



# ANNUAL REPORT

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2020/2021

Thriving Communities,  
Endless Possibilities



## **Yaama.**

TFSS would like to show our respect by acknowledging the land, its traditional owners, Elders past and present, and the youth who are the leaders of the future. On this land where we are today, we thank you for the opportunity of working together to nurture and enrich our community and families.



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# Our Philosophy

## MISSION

We work toward our vision through our purpose, which is to:

1. Strengthen and improve social and personal well-being for individuals, families and communities;
2. Promote access, equality and social justice;
- and
3. Deliver services of quality and value.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. In family services projects, staff and families work together in relationships based on trust and respect.
2. Family services projects enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members; adults, young people and children.
3. Family services projects affirm and strengthen families' social, cultural, racial and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a pluralist society.
4. Family services projects are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.
5. Family services projects are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.
6. The principles of family service are modelled in all aspects of a project, including planning, service delivery, management and administration.
7. All members of a family should be safe from violence.
8. Children should be provided with safe, quality alternatives if it is deemed they cannot live with their birth family.
9. There is a recognition that families have multiple forms, not necessarily biologically based.
10. The priority at the heart of all our work is the safety, health and wellbeing of children and families.





## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

### **1. We are inclusive and respectful of people's rights**

- 1.1. We commit to working within a human rights framework

### **2. We are a regional employer that values employees and supports them to make a difference**

- 2.1 We enable employee health and well-being
- 2.2 We improve communication, decision-making and knowledge sharing
- 2.3 We are prepared for succession of key management roles
- 2.4 TFSS is strong in governance and compliance

### **3. We build and support connections between people, communities and community-based organisations**

- 3.1 We strengthen partnerships and organisational capacity
- 3.2 We enhance community knowledge and connection to services and community resources
- 3.3 We implement local service delivery through formalised partnerships

### **4. We will work to build the financial security of TFSS**

- 4.1 We identify opportunities for social enterprise and building community capacity.
- 4.2 We develop integrated systems to enhance individual and community outcomes

### **5. We know and tell our story and the stories of our communities**

- 5.1 We are clear about how we make a difference
- 5.2 We effectively communicate with our communities
- 5.3 We raise our voice on issues of importance and relevance



## VALUES

### **Diversity**

To accept and appreciate differences

### **Integrity**

To always act with honesty and professionalism

### **Community**

To have a sense of responsibility and contribution

### **Leadership**

To utilise our position to drive change

### **Partnerships**

To work collaboratively to deliver the best outcomes

TFSS works together with children, families and individuals, to provide services, support and information throughout the New England/ North West region of NSW, with a focus on the most disadvantaged.



## **A message from our**

As I reflect on the past year, a few things come to mind. The leadership shown by the two top women leading NSW through this pandemic is nothing short of amazing. Everything about Gladys Berejiklian and Dr Kerry Chant is questioned daily, yet they still show up and face the often-angry barrage of questioning. They have strength and unwavering determination to continue to lead. I am sure they don't just wake up every morning and go "oh today I think we will do this." Instead, I believe they are advised and informed by specialists around them. However, at the end of the day someone needs to stand

up and take responsibility for the final decision (which may not always be correct) and show leadership; I believe they are doing this extraordinarily well under exceptional circumstances. Even though the worry associated with the pandemic was very real in our lives, we as an organisation continued to deliver high quality professional services. The services were delivered in creative and innovative ways, ensuring people still felt safe and connected. Due to the hard work and dedication of our workers, TFSS was recognised as a leader in this regard.

The Covid-19 impact on individuals and communities meant many of the people we work with and alongside were even more disadvantaged. A prime example of this is the current housing shortage. Large numbers of the population moving out of larger cities into regional areas has placed even more stress on a very tight housing market across our region.

I want to thank the Service Stream Managers for guiding and supporting your staff to achieve outstanding outcomes across all your programs. I also acknowledge the amazing and inspirational work of all TFSS staff. You have delivered exceptional services to the people and communities you work in across the New England region. This was done when, as an organisation, there was a lot of internal changes happening. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we moved offices, changed computer and phone systems and introduced a new case management platform, just to name a few. Our workforce is now very flexible and adaptive, ready to meet the ever-changing environment we work within.

The Corporate Services Team led by Greg Barton was instrumental in a lot of this change. Greg has insight and vision. The consolidation of many of our resources has led to significant savings that will be put back into our communities. As John F. Kennedy once said, "Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." Thank you to the TFSS Board that have continued to lead the organisation and our vision of Thriving Communities – Endless Possibilities. The success of any organisation is only as good as its Board of Directors.

I would like to say a special thank you to Joanne Stead, Liz Loi and Natalie Scanlon who are retiring from the TFSS Board at this AGM. These ladies have invested their time, knowledge and expertise over many years to ensure that TFSS as an organisation remains compliant and relevant to our communities and the people we serve.

On a final note, this year I became a Nanna to my beautiful granddaughter Ayla. I never realised there was a piece of my heart missing. What children need most is love and attachment. To see her so loved and treasured by her dad, mum and all the extended family and friends on both sides gives me new hope and inspiration.

It certainly is true that it takes a village to raise a child. I am even more committed now to ensuring all the children we work with are given the opportunities they need to be safe and thrive. I believe this is key to ensuring Thriving Communities – Endless Possibilities.

*Belinda Kotris*

## ***A message from our***

# CHAIRPERSON



Once again, COVID has thrown a long shadow over our communities, our activities and our organisation. The impact of the pandemic on our families, communities and economy continues to play a role in the uncertainty we see in so many areas.

In the middle of the pandemic, TFSSt moved offices, locating the bulk of services at Bligh Street. This was no mean feat, as the move also included fitting out the space to provide a flexible working environment for the organisation. Thanks to staff for their understanding during this busy and challenging time.

Tamworth Family Support has continued to provide outstanding services to the communities it worked in throughout 2020/2021. As an organisation we continue to advocate for a wide range of members of the community, including those affected by domestic violence and homelessness. We have a client-based focus and look to make a difference with everything we do.

Behind the operational scenes, the board continues to operate to provide support, advice, guidance and management to the organisation. All board members give freely of their time – they are all volunteers. The board currently consists of Robert Taggart, Emma Trigg, Natalie Scanlon, Joanne Stead, Liz Loi, Janice Benic, Grant Scarborough and myself Jane Kibble. The work of the board would be more challenging if it were not for the hard work of TFSS CEO Belinda Kotris, who has led the organisation through nearly two years of a pandemic and managed to continue its growth and success. In the middle of all this she also became a grandmother for the first time. Thank you and congratulations, Belinda!

At this meeting we will say farewell to Joanne Stead. Joanne has been a mainstay of the board for many years, ably serving as secretary and providing support in the development of TFSS's Reconciliation Action Plan among other achievements. She is standing down to pursue other activities and interests in Tamworth and surrounds, but we are sure we will continue to see her at events and functions. Thank you for everything you have done to make TFSS a strong and active service Joanne. On behalf of the board I wish you all the best for the future.

It was a very sad time when we lost long-standing board member Aunty Yvonne Kent. Aunty Yvonne's time on the board was marked by her determination to make a difference for Aboriginal people through the services of TFSS, her quiet dedication to the organisation and her passionate support of the people she worked with. Like so many others in the community we miss her.

Aunty Yvonne always reminded us that we met on the beautiful lands of the Gomeroi people, so in closing I would like to acknowledge that we have met all year on the traditional lands of the Gomeroi people, while our organisation has served a wider audience. I acknowledge and pay my respects to elders past and present.

Jane Kibble

*Jane Kibble*



# OUR PEOPLE

## Board of Directors

Jane Kibble (Chairperson)	Grant Scarborough
Joanne Stead (Secretary)	Janice Bennic
Robert Taggart (Treasurer)	Elizabeth (Liz) Loi
Emma Trigg	Natalie Scanlon

## Chief Executive Officer

Belinda Kotris

## Senior Manager Corporate Services

Gregory Barton

## Management Team

Children and Family Services Manager  
Julie Green

Early Childhood Services Manager  
Kimberly Smart

Intensive Family Services Manager  
Lisa Hetherington & Bryarne Bielefeld

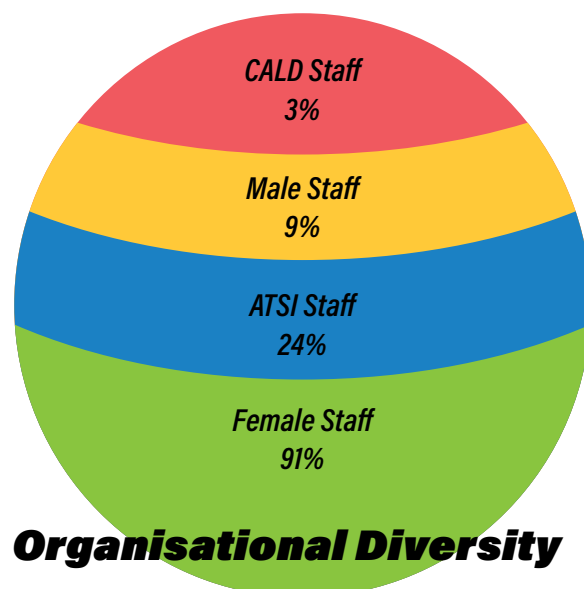
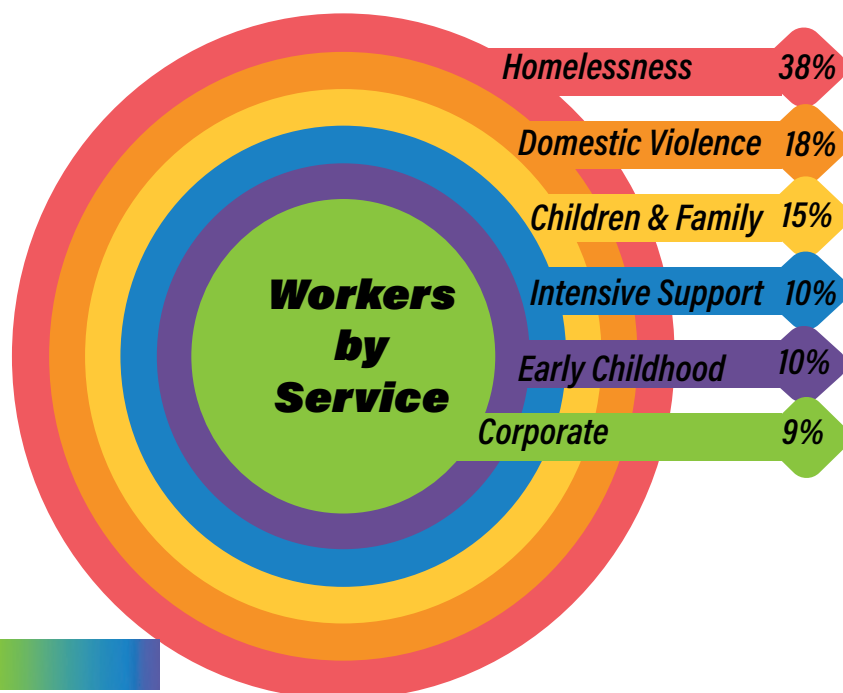
Homeless and Domestic Violence Services Manager  
Lynda Townsend

Youth Homelessness Manager  
Annette Pascoe

Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services Oxley  
Melanie Gray

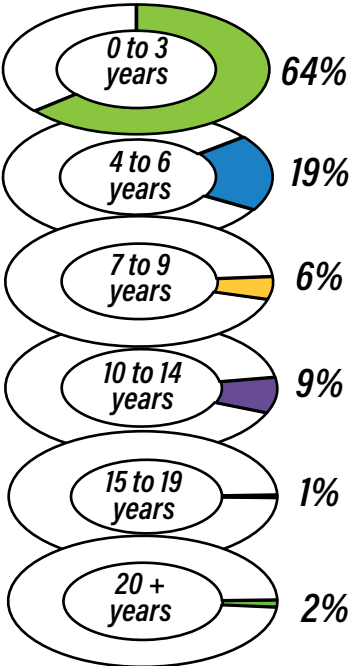
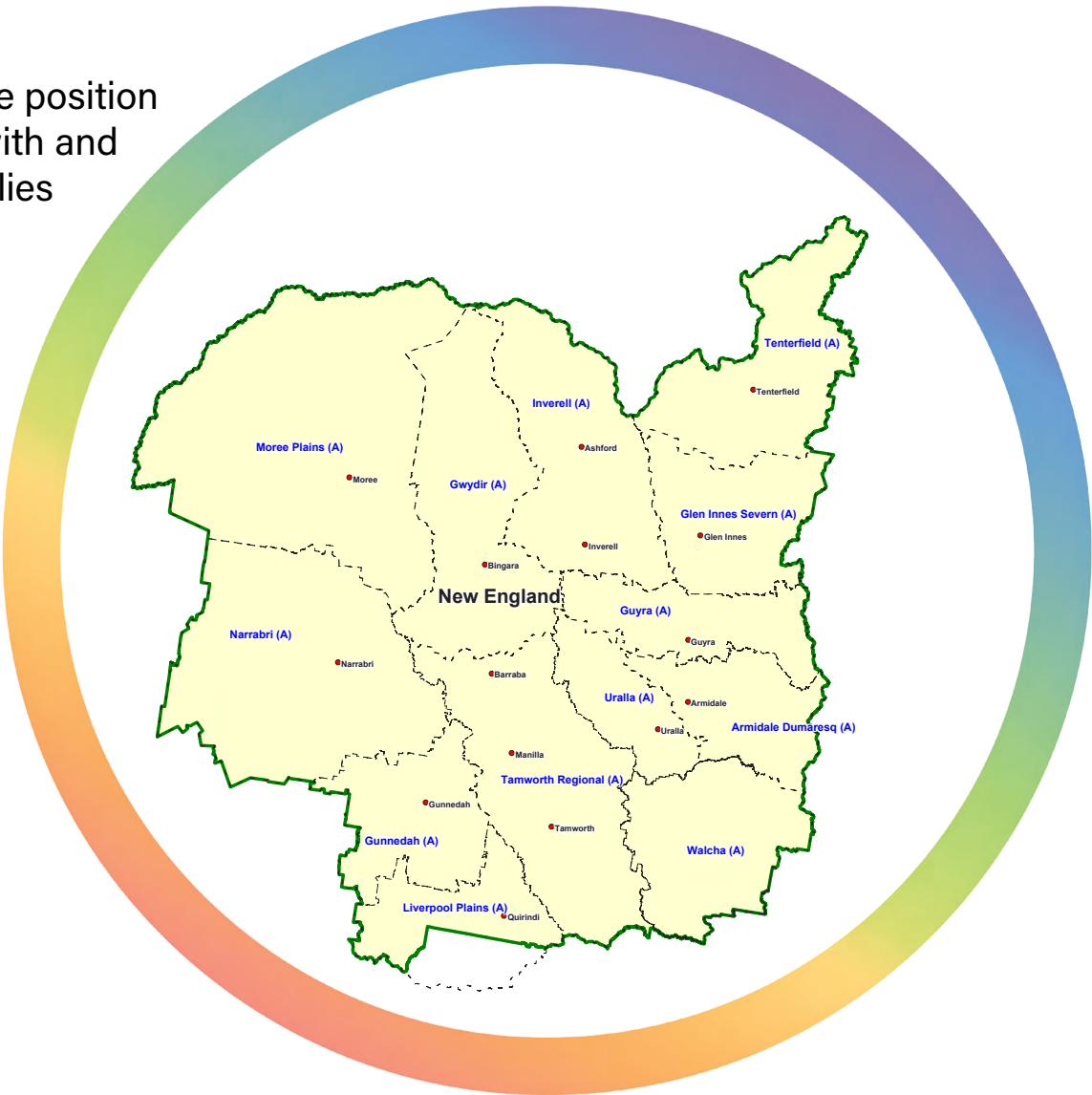
Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services New England  
Cassandra Cutmore

88 Very Important Staff



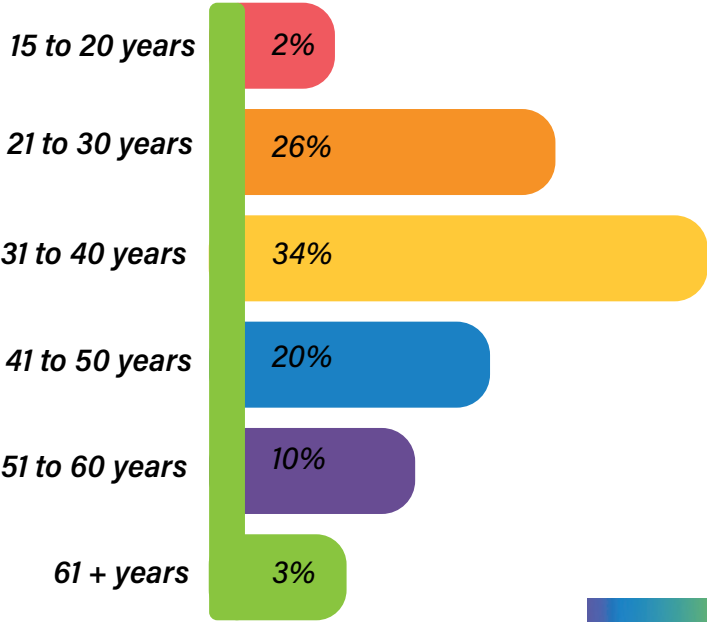
# Working Across the Region

TFSS is in the position to connect with and support families across the whole of the New England Region.



**Workforce by Length of Service**

## Workforce by Age



# OUR RESOURCES

## Statement of financial position

as at 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash & other Financial Assets	2,613,310	2,222,821
Trade and other Receivables	1,312	18,044
Other Current Assets	104,659	63,232
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>2,719,280</b>	<b>2,304,097</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Trade and other receivables	200	200
Right of Use Assets	693,320	33,114
Land & Buildings	783,113	802,317
Property Improvements, Equipment & Vehicles	587,031	330,585
Intangibles	29,159	29,531
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>2,092,823</b>	<b>1,195,747</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,812,103</b>	<b>3,499,844</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Program Funds	495,781	495,082
Employee Entitlements	660,068	480,356
Tax Payable	132,593	174,498
Superannuation Payable	0	853
Accrued Wages & Expenses	168,806	128,566
Trade Creditors	68,394	30,336
Lease Liabilities	68,894	33,598
Auspice Services	9,650	5,569
Other Liabilities	21,225	0
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,625,412</b>	<b>1,348,858</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Lease Liability Non-current	654,450	0
Employee Entitlements	70,843	94,483
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>725,293</b>	<b>94,483</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2,350,705</b>	<b>1,443,341</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>2,461,398</b>	<b>2,056,503</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Special Reserves WR1.7.07	60,000	60,000
Retained Earnings	1,996,500	1,996,503
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>2,056,500</b>	<b>2,056,503</b>

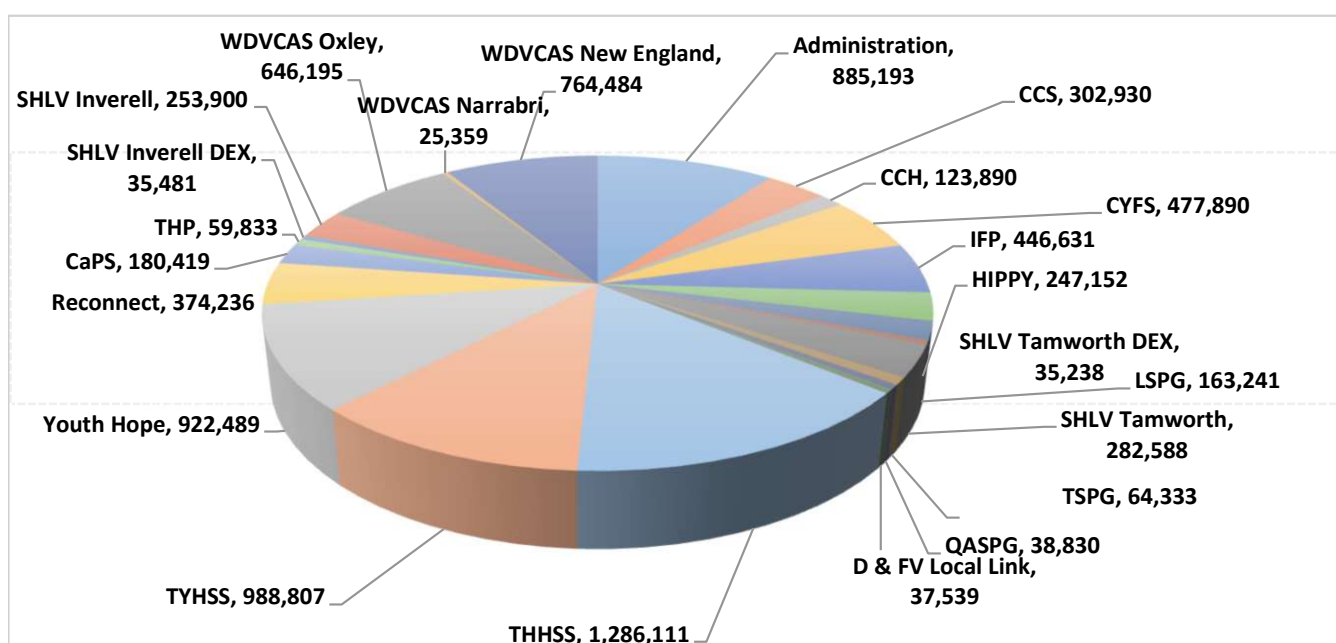


# Statement of profit and loss

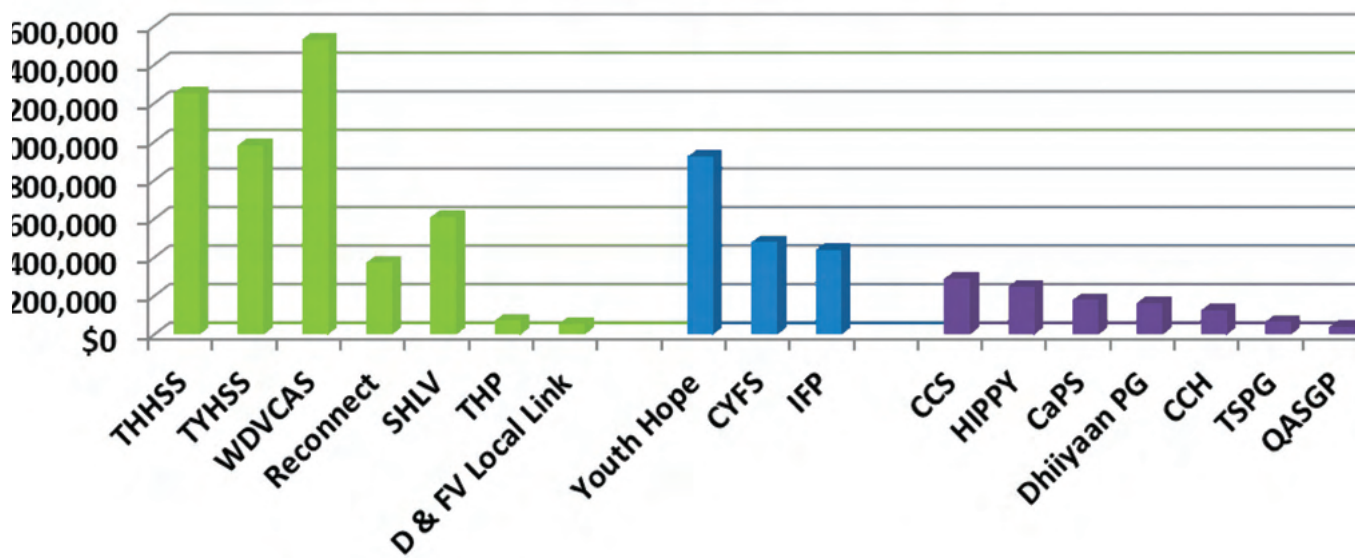
as at 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Donations Income	37,611	30,069
Overhead Fee Income	1,102,825	702,014
Sundry Income	65,521	48,809
Program Funding	7,672,381	6,612,319
Other Program Income	143,795	67,408
Other Income	47,476	138,422
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>9,069,609</b>	<b>7,599,041</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Indirect Administration Costs	568,700	440,508
Administration Expenses	1,062,368	886,485
Program Specific Training	87,618	62,811
Client Expenses	819,415	422,382
Vehicle Expenses	454,797	270,190
Employment Expenses	5,563,515	5,107,001
AASB-16 Leases	108,297	59,705
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>8,664,710</b>	<b>7,249,083</b>
<b>NET PROFIT</b>	<b>404,899</b>	<b>349,958</b>

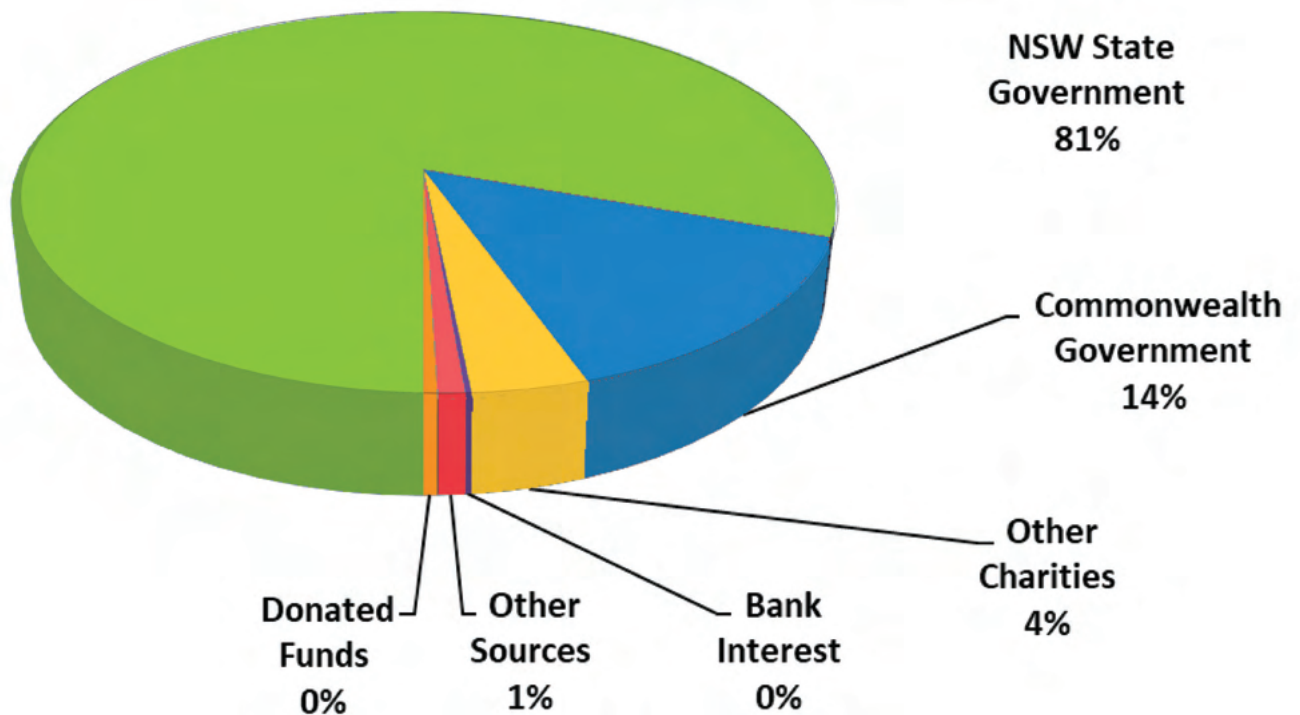
## 2021 Expenditure by Program



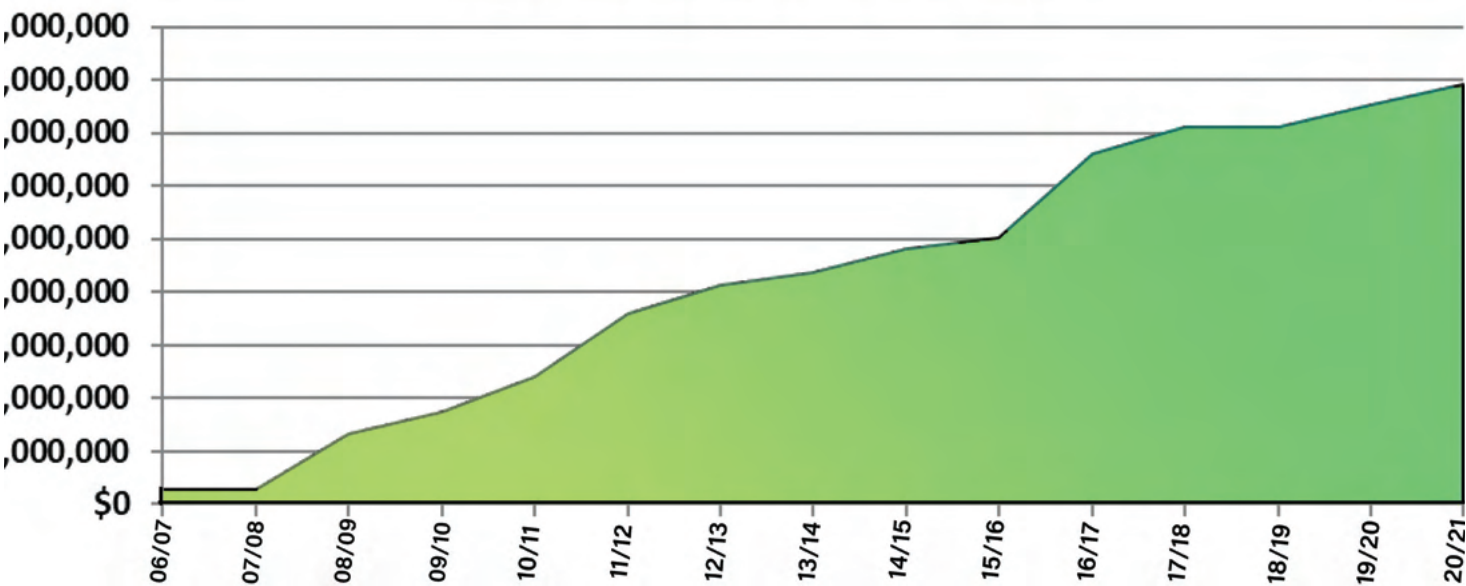
## Funding by Program 2020/2021



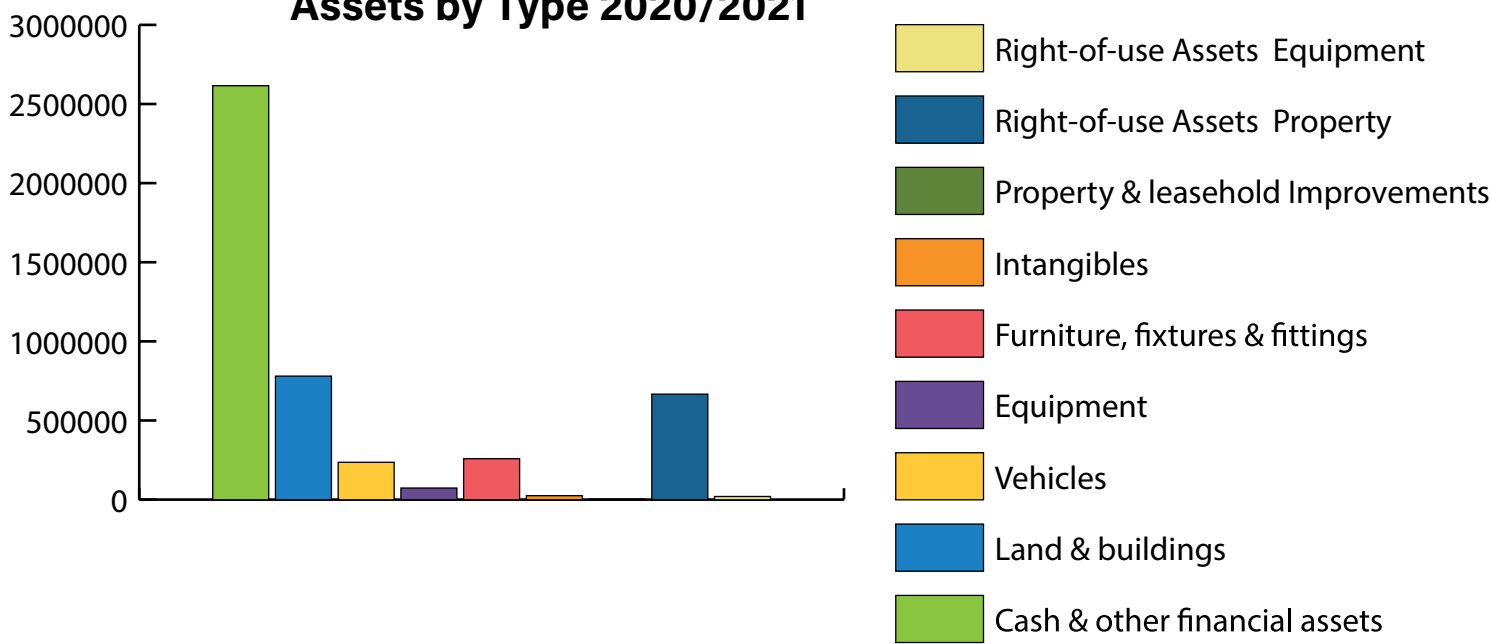
## Funding by Source 2020/2021



# Income by Financial Year

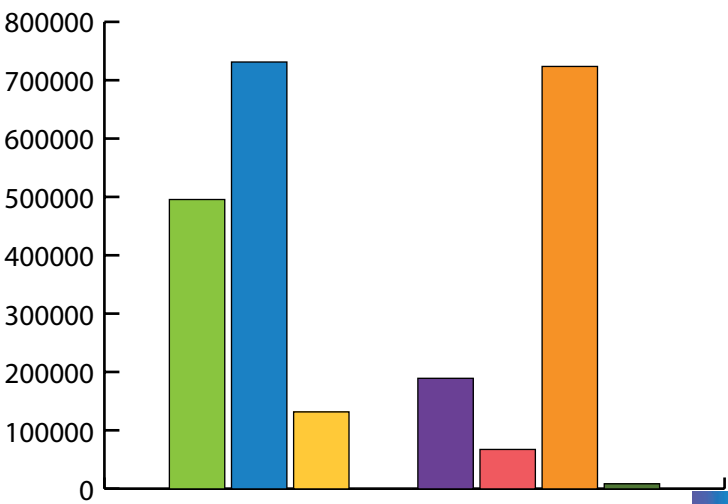


## Assets by Type 2020/2021



## Liabilities owed to others 2020/2021

- Auspice Services
- Lease Liabilities
- Trade Creditors
- Accrued Wages & Expenses
- Superannuation Payable
- Tax Payable
- Employee Entitlements
- Program Funds







**TFSS is an  
ASES  
Accredited  
Organisation,  
an equal  
opportunity  
employer  
of choice.**

## CORPORATE

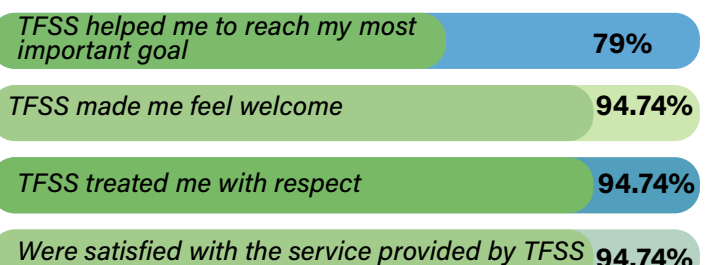
TFSS continues to focus on growing our culture, automating systems as a response to staff and client feedback to continue to be more innovative in our day-to-day operations.

The Corporate Services team have introduced several changes over the past year including, centralising services into a new premise, reviewing financial systems, implementing an asset management system, upgrading our security surveillance systems, implementing new technology around telecommunications and a new client management system. The organisation is focused on implementing a "green" strategy. We have implemented sustainable practices such as reducing our paper-based documentation by over half by transitioning to electronic record management.

TFSS continues to actively work on areas in need of improvement and to celebrate our areas of strength. The organisation conducted its Annual Staff Cultural Survey which disseminated in April 2021. Some of the results are as follows:



TFSS continues to actively seek client feedback through a variety of means and this is used to identify potential service improvements. Client complaints are acknowledged, recorded and dealt with in a timely manner.



# SERVICES

TFSS maintains a strong workforce and has a structured and comprehensive recruitment and induction process, which enables new staff to integrate quickly into the organisation.

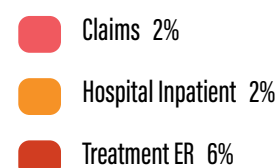
The organisation continues to utilise a variety of means to identify potential employee engagement and service improvements including, 360-degree surveys, exit evaluations and client feedback to assist TFSS. Consultation with staff, managers and employee subgroups ensure effective communication, increasing our awareness and ability to embrace workplace diversity and career progression. Through consistent training, workplace adjustments and ongoing policy review, we have improved engagement rates with our 88 permanent, part-time and casual employees with a view to further increase our long-term retention rates.

Clients identified six main areas where TFSS had assisted them to increase their knowledge.



Our organisation is committed to safety and continues to invest time and resources to ensure that we maintain a safe environment volunteer for our organisation and to keep workplace incidents by remaining vigilant and and timely corrective action.

for, those engaged to work or our client group. TFSS continues and injuries to a minimum, implementing regular monitoring



# Children & Family Services

**Manager: Julie Green**

CHILD YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICE

CHILDREN and PARENTING SUPPORT

CHILDREN'S CONTACT SERVICE

THE COLEDALE COMMUNITY HUB



## Promoting Opportunities for Children & Families



The Child, Youth and Family program provides appropriately targeted support services to families with a child under the age of 18 years, or families who are expecting a child. These services are provided through case management, practical skills groups, advice, information and support providing appropriate, short term supports to address identified issues and prevent escalation of problems. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families receive priority of access to services under the child and family support service model.



#### CASE STUDY

CW has been working with a family (mother and daughter) that have recently moved to the area from out of state. The young girl in year 11 was disengaged from school and was wanting to enter employment. Case Worker liaised with the school and other service providers (Careers Network) to assist the family to work towards gaining an exemption from school. The young client was able to gain employment at a fast-food restaurant and is doing trials for full time work. CYFS was able to use their material aid to purchase her some nonslip work boots so that she was able to commence employment. CW also worked with the mother to find more effective communication strategies with her daughter as they were often having disagreements and arguments. Mum commented that the information provided to her in the Engaging Adolescents course made her aware that she had been contributing to the 'blow ups' and the relationship has been improving. CW is continuing to engage with the family and hopes to work further with the young girl around her anxiety once she comes to trust the CW further.

#### A message from the Principal of Walhallow Public School

Hi Tash

I'm sorry I missed you and Renee today as I'm at a course.

Thank you for your program delivery and your generosity of supplying goodies today. I'm certain the kids will love them. Look forward to having you out again soon. We love having you.

Thanks a million  
Happy Easter  
Skye

CaPS continues to exceed KPI figures in Tamworth, Quirindi and Liverpool Plains Local Government Area's. CaPS continues to receive referrals through the Weekly Allocation Meeting, which originate from both internal program referrals and external sources. The CaPS programs focus remains on early intervention and prevention services through case management, to improve the outcomes for children and families. The 2020-2021 financial year has proven to be a challenging year for CaPS, with the continued threat of COVID-19. Our service has adapted and grown to continue to deliver services within our client's homes and the community. Both CaPS workers were lucky enough to be trained in the evidence-based program, Rock and Water, and secured group work opportunities to deliver this program in schools in the latter half of 2021. CaPS intend to continue to provide first-rate case management support and group work to our clients.

## Children's Contact Service

The Children's Contact Service (CCS) conducts a range of services for children to spend time with their non-custodial parent when parents are experiencing separation. Services include Supervised Contacts and Change Overs, Supervised Skype/ video contacts for long distance families and/or those families affected by the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns.

CCS aims to have parents move onto self-managed arrangements into the future and we provide this support to be able to make the transition as smooth as possible. Service can be offered up to 18 months and CCS also provides Supported (unsupervised) Contacts to help with the transition.

All these forms of service are focused on the children and their needs. Safety is important for all clients and staff, and we aim for all clients to feel comfortable and supported.

Parents may be ordered to attend a CCS by a Court Order (majority of referrals), Legal Mediation or they can self refer for various forms of contact.

CCS has made a large number of changes to the way it operates from the impacts of Covid-19 and has managed to stay open and continue working with clients as much as possible.

A client thanked CCS for all the work they had put into helping his family, June 2021



A family who has been directly impacted by Covid lockdowns has been able to successfully continue visits via Skype. The children are able to maintain a relationship where the father actively prepares for the visit and is interactive within the limitations.

A family where the children did not spend time with the father contacted CCS. The family worked together to support the children and they are now able to successfully spend time with their father on a fortnightly basis.

## The Coledale Community Hub

The Coledale Community Hub provides information, referral and advocacy services to the Tamworth Community. The Service currently coordinates and facilitates the use of part of the Coledale Community Centre which is owned by Department of Community & Justice. We are able to provide a safe space for the community to access resources including computers, television, tea and coffee but most importantly, support from staff.

Coledale Community Hub has been fortunate in partnering with many great local organisations over the past 12 months. These partnerships have enabled the hub to provide valuable services and events to the community. This year the Community Hub were able to start their One Stop shop. The One Stop Shop is a partnership between services from across the LGA that aims to provide our clients with an opportunity to access a range of services all in the one area at the same time, offering a holistic approach. We look forward to building on these partnerships and providing more days like this in the future for the communities we work in.



A clients comment to the Hub, "Thank you for the Work Development Orders and linking me in with a counsellor to pay off my fines. At first, I was only going for the sake of paying my fines. Little did I know I would get more from this. Even my family has commented on the difference and likes the happier me"



# Early Childhood Services

**COORDINATOR: KIM SMART**

Come-N-Play Oxley Vale & Hillvue

Dhiiyaan Playgroup and Transition

Come-N-Play Quirindi

HIPPY Tamworth



## Nurturing Children, Enriching Families



## Come-N-Play Supported Playgroup

The 'Come-N-Play' Supported Playgroups provide play-based activities for families with children 0 to 5 years of age, in the Oxley Vale and Hillvue areas. Parents are supported through a variety of guest speakers and initiatives such as child development, safety, healthy living, nutrition and early learning concepts. These playgroups are available to all families, including single parents, grandparents, other carers, young or first-time parents, Aboriginal families and CALD families.



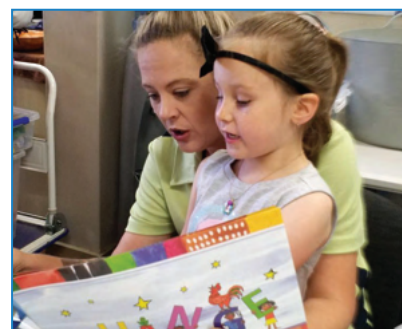
Feedback from a current client, "Thank you so much for the packs you put together each week to keep us sane through this lockdown".

## Dhiyaan Aboriginal Locational Supported Playgroup

Dhiyaan Aboriginal Locational Supported Playgroup delivers four playgroup sessions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families within the Tamworth Local Government Area. Play & Chat is for parents with children 0 to 5 years of age; Dhiyaan works in partnership with the Come-N-Play to deliver age-appropriate activities for families with children 0 to 5 years of age; Healthy Dhiyaan is a playgroup with a specific focus on healthy living choices for children and parents; Mum's & Bub's caters for families with babies 0 to 2 years of age.



Via Phone call, "Thank you so much for ringing and checking In each week, I look forward to your phone calls".



## Dhiyaan Transition to School Program

The Dhiyaan Transition to School program works with preschool aged children at playgroup as well as individual children from the community to support them in developing school ready skills. The support provided and activities developed are designed and chosen in consultation with families and caregivers, to ensure children are given the opportunity to develop skills they will be able to use at school. Parents are an important part of this transition process



and are assisted by the Transition to School Facilitator.



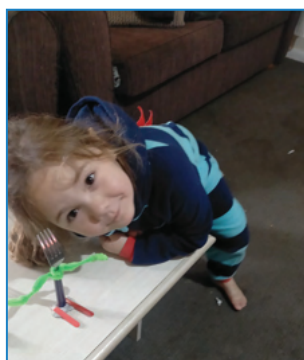


### Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)

The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is a two-year home-based early childhood learning program that works with families with young children aged 4 and 5 years old in disadvantaged communities. HIPPY empowers families to take an active role in their children's education, development and overall wellbeing. The HIPPY approach is based on evidence that children's earliest and most powerful learning comes from their family. This evidence shows that encouraging literacy and numeracy in early childhood sets children up for success in learning throughout their lives. Over two years (in the years before and after starting school), HIPPY children work through weekly or fortnightly packs of play-based, educational activities with their parents and family. They are encouraged to ask questions and try new things, developing their confidence and passion for learning, which enables school-readiness.



Feedback from a HIPPY child, "I want Miss Krystle to be my teacher because she is the best teacher ever".



### Quirindi Aboriginal Supported Playgroup

The Quirindi Aboriginal Supported Playgroup provides a structured and positive learning environment in which children from birth to school age can socialise, play and learn. Although priority is given to Aboriginal families, non- Aboriginal families are also welcome. A mix of all types of families can come together and experience the positive benefits of playgroup. This past year has seen a great partnership developed with Winanga-li and NSW Health in delivering a variety of programs to families.





# Intensive Family Services

**Managers:**  
**Lisa Hetherington &**  
**Bryarne Bielefeld**

Intensive Family Preservation

Youth Hope



## Promoting Opportunities for Children & Families

## Youth Hope

Youth Hope is a 12-month program that supports 9–15-year-olds and their families. Young people who need extra support are referred to the program by the Department of Communities & Justice and other services in the community. The program addresses factors that can lead to risk of significant harm and children entering Out-Of-Home Care (OOHC). Case Workers tailor supports to match the needs of the young person and their family, with a focus on increasing family functioning, healthy relationships, education and community connection. The program works to ensure young people receive the best support possible from their family and their community.



Staff from Youth Hope and IFP had the opportunity to attend a 3-day Rock & Water facilitator training. Rock & Water is a course for school aged children. Through exercises and games, children learn confidence and self-regulation strategies to be able to be assertive without aggression. Youth Hope have commenced running Rock & Water in family sessions with two client families and both families are giving positive feedback about the program.

The Youth Hope and Intensive Family Preservation team organised a day for our young people to connect and learn about Kamilaroi culture. Kamilaroi Elder, Len Walters ran a cultural tour where children and staff members were shown rock paintings and told their stories. The children were mesmerized and were very emphatic about how much they enjoyed it. In the afternoon Uncle Len did ochre paintings with the children and told stories of the Kamilaroi.

Youth Hope and IFP have been contracted for another three years with TFSS. This has given staff stability of employment after numerous short-term extensions. Staff report feeling much more settled and are looking forward to the recommissioning of the programs over the next three years with opportunities expanding for clients. Staff are now planning and brimming with ideas they now believe they will be able to implement.

## INTENSIVE FAMILY PRESERVATION:

The Intensive Family Preservation (IFP) program is designed to work with families in crisis, whose children or young people are at significant risk of harm to prevent placement in Out-Of-Home Care (OOHC). The program is structured with a three-month intensive phase and a three-month step-down phase with work being undertaken in the client's homes. The program aims to improve family functioning and relationships, through improved parenting and living skills. The program is grounded in the principle that it is best for children to be raised by their own family wherever possible and helps to achieve this by increasing child safety and wellbeing.



# Homelessness Services

**Manager:**  
**Lynda Townsend**

TAMWORTH HOUSING &  
HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

WOMEN & CHILDREN'S ACCOMODATION (Refuge)

TOGETHER HOME



## Supporting People to Build Positive Futures

The Tamworth Special Homelessness Service assists men, women and families aged from 25 years who may be experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Our priority is to establish a rapid reconnection with safe and sustainable housing options.

A priority for the service over the last year has seen a shift in focus towards homeless prevention initiatives. We provide crisis accommodation to women and their children, and place priority of those

women who may be escaping domestic violence.

The Special Homelessness Service offers transitional accommodation for men and women who may require intensive support and assistance in developing skills to manage a successful tenancy.

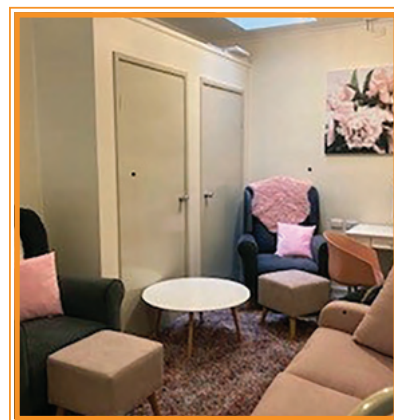
We have seen many changes and social factors that have impacted across the region. Homelessness and 'at risk' of homelessness have continued to rise. We have seen clients

for the first time who were not previously known to support services and at the conclusion of the rental moratorium we saw an increase in 90 day no cause evictions and for the first time in many years the lack of available and affordable rentals has been significant. However, in true spirit and commitment to the values of TFSS, staff have continued to push forward and advocate for our clients to obtain housing.



A client response after securing housing and sustaining independently for over 3 months, now also fully employed:

***"Yes thanks, I'm happy for you to close the support period. And I'd like to pass on my appreciation for all the help and support from all the staff at TFSS."***



The women's and children's refuge continue to go from strength to strength. Our biggest objective is to make the residence as safe and comfortable as possible. To do this we have worked in partnership with other service providers and local charities through the donation of grants to create some beautiful spaces. We focused on areas that could create a sense of wellbeing in our latest projects: a beautiful interview room with soft pinks and greys; a Zen room where mums could sit and just take time; the children didn't miss out with a beautiful revamp of their play areas.

We also welcomed the addition of pet enclosures, making the residence pet friendly and being one of the only refuges in regional NSW to cater for this.



Comment received from  
Aboriginal Health Worker

***'Wow this place is beautiful, I didn't imagine it to be like this. It has a warm and calming feel'***

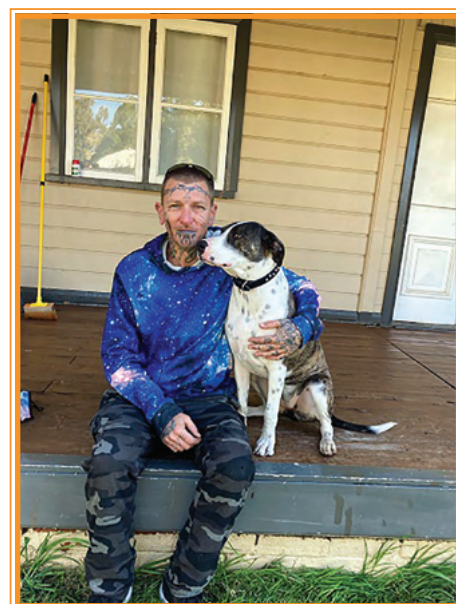


Together Home, an intensive specialised homelessness program that operates under the guiding principle of the 'Housing First' approach. This approach states that safe and secure housing should be quickly provided prior to, and not conditional upon, addressing other health and well-being issues. Together Home emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. It was initiated as a government response to visible 'rough sleepers' and the associated risks that some of Australia's most vulnerable community members were facing in and around the inner Sydney CBD as a result of COVID.

Together Home was formally rolled out in Tamworth in July 2020 and has seen TFSS work in a collaborative partnership with Homes North Community Housing. The dedicated staff of the Together Home Program have worked tirelessly to secure housing for 10 individuals who called tents on the Peel River, Anzac Park or the dressing sheds of the Carter St sporting fields home. As a result of the intensive support, all of these people now have a home, some are employed and others are working towards building family connections.

#### Ben's Story

*Ben was initially identified from an assertive outreach activity. TFSS had been made aware that a person was living in a tent on the river. He had a couple of sets of clothes, 1 pot and a little gas cooker. It took several visits before Ben was willing to really talk to us. Our first positive encounter was when we purchased him a phone and all he wanted to do was use it to contact his children. Ben was accepted in the Together Home program, after a rocky start with Ben leaving Tamworth to travel to Byron Bay. After a series of unfortunate events, he made his way back to Tamworth. Ben said he knew he had support here and was ready to change his life. Ben has come along in leaps and bounds. He started off with small steps, using the temporary accommodation to shower but still sleeping in his tent. Slowly Ben began to stay at the accommodation, he remained there until he was offered a stable home. Ben was able to purchase all of his essential furniture and household items with the assistance of the Together Home Program and his case worker. Ben has been in his home for almost a year. He continues to receive support through NDIS and his case worker and is learning new skills daily. He even has Mo Mo a therapy dog that is the light of his life. Ben has reconnected with his family and has gotten to know his little granddaughter. Ben still has goals that he is aiming for one day at a time- he hopes to soon re-gain his license and purchase a car.*



# Youth Homelessness Services

**Manager:**  
**ANNETTE PASCOE**

TAMWORTH YOUTH HOMELESS  
SUPPORT SERVICE

RECONNECT



## Supporting People to Build Positive Futures



Tamworth Youth Homeless Support Service (TYHSS) provides support to young people aged 16 to 24 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with safe, clean and healthy short term accommodation; provides young people with case management support to access long stay and permanent tenancies; access to Crisis Accommodation via our Youth Refuge and transitional properties. Products such as the YEAH program that supports young people to get into community housing with ongoing case management for up to 6 months and Rent Choice Youth which supports young people to access the private rental market with ongoing case management for up to 3 years remain valuable tools to support a young person's pathway to independence. The cost of living for young people remains one of the biggest barriers to stable housing with many young people affected by mental health issues and family relationship break downs. Our focus includes job seeking skills and counselling programs to assist with rebuilding family connections. Ongoing supports from community donations and donations from key stakeholders such as Joblink Plus and NERSHH have assisted TYHSS to provide access to furnishing, house hold cooking appliances, fridges and washing machines to assist young people establish tenancies. Donations remain a key source to support for young people engaged with TYHSS



### Good News Story

The young person presented to Tamworth Youth Homelessness Support Service (TYHSS) seeking support with housing and connecting with local services.

The young person was 18 years of age, transgender and identifies as male, his pronouns are he/him.

The young person has had a previous placement in the TYHSS Youth Refuge however left the placement to stay with his ex-partner. During his stay with the expartner the young person was a victim of Domestic Violence requiring an Apprehended Violence

Order. The young person has since moved into temporary accommodation with another friend.

The young person has been employed at a local fast-food outlet for four years. He enjoys his work and has goals to reach management level. He is currently studying for a Certificate III in Retail, supported by his employer.

This young person was approved for his first rental property in the private housing market using the DCJ initiative called Bond Start Loan. . TYHSS and RCY will continue to support the young person in his tenancy for up

to 3 years to prevent tenancy failure and a possible return to homelessness.

This young person regularly receives Transgender supports through Headspace, LGBTQI support programs and TAMS Wellbeing Program. The young person attends monthly appointments for Social and Emotional wellbeing which includes supports via counselling for violence and trauma mental health, self-harm and suicide.

As a result of working with this young person, TYHSS staff are committed to learning about and understanding LGBTQI issues.

The Youth Refuge is a key aspect of our program by assisting young people with shared living experiences while developing key life skills such as cooking balanced meals, learning to use a washing machine, budgeting and daily routine activities. We aim to engage young people in drug and alcohol free activities with support from our house parents and case workers. Key activities have included the movies, Aboriginal cultural shows, tenpin bowling, bush walks, bbq's, sports activities – tennis, soccer, touch football, gardening, visit to Lake Keepit and attempting to experience snow. We aim to introduce young people to new and exciting activities to enable them to make healthy lifestyle choices.



This year we welcomed two new sites – Armidale and Inverell into the Reconnect team, while continuing to service the Gunnedah and Narrabri communities. Reconnect have been able to service approximately 60 young people aged 12 to 18 years through case management and delivery of group experiences to build stronger community connections. Reconnect remains committed to providing positive experiences for young people and their families to build connectedness to community and culture in rural and remote areas. The ongoing support from local schools, community libraries and youth centres allows Reconnect work in communities and build fun and engaging life skill activities for the local youth.

During the year Reconnect delivered group activities within their communities to meet the needs of young people and their families by providing programs such as:

- Study Wiser, in Armidale, was aimed at supporting young people in year 11 and 12 to develop healthy study habits and maintain their health wellbeing.
- Season for Growth, in Gunnedah, was aimed at assisting young people experiencing traumatic grief and loss with support in managing their emotions and feelings.
- The Resilience Donut was delivered in Glenn Innes and Inverell to provide young people with an overview of the strengths and positive connections to family, school and community.
- Reconnect in Narrabri and Wee Waa delivered afterschool activities aimed at engaging young people in healthy, positive social connections.
- School Holiday Art and Craft sessions provided opportunities for the young people to meet new friends and gain new skills.
- This year, with the help of local schools, community libraries and youth centres we were able to deliver free drug and alcohol programs.
- Our biggest activity for the year was the Lake Keepit Camp held in conjunction with Lake Keepit Sport and Recreation Centre. Twelve young people attended a three day, two night experience away from their families. Staff displayed great commitment to transport and provide educational, life skill activities to young people from Tamworth, Gunnedah, Narrabri, Wee Waa, Inverell and Glenn Innes.





### Good News Story Reconnect

Reconnect Armidale was invited to deliver 'Study Wiser' seminars, focusing on stress management and study skills to 190 year 11 students at Armidale Secondary College. The first round of seminars focused on self-care and stress management during the HSC years, just in time to practice over the school holidays. Using seminar-style presentations, discussions, and interactive break-out groups, the students were taught about the impact of long-term stress on their wellbeing and brain function, how to notice and lower levels of chronic stress, and practical ways to implement self-care into their busy lives.

Students have reported that the seminars were helpful, informative and fun. Staff noted how engaged and keen the students were to take part in the thoughtful discussions during the presentations and the activities during the break-out groups. One student in particular asked if they could take some extra resources home with them as they wanted to equip other people in their life with managing stress.



The seminars highlighted the impact that Coronavirus has contributed to the stress levels of the students. The skills and resources the students gained during the seminar will help them manage these additionally challenging times in healthy and resilient ways. Stress management and self-care isn't just for the HSC, it's for life!



# Domestic Violence Services

STAYING HOME LEAVING VIOLENCE  
MANAGER: Lynda Townsend

WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT  
ADVOCACY SERVICE OXLEY  
MANAGER: Melanie Gray

WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT  
ADVOCACY SERVICE NEW ENGLAND  
MANAGER: Cassandra Cutmore



## Supporting People to Build Positive Futures



## Staying Home Leaving Violence

Staying Home Leaving Violence is a specialty domestic and family program offering service to the Tamworth and Inverell local government areas. Through its unique model, the program can support women and their children to remain safely in their home with an added sense of safety. The SHLV program provides comprehensive home safety audits and risk assessment activities to ensure women and their children are as safe as possible and can live free of fear. SHLV provides domestic violence education, support, advocacy, court support, referral and brokerage options for safety upgrades, counselling, school excursions, school uniforms, tutoring, and other identified needs for women and their children engaged in the program.

SHLV received a COVID-19 stimulus grant which enabled them to offer the program out to adjoining LGA's, which included Gunnedah, Armidale, and Glen Innes.



'The help and support from the ladies. The information given, was easy to understand and the ladies' suggested options to me that I didn't even know were available'

"I am thankful to have had the support from you. You guys have helped me through the hardest time of my life, and I wouldn't have been able to do this without you. There are moments where everything becomes so overwhelming, and you cannot work out what happens next or where to go, but to have one person that is able to guide you through, that's what I needed most, and that is what I got."  
- 39-year-old female DV survivor

The WDV CAS New England team provided 4,863 service events in this period and reviewed 151 cases of victims assessed as at serious risk of harm from domestic and family violence at 26 Safety Action Meetings.

*Provided in an exit survey when asked what clients liked most about the service:*

'I liked Jenny coming to visit and listening to my issues. She showed great care and understanding and was very thorough with her service delivery. She is an asset to your team and Armidale needs the services of TFSS. I am extremely grateful for the service provided and for Jenny and her beautiful character'

On 1 July 2020 we became two independent WDVCA's Servicing the New England Police District and the Oxley Police District.

During the 20-21 period WDVCA New England received 2,450 referrals via the Central Referral Point System. During this time, we provided support to 1,171 clients, including 452 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, and 34 from culturally diverse communities. These two unique groups continue to be a focus of WDVCA New England.

Our service offers court advocacy and support at the Court Houses in Moree, Boggabilla, Mungindi, Armidale, Inverell, Glen Innes, and Tenterfield. During this period our team assisted and support 1,498 women at court.



*Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service  
Oxley*

Oxley WDVCA came into effect from 1 July 2020. We cover the Oxley Police District, which includes the towns and communities of Walcha, Tamworth, Manilla, Barraba, Werris Creek, Quirindi, Gunnedah, Narrabri and Wee Waa. This financial year we have been focusing on developing relationships and establishing our service in those areas. Since April 2021 we have had a worker based in the Narrabri area to provide support to the Narrabri and Wee Waa communities. As well as covering ADVO list days at Wee Waa and Narrabri Courts we have established a Prosecutors Clinic. This has been well received in the area with one young client stating, "I'm so glad I came to the Prosecutors clinic I don't think I could do this if I hadn't"

In the 2020/2021 year we provided service to 2,596 women.

We reviewed 319 cases of victims assessed at serious risk of harm from domestic and family violence at 26 Safety Action Meetings.

# TFSS Initiatives

CENTRAL INTAKE

FINANCIAL COUNSELLOR

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN



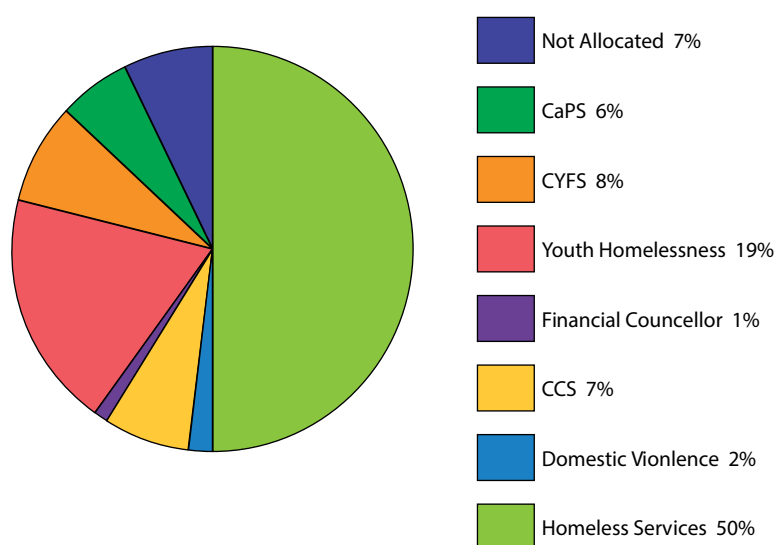
**THRIVING COMMUNITIES,  
ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES**

## Central Intake

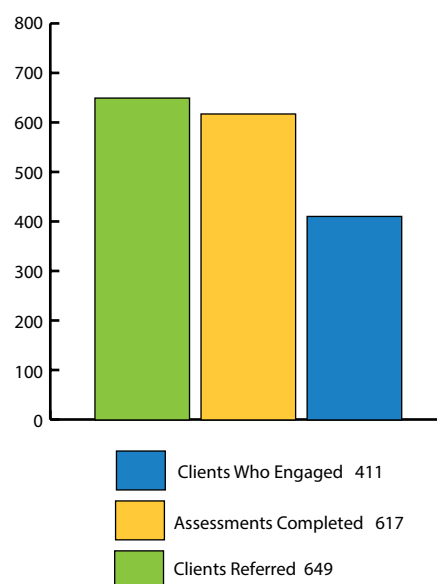
Our Central Intake team are the welcoming smiles who meet and greet our clients daily, answer your calls and assist with assessments for many people in the community aiming to access TFSS services. This year the team have assisted with over 14,000 calls into organisation and conduct over 600 client assessments.



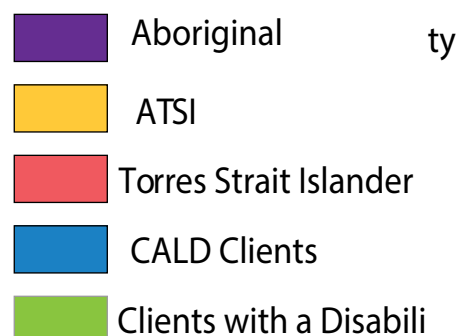
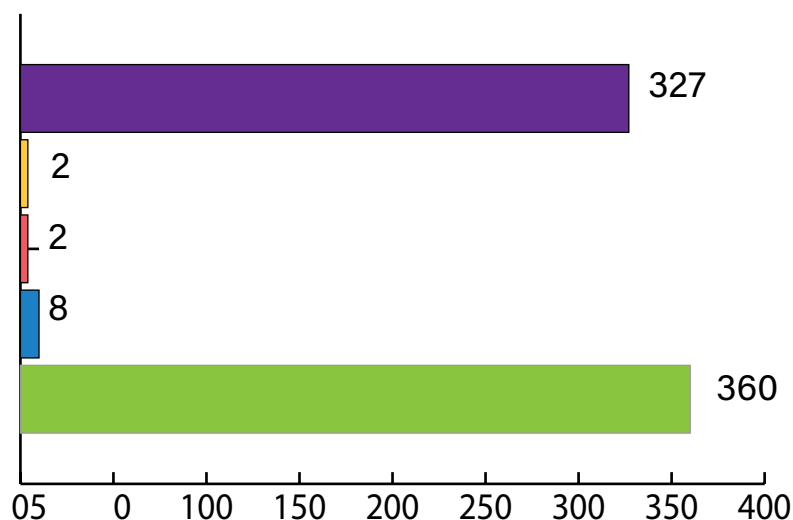
## Program Allocations



## Central Intake Statistics



## Client Demographics





## Financial Counsellor

The Financial Counsellor provides assistance to clients including; negotiating with creditors to reduce payments or waiver debts; educating clients on income versus expenditure; educating clients on alternative options to high interest loans and leasing goods; provide options if bills; fines or debts cannot be paid; providing Information about possible government assistance; budgeting; banking and money management strategies; preventing disconnection of utilities; providing information and advocacy regarding early release of superannuation and providing information about bankruptcy.

### **Work and Development Orders**

Work and Development Orders (WDO) are coordinated by Revenue NSW to allow eligible clients to satisfy their state debt through unpaid work with an approved organisation.

Tamworth Family Support Service became an approved organisation for work and development orders in September 2012. Since registering, Tamworth Family Support has assisted 912 clients to pay off a total of \$587,318.

### **EAPA Vouchers**

EAPA (Energy Accounts Payment Assistance) is a NSW Government Scheme designed to help people who are having trouble paying their home electricity and/or 'natural' gas bill because of a crisis or emergency situation. The Scheme is aimed at helping people in these situations to stay connected.

Tamworth Family Support has assisted the Community to access \$48,300 of EAPA credit this financial year.

### **Highlights**

Kate accessed TFSS after her husband was incarcerated. The Financial Counsellor assisted Kate to navigate the Centrelink and Child Support System to ensure that she was getting the correct payments. She was referred to Legal Aid to assist her with her legal rights re: a joint property. Once Kate's Centrelink payments were corrected, she was able to service her mortgage payments and rate commitments. She was supported to set up regular payments to rates, water, phone and power. The Financial Counsellor advocated to have a \$1,891 NAB credit card debt waived. She was referred to SHLV to support her after DV was identified.

Kerry was referred to the Financial Counsellor via the IFP Program. Kerry was living in a current DV situation with the perpetrator and her 2 Children aged 5 & 4 years. Kerry was a long-term client for over 12 Months, and this was due to the complexity of her situation. Kerry originally presented owing \$4,859 to debt collectors; this was successfully waived. Another \$2,200 in overdue fees were waived on a cash loan and an affordable payment plan put in place. Kerry paid off \$4,265 of State Debt with a WDO by engaging with her case workers, counsellor and the financial counsellor. She was assisted to keep her power connected with payment plans and EAPA vouchers. Her car was at risk of repossession, but the repayments have now been lowered to an affordable amount for the life of the loan with no interest of fees being added. Kerry exited TFSS with minimal debt and affordable payment plans.

The TFSS 2019 – 2021 Innovate Reconciliation Plan (RAP) has provided guidance for the RWG (Rap Working Group) to continue their collaboration and work with local Aboriginal organisations and community members. Recognising and embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, families and communities underpins the goals and responsibilities detailed in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Through guidance from Reconciliation Australia, The RWG looks for practical ways to bring about lasting change that promotes reconciliation and equality in our community while educating staff and community members about how the injustices of

the past can be acknowledged and how we can work together to form a new path.



The RWG has Introduced a systematic approach to ensuring all new employees are provided with an orientation to the RAP during the service induction. This process allows for the collection of new perspectives and ideas. This also involves new employees completing a self-assessment that is specific to the RAP. The data from this is used to identify cultural awareness needs and helps to guide new RWG practices and decisions on deliverable actions moving forward.



TFSS strive to ensure that our work practices and workplaces reflect our commitment to working towards a Reconciled Australia and thank everyone for their valuable input and dedication. It is through continued knowledge sharing, partnership, learning and commitment that TFSS will continue to work towards our goal of 'Thriving Communities, Endless Possibilities.'

## THE RAP IN ACTION

- Recognition of National Sorry Day with a 'Sea of Hands' display created in partnerships with children in our TFSS Early Childhood programs and local preschools.
- Supporting community members to share in acknowledging significant dates such as facilitating a Children's Disco inline with the 2020 theme 'We are the Elders of the Future' this was held in August 2020, also attending R U OK DAY events held by Tamworth Aboriginal Medical Service in 2020 and Close the Gap Day held at The Coledale Community Centre in 2021.
- Providing opportunities for staff to access cultural learning through accessing local cultural walking tracks, guided tours of Aboriginal artist works, facilitating a learning session with local Aboriginal Elders and sharing the contact and details of these so that TFSS staff are empowered to facilitate their own learning.
- The RWG worked in consultation with Oxley Vale School to provide fun activities for students during an early celebration of NAIDOC week.
- Involvement in National Reconciliation Week by facilitating a knowledge sharing day at Westdale School.



## *Thank you to those who support us with funding and consultation, including:*

- Australian Government - Department of Social Services
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Brotherhood of St Laurence and HIPPY Australia
- Centacare New England North West
- Legal Aid - New South Wales
- NSW State Government - Department of Community & Justice
- NSW State Government - Premier & Cabinet
- The community for their generous donations
- Share the Dignity
- Barton Lane Practice
- Elevation Church
- Commonwealth Bank
- Secondbite



*Help us to continue to change lives:*

### ***Donate Money:***

**TFSS is supported by many individuals, organisations and community groups. You can help us to help others by making a financial contribution to us through the following channels:**

**1800 073 388**

**<https://giveeasy.org/charity/appeal/tamworth-family-support-service/default?>**

**TFSS PO Box 1088 Tamworth NSW 2340**

### ***Donate household items and furniture***

**We accept donations of good quality household items including furniture, crockery, cutlery, appliances all in working order.**

### ***Volunteer***

**We believe the best way to better, fairer society is to engage everyone in looking after each other. Volunteers are appreciated and encouraged. If you would like to be a part of our efforts to reduce disadvantage by offering your time and expertise please visit our webpage at <https://www.tfss.com.au/work-place-ments-and-volunteering> or call us on 1800 073 388.**

### ***Leave a Gift in your will***

**If you admire the work we do at TFSS and want to assist us to create a better future please consider a gift to TFSS in your will; To do this please contact our team on 1800 073 388.**

### ***Create Corporate Partnerships***

**We rely on the business community for generous financial and non-financial support. We have a dedicated Senior Manager Corporate Services who is willing to support our future ventures through Corporate Partnerships.**

### ***Learn More***

**To understand more about our important work please**

**View our website: [www.tfss.com.au](http://www.tfss.com.au)**

**Join us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TFSSsince1979/>**

**Call us on 1800 073 388**

<b>24/7</b>	Twenty-Four Hours a Day, Seven Days a Week
<b>ADHD</b>	Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
<b>ADVO</b>	Apprehended Domestic Violence Order
<b>AOD</b>	Alcohol and Other Drugs
<b>ATSI</b>	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
<b>CALD</b>	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
<b>CaPS</b>	Children and Parenting Support
<b>CCS</b>	Children's Contact Service
<b>CCC /CCH</b>	Coledale Community Centre / Hub
<b>CYP</b>	Coledale Youth Project
<b>CY&amp;FS</b>	Child, Youth and Family Services
<b>D&amp;FV</b>	Domestic and Family Violence
<b>DV</b>	Domestic Violence
<b>DVLO</b>	Domestic Violence Liaison Officer
<b>DVRE</b>	Domestic Violence Response Enhancement
<b>EAPA</b>	Energy Accounts Payment Assistance
<b>DCJ</b>	Department of Communities and Justice
<b>GP</b>	General Practitioner (Doctor)
<b>HIPPY</b>	Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters
<b>HSR</b>	Health and Safety Representative
<b>IDAHOT</b>	International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia
<b>IFP</b>	Intensive Family Preservation
<b>LAC</b>	Local Area Command
<b>LCP</b>	Local Coordination Point
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>NAIDOC</b>	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
<b>NDIS</b>	National Disability Insurance Scheme
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organisation
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>QASPG</b>	Quirindi Aboriginal Supported Playgroup
<b>RAGE</b>	Renegotiating Angry and Guilty Emotions
<b>RAP</b>	Reconciliation Action Plan
<b>RWG</b>	RAP (Reconciliation Action Plan) Working Group
<b>SAM</b>	Safety Action Meeting
<b>SHLV</b>	Staying Home Leaving Violence
<b>SHS</b>	Specialist Homelessness Service
<b>TFSS</b>	Tamworth Family Support Service
<b>THSS</b>	Tamworth Homelessness and Housing Support Service
<b>Triple P</b>	Positive Parenting Program
<b>TSPG</b>	Tamworth Supported Playgroup
<b>TYHSS</b>	Tamworth Youth Homelessness Support Service
<b>WDO</b>	Work Development Order
<b>QAP</b>	Quality Action Plan
<b>CQI</b>	Continuous Quality Improvement
<b>ASES</b>	Australian Service Excellence Standards
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>NERSHH</b>	New England Regional Sustainable Housing & Homelessness Group
<b>YEAH</b>	Youth Entering Affordable Housing Program









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