

Foster Care Association of Victoria

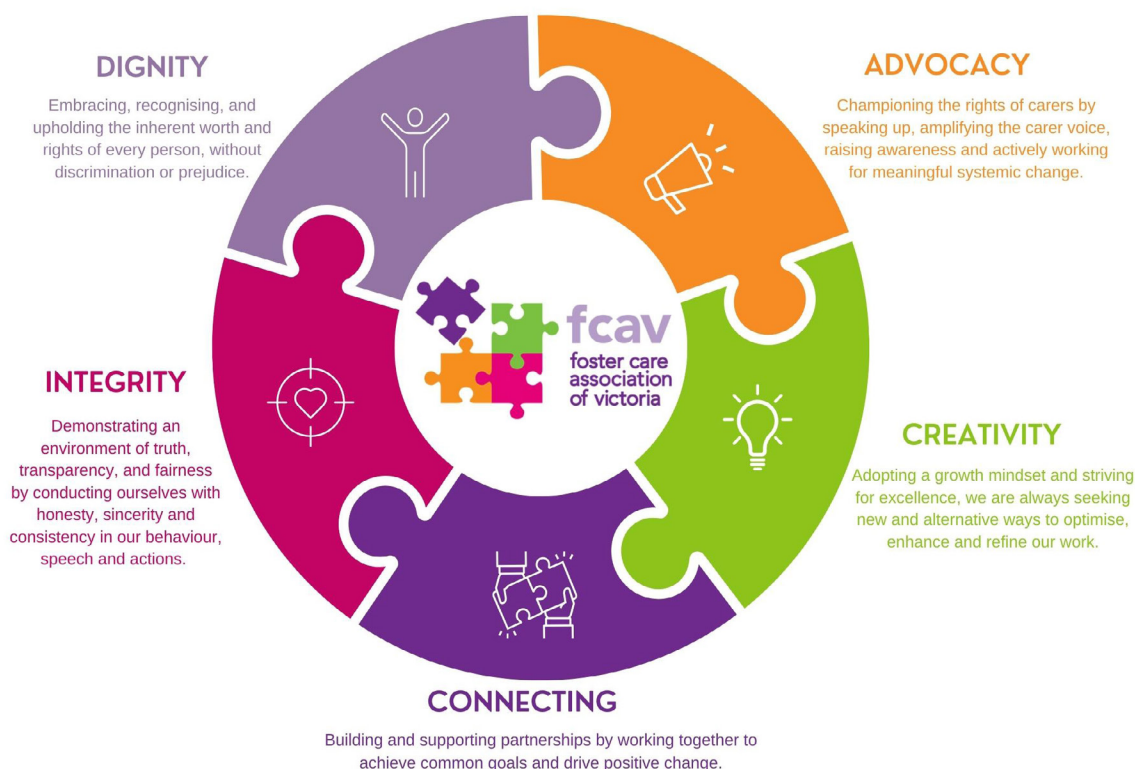
Annual Report 2023-2024

Annual Report July 2023 - June 2024

The Foster Care Association of Victoria presents a year in review. As the peak body for foster carers, the Foster Care Association of Victoria's mission is to build Victoria's recognition, respect and resources for foster carers, the volunteers who, every day and night, make a difference in the lives of Victoria's children and young people. Together we stand to make a difference.



ABN 30 747 010 099



Foster care is the backbone of the Victorian response to protective intervention for children and young people at risk. Foster carers are the volunteers providing a home, family life and care to children and young people who are unable to live with their birth family or kin for a variety of reasons. Many of these children have suffered traumatic events and the role of foster carers is critical and complex to provide a safe and healing environment for children and young people to reach their full potential.

The Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV) provides independent information, support and advocacy directly to all Victorian foster carers and families. Our work directly impacts the care provided to the thousands of Victorian children and young people in foster care by providing:

Carer Support Service - free, independent learning and development, therapeutic support, advice and phone or online advocacy and support for foster carers.

Advocacy - on behalf of foster carers to government, their agencies or ACCOs, and raising the profile of foster care in the community.

Programs and Events - as the only centralised body for all foster carers in the state; providing forums, peer support and carer events.

Foster Care News and Information - through our comprehensive website, regular newsletters and social media sites.

The FCAV represents all foster carers across Victoria. In tandem with the support we provide to individual foster carers, our role as a membership association is to advocate for vital improvements to the foster care system. Our member base consists of foster carers, kinship and permanent carers, and supporters from the wider sector and community.

The Foster Care Association of Victoria aims to strengthen Victoria's investment and resources for home-based carers and the children and young people in their care.



Acknowledgement of Country

The FCAV acknowledges the unceded sovereignty of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their continued connection to Country – including lands, cultural knowledges and their peoples – and pay our respect to Elders past and present. We are the united voice and advocate for all foster carers across Victoria, and we aim to continually develop our knowledge and act with respect to First Nations sovereignty.

President Report

Megan Sadlier

President of the Board of Directors



Welcome to the Annual Report of the Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV) for 2023/24.

This year has presented significant challenges for foster carers, the sector and, by extension, the children and young people in our care. It has been a privilege to work alongside the dedicated staff and Board of the FCAV to address these challenges through focused research, support, and advocacy.

The FCAV's Carer Census, combined with our Carer Snapshot, has provided us with sobering insights, particularly regarding attrition rates. Notably, 35% of respondents are sole carers. The census highlighted that 62% of carers are supporting children with disabilities. This data has been crucial in identifying where the FCAV can best respond to the resource and support needs of carers. Respect for carers and their treatment in these demanding roles is vital to their ability to continue providing care.

The stressors identified, such as inadequate financial and wraparound supports, are failing to effectively serve the children in our care. Despite these challenges, carers remain motivated by the positive impact they have on the children and young people in their homes—whether for a day, a week, or a lifetime. An encouraging 86% of respondents reported that witnessing positive change and growth in the child or young person is the most rewarding aspect of their role, with contributing to the community also being a significant reward.

While the FCAV has, and will continue, to engage with the sector's focus on future reforms, we remain steadfast in addressing the immediate gaps affecting current carers and the children in their care today.

Throughout this year, I have been proud to pursue the FCAV's advocacy and support goals alongside our dedicated Board of Directors. The skills, opportunities and commitment each Director brings are vital to upholding the FCAV's governance and mission to support and represent foster carers in Victoria. I extend my sincere thanks to each of them for their time and expertise.

I also want to acknowledge the dedicated staff of the FCAV, led by Chief Executive Officer, Samantha Hauge. This small, action-oriented team is laser-focused on ensuring that the work of the FCAV is carer-driven.

By building partnerships and positioning the organisation as a critical service provider, the FCAV is able to pursue advocacy and leverage its members' calls to action while remaining fiercely independent.

My involvement in the Care Allowance Campaign, work with the media, and collaboration with our new Ambassadors, alongside our growing evidence of carer needs, has strengthened my determination to advocate for solutions, policy changes, and best practice in carer support. Our mission is to ensure that foster carers, the backbone of the child protection system, are supported and retained to provide safe homes and loving care, preventing vulnerable children and young people from being placed in residential or contingency care. Whether they return safely to their parents, or transfer to kin or permanent care, all children and young people deserve to be in loving homes, not with a worker or paid employee, every day of their lives.

For this selfless role you undertake, I thank you and stand with you. Knowing what our members need and what matters to them drives the FCAV's strategic objectives. While it is gratifying to reflect on the work we have accomplished over the past 12 months, I look forward to the next year as FCAV President with a sense of urgency and determination for change.

CEO Report

Samantha Hauge

Chief Executive Officer



It is an honour to lead the Foster Care Association of Victoria and my pleasure to introduce the Annual Report of 2023/24. This year has been marked by both significant challenges and notable progress in carer services.

Despite a tight fiscal year, the FCAV has successfully managed to expand its services for carers. With funding from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, we have ensured that the Carer Assistance Program's counselling service is now available to carers on a permanent basis. Additionally, we have expanded support hours and are now offering a full-time counselling service. Our Learning and Development program has seen higher carer participation, and we are consistently receiving positive feedback from carers who have benefited from information, support and advice provided by our Carer Support Team.

We have also completed a major carer census, providing crucial evidence of carer experiences and priorities, and successfully begun implementing the new FCAV Strategic Plan.

Additionally, we welcomed our first Carer Ambassadors, Fiona and Mike te Wierik, who are already playing a pivotal role in promoting the goals of FCAV and supporting carers.

The Roadshow around Victoria has been a highlight of the past 12 months for me. Meeting people in person, putting names to faces, and hearing directly from agency and ACCO CEOs, staff, and carers across the state has been invaluable. These interactions have deepened our understanding that we all share common goals for better support for foster carers and helped shape FCAV advocacy and support we can provide. The collaboration fostered during these trips has been invaluable.

I am grateful to each agency and ACCO that has endorsed the FCAV/PCA Families, Care Allowance Campaign and to everyone who has made a submission. While progress from the Government has been slow, the awareness raised is making an impact.

We have continued to work closely with our carer peak counterparts in other states and territories on the National Foster and Kinship Care Collective. Working together, our voice has been amplified in advocating and lobbying for a better home-based care system for carers and the children and young people in their care. Although home-based care systems operate at a state level, the common issues transcend state boundaries. Through the National Collective, we have fostered collaborative thinking, knowledge sharing, and unity in the needs of children and carers at a national level. This collective has been a vital source of courage, strength and knowledge, and I express my gratitude to each member.

The achievements of the FCAV are a testament to our dedicated team of staff who continue to deliver innovative carer-focused and member-led supports, data, resources, services, events, and advocacy. Their hard work directly improves the carer experience and the care sector overall, and I sincerely thank them for their commitment.

I am deeply grateful for the support of FCAV's President, Megan Sadlier, and the entire Board of Directors in providing good corporate governance for the organisation. I extend my thanks to these busy carers who have dedicated their time and effort in their roles on the FCAV Board, as well as the expert co-opted directors whose unwavering commitment to the FCAV mission has significantly contributed to our technological infrastructure, financial management, human resource management and legal oversight, throughout the year.

Above all, I extend my sincere gratitude to the carers and FCAV members of Victoria who have dedicated their time, not just to the children and young people in their care but to engaging with carer services and events, research and learning and development opportunities for their own continuous learning.

Fostering is a journey filled with challenges and triumphs, and the impact of your dedication, love and support for our state's vulnerable children and young people in care is inspiring and can make such a positive and lasting impression that can shape lives for the better.

We have a significant task ahead to better meet the needs of foster carers in this state, but it is important to reflect on the achievements of the past 12 months, of which we are proud. We hope you enjoy reading about them in this year's report.

2023-2024 Team



From left: Biba Dickson, Tessa Hughes, Anna Viola, Rowan Pulford, Sarah Wauters, Bronwyn Hume, Samantha Hauge, Tonya Bavaro, Leigh Hillmann and Deb Collard

FCAV Board of Directors



Megan Sadlier, President



Natalie Pryor, Vice President



Mathew Fredericks, Secretary



Stephen Bowers, Treasurer
(Co-opted)



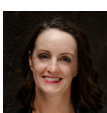
Zoe Sredovic, Treasurer
(Co-opted)
(exit August 2023)



Alexis King, HR Consultant
(Co-opted)



Kym Philips, Director



Sarah Witty, Director



Morgan Smithe, Lawyer
(Co-opted)
(exit April 2024)



Luke Sapwell, Vice President
(exit April 2024)

FCAV Staff

Chief Executive Officer - Samantha Hauge

Office Manager - Bronwyn Hume

Finance Manager – Niraj Shah

Finance Officer – Rebecca Butterworth

Carer Support Team

Carer Support Manager – Tessa Hughes

Carer Advocate - Leigh Hillman

Carer Advocate – Biba Dickson

Carer Advocate/ L&D Coordinator – Deb Collard

Carer Assistance Program

Carer Assistance Program Worker – Tonya Bavaro

Carer Assistance Program Worker – Jake Iaria

Carer Assistance Program Worker – Nic Masuku
(Exit July 2023)

Engagement and Advocacy Team

Communications Manager - Anna Viola

Policy Adviser - Rowan Pulford

Member Relations Coordinator - Sarah Wauters

With Gratitude

By investing in the FCAV, donors and subscribers provide the organisation with the resources that are not covered by our core funding. According to latest data, the FCAV supported over **30%** more carers than we are funded for and added to our suite of services to support, inform and advocate on behalf of around **2000** foster carer households across Victoria.

Support to our work directly impacts the care provided to the thousands of Victorian children and young people in foster care.



The Foster Care Association of Victoria is funded through the state government of Victoria, agency subscribers, foundation grants, fundraising campaign donors and the generous volunteer support of individuals and organisations. Thank you to all subscribers and donors who provided the FCAV with generous donations throughout the year.

Our Agency Subscribers

Thank you to the Community Service Organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations that formed our subscription base for 2023/2024.



- Anchor Community Care Ltd.
- Anglicare Victoria
- Baptcare
- Berry Street
- Brophy Family and Youth Services
- CAFS Child and Family Services Ballarat
- GEGAC Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd.
- Key Assets
- Life Without Barriers
- Lighthouse Foundation
- MacKillop Family Services
- Mallee Family Care
- Mallee Accommodation and Support Program
- Mallee District Aboriginal Services
- Meli
- Njernda Aboriginal Corporation
- OzChild
- Quantum Support Services
- Rumbarala Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd.
- Settlement Services International – foster care program
- Uniting Vic.Tas
- Upper Murray Family Care
- Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency
- Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Family Services

Pro bono and Volunteer Support

Kate Gray
Proof reading



Hope in a Suitcase Partnership – making children feel worthy, loved & hopeful.

Foster carers witness first-hand children entering foster care with only a plastic bag of belongings or less and dragging this from placement to placement.

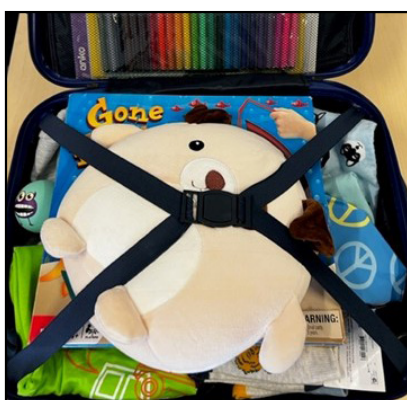
The FCAV is honoured to partner with Hope in a Suitcase, a non-profit organisation run by passionate volunteers and through donations of new items from the community.

Hope in a Suitcase provides new essential items such as toiletries, pyjamas and clothes, a teddy to cuddle, a journal or colouring book, pencils and toys.

The FCAV receives regular donations and carers write in to receive a suitcase for the children in their care. We then coordinate the delivery of suitable suitcases to as many children and young people in foster care households across Victoria as we can. This program has been so well received and we aim to continue the partnership this year.



Above and left: Julie, a dedicated volunteer from Hope in a suitcase with Member Relations Coordinator, Sarah Wauters, making a delivery of cases to the office



Our Donors

Thank you to these supporters who made significant donations to the FCAV and our carer members throughout the financial year. **For more details on making a donation, you can visit the Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV) website at:** fcav.org.au/get-involved/donate-now

- Australian Quilters Association
- Aussie Broadband
- Big Group Hugs
- Commonwealth Bank (Abbotsford Branch)
- Gelato Messina
- Goods 360
- Gumbaya World
- Holland Foundation
- Hope in a Suitcase
- Hunky Dory
- Immune Deficiencies Foundation Australia (IDFA)
- Lion's Clubs of Melbourne, Geelong, and Ballarat
- Penleigh & Essendon Grammar School
- Pinchapoo
- Puffing Billy Railway
- Sweet Mickey
- Teddy Bear Shop
- The Comics Lounge
- Timothy McClelland (Individual)
- Waverley Woodworkers
- Westbourne Grammar School

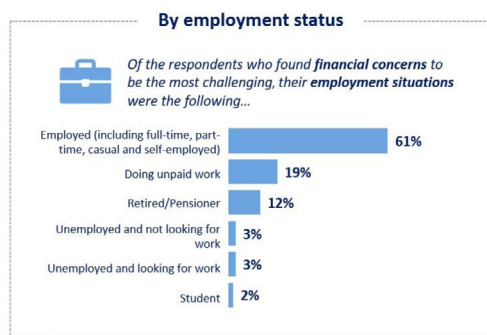
Carer Census 2024



Read the full Census Report:
fcav.org.au/news/release-of-the-carer-census-report

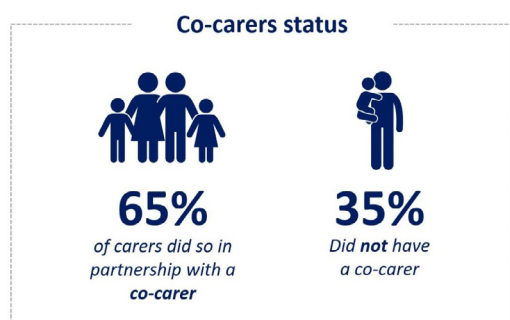
The FCAV conducted a carer census in April/May 2024, with over **750 respondent carers** participating. This strong response enhances our understanding and advocacy for addressing the unique challenges faced by foster carers in Victoria.

The insights from this census will inform FCAV's service delivery and advocacy, guiding improvements in the services, resources and respect for the role provided within the home-based care system. The census offers both demographic and attitudinal data, shedding light on carers' experiences, including their relationships and wellbeing within the home-based care services of their agency, the Department, and Child Protection.



Carer participation in society is high, with **83%** holding an **educational qualification**—**26%** with a bachelor's degree, **24%** with a post-graduate degree and **33%** with a diploma. A majority (**69%**) are employed, with **35%** earning over \$120,000 annually and **36%** between \$60,000 and \$120,000. Carers report a high Life Satisfaction Index score of **79%**.

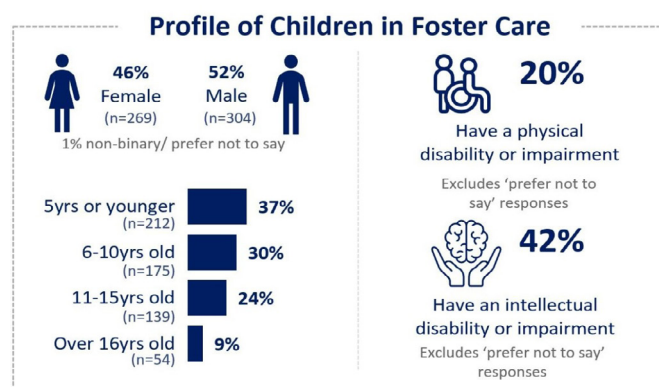
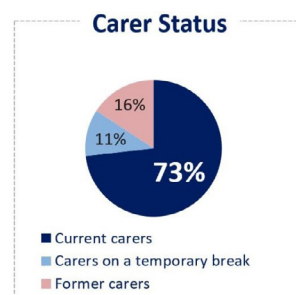
For **86%** of respondents, the most rewarding aspect of foster care is **seeing positive changes** in the child or young person, with contributing to the community also of significance. However, financial challenges, such as inadequate care allowances and funding for expenses, are consistently the most highlighted issues, regardless of household income. Inclusion and respect within care teams also rank among the top three challenges.



Among the respondents, **35% are sole carers**, with **90%** of these being **women**. Additionally, **62%** care for a child or young person with a physical or intellectual disability.

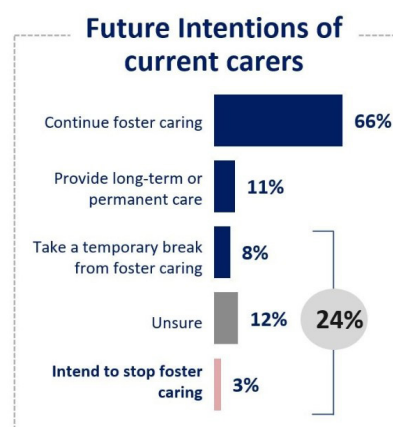
Notably, **24%** are considering **taking a break, leaving** or are **uncertain** about **continuing to care**, with those who have been caring for **a year or more** reporting a significant **change in motivation**.

Over **95% of respondents find FCAV's services, support, and information useful**, with **85%** strongly agreeing that **FCAV provides practical support** and would recommend it to others. Additionally, **63%** are interested in **online learning** and development opportunities, and nearly half want to access peer connection opportunities in the coming year.



The census also allowed carers to share their experiences, motivations and needs, highlighting both the positive and challenging aspects of their roles. Key themes include a deep commitment to children's wellbeing, inadequate support and communication from agencies and the Department, financial strain, emotional and mental health challenges, work-life balance issues, challenges with children's needs and behaviour, and systemic inefficiencies and injustices.

Thank you to the carers who participated in the census, providing valuable insights into carer needs and experiences in Victoria.

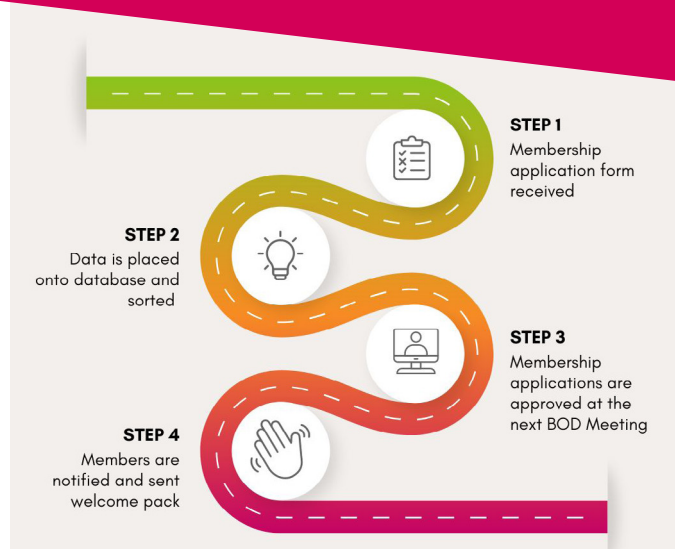


Membership Report

The Foster Care Association of Victoria welcomed **271** new full members and **54** associate members to the organisation this past year. This increases our total membership to over **4,300** full and associate members.

All new FCAV members are sent, via email and post, a welcome pack which includes information related to all the free support and services they are eligible for, and the easiest way to connect with our Carer Support Team.

The FCAV continues to engage with members in numerous ways including regular newsletters, conducting quarterly check-ins with a range of members, posting online, and hosting forums, events and opportunities for carers to share their fostering experiences and issues, ask questions and build community.



The 2024 figures shows fewer carer households going through the accreditation process than the previous year



The 2024 figures show 56 fewer carer households have been accredited than the previous year



Carer Snapshot Report 2024

The 2024 FCAV Foster Carer Snapshot Report, collected for March 2024 indicates a further decline in active carer households in Victoria. There are **1683 active carer households** available to take placements of children and young people in Victoria, a **net loss of 93** active foster carer households compared to last year.

Looking at the data by DFFH Division Area, we see that the South and West divisions have historically had the highest number of active carer households and that the South saw a sharp decline in the period. The East division has been steadily increasing in active carer households but the North division area continues to see a consistent decrease in the number of active carer households over the years.

Another record year of households exiting coupled with an **18% drop** in interested households undertaking the accreditation process, continues to highlight a worrying trend in the availability of foster carer households in Victoria.

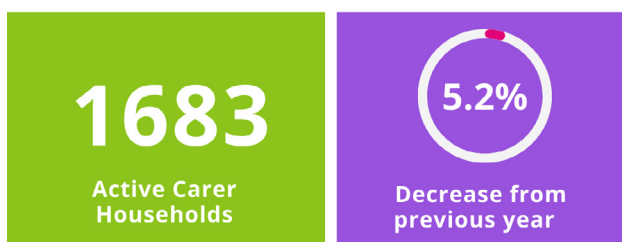
Read the full Carer Snapshot Report:

fcav.org.au/assets/carers-snapshot-data-2024

2024 FOSTER CARER SNAPSHOT REPORT



The 2024 figures show almost 100 fewer active carer households than the previous year



2024 FOSTER CARER SNAPSHOT REPORT



Active households from 2020 to 2024 via DFFH area.



Carer Support Team Report

Full CST Report available on the website: [fcav.org.au/policies & publications](https://fcav.org.au/policies-&publications)

Carer Advocates

The Carer Support Team comprises Carer Advocates providing information, advice and advocacy to foster carers (enquiries), Carer Assistance Program (CAP) providing short-term counselling to foster and permanent carers & adoptive parents (referrals) and a Learning and Development stream delivering a range of forums for carers.

The Carer Support Team responded to and closed **946** enquiries/ referrals, delivering **1701** hours of service in the 2023/2024 period.

Foster Care Enquiries

The Carer Advocates provided information to **204**, advice to **266** and advocacy to **135** foster care enquiries in the 2023/2024 period.

The highest number of enquiries were in relation to carers seeking advice. Many carers were unsure of processes and systems within their agencies and reported having insecure relationships with agency and child protection staff. Sometimes this is a result of carers not feeling valued or respected in the system and needing reassurance.

Advocacy is a significant component of the work provided to carers. Often relationships with professionals are broken and the FCAV is mediating on behalf of carers, advising them of their rights and supporting them in navigating the complexities in the home-based care system.

A large proportion of our work is advocating for carers' rights and supporting carers through the difficult CIMS investigation process. We support carers preparing for investigation interviews, for suitability panel and provide advice in relation to reviews and appeals of decisions.

The highest frequency issues for foster care enquiries related to CIMS investigations, agency and DFFH matters. Considerable time was spent on financial support (care allowance rates/level) and permanent care (foster to permanent care conversion).

Client Incident Management (CIMS) Investigations

The Carer Advocates responded to and closed **104** CIMS enquiries, delivering **465** hours of service in the 2023/2024 period. This accounted for **43%** of overall service delivery hours.

The multiple layers of CIMS (investigation, Reportable Conduct Scheme, S81 investigations) result in confusion and repeated carer enquiries for support and clarity of these processes, with each enquiry averaging approximately **3** hours of support. More complex cases have required **6** to **25** hours of support.

The FCAV has continued to meet with the CIMS review team, reporting on significant shortfalls in the principles of procedural fairness within the CIMS investigation process. The FCAV has continued to provide feedback for improvement to the investigation process including a proposal for an Industry Code of Practice for the CIMS investigation process.

Agency Issues

The Carer Advocates provided support to **175** enquiries relating to agencies, accounting for **241** hours of service. Communication, planning and support was by far the largest category of referrals with **115** service hours.

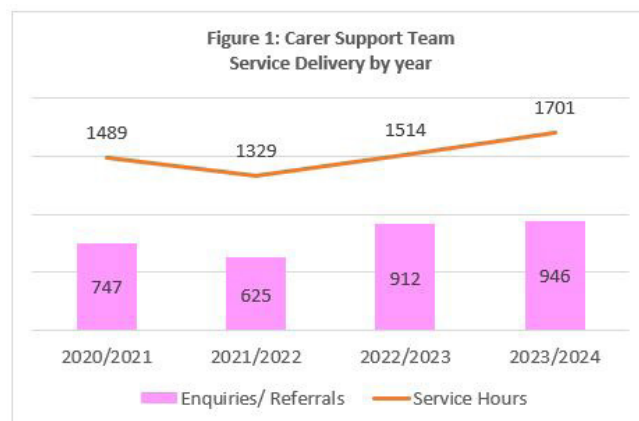
The FCAV has information sheets for carers and agency staff as a guide to building respectful relationships and creating a working agreement between a worker and carer to establish good practice by both parties. Carer feedback shows significant frustration with the number of workers each carer will experience in their care journey.

The FCAV has conducted a Roadshow visiting **90%** of all agencies across the state. (See Roadshow report p. 18).

DFFH Issues

The Carer Advocates provided support to **88** enquiries relating to DFFH, accounting for **182** hours of service. Significant time was spent on complex matters relating to removal of child, complaints and lack of support.

The FCAV supports carers through the complaints processes to ensure they have an opportunity to be heard. This guidance is key to de-escalating carers' concern which in turn, supports retention of foster carers in Victoria.



Above: Figure 1 shows the number of enquiries/ referrals steadily increasing over the past 4 years.



YOUR WELLBEING MATTERS

The Carer Assistance Program (CAP) received **341** referrals for short-term counselling, delivering **617** hours of service in the 2023/2024 period.

Foster Care

While the majority (**80%**) of foster carers require **1–3** counselling sessions, **10** individuals required longer term counselling from **4–10** sessions.

Mental health, CIMS and grief & loss continue to be the most common issues for foster carers seeking emotional support.

The majority (**88%**) of permanent carers book **1–3** counselling sessions, though in some cases the issues are so complex and multi-faceted that individuals are seeking longer term counselling from **4–13** sessions.

In this case the CAP Worker will develop a discharge plan with referral to another support service. In some instances, the carers are accessing a mental health support plan, alongside the CAP program due to the complexity of issues they are navigating.

Permanent Care

Most permanent carers are seeking emotional support due to the challenging behaviours of children in their care. Mental health, placement breakdown and birth family issues were also common themes in the year.

The FCAV delivered a series of CAP Group sessions. This provided an opportunity for carers to validate their issues and share with others who have similar experiences. Carers welcomed the group experience.

We have only offered daytime sessions; however, it would be worth considering offering evening online sessions to assist carers accessing the valuable experience if group sessions are held.

The CAP this year celebrated the provision of ongoing and increased funding which has also enabled an expansion of the program to deliver a full time service. This will improve availability of counsellors for foster carers, permanent carers and adoptive families.

“Jake is a wonderful, knowledgeable support and without his insight and help I would not be where I am today.. Thank you so much.”

“Tonya was an amazing support for me. She has a very gentle approach and brings out complex issues to the surface very effectively in a non-intrusive manner.”

Program feedback has been excellent. Carers report on the ease of the referral and appointment process, the kindness of staff who facilitate the referrals and appointments, as well as the direct support by the counsellors.

“Thank you for this service.. (it) has been a lifesaver. (Having someone) understand our position and validate my feelings made things a little easier. Thank you again.”

CAP Therapeutic Group Sessions

This year, the CAP trialled therapeutic group sessions for eligible carers across foster and permanent carers and adoptive families. These sessions provided reflective spaces for carers to discuss their experiences, addressing common challenges such as:

- navigating complex behaviours in young people
- balancing multiple family needs
- prioritising self-care and learning to have self-compassion.

Feedback has highlighted the importance of sharing experiences as well as opportunities for carers to connect with each other.

The CAP continues to offer individual therapeutic sessions that significantly enhance the capacity of carers to provide effective and compassionate care.

These sessions help carers manage the stress within their daily lives and reduce feelings of burnout. The therapeutic space provides crucial avenues for:

- support
- guidance
- coping strategies
- a safe space to debrief about challenging topics – such as CIMS investigations
- considerations of relinquishment
- personal mental health challenges
- support through grief and loss.

Learning and Development

This report summarises our Learning and Development activities over the past year, showcasing our commitment to supporting foster carers and promoting cultural understanding and wellbeing among the children in their care.

Carer feedback on FCAV Learning and Development events shows that sessions have provided carers with a range of benefits:

- opportunities for learning
- networking and connection
- validation
- advocacy on complexities with the care system
- understanding the importance of self-care activities and mental health wellbeing

Cultural Days

Throughout the year, we organised several cultural events to promote cultural awareness and connection among foster care families and the children in their care:

21st October 2023: Krowathunkoolong Keeping Place, Bairnsdale

In collaboration with GEGAC and local Elder, Uncle Robert Hudson, a smoking ceremony was held, followed by a tour of the Keeping Place Museum. Children viewed paintings of their family members and engaged in cultural activities, including dilly bag making, boomerang lessons, and art using sand and clay.

16th January 2024: Islamic Museum, Thornbury

Partnering with Project Us Foundation and Settlement Services International, participants explored artworks by Muslim artists and listened to a talk by Sheik Saeed Warsama. The event fostered community connections through a mentoring program for children.

23rd January 2024: Rippleside Park, Geelong

In partnership with MacKillop and Meli Foster Care, Melinda Gaye Walker, a Wadawurrung Traditional Owner, provided a Welcome to Country and showcased Aboriginal artifacts. The day included traditional dance lessons and art activities, enhancing cultural understanding and connection.

These cultural days provided valuable learning experiences, helping children and carers connect with culture and each other. The events also facilitated networking among carers, promoting mutual support.

Caring Thru Art

Two art therapy sessions were conducted:

- 14th March 2023: Boot Factory, Coburg
- 14th March 2024: Anderson Inlet Anglers Club, Inverloch

These sessions included art therapy techniques, discussions on self-care, meditation, mindfulness, and the exploration of Gratitude Cards. Carers appreciated the opportunity to connect with others facing similar challenges, making the sessions a safe space to share experiences and support each other.

Right: Uncle Robert Hudson conducting a smoking ceremony for carers and children at Krowathunkoolong Keeping Place, Bairnsdale

School Presentations

We delivered presentations on foster care to various schools, engaging with students to raise awareness:

1st August 2023: Parade College

Students from multiple schools participated, learning about foster care and the role of FCAV.

29th August 2023: Yarrowonga Secondary School

Year 12 students engaged in discussions about the foster care system, showing interest in understanding the support available to children in care.

Managing Stress & Developing Respectful Relationships Training

This training was developed to address the challenges faced by carers in building effective relationships with workers and teams:

22nd August 2023: Meli Foster Care

This training emphasised the importance of respectful relationships with case workers and care teams.

19th March 2024: Online Webinar

The webinar covered practical actions for fostering respectful relationships and included role-playing exercises. Feedback was positive, highlighting the value of real-life scenario practice.

Carer Support Group

On 14th May 2024, training was held in Geelong to develop a Carer Support Group, aiming to reduce isolation and promote self-care among carers. The session was well-received, with attendees appreciating the opportunity to connect with local carers.



DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	ATTENDEES
14/07/2023	Caring Thru Art at Ceres	Metro	8
17/08/2023	Chat with CEO – Carers	Online	14
19/08/2023	Hold My Hand Training at Ceres	Metro	10
22/08/2023	Managing Stressful Relationships Training at Meli Foster Care	Regional	8
31/08/2023	Chat with CEO - Agency/ACCO staff	Online	23
21/10/2023	Cultural Day, Keeping Place, Bairnsdale in partnership with GEGAC	Regional	19
2/11/2023	Chat with CEO - Carers	Online	6
23/11/2023	Chat with CEO – Agency/ACCO staff	Online	9
11/12/2023	Fearless – Triple P Training in partnership with Berry Street	Online	7
13/02/2024	Chat with the CEO - Carers	Night/ Online	31
22/02/2024	Chat with the CEO -ACCO and Agency Staff	Online	21
14/03/2024	Caring Thru Art Training	Inverloch	18
19/03/2024	Managing Stress and Developing Respectful Relationships	Online	28
26/03/2024	The Impact of Neglect Upon Children in Care Webinar	Online	30
18/04/2024	Chat with the CEO -Carers	Online	15
2/05/2024	Chat with the CEO -Agency & ACCO Staff	Online	20
14/05/2024	Carer Support Group with Meli Carers	Geelong	14
20/06/2024	Chat with the CEO Agency & ACCO Staff	Online	15
25/06/2024	Chat with the CEO – Carers	Online	10
27/06/2024	CIMS Webinar with Chris Craig & Leigh Hillman	Online	21

Impact of Neglect on Children in Care Webinar

On 26th March 2024, Annette Jackson from Berry Street presented her research on childhood neglect. The webinar presented findings on the research conducted by Annette Jackson in partnership with Latrobe University and Dr Bruce Perry. It provided insights into the consequences of neglect and the crucial role carers play in a child's recovery.

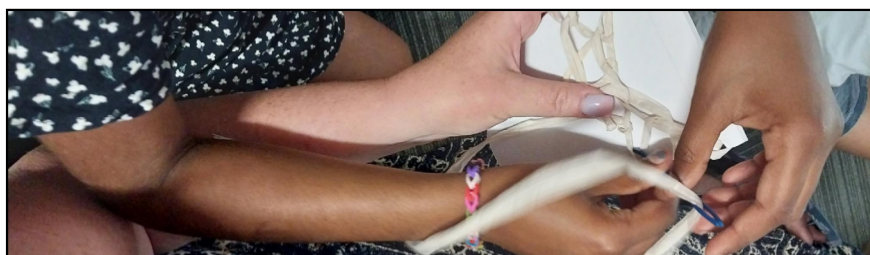
Client Incident Management System (CIMS) Investigations Webinar

On 27th June 2024, an online session was held with Chris Craig and Leigh Hillman, covering the CIMS investigation process. The webinar offered comprehensive knowledge on handling investigations, preparing for interviews, and managing stress related to CIMS investigations.

Chats with the CEO

Throughout the year, ten "FCAV Chat with the CEO" sessions were held, allowing foster carers and agency staff to share their experiences with the FCAV. Key issues discussed included:

- Lack of respite options for long-term placements,
- inconsistencies in funding and support across divisions,
- the need for clear guidelines on what the care allowance covers, and
- the importance of peer support networks.



The 2023 National Foster and Kinship Care Conference: Tasmania



The FCAV was pleased to support a delegation of carers, staff and board to attend the National Foster and Kinship Care Conference at Wrest Point Casino in Hobart, Tasmania, 21–23 September 2023.

Over three days in September participants took part in sharing and learning about the needs, rights and voices of children and young people in care and their carers from around the country.

Sessions covered overarching trauma-informed approaches, research and practice improvements from state and global perspectives. There was also discussion on day to day practices and resources that support children and young people in care and their carers.

The FCAV delegation of carers, staff and board gained so much from the sessions, meeting and networking with carers from around Australia and hearing about the innovative ways other states support home-based care.



Above: FCAV delegation of Board, staff and carer members

Engagement



www.linkedin.com/company/foster-care-association-of-victoria



www.instagram.com/fostercarevic



www.facebook.com/fostercarevictoria

Research

The FCAV is pleased to partner with leading researchers in the field of child protection and home-based care research. This year, we facilitated carer involvement in:

- Better Futures/Home Stretch evaluation - Centre for Evaluation and Research Evidence, Department of Health and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.
- Demographics, parenting and observations of children in your care from Out of Home Care, Charles Sturt University.
- Care Concern Process (CIMS South Australia), Flinders University.
- Psychological challenges and parental regret in foster care settings, Flinders University.
- Vicarious Trauma in Foster Care, Flinders University
- Trauma Informed Practice, Foster Care support, Monash University.
- Impacts of Neglect, La Trobe University.
- Carer Census - demographic and attitudinal Carer research, Foster Care Association of Victoria.

Sector Partnerships

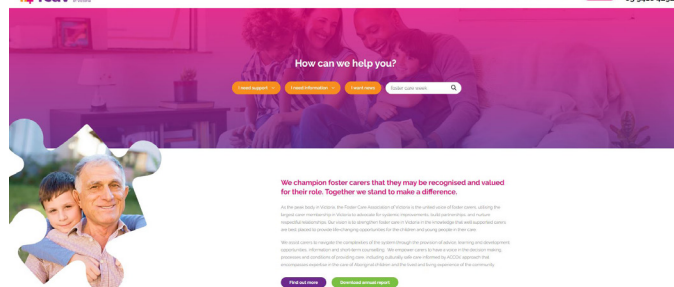
We have been honoured to work closely with allies and counterparts across the sector on several important projects in the past 12 months:

- National Foster and Kinship Care Peak Body Collective for foster and kinship care organisations around Australia - Federal advocacy.
- Association for Children with a Disability - Forums, workshops and training
- Permanent Care and Adoptive Families: Programs and advocacy.
- Victorian Council of Community Services (VCOSS) Education Equity Coalition: Research, case studies and advocacy.
- VACCA and Wautharong: Cultural days and advocacy.
- Foster Dreamz - Sports and extra-curricular activity scholarships
- Kelly Sports - Vouchers - Sports and activities.
- CREATE Foundation - Peak body for young people with a care experience. Carer support to young people.
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): Research, working groups and advocacy (eg. 'Let Us Learn Inquiry').

Newsletters

The FCAV produced and distributed 8 newsletters and several supplementary communications, comprising foster care news, updates, legislation changes, events, training and carer giveaways in the 12 months. Back issues are available here: fcav.org.au/newsletters

Launch of new FCAV Website



The FCAV proudly launched its new website in 2023 including extensive consultation with users, First Nations organisations and carers. The new website provides a more interactive and searchable interface based on user need which has been well received by members and stakeholders.

Social Media

We have continued to implement online options as the preference for some carers as evidenced through the FCAV Carer Census. The FCAV provides hybrid or online forums, meetings, training and digital options across the board, that increase accessibility to FCAV outputs, especially for rural and remote carers, full-time working carers, solo carers and those with infants and/or very young children at home.

Our Facebook page has over **7700** followers and a growing Instagram account. The FCAV followed the DFFH move and has paused engagement on X (Twitter).

The activity of social media sites has remained an important information and feedback portal for our stakeholders, particularly in relation to information-sharing, peer connections and event promotion.

Carer Gifts and Giveaways 2023/24

- 2 x Gumbaya World Family Pass
- 3 x Gumbaya World Junior Pass
- 7 x Sovereign Hill Family Passes
- 8 x Harry Potter Lego Sets
- 8 x Star Wars Lego Sets
- 8 x Foster Family Christmas Hampers
- 5 x Gelato Messina Gift Vouchers
- 2 x The Torch Aboriginal Calendars
- 5 x Hope in a Suitcase deliveries
- 5 x Pinchapoo Pamper packs
- 8 x Back to School Packs from Transforming Tomorrow Project
- 2 x 'The Last Daughter' book by Brenda Matthews.
- 2 x VACCA Deadly Diaries
- 1 x VACCA Significant Dates Poster
- 1 x VACCA Bedtime and Morning Routine Poster Series
- 9 x Hunky Dory Kids' Meal Vouchers
- 3 x The Shadow that Follows - book by Conor Pall
- 2 x Puffing Billy Railway Family Vouchers

Foster Care Week - September 2023

Foster Care Week is a sector-wide, annual event celebrating and raising awareness within the wider community about foster care, the carer's role, the issues facing foster carers and the children and young people in care. The events and celebrations held during Foster Care Week aim to highlight and appreciate our valuable pool of foster carers and the contribution they make to the lives of children and young people in care in our community.

2023 Theme: Heart of Gold

The Foster Care Week 2023 theme celebrated the value and contribution of carers in the lives of the children and young people and what being a carer means to those who provide it.



Many carers were able to join an agency celebration or attend the FCAV Carer Celebration and AGM in Ballarat.

Local and Victoria-wide carers made it to the FCAV Carer Celebration and AGM on Friday 15th September, 2023 for a glorious day together in Wadawurrung country - Ballarat.

Thank you to guest speaker, the Hon. Lizzie Blandthorn MP, Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, who outlined the valuable place carers hold in

Victoria and the government's commitment to improving the system. We were grateful for the time taken by Minister Blandthorn to travel from Melbourne to meet Ballarat and regional carers and stay on to present our Commitment to Supporting Carers Awards.

Minister Blandthorn spoke to a number of carers and took away first-hand knowledge of the systemic challenges facing carers and their limitless dedication, caring and advocacy for the children and young people in their lives.

We were pleased to have the MacKillop Paw Pals Program attend with their gorgeous dog 'Millie' who gave out cuddles to the delight of carers, children and staff.

Foster Care Week - Heart of Gold - was a triumph of celebration, awareness and recognition of carers at events, online and in the media.



Commitment to Carers Awards

Congratulations to all the nominees in the 2023 Commitment to Carers Awards. We received over 40 excellent nominations from carers who had experienced exceptional support to placements from their support team workers.

We recognise that the support offered to carers is golden in a complex system especially in these challenging times. These awards provide foster family carers the opportunity to acknowledge the people who have offered committed support and to show how much that support means to them in caring for children and young people.

Congratulations to the 2023 Shortlisted Nominees:

- Gemma Barton - Key Assets Australia
- Tara Dunn - MacKillop Family Services
- Tahlia Wilson - Hansen - Meli
- Jessica Savy - Anglicare Victoria
- Jessica Wright - The Circle Program (a partnership between OzChild and the Australian Childhood Foundation).



The winners announced:

Outstanding Support Award

Jessica Wright - The Circle Program (a partnership between OzChild and the Australian Childhood Foundation).

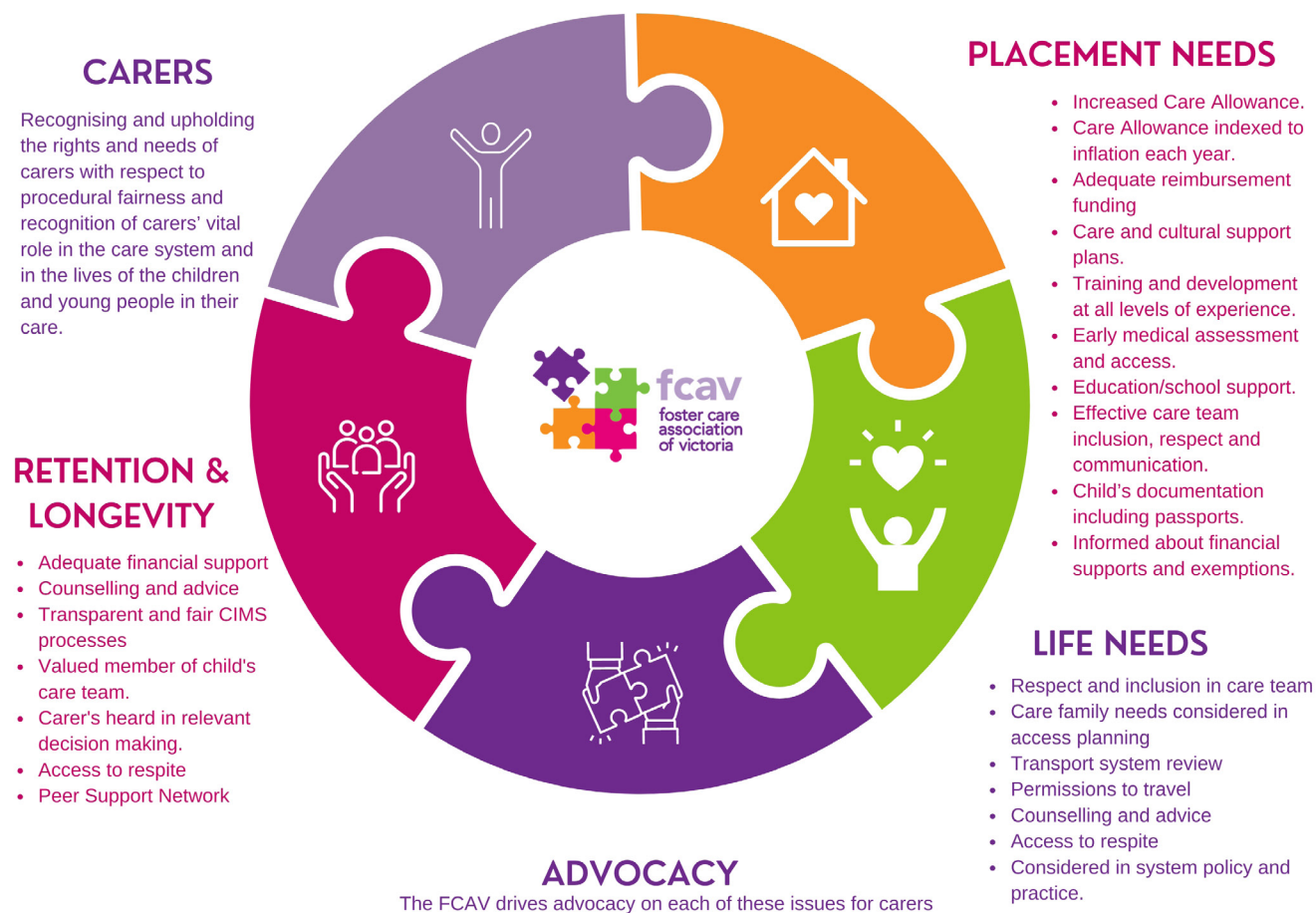
Exemplary Support Award

Jessica Savy - Anglicare Victoria.



Being Heard FCAV's Advocacy Program

FOSTER CARE SUPPORT NEEDS



The FCAV continues to advocate for systemic changes to carer conditions across several areas which carers have identified as negatively affecting carer morale, retention and recruitment. Key areas of focus include:

Care Support Help Desk

The DFFH Care Support Help Desk (the Help Desk) is an initiative that was developed by the FCAV in 2021 in response to the extensive delay in obtaining essential documents such as birth certificates, Medicare numbers and other placement supports such as immunisation records. The Help Desk was funded for an initial two-year period in the 2022/23 Budget and can be directly accessed by carers or agencies. The Help Desk has been extremely successful and has reported the following performance metrics since its inception in October 2022 to March 2024:

Received 9,822 calls.

- Submitted 2,990 birth certificate applications. 1,940 have been received.
- Submitted 3,200 Medicare applications. 2,506 have been received.
- Supported 4,660 children and young people

Carers report high levels of satisfaction with the improved service delivery enabled by the establishment of the Help Desk. Following FCAV advocacy as part of the development of the 2024/25 Victorian Budget, the Help Desk has now become a permanent DFFH service offering.

Passports

The FCAV advocated for an expansion of the Care Support Help Desk to include support and advice for passport applications. The demand for passports has increased since the end of COVID lockdowns because carers want to travel to visit family, friends or have a holiday. Passport applications are complex and time consuming because of stringent identity and documentary requirements and carers report they can take years to process. Carers also report that agency and Child Protection staff often lack the skill and expertise to complete passport applications in a timely manner and application supports and training are required to improve service delivery.

Care Allowance review FAQ

The FCAV has researched and developed information to inform and assist carers who want to apply for a review of the care allowance level they receive. The fact sheet sets out the process and criteria for applying for higher level payments. This is currently under DFFH review.



Sector Working Groups and Networks

- DFFH CIMS Community of Practice Forums – Client Incident Management System (CIMS)
- Carer KaFE Governance Reference Group meetings
- National Foster and Kinship Care Collective meetings
- Foster Care Practice Network meetings
- VCOSS Peaks and Statewide Networks Forums
- DFFH Care Support Help Desk meetings
- PCA Families Alliance meetings
- National Kinship, Permanent and Foster Care Conference Committee meetings
- DFFH Home-Based Care Reform Sector Working Group meetings

National Foster and Kinship Care Collective (NFKCC)

The NFKCC has continued to meet to define and advocate for a better home-based care system nationally and explore the potential for the role of the Commonwealth in supporting standardised kinship and foster care financial and health supports. The peak bodies have approached Services Australia collectively on issues such as Family Tax Benefit A and B eligibility, Child Care Subsidies, Medicare and Medicare Dental, possibilities for a National Care Allowance, and superannuation.

Medicare Dental

The FCAV provided a submission to the fifth review of the *Dental Benefits Act 2008* advocating that all children in care be automatically eligible for Medicare Dental. Children in care generally have poorer oral health than children in the general population and currently access to Medicare Dental is means tested on a carer's income. This means that many children are ineligible for \$1000 of dental treatment over a two-year period.

The review recommended (Recommendation 17) that where possible access barriers to Medicare Dental for children in care be removed, including the consideration of legislative changes. The Federal Department of Health and Aged Care is currently implementing the recommendation and has established the Dental Clinical Advisory Committee to manage the implementation process. The FCAV met with the Department to discuss how the implementation of the recommendation will be progressed, and this is expected to be finalised in 2025.

Regular meetings with Minister's Office

The FCAV has established regular quarterly meetings with the Minister's office to advocate for carers on priority issues including:

- Care allowance payments and indexation
- Care Support Help Desk funding
- Passports
- Medicare Dental
- Systemic reform agenda for 2024

Carer household and personal accident insurance

The FCAV has clarified that foster carers are insured for both household property damage and personal accidents incurred while volunteering by the Victorian Managed Insurance Agency (VMIA).

VMIA is a government insurance authority and its functions include acting as an insurer for, or providing insurance services to, government departments and community service organisations.

A fact sheet has been developed to provide information about the scope of the insurance cover and application process. This is currently under DFFH review.

Services Australia

The FCAV has met with Services Australia to discuss the operation of the Grandparent, Foster and Kinship Carer Adviser line (GFKAL). Services Australia advised that one of the biggest issues it encountered with carers was difficulties accessing the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Several of those cases involved the over payment of the CCS and subsequent recovery action brought on the carer because they had initiated the CCS application and consequently were personally liable. Following the meeting, GFKAL have assisted a number of carers referred by the FCAV.

FEDERAL ADVOCACY

- NATIONAL FOSTER & KINSHIP CARE COLLECTIVE
- SUPERANNUATION
- CENTRELINK INCL. CARER HELPLINE
- CHILD CARE SUBSIDY
- PARENTING PAYMENT
- NDIS
- PASSPORTS
- MEDICARE
- CHILD DENTAL BENEFITS SCHEDULE (MEDICARE DENTAL)

**Helping you navigate the system,
so you can focus on what's important.**

Being Heard Care Allowance Campaign



Victorian Care Allowance Campaign

The Care Allowance is too low to cover the costs of caring for children and young people in Victoria.
IT'S TIME TO INCREASE THE CARE ALLOWANCE.



Children in home-based care in Victoria receive \$120 less per week compared to those in Canberra. This shortfall impacts the ability to afford essentials such as mobile phones, dental visits, therapies, and tutoring. Often, carers cover these costs, leading to an emotional, social, and economic burden on both the children and their carers, who volunteer for this challenging role.

In response, the Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV) and Permanent Care and Adoptive Families (PCAF) launched a campaign in June 2023 advocating to raise the care allowance in Victoria to align with other states. The current financial strain on carers has been exacerbated by inflation and a low indexation rate, which have diminished the allowance's value. The FCAV Carer Census (see p. 7) highlighted financial stress as one of the most challenging aspects of the role, contributing to the high attrition rate among carers.

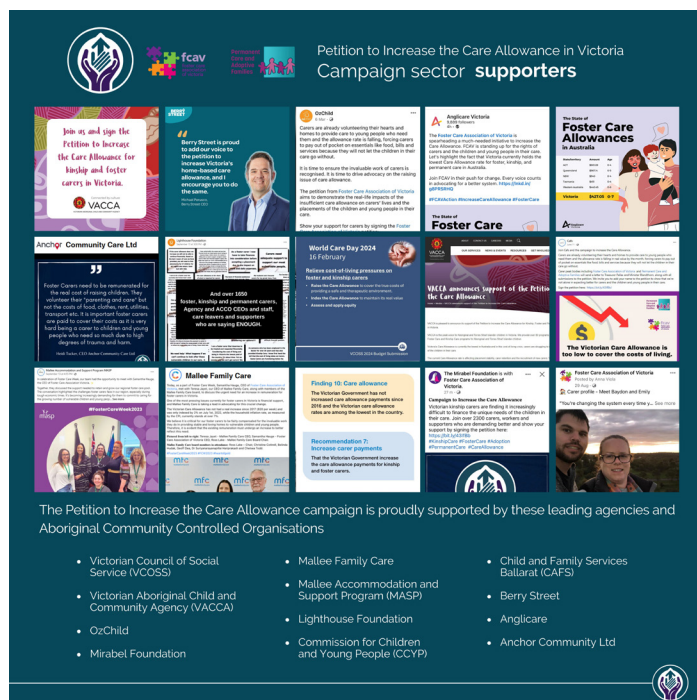
Campaign Launch and Progress

The campaign was initiated by a committee that included FCAV and PCAF, advocating after years of lobbying the Government and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) for an increase. There has been no net increase in the care allowance rate since 2016. The urgency of this issue is underscored by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's data, showing that in 2022-23, 621 households exited the foster care system, while only 317 were recruited.

A commissioned report by KPMG, received by the state government in January 2022, recommended a 67% increase to the care allowance. A separate report by Cube Consulting, commissioned by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and DFFH, estimated that Victoria's 1,825 active foster carers provided economic benefits worth \$80 million in active caregiving and \$453 million in avoided costs by keeping children out of alternative care.

The Call to Action

The campaign was designed to enable carers and their supporters to directly petition for an increase in the allowance. The petition aims to demonstrate to policymakers the real-life impact of the insufficient care allowance on carers and the children and young people in their care. The Victorian Government is urged to implement a significant increase to the allowance, with age-appropriate adjustments, to bring payments in line with those in other states and to ensure it is indexed to meet inflation each year.



Submission to Treasury

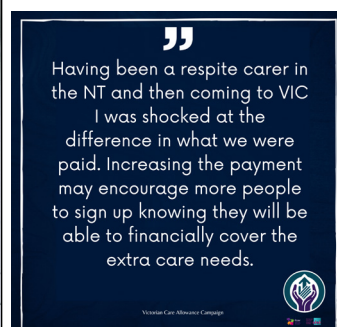
In December 2023, we were invited to a meeting with the Treasurer's Office, where we advocated on behalf of carers and presented over 2,000 Care Allowance Petition submissions. Despite the clear urgency conveyed in these submissions, neither the Department of Treasury nor DFFH has committed to increasing the care allowance.

Next Steps

Submissions from those with lived experience have detailed the hardships of providing care under the current allowance rates. The campaign has successfully drawn attention to these issues, gaining support from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), Community Service Organisations (CSOs), larger sector advocates, and high profile media attention.

The campaign continues, and we seek further engagement with the Minister for Child Protection, Lizzie Blandthorn, and the Victorian Government in the upcoming Budget round.

Join the campaign here: bit.ly/43If8bJ



FCAV Ambassadors



The FCAV was excited to launch Fiona and Michael Wierik as our first Foster Care Ambassadors in June 2024.

Fiona and Mike embody the essence of foster carers. With over 17 years of experience caring, they have not only provided love and stability to many children and young people but have also witnessed and experienced first-hand the challenges and stresses that carer households often face within the system.

Their appointment opens the potential to engage the community in foster care, what it means to be a carer, where the needs are and what it takes to improve the way we support carers to take on their incredible role with children and young people.



Find out more about the FCAV Ambassadors and their work here: fcav.org.au/news/launch-of-fcavs-new-carer-ambassadors

Through their media appearances and engagements with decision-makers and in the community, our Ambassadors will spread awareness of the complex and challenging role that carers undertake with the children and young people in their care.

Michael was the YMCA Father of the Year Award recipient in 2022 - a testament to the Wierik's exceptional work and dedication as carers. Our Ambassadors have already undertaken to represent the carer voice at various events and in the media, raising awareness about the importance of carers in our community, rallying interest in the role and outlining where support to carers should improve.

On behalf of the Foster Care Association of Victoria Board of Directors, staff and carer membership, we welcome Fiona and Michael to this Ambassadorial role.

We look forward to working with Fiona and Michael in their commitment to making a difference as powerful advocates for our community of carers.

Contact Fiona and Michael: ambassador@fcav.org.au

FCAV Roadshow

The FCAV launched a statewide Roadshow in July 2023 and the team has had the pleasure of visiting offices and hearing from local staff and carers about their foster care-specific support programs, regional issues, and themes in various metro and regional offices. To date, 35 visits have been made to agencies and ACCOs.

The FCAV uses the visits to provide detailed information to staff in relation to services available to foster carers which has been well received by agencies.

Throughout these visits, FCAV gathers valuable feedback, identifies common themes, and develops a deeper understanding of both the unique challenges and successes experienced by foster carers and support organisations all across Victoria. This comprehensive engagement enhances our understanding of the support and resources we can make available to carers or advocate for on their behalf.

Following the visits, agencies expressed a strong desire for ongoing dialogue. As a result, a CIMS webinar is being developed specifically for agency staff. This initiative aims to inform the sector to improve practice.

The Roadshow has been a platform to develop relationships across the sector, which in turn builds the confidence of agency staff to promote FCAV to foster carers. The FCAV aims to continue the Roadshow to reach all agencies and ACCOs in the next 12 months.



Above: Sam visits VACCA Morwell



Above: Sam visits the Quantum team



Above: Tessa at MacKillop

Treasurer's Report

Stephen Bowers

Treasurer



As of the end of financial year 2024, FCAV Net Assets are **\$756,480**, reflecting a notable increase of **\$178,635** compared to the previous financial year. This growth is primarily due to a bequest received during the year.

Our total income for the year amounted to **\$1,295,745**, a significant decrease from the previous year's figure of **\$2,140,222**. State Government funding accounted for most of our financial support, contributing **\$835,828** which accounts for 68% of our overall income. The current financial year (in comparison to last), reflects the full transition of the organisation of the Carer KaFE (learning & development) program no longer operating under FCAV. Responsibility for this program was transitioned from FCAV management following the outcome of a public tender from 1 April 2023.

Whilst it is greatly appreciated that the Victorian state government has maintained its ongoing support of the organisation, FCAV will continue to explore alternative funding sources with a view to diversify its revenue streams. This strategy will assist the organisation to maintain its independence in decision-making processes around its operations, and is particularly important given current economic conditions resulting in donations further declining.

Our expenditure for financial year 2024 amounted to **\$1,117,110**. This allocation of funds reflects our ongoing commitment to our core programs and services.

This shift in our financial landscape necessitates careful planning and resource allocation to ensure continued sustainability. FCAV continues to meet this challenge, and has planned its future resource allocation carefully to ensure financial sustainability outcomes are met.

Further reading: The Foster Care Association of Victoria full Financial Statement for the year ending **30 June 2024** is available on the FCAV website: fcav.org.au/assets/annual-report/2024-signed-financial-statements.pdf



Financial Report

Profit and Loss

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue	3	1,295,745	2,140,222
Employee benefits expense	4	(852,315)	(1,205,483)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	4	(47,429)	(34,840)
Consultancy fees		(9,342)	(647,434)
Administrative expenses		(20,585)	(25,076)
Carer and event expenses		(37,488)	(44,381)
Office expenses		(20,120)	(31,343)
Occupancy expenses		(21,045)	(32,755)
Other expenses		(45,834)	(73,756)
Repayment of funding	2	(59,683)	-
Finance costs		(3,269)	(1,366)
Surplus before income tax		178,635	43,788
Income tax expense	13	-	-
Surplus for the year		178,635	43,788
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax			
Revaluation changes for property, plant and equipment		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		178,635	43,788

Balance Sheet

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	882,675	1,375,531
Trade and other receivables	6	13,446	41,835
Prepayments		4,332	3,900
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		900,453	1,421,266
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Right-of-use assets	9	26,932	32,179
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		26,932	32,179
TOTAL ASSETS		927,385	1,453,445
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	7	49,956	747,489
Lease liabilities	9	20,807	13,507
Employee benefits	8	90,887	67,521
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		161,650	828,517
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease liabilities	9	7,186	19,042
Employee benefits	8	2,069	28,041
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		9,255	47,083
TOTAL LIABILITIES		170,905	875,600
NET ASSETS		756,480	577,845
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		756,480	577,845
TOTAL EQUITY		756,480	577,845

Auditor's Report

Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, as lead auditor for the audit of Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc for the year ended 30 June 2024, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- (a) No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 in relation to the audit; and
- (b) No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



Mr Benjamin Horner
Chartered Accountant; Registered Company Auditor
Director
McConachie Stedman Audit and Assurance Pty Ltd
160 Hume Street
Toowoomba Qld 4350

14 August 2024

Statement by the Board of Directors

Responsible Persons' Declaration

The responsible persons declare that in the responsible persons' opinion:

- The attached financial statements and notes comply with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, the Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012;
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.



Responsible person
Megan Sadlier



Responsible person
Stephen Bowers

Dated this14..... day ofAugust..... 2024

A year at a glance



fca
v
foster care
association
of victoria

The FCAV's support, resources and advocacy helps retain foster carers and supports them to provide great care. Join us... fca.org.au

CARER HOTLINE



946

carer enquiries, delivering
1701 hours of support in the
12 months to June 2024

4,300

welcomed 271 full foster carer
members and 54 associate members in
year to June 2024

MEMBERS



**946 enquiries
over 1701 hours
of service to
carers through
the carer
support team**

2,000

**submissions to the
care allowance
campaign**

30

**nominations to the
FCAV Commitment
to Carers awards**

341

**carers supported
through the Carer
Assistance Program**

10

**Chat with the CEO
sessions with carers
and agencies hosted**

1

**new website launch
fca.org.au**

754

**carers responded to
the Carer Census**

7,597

**FCAV facebook page
followers**

12

**foster care newsletters
for information, updates
and giveaways**

2

**foster care
Ambassadors
launched**

270

**new FCAV members
contacted to ensure
they know about
services**

1,021

**carers engaged in
FCAV or university
affiliated research,
surveys and forums**

**20 learning and
development
sessions hosted**

**5 carers supported
to attend the
national
conference**

We champion foster carers to be recognised and valued for their role in the lives of children and young people in care.

BECOME A MEMBER!

As an FCAV member you have access to free advocacy, support & information. Your membership is instrumental to our strength, striving for a better Victorian foster care system for our children, young people & carers.

As the peak body in Victoria, we are the united voice of foster carers, advocating for systemic improvements, building productive partnerships and nurturing respectful relationships. We deliver a full range of information and support services to meet carers' needs at all points in their care journey.

FCAV.ORG.AU | (03) 9416 4292



The FCAV celebrates the diversity of its carer membership, board and staff. We are committed to a workplace, policies and services that are safe and inclusive for LGBTIQA+ communities, young people and families.



Acknowledgment of Country

The FCAV acknowledges the unceded sovereignty of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge the continued connection to country – including lands, cultural knowledges and their peoples – and pay our respect to Elders past and present. We are the united voice and advocate for all foster carers across Victoria, and we aim to continually develop our knowledge and act with respect to First Nations sovereignty.

Contact:

Foster Care Association of Victoria
Ground Floor, 2 Greenwood Street,
Abbotsford VIC 3067
Telephone: (03) 9416 4292
Email: admin@fcav.org.au
Website: www.fcav.org.au

