

**communities
at work**

2022 – 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Working Together to Enrich Lives





To enrich the lives of people in our community in life changing ways



Integrity • Respect for all • Progressiveness
Quality and Innovation • Sustainability



To be responsive to the needs of the community by delivering high quality services that support positive educational outcomes, assist in alleviating hardships, enhance the quality of life and lead to positive and social change.

Privacy Statement

Communities at Work respects the privacy and dignity of the people it assists, our members, volunteers and employees. For more information about how we manage privacy information please refer to our Privacy Policy.

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Acknowledgement of Country

Communities at Work acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

“

‘It warms our heart to see how much our daughter enjoys attending after-school care and your school holiday program, and that is undoubtedly because of the special bond she has formed with all of you. Over the years, you have not only been her caregivers but also her friends and mentors, creating a nurturing and loving environment where she feels safe and happy.

Your patience, kindness, and commitment to fostering a learning-rich space has played a crucial role in her growth and development. Your genuine care and concern for each child’s wellbeing makes all the difference in their lives. Thank you for making a significant positive impact on our daughter’s life.’

– Parents at Emmaus Out of School Hours Care and School Holiday Program

”



Alan Greenslade BOARD CHAIR

The last year has been another year of developing and targeting the services that we provide to the community in an ever-changing environment. We are seeing the challenges that the community faces from a post-COVID environment and the increasing impact of cost-of-living pressures. For example, our community pantries have experienced a large surge in demand, which is continuing to grow.

As foreshadowed in my last report, we welcomed Michelle Colefax as the organisation's sixth CEO in its 45-year history, taking over from Lee Maiden, who served Canberra so well in her time at Communities at Work. This marks an exciting new chapter for Communities at Work as we continue to seek to better target our help to those most in need in the community.

Michelle leads a great team, and we would not be able to deliver all that we do without our amazing employees and volunteers. Of course, as is the case with many other organisations, we face workforce challenges in the current climate. We are therefore investing in several initiatives to address this and will report in more detail on them next year.

The work of Communities at Work over the last year has been recognised in many ways. For example, Communities at Work was again awarded the ACT Large Employer of the Year at the ACT Training Awards. We intend to further invest in our work in the Centre for Professional



Learning and Education both to maintain quality and service delivery and to assist with addressing workforce challenges.

Also, the work of Galilee School was featured in the 2023 ISA Special Assistance Schools Showcase. Galilee also had two significant milestone achievements, opening its new Year 11 and 12 building and having our first graduation of Year 12 students.

I would like to thank my Board colleagues for their professionalism, skills and passion in guiding our organisation in its mission. I warmly welcome our new Board Directors Wayne Harriden and Domenic Stramandinoli, and farewell outgoing Board Directors John Runko and Andrew Snaidero. John and Andrew have made significant contributions during their time on the Board.

Finally, we are grateful for the substantial support that we receive from the Australian and ACT Governments, businesses, community organisations, schools and individuals. Together we are making a genuine difference to people's lives in the Canberra region.

MEET OUR BOARD

Communities at Work is a public company limited by guarantee and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.



Alan Greenslade
Chair

Alan has extensive experience in leading financial management and governance roles in the public and private sector, including the Department of Finance.



Karen Curtis
Deputy Chair

Karen was the inaugural CEO of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), the Australian Privacy Commissioner, and the Executive Director of the Australian Made Campaign.



James Selkirk
Director

James is a qualified Chartered Accountant with over 25 years' experience. He has a proven track record in a broad range of diverse leadership roles with organisations undergoing significant growth, change, or both.



Bernice Ellis
Director

Bernice is a partner in a national law firm, specialising in commercial litigation and insolvency. She has a background in tax and commerce, and is also a board member of a disability support-service provider.



Joanne Garrison
Director

Joanne has led and influenced significant education reforms in her many and various roles within the ACT Education Directorate, and currently works for the ACT Association of Independent Schools.



Wayne Harriden
Director (appointed 8 Feb 2023)

Wayne has 34 years' experience at the elite level of the Australian real estate and property development industry and currently runs a high profile National Project Management and Marketing.



Domenic Stramandinoli
Director (appointed 8 Feb 2023)

Domenic is a partner in a chartered accounting firm with over 27 years of demonstrable experience with taxation, business advisory and governance, servicing a range of government, private sector, and not-for-profit clients.



John Runko
Director (resigned 30 Nov 2022)

John is the former CEO of the Independent Property Group and has been involved in most facets of the property industry in Canberra over the past 30 years.



Andrew Snaidero
Treasurer (resigned 8 Feb 2023)

Andrew has been a partner of Hardwicks since 2013, with vast experience in finance, auditing, reporting and governance.

Michelle Colefax CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I am both honoured and excited to address you as the new CEO of Communities at Work. As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with an immense sense of pride and gratitude.

Communities at Work has always been driven by a deep commitment to serve and uplift our community, and this year has been no different. In fact, the challenges we faced have only served to reinforce our dedication to our mission and to the people we serve.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this year has been the unwavering dedication and spirit of our staff and volunteers. They are the heart and soul of Communities at Work, and they inspire me every single day. Their resilience, compassion, and tireless efforts in the face of adversity have been nothing short of heroic. I am truly privileged to work alongside such a remarkable group of individuals.

It is the extraordinary efforts of our staff and volunteers that have allowed us to enrich the lives of the community we serve. Their willingness to go the extra mile, whether it's delivering quality education and care, essential crisis support or life skills development, offering a listening ear, or simply brightening someone's day, is what truly distinguishes Communities at Work.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, I'm thrilled to announce the restructure of three of our programs into one Community Services Program. By enhancing our program's effectiveness and expanding our reach,



this reorganisation will enable us to better address the ever-evolving needs of our community.

In closing, I want to express my deepest appreciation to all those who have supported us in our mission this past year. It is your generosity and belief in our cause that allows us to make a lasting impact. With your support and the collective efforts of our remarkable team, I am confident that we will achieve even greater milestones in the days to come.

Thank you for your trust in Communities at Work, and for being a part of our journey towards a brighter future.

With gratitude and hope,

“

I am immensely proud of so many achievements across the year – especially our workforce attraction and retention initiatives to address the growing workforce crisis in early childhood education.

”

WHAT WE DO

Communities at Work is the largest provider of children's services in the ACT and one of the largest not-for-profit organisations in the region. We have a proud 45-year history of providing a diverse range of community services and pride ourselves on the significant positive contributions we make to our community.

We employ over 630 employees across four program areas, engage 62 self-employed Family Day Care and In-Home Care Educators and harness the dedicated commitment of more than 100 volunteers to help us carry out our mission of enriching the lives of people in our community in life-changing ways.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

We are a recognised leader within the children's services sector with 12 Early Education and Care Centres, 15 Out of School Hours Care services, 11 School Holiday programs and 62 Family Day Care and In-Home Care educators.

CENTRE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & EDUCATION

Our registered training organisation delivers a nationally recognised Certificate III and Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care, a Certificate III in Business and ongoing professional development for early childhood and other sectors.

GALILEE SCHOOL

We run a registered, independent secondary school designed specifically for disengaged and vulnerable young people in Years 7-12 for whom mainstream schooling has struggled to deliver positive outcomes. We focus on inspiring these young people to realise their full potential and find a sense of purpose.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

We provide support to people in need through our two community pantries, a clothing program, a pre-loved clothing store, crisis support and transitional accommodation.

We also support seniors, those living with a disability, and others in the community with community transport, domestic and personal in-home care services, and social, recreational and skills development programs.

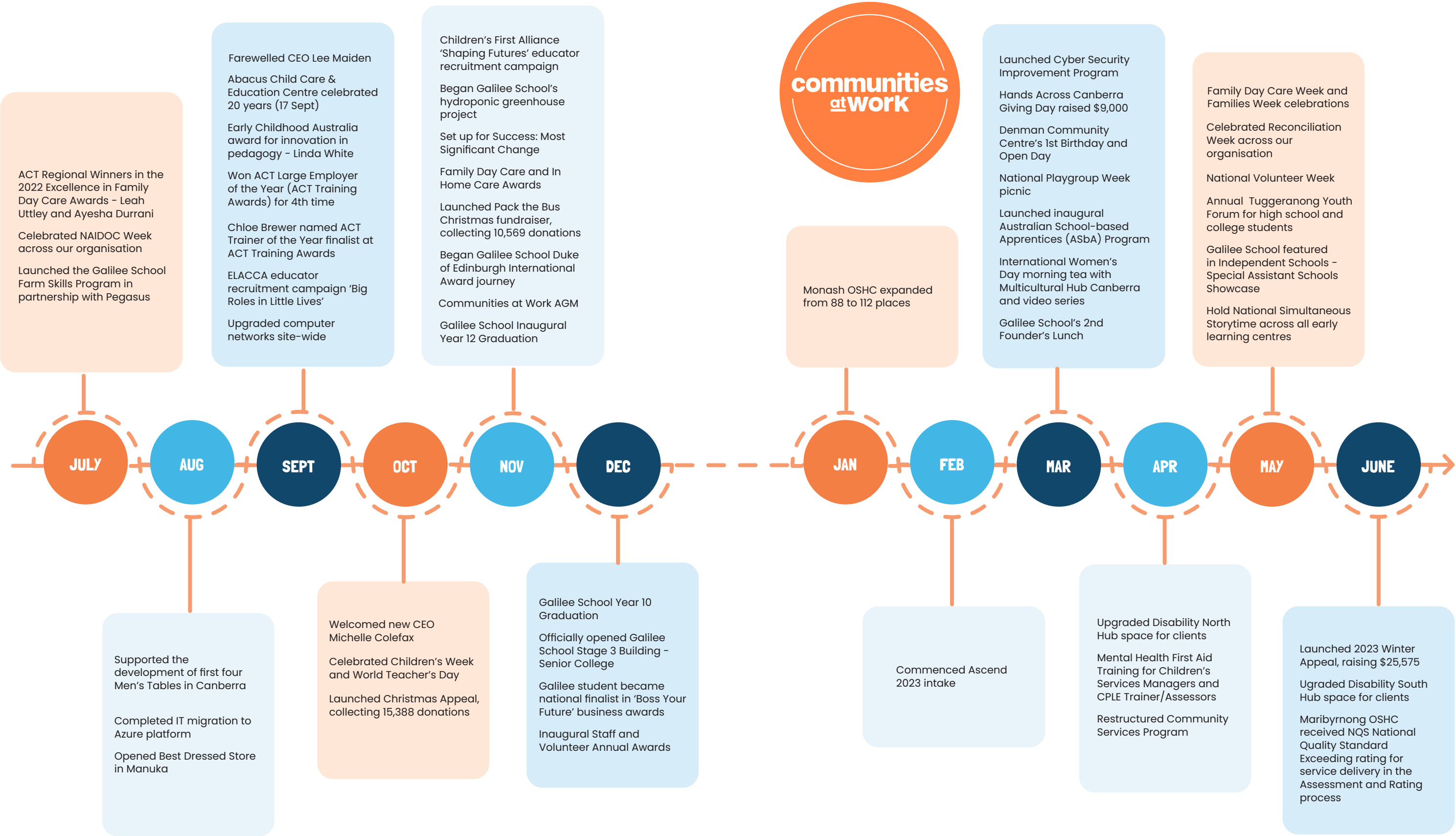
Our community development team partners with communities, individuals, agencies, local government, and businesses to support community-inspired initiatives that build social connections and quality of life.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Our program areas rely on our 'behind-the-scenes' team to provide essential organisational support in human resources, information technology, digital transformation, financial management, quality assurance, marketing, infrastructure, facilities, and administration. This team provides the 'oil' to keep our 'engine' going.

YEAR IN REVIEW

JULY 2022 – JUNE 2023



OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

Communities at Work is proud to acknowledge Ngunnawal Country.

Our employees, students, children and clients engaged in activities to better understand and respect First Nations' culture and history. Here's a snapshot.



We held a **birthday party for Stolen Generation children**

Our Child Care and Education Centres experienced the **Aboriginal Ways of Learning**

Our educators and students **explored Mulligan's Flat and Mt Majura** with Wiradjuri local groups



We attended **professional development workshops** on Ngunnawal culture and language

We **celebrated NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week** across our organisation

Aboriginal **employees shared Dreamtime stories** with children at our centres



We shared our vision for **more Indigenous staff** in our organisation with Indigenous recruiters.

Galilee School students visited the **Connection Exhibit** and created a stunning artwork

Capital Hill Early Childhood Centre received **Aboriginal books** by Westpac Bank at Parliament House



We **gifted books to pantry clients** about Aboriginal celebrities and dreaming stories

We gave out **gift baskets of Indigenous-inspired foods** as lucky door prizes at our centres

We engaged in **yarning circles**, artwork, weaving, music, dance and storytelling



We **raised money** for disadvantaged First Nations children and families

Galilee students learned how First Nations people used **native plants for food and medicine**

We went on **symbolic Bridge Walks** to commemorate National Sorry Day



We purchased **Indigenous-specific resources** for our early learning centres

We attended the Early Childhood Australia **Reconciliation Symposium** to learn about embedding reconciliation into our programs



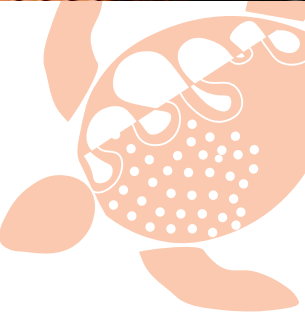
STORY

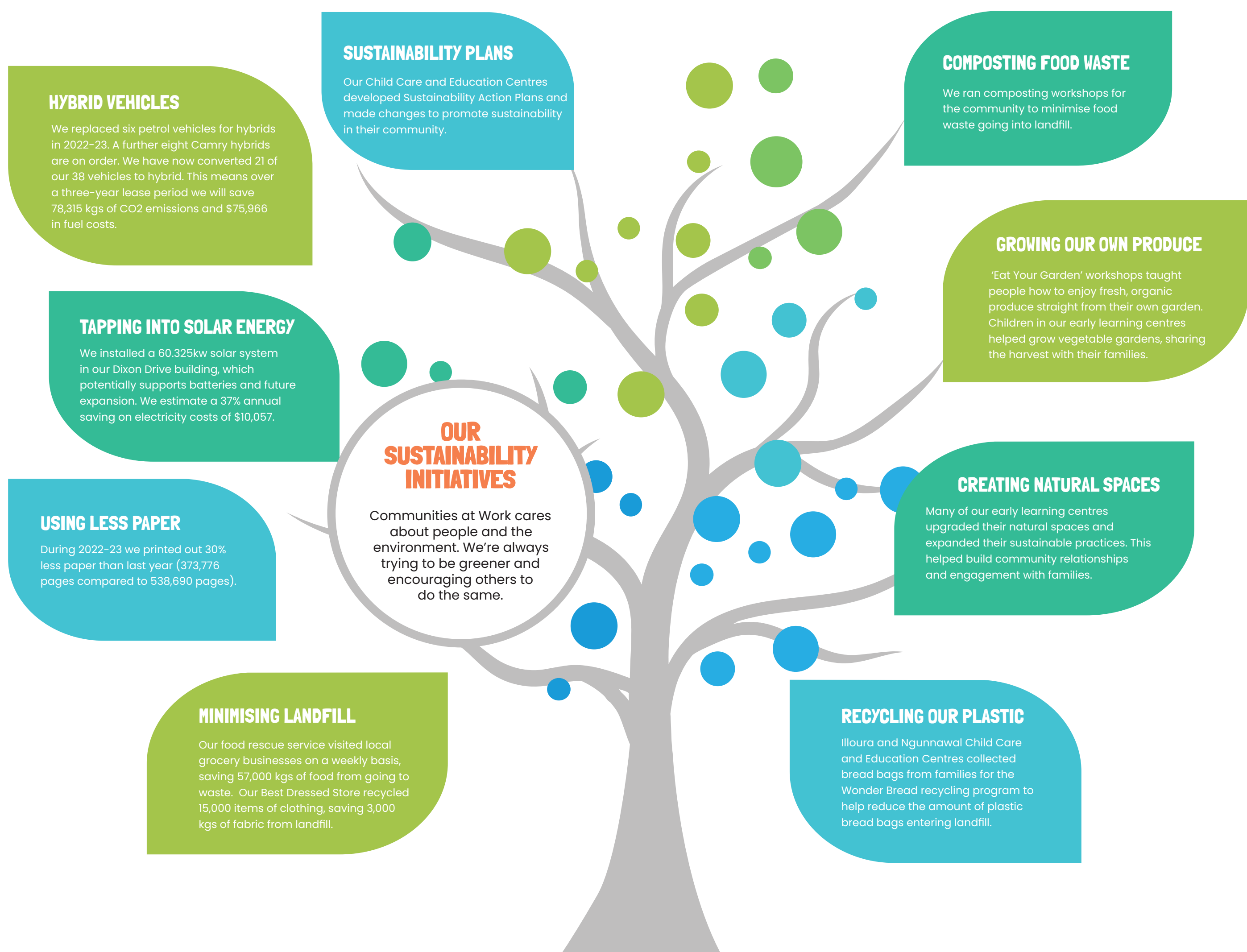
FOSTERING RESPECT AND CONNECTION

Reconciliation Gardens have been springing up across many of our early childhood learning centres to foster respect and connection with First Nations people.

'Our Reconciliation Garden upholds First Nations cultural values, ensuring children, families, educators, and visitors feel respected and welcomed within our centre,' explained Michael Uttley, Centre Manager at our Isabella Plains Childcare and Education Centre.

The garden project was a hands-on collaborative initiative, with everyone enthusiastically contributing in various ways. Families offered their ideas and feedback. Children planted and nurtured the garden, fostering a connection with the land. Educators helped with planning and learning experiences, instilling a sense of responsibility and respect for the environment.





STORY

REPURPOSING OUR PLASTIC THROUGH LIDS4KIDS

Looking after our environment is a big lesson in our Children's Services programs. For example, five of our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) services joined the Lids4Kids campaign and collected 41,804 plastic bottle tops!

This project turns used plastic tops and bread clips into useful items like children's crutches, park benches, and cubby house roofs.

Children learned how they can help the community and why recycling is important. One child from Amaroo OSHC said, 'Giving bottle caps to 'Lids for Kids' means they can be turned into other things. We shouldn't waste them if we can use them again.'

'This project not only helped children learn but also aligned with our sustainability plan,' explained Chris, Amaroo Assistant Program Coordinator.



OVERVIEW

National workforce shortages in children’s services across the country have significantly affected the sector. Our workforce has been challenged like never before.

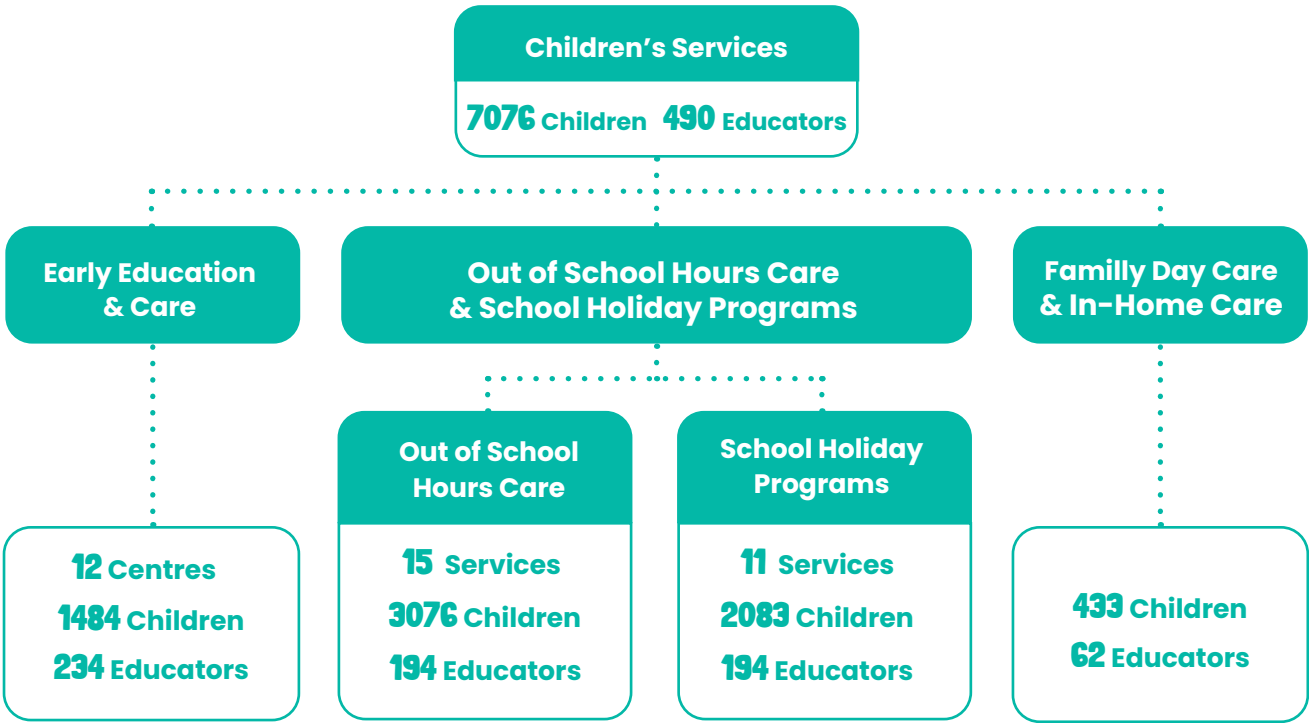
In response, we focused on attracting educators to our services and implementing retention strategies to provide consistency for our workforce, families and children.

We improved workforce conditions by adding five additional days of leave and a leadership allowance. We are currently working on formalising a Workforce

Strategy and look forward to announcing further initiatives into the 2023/2024 year.

Our educators share a core belief that what they do makes a difference in the lives of families, children and the wider community. A belief that drives them in their work and shows in their dedication day in and day out.

That professionalism was recognised with nominations and wins across our children’s services for excellence in service provision. We could not be prouder of our people!



IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

One of our top priorities is ensuring our children’s services are the very best they can be. We frequently check and evaluate our performance through both internal and external audits. These audits help us understand how well we’re doing and identify areas where we can improve.

A regulatory authority regularly assesses and rates how our services are going against the National Quality Standard (NQS). This is the national benchmark for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services in Australia. Here’s how we rated in 2023.

490 educators provided **7,088 children** with early childhood learning and care

430 children from **360 families** attended Family Day Care

Received numerous **Awards for Excellence** in service delivery

We supported **66 children** to access two days of quality early childhood education through the 3-Year-Old Initiative

3 children from **2 families** attended In-Home Care

We advocated for **Wage Increases** for educators through a national call to action

We supported **64 vulnerable children** to access **3,214 days** of early childhood education through funding the Children’s Services Program

26 educators and **up to 90 children** attended 5 playgroups each week

EARLY EDUCATION & CARE	OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE	SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMS	FAMILY DAY CARE
Abacus E Appletree House M Capital Hill E Greenway E Illoura M Isabella Plains CCEC M Isabella Plains ECS M Narrabundah WT Ngunnawal M Richardson WT Stirling M Taylor M	Amaroo M Bonython M Caroline Chisholm M Charles Weston M Emmaus NYA Fadden M Gordon M Maribyrnong E Monash E Mount Rogers M Neville Bonner M Ngunnawal (Primary) M Palmerston E Theodore E Wanniassa Hills M	Amaroo M Charles Weston M Emmaus NYA Fadden M Isabella Plains ECS M Maribyrnong E Monash E Mount Rogers M Neville Bonner M Palmerston E Wanniassa Hills M	Family Day Care NSW M Family Day Care and In-Home Care ACT M

*NQS Ratings: **E** = Exceeding **M** = Meeting **WT** = Working Towards **NYA** = Not Yet Assessed

SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

Monash OSHC

Expanded from 88 to 112 licensed places to meet growing family needs.

Family Day Care

Our educational leaders initiated the Family Day Care Specific National Educational Leaders networking group.

Thirty-four of our educators were nominated by families in the National 2023 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards.

Circle of Security

In the Classroom training was rolled out across our Children's Services, exploring the central role educators play in establishing security and trust to give children a sense of safety.

5 OSHC sites

Collected almost 42,000 lids for the Lids4Kids campaign.

Greenway

Child Care and Education Centre taught children about making and selling products.

Abacus

Child Care and Education Centre participated in Earth Hour to help reduce, reuse, and recycle in line with their sustainability action plan.

Appletree House

Child Care and Education Centre participated in Simultaneous Storytelling Time at their local library to promote the value of reading and literacy in children.

Children's Ground Fundraiser

Eight of our services raised money for the Children's Ground fundraiser to help First Nations children (Charles Weston and Wanniasa Hills OSHCs, along with Abacus, Richardson, Ngunnawal, Illoura and Narrabundah Early Childhood Service).

Narrabundah

Early Childhood Service celebrated LGBTQIA and First Nations communities by supporting the Rainbow Shoelace project – part of their Narragunnawalli journey.

Richardson

Child Care and Education Centre celebrated all things Grand Finals where the children and educators could proudly wear their sporting team's favourite colours.



Capital Hill

Child Care and Education Centre participated in the Early Learning Matters Week at Parliament House and spoke to Minister Anne Aly, Samantha Page (Early Childhood Australia) and Emma Watkins (formally Yellow Wiggle).

Taylor

Child Care and Education Centre celebrated Children's Week by hosting a series of intergenerational activities to encourage people of different ages to interact and collaborate.

Isabella Plains

Child Care and Education Centre welcomed Wiradjuri Echoes to share First Nation's culture with the children through dance, song, art, and storytelling.

Isabella Plains

Early Childhood Service celebrated their educators during key events like Early Childhood Educator Day and R U OK? Day, by thanking them for their continued efforts.



Stirling

Child Care and Education Centre's outdoor areas had a major re-vamp, with new gardens beds, native plants, and wood and rock structures to promote play in nature.

HELPING VULNERABLE CHILDREN ACCESS EARLY EDUCATION

We believe all children should have the right to access quality early childhood education – regardless of their circumstances. Research shows access to early education is the most cost-effective means to positive lifelong outcomes.

We are actively pursuing universal access through our advocacy work and through supporting and subsidising initiatives that reduce barriers for families and children.



Three-Year-Old Initiative

By subsidising the ACT Government's Three-Year-Old Initiative (part of its Set Up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT) we were able to support 66 children to access two days of quality early childhood education every week.

This initiative is targeted at vulnerable children and families that have barriers to accessing quality early learning. Evidence shows that a child's early years sets the groundwork for their lifetime learning and that two years of a preschool program is better than one, providing better lifelong outcomes.

Children's Services Program

We subsidised temporary, short-term funding to families so children experiencing vulnerabilities could access early education. We did this in collaboration with our referral partners and the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (OCYFS). This program allows for families experiencing vulnerabilities to work with a referrer, who then submits an application to the Program. Once approved, the referrer supports the family to enrol the child in a partnered early learning service. This is where we come in.

STORY

YOUR CARE MEANT THE WORLD TO ME

'I never thought I would have my children in childcare five days a week while I work,' said a mother at one of our early childhood centres. 'But due to unforeseen circumstances, I had to put aside the idea that I can spend all my days educating them, nurturing them, and watching them grow. This had been quite hard for me.

'However, the service has provided my children with safety and consistency while I go to work – showering the girls with education, social skills, value-based practice, autonomy, and kindness.

'One of my children had a speech delay but has thrived in her language since attending additional childcare days. One of her educators delights in braiding her hair during the day and this language of love has been so imperative in fostering her sense of belonging.

'My other daughter was recently diagnosed with a significant medical condition. After speaking to the Infants Room team, I felt confident to leave my daughter in their care and not stop work altogether. After three months, her specialist confirmed an incredible improvement, which I credit to the educators. Their continual support has meant I have been able to continue working to provide for my children.

'It has meant the world to me having my daughters attend a safe place that is invested in their growth and development.'

- A mother and her children benefiting from the Children's Services Program

STORY

PROVIDING AN EXCELLENT QUALITY SERVICE

In June 2023, our Maribyrnong Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) was thrilled to be officially recognised as Exceeding the National Quality Standard during the Assessment and Rating process.

This accomplishment reflects their unwavering commitment to excellence in five crucial areas: children's health and safety, the physical environment, staffing arrangements, collaborative partnerships with families and the community, and governance and leadership.

Assessors were impressed by the team's professionalism, their engagement with children and families, and active involvement in learning and shared decision-making. Assessors commended the OSHC Leadership Team and the Maribyrnong Team on embedded teamwork, inclusion, continuous

improvement and quality outcomes for children. They also commended Reanna, the Maribyrnong Senior Program Coordinator, for nurturing a culture of warmth, inclusivity, and professionalism.

Maribyrnong Principal Andrew Buesnel echoed this sentiment. 'An exceeding rating for our wonderful team from Communities at Work comes as no surprise to us. Our alignment in philosophies means that children's individual wellbeing and learning needs are met before, during and after school.'

'This exceeding rating acknowledges the exceptional work our team does,' said Reanna proudly. 'Our close relationships with the school and families were highlighted in this assessment. This is a goal I have personally been working towards in my career and I'm extremely proud of our achievement.'





STORY

BOOSTING EDUCATOR WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

During 2022 we partnered with University of Canberra researchers Thomas Nielsen and Jennifer Ma to enhance the wellbeing of educators and children. The research project aimed to cultivate meaningful happiness and resilience among educators, with a special focus on post-pandemic challenges.

During the initial phase, we conducted a comprehensive survey involving 108 staff members. This research unveiled valuable insights into their mental health, resilience, and overall wellbeing, especially in the face of challenges such as COVID-19. These findings laid the foundation for constructive interventions.

Kellie Stewart, Director of Children's Services, highlighted the immense stress educators faced over the past three years, working tirelessly in a pandemic environment without respite and dealing with workforce shortages.

'We recognised the toll this took on individuals and committed ourselves to their wellbeing, mirroring

their dedication to children's wellbeing,' she said.

As the project evolved, we translated research insights into practical solutions at our centres, equipping educators to foster resilience, wisdom, and meaningful happiness.

'Integrating these self-care strategies definitely had a positive impact on the quality of care and educators' wellbeing. It created a more enriching and supportive learning environment,' said Lisa, Manager of our Illoura Child Care and Education Centre.

Lisa, along with her fellow managers, said their staff experienced decreases in stress levels, enhanced behaviour management strategies, improved work-life balance, and higher job satisfaction.

'We're really looking forward to what comes next,' said Kellie. 'I think we're going to see a highly skilled workforce become more comfortable in the work that they do.'



3 COMMUNITY SERVICES

OVERVIEW

Our experiences in service delivery, the needs of the people we support and the key role we play in people’s lives led to a decision to simplify our structure and bring together three areas of the organisation under one umbrella.

Now known as Community Services, the new program area will evolve to provide a more supportive approach to serving our community. We would like to thank the teams for embracing the opportunity and our role in community.

These changes are also important for building a stronger workforce culture and will improve collaboration across our organisation.

We simplified our structure by combining:

Social Program

- Community Pantries
- Clothing Program
- Best Dressed Store
- Crisis Support
- Reach Home
- Volunteering

Lifestyle Program

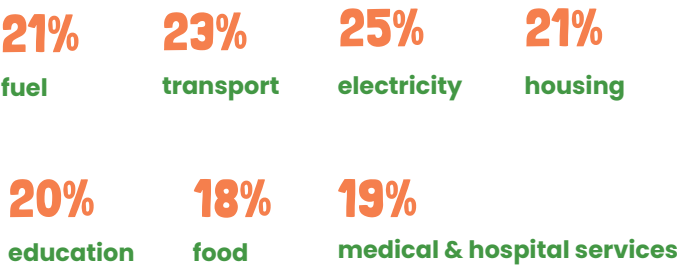
- Seniors
- Disability
- Community Transport

Community Development Program

- Community Consultations and Connections
- Partnerships and Networks
- Workshops, Events and Activities

WHY WE NEED TO HELP
Cost of Living Crisis in Canberra*

Prices have significantly increased over the past 5 years:



* Source: 2023 ACT Cost of Living Report by ACTCOSS, June 2023

- Least affordable city in Australia for people on low incomes
- Most expensive city to rent a house (\$690/week as of Dec 2022)
- Approximately 20% of one-parent families are jobless
- Only 4% of community support organisations (including us) were always able to meet the level of client demand during 2022

COMMUNITY PANTRIES

Our community pantries in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin enable individuals and families to access food, hygiene and other essential household items.

Our pantries were especially busy this year with a 40% increase in new clients, reflecting the ongoing cost of living crisis. Our ability to consistently meet this demand is thanks to the dedication and commitment of our staff, volunteers, and donors.

We’re also proud of our staff and volunteers for making our pantries more than shopping spaces – they’re also familiar and safe places for our clients to enjoy a chat with a friendly face.

In November, our Gungahlin pantry celebrated 10 years of providing essential food and support to the north Canberra community.





STORY

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Our Christmas Appeal was a big success this year. We raised \$10,000 in online donations and received more than 15,300 gift and food donations – 30% more than last year. This had a significant impact on the lives of families in need.

The food donations were crucial in helping us meet the high demand at our community pantries during the Christmas and New Year period. The gift donations allowed us to create two special places called 'Christmas Caves' where clients could choose gifts for their families. Many clients were deeply moved when they visited these Christmas Caves, grateful to have gifts to put under the tree and food for their holiday meals.

Our partnership with Mix 106.3 and Transport Canberra was a game-changer. They ran a fundraising drive called Pack the Bus, and it played a huge role in the success of our Christmas Appeal. In fact, 70% of our total donations came from Pack the Bus alone. They promoted our cause actively on the radio and social media, and their Transport Canberra bus became a visible symbol of our campaign.

Pack the Bus collected an impressive 10,569 donations, which included 8,107 gifts and 2,462 food items. This was 65% more than what we received last year. The campaign not only helped us during Christmas but also raised awareness about our organisation and the support we offer to the community throughout the year.

HOW WE FUND THE PANTRIES

Our pantries don't receive government grants. They are funded through our surpluses as part of our Profit for Purpose Philosophy, combined with cash donations from members of our community and local businesses.

We also run two major appeals during the year (Winter Appeal and Christmas Appeal) to collect food and funds for our essential services. In 2023 our Winter Appeal raised \$25,575. A big thanks to the Department of Finance, who donated \$6,500 through their Trivia Night fundraiser, organised by the Department's Graduate Program staff.

How we fund our pantries

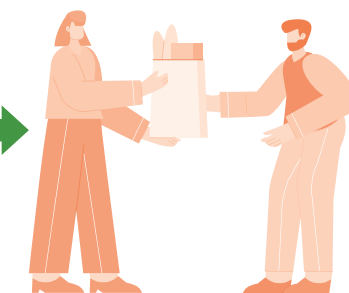
Surpluses from our profits



Cash donations from community



Major Appeals



\$10,000

through our
Christmas Appeal

\$25,575

through our
Winter Appeal

Christmas Appeal

People donated

2,759 **2,060**
gifts food items

directly to us



People donated

8,107 **2,462**
gifts food items

from Pack the Bus fundraiser
(65% increase)



A total of

15,388
gifts and food
donations
(30% increase)



Organisations set up

72 giving
trees

50%
↑↑↑

in households
visiting our two
Christmas Caves



FOOD RESCUE

Our food rescue van travels around Canberra twice a week, collecting surplus food from our regular grocery donors to stock our two pantries. This important service saves food and reduces landfill waste.

There has been an increase in food rescue as stores are allocating even more non-purchased food to the rescue program in a bid to reduce waste.



We collected
22 trolleys of food per week
from regular grocery donor businesses
*based on approx 50kgs/trolley

We saved

58,800 kgs

of food from going to land waste
through our Food Rescue service
(33% increase)



CRISIS SUPPORT

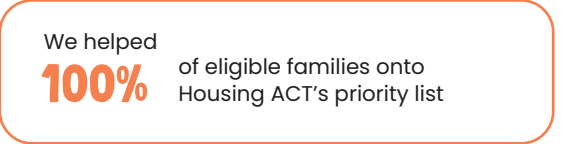
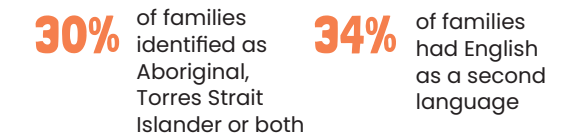
Our crisis support program (emergency relief) provides crisis support for people in need, providing a range of essential items, information and referral to appropriate services.

To give vulnerable households access to additional information outside of a crisis, we organise pop-up displays with a wide range of community providers to showcase their services in our Tuggeranong and Gungahlin community centres.



REACH HOME

This program offers transitional housing to families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Its aim is to support families to move to long term housing. The program strengthens connections between the client and community programs such as mental health, drug and alcohol and financial services. We consider all members of the family and work with the parents/adults to support their children.



STORY

GETTING MY LIFE BACK ON TRACK

'I didn't know what to do, but I knew I could come to you, and you would know what to do,' said a client facing homelessness due to domestic violence.

Our Crisis Support service connected her with a local women's housing outreach program, which provided short-term transitional accommodation until Housing ACT offered a long-term house.

During this critical period, we provided her with showers, toiletries, hot meals, a private phone room for coordinating support, and bus tickets to get to appointments. Legal Aid's pop-up stall assisted her with legal issues around her previous tenancy and domestic violence court matters. We also referred her to Care Inc for a No Interest Loan and financial counselling.

When the client moved into her new home, we provided her with Givit vouchers to buy clothing, bedding, and kitchen appliances. Through our Crisis Support program, she accessed our food pantry to stock her cupboard.

Since her initial crisis, the client has met with our Crisis Support workers several times to create a plan to rebuild her life.

'You always have helpful information, and I know I can trust you,' she said. 'Sometimes just talking it out loud helps me realise that I can do it.'

STORY

HELPING THE HOMELESS

'There's nothing more rewarding than helping a family feel safe and good about the world again,' says Yolanda, our Reach Home Program Manager.

'When clients come to us, they're usually facing serious challenges that have led to their homelessness, such as domestic violence, money problems, relationship breakdowns, or mental health issues,' Yolanda explains. 'We provide them with transitional housing – a safe place where they can rebuild their lives – until we help them find a permanent home.'

Yolanda builds trust and a close connection with her clients. She compassionately helps them address the effects of their homelessness so they can move forward. She supports them to set housing and personal goals and regularly checks on their progress. Sometimes they need help with clothing, food, transport, or their children's education. Often, they need emotional support when accessing other services. Yolanda also collaborates with Housing ACT and other housing providers to speed up her clients' applications for priority status.

'Our clients understand that we genuinely care about them and don't judge them,' says Yolanda. 'We help them regain a positive outlook on life. They're incredibly grateful, and say our program has been a lifeline. What more could we ask for?'





CLOTHING PROGRAM & BEST DRESSED STORE

Our Clothing Program provides free clothes to those who need a hand up to access appropriate attire and accessories for job interviews, starting new jobs, or attending important events like funerals or court appointments. Our volunteers are there to help them pick out clothes, style themselves, and boost their confidence. Any extra clothing we receive is sold in our Best Dressed Store in Manuka.

Moving our Best Dressed Store to Manuka in August 2022 was a big step. It allowed us to reach more people beyond Tuggeranong, bringing in more customers and more high quality donations. This helped us sell more and attract more volunteers, making our community work even impactful.



We saved

3,000 kgs of clothes

from going to landfill
by selling

15,000 items of clothes

through our
Best Dressed Store op shop

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Our transport team drove

592,279 kms

this year



That's

**15 TRIPS
AROUND
THE WORLD!**



26 drivers

made

28,294 trips

to help

791 clients

get to appointments,
shopping and social groups

We expanded our community transport fleet to

13 Vehicles

That's

9 cars

2 vans

2 minibuses



SENIORS PROGRAM

Our Seniors Program provides domestic assistance, personal care, and social support so senior members of our community can maintain their independence and social connections. This can be through our in-centre activities or in-home care.

As the global pandemic eased, more seniors joined our five social groups in Holder and Ngunnawal,

showing a stronger interest in being part of the community.

In February 2023, we met all requirements of the Aged Care Quality Standards during our audit with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

How We Support Our Seniors

We spent **18,892 hours** supporting our seniors clients in 2022-23 through:

Domestic Assistance	Personal Care	Individual Social Support	Group Social Support
5,564 hours provided to 131 clients	137 hours provided to 2 clients	1,233 hours provided to 48 clients	11,758 hours provided to 130 clients
Cleaning living spaces. Washing and hanging clothes. Shopping for clients.	Helping clients with daily living tasks. Personal care assistance eg. showering.	Keeping someone company who is isolated eg. having a chat, going out for a coffee or going grocery shopping together.	Participating in our seniors' social groups eg. playing games, excursions and guest speakers.

Our Seniors Social Groups

Our five seniors' social groups in Holder and Ngunnawal enabled clients to develop friendships, enjoy fun and educational activities, and maintain their health and wellness. Seniors enjoyed diverse activities like chair yoga, armchair travel, woodworking, interactive games and bus excursions. They were entertained by musicians and choir groups and gained valuable knowledge from guest speakers on topics like cyber security and elder abuse.

- Woodwork
- Men's Business
- Spice of Life
- Healthy Living
- Creative Projects



STORY

THE JOYS OF ARMCHAIR TRAVEL

For Maria and many other senior clients, armchair travel is a popular activity in our seniors' social group. It allows them to explore new cultures, foods, and games without spending a cent. Our centre is transformed to make them feel like they're actually in another country, giving them a break from their daily routine.

'I'd picture myself arriving at Sydney Airport, hopping on a plane, and just flying away to a beautiful spot,' Maria said with joy.

'One of my favourite places was the peaceful island of Mo'orea, near Tahiti,' recalls Maria. 'The hotels

were French, the food was exquisite, the beaches had white coral sand, and the seas were turquoise. Local Tahitians guided us through the jungle to their ancient worship sites and showed us carved tikis, similar to the Maoris in New Zealand. It was a wonderful escape - and it didn't cost a thing!'

This year, our seniors' groups virtually 'travelled' to nine different countries across five continents. Our facilitators drew on the cultures represented in our groups to plan these sessions. For instance, during the Italian 'visit,' our clients with Italian heritage taught everyone how to make authentic pasta.

Besides being a fantastic cultural experience for clients and staff, armchair travel can stimulate brain activity and potentially reduce the risk of dementia.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Our Disability Programs help children, teenagers and adults develop friendships, essential life skills and independence in a supportive, non-judgmental environment. Our Adults Program, based at our North Hub in Gungahlin and South Hub in Greenway, focuses on developing skills in six key areas needed for independent living: self-care, home, community, leisure, interpersonal, and basic work skills. We also provide a mix of social activities, workshops, exercise, and community engagement.

We recently upgraded both hubs based on feedback from our clients and an opportunity with ACT Government. These enhancements included new spaces for relaxation and activities, computer stations, a projector screen for movies and yoga, a sensory room, a kitchenette, and a gym with new

equipment for our fitness program. Our clients are delighted with these improvements!

Our Teens Program is a social and recreational program for young people aged 12-18 who live with a disability. It provides opportunities to engage with other teens to develop and enhance their social skills and build peer networks. We run programs after school and during the school holidays.

Our Malkara Holiday Program is a school holiday service for children aged 5-12 years with a disability. The program provides children with opportunities to engage with other children in a fun, supportive environment, and caters to their individual needs, interests and wellbeing.

We provided
28,917 hours
of client support
benefiting
91 disability clients
(68% ↑ in hours from last year)



We successfully
Met all NDIS requirements
during our
May 2023 mid-term NDIS audit



OUR SERVICES SUPPORTED



56 adults
(18+ years)
in our
**Full-time
Day Programs**



15 teenagers
(12-18 years)
in our
**Teen After School
Program and School
Holiday Program**



20 children
(5-12 years)
in our
**Malkara School
Holiday Program**

Our disability educators engaged in almost

60 hours
of professional development and training
across

53 NDS training modules
to better respond to our clients' needs and support our team



STORY

HELPING JUSTY ACHIEVE HER DREAM

Justy, a client in our Disability Day Program, loves going to the pool and floating in the water. It's fun and great therapy. But she's in a wheelchair full-time so struggles to find people to take her.

When she shared her love of swimming with our Life Skill educators, they were keen to support Justy with her goal. They connected with her family and collaboratively organised a plan.

They now take Justy and her Day Program peers to the pool regularly, helping her access the water using a wheelchair and pool noodles. These visits allow her to practice swimming and exercise with her peers.

Justy is absolutely delighted to see her dream come true. 'I really enjoy the exercises and love practicing my swimming. It's really good for me,' she beamed. Based on the laughter and conversation from the group at the end of each pool visit, it's good for them all.

The pool excursions also allow Justy and her peers to practice their road safety awareness skills. The group either travel in our van, practicing safe vehicle travel, or enjoy the outdoors and walk to the pool, practicing how to navigate from one place to another safely.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Our Community Development program utilises a strength-based approach known as Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). Our team works alongside communities to identify their strengths and understand their own potential to address local needs and community goals.



We helped facilitate

6

WELLNESS THROUGH WATERCOLOUR WORKSHOPS



We supported and delivered

5

A WINDOW INTO WELLNESS WORKSHOPS



We supported and delivered

4

COMMUNITY EVENTS



We supported and delivered

3

FORUMS



We supported the development of

4

MEN'S TABLES



We supported

4

SECTOR DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS



We organised

COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

in partnership with Capital Estate Developments



We supported

1

PLAY STREET ACTIVITY

“Loved the whole workshop! Great info, great space, loved the interactive style of the facilitator and the balanced way the content was delivered.”

– Participant feedback

Celebrating Our First Birthday in Denman

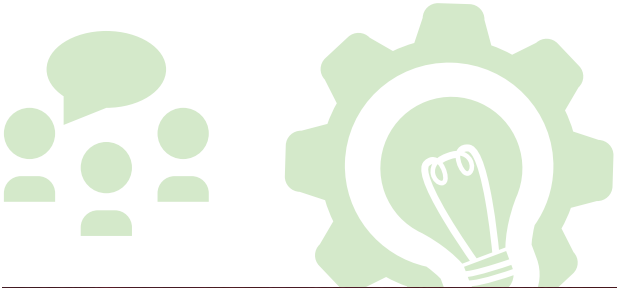
In March 2023, we celebrated Denman Village Community Centre’s inaugural birthday with an Open Day event. This event showcased this community facility, as well as local makers, clubs and activities available to the Molonglo Valley community.

Amplifying Youth Voices

In partnership with Tuggeranong Community Council (TCC), we facilitated a World Café-style event where 28 students from 7 high schools and colleges were able to participate in discussions on a range of topics of importance to young people. The Forum captured diverse views on climate change, education, safety, crime, transport, youth spaces, and mental health. These views are informing submissions by the Council to the ACT government.

Empowering Communities through ABCD

In collaboration with ABCD expert Peter Kenyon (from Bank of I.D.E.A.S), we facilitated a Masterclass which introduced ABCD principles to students, community members, and professionals. Peter’s visit inspired participants to think differently about community development.



Supporting Men’s Wellbeing

We supported the development of four Men’s Tables in the Gungahlin, Tuggeranong, and Molonglo Valley areas, and provided connections that led to the development of two more tables in Belconnen and Queanbeyan. This initiative addresses the need for belonging, community, resilience, and peer support for men.

Celebrating Inspirational Women

In partnership with the Multicultural Hub Canberra, we delivered stories of inspirational Canberrans through a series of videos and co-facilitated an International Women’s Day Morning Tea. The videos captured and celebrated how these Canberrans are making positive changes in our ACT community.





STORY

ENHANCING COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

For Piyada, participating in a Communities at Work foraged flower bouquet workshop was a wonderful wellbeing experience, far exceeding her expectations.

Piyada enjoyed the process of making her own bouquet and said the flowers were 'a great reminder of the wonderful people out there who are dedicated to the wellbeing of strangers and caring for the environment'.

'The workshop was a welcoming environment. It had a genuine and community feel about it, which I believe was one of the most unique and best features about the workshop.'

'I especially loved the gift bag! I have already been planning what natives to plant. The gift bag provided practical resources that enabled me to continue to engage in wellbeing activities through nature well beyond the workshop.'

The workshop was part of our Community Development team's 'A Window into Wellness' series of activities, which had a strong focus on nature, art, nutrition and wellbeing. The series helped over 100 participants learn and practice new self-nurturing skills through workshops like Wellness through Watercolour, Foraged Bouquet, Pressed Flower Art, Nature Walk, Harp Yoga, and Eat Your Garden.



4 GALILEE SCHOOL

OVERVIEW

The financial year 2022–23 was a year punctuated by significant events peppered across the normal structures and rhythms of the school year. Galilee School experienced progress, growth, challenge, learning, adversity, and success. We saw our first ever cohort of graduating Year 12 students, we saw the completion and opening of our Stage 3(A) building at our Kambah Campus, and we saw our

partnerships and connection with the community continue to grow. The success of the school is underpinned by the wonderful team of teachers, youth workers, learning support assistants and support staff that devote so much of themselves to the learning and development of our amazing young people.

In 2023 we welcomed

33 students

into our Senior Secondary College
(18 in Year 11 and 15 in Year 12)

94 students

enrolled for Year 7–12 in 2023



We opened our **Senior Secondary College Building** to provide learning spaces for our Year 11 and 12 students at Kambah.



Student Success Rate

in finding pathways to success after Year 10

8%

2020

Before opening of
Senior Secondary
College

92%

2022

After opening of
Senior Secondary
College

**Pathways to success include meaningful engagement in further study, an apprenticeship or employment*

In 2022 we celebrated

**OUR FIRST EVER
YEAR 12 GRADUATES**

**8
Year 12
Graduates**

**22
Year 10
Graduates**

Satisfaction Surveys

Staff strongly agree or agree that they enjoy working at Galilee School:

2022 **100%**

2021 **87%**

Parents were extremely or very satisfied with their child's experience at Galilee School:

2022 **96%**

2021 **91%**

(from 2022 parent satisfaction survey)

“

'Extending Galilee School's program from Year 10 to Year 12 was pivotal in supporting students' integration into society. These students have experienced transformative growth, significant academic success, and a highly successful integration into society.'

– Senior Secondary College Coordinator

”



Galilee School Expansion

Galilee School proudly marked the completion of its new Year 11 and 12 building on 6th December 2022, with Dr Marisa Paterson MLA and Mr David Smith MP Member for Bean, officiating the opening. Generous funding from ACT and Federal Governments has enabled us to create purpose-built facilities for our Senior Secondary College.

This expansion enhances our unique educational offerings, catering to students who have faced challenges in mainstream education. Additionally, we've secured grant approval for the Stage 4 building at Kambah Campus. The first stage will accommodate food studies and hospitality areas. A future stage will support visual and creative arts.

Improving Mental Wellbeing

The school partnered with local organisations to offer students, families and staff strategies to maintain their mental wellbeing. For instance, each term, we conducted 'In the Know' sessions for parents and carers, offering insights into contemporary challenges facing young people today. This year, we educated families on online child safety, the impact of diet on behaviour, suicide prevention, and guiding teenagers toward healthy relationships.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

In 2022, Galilee School became an Award Centre for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. This exciting opportunity allows students to explore beyond our regular curriculum by developing skills to equip them for life and work, while getting physical activity, giving service, and experiencing adventure. Our first Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (practice) Adventurous Journey in November involved a mountain bike ride and an overnight camp at our Kambah Campus.

Inaugural Year 12 Graduating Class

With immense pride, we witnessed the graduation of Galilee School's first Year 12 cohort. This event marked a significant milestone, underscoring the crucial role of the College as a stepping stone for success beyond Year 10. This accomplishment stems from years of investment, building, planning, and dedication.

Eight students obtained their ACT Senior Secondary (Year 12) Certificate, five achieving BSSS Awards for Excellence. These students may not have attained their Year 12 Certificate without the establishment of the senior college and the work of its dedicated and passionate staff.

SINGLE MUM TOPS YEAR 12

When Georgia had her daughter at the start of Year 12 it was extremely hard to concentrate on her studies. As a single mum, living off government payments, life was full of daily stresses.

'One of the huge concerns I had about attending college was how I was going to tackle both parenting and study.'

Galilee School welcomed Georgia and organised for her daughter to attend Communities at Work's Taylor Child Care and Education Centre, where she thrived and had fun.

'Galilee School wasn't equipped to deal with parents as students, but they facilitated it without any discrimination or judgement. They believed in me – in all of us. They helped me with things other schools never would.'

'I wouldn't have gotten through without Galilee School,' Georgia says. 'It's pretty amazing. They even helped me with a formal dress [through our Best Dressed Store] and fed us every day at school.'

Georgia was part of the school's first Year 12 graduating class and, despite her life challenges, achieved Galilee School's highest academic award. She now enjoys opportunities that were beyond her grasp had she been left to struggle on her own. She leaves our school community with an immense sense of gratitude and pride in her accomplishments.

'It's been awesome! I wouldn't be anywhere without the school!'



STORY

STUDENT INSPIRED TO REACH FOR THE STARS

Thanks to a student scholarship with The Academy of Entrepreneurs and Future Schools, Evan now has new skills and exciting new opportunities for life after Galilee School.

The innovative 'Boss Your Future' program for Years 9 and 10 offers students an alternative path by teaching them entrepreneurial skills for starting their own business. During the program, students developed diverse business plans, ranging from mobile food delivery trucks to pet walking services.

One of our Year 10 students, Evan, achieved remarkable success as a national finalist when his business idea 'Spray Hall Canberra' became one of six ideas chosen from 100 schools across Australia. His vision was for a social enterprise that creates a safe and legal space to develop contemporary street art. His idea incorporated revenue-generating potential and identified a niche market untapped in the ACT.

Although he didn't clinch the top prize, Evan established crucial connections with supportive business figures during his pitch at the Google National Headquarters in Sydney.

Evan attributed his growth to the support of Galilee School's teachers, emphasising their role in nurturing his potential. 'Staff at Galilee School support you to reach your goals,' he said. 'I probably wouldn't have finished Year 10 or done the 'Boss Your Future' program without Galilee. But now, a kid like me ended up presenting a business pitch at Google HQ in front of a bunch of billionaires!'



“ ‘The skills that we try and give our students is geared at skills that employers want to see and that will hopefully give them positions of employment when they leave college. That’s the goal: get them ready for work and build that sense of themselves, so they can be a participant in life.’ ”

– Damian, Timber and Construction Teacher



STORY

THE DIFFERENCE TEACHERS CAN MAKE

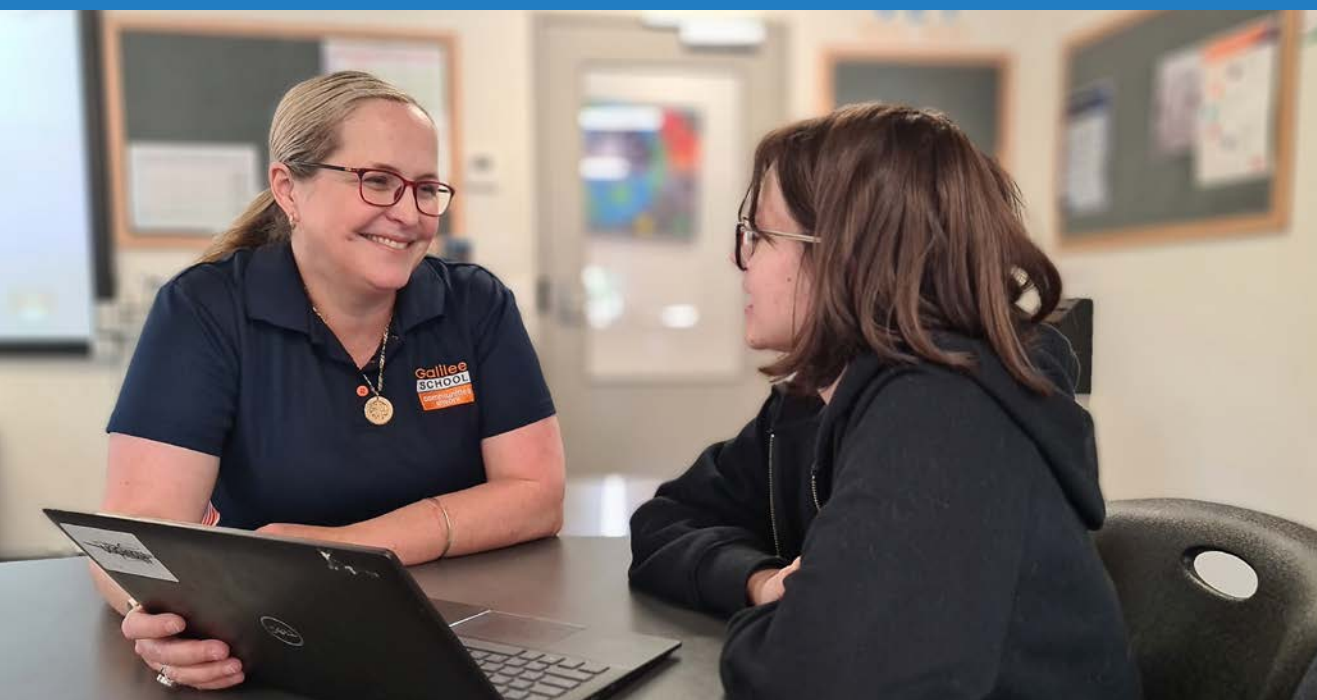
Lisa Hivers loves her job as the Head of Teaching and Learning at Galilee School. Every day is different, and every day can touch students’ lives.

Some students have been through difficult experiences in life. They only share their frustrations and questions with people they trust. This doesn’t happen overnight; it takes patience and hard work.

Having a staff-to-student ratio of 1 to 5 makes a huge difference in building that trust.

What keeps Lisa going through challenging times is knowing the difference teachers can make. If a young person has just one positive relationship with an adult, it can completely change their life’s trajectory.

‘We get to connect with young people,’ Lisa says. ‘We get to help them achieve things that when they first start with us, they don’t ever think is possible. And that’s awesome!’

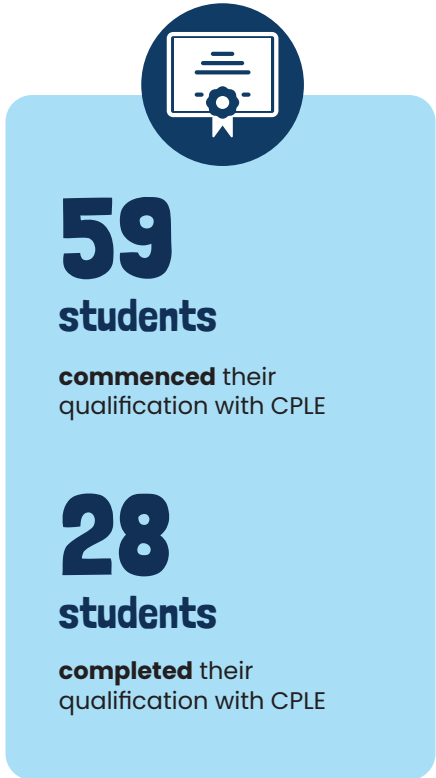


5 CENTRE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

This year, our CPLE team focused on our ability to respond to the learning needs of the community. We included many workshops on supporting mental health in the Professional Development calendar. We began implementing the new Education and Care training packages whilst transitioning out of the now superseded qualifications. This transition allowed us to focus on increasing flexible study options

and developing new assessment approaches to better capture student’s skills. These changes also supported the need for more qualified educators due to the current workforce crisis in the education and care sector. We also began enrolling Australian School-based Apprentices as part of the plan to increase study options to more Canberrans.



911 Workshop Participants (up from 558 total last year)

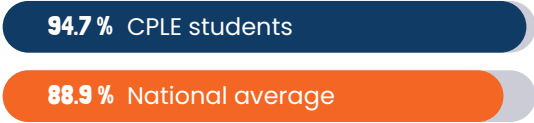


WORKSHOP TOPICS INCLUDED:

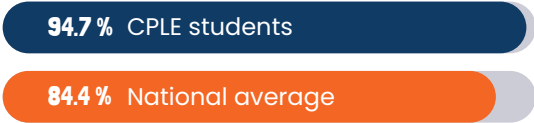
- Autism Awareness
- Key Word Signing
- Ngunawal Language
- Dealing with People in Difficult Situations
- Mental Health First Aid
- Exploring Mulligan’s Flat
- Learning Through the Arts
- Understanding Sex and Gender Diversity
- Weaving for Wellbeing

Student Satisfaction Survey

Student satisfaction with our training:



How likely students are to recommend us to others as a training provider:



“ ‘Rebecca had always been a reliable and supportive teacher. She was always encouraging and caring towards our class, and genuinely made me enjoy the learning journey. Her efforts and tremendous support have resulted in my further professional development, and I am excited to have her as my teacher again.’

– CPLE Diploma student



Developing More Qualified Educators

Our CPLE team created several initiatives to alleviate the education and care sector workforce crisis:

- We changed our course intakes from twice a year to rolling intakes to enable students to enrol at any time throughout the year. This change also included aligning study schedules with ACT school terms.
- We incorporated more practical assessments to enhance engagement, including role plays and video assessments.
- We introduced flexible study options, including online meetings and evening study sessions, to allow students to access support without affecting staff ratios.
- We partnered with the ACT Government Headstart Program and ACT colleges to award three Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbAs). These ASbAs have kickstarted young people’s careers in education, while our support ensured they were still able to continue their Year 10 and Year 12 certificates within a caring environment.



STORY

HOW ONE WOMAN INSPIRED A FUTURE EDUCATOR

Meet Anita Senjic, a devoted educator with a passion for children and mentoring. Since 2010, she has been working with Communities at Work making a difference in the lives of young learners. But there's one special story that left a lasting impact on Anita's heart.

In 2017, Anita looked after a young girl named Sophie who had been placed into Gordon Out of School Hours Care (OSHC). It was a tough time for Sophie and her siblings as they were temporarily in the care of their grandparents. Anita took Sophie under her wing, providing encouragement and support that left a lasting impact.

Seven years later, destiny brought a heart-warming surprise for Anita. Now working as a Trainer and Assessor at our Centre of Professional Learning and Education, she discovered that

Sophie had enrolled in our Centre's Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care. Their paths crossed once again, and Anita was determined to make Sophie feel comfortable and respected in her new role.

Sophie remembered the care she received at OSHC and how Anita had looked after her and her siblings during a difficult time. Anita had left a lasting impression, sparking Sophie's passion for working with children and teaching them new things. Anita couldn't be prouder of Sophie's determination and growth.

Although Anita felt like she was just doing her job, this feel-good story reminds us to never underestimate the impact we can have on others. Even the smallest acts of kindness can make a big difference.



OUR IMPACT

6 new hybrid vehicles

will save
8,550 kgs
in CO2 emissions

\$8,316
in fuel costs
(3,780 litres x \$2.20/l) over 3 years



New Bequest Program

In September 2022 we launched our Bequest Program to enable people to support us by leaving a gift in their will. Since its launch, the program has generated an estimated \$287,000 from people nominating a percentage of their estate's value or nominating a specific figure in their wills.

Upgrading Our IT Systems

Throughout the year we improved the quality of our IT systems. These included completing the Azure migration, upgrading our network site-wide, introducing a new platform to support staff working remotely, and carrying out an IT internal audit with Children's Services.

Finance

We continued to improve systems and processes, applied for new grants, and supported applications in the ACT government tendering process. We also engaged new independent auditors to promote objectivity and get a different perspective in reviewing our accounts.

Investing in Our Properties

We undertook preventative works on all our sites and upgrade works to our Community Centres and 12 Early Education Centres. This ensured our buildings were fit for purpose to provide services to our clients. Upgrade works included painting, flooring, and furniture and fittings upgrades.

Keeping Our Data Safe

In April 2023, we launched a cybersecurity program to keep our data safe. The program is the biggest of its kind in the history of our organisation. The improvements will help us comply with industry standards and build trust with clients, staff, and volunteers.

Updating Our Policies and Procedures

Acting on staff feedback, we updated our Quality Management System (QMS) to improve the way we manage our policies and procedures. The new QMS has an improved search function, a 'What's New' section, and alerts when documents are added to or updated.

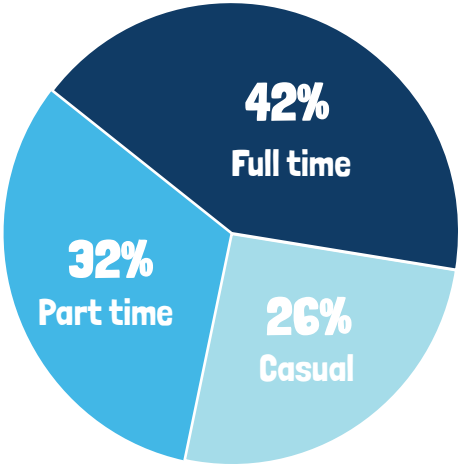
Marketing and Communications

The Children's First Alliance workforce recruitment campaign was one of our most successful initiatives, generating far more traffic to the CFA website than we'd hoped. This year we also introduced monthly newsletters to keep our donors informed of how their support helps the Canberra community.



OUR WORKFORCE

BY WORK TYPE

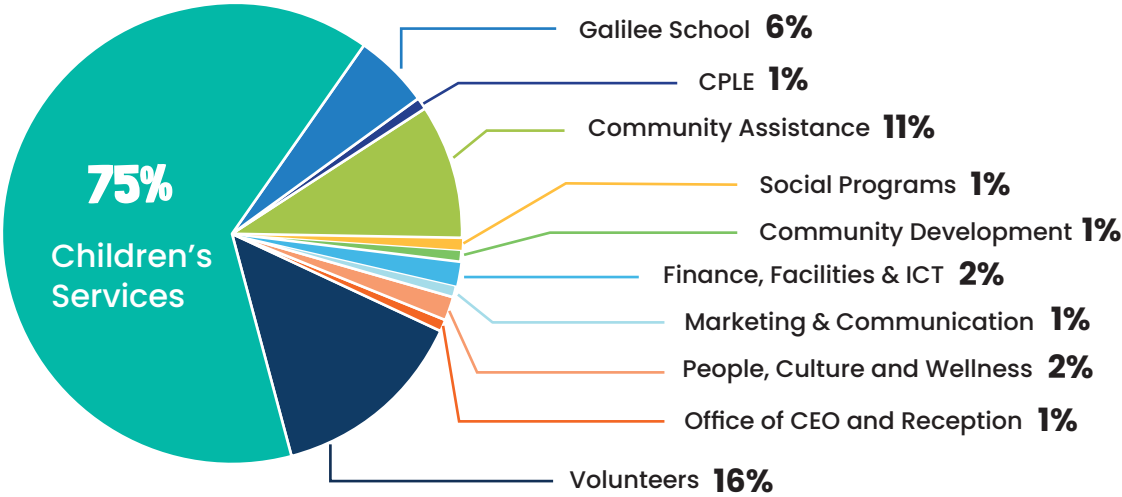


Total employees **633**

- Full time **263**
- Part time **167**
- Casual **203**

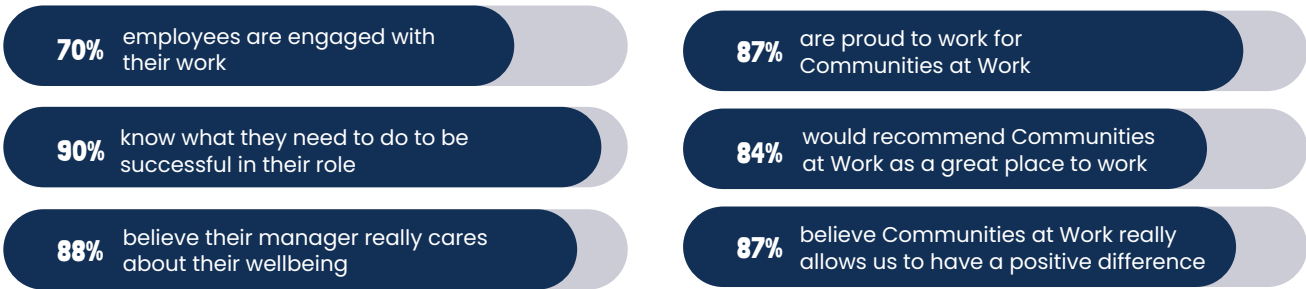
Total volunteers **109**

BY PROGRAM AREA



WHAT OUR STAFF THINK

All Staff Engagement Survey



ADDRESSING THE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

ELACCA Recruitment Campaign

In Sept-Oct 2022 we partnered with the Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA) and 15 other education providers across Australia in the third and final phase of a national educator recruitment campaign, Big Roles in Little Lives. This campaign aimed to help address the workforce shortage in the early childhood education sector.

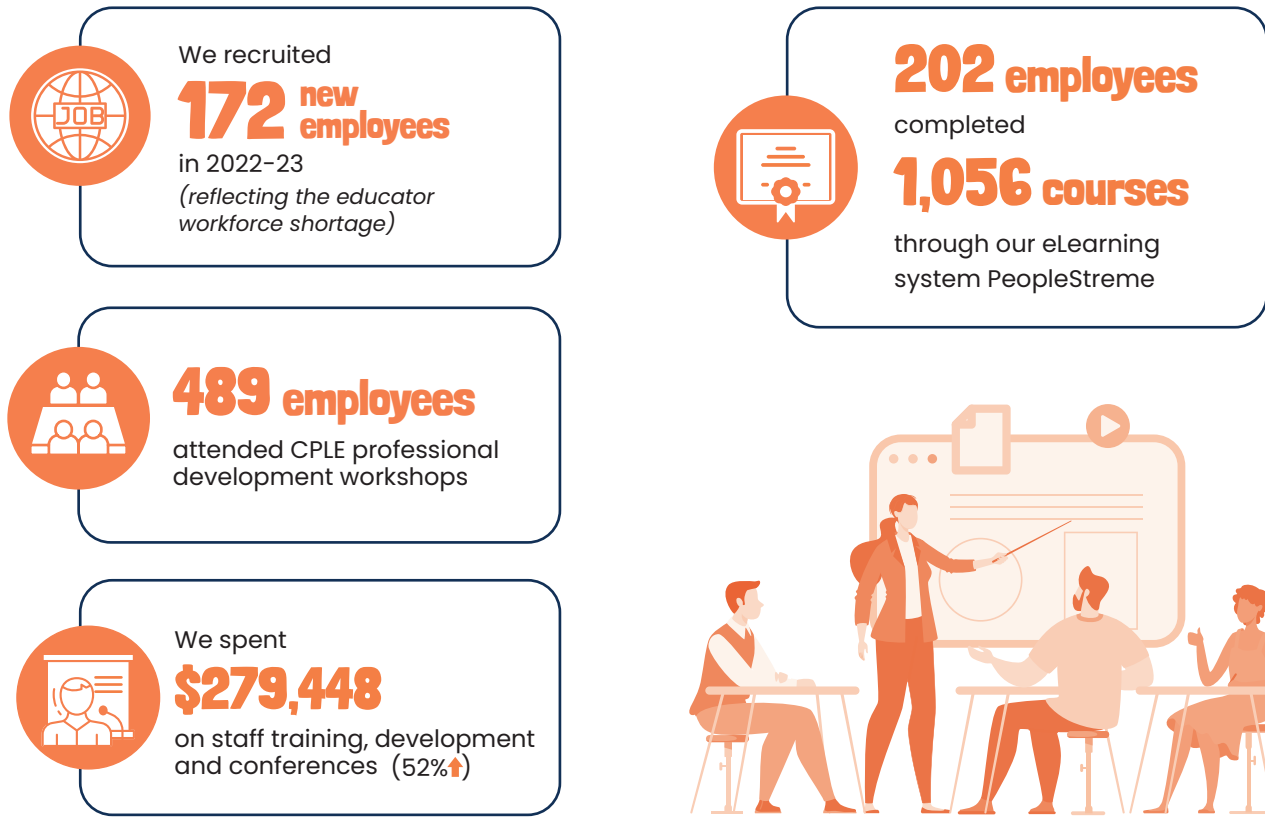
Children's First Alliance Recruitment Campaign

In November 2022, we played a leading role in organising the ACT Children's First Alliance (CFA) Shaping Futures campaign to attract early childhood workers. We saw a 34% increase in early childhood worker applicants (66 people) between November 2022 and January 2023. In addition, the CFA website had 29,081 visitors, which vastly exceeded our target of 5,000.

ACTCOSS Campaign

In May 2023 our Manager of Seniors and Transport, Felix Latham, featured in an ACTCOSS campaign to promote careers in the community sector. The six-month campaign was designed to drive online traffic to the ACT Community Sector Careers Gateway. Felix appeared in social media and on trams, buses and in shopping malls.

INVESTING IN STAFF TRAINING AND PD





“ ‘I am thrilled we won the Skills Canberra ‘ACT Large Employer of the Year’ award for the fourth year in a row! This is a testament to our Centre of Professional Learning and Education. Their incredible team embody our focus in providing career pathways and skills development.’

– Lee Maiden, former CEO

GIVING EMPLOYEES A VOICE

In January 2023 we formed the Employee Consultation Committee to liaise with the Executive team and our employees as we negotiate a new Enterprise Agreement. Our last agreement nominally expired in 2019. We want a new agreement to address our changing landscape and support all employees with enhanced terms and conditions.



ENSURING OUR WORKPLACE STAYS SAFE

We want to keep our workers safe, both in body and mind. So we introduced these measures to create safe workplaces:

- Psychosocial hazard training.
- An online reporting and tracking system for incidents.
- Over 19 WHS training workshops for staff to learn more in this area.
- Quarterly WHS compliance awards.
- WHS audits to enhance our WHS comprehension and minimise incidents.
- A new WHS Committee for employees to raise concerns with the Executive.

CELEBRATING OUR EXCEPTIONAL EMPLOYEES

ACT TRAINING AWARDS

CHLOE BREWER
CPL TRAINER

Finalist in the ACT VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year Award

**Chloe is now the Manager of our CPL*

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING & SCHOOL LEADERSHIP (AITSL)

LISA HIVERS
HEAD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING, GALILEE SCHOOL

National certification at the Lead Teacher level

2022 EARLY CHILDHOOD AUSTRALIA ACT EDUCATION AND CARE AWARDS

LINDA WHITE
FDC COORDINATION TEAM

Winner in the Innovation in Pedagogy and Practice Award

TRISH GRAHAM
FAMILY DAY CARE EDUCATOR

Finalist in the Innovation in Pedagogy and Practice Award

2022 NATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN FAMILY DAY CARE AWARDS

LEAH UTTLEY
FAMILY DAY CARE EDUCATOR

South Canberra regional winner

AYESHA DURRANI
FAMILY DAY CARE EDUCATOR

North Canberra regional winner

2022 COMMUNITIES AT WORK FAMILY DAY CARE AND IN HOME CARE AWARDS

LEAH UTTLEY
FAMILY DAY CARE EDUCATOR

Educator of the Year

TRISH GRAHAM
FAMILY DAY CARE EDUCATOR

Manager's Award

2022 COMMUNITIES AT WORK STAFF AND VOLUNTEER AWARDS

EVA HICKMAN MARKETING OFFICER CEO Award	KAITLYN VAN DE PITTE GALILEE SCHOOL STUDENT Ascend Student of the Year Award	MICHAEL UTTLEY EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE MANAGER Employee's Choice Award
BAKR RASHEED ICT MANAGER Executive's Choice Award	ROGER BUSCH BEST DRESSED STORE Volunteer of the Year	JEANINE CANNON EA TO CEO Organisational Support Award
LYNNDA RAMSAY OSHC MANAGER Communities at Work Values Award	KATRINA REYES TAYLOR EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE Educator of the Year	SUSIE MELI PAYROLL MANAGER Unsung Hero Award
TREVOR GILBERTSON SOCIAL PROGRAMS MANAGER Community Services Award	NATALIE EVANS CPL TRAINER CPL Award	GORDON OSHC WHS Centre of the Year



STORY

TOUCHING EVERYONE WITH KINDNESS

'I was going through a rough time in my life,' recalled a parent at our Taylor Child Care and Education Centre. 'Farah, the manager, gave me a courtesy call to check on us because my child was not attending care for a few days.'

'She referred me to the Communities at Work food pantry and other support programs. She arranged a call with the enrolments team who helped me with a payment plan, so that my child could return to care, and I could go back to work.'

'If Farah hadn't called me, I don't know where I would be today. She is the most beautiful human and a kind soul. A real gem.'

'Since she has become manager, all the educators at Taylor are following her footsteps. I have noticed much more effective communication between educators and carers.'

'Educators look happier and are always welcoming us with a smile. She is a fantastic manager who has developed a wonderful working culture and learning environment for children.'

'I don't know how many lives this woman is touching with her kindness and beautiful heart. I wish she gets everything that her heart deserves.'

- Parent, Taylor Child Care and Education Centre



8 OUR VOLUNTEERS

OVERVIEW

We are so proud and grateful for our 109 volunteers and their dedication to the local community. Without them we wouldn't be able to do what we do.

In 2022-23 our volunteers generously gave 9,921 hours of their time and energy to help us enrich people's lives.

EVERY WEEK OUR VOLUNTEERS HELP US CHANGE LIVES



HOW OUR VOLUNTEERS HELP US

Sort food in our community pantries

Collect excess food from Canberra supermarkets

Sort clothing donations

Collect donations from supermarkets and shopping centres

Serve people in our pantries

Provide advice and support for Galilee School's music program

Sort Christmas Appeal donations

Set up our Christmas Caves and help people access gifts

Help clients select clothes for job interviews

Display and sell clothing in our Best Dressed Store



STORY

VOLUNTEERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Like many retirees, Dianne wanted to be involved in the community and do something useful. She reached out to Volunteering ACT and found Communities at Work was a perfect fit.

She wanted to help people in a practical way, without taking on too much responsibility. Dianne has now been volunteering in our Gungahlin pantry for four years.

'I really love the interaction with the people,' she said. 'I really, really love the diversity of the people that come in daily. I now know many of our clients reasonably well, and I love that.'

Peter has been volunteering at the Gungahlin pantry for over five years. Working two shifts a week, a total of six hours is not a huge commitment but it's always rewarding.

'I love being a volunteer because you get out into the community, you get to meet people you wouldn't ever meet, especially in the pantry. It's really something worthwhile doing.'

'The management team here are great to work with! But even more importantly, I feel like I am making a meaningful difference in people's lives.'



WHY WE APPRECIATE OUR VOLUNTEERS



'The change we make in people's lives is just incredible. Thank you to our volunteers for being part of that and doing what you do every day. Thank you for how you represent the organisation. You truly make a difference to people.'

– Ruth, Director of Community Services



'We can't do without our volunteers. They're an important part of our programs. We really appreciate the work they do and the fact that they're so willing to help us and our clients.'

– Trevor, Social Programs Manager

'Our volunteers are kind, compassionate, caring people that provide a judgement-free space for our customers and our clients. Our programs couldn't run the way they do without the support of our wonderful volunteers.'



– Hayley, Volunteer Coordinator



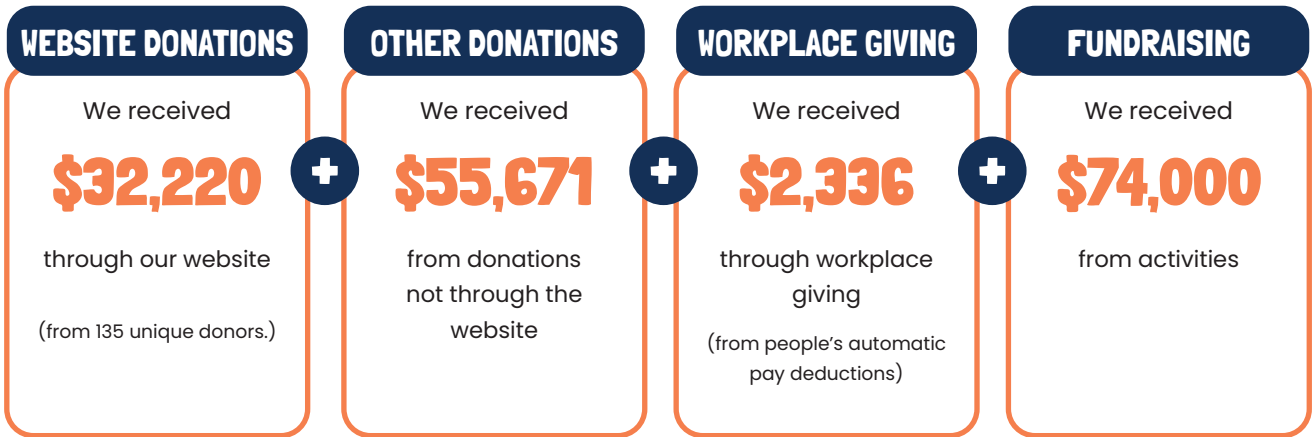
OVERVIEW

Thanks to the many donors, supporters and corporate partners that have provided advice, collaborations, free or discounted services, resources, time or donations to help us deliver

important services to the local community. Together we are making a genuine difference in the lives of people in our community.

FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

Every donation makes a difference. We are grateful for our amazing donors who gave us **\$164,227** during 2022-23 to help us support our community.



WHAT SOME SUPPORTERS SAY

“We want to support a local organisation that is people-focused and provides much-needed assistance and support like food, clothing and other gifts.”

“I got some money in my father's will. I couldn't enjoy it knowing so many people were having a tough time. So, I wanted to make a donation.”

SUPPORTER STORY

A+P LEENHUIS BUILDERS



In 2022, A+P Leemhuis Builders gave Galilee School \$20,000 to help support young people in need.

With these funds we built a greenhouse at our Kambah Campus. This will form the foundation of a strategic educational program in partnership with organisations like Food Ladder, The Root Cause, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation, and Canberra Seed Savers.

The funds helped pay for the footings and electrical and plumbing infrastructure, with our Senior Secondary construction students helping with the installation. Once built, the greenhouse will support learning for both students and their families on nutrition, cooking and sustainability – and hopefully benefit their social and emotional wellbeing too.

Thanks A+P Leemhuis for making this possible!

SUPPORTER STORY

CANBERRA TOYOTA

We teamed up with Canberra Toyota for our company cars (we have 36 now). They've given us great deals, bought our old cars, and always helped. Our vehicles get VIP service with them.

Canberra Toyota also supports our community. They gave our Galilee School two vans for moving students. They also help with our Christmas Appeal, collecting donations at their operating centres.

We're really thankful for their support and how they help us serve the Canberra community.



THANK YOU !

Government Supporters

- ACT Community Services Directorate
- ACT Block Grant Authority Inc
- ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies
- ACT Education Directorate
- ACT Health
- ACT Government Property Group
- ACT Sexual Health Clinic
- Department of Education, Skills and Employment
- Department of Finance
- Department of Health
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Parliamentary Services
- Department of Social Services
- Housing ACT
- Marisa Paterson, MLA
- National Disability Services
- Nicole Lawder, MLA
- Senator David Pocock
- Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
- Skills Canberra
- The Hon Mr David Smith MP
- Services Australia
- Suburban Land Agency – Mingle
- The Treasury
- Transport Canberra

Business and Community Supporters

- 11:11 Health & Wellbeing
- 1000 Hearts
- A Gender Agenda
- A&P Leemhuis Builders
- Absolute Home Care
- Academy of Entrepreneurs
- Access EAP
- ACTCOSS
- Aldi (Weston, Belconnen, Kippax, Gungahlin, Amaroo)
- All Homes
- Ainslie Group
- Ainslie Urban Farm
- Alliance Community Care ACT
- Association of Independent Schools of the ACT
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Forensic Services RTO
- Australian Institute of Food Safety
- Australian Institute of Sport
- Australian National University
- Australian Red Cross
- Bank of I.D.E.A.S
- Baringa Early Learning Connections
- Blue Gum Community School
- Bradley Allen Love Lawyers
- Bunnings Warehouse
- Burns Club
- Calwell Shopping Centre
- Canberra Baptist Church
- Canberra City Farm
- Canberra Environment Centre
- Canberra First Aid
- Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)
- Canberra Relief Network
- Canberra Seed Savers
- Canberra Southern Cross Club
- Canberra Toyota
- Capital Airport Group
- Care Plus Services
- CCS Group Canberra
- CDC Data Centres
- CDNet
- Charles Weston School
- Christmas Appeal supporters (thank you all!!)
- Coles Gungahlin
- Commonwealth Bank (Gungahlin and Tuggeranong)
- Community Services #1
- Cooleman Court
- Costco
- Country Valley
- Cypress Springs Floristry
- Daana – Indian Restaurant
- Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – ACT

- EduInfluencers
- Elliott Gray Recruitment
- Elluca Hair
- Embroiders' Guild ACT
- Erindale United Church
- Ernst & Young
- Evelyn Scott School
- Exhale People
- Families Australia
- Foodbank
- Food Ladder
- Future Schools
- Griffin Legal
- Grill'd (Woden and Gungahlin)
- Gungahlin College
- Gungahlin Marketplace
- Gungahlin Village
- Hands Across Canberra
- Hardwicks
- Hesta Superannuation
- Icon Water
- IMD Electrical and Maintenance
- Impact Church
- JB Hi-Fi
- Just Better Care
- Kids Space Occupational Therapy
- Kingflex
- Koomarri
- KPMG
- Leidos
- Lifeline Canberra
- Lions Foundation
- Luton Tuggeranong
- Mackinley Optical
- Marymead Autism Centre
- Meditate and Create
- Menslink
- Mental Health First Aid

- Microsoft
- Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)
- Mercy Aged and Community Care
- Mills Oakley
- Mix 106.3
- Modern Teaching Aids (MTA)
- Molonglo Valley Gospel Community
- Morgans Cleaning
- Multicultural Hub of Canberra
- Munns Sly Moore
- Ngala Tours at the National Arboretum Canberra
- National Gallery of Australia
- National Zoo
- OPC
- Orana Steiner School
- OzHarvest
- Parbery Consulting
- Pegasus Riding for the Disabled ACT
- Proact Security
- PSC Insurance Brokers
- PWC
- Queen Bee Beauty
- Raiders Kippax Club
- Rainbow Paws Program
- Roadmaster
- Sarina Russo Apprenticeships ACT
- School Governance
- Seasons of Self
- Second Bite
- Share the Dignity
- Smart Salary
- Sneddon, Hall and Gallop
- SouthFest
- South.Point
- St Andrews Canberra

- Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation
- Street University
- SupaExpress Denman Village
- The Green Shed
- The Men's Table
- The Property Collective
- The Root Cause
- The Snow Foundation
- The Strength Syndicate
- Think-write Consulting
- Thunderstone Aboriginal Cultural Services
- TPG
- Transtate Tyres
- TR Civils
- Tuggeranong Arts Centre
- Tuggeranong College
- Tuggeranong Community Council
- Tuggeranong Leisure Centre
- Tuggeranong See-Change
- Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club
- Veolia
- Visual Language Connections
- Volunteering ACT
- Warehouse Circus
- Westpac
- Wilde & Woollard Lawyers
- WINC
- Woden Community Services
- Woolworths Group Limited
- Woolworths@Work
- Woolworths Dunlop
- YWCA
- Zone 3 Bowling Centre

How Supporters Help

Grants



Fundraisers



Working bees



Food donations



Subsidised advertising



Clothing drives



Social media promotion

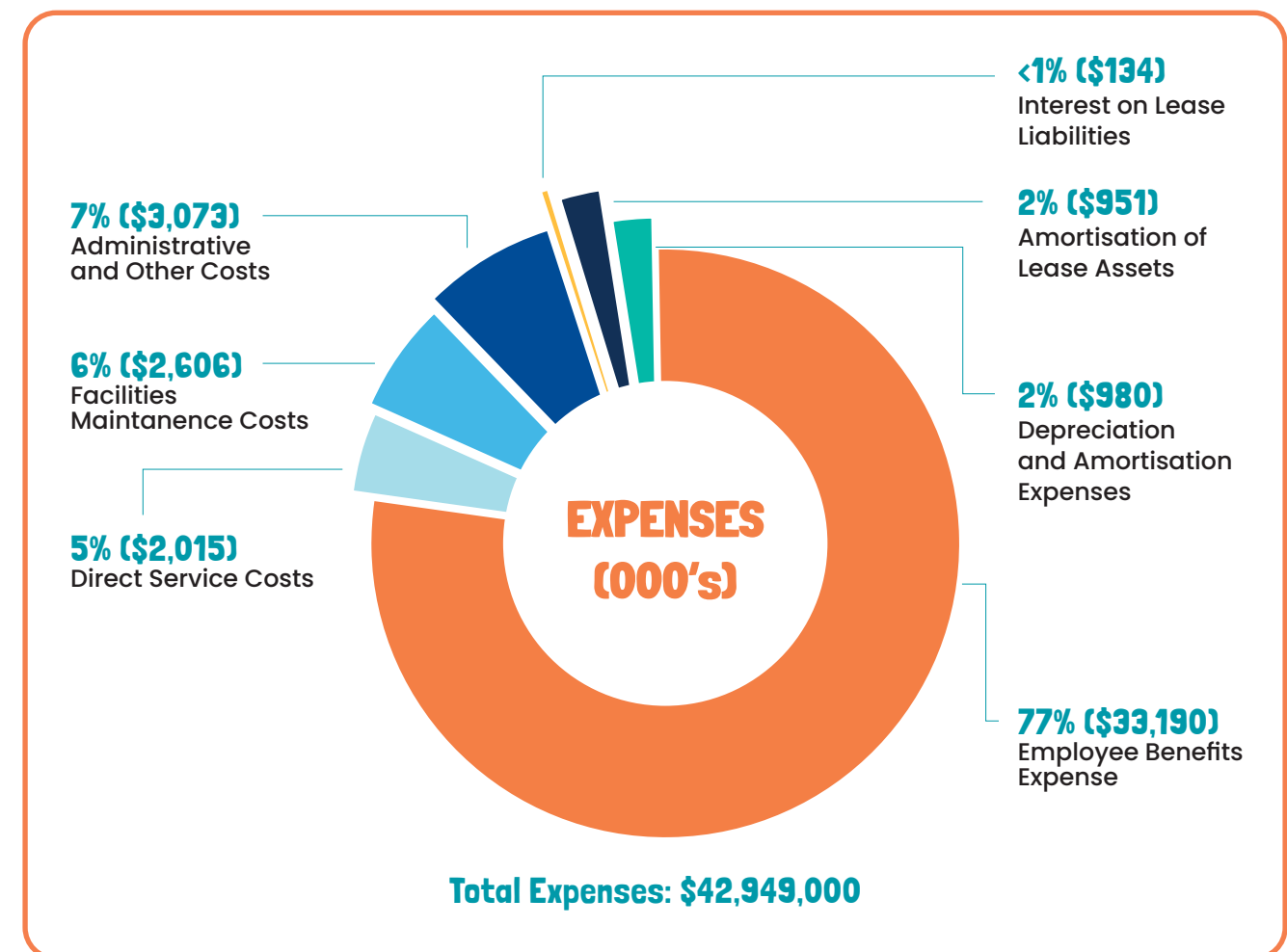
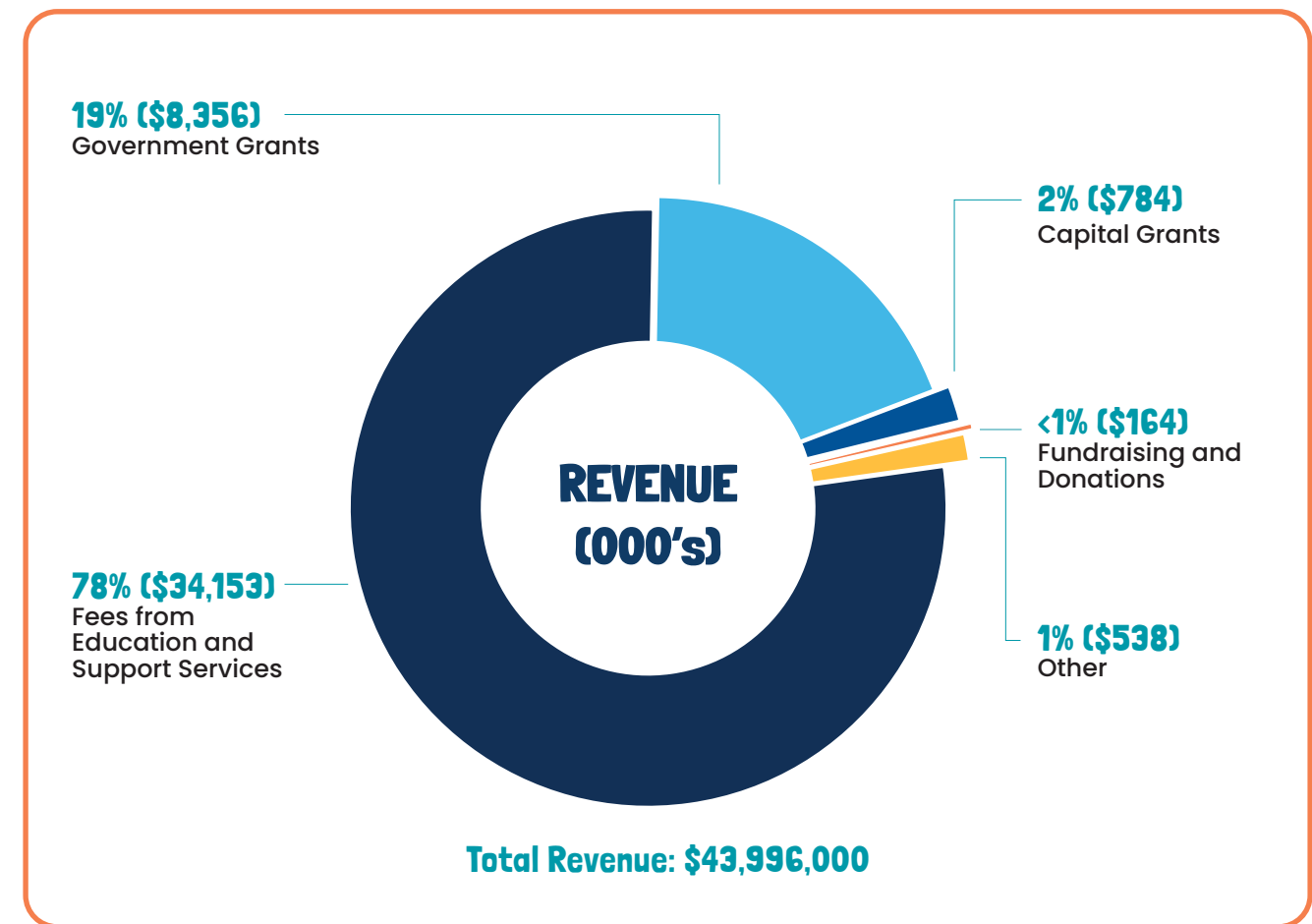


Subsidised motor vehicle costs



Free or subsidised professional services





Get Involved!



commsatwork.org/get-involved



admin@commsatwork.org



(02) 6293 6500



FUNDRAISE

Fundraise by organising an activity through your business, work or school.



PARTNER

Partner with us and enhance your reputation, build stakeholder loyalty and closely connect with your community.



DONATE

Donate with a tax deductible donation or bequest and help us make a difference.



Together,

we can make an even bigger impact on the lives of people going through tough times.

Every little bit helps.



VOLUNTEER

Volunteer and share your skills, experience and time, while doing and feeling good.



CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Donate food or gifts or host a Giving Tree to ensure families won't miss out at Christmas.



SPONSOR

Sponsor us financially or through in-kind support with goods and services.



Tuggeranong Community Centre

245 Cowlshaw St, Greenway ACT 2900

Gungahlin Community Centre

47 Ernest Cavanagh St, Gungahlin ACT 2912

Denman Village Community Centre

5 Felstead Vista, Denman Prospect, ACT 2611

Communities at Work Weston Creek

172 Dixon Drive, Holder ACT 2611

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