

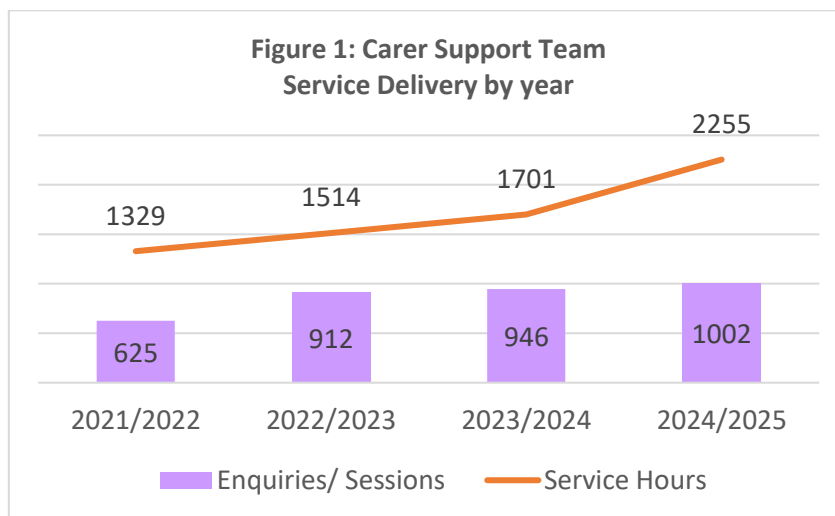
## Carer Support Team Annual Results

1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

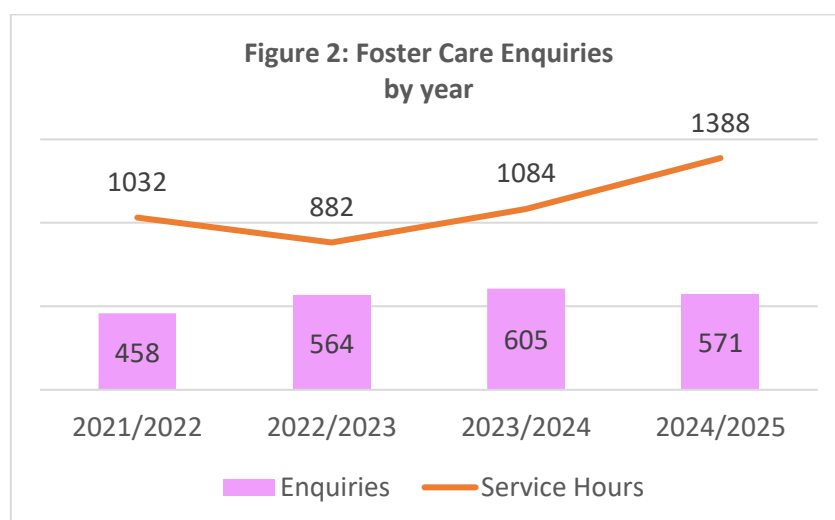
The **Carer Support Team** comprises **Carer Advocates** providing information, advice and advocacy to foster carers (enquiries), **Carer Assistance Program**, providing short-term counselling to foster and permanent carers & adoptive parents (sessions) & **Learning & Development**, delivering a range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

The Carer Support Team responded to and closed **1002** Foster Care Enquiries/ CAP Sessions, delivering **2255** hours of service in the 2024/2025 financial year.

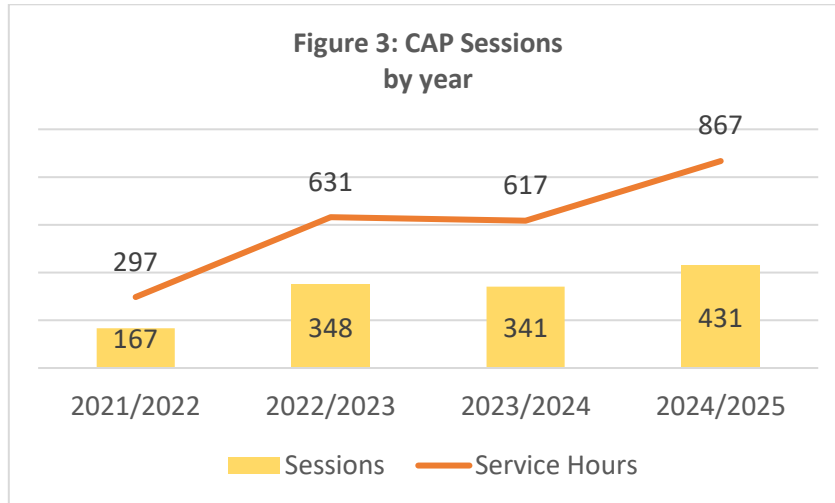
**Figure 1** shows the number of enquiries/ sessions steadily increasing over the past 4 years, since the expansion of the Carer Assistance Program.



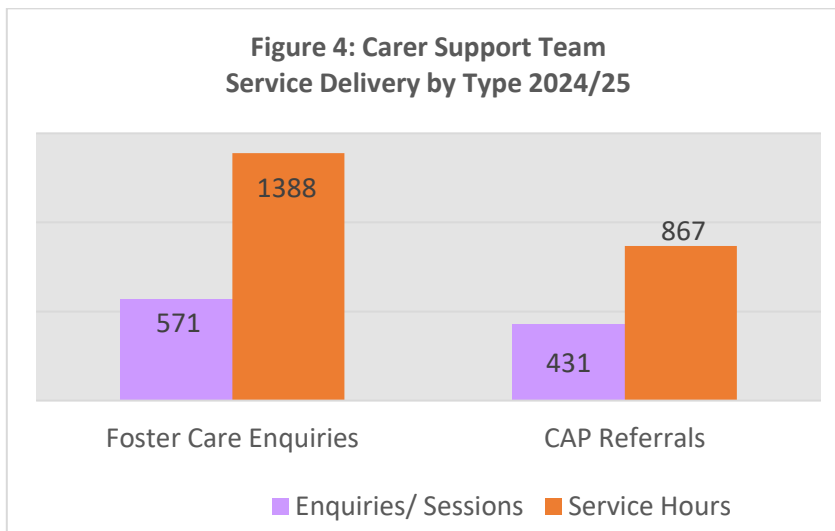
**Figure 2** shows foster care Enquiries over 4 years. While the number of Enquiries remains consistent, hours of support increased significantly in 2024/25. Support for carers through complex CIMS Investigations continues to dominate their time.



**Figure 3** shows CAP sessions over 4 years. The number of sessions doubled when the service was extended to Permanent Carers and Adoptive Parents in 2022/2023 and continued to rise when the service offering expanded to an extra day a week in 2023/24. The most significant increase is seen in 2024/25, this is a result of increased need for emotional support and greater promotion of the service.

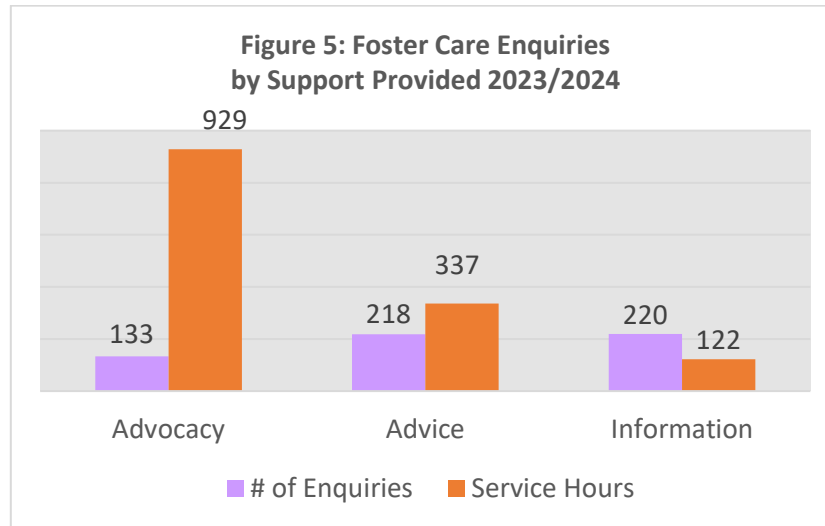


**Figure 4** shows the Carer Support Team Service Delivery for the 2024/2025 period.



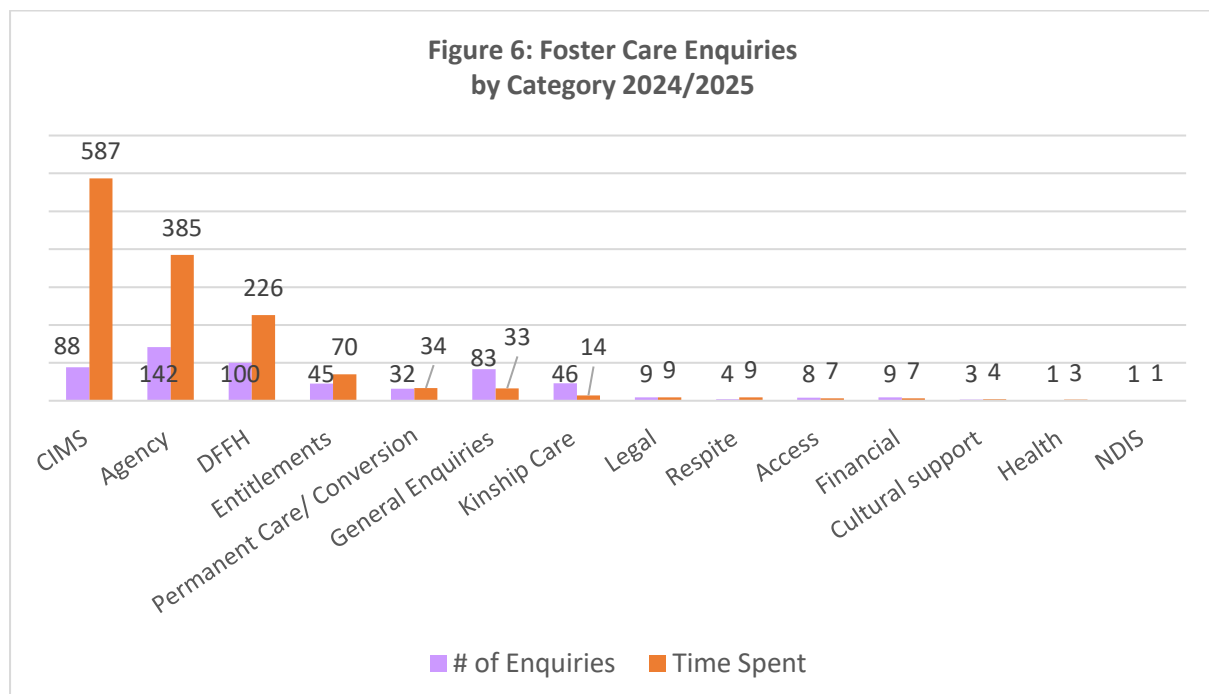
## Foster Care Enquiries

Figure 5 shows the Carer Advocates provided advocacy to 133, Advice to 218 and Information to 220 foster care enquiries in the 2024/2025 period.



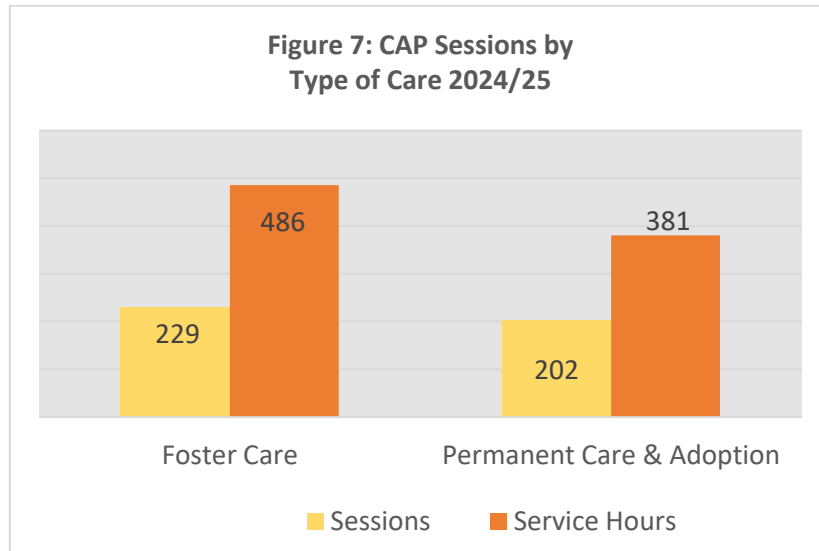
## Categories

The most time was spent responding to foster care enquiries relating to CIMS, Agency and DFFH matters. Considerable time was spent on Entitlements (Carer allowance rates/ level) and Permanent Care (Foster to permanent care conversion).



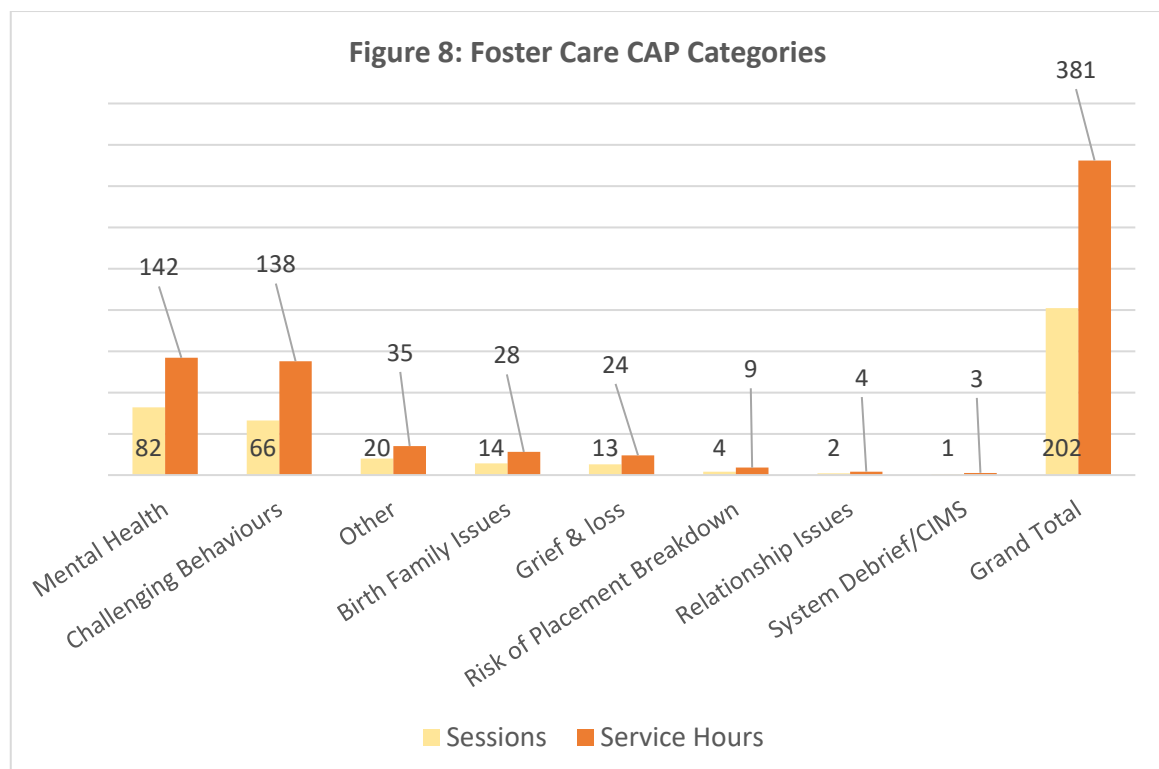
### Carer Assistance Program (CAP)

The Carer Assistance Program delivered 431 sessions of therapeutic short-term counselling, delivering 867 hours of service in the 2024/2025 period.



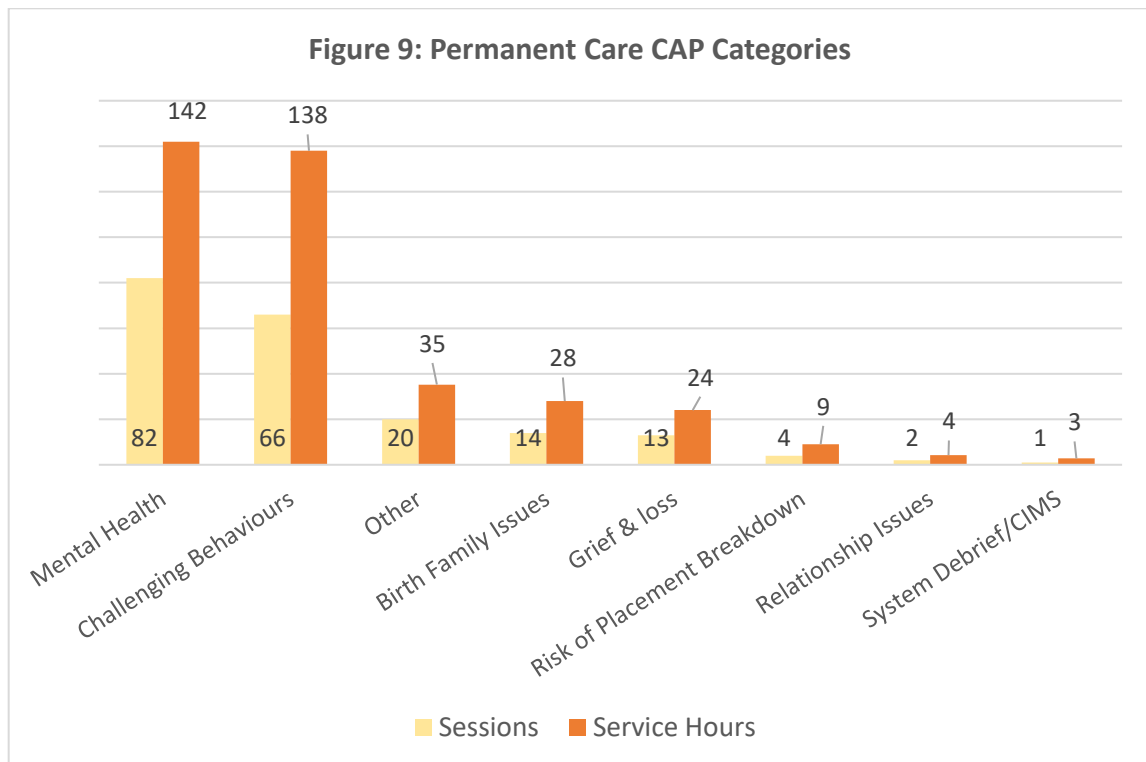
### **Foster Care CAP Categories**

Mental Health, CIMS and Grief & Loss continue to be the most common issues for foster carers seeking emotional support.



## Permanent Care CAP Categories

Most permanent carers are seeking emotional support due to the mental health and challenging behaviours of children in their care. Birth family issues and Grief & Loss were also common themes in the year.



## Carer Support Team Feedback 2025

- Jake was absolutely marvellous! He was sympathetic and approachable, yet maintained his professionalism. He listened and advised so wisely, and I am eternally grateful.
- The CAP service is a much needed program to assist carers navigate such a difficult landscape. Given the struggling CP system, and the emotional toil that comes with being a foster carer, having access to the CAP will certainly go along way to supporting and retaining carers. I really appreciated the support and advice I received today. And just having someone who could listen to me and empathise with what my family and I are currently experiencing, was such a great support. Given the nature of out of home care, where you are limited in the information you can share with friends and family, it was great to be able to speak confidentially and openly with someone who understands the landscape.
- I was unsure if it was going to be helpful, but it absolutely was.
- Caring is an isolating experience and one that leaves carers disempowered. Having someone to hear and support you through the many challenges that fostering brings is a valuable resource. Unfortunately the system is too broken for me to remain as a carer ongoing but this service helps me to sustain our current placement until the children age out of care and my fostering days are

over.

- This service helped me in many ways , especially around the guilt I had of not feeling like I'd done enough and that I thought what I was doing wasn't helping.
- As a permanent carer of 2 children, my husband and I fall into a very small cohort of parents with similar experiences. FCAV and PCA Families have been extremely important in helping us navigate the challenges we have faced in helping our children thrive despite their foundations of complex trauma.
- Big thank you to Leigh for all the patience when I was definitely not making it easy to navigate.
- Thank you, Leigh, so much for supporting me through this tricky process.
- Thank you for your support. After 8 months of self-advocacy and getting nowhere, you have helped achieve a resolution in 2 weeks
- The system is losing so many carers, it's not the children, it's the demands the system is placing on our family's they are at times unrealistic, government guidelines continuously getting misused to suit each new worker, changing the goals to often, bias agency workers not listening to the drivers. I am no longer a carer after 7 years and it really showed me how valued I wasn't.
- You're doing great, keep up the good work.
- The psychologist I spoke with was definitely trauma informed and knowledgeable about out of home care
- I valued having professional experienced psychological support. Some situations are not appropriate to be handled by peer support or agency team.
- Your team is incredible Jake is amazing and kind and very understanding
- Please keep up the fantastic and very needed support. If I could help FCAV in any way, I would. Hands down best service.
- The care I received was exceptional
- Biba is wonderful as always
- I find it very beneficial to be able to speak to someone who understands foster care.
- I'm very appreciative of your time and expertise

- Form a union, go on strike, see real change in the foster system. help us get a wage for the time we spend doing what we do everyone deserves to get paid for services rendered.
- I personally have received the best support from FCAV. Better than any other support service out there. If anything could be improved, it would be to have offices for F2F available in regional towns.

#### How could we improve the service?

- Legal aid or legal advice when it comes to our rights as carers.
- Would love legal advice to be part of FCAV
- Offer longer time for sessions if needed
- Have telephone as first contact NOT website form...when stressed filling out yet another form is a barrier.
- Initial contact to be by phone rather than online form. When you are traumatised, filling out a form is not helpful. – **In response to this we updated the CAP webpage with “If you require assistance completing the referral form, please call us on 03 9416 4292.**
- Could it be a regular service rather than reactive?
- I wish I had used this service sooner... I just didn't understand what FCAV could offer me and what the support looked like. I feel like the foster agencies don't want foster carers to know about this...
- By sharing more information on how complex trauma affects children at different stages of life.