



*Transforming  
lives for stronger  
communities*

## **Performance and Impact Report 2019/20**

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**Capable Communities**  
**Strong Families**  
**Thriving Children**

Research, Outcome  
Measurement & Evaluation  
(ROME) Unit

# Foreword

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## It is with much pride that we share the Family Life Performance and Impact 2019/20 Report with you.

It highlights the respective journeys of our 188 staff, 269 volunteers and 14,287 individuals who worked together towards our collective vision to see children thriving in strong families, supported by capable communities.

***“Family Violence may happen behind closed doors but it needs to be brought out from these shadows and into broad daylight.”***

*(Rosie Batty)*

This year we expanded our resources to reduce family violence and its impacts. In partnership with the Mornington Peninsula Shire (MPS) and in collaboration with Jesuit Social Services and Monash University, we adopted a Collective Impact approach characterised by a collaborative, place based focus, to build a shared understanding of family violence. This has a key focus on the concept of healthy masculinities and explores prevention and early intervention approaches through community engagement, education and partnership.

We celebrated our Strength2Strength program receiving ongoing funding after a successful pilot. This unique program consists of a suite of therapeutic services, allowing it to be tailored to the individual needs of each family member. This supports those affected by family violence in their journey of recovery and repair.

We also celebrated growth in our Men’s Behaviour Change Program (MBCP). Over the next three years (1/1/2020 - 31/12/2022) we will see our capacity increased from 2 to approximately 24 groups per week. We welcome the support from our funders and partners in this important family violence work.



Family Life's commitment to creating capable communities was evident in our co-design work to facilitate creative place based solutions for change at local levels, innovating, sharing and scaling in a practical and cost effective way. We facilitated a 'listening tour' with the Hastings community, providing a unique opportunity to reflect on demographic data related to education, employment, mental health and family violence. We listened to local people identify community needs and strengths. We also commenced delivering our Community Change - Community of Practice webinars for the broader services sector. This is a space where we share the journey and learnings that we have experienced with our industry peers so that we can work together to support and strengthen our community.

During the year, the COVID19 pandemic sent shockwaves around the world and this has had a significant impact on our society. Our staff and volunteers have been able to pivot and respond

efficiently and effectively, supported by our Board's decision to invest in our organisation through enhanced technological capacity. This enabled us to navigate through COVID. In this report we are able to share insights into what was achieved during this time. We note that this resilience and capacity to adapt has been matched, at every level, by the community we serve.

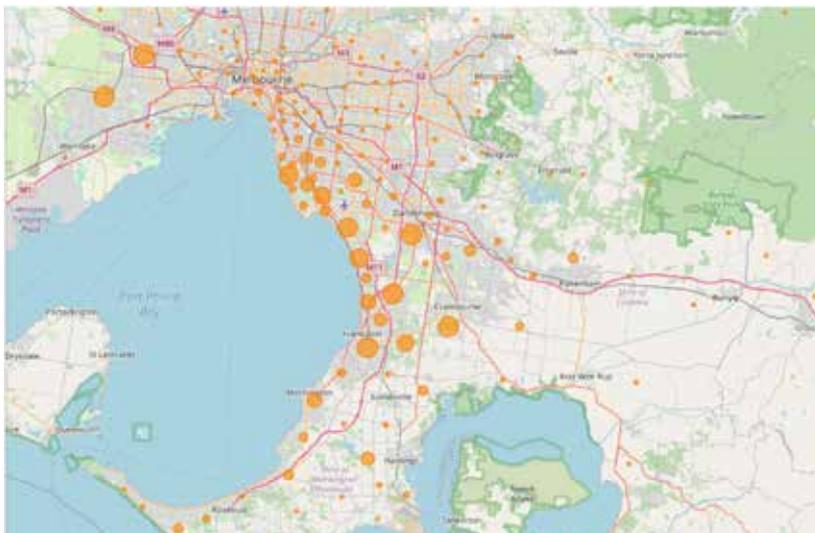
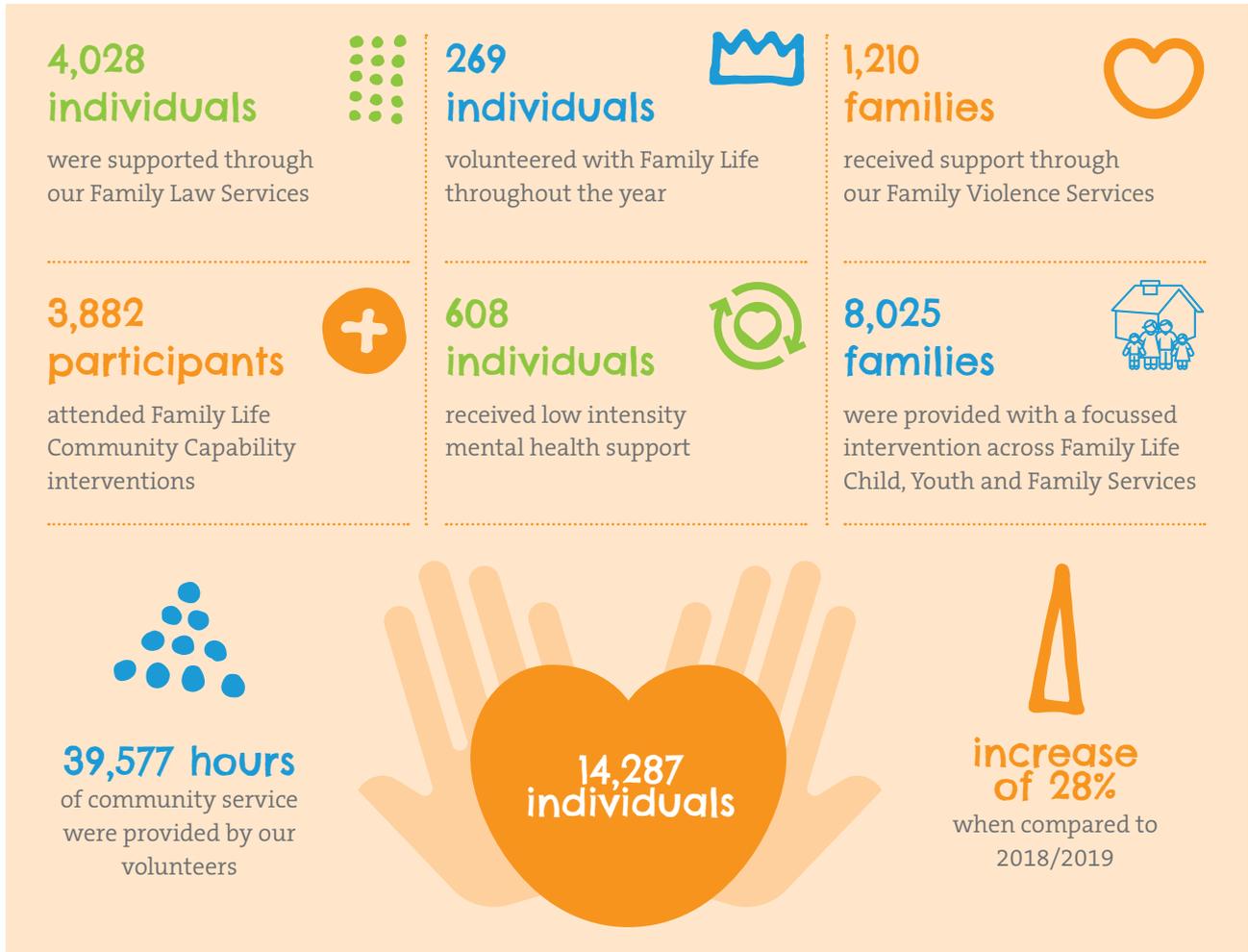
As we share this report with you, the impact and ripple effects of COVID19 are still playing out. While we acknowledge the enormity of this pandemic, we also invite you to journey through this report remembering that it is not the entire story for the 2019/20 financial year. There are many successes and outcomes that we can celebrate both before and during COVID19.

We thank you for the part that you have played in this story and we are grateful for your continued support.

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**Allison Wainwright**  
Chief Executive Officer

# How much did we do for our children, families and our community?



Our clients accessed our services from 220<sup>1</sup> different postcodes<sup>2</sup> across Victoria. Our service delivery footprint reached 69 different Local Government Areas (LGAs). During the December 2019 to May 2020 period 26,540kms were travelled to deliver our services<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This has decreased from 237 postcodes when compared to the previous financial year.

<sup>2</sup> In our report last year we reported 348 suburbs, we have since updated this calculation to count postcodes instead of suburbs to reduce the potential of duplications.

<sup>3</sup> In December 2019, Family Life introduced a new fleet car management system which has enabled us to have more accurate and detailed information about our fleet of cars and the travel they undertake.

# Social Enterprise

Embedded within our local communities, our Social Enterprise Community Stores (opportunity shops) provide a space for the community to connect and to source low cost clothing and goods.

Over 250 volunteers support our Community Store staff to provide a service to their community, directly working to reduce social isolation and loneliness. Our volunteers activate strong local networks and, for some, build skills to enhance other life outcomes such as workforce readiness.

<p>Individuals in our local community often experience isolation and loneliness. Soft community connection points are required to support community resilience. Through these grass roots connections, individuals are able to connect with the support of our social enterprises and/or be connected with the broader supports available through our services.</p>	<p><b>9</b> further Catch Up 4 Women mentors were trained<sup>4</sup>.</p> <p>Volunteers attended our Here4U Bystander intervention training<sup>5</sup>.</p> <p>We partnered with local organisations which allowed us to strengthen the systemic support achieved by our social enterprises. We would like to thank the following partners for their support this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hampton Community Centre</li> <li>• Country Women’s Association</li> <li>• The Men’s Shed</li> <li>• Hampton Girl Guides</li> <li>• Sandy Beach Community Centre</li> <li>• Hampton Traders association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approximately <b>169,500</b> individuals visited our stores to access supports and goods from Family Life and connect with their community</li> <li>• <b>67,829</b> transactions (or points of social connection) took place through our stores</li> <li>• <b>203,487</b> items were sold, reducing waste in landfill and providing goods for others</li> <li>• <b>411</b> orders were taken through our online store, an initiative we accelerated due to the impact of COVID19 on our Community Stores</li> <li>• <b>10</b> volunteers were able to secure employment and move into the workforce</li> <li>• high quality products can be made more available through generous donations which also reduces waste in society</li> <li>• the financial income that is generated by the people behind our stores is directly injected back into community capacity building.</li> </ul>
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<sup>4</sup> The Catch Up 4 Women program brings older women together to learn, socialise and develop skills to reduce the gap created through inequity in social systems.

<sup>5</sup> Here4U equips participants with the skills to stand against family violence, gender stereotypes and gender inequity.

# The people behind the statistics

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## Rosie's Story

Rosie is an 11 year old girl who was referred to our SHINE (Support, Help, Information Networks and Education) program due to experiencing trauma from significant involvement with the Child Protection system as well as exposure to family violence. Rosie reportedly experienced bullying which contributed to disengagement from school. Additionally, Rosie experienced issues with regulating her emotions, in particular anger. Rosie was reluctant to engage in any type of support service and initially stated that she did not want to work with SHINE, however would attempt to engage.

The SHINE program is an early intervention and prevention program designed to interrupt the progression of emerging and enduring mental illness for children and young people. SHINE provides mental health support in universal and community settings through both outreach and school-based activities.

The SHINE program's approach to supporting Rosie utilised evidence informed approaches including:

- strengths-based theory
- client-centred theory
- narrative therapy
- cognitive behavioural therapy
- emotional awareness and mindfulness strategies
- relationship-based practice

At the end of this support, Rosie reported that she felt she was becoming less triggered by situations and when she did become triggered, she felt confident in implementing strategies she was taught during the program. Rosie enrolled in school, gradually increased her hours of school attendance and displayed a high level of motivation to maintain and improve her learning. Rosie was nominated and won an award for her resilience and ability to overcome adversity.



## The people behind the statistics

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### Julian's Story

Julian attended our Unite program and participated in several components available to him. The Unite program is a strong, flexible and responsive service offered to individuals, and their families, who are in Corrections Services, with the aim of strengthening family relationships.

Julian had a story of family violence against his wife. This had an impact on his son, Ryan, who was refusing to attend school and held strong anger towards his father and was attending counselling to support with the trauma he had experienced.

Through his participation in the program, Julian displayed a keen motivation to learn new strategies and skills to help improve his relationships. He was able to identify that, despite being incarcerated at the time, he could contribute to supporting Ryan in his journey towards safety and stability. After seeking guidance/approval from Julian's wife, the Unite program was able to support Julian to apply the skills and learning he had received through the program by writing a letter to his son. Julian was able to articulate and acknowledge his past behaviours and provide thoughtful reflection; he said that it was important for him to learn from the past and that it was time for him to move forward. Julian drafted a letter whereby he apologised to Ryan and expressed his love for him. Julian has sent the letter to Ryan.

# Growth and Progress

## Evidence and Outcomes



All services are implemented under the requirements for evidence informed practice, transparent performance and measured outcomes.

## Families Benefit



Families have improved social and economic outcomes from our model for prevention and earlier intervention, integrated whole of family services and community support.

## Social Change



Through collaboration and communication we work to support better outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged families and children in diverse communities in Australia.

Looking Forward 2020/2021

Contribute to the evidence base supporting children and families in the post COVID19 pandemic and transfer this knowledge into practice.

Continue to support and facilitate trauma repair for our community, particularly in response to the COVID19 global pandemic.

Ongoing development of partnerships with local and international best practice organisations.

Continue our work with communities that reflects our deep-seated ethical commitment to inclusion and collaboration.

Implement a volunteering strategy to empower the community to achieve social change, enhance early intervention approaches and create a long-term connection post Family Life intervention.

Develop an organisational Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

Current Status 2019/2020

Rapid adaptation of client database to enable effective capture of COVID19 specific risks and challenges to support client risk assessment.

Adaptation of client satisfaction survey to capture information about specific needs related to COVID19.

Strength2Strength received ongoing funding following a successful pilot.

Expanded our Men's Behaviour Change Services by onboarding the Court Mandated Men's Behaviour Change Program through Magistrates' Court Victoria.

Mornington Peninsula Collective Impact work in development with Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Working with the Tamarack Institute to enhance our work in Collective Impact.

Consultation with the Hastings community through Listening Tours.

Initiated a social and community change focused Community of Practice for external organisations.

Launched a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.

Looking Back 2017-2019

Data analysis enhanced by using NVivo and SPSS to interrogate and report on evidence, outcomes, and client feedback.

Unite service commenced.

The Orange Door service commenced; Family Life auspiced Integrated Practice Leaders in the Bayside Peninsula Area.

Continued growth of infant and child focussed family interventions and trauma informed service design in partnership with Child Trauma Academy.

Growing knowledge and experience in co-design and Collective Impact: Together We Can, Creating Capable Communities (Hastings), Catch Up for Women.

Connect peer support mental health program implemented at Family Life.

Developed a client participation strategy and employed a client participation consultant.

**Forward Plan 2017-2021: By 2021, Family Life will report an increased, expanded and high value contribution to improving the social and economic well-being of diverse Australian families.**

**Knowledge and skills**



Outcomes are achieved by an engaged workforce resourced to deliver the best customer experiences for diverse beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Redevelop Family Services approaches into evidence informed care modules which achieve improved outcomes across a range of domains to improve parenting capacity.

Review and enhance Family Violence models to promote integration across systems.

Transition from COVID19 remote service delivery to hybrid service delivery models.

Implemented complex case panels, clinical supervision and reflective practice to enable practitioners to engage to seek expertise, case support and consultation.

Developed an organisational resource bank of information to support practitioners in their work with clients impacted by COVID19.

Engaged with the Child Trauma Academy and the Safe and Together Institute to ensure a trauma informed response was provided for clients in the context of COVID19.

Launched our Practice Quality and Research strategy.

Launched our Learning and Development Strategy.

Continued our Neurosequential Model (NM) certification process.

**Innovation**



We contribute thought and practice leadership embracing new technologies and approaches to solving complex social problems.

Continue to engage in collaborative partnerships to achieve systems change.

Implement an enhanced therapeutic care model across Family Law Services.

Establish targeted Mental Health responses in the Southern Melbourne Area to support Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities.

Exploring data sharing relationships with Australian Data Archives.

Establishing partnership with Swinburne University in relation to a data co-operative.

Implemented a Brief Intervention model to provide rapid, early intervention responses to families with vulnerable children to divert them from the Child Protection System.

Introduced a mobile workforce strategy with VOIP phone systems and hot desking flexibility.

Partnered with the Social Enterprise Innovation Lab (SEIL) project with Swinburne University to develop tools to demonstrate impact and innovation in the area of social enterprise.

**Financial Resilience**



We have built the financial sustainability of our purpose by diversifying income, connecting with empowering networks and ensuring best value business systems and processes

Continue to build and develop our philanthropic relationships to increase our innovative capacity.

Revised Social Enterprise retail strategy.

Increased funding for service delivery in our Family Violence Services.

Established "Heartlinks" as a 'fee for service' component of the organisation.

Increased Family Life's Mental Health portfolio.

# COVID19 Response

In March 2020, the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic led to Family Life introducing remote service delivery to protect staff, volunteers and clients.

This required significant adaptations to service delivery. The commitment and passion of all staff during this time was outstanding. Despite their own personal experiences of the pandemic, and the impact and pressures of bringing this crucial, yet complex work into the safety of their homes, they have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to their clients that is remarkable.

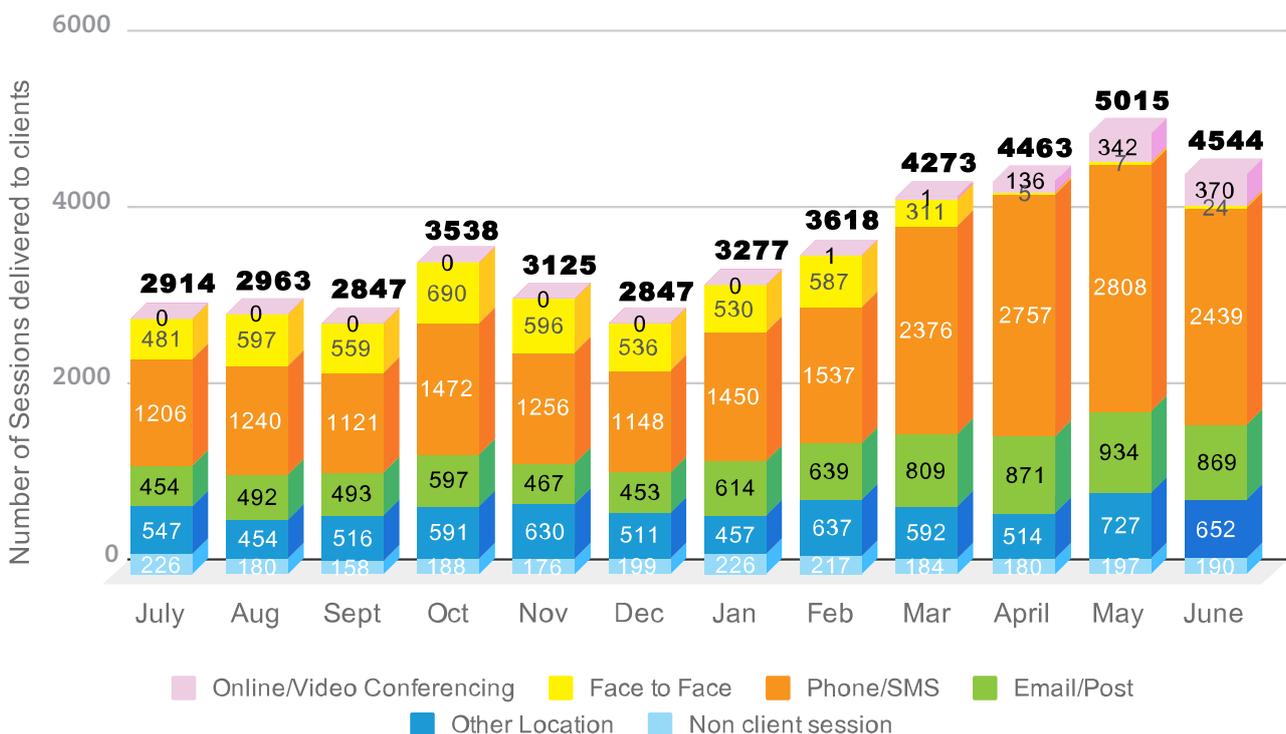
Staff embraced technology, in particular the use of video conferencing (Zoom and Coviu), all while supporting clients to navigate the same new experience. A pandemic literature review informed an organisation-wide COVID19 practice framework. Programs developed resource/activity packs to be delivered to clients' homes which they then used

to connect and engage during sessions. Programs quickly responded by developing and delivering webinars to support our community through this time. We even saw examples of practitioners who would play games with some of the children in our programs pretending to be playing hide and seek or tag over the phone while the child ran around their backyard.

The enormity of this passion and dedication resulted in a 40% increase in the number of client sessions/contacts from February to May 2020. This increase is even more significant when considering that not all of our services<sup>6</sup> were able to operate under usual frameworks during this time.

## Monthly Session Contact Method 2019/20

Agency Wide



<sup>6</sup> Due to the restrictions in place, the services provided by our Parenting Orders Program, Children's Contact Services and Unite programs were reduced significantly during this time.



Knowing that the impact of this pandemic for our clients would be significant, our Research, Outcome Measurement and Evaluation Team (ROME) developed a COVID19 resource platform to ensure that staff had easy access to the most up to date resources and literature that was being developed as the pandemic progressed.

In addition to this, we developed and implemented an evidence informed Safety Planning - COVID19 response policy which consisted of practitioners regularly monitoring the wellbeing and safety of our service participants. This process enabled us to have an up to date, clear understanding of the impact of COVID19 on the safety and wellbeing of our service participants.

There were 2,168 safety plans completed during the period of 30th March to 30th June 2020. From these reports the following risk or safety concerns were the areas most represented in these safety plans:



**38%** Safety plans reported mental health issues



**33%** Safety plans reported family violence as a safety concern



**31%** Safety plans reported relationship concerns (including separation and divorce) as a safety risk concern



**24%** Safety plans reported included child and wellbeing concerns



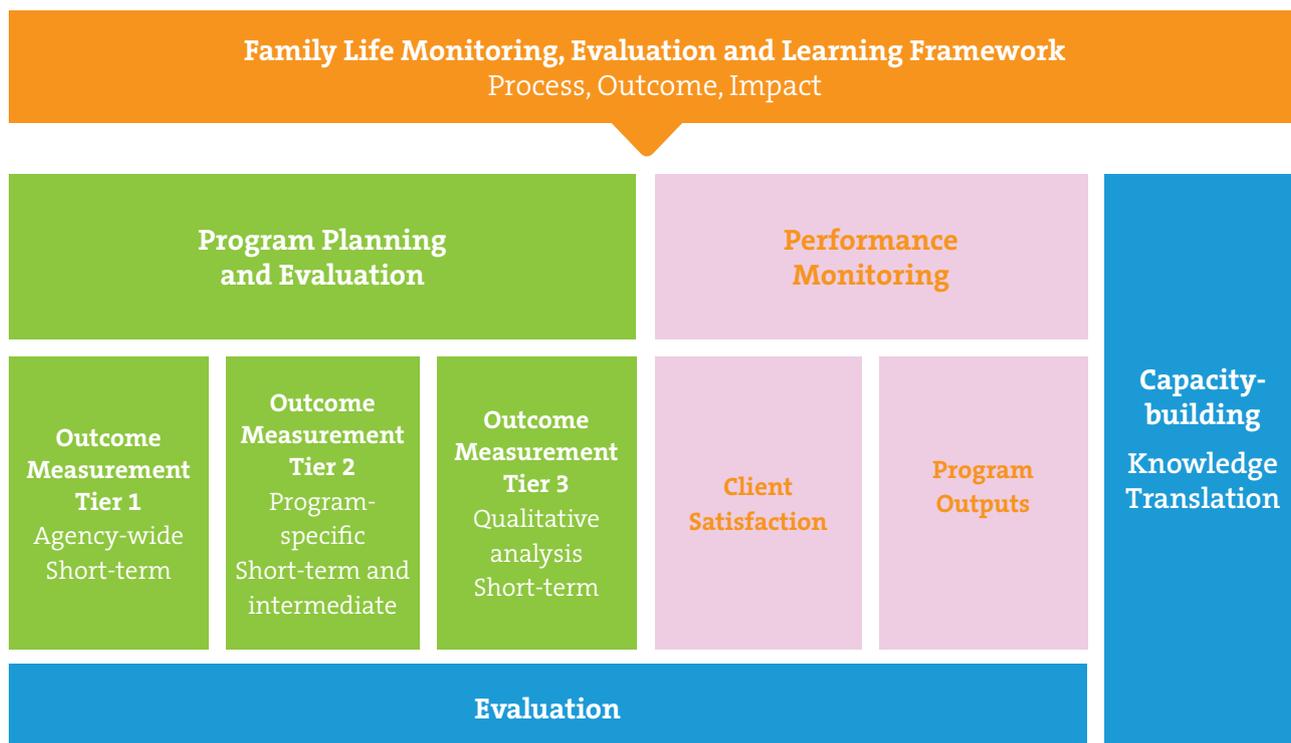
**15%** Safety plans reported Isolation as a risk factor

This data enables the continued adaptation of our COVID19 service response and is useful in informing key focus areas for individual and community repair as we emerge from the pandemic.

# What impact did we have?

*“To accurately measure and report value creation and the social and economic return of our whole of community effort is, like the problems we seek to solve, a complex, multifaceted issue.”<sup>7</sup>*

Family Life aims to measure and report the outcomes that our clients/participants achieve whilst they are participating in any of our programs or services.



## Methodology

Our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework collects both qualitative and quantitative data that is practitioner reported, client/participant reported, as well as information gathered during consultation between clients/participants and practitioners. Our MEL Framework consists of three different tiers of data all of which are mapped to our Family Life Outcomes Framework. This information has been captured through a combination of methods including CSNet, Google forms and sheets, and Survey Monkey and has then been analysed using NVivo and SPSS software. All tools and processes used to capture data for all three outcome measurement tiers of our MEL framework are mapped to our organisational outcomes framework and theory of change.

Our ‘Tier 1’ (organisation-wide) outcome measurement and client feedback tool has undertaken a significant review this year. A new replacement Tier 1 tool is currently in the process of trial with the expectation that it will be in place for the 2020/2021 financial year.



Our ‘Tier 2’ (program specific) validated tools are embedded into services to guide service delivery and support practitioners to be able to tailor their service to the needs of the individual or family. Where possible, using SPSS, a sign test was conducted to compare if the differences in outcome ratings are significantly different between the first time and the last time the tool was used with the families. For an observed change to be significant, the test assumes that the improvement is larger than being due to chance (50%) (Nonparametric tests, n.d.).



The final tier to our MEL Framework is our 'Tier 3'. This tier consists of the qualitative information that is captured by practitioners in our CSnet client database and through interviews, focus groups and other qualitative data collection. Through the NVivo software, a content analysis was undertaken. This consists of systematically coding and categorising text to determine trends and patterns, their frequency and their relationships with the aim to describe the characteristics of the content (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Data classified in the "needs assessment" and "plan action closed" categories was coded using

an inductive approach (an inductive approach aims to generate findings emerging from the data - without a theory to test). Data classified in the "action to be taken" category was coded using a deductive approach following the key elements of trauma-informed service delivery (Kenny et al., 2015) and the theoretical basis of trauma informed models of care (Wall, Higgins & Hunter, 2016). Comments related to administrative tasks were not analysed.

A summary of the data captured across all of our tiers of measurement has been provided in the following Outcome Measurement Report pages.

### Short-term Outcomes

- Individuals are connected through a mutual support network of friends, family and neighbours and by participating in community activities
- Individuals recognise when they need help and know how to find and access support services
- Individuals are work-ready and motivated to engage in employment and training opportunities
- Children and young people are engaged in school and learning with support from their parents
- Individuals have the skills and support needed to volunteer in their community

### Intermediate Outcomes

- Individuals are connected through a mutual support network of friends, family and neighbours and by participating in community activities
- Individuals recognise when they need help and know how to find and access support services
- Individuals are work-ready and motivated to engage in employment and training opportunities
- Children and young people are engaged in school and learning with support from their parents
- Individuals have the skills and support needed to volunteer in their community

### Long-term Outcomes

Adults, young people and children learn and participate within supportive communities

- Individuals experience optimal individual functioning
- Individuals have healthy relationships
- Individuals and families experience reduced conflict and violence
- Individuals utilise their personal strengths in times of adversity

- Individuals are connected through a mutual support network of friends, family and neighbours and by participating in community activities
- Individuals recognise when they need help and know how to find and access support services
- Individuals are work-ready and motivated to engage in employment and training opportunities
- Children and young people are engaged in school and learning with support from their parents
- Individuals have the skills and support needed to volunteer in their community

Families experience positive wellbeing and strong and respectful relationships

- Parents provide care that optimises their children's physical, mental, emotional and social development
- Children and young people have a secure and positive attachment to their parent
- Children and young people live, learn and play in an environment that is free from violence and conflict
- Children and young people have a positive sense of self

- Parents understand how to manage their children's behaviours and meet their developmental needs
- Parents have the ability to create a safe, stable and nurturing environment for their children
- Children and young people use prosocial strategies and behaviours to express themselves and have their needs met
- Children and young people develop self-awareness and self-esteem

Children and young people experience optimal development and are safe from harm

<sup>8</sup> Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

<sup>9</sup> This test is an alternative from the t-test (previously used) when the data is nonparametric (e.g. ordinal data).

# Outcome Measurement Report

Adults, young people and children learn and participate within supportive communities

**69%** of students reported having **better friendships** at school since attending the School Focused Youth Service Upstanders Program



**71%** of Creating Capable Leaders participants experienced a positive change in their **connection to their community** during the program, change overall in this area was statistically significant<sup>10</sup>

**80%** of our volunteers reported **feeling valued** as a member of our Family Life community



**86%** of individuals/families of our Family and Community Service participants requested and received support with referrals and accessing support services<sup>11</sup>

*“Since I work full time and I’m a solo mum, I appreciated that <the worker> sourced information for me about what was available. I found out about programs and resources that I could trust.”*

(IFS Child & Family parent)



**50%** of individuals/families across our services requested and were provided with relevant **skill building** during their service<sup>12</sup>

**92%** of teachers reported that the School Focused Youth Service Martial Arts Therapy program had a positive impact on student engagement



**71%** of Creating Capable Leaders participants experienced a positive change in their capacity to contribute to their community during the program, change overall in this area was statistically significant<sup>13</sup>



This data represented a statistically significant change.



This data was captured through thematic analysis of qualitative data.

<sup>10</sup> p=0.063

<sup>11</sup> This information was identified through qualitative analysis of service plans and themes data recorded by practitioners.

<sup>12</sup> This information was identified through qualitative analysis of service plans and themes data recorded by practitioners.

<sup>13</sup> p=0.063

# Outcome Measurement Report

Families experience positive well-being and strong and respectful relationships



**89%** of parents/carers in our C2K program experienced an improvement in their own **well-being** during the program, overall change in this outcome area was statistically significant<sup>14</sup>



**97%** of our Connect program experienced a positive improvement in their **psychological distress** during the program, overall change in this area was statistically significant<sup>15</sup>



**47%** of children participating in our SHINE program experienced an improvement in their **relationships** during our service, overall change in this area was statistically significant<sup>16</sup>

*“Helped me to realise and look at myself/behaviour from an outsiders point of view. And re-evaluate my actions.”*

(IFS adolescent service young person).

**74%** of Here4U participants reported their knowledge of the impact of family violence on children increased after attending the training



**47%** of families in our Child & Family Integrated Family Services program experienced an improvement in the area of **housing and finances** during the program, overall change in this outcome area was statistically significant<sup>17</sup>



**50%** of young people in our Adolescent Integrated Family Violence team experienced an improvement in their **choices and behaviour**



This data represented a statistically significant change.



This data was captured through thematic analysis of qualitative data.

<sup>15</sup> p=0.008

<sup>16</sup> p=0.066

<sup>17</sup> p=0.021

# Outcome Measurement Report

Children and young people experience optimal development and are safe from harm



**44.2%** of parents/carers in our Child and Family Integrated Family Services program experienced an improvement in their ability to manage their child's **boundaries and behaviours** during the program, overall change in this area was statistically significant<sup>18</sup>



**47%** of parents/carers in our Child and Family Integrated Family Services program experienced an improvement in their **family routine** during the program, overall change in this area was statistically significant<sup>19</sup>



**43%** of children in our SHINE program experienced an improvement in **feeling safe and comfortable** where they live during the program, change overall in this outcome area was statistically significant<sup>20</sup>

**50%** of young people in our Adolescent Integrated Family Violence team experienced an improvement in their **ability to communicate** with others

**89%** of School Focused Youth Service 'Man Cave' Participants felt **enabled to discuss their emotions and masculinities**

*"The most important thing was that he helped me to manage and control my anger and that helped the family as well."*

(SHINE Child participant)

**90%** of School Focused Youth Service 'Man Cave' Participants cultivated a deeper social and emotional intelligence



This data represented a statistically significant change.



This data was captured through thematic analysis of qualitative data.



# Snapshot

## FamilyLifeConnect



The Connect Program aims to build a resilient population by supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of people experiencing low level mental health concerns. Based in Dandenong, our dedicated Family Life Connect peer support workers are engaging with our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community.

<b>Problem</b> 	Individuals experiencing low intensity mental health concerns are struggling to navigate local community and service supports and access early intervention options.
<b>Performance</b> 	<p>Our Connect program supported 219 individuals during the 2019/20 Financial year. This support consisted of 959 sessions of support over a total of 953 hours.</p> <p>COVID19 safety audits<sup>22</sup> revealed increased risk for most clients experiencing vulnerability. 85% of participants moved to medium risk during this time with risk concerns of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• relationship concerns</li><li>• isolation</li><li>• mental health issues; and</li><li>• family violence.</li></ul> <p>Our Connect program was able to quickly respond and adapt the support and information provided to participants to meet the increased risks identified through safety audits.</p>
<b>Impact</b> 	Overall, participants of our Connect program experienced a statistically significant <b>improvement in their psychological distress.</b> <sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> n=20.

<sup>23</sup> Moving from an average level of 'severe mental disorder' to an average level of 'likely to be well' - with a difference of means of 12.5 and a p value of 0.000.

# Snapshot



Our Support, Help, Information Networks and Education (SHINE) program aims to help children, and their families, who need support in leading the way towards happy and healthy lives. Our specialist case managers work with young people (with the support of their families or carers too) to address key issues and strengthen their resilience and well-being.

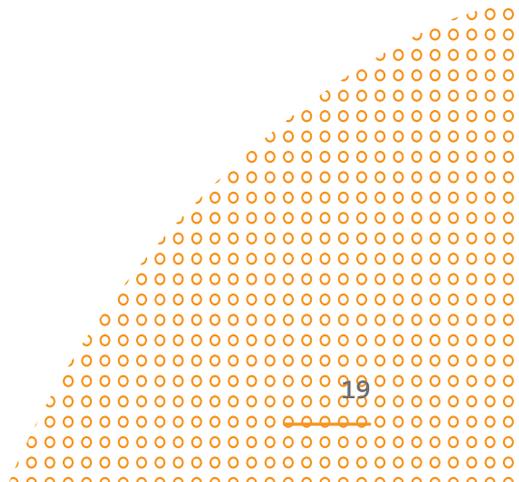
<b>Problem</b> 	The SHINE program fills a significant gap in the area of children’s and young people’s mental health, supporting individuals who do not qualify for, or cannot engage with more clinical mental health services due to age and complexity of issues, where they would otherwise slip through system gaps.
<b>Performance</b> 	The SHINE program supported 174 families during this financial year providing 2,559 hours of support.  Increased risk was identified through the 202 safety audits completed during the COVID19 period of the financial year. 71% of audits reported medium safety concerns were present for SHINE families with the most noted risk issues being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mental health Issues</li> <li>• isolation</li> <li>• family violence</li> <li>• child wellbeing concerns; and</li> <li>• lack of access to CALD<sup>24</sup> community.</li> </ul> With this information, our SHINE team responded to the needs identified by ensuring that families were supported with information and advice in regard to these areas.
<b>Impact</b> 	47% of participants experienced a statistically significant positive shift in their <b>relationships</b> . <sup>25</sup>  43% of participants experienced a statistically significant improvement in their <b>safety and stability</b> at home. <sup>26</sup>

For further information about the impact of this program, please take a look at our recently published SHINE Performance and Impact Report.

<sup>24</sup> Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD).

<sup>25</sup> My Star Outcome Measurement Tool outcome area 'Relationships' with a p value = 0.066.

<sup>26</sup> My Star Outcome Measurement Tool outcome area 'Where you live' with a p value = 0.033.



## Snapshot - Infant Programs

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Family Life continues our long term commitment to helping vulnerable infants have the best start in life and to grow safe and well in the care of their families. Commencing with the Community Bubs program in 2003, with proven program effectiveness confirmed by the Monash University evaluation in 2007. This program, along with our infant Integrated Family Support and Cradle to Kinder (C2K) programs enable us to provide a suite of services and supports to support infants and their families in our community. This philosophy is further explored through continued partnership within the Child and Parent Centre of Excellence (CAPCE).



<p><b>Problem</b></p> 	<p>Children thrive when they grow up in families where parents are able to actively promote their positive growth and development. It is often difficult for families to do this important work without support and additional resources.</p>
<p><b>Performance</b></p> 	<p>Our suite of infant services provided support to 736 individuals (173 families) this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 49 families were supported through the Cradle to Kinder program</li> <li>• 35 families were supported through the Community Bubs program</li> <li>• 89 families were supported through the infant Integrated Family Services program</li> </ul> <p>Our suite of infant services provided a combined 11,987 hours of support to these families.</p> <p>In addition to the case management support services provided by our infant programs, our infant services also delivered the following community change initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating Lasting Connections trauma informed playgroup</li> <li>• Circle of Security groups</li> <li>• Mother Goose playgroup</li> <li>• Jump, Jiggle and Jive group</li> <li>• Music group</li> </ul> <p>Increased risk was identified through the 369 safety audits completed during the COVID-19 period of the financial year. 33% of audits reported medium to critical safety concerns were present for our infant program families with the most noted risk issues being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mental health issues</li> <li>• child wellbeing concerns</li> <li>• family violence</li> <li>• relationship concerns (including separation and divorce)</li> </ul> <p>With this information, our infant teams were able to respond to these needs identified, providing families with the relevant support, information and advice they needed.</p>
<p><b>Impact</b></p> 	<p>C2K parents experienced a statistically significant improvement in their <b>well-being</b>.<sup>27</sup></p> <p><i>“&lt;The worker&gt; listened to me. She kept me on track and just was aware of my emotional state. She never judged me. She was respectful and actually followed through with words. She was a special person and am grateful for her help and support she gave me. She gave me strength on days I didn’t think I had any.”</i></p>

For further information about the impact of our Cradle to Kinder program, please take a look at our recently published [Cradle to Kinder Performance and Impact report](#).

<sup>27</sup> Family Star Plus Outcome Measurement Tool - “Your well-being” outcome area, with a p value =0.008.

# Snapshot



## Building Family Relationships

In April 2018, Family Life, in collaboration with Life Without Barriers,<sup>28</sup> commenced the Unite program at five prisons across Victoria. The Unite program helped prisoners improve and build family relationships. Unite provided 2,238 episodes of service to 1,661 individuals through its different activities and printed resources supporting the programs were developed for prisoners, partners, children and their families. The program concluded on September 30, 2020.

<b>Problem</b> 	Prisoners experience barriers related to maintaining positive family relationships. Challenges include: shifts in roles in the parenting partnership; psychological changes given the new environment; families not knowing how to engage in, or access, support; stigma; and the impact of complex past and current trauma.
<b>Performance</b> 	<p>The Unite program offered a unique service combining group work and individual support. The key elements for the success of the program include: being a trustworthy and transparent service with the prisoners, their families and the system; being a responsive and flexible service; prioritise safety; and having a skilled team who could assess and identify the needs of the clients using a trauma informed lens.</p> <p>A variety of support was provided. This includes: connecting families; supporting post release; support with referrals; emotional support; coping strategies; opportunities for truth telling; and guiding and supporting families.</p>
<b>Impact</b> 	<p>96% (n=746) of participants indicated that the sessions provided them with information to help improve their relationships.</p> <p>91% (n=713) of participants indicated that the session will help them with their family relationships.<sup>29</sup></p>

For further information about the impact of this program, please take a look at our recently published [Unite Performance and Impact report](#).

# Snapshot - FaRS



The Family and Relationship Service (FaRS) aims to strengthen family relationships, prevent family breakdown and ensure the wellbeing and safety of children through broad-based counselling and education. This early intervention and prevention service aims to support families when going through change, such as family formation, extension and separation.

<b>Problem</b> 	Families/individuals are experiencing challenges and strains on their relationships.
<b>Performance</b> 	<p>Our FaRS counselling service supported 309 individuals during the financial year, providing 1,190 hours of support.</p> <p>Families/individuals came to the Family and Relationship Service mainly for relationship concerns support. However, other support needs were identified in the internal family progress report.<sup>30</sup> These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship concerns (65%, n=30);</li> <li>• Emotional support (43%, n=20);</li> <li>• Current or previous experience of family violence/violent or aggressive behaviour (26%, n=12);</li> <li>• Mental health concerns (24%, n=11); and</li> <li>• Parenting issues and skills (22%, n=10).</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b> 	<p>In total, using a thematic analysis process, outcomes of the service was reported for 25 families/individuals (35% of the total number of cases<sup>31</sup>). From those, 84% individuals self-reported (or was noted by their practitioner) achieving between one and two outcomes; the rest reported achieving at least three outcomes. For those with reported outcomes, the main improvements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve relationships and communication skills (56%, n=14);</li> <li>• Using learnt strategies (44%, n=11);</li> <li>• Self-esteem and confidence improved (20%, n=5);</li> <li>• Parental support provided (16%, n=4);</li> <li>• Understanding developmental and other needs of their children (12%, n=3); and</li> <li>• Participation in community/group activities (4%, n=1).</li> </ul>

<sup>30</sup> Notes related to primary support needs were coded using an inductive approach. Families who received, or are still receiving, support during the period between July 2019- March 2020 were included in the analysis. Vulnerabilities were reported for 46 families/individuals (67% of the total number). For the rest, there was no detailed information available. This could have been due to the service being in an early stage, early disengagement, or lack of detailed information provided.

<sup>31</sup> Information of 47 individuals/families was not included in the analysis. This could have been due to early stages of the service; disengagement; or lack of detailed information (e.g. "case closed").

# Knowledge Sharing and Community Change

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Family Life is passionate about contributing to community change. We continue to work towards our theory of change to realise our goals: children thriving, within strong families, supported by capable communities.

This year we introduced our Community Change - Community of Practice series which, in addition to our School Focused Youth Services, Heartlinks and Creating Capable Communities initiatives, has enabled us to provide significant support, knowledge sharing and development opportunities to our community.

## Community of Practice

With the support of leaders in our community development field, we offered six different Communities of Practice sessions to a total of 406 community participants. Topics covered during these sessions included:

- Community of Change Through Collaboration
- Community Voice: Data and Technology as Enablers for Change
- Leading Community Change
- Radical Readjustment During COVID19
- Community Change Work and Recovery in the Context of a Pandemic
- Adapting and Transforming Across the Community and Philanthropic Sectors.

## Heartlinks Workshops and Training Sessions

- 300 individuals attended Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) training
- 14 parents attended parenting workshops
- 15 individuals attended the 'Working with Abusive Fathers' workshop
- 50 individuals (Staff & Volunteers, Parents, Teachers, Students) attended Looking after you workshops

## School Focused Youth Services

School Focused Youth Service (SFYS) works with schools to support students in years 5-12 who are vulnerable, or at risk of disengaging from education. The service is available to all schools across government, Catholic and independent sectors.

This year our SFYS provided professional development to 595 teachers and workshops for 607 students. With the addition of the successful school therapy dog program, we estimate that our SFYS program has impacted more than 4,220 students this year.

## Creating Capable Communities

Family Life has a proven suite of Creating Capable Communities (CCC) programs which demonstrate we can empower parents and residents to lead change and to meet the needs of children. These initiatives consist of running events as well as groups and workshops. Through our CCC work, this year we have supported 1,033 individuals.

One of our CCC initiatives is our Hastings project funded by the Department of Social Services, Strong and Resilient Communities funding. This initiative provides leadership training to adults and young people with the focus on supporting them to make a difference in their Hastings Community. In addition to two of the CCC Hastings groups being nominated for the Tiny Town awards, the CCC Hastings project participants experienced statistically significant change in the areas of 'Making a difference to your community'<sup>32</sup> and 'Getting to know people'<sup>33</sup> in their community.



## Conclusion

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This report showcases the hard work and passion of Family Life and the communities that we have partnered with for 50 years. As an organisation we remain committed to the courage, patience and persistence required to realise our vision of 'Capable Communities, with Strong Families and Thriving Children'.

2019/20 has required great agility and commitment from ourselves but even more so from our community. We continue striving to change the odds for community and ensure that each individual and family reaches its potential and achieves wellbeing. We do this in partnership with our volunteers, community supporters, funders, donors and change makers.

Finally, the success highlighted in this report would not be possible without the individuals who, at some of the most vulnerable times in their lives, continue to trust us and welcome us into their lives. We are honoured to support and encourage them to turn their lives into the stories that they want them to be. It is a privilege to be involved in the lives of such courageous individuals who put up their hand, ask for help and embrace support and we continue to be grateful for this opportunity. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your story.



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