

Annual Review 2021-2022





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Where we work.

In addition to our office locations, we provide social, emotional and practical support in homes, schools and communities throughout the Diocese of Wollongong

 **Campbelltown**

 **Wollongong**
Auburn St Office
Osbourne St Cottage

 **Shellharbour**

 **Nowra**
Worrigee St Office
Shoalhaven St Cottage



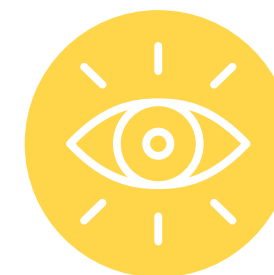
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work and pay our respect to Elders past and present.



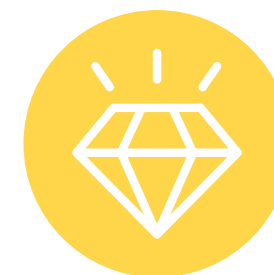
Mission

Inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we seek to bring joy to those we serve by enabling growth, healing, and hope. By delivering effective and high quality social services, Catholic-Care helps to build the social and emotional wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.



Vision

For inclusive, thriving communities where the human dignity of all is respected and valued.



Values

- **Dignity:**
Everyone is worthy of respect
- **Integrity:**
Always do the right thing
- **Compassion:**
Be empathic and responsive
- **Equity:**
Some people need extra support

Foreword.



Bishop Brian Mascord.

Reflecting on the challenges our community and the world has faced over the past few years, I am reminded that Christ came into the world at uncertain times, to help us reconnect in loving friendship to God and to each other.

Having been separated for so much of the last two years, there has been a real

sense of disconnection as we lived with the pandemic. It has altered our lives and our way of thinking.

Despite the immense challenges, CatholicCare staff have worked valiantly, supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the community. They provided practical support and genuine care, while giving vital companionship and hope.

Moving out of lockdown, there was an opportunity to live in the posture of love once again, with a message of hope our communities desperately needed. In his latest encyclical Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis focuses on spiritual unity through social friendship and the importance of caring for our neighbours. In it, he discusses how the pandemic exposed a “throw-away culture” which denies the dignity of those who are vulnerable. I reiterate his call to love one another as brothers and sisters and to engage with each other in positive and meaningful ways, as we are all children of God.

The work of CatholicCare is more important than ever. As our community faces increasing pressures with the cost of living, financial stress, economic uncertainty, social issues, rising mental health rates and negative impacts on wellbeing, our most vulnerable are impacted. The virtue of solidarity challenges us to commit ourselves to the common good and support those who are struggling in the face of such widespread challenges.

I give thanks for the whole team at CatholicCare. Frontline staff, Michael Austin and his Leadership Team and the Advisory Council all play unique and critical roles in supporting people in need. I pray, that God may continue to bless this vital ministry and all our pastoral works as we journey ahead as bearers of Christ's love, bringing hope and healing into the lives of all those we meet along the road.

Bishop Brian Mascord

Bishop of Wollongong



Franca Facci CAC Chair.

Reflecting on the last twelve months, I give thanks to all the staff of CatholicCare for riding the waves of the bumpy year, with determination and grit, to ensure that the people we serve received the services and support they needed. Without our staff, we wouldn't be able to strive to make our community a better and fairer world to live in.

At the end of 2021 we were all hopeful that the pandemic may be over and we could resume a more normal life. Unfortunately,

new variants and waves of infection saw our community continuing to cope with rules, restrictions, illness and separation. We were fortunate that the planning and communication processes put in place by Michael Austin and his team were robust and flexible, to address the new variants, and the agency continued without major incident.

It is a testimony to the commitment and dedication of all staff at all levels of the organisation that CatholicCare has been able to not only continue with usual business but also expand the work and mission of the agency with the opening of the Early Learning Centre in Shellharbour. The opening was a truly exciting opportunity to showcase an important investment in the lives and futures of young people. It was also an example of how we can work closely with schools and parishes to sustain and nurture young children in their most critical years of early learning.

Given all that has transpired in our world over the last few years, CatholicCare has become very cognisant of the difficulties many people in our community are experiencing with cost of living, secure

housing and mental health and wellbeing. These issues, as well as the personal dislocation that has occurred because of COVID restrictions and distancing, will inform CatholicCare's strategic planning in 2023. The role of agencies like ours become more vital in times of turmoil and uncertainty and we take our mission very seriously to provide the tools and support for people to thrive and lead their best lives.

I would like to personally thank all my fellow CAC members for their considered and professional review and dedicated stewardship of the organisation. I would also like to extend sincere and heartfelt thanks to Michael Austin and the Executive Leadership Team for their resilience and fortitude in leading CatholicCare through the last uncertain year. But most importantly, I would like to offer warm and generous congratulations to the incredible staff of CatholicCare, who care for our local community and honour the legacy upon which it was created.

Franca Facci

Chair, CatholicCare Advisory Council (CAC)



Michael Austin Chief Executive Officer.

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have once again dominated the local, national and international agenda. Rates of death, infection, lockdowns, isolation and immense challenges to the public health system have created endemic social issues.

Locally, the pandemic has complicated service delivery and created a greater need for social services. The pandemic is taking its toll on the most vulnerable people in the community, through financial stress, domestic violence rates, mental health issues and the housing crisis. It's never been more important for social service agencies to unite and work with the all levels of government to advocate for and support those most impacted. Advocacy and inter-agency collaboration have been on the top of my agenda, to ensure CatholicCare is leading the way and giving a voice to local people in need.

It has been humbling and inspiring to see staff rise to the challenge and ensure our clients and participants have been supported through these tumultuous times. It was a real highlight to host our first face-to-face staff day to thank our employees and treat them to a special day dedicated to celebrating their achievements. This was our first staff day since 2018, bringing together over 200 staff for the occasion. Events and moments like these are such a

rich celebration of our people, our culture and they honour the foundations upon which the agency was created. I take this opportunity to thank our Bishop Brian Mascord for his ongoing support and encouragement, our Advisory Council Chair Franca for her guidance and leadership and all members of the CatholicCare Advisory Council.

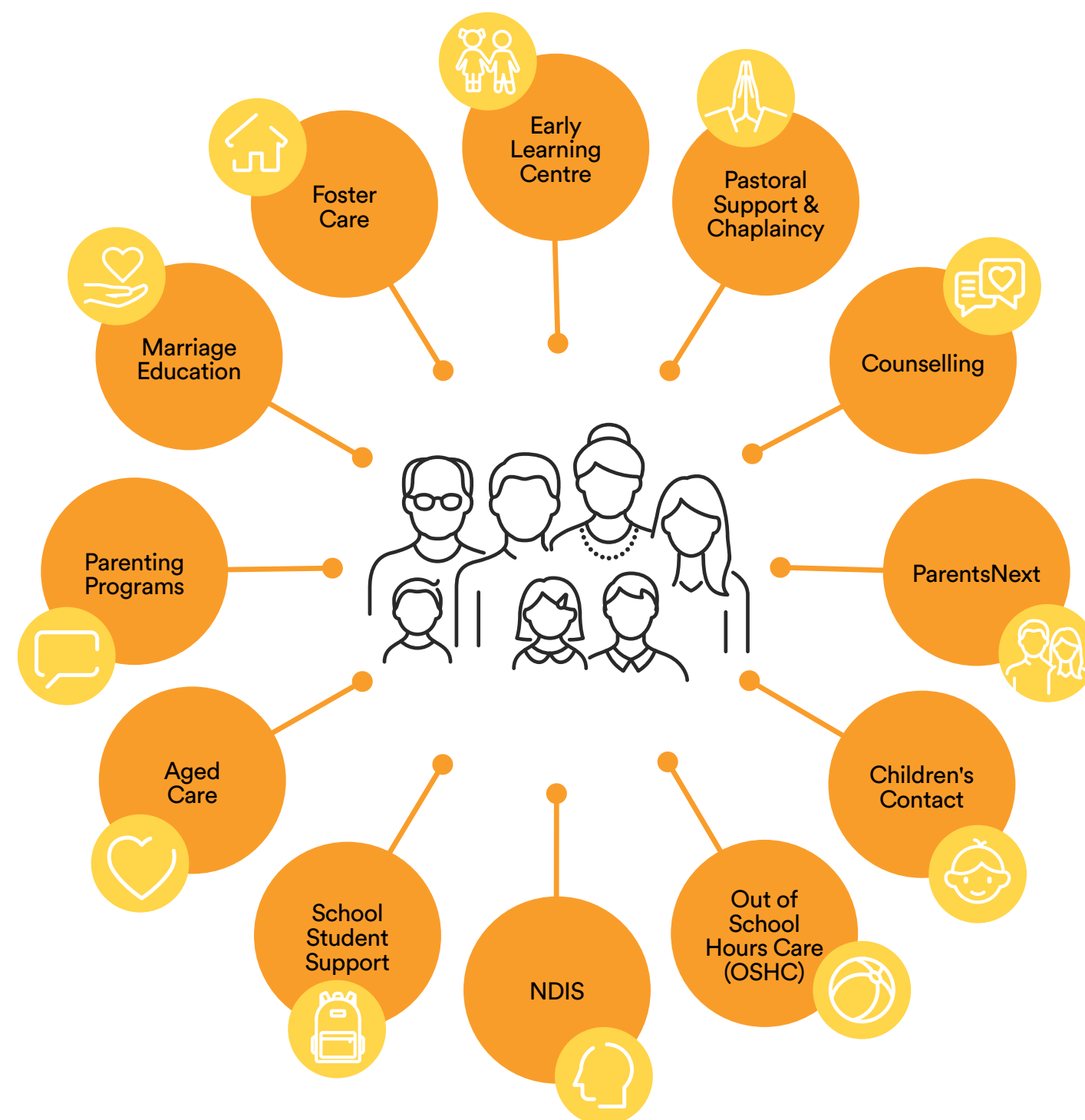
Reflecting on the 2021/2022 financial year, CatholicCare's year end result was more favourable than our original projections. Despite the operating challenges which COVID has presented this financial year, we continued to maintain a healthy performance, which means we are well placed to invest and expand our services. The plans to extend our mission in the community include a focus on establishing more childcare centres throughout the Diocese, after the successful launch of our first Early Learning Centre at Shellharbour. These and other exciting plans ensure we continue to respond to growing and changing community needs, and making a positive impact for those we serve.



Our Services.

CatholicCare is the social services agency of the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong, covering the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Macarthur and Southern Highlands Regions. We support people to establish and build positive relationships and connected lives. Our aim is to help people through difficult times to help them achieve self-reliance and realise their full potential. We also advocate for social equality and prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable.

CatholicCare is an inclusive organisation committed to helping anyone in need regardless of religious beliefs.

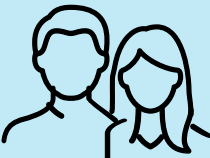


Our Impact.



1276

parents of children under the age of 6 increased their work readiness and social engagement through ParentsNext



1021

older people accessed Aged Care services to help them live well in their home and community



56

children enrolled at CatholicCare Early Learning Centre, Shellharbour



484

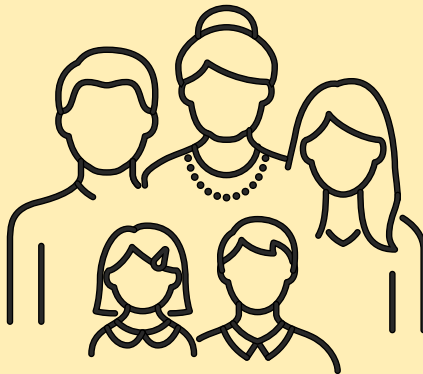
people found someone to talk to about their relationships through counselling

58

children and young people in foster care are on an adoption, guardianship or restoration pathway

160

families experiencing separation carefully navigated supervised visits and changeovers of children using Children's contact Service



624

Counselling sessions were held online



460

people living with disability increased their independence and community connections.

1824

children of working families enjoyed activities in a safe environment before and after school care

Early Learning Centre Launch for Shellharbour Community.

In May, we kicked off celebrations for National Families Week with the launch of CatholicCare Early Learning Centre, Shellharbour.

The state-of-the-art centre was officially opened and blessed by Bishop Brian Mascord and CatholicCare Wollongong Director Michael Austin.

"It seemed fitting to launch our new Early Learning Centre on such an important week, which celebrates the vital role that families play in the community", said Director Michael Austin.

CatholicCare is a social service agency which has delivered com-

"We had a dream of extending our Mission to contribute to the lives of children and families at a most significant stage, in the early years"

munity services for over 40 years. "We had a dream of extending our Mission to contribute to the lives of children and families at a most significant stage, in the early years", said Mr Austin.

"When we consider that 90% of the brain development of a child occurs by the age of 5, and that quality early learning can profoundly shape and create positive pathways throughout life, the mission call for

this work is truly compelling", he said.

"We embrace diversity, with thoughtfully designed play spaces, and with resources and menus that are supportive of a range of practices and beliefs", said Mr Austin.

"Our aspiration is to create more Early Childhood Education and Care Centres across the Diocese, and continue this journey of delivering the highest quality programs based on the latest evidenced-based research, with always the child and family at the centre", he said.



Easing the Transition to Kindy for Kids and their Families.



This year the School, Student and Family (SSFP) team worked collaboratively to develop the Kindy Kids Connect Program that focuses on building and strengthening resilience and connectedness in children through early school-based intervention.

The program adopts an early intervention 'wrap around' approach, supporting and upskilling parents and teachers along with direct support for children via face-to-face learning opportunities.

There is strong evidence from leading child psychologists

that building resilience in early childhood helps children to develop skills to overcome obstacles and reduce anxiety or other stress-related disorders later in life.

In May this year three staff from the SSFP team presented on the Kindy Kids Connect program at the FRSA conference in Adelaide.

Since the program was rolled out at the beginning of 2022, 293 students across 15 schools have completed the program. We look forward to rolling this program out to more schools, students and families in 2023.



Staff Day 2022.



There was joy, laughter, and celebrations as close to 200 CatholicCare Wollongong staff enjoyed their first face-to-face team day since 2018. The event was an opportunity to recognise how tough it's been to deliver community services during the pandemic and thank staff for their commitment to supporting the people we serve.

Everyone enjoyed socialising with colleagues across the agency, from aged care workers to foster care managers and school counsellors to NDIS support workers. The theme for the day was Belonging & Community - Our Stories, Our Impact.

The team shared reflections on how they had personally coped over the last few years, with incredible stories of resilience and comradery. It was particularly inspiring to hear stories about impact and transformation in the lives of the people we serve, responding to the call of our mission. Staff gave feedback about what inspired them in their roles and what they needed to feel valued.

Another highlight of the event was the keynote speaker Dr Tim Sharp, an internationally renowned leader in the field of Positive Psychology, a best-selling author, TV personality, newspaper columnist and people coach. His presentation captured the interest of staff, with practical tips on how to establish positive pathways and prioritise self-care.

The day included some fun team building activities, lunch at the Novotel Northbeach and gifts to help everyone feel appreciated and connected.

Connecting our Communities.



In 2021 we successfully ran a pilot of the Cross Generation Seniors Technology Training Program at All Saints Catholic Parish in Shellharbour. Affectionately called Cross-Gen by participants, the pilot highlighted the real need for a program such as this to continue.

This financial year we have successfully rolled out the program to three additional schools: St Benedict's Oran Park, Corpus Christi Oaks Flats and Holy Spirit College Bellambi, in partnership with Catholic Education.

Gross-Gen was promoted through parish and school bulletins, Catholic Women's League and various parish lunch groups. Not only have connections been formed, but there has also been learning, laughter

and most importantly connection between the generations.

CatholicCare Wollongong was also successful in receiving a small grant to continue this important work across the Diocese, this training however was a peer to peer model where senior volunteer mentors taught other seniors through an online learning training platform. This program, *Be Connected* is a joint initiative and is a joint initiative from the Good Things Network and the Australian Government. The goal was to encourage and assist seniors with technology. We successfully ran 6 sessions in 3 regions of the Diocese: Macarthur, Wollongong and Shoalhaven.

There were over 40 seniors who attend this *Be Connected* program.

We successfully ran 6 sessions in 3 regions of the Diocese: Macarthur, Wollongong and Shoalhaven.

It has been reported that one of the schools now has the cross generation program embedded in their curriculum, and other high schools would like to participate in 2023.

In total, across both programs, we were able to help nearly 100 seniors with not only technology but staying connected with each other.



Our People.

AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

337
total number
of staff



60
total number
of volunteers

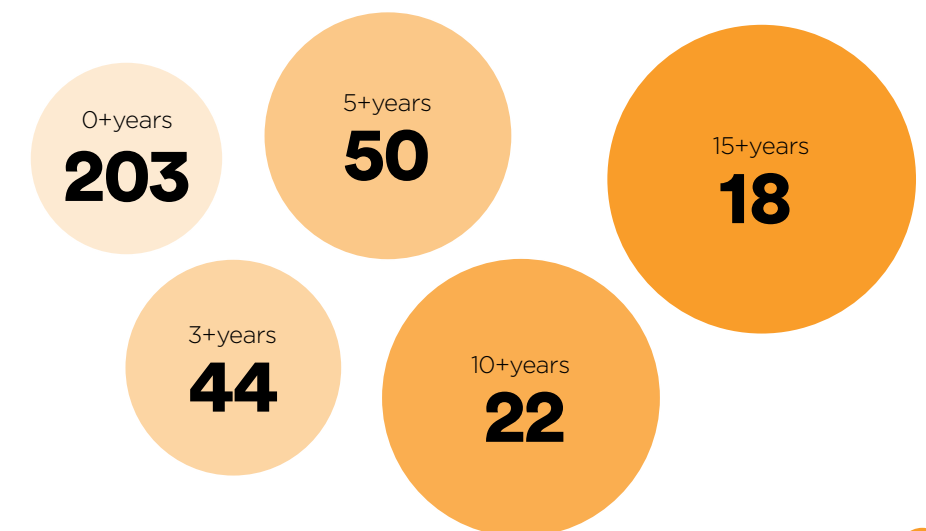


36 10.7% male
+
301 89.3% female

89 26.4% full-time
+
170 50.5% part-time
+
78 23.1% casual

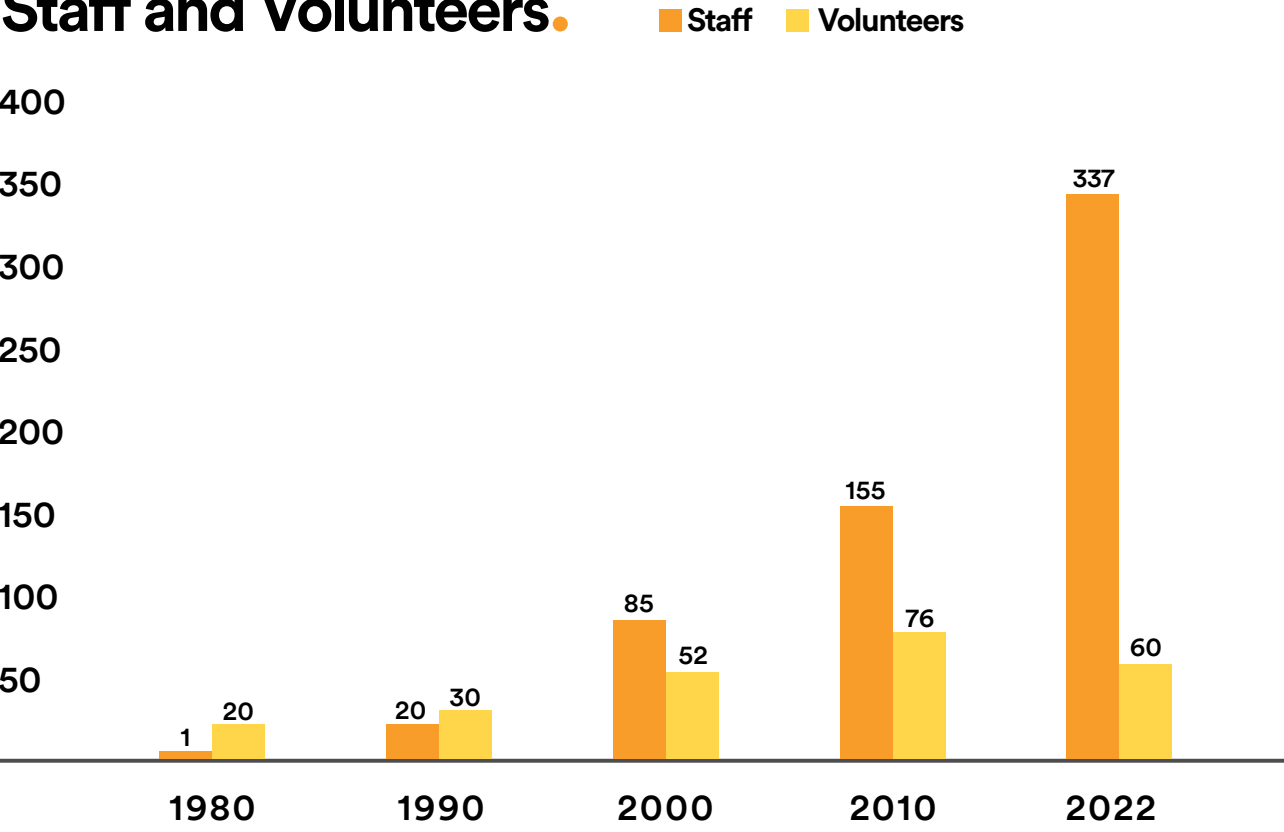
115 34.1% aged & disability
+
34 10.1% corporate
+
92 27.3% children & youth
+
96 28.5% family services

YEARS OF SERVICE

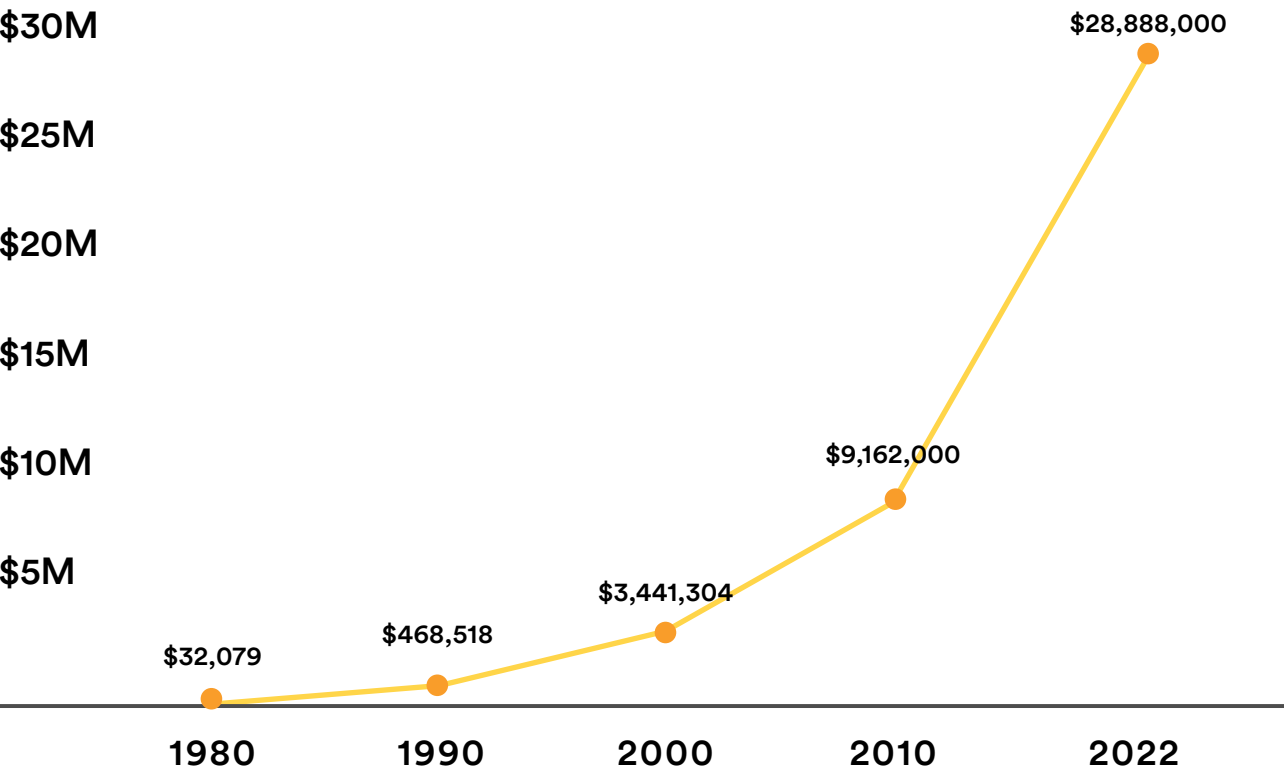


Growth.

Staff and Volunteers.



Revenue.



Advisory Council.



Top Row: Bishop Brian Mascord, Franca Facci – *CAC Chair*, Gail Maurice, Michael Austin – *Chief Executive Officer*
Bottom Row: Greg Parish, Kerry Hunt, Kieran Biddle, John Akele – *FRAC Chair*

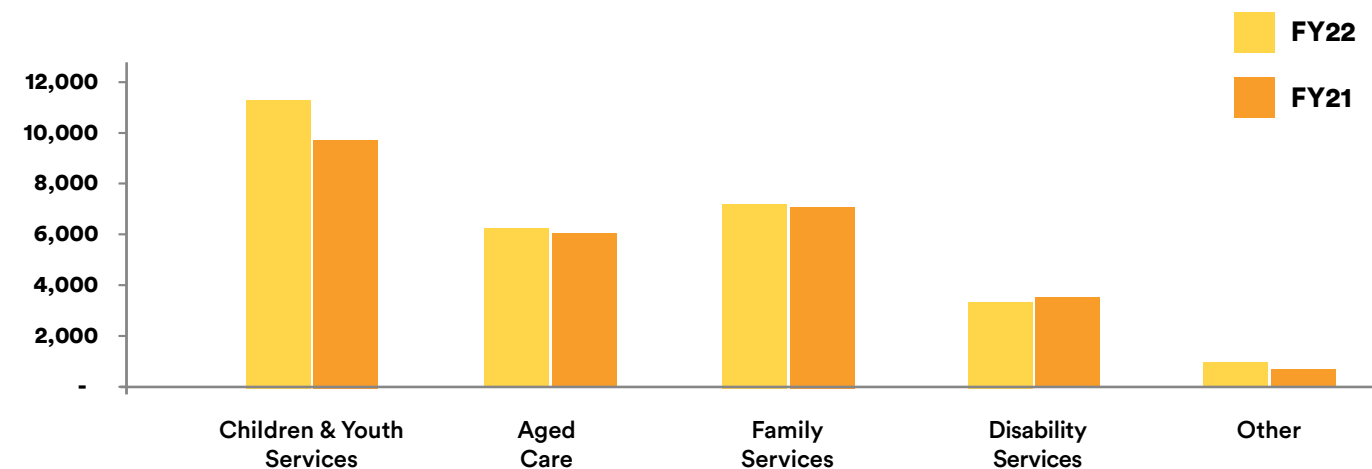
Executive Leadership Team.



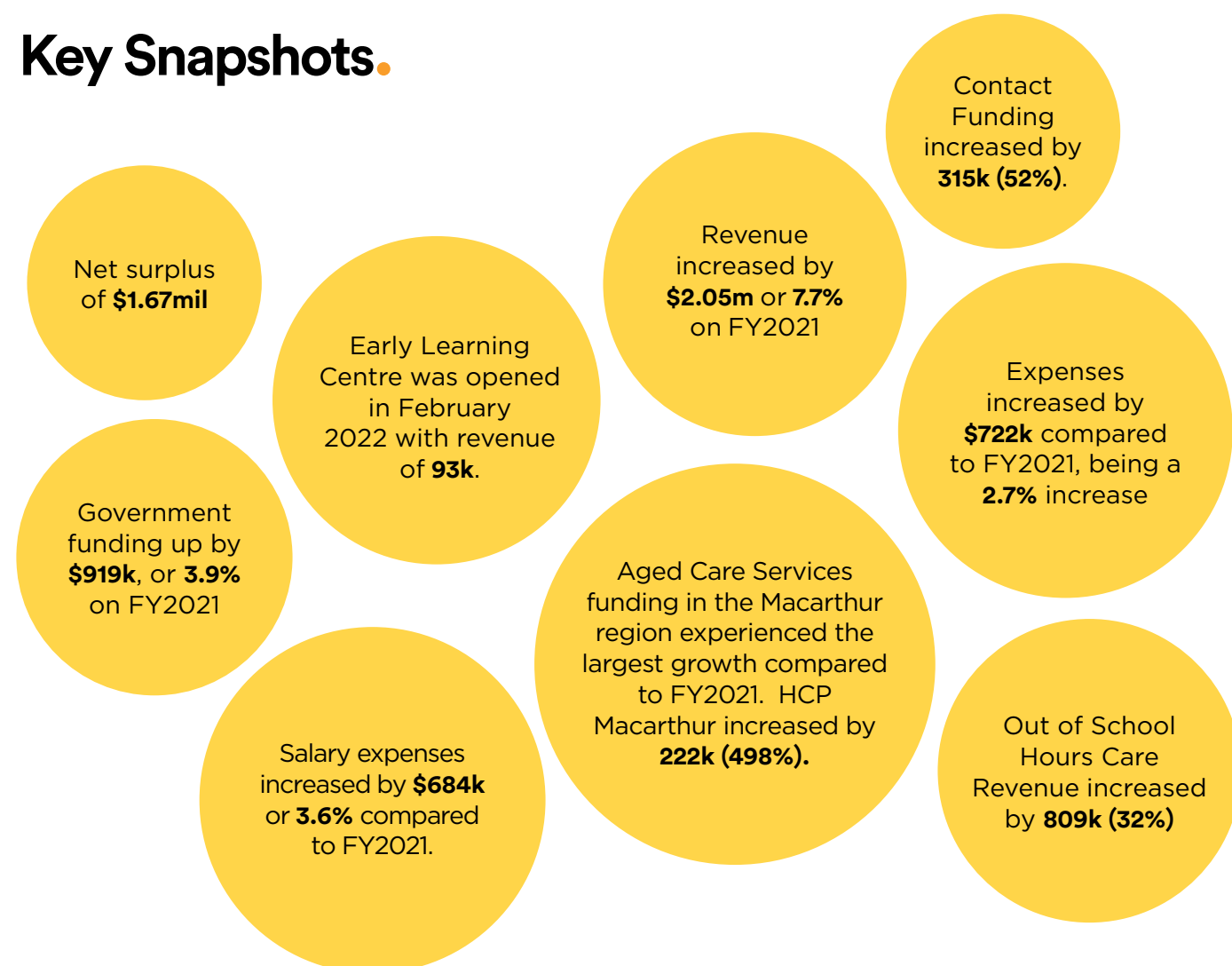
Top Row: Cheryl Tarantola – *Aged Care & Disability*, Kathleen Burgess – *People & Culture*, Moye Prichard – *Finance & Enterprise Development*, Michael Austin – *Chief Executive Officer*
Bottom Row: Roseanne Plunkett – *Family Services*, Tony Eid – *Chief Operating Officer*, Michelle Ferrara – *Children & Youth*, Narelle Austin-Eames – *Quality & Risk*

Revenue Trends.

Funding by Program (000's)



Key Snapshots.



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