Southern Tablelands
(Goulburn Mulwaree LGA and Crookwell)
Gandangara and Ngunnawal Country
Moira Ritchie - Family Worker**

Overview: Family Capacity Building, which includes provision of the following services

- Case management.
- Developing and implementing Case Plans.
- Home visiting.
- Referrals.
- Parenting guidance and Program.
- Skills education.

Referrals: During this reporting period, I worked with 16 families, 7 of these families identified as Aboriginal, 1 family Rwandan. The number of children attached to these families was 43.

I received referrals from the following agencies/organisations

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| • Brighter Futures | • Community Health psychologist |
| • Goulburn Family Support Services | • Able Support Coordination |
| • Community Health | • Self-referrals x 2 |
| • Family Connect and Support | • Crookwell Neighbourhood Centre |
| • MaryMead Catholic Care | • Enterprise Plus get Back in the Game. |
| • Community Health Nurse | • BeAble Support Coordination. |

The main issues families were facing included but were not limited to, Family and Domestic Violence, Access to Legal Aid, longstanding Family Court matters, lack of affordable housing, social isolation, poverty, generational trauma, mental health, parenting children with disabilities, lack of family or social supports, no confidence in accessing community resources for their children and themselves, no access to childcare.

Frequent school suspension of primary aged children a current NDIS plan (National Disability Insurance Scheme Plans) and stress placed on mothers to have constant time off work. Extremely long waitlist for CIFS (Child, Infant and Family Tertiary Services) referrals approximately 12 -18-month waitlist.

Aboriginal women expressed their lack of confidence in the Police, and Family Court system, especially regarding FDV. These parents have no financial capacity to receive appropriate mental health services, especially in regard to diagnosis.

Volunteers: 6 Active Volunteers during the reporting period

Staff Development Training:

NSW Coercive Control Forum, Systematic Thinking Practice Training – The Peregrine Centre, and Suicide Prevention Training

Webinars:

- NSW first specialist criminal legal service for women.
- Supporting children’s mental health when working with separated parent.
- How a village approach can support infant and toddler mental health.

I also attended at the Goulburn Interagency meetings.

Collaborations:

This year we have also had many valuable partnerships with other service providers:

- Relationships Australia – culminating in the development of an 8-week Program for women who are survivors of FDV to be rolled out in Jan 2025
- Crookwell Neighbourhood Centre – Use of their Centre for Volunteer training, and their food pantry for families in Crookwell.
- Schools as Community Centres
- Aboriginal Community Health

Highlights:

A mother I have been supporting for over 3 years who had suffered from severe anxiety and PND has started her own local business, “Mumma Bears Cleaning Service”,

she started small, and it has now grown to the point where she is financially independent and confident that she no longer requires financial support for her family. Well Done, Susie.



The Amazing Volunteers are always a highlight and the great support they provide to their families.



Attending the Home-Start Retreat in November 2023 in the beautiful Hunter Valley and spending time with fellow staff members was a great highlight and recharged my batteries for another year of caring for our most vulnerable.



Home-Start Family Worker Service - Great Lakes Worimi Country Shiralee Cameron - Family Worker

WOW what a year. My first year as a Home-Start team member. I enjoyed setting up my office for a new and exciting year ahead.



I hit the ground running and began immediately providing case management and parenting programs to 10 local families. Over the past year I have provided targeted early intervention and/or parenting program support to 42 families.

I got to know the area and met with some fantastic organizations that I now partner with to support parents and children in need. In December 2023, I collaborated with Homebase Youth Services to deliver a great Christmas picnic on the river foreshore for disadvantaged children and parents.



During this year, referrals came from community health, local schools, Department of Communities and Justice, housing and hospitals. The biggest demand is for case management and parenting programs.

Since COVID we have seen a big shift in the way people want to see these programs delivered and most people now prefer one on one, face-to-face delivery.

I introduced a cooking and budgeting program and have demonstrated to several families how to plan and prepare meals within low budgets.

It's been a privilege to be invited into many homes to mentor families in setting up and maintaining solid routines to enhance their children's development and mental health.

I started a children's book library and when the children return the book, we take time to discuss it and they give me a book review.



Financial Position 2023-2024

Home-Start National Incorporated

Statement of financial position

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$	2023 \$
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	84,586	72,919
Trade receivables	5	1,000	10,000
Financial assets at amortised cost	6	138,240	132,702
Other assets	7	7,357	2,404
Total current assets		231,183	218,025
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	8	70,080	81,516
Right-of-use asset	9(a)	-	13,183
Total non-current assets		70,080	94,699
Total assets		301,263	312,724
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	63,210	48,286
Financial liabilities	11	-	26,507
Provisions	12	156,401	140,107
Other liabilities	13	-	1,655
Lease liabilities	9(b)	-	13,517
Total current liabilities		219,611	230,072
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	12	16,177	10,861
Total non-current liabilities		16,177	10,861
Total liabilities		235,788	240,933
Net assets		65,475	71,791
MEMBERS FUNDS			
Retained profits		65,475	71,791
Total members funds		65,475	71,791

