

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



Helping kids grow towards a bright future



Kids First Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, recognising their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



We celebrate and value diversity. Our HEART Values guide every action we take, ensuring we support our community in the most inclusive way possible.



This artwork was created for Kids First by Kahli Luttrell, a proud Yorta Yorta woman. The image represents the connections between families, the importance of these connections, and the strength the family unit provides. The line work represents the pathways of many families in our community and the services and people that support these families in helping to strengthen the family unit.

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PRESIDENT AND CEO MESSAGE

Firstly, we would like to recognise our Board, our people, and our volunteers for contributing to what turned out to be another challenging year for the children, young people and families we support. The post-pandemic climate of increasing cost-of-living pressures, coupled with the unique challenges each family faces has meant our services have been more in-demand than ever.

For Kids First, this year was one of growth, expansion, and impact. Across 2022-23 we provided more than 27,000 hours of support services to families, an increase of more than 6000 hours on the previous year. Our staff travelled more than 107,000 km to deliver our programs and services, an increase of more than 80,000 km, and we're now providing services in 26 Local Government Areas across Victoria, up from 17. We are supporting more children, young people and families than at any other time in our organisation's history. This milestone is down to the efforts of every one of our people.

Following through with the aims outlined in our Strategic Plan launched in 2021-22, we have changed the way we manage client data and analyse outcomes, with processes added to embed the client voice into our practice leading to some impactful outcomes for our clients.

We also opened an incredible five new Early Years centres across Whittlesea, Darebin and Casey, bringing our total Early Years footprint to 12 centres across Victoria. We welcomed 995 new little learners to our centres for the period, an increase of 192 enrolments on the previous year.

Tony Smith departed our Board this year. A long-standing member of our team, Tony pioneered our (now annual) Kieser Charity Golf Day which has raised record funds to support our work. Tony has been an unwavering advocate, cultivating strong partnerships with industry and lending his commercial acumen to our growth objectives. We wish Tony all the best in his future endeavours.

In 2023, Whitelion Youth signed an Intent to Merge into Kids First. This merger is a rare opportunity to create an organisation that provides a broad suite of programs and services nationally. With established presence in Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia, for those aged between 10 to 24 years old, we now have the ability to provide high quality client-informed services and collective impact across Australia.

Improving the life trajectories of our nation's most vulnerable children and young people is our legacy – we're grateful to every single person who has contributed to its continuation this year.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aileen Ashford'.

Aileen Ashford, CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Forbes'.

Sandy Forbes, President

KIDS FIRST AUSTRALIA

We are a leading educational, family and support services provider for children and young people, and their families. Responsive to community needs, we harness the power of evidence-based programs and services to strengthen families so that children and young people can thrive. Our supports include trauma informed counselling, tailored parental coaching, high quality early years education and care, and more.

We've been at the heart of community care since 1896 – and we've only just begun.

OUR VISION

All children and young people thrive in resilient, strong and safe families and communities.

OUR PURPOSE

All kids deserve a bright future.

OUR VALUES

Our **HEART** values encapsulate the way we work together and partner with children and families to bring positive and sustainable outcomes.



HOPE



EMPOWERMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY



RESPECT



TRUST

OUR IMPACT



9,166

ANNUAL SERVICE
USERS



995

CHILDREN ENROLLED IN
EARLY YEARS SERVICES



27,274

HOURS OF FAMILY
SUPPORT SERVICES



7,000+

HOURS OF SEXUAL ABUSE
COUNSELLING & PREVENTION
PROGRAM SERVICES



59

AMAZING
VOLUNTEERS



244

KIDS FIRST TEAM
MEMBERS



14,700+

CLIENTS SEEN THROUGH
THE NEMA ORANGE
DOOR PARTNERSHIP



WE PROVIDED SERVICES IN

26

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREAS (LGAS)



WE TRAVELLED OVER

107,843km

TO DELIVER OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

FAMILY SERVICES: SUPPORT, EMPOWERMENT, GROWTH

At the heart of Kids First is our Family Services team. Every day our practitioners are in homes across Victoria, supporting parents and caregivers to become the best they can be. They help parents cultivate daily household routines, support them to engage in play with their children, and build rapport and trust. Our practitioners walk beside parents to support their engagement with services that help to meet their profound challenges. All the while, the voice of the child is at the centre of everything our practitioners do.

Over the past 12 months, our team has provided more than 27,000 hours of in-home and parenting support services to families with complex needs. These needs include mental health, substance use, family violence, insecure housing, and intergenerational trauma.

This past year has seen the way family services is delivered evolve in a profound way. Where traditionally, family support has involved 'case management' and coordinating services in a managed and systemic way, our practitioners identified that this way-of-working did not provide parents and families with everything they needed. We recognised there was an opportunity to tailor our approach, to empower parents with motivation and skills, building their capacity to navigate the challenges they face.

Driven by this insight, we partnered with the Parenting Research Centre (PRC) to develop and implement a new Coaching Practice model. This model has shifted the client approach from a risk paradigm focused on risk identification, monitoring and mitigation of deficits, to a developmental approach grounded in identifying strengths, building aspirations, and discovering the untapped potential of every family. While changing established practices can be daunting, the Family Services team has risen to the challenge and our clients are reaping the rewards of our new coaching model.

“
**JUST HAVING SOMEONE TO TALK
TO HAS BEEN SO NICE. IT CAN BE
SO ISOLATING BEING A SINGLE
MUM AND HAVING A BABY.**



Case study

COACHING WITH COMPASSION: SELINA'S* STORY

A single mother of five children between the ages of nine and seventeen – including a youngest son with complex support needs – Selina was, in her words, feeling 'utterly hopeless' when she connected with Kids First. Up to this point, her attempts to engage with the NDIS to advocate for support for her son had been fruitless, and Child Protection had become involved. With stress rising in the household, Selina's mental health and her children's wellbeing were greatly impacted. She felt like her family was fracturing. And then she met Natalie.

A member of our Family Services team, Natalie used the methodology set out in our Coaching Practice Framework to partner with Selina. Together, they developed a set of goals for the family, settled on strategies to support the children and her own wellbeing, and all the while Natalie listened to Selina, with empathy and without judgement, helping to build Selina's capacity to self-advocate.

Natalie supported Selina in engaging with her children's school and other services, and secured access to aid and support that made the family's home better equipped to meet their needs. Natalie also worked with Selina to choose future goals for her and her family.

Selina now says she feels 'like the best mother (she) can be.'

Natalie describes Selina as 'one of the most resilient people (she has) ever met.'

Child Protection is no longer involved in Selina's life and her five children are thriving. Selina is starting her own haircare business. She's also built a loyal following on social media, sharing lessons learned about motherhood and life.

This is just one example of the power of our newly adopted Coaching Practice Framework, helping our practitioners empower their clients to affect meaningful, lasting change.

* To protect the privacy of our clients, names have been changed.



“

I WAS EMBARRASSED FOR THE HELP BECAUSE I'D NEVER REALLY BEEN IN A POSITION WHERE I NEEDED TO ASK FOR HELP. SO I WAS A BIT EMBARRASSED ABOUT IT BUT I GOT THE HELP, WHICH WAS GOOD AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR IT.

EARLY HELP HUBS: CONNECTIONS AND SUPPORT BEFORE CRISIS

Recognising the value in offering support to families before small challenges become crises, we researched and co-designed a child-centred, place based, community led service model. This model provides early help to families with emerging needs, supporting the wellbeing and development of children from birth to 12 years.

Providing support at the onset of challenges reduces the likelihood of increasing families' stress at critical transition points, including the birth of a new baby, and when children begin kindergarten, primary and high school.

Our two Early Help Hubs, based in the City of Whittlesea and Mitchell Shire, provide:

- 1:1 parenting skills coaching
- Evidence-based parenting group programs
- Support to navigate specialist services, such as paediatrics, speech and occupational therapy, Carers Support service and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Specialist advice and consultation

Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) was engaged to undertake an evaluation of our pilots' impact. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to support Kids First in the ongoing adaptation of the Early Help Model and to understand its short-term impact on selected key outcomes.

After 12 months of implementation, the evaluation identified promising signs that the model contributes to increasing family awareness of, and willingness to engage with parenting support services. Also, the model appears to support families to understand their own needs, and has improved family functioning, social connection, financial literacy and parenting confidence.

**“
THE FAMILY PRACTITIONER HAS
BEEN SO GREAT. IF SHE HASN'T
BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE SHE
WILL LOOK ELSEWHERE AND
FIND THE SUPPORT I NEED.**

SUPPORTING DADS TO BREAK CYCLES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Kids First is a learning organisation providing evidence-based and innovative services that deliver measurable outcomes for children, youth and families. Through our formal research partnerships with academic institutions, we use both international models adapted to our context, and our own models tested and evaluated in varied settings.

One of the models we have proudly brought to Australia and adapted to the Australian context is Caring Dads. An evidence-based behaviour change program, Caring Dads helps fathers who have used violence improve their relationship with their children. An evaluation of the model conducted by the University of Melbourne identified a reduction of violent behaviour, and improved relationships between fathers, and both their children and the mothers of their children.

Over the last 12 months, our Caring Dads practitioners:

- worked with 138 men new to the program;
- provided clinical leadership to our subcontracted partner Anglicare; and
- delivered facilitation training and clinical consultations to delegates across Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Recognising the power of this program to shape positive behaviours, this year the Department of Justice and Community partnered with us to fund Caring Dads for men on community corrections orders. This partnership means Caring Dads can reach more dads.

Now in its third year, The KODY Project is a partnership between Kids First, Odyssey House and the University of Melbourne. KODY is an adaptation of the Caring Dads program to address and mitigate the combined impact of family violence, and drugs and alcohol on family relationships.

KODY provides participants with behaviour change support from the Caring Dads program, alongside alcohol and drugs counselling, while the whole family participates in a specialist child and family support program Kids in Focus. This program is an opportunity to identify and address both the needs of the parents, and their children.

THE ORANGE DOOR – A SAFE PATHWAY FOR FAMILIES

Kids First is a partner in the Northeastern Melbourne Area (NEMA) Orange Door. The Orange Door is a service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence and families who need extra support with the care of children. The Orange Door provides immediate practical support, including accessing safe interim accommodation as well as counselling, accessing legal and financial services, finding long term housing options and referrals to family service support. This year more than 14,700 clients were supported through the NEMA Orange Door.



HOPE AND HEALING FOR YOUNG VICTIM-SURVIVORS

The Northern Healing & Recovery Program (NHARP) uses individual and group practice to provide therapeutic support to victim-survivors of family violence including infants, children, young people and their parents and/or primary caregiver.

NHARP's Momentum Group is a therapeutic group for young people aged 13 - 17 years. Momentum provides a safe and supportive space for young people who are recovering from family violence. Over six weeks participants can connect with one another to understand the impacts of their experience and to participate in fun, creative activities. NHARP's practitioners facilitate these sessions, which include conversations around connection, recovery and trauma-informed healing approaches.

This year one of our group participants recalled only making it 'as far as the front door' of the first session, before they left feeling overwhelmed and out of place. The following week, their Mum came along with them and stayed outside while the young person tentatively entered the room and stayed for the session. By the final session, this young person declared that they didn't want the sessions to end. 'They were the best, especially the pizza!'

Other participants from our Connections Group shared similar experiences:

'Thank you so much for this fantastic corner of peace and support and safety. Emma and Monica are so wonderful, knowledgeable and supportive! Thank you from the heart!'

'Every time I leave this group on Thursdays I feel happier and more confident and less paralysed with fear for what is coming.'

SEXUAL ABUSE COUNSELLING AND PREVENTION

Our Sexual Abuse Counselling and Prevention Program (SACPP) is a specialist therapeutic counselling service for children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse and/or engaged in problematic or harmful sexualised behaviour. Practitioners create a safe space, supporting children and young people to process their experiences so they can heal from trauma.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT GRADUATE PROGRAM

Training and mentoring programs are opportunities for our experienced practitioners to have input into the future of our sector, shaping the practices and skillsets of our emerging leaders. In February we welcomed five graduates into our Family Violence and Sexual Assault Graduate Program. They gained valuable experience across our specialised programs, including:

- Sexual Abuse and Counselling Prevention Program
- Northern Healing and Recovery Program
- Caring Dads
- The Orange Door

In addition to receiving guidance and support from our highly qualified staff, participants benefitted from training with internal and external providers, while consolidating expertise gained through their social work studies. Participants also received support with their ongoing learning and development.

The program is a collaboration between the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Centre for Workforce Excellence (CWE), Family Violence Regional Integration Committees, and Kids First.

1,148

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SUPPORTED WHO EXPERIENCED
SEXUAL ASSAULT

167

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SUPPORTED WHO HAD DISPLAYED
HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS

1,315

CLIENTS SUPPORTED DURING THIS PERIOD,
AN INCREASE OF 339 ON 2021-22



ToFutureMe™

CONSENT EDUCATION MATTERS

We see evidence-led consent education as integral to eliminating grooming and unsafe relationships from our society. Our experts report that most young people don't know what consent is. They do not know how to ask for, recognise, or give enthusiastic consent.

To Future Me is a self-paced e-learning platform co-designed with Year 8 students, and clinical experts from our Sexual Abuse Counselling and Prevention Program. The platform helps to provide awareness and confidence to young people surrounding consent, respectful relationships, grooming, gender and sexual identity, and porn. Bridging the gap between existing sex education resources and online safety programs, To Future Me encourages young people to explore what healthy relationships look like – and what they don't look like.

Launched in early 2023, To Future Me was shortly thereafter awarded **Gold in the Product Design – Education category at the BETTER FUTURE Melbourne Design Awards**, highlighting the usability, forward-thinking nature, and game-changing possibilities of our platform.

Thanks to Westpac's Safer Children, Safer Communities grants, this year we were awarded \$100,000 to create two new digital education products to increase the reach and impact of To Future Me. The funding will allow us to research, design and develop another piece of the To Future Me product suite aimed at supporting teachers and parents.



BRIGHT FUTURES START IN THE EARLY YEARS

We believe that all children deserve to receive high-quality Early Years education and care. Education in the early years shapes childhood and beyond. Children's experiences in the years immediately after birth are a major determinant of their lifetime circumstances and wellbeing. Early life experiences have a fundamental influence on brain architecture, gene expression, and physiology.

The Kids First Early Years Education Program (EYEP™) – Kindergarten Model views all children in a holistic way, and in the context of their social, cultural and environmental influences. The model's aim is to empower children and their families to grow and develop positively, from the early years and beyond.

To evaluate this aim we have partnered with Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI), Australia's preeminent children's research institution. In a three-year project, MCRI is evaluating the effectiveness of our model and how it may be adapted and scaled in the future.

MCRI's second year report showed that our kindergartens delivering the EYEP™ – Kindergarten Model scored higher than Australian comparison data across emotional support, classroom organisation and instructional support.

In early 2023 The Australian Government called for responses to support the development of a new Early Years Strategy. We submitted our response in April 2023, highlighting the emerging findings from the Murdoch evaluation. Our Early Years Model was also featured as a case study in Early Learning Association Australia's submission to the Early Years Strategy.

The Ian Potter Foundation has committed to a five-year funding partnership with Kids First to support our model's adaptation and embedment.



Case study

FATIMA'S* STORY

Fatima had been acting out in her three-year-old kindergarten sessions and was becoming distressed in group situations. Noticing her changed behaviour, her educator Kamal organised a meeting with Fatima's mother Saanvi*. Saanvi confided that her marriage had broken down due to family violence, and that she had fled the family home, with Fatima, to reside with her mother, Fatima's grandmother. Saanvi also disclosed that her mother was being violent towards her, which Saanvi had experienced from her as a child.

With Saanvi's permission, Kamal consulted her colleague within Kids First's Intake and Engagement Team, with the Intake member linking Saanvi to The Orange Door. The Orange Door worker sourced alternative accommodation for Saanvi so that she and Fatima were safe. This was actioned swiftly and without Saanvi needing to retell her story or be left to navigate a disparate service system. Once safe, Saanvi was connected to a Kids First Family Therapist for dedicated sessions focused on positive interactions between mother and child.

Fatima is now happier, demonstrating an increased capacity to regulate her behaviours, and has started to engage in play and learning activities with other children.

* To protect the privacy of our clients, names have been changed.

We opened five new kindergartens this year, bringing our total Early Years footprint to 12 centres across Victoria. Our new centres are:

Whittlesea

- Lalor Primary School Kindergarten
- Meadowglen Primary School Kindergarten
- Barrawang Primary School Kindergarten

Darebin

- Reservoir East Primary School Kindergarten

Casey

- Clyde Township Family and Community Centre

Four of these centres are co-located with primary schools, making drop-offs simpler and saving valuable commute times for families in peak hour traffic. The proximity of kindergarten to 'big kid school' breeds familiarity, ensuring the next step in each child's educational journey is as smoothly stress-free as possible.

We could not have opened and staffed so many new centres in such a short time without the tireless work of our Early Years and People and Culture teams, who were singularly focused on all the little learners who will benefit – we thank them for their efforts.

In March, our Early Years team presented our approach to Educator Wellbeing at the Northeastern Melbourne Early Learning Leadership Forum run by the Department of Education. Teachers, educators, and funded kindergarten professionals were invited to learn about the latest initiatives and developments from the forefront of Early Years leadership. Our wellbeing approach centres engaging wellness activities and leading with compassion and empathy.



Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt MP was warmly welcomed for a tour of Lalor Primary School Kindergarten in March.



In May, Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt officially opened our Reservoir East Family Centre and Meadowglen Primary School Kindertartens.

SCHOOL READINESS TRAUMA-INFORMED CONSULTANCY AND COACHING

Our School Readiness Training equips Early Years educators with the tools they need to support children's social and emotional needs. Sharing our expertise and experience helps to build the ability of early years educators. Adopting a trauma informed and relational approach, we offer educators a holistic perspective on child wellbeing derived from our model of Early Years education and care, and our first-hand experience at our own early years centres.

Our School Readiness team delivered 29 training sessions to 230 participants, alongside nearly 200 consultation hours.



UPHOLDING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

We were successfully recertified against the Human Services Standards and ISO9001 accreditation this year. These two non-negotiable standards enable us to continue our vital client work funded through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).

The recertification auditors described our team as open, transparent, helpful, and very keen to share programs and outcomes achieved with clients. Our quality management system was described as 'mature' with sound governance processes and 'lots of evidence of data driving improvement.'

As part of our audit, interviews were conducted with our clients to seek feedback both on their experience, and the impact our services have had on their lives. It was with immense pride that we received the following verbatim feedback, testaments to the tireless efforts of each of our people to improve the lives of children and young people, and their families.





“
KIDS FIRST **CHANGED**
MY LIFE.

“
THE ORGANISATION
IS VERY **HELPFUL**, GREAT
COMMUNICATION.

“
THEY'RE **UNDERSTANDING**
AND NON-JUDGMENTAL.

“
FEELS LIKE MY **FAMILY**.

“
THEY PROVIDE A
WARM AND COSY
ENVIRONMENT.

“
ALWAYS ASK
MY **OPINION**.

“
ONE OF THE FIRST
ORGANISATIONS
TO MAKE ME FEEL I'M
WORTH SOMETHING,
AND ONE OF THE FIRST
ORGANISATIONS
TO **HELP** ME.

“
SUCH A **RELIEF** TO
FIND KIDS FIRST.

“
REALLY **FRIENDLY** AND
TAKE TIME TO LISTEN.

“
EVERY (GOAL) HAS
BEEN HIT. I COULDN'T
BELIEVE WHAT I WAS
ABLE TO **ACHIEVE**.

CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

We attend and support community events to actively connect with the community we serve. We foster relationships, raise awareness, and build support for our mission: to empower children and young people, and their families, so all can reach their fullest potential.

MIDSUMMA FESTIVAL

Kids First actively embraces inclusion and diversity. Members of our team joined Melbourne's largest LGBTQIA+ festival, Midsumma on Sunday 22nd January. Their attendance was part of a Sexual Assault Services (SASVic) stall that featured giveaways, art and important information on how to access sexual assault services across the state.



BANYULE TWILIGHT SOUNDS

We sponsored and attended Banyule Twilight Sounds, the area's premier free family-friendly music event. This was a valuable opportunity to connect with local families, increasing awareness of our services.



CITY OF WHITTLESEA COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

Our colouring table was an absolute hit at the City of Whittlesea Community Festival. Laura from our Early Help Hub 3757 was interviewed by the 88.6 Plenty Valley FM team.



LALOR LIVING WELL EXPO

Our Early Years team enjoyed attending the Living Well Expo at the Lalor Library in May, chatted to families about our unique approach to Early Years Education and Care.



RALLYING OUR COMMUNITY

As a not-for-profit organisation, we wouldn't be able to deliver our broad suite of programs and services without the ongoing generosity of our supporters. From one-off gifts to sponsored fundraisers, every act is helping us create bright futures for the children and young people we support.

3AW – MAJOR CHARITY PARTNER

2022 3AW Lunchtime Rumours Feast

The 3AW Lunchtime Rumours Feast – held in the opulent surrounds of the Regent Theatre's Plaza Ballroom – attracted 420 generous attendees who gathered in support of our work in the community. In its 16th year, this key fundraising event generated more than \$280,000. Our appreciation goes to Ross Stevenson, Leonie McNicol, Elaine Marriner, Russel Howcroft and the entire 3AW team for their continued dedication to bring this event to life.

3AW Feature Charity – April 2023

In addition to partnering with us for the Lunchtime Rumours Feast, 3AW selected us as their feature charity for April, with daily recorded and live messages on radio and posts across their social media exposing us to more than 700,000 weekly listeners in Victoria alone. This visibility was amplified through 3AW's affiliate station 2GB in Sydney, which contributed significantly to our 2023 Tax Appeal results.



Guests enjoyed a hip-swinging live performance at the 2022 3AW Lunchtime Rumours Feast.

2023 KIESER ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF DAY

Held at the Latrobe Golf Course in Alphington, 124 players took to the turf and for the 9th year in a row, Kieser selected Kids First as their chosen golf day charity. Sponsorship, players' fee contributions, and funds raised from raffles and a live digital auction led to this fun-filled day of competition and camaraderie raising a record \$57,000. We thank Kieser for their continued support.



Attendees pose for a photo at the 2023 Kieser Golf Day for Kids First.

2023 TAX APPEAL

If you live, work or play around Thomastown or Heidelberg, you may have spotted our eye-catching Tax Appeal collateral in shop windows and community hubs. Part of an integrated fundraising campaign, this appeal centred on the story of Alex, a resilient young boy with a troubled past. We chose a hopeful goal of \$15,000 for this campaign, so we were simply awestruck when we managed to raise more than \$26,000. The generosity of our community never fails to astound us.



An image from the 2023 Kids First Tax Appeal campaign.

\$26,329 (and 30 cents)

RAISED FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN NEED

OUR BELOVED OP SHOP CONTINUES TO DELIVER

From homewares to haberdashery, furniture to fashion, our Rosanna Op Shop has something for everyone. Our community's generosity knows no bounds, with regular donations keeping our staff and volunteers busy sorting, displaying, and serving customers with their customary warm welcomes.

In the last year, our Op Shop raised more than \$185,000 to support our work with children and young people. With a strong place in the Rosanna community and an active presence on social media, it is little wonder that this humble Op Shop in the heart of Rosanna is still going strong more than three decades after its establishment.

“ THIS SPACE CONNECTS PEOPLE FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS, AGES, CIRCUMSTANCES. I THINK THAT'S LOVELY. THERE'S STILL PEOPLE COMING TO THE SHOP WHO WERE COMING WHEN I FIRST STARTED VOLUNTEERING, SO MORE THAN TEN YEARS AGO. THEY'RE STILL REGULARS. I THINK THAT SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT THE SHOP'S PLACE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

Nicole, long-time op shop volunteer



Nicole poses in front of our Rosanna Op Shop.

ABC ALPHABET ART FUNDRAISING EXHIBITION

ABC Alphabet Art is a wondrous children's picture book; a collaboration between artist Jo Lane and Kids First. In May our President Sandy Forbes officially opened an exhibition showcasing all 26 of Jo's alphabet-themed original artworks from the creation of her book. During the six week exhibition, attendees could purchase books and posters with all proceeds benefiting Kids First.



Kids First President Sandy Forbes welcomes attendees to the opening of ABC Alphabet Art.

METHODIST LADIES' COLLEGE – MLC KINDLE ART EXHIBITION FUNDRAISER

We are so grateful to the MLC Kindle community for selecting us as the recipient of this \$8000 donation, which we used to purchase items for our children's Sensory Room at our Heidelberg Child and Family Centre. This amount was raised from MLC Kindle's art exhibition and auction.



A representative from Kids First poses with some little helpers from MLC Kindle.

SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

Within the heart of our organisation lies the unwavering commitment and remarkable contributions of our people. Their passion, innovation, and resilience have propelled us forward, and it is their collective dedication that has shaped our success. This year, we have continued to foster an environment where each person's talents could flourish, demonstrating our steadfast commitment to nurturing our people and in doing so, enabling them to be and do their best.

KIDS FIRST DAY

Our annual all-staff get together, Kids First Day, was held in November 2022 with over 200 staff, several Board members and volunteers in attendance. The day was extremely well received by everyone with a very warm and interesting Welcome to Country by Djirra Djirra Aboriginal Women's dance group. This was made special with two of their young babies being part of the dances.

“
**MY COLLEAGUES WERE AMAZING.
THERE WERE SOME INTERESTING
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.**

Staff made the most of Kids First day activities, with lots of laughs had by all!



“

KIDS FIRST HAS GOOD COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND PROFESSIONALISM IN LOOKING OUT FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES. THE WELLBEING OF THE EDUCATORS IS IMPORTANT AND WELL SUPPORTED.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Over the past 12 months we have been successful in applications for funding for Graduate and Traineeship programs from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. This has supported existing staff in their development, and for new staff to join our organisation.

We were also participants in Family Safety Victoria's Family Violence and Sexual Assault Health, Safety and Wellbeing pilot program to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of the Sexual Assault, and Prevention workforces.

We were among nine pilot agencies from across Victoria who worked closely with wellbeing coaches to co-create team strategies and resources to bring an online Health, Safety and Wellbeing Guide to life. The Guide features practical ideas and resources which can be applied by any team or organisation. Kids First has adapted many of these practices into our ways of working.

DEVELOPING OUR VOLUNTEER FOOTPRINT

At Kids First we value our volunteers and the incredible skills, experience and enthusiasm they bring to their roles alongside our staff. In this period, several short-term volunteer roles were developed within **Early Years** to provide support with projects including:

- a **book audit**, assessing the diversity of characters and families in the library collection of children's books at Early Years centres;
- an **administration project**, collating photographs of resources and toys, and then printing and laminating these for use by children who have English as a second language or communication difficulties; and
- a **sustainability project**, where a volunteer will assist Early Years staff in the development of an environmental sustainability action plan for the centres.

Also, a new role was created to support our Payroll Manager with various parts of our fortnightly pay-run, and another volunteer recruited studied accounting and finance, and is learning more about our systems and processes.

We also formed a new partnership with disability support service GenU, enabling us to invite a person with a disability to volunteer at our Ganbu Gulinj Early Years Centre. This person was provided with a support worker who was present to assist them, and there is now scope to expand volunteer opportunities of this nature to our other Early Years centres.



MEDIBANK PRIVATE

We negotiated with Medibank Private to offer all existing and new staff access to discounted rates on private health insurance. This also includes access to a range of resources for health and wellbeing made available to individuals who join, and also for Kids First to use as part of our overall wellbeing initiatives.

“ I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THE WORK WE DO IN FAMILY SERVICES AND IT WAS A PRIVILEGE TO WORK WITH FAMILIES AND BUILD COMPETENCE IN PRACTITIONERS WHO ALSO LOVE THE WORK AND ARE KEEN TO LEARN. ”

THANK YOU

PATRONS

Patron in Chief, Her Excellency, the Hon. Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria.

Patrons Elaine Marriner, Neil Mitchell AO, and Ross Stevenson.

VOLUNTEERS

We wouldn't be the same without the tireless work and boundless enthusiasm of our army of committed volunteers. Thank you for the time you give so generously, and the joy you spread so freely.

PHILANTHROPIC TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

For believing in our vision and our ability to deliver on our ambitions. Your support drives industry innovation, which only means better outcomes for children and young people. Thank you for your trust and generosity.

- Ian Potter Foundation
- Brian M Davis Foundation
- Westpac Safer Children, Safer Communities

DONORS

A wise person once said 'Giving is not just about making a donation. It's about making a difference.' To every person who has supported our work, no matter the size of your donation – your generosity means we can continue to make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

GOVERNMENT

We would like to acknowledge the generosity and support of the Victorian Government's Department of Education and Training; Department of Families, Fairness and Housing; and Department of Community Safety and Justice. Also, we extend our thanks to the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, and Local Governments.



KIDS FIRST FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

To Leonie McNicol, Jeanette Finegan, and Lynda Turnbull for your efforts bringing together our major fundraising events, including the Lunchtime Rumours Feast and Kieser Charity Golf Day.

KIESER AUSTRALIA

We extend our sincere appreciation to the team at Kieser Australia for the efforts that went into making our 2023 Annual Charity Golf Day a success. We look forward to continuing our relationship for the benefit and betterment of children and young people, and their families.

Gold Sponsors: Commonwealth Bank
Bendigo, TDG Environmental.

Silver Sponsors: Maurice Blackburn Lawyers,
Platinum Group Design + Construct, Lakeside Financial,
CS and G Signs Pty Ltd.

Bronze Sponsors: Lawless Construction, Imaging
Associates, ITelligent Consulting Services.

3AW LUNCHTIME RUMOURS FEAST

Major Sponsors: 3AW 693, Marriner Group, De Bortoli Wines, Elaine and David Marriner and Family, Marriner Group Staff, CHANEL, Bertocchi Smallgoods Pty Ltd, Jayco, Kieser, Mercedes-Benz Berwick.

3AW Breakfast Team: Ross Stevenson, Russel Howcroft, Jon Anderson, John Silvester, Peter Ford, Mark Davidson, Damian Tardio, Luca Gonano, Emilia Fuller, Cushla Travers.

Event Partners: Andrea Mayers, Anita Sharma, Armadale Dance Studio, Australian Football League, Bill Gibbins AM – Jericho Cup Warrnambool Pty Ltd, Calendar Cheese Company, Caroline Dall, Clare Lombardi, Craig Howard – Mercedes Benz Berwick, Craig Jackett – Emit Capital, Cydnie Wood, Davin Magee, Declan Murphy, Elaine Marriner, Finegan Family, Gerry Ryan, Hawthorn Football Club, Hitomi Sanders, International Artisans of Florence, Jesse Davidson – Centonove, Jim Davidson – Photography Studies College, Jo Lane, Katie Murphy, Kerry Ryan, Koko Black, Margaret Farquharson, MECCA, Melbourne Football Club, Meyer Cookware Australia Pty Ltd, Mitchelton Winery, My Local Broker, Platinum Providore and Northern Wildcatch Seafood Australia, SEW Eurodrive, Reece, Richmond Football Club, Rob Sinclair – E and S Trading Co Pty Ltd, Sam Pang, Sarah Fallshaw, Sarah Young, Smiggle, Steve Abbott – Jellis Craig, Tennis Australia, Tony Smith – Kieser Australia, Vince Gurciullo – De Bortoli Wines.

TAX APPEAL 2023 MAJOR DONORS

- The Melbourne Pen Show
- The Old England Hotel

RESEARCH PARTNERS

- Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- The University of Melbourne
- University of Toronto

SECTOR PEERS

- 3081 Angels
- Anglicare Victoria
- Banyule Community Health
- Banyule Council
- Berry Street
- Big Group Hug
- Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Bubup Wilam Child and Family Centre
- Changing Ways (Canada)
- Child Development Institute Toronto
- City of Whittlesea
- City of Casey
- Mitchell Shire Council
- Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
- cohealth
- DPV Health
- Early Learning Association Australia
- FamilyCare Shepparton
- Family Services Australia
- inTouch
- Nappy Collective
- Odyssey House Victoria
- Our Place
- St Kilda Mums
- Thorne Harbour Health
- Uniting Vic. Tas
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association
- Victorian Council of Social Service
- Whittlesea Community Connections
- Wellways
- Whitelion

LEADING KIDS FIRST

Instrumental in shaping our long-term vision and fostering accountability, our Board serves as ambassadors to represent Kids First to donors, and the wider community. Through their governance, strategic planning, and unyielding dedication to our vision for brighter futures for children and young people, our Board has, and undoubtedly will continue to contribute to our meaningful impact.



Sandy Forbes
President



Kerry Ryan
Vice President &
Secretary/Public Officer



Davin Magee
Treasurer



Suyin Ng
Board member



Stephen Sandler
Board member



Simon Kent
Board member



Paul McCarthy
Board member

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

INCOME OVERVIEW

Kids First Revenue	%	\$
Government Grants	90.0%	25,368,056.00
Donations	1.3%	363,439.00
Philanthropic & Trust	2.0%	553,500.00
Operating Activities	1.9%	528,654.00
Interest Received	0.2%	63,375.00
Other Income	1.6%	451,878.00
Investment Income	1.5%	422,094.00
Net Fair Value of Financial Assets Designated as FVTPL	1.5%	426,866.00
Total Income		27,328,902

EXPENDITURE OVERVIEW

Kids First Expenses	%	\$
Employee Benefit Expense	72.7%	19,168,352.00
Client Expense	12.4%	3,260,566.00
Administration and Operations Expense	14.9%	3,927,956.00
Total Expenses		26,356,874.00
Total Comprehensive Income/Loss for the Year		1,820,988.00

KIDS FIRST ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Total Assets	17,750,764.00
Total Liabilities	5,720,273.00
Net Assets	12,030,491.00



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In 2022/23 Kids First was able to emerge strongly from the challenging pandemic financial climate. Our overall revenue has increased by \$7 million compared to the previous financial year mainly from increased funding for new program offerings. Grants have increased by 5% representing strong backing from a range of philanthropic partners.

We have continued to make positive gains to increase our footprint and maximise positive outcomes for children and families, with growth particularly in Early years services. Donation funding also increased and we welcomed back our largest fundraiser, the 3AW Lunchtime Rumours Feast after a two-year COVID hiatus.

All-in-all, a very strong financial position and platform to continue to deliver impact for many years to come.

Davin Magee, Treasurer

CONTACT

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info@kidsfirstaustralia.org.au


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