



# Centacare

CENTRAL WEST & ORANA

## Annual Report 2024/2025





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## Acknowledgement of Country

Centacare acknowledges the Wiradjuri, Gamilaraay and Wailwan peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land. They have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years.

We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.



## Mission

We provide professional social services to empower communities, families, children, and individual adults to thrive within their environments.

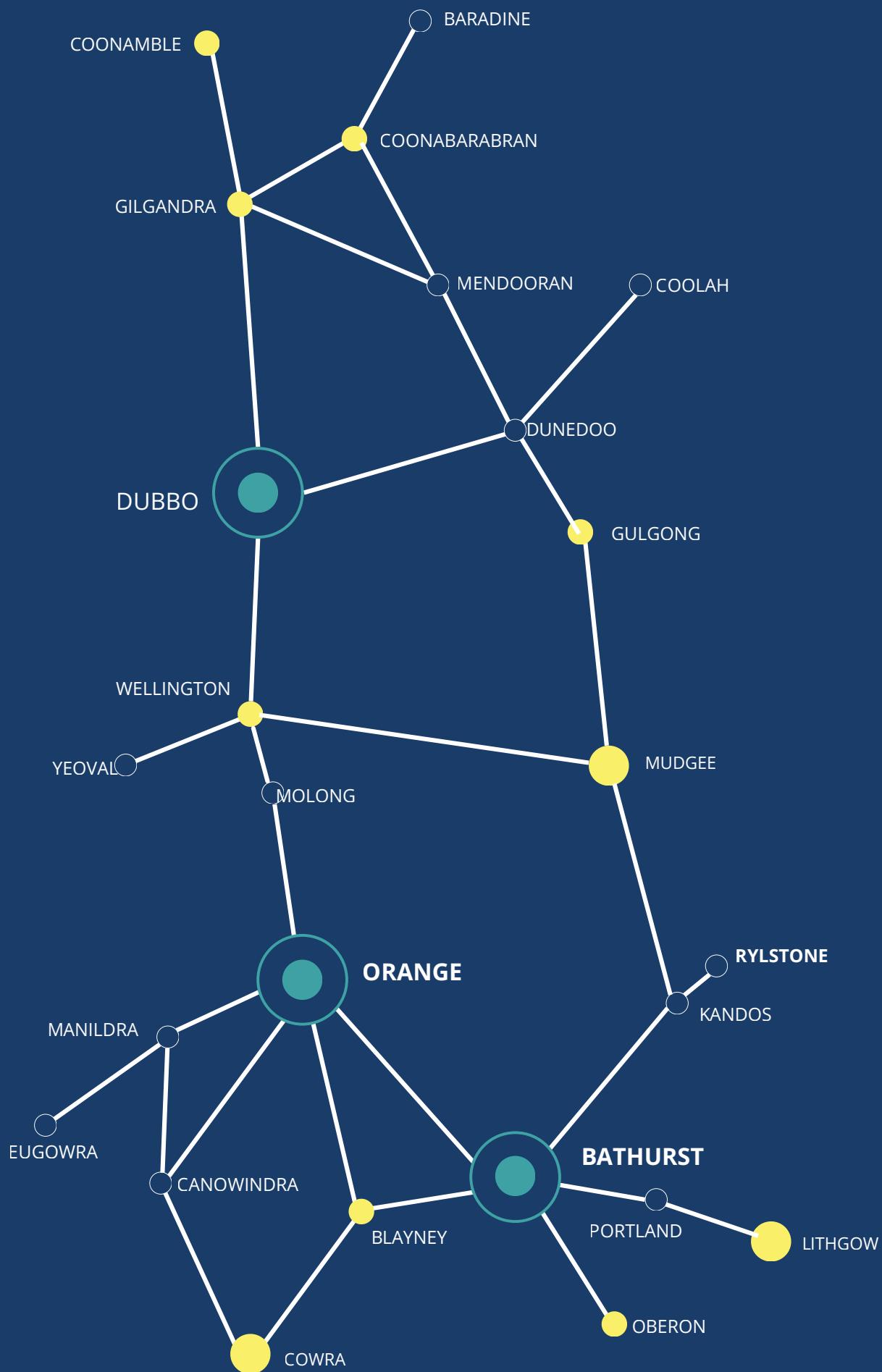
## Vision

A society in which there is full recognition of the rights and responsibilities of all, a community that values families and relationships and promotes dignity, equality, respect, and participation of all, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

## Values

Reflection on Gospel values and Catholic social teaching, Dignity and worth of the human person, Relationships and interconnectedness, Common good, Preferential option for the most disadvantaged devalued, and marginalised, Stewardship and respect for God's creation, Integrity and accountability, Social Justice, Responsiveness, Partnerships and collaboration, Professionalism

# Our Locations



# Foreward from Bishop and Chair



**Michael  
McKenna  
Bishop of Bathurst**

In the last months of his life, the late Pope Francis was preparing a major teaching document entitled "Dilexi te", quoting Christ saying "I have loved you".

It was to be an exhortation recalling the Church to find and love Jesus in our sisters and brothers who are poor and suffering. Pope Leo XIV took up this document and, with a few additions, made it his own.

The work of Centacare in our Diocese is one way that we seek to respond to this essential element of the Church's life and mission.

I am grateful to our Advisory Council, chaired by Paul Favero, who give of their time and talents to oversee and guide the work. To Robert George, who has led Centacare here for longer than I have been Bishop, I give thanks for his wise, responsible and imaginative service; and to all his co-workers.

May God bless everyone whom Centacare serves: may we meet Christ in one another and learn how to love.



**Paul Favero  
Chair**

As Chair of the Centacare Central West & Orana Advisory Council, I am pleased to reflect on the considerable efforts and accomplishments of the organisation over the past year. It has been a period marked by significant progress and thoughtful evolution within our organisation, particularly in governance and strategic planning.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, whose tireless efforts form the backbone of Centacare's mission. Their steadfast commitment to supporting the most vulnerable in our communities is truly inspiring. Under the leadership of Centacare's Director Robert George and his exceptional team, our Mission continues to flourish with unwavering dedication.

This year, Robert celebrated 25 years at Centacare Central West & Orana, and we are grateful for his leadership and commitment to Centacare, the last 17 years as director. His vision and compassion have guided Centacare through times of growth and change, ensuring that our values remain at the heart of everything we do.

In an environment shaped by a challenging labour market, varied funding models, and increasing community needs, Centacare continues to stand strong. Our ability to deliver such a broad range of high-quality services is sustained by the dedication and hard work of those behind the scenes. As Chair of the Advisory Council, I am deeply proud of what we have achieved and confident that Centacare will continue to serve our communities with compassion, excellence, and purpose.

## Centacare Advisory Council Members

Anthony Tonna, Geoff Mann, Maureen Horth, Paul Favero (Chair), Terry Mahoney, Tony Perry, Patrick Cooper.

# Foreward from Director



***We have built a strong foundation for continued success in the years ahead***

**Robert George**  
Director

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2024/2025 Annual Report, marking another milestone in Centacare's journey of growth, resilience, and transformation. The past year has been a testament to the strength of our people, the trust of our stakeholders, and our unwavering commitment to excellence. Despite a dynamic operating environment, we continued to adapt, innovate, and deliver sustainable value across all areas of our business.

As we reflect on the progress made, it is clear that our success stems from a shared vision and collective effort. By investing in innovation, strengthening our governance, and maintaining a steadfast focus on customer and community needs, we have built a strong foundation for continued success in the years ahead.

We have come to the end of another strategic plan cycle. Our plan focused on three themes: Our Communities, Our People, and Our Systems. We exist to serve our communities. Our people deliver our mission. Our systems provide the right support for our people to deliver our mission. I am very grateful to the team of managers for their commitment to the strategic plan and our mission. When developing the strategic plan for 2025-2028, we recognised the value of these themes as the foundation. And the new plan is building further on this foundation. The managers as the leaders within the organisation co-create, own, and deliver on these themes. I am grateful to Bishop Michael for his continued support, trust, and guidance.

The Centacare Advisory Council continues to play a key role in ensuring the proper governance of the organisation. There were times when decisions looked difficult to make but our mission and vision were the touchstones when on occasions decisions looked difficult to make. I am grateful to the Advisory Council members for their wisdom and guidance. They give generously and voluntarily of their time. I am particularly indebted to Paul Favero who has been the Chair of the Council for a substantial period of time. He has mentored me over the years, often giving a compassionate ear and a healthy sounding board when most needed.

All of Centacare's achievements are driven by a wonderful group of leaders, each of whom excel in their role. It is a privilege to work with them. Their passion for the organisation, the community, and the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives is the energy that keeps Centacare moving forward.





# Our Programs

**Mindful of the needs of all, Centacare provides professional services which enhance the potential of individuals, couples, children, families and communities within the Diocese to live in harmony with themselves and others - we are a voice on their behalf.**

Having started in 1988 as a 'pilot project' Centacare has established itself as the social service arm of the Church in the diocese of Bathurst. As an organisation guided by Jesus' mission 'I came so that you may have life and have it to the full', Centacare continues to assist families and communities in the region to thrive and experience the fullness of life.

We provide professional social services to families, communities, and people across the Central West and Orana regions: from Lithgow to Dubbo, Cowra to Coonabarabran, and everywhere in between.

Centacare's vision is for a society in which there is full recognition of the rights and responsibilities of all, a community that values families and relationships and promotes dignity, equality, respect, and participation of all, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Centacare's reason for existence is to bring the healing presence of Christ to the vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our society.





# Early Childhood and Community Programs

## Bathurst Family Day Out

In May we celebrated National Families week with our Annual Family Fun Day in Bathurst.

National Families Week is an initiative designed to celebrate the crucial role that families play in Australian Society. The Theme was "Lending a Hand to Thrive: Supporting Each Other". This theme highlights the importance of connection, care, and resilience within families and communities, celebrating the idea that when families support one another, everyone thrives.

At the family fun day, there were a number of fun activities that families could participate in, with feedback on the day being very positive with many families expressing their gratitude.





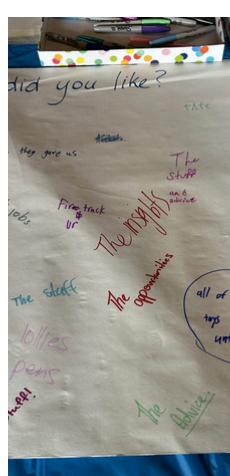
# Goanna Academy MindEd Event

Students were given an inspiring, culturally relevant experience held at Glenroi Heights Public School in Orange in June 2025. Delivered by NRL legends Greg Inglis and David Peachey, this preventative mental health program focused on goal setting, self-esteem, self-care, and the influence of social media - key areas that directly support a successful transition into high school.

Greg Inglis' honest and heartfelt sharing of his own life journey deeply resonated with students and support staff alike. His story highlighted the value of education, the strength found in perseverance, and the importance of building positive, supportive relationships.



## Careers Expo Coonabarabran



Centacare's Early Childhood & Community Programs hosted a very successful Careers Expo in Coonabarabran in May 2025. Over 200 school students were given the opportunity to speak with exhibitors from a range of different careers and employment pathways.

The interactive exhibits had the most engagement with NSW Ambulance CPR challenge being one of the most popular activities on the day.

The event helped plant career seeds in students minds as well as providing an opportunity to talk with a variety of exhibitors to find out more about their chosen field and opportunities for their future beyond school.

Students provided feedback about the career they would like to have in the future and a majority of responses reflected careers from the exhibitors at the Expo. Their aspirations range from being a mechanic, footy player, teacher, doctor, vet, psychologist, hair dresser, farmer.

This initiative was supported by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

## Cowra Festival

Jan Chivers leads the Cowra Child & Family Network (CCFN) and together with other members of the CCFN they provided free activities for children and their families to engage in while at the Festival Carnival in March 2025.

The CCFN stall was a haven for families in the heat, where their children were able to sit on cushions and read books, join in drumming activities, draw or do puzzles. They also had the opportunity to go on a Nature Treasure Hunt. Jan also took along her famous Centacare Book Box, which offered the opportunity for children to take home free books. Many families took advantage of this!



## Lithgow Family Day Out

In October 2024, the Lithgow Family Day Out once again brought the community together for a vibrant celebration of connection, fun and inclusivity. Held at Queen Elizabeth Park, the event offered free family-friendly activities, entertainment and opportunities for residents of all ages to connect and enjoy quality time together.

This year's program reinforced the values of family diversity, connection and community wellbeing that are central to that national initiative. The official theme for National Families Week 2024 was "Celebrating Family Diversity & Connections", recognising the unique make-up of every family and the importance of nurturing meaningful relationships within and across communities.

The Lithgow Family Day Out strengthened its role in fostering inclusive community bonds and supporting families to thrive in all their diverse forms.



# Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)

## Bowenfels

"During 2024–2025, HIPPY Bowenfels participated in a range of community events, providing valuable opportunities to promote the program and engage with local families. The team hosted a promotional stall at the local shopping centre as part of Families Week, alongside several other community organisations. HIPPY Bowenfels was also a contributing team in the organisation of the free community event Lithgow Family Day Out, which attracted approximately 800 attendees.

In November 2024, 26 families successfully completed their two-year participation in the HIPPY program. This milestone was celebrated with a graduation ceremony recognising their achievements, followed by a Christmas celebration for all participating families. In early 2025, 20 new families were enrolled to commence their journey with the HIPPY program. Throughout the year, fortnightly playgroups were conducted, offering structured parent-child activities as well as opportunities for free play to support learning and connection.



## Dubbo



HIPPY Dubbo has reached both recruitment and retainment targets in 2025, enrolling 30 Age 3 families and retaining 26 age 4 families who graduated from the program in December 2025. 78% of our current families are CALD families. Word of mouth referrals from previous and current families, as well as local community services fill our cohorts each year and speaks to the positive relationships that we have built within our local community.

We average 15 families per group during school terms, with parents enjoying parent focused craft and children enjoying sensory play, craft activities and our new and inviting spaces. We have high numbers attending our annual Open Day each year, as well as school holiday groups and end of year celebrations.

# Community Outreach Wellbeing Support

## Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme

Centacare is funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to deliver the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS). This nationally recognised program responds to the social and emotional challenges many older people experience when transitioning into residential aged care, including feelings of loss, isolation, and disconnection from familiar environments, routines, and relationships.

Through the delivery of ACVVS, Centacare facilitates meaningful, one-to-one relationships between trained volunteers and older people living in residential aged care homes. These relationships are built on trust, consistency, and companionship, with volunteers providing regular visits throughout the year. For many participants, these visits offer an important sense of continuity, belonging, and emotional support, significantly enhancing their overall wellbeing and quality of life.

Centacare is privileged to be supported by a committed and compassionate volunteer workforce who deliver this program across more than 16 residential aged care facilities throughout the Central West and Orana regions. Volunteers play a vital role in strengthening social connections and reducing loneliness among some of the community's most vulnerable older people. In turn, volunteers consistently report high levels of personal fulfilment, connection, and purpose through their involvement, reinforcing the mutual benefits of the program.



## Dr Rob Gordon visit

In November 2024, Dr Rob Gordon visited Eugowra to share his knowledge and expertise on trauma following natural disasters. Dr Gordon is a clinical psychologist who is recognised as Australia's leading expert on the subject.

There were two sessions for the community and one for the service organisations that have been working with the communities affected by the November 2022 disaster. The sessions were well received and provided a wealth of information. It was a great opportunity for the community and the service providers to come together and strengthen their journey towards healing and recovery.



## Intergenerational Wellbeing Program

The Intergenerational Wellbeing Program currently supports St Pius X College in Dubbo and St Mary's Primary School in Wellington, providing wellbeing services that are developed in consultation with school leadership and staff to meet the needs of the broader school community.

A key highlight of the program is the ongoing intergenerational connection between students from St Mary's Primary School and residents of the local aged care facility, Maranatha. These regular visits foster meaningful relationships, empathy, and community connection, enriching the lives of older residents while supporting students' social and emotional development.

Teachers, parents, and students consistently report positive outcomes, reinforcing the value of this program in strengthening wellbeing and community engagement.



# Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)



OSHC provides children with a welcoming, safe, and enriched environment with activities for children both before and after school, and vacation care, for children aged between 5 and 12.

Our OSHC sites have a focus on promoting social and emotional development, providing quality care, and engaging children in various fun and educational activities, and are perfect for busy families needing extra support. Our OSHC sites are operated in collaboration with Catholic Primary Schools across the Diocese area with four services located in Bathurst, two in Orange, and one in Mudgee.

## Streamlining OSHC with Xplor

To better meet the needs of families and enhance service delivery, we transitioned to the Xplor platform during the financial year. This change has streamlined enrolments, simplified fee management, and improved overall communication with parents, making it easier for families to access and manage our OSHC programs efficiently. By adopting this modern, user-friendly system, we have strengthened our ability to provide high-quality care while reducing administrative barriers for families.

# Family Law Pathways Network

Centacare is the local auspice for the Family Law Pathways Network for the Central West NSW (Bathurst) region. The Family Law Pathways Network is a national program promoting the collaboration and coordination of family services amongst professional organisations and individual professionals in the family law system who are working with families who may be separating, or who are already separated.

As an auspice Centacare coordinates professional development events for the family law network and over the reporting period were privileged to have both Jon Graham a nationally accredited mediator, a registered Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner (FDR) and a clinical supervisor of mediation practice, and Federal Circuit and Family Court Judge David Dunkley as present across our area.



## School Wellbeing Program

This program provides short term counselling and other support to students and their families to all the Catholic schools across the Diocese of Bathurst, some 33 schools both primary and secondary.

Our counselling team is able to provide support where there may be a stress, a crisis, a relationship or a behavioural difficulty, a mental health issue or any other wellbeing factor that impacts on student learning.

We also provide support through group programs for students, workshops and information meetings for parents and the school staff. Some of our group programs are Cool Kids, Lego Based Therapy, Anger Management and Social Stencil Therapy.

We aim, through supporting the students, families and staff to reduce any barriers to educational and social engagement and promote general wellbeing.



# Clinical Services

Centacare Central West and Orana has a specialised team of psychologists, social workers and counsellors, with expertise in child and adolescent counselling, individual counselling, relationship counselling, and family counselling. Centacare also specialises in assisting families who are experiencing relationship breakdown and subsequent conflict.

Centacare is funded by the Department of Social Services and the Attorney General's Department to provide Family and Relationship Services, Family Law Counselling, and Regional Family Dispute Resolution. Clients do not need a referral to access these services and can self-refer at any time. Centacare also offers counselling to clients who are referred with a GP Mental Health Care Plan.

## Family Dispute Resolution

Clients accessing support through the family dispute resolution program are often experiencing significant grief and loss and, in some cases, significant trauma. Centacare's Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners have specialised training in assessing risk, establishing safety, and providing support to clients who are trying to navigate through what is typically one of the most difficult times in their life.

## Clinical Assessments

In partnership with the Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst (CEDB), Centacare offers a range of clinical assessments for children in the Catholic School system who are in need. The types of assessments available include cognitive, academic, behavioural, and neurodevelopmental.

In the last 12 months, Centacare psychologists have assessed 87 students across the Diocese and provided information and support to the 33 schools invested in assisting students with additional learning needs.



# Program Feedback

We are very grateful to have had access to affordable counselling via Centacare. The sessions helped us to understand each other better and learn useful techniques for communicating and being in a relationship.

Thank you for everything you do for our community and the extra support recently when one of our students was involved in a critical accident.

I'm very happy with the service provided. The kids are so happy and positive when I pick them up. The staff are lovely too. So a big Thankyou.

Centacare has been an incredible resource for our family, the flexibility in session pricing, appointment availability, and constant support is second to none.

My daughter loves St Matthews OHSC and is disappointed when I pick her up too early or if I say we aren't going to OSHC

I never thought for a moment that I would need or end up in counselling. I was very wrong and I'll be forever grateful for the assistance I received. My learnings through our sessions will stay with me for life and will be valuable in how I develop and maintain relationships in the future. Thank you, Centacare.

Centacare has been an incredible resource for our family, the flexibility in session pricing, appointment availability, and constant support is second to none.

# Our Impact



**93%**

Percentage of Regional Family Dispute Resolution clients with positive satisfaction scores

**67,686**

Number of sessions of care provided to children within Outside of School Hours Care services

**45**

Elderly in care visited across 12 Residential Aged Care Homes



**23**

Visits by students to aged care homes Dubbo & Wellington



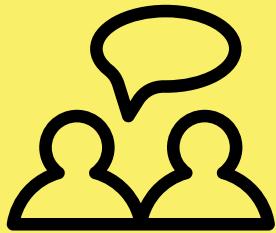
**18**



couples entered into married life with a clearer picture of their own and each other's expectations through Pre marriage education programs

**87**

Psychological Assessments completed within the Catholic School Community



**1,379**

Number of children in Catholic school communities accessed counselling and early intervention to support their social and emotional wellbeing



**261**

Number of clients receiving a service with the Regional Family Dispute Resolution Program



**268**

Number of clients within Family Relationship services

**825**

Number of children enrolled in Outside of School Hours Care Services

**99%**

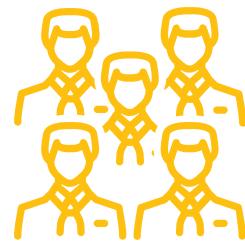
Percentage of Family Relationship Services clients with Positive satisfaction scores

# Our People

AS AT 30 JUNE 2025



**TOTAL NUMBER  
OF STAFF**



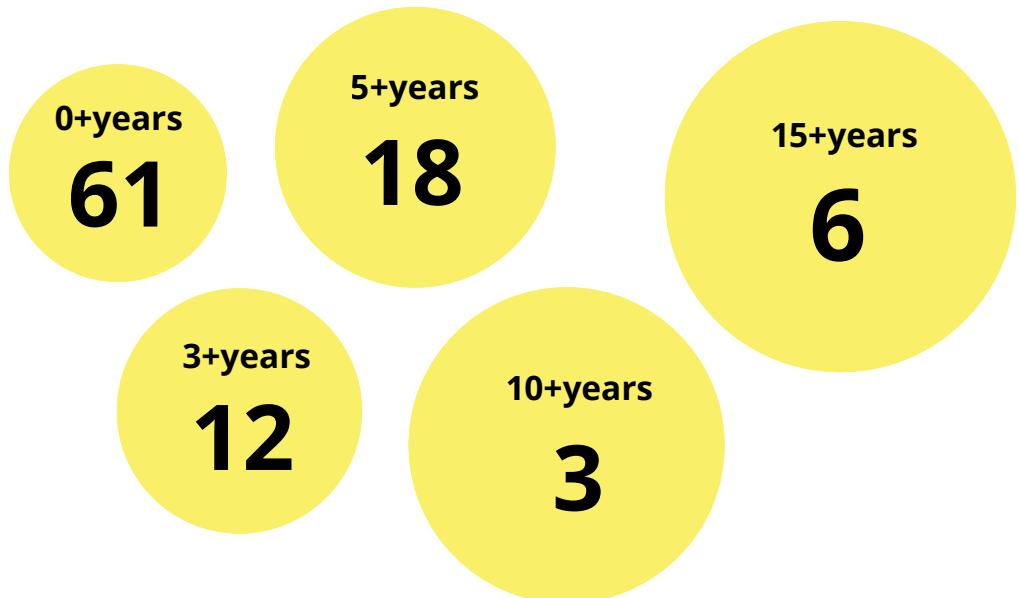
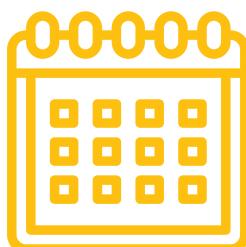
**14** male  
+  
**86** female

**24** casual  
+  
**56** part time  
+  
**20** full time

**15** clinical services  
+  
**12** early childhood community programs  
+  
**12** corporate & community outreach  
+  
**28** school wellbeing program  
+  
**33** outside school hours care program



**YEARS OF SERVICE**



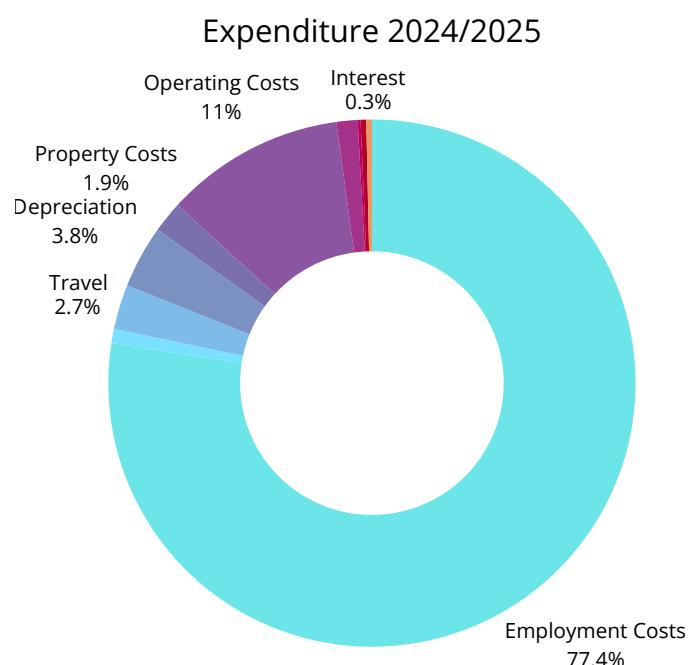
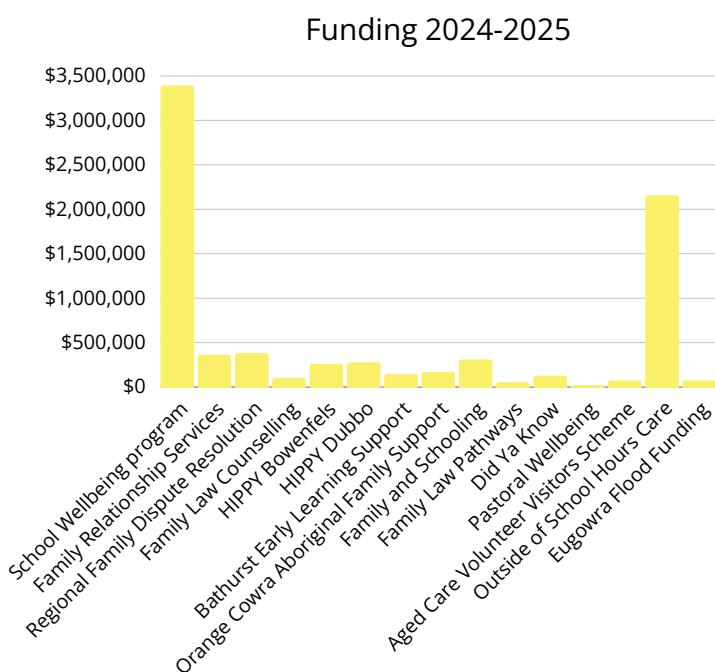
# Leadership Team



**Top Row:** Robert George - *Director*, Annette Meyers - *Manager Early Childhood and Community Programs*, Jordan Emery - *Manager Outside of School Hours Care*, Louise Hennessy - *Manager Community Wellbeing Programs*,

**Bottom Row:** Melinda Tabone - *Manager Clinical Services*, Raelene Mulligan - *Manager Finance & Compliance*, Susan Anderson - *Manager School Wellbeing Program*, Tanya Kosef - *Manager Human Resources*

## Financial





## Our Offices

Bathurst | Orange | Dubbo | Lithgow | Coonabarabran

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