



fkaCS

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017



Operational Report – The Year in Review

Since 1908, *fka* Children's Services has provided support for Victoria's children under many different guises: for example, managing centres, training kindergarten teachers and providing bilingual and bicultural support to children and families. This is one of the key features of this organisation, our ability to respond to changes in the world of young children and their families. A look through our operational history tells the changing story of how young children's health and education has been viewed by society.

Today is no different. Government policies and funding agreements drive the way services for young children and their families are planned, provided and evaluated. The current political and funding landscape places an emphasis on individual services identifying and designing how to meet quality guidelines and professional development needs.

The Educators' guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia acknowledges that 'culture is the fundamental building block of identity and the development of a strong cultural identity is essential to children's healthy sense of who they are and where they belong.' It asserts that 'children must have access to services that nurture, celebrate and reinforce their culture and support the development of their cultural identity.'

To genuinely uphold 'the image of the child as a rights holder and a competent learner with capacities to learn from birth' (DET, 2016 p.2) we need to move from an attitude of 'inclusion' to thinking with a 'rights' lens.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines this approach as requiring a 'paradigm shift away from... approaches in which children are perceived and treated as 'objects' in

need of assistance rather than as rights-holders entitled to non-negotiable rights.'

The UNCRC goes on to describe the responsibility of 'duty-bearers' to meet their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil those rights.

As early childhood organisations, teachers and educators, we are those 'duty-bearers'.

fka Children's Services service delivery is built on the understanding that all children and families have the right to actively participate in education and care that recognises, values and celebrates diversity, that supports children to learn English as an additional language and supports the rights of families to maintain and celebrate their home languages.

Alongside the Executive Director, the Board of Management is reviewing the operational structures and procedures with a view to continuing to support all members of Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse community through our service provision and advocacy work.

The focus of our service delivery for the 2016/17 financial year has been on supporting Early Childhood Education and Care services transition to the new Inclusion Support Programme (ISP), with a particular focus on supporting the cultural and linguistic rights of all children and families to actively engage in their education and care.

The Commonwealth ISP guidelines state that Australian Government Approved Education and Care services can access funds via the Inclusion Development Fund to 'reduce the barriers to participation for children and families'. For culturally and linguistically diverse families this support was previously provided by *fkaCS* under the bilingual/bicultural support program.

During the development of the new program assurance was provided to the sector and *fkaCS* that the funds previously available under the bicultural support program would remain available to Education and Care services in Victoria.

“Changes to bicultural support operation...provides a national funding pool for services to access bicultural support that is no longer constrained by funding allocations determined by jurisdictional boundaries. Under the ISP the onus is on the child care services to identify the need, with assistance from their respective Inclusion Agency, and to apply for bicultural support under the Innovative Solutions stream of the program.”

In reality the process of developing a business case, obtaining a quote, applying to the National Inclusion Development Fund Manager for Innovative Solutions Funding has been time consuming and administratively burdensome for Education and Care services, and many services who have traditionally accessed bicultural support have not participated in the new program.

Not only has this resulted in a burden on *fkaCS* financial reserves it also shows a lack of support and understanding of the Victorian context.

The 2016 Census shows that:

- 49% of the Victorian population were either born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas
- Victorians were born in over 200 different countries
- 26% of Victorians speak languages and dialects other than English at home
- Over 260 languages and dialects are spoken in Victorian homes
- 59% of Victorians follow 130 different religious faiths.

Culture is not just about language, ethnicity, race and religion it is also about the diversity of family life, structures and ways of being. *fkaCS* continues to provide targeted support via a range of programs and on a fee-for-service full cost recovery basis to support the capacity of teachers and educators.



The Victorian Kindergarten Cultural Inclusion Program

The purpose of this program is to provide a broad range of support to Victorian services to support children and families from culturally and linguistically backgrounds to engage in the educational program.

We worked in collaboration with the Victorian Government in the redesign of the Kindergarten Cultural Inclusion Program (formally known as bicultural support). While *fkaCS* continues to advocate for the cultural and linguistic rights of all children the new program delivers a more targeted approach to support children and families with the highest need and has recently broadened the support options available, affording us the opportunity to respond to the unique circumstances of each kindergarten.

The teacher/educator capacity-building component of the program has seen *fkaCS* providing more intensive support to Kindergarten services in a number of local government areas, including the funded delivery of the two-part professional learning series *Supporting children learning English as an additional language in kindergarten*.

Playgroups

fkaCS provided a more sustainable approach to playgroups this financial year. Grants from the Department of Education and Training were provided directly to playgroups to build their capacity to engage with children and families from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Many playgroups used these additional funds to access bilingual workers on a weekly basis for the full year.

While the grant program has now ceased many municipalities continue to utilise *fkaCS* bilingual workers on a fee-for-service basis to activity engage their community and support active participation in local playgroups.

Onsite Individual and Group Professional Learning Sessions

A range of Professional Learning sessions were delivered across Victoria and interstate. A sample of topics include:

- The impact of cultural identity on belonging
- Inviting play spaces – environments that teach
- Literacy, storytime and children learning English as an additional language
- Supporting connections with community
- Supporting children learning English as an additional language in the early years.

Participant's feedback has been positive as teachers and educators reflect on their current practice and identify strategies to support and engage with their community.

The Multicultural Resource Centre

The move from Richmond to Collingwood afforded us the opportunity to review the Multicultural Resource Centre collection to ensure the resources reflect contemporary Australian society, are culturally relevant, and provide opportunities for educators and teachers to extend children's learning.

Intentional teaching notes have been produced for a number of resources and audio story books.

Phase two of the audio story book project is currently under development as we source props and resources to support the audio story book collection.

With generous support from the Peter Williams Trust we are developing a series of Community kits for use with newly arrived communities.

Once again we provided Community Storytime at Romp and Stomp. Bilingual workers read stories to children in Community languages, with many families also reading to their children in their home language.



EXPOs and Networks

With continued and generous support from the Miller Foundation the Mobile Resource Service has travelled to networks and events across Victoria stocked with library books and resources. A highlight of this year was the Bendigo EXPO *Building Culturally Respective Relationships: Using a rights-based approach to working with children and families*.

When we consider the many ways to foster respectful relationships with children and families, we often reflect on the sense of welcome we can create within the physical space of children's services. EXPO participants engaged in a range of unique demonstration spaces in order to explore the culturally responsive relationships embedded in the play spaces and the professional displays, and to identify a shared goal to work on with their team.

These offerings provide teachers and educators with an opportunity to critically reflect on their role as 'duty-bearers' in supporting children's active participation as rights-holders in their education and care.



With our move to Collingwood, the regular working bees undertaken by our long serving volunteers came to an end. On behalf of the organisation, we would like to thank these wonderful people for their dedication over the years, with both mundane and more complex tasks. Their length of service has seen the rise and fall of the membership and advertising mailouts.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of all Board members for their generosity in sharing their skills and expertise, as well as the time commitment board membership requires. We received two resignations from the Board this year and would like to thank both Megan Adams and Khanh-Tho Nguyen for their commitment to the organisation. We also thank the Executive members for their oversight and additional support of the organisation.

Melodie has completed her third year as Executive Director and the Board was pleased that she has accepted a two-year extension of her contract. This stability is vital in this time of challenge and change and we thank her for her commitment to the organisation and her passion for advocating for all children's cultural and linguistic rights. She continues to lead a professional team in carrying out the work of the organisation.

Denise Rundle
President

I would like to thank the Board and staff team for their commitment to the principles and values of *fka* Children's services. I would like to particularly acknowledge the Executive Denise Rundle, Kirstin Slifirski and Karla Coombes for their faith, encouragement and support as we continue to advocate for the best educational outcomes for all Victorian children and families as is their right.

Melodie Davies
Executive Director



Board of Management

Patron	Her Excellency, The Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria
President	Ms. Denise Rundle
Vice President	Ms. Kirsten Slifirski
Honorary Treasurer	Ms. Karla Coombes

Board Members

Bruna Pasqua	Carolina Cabezas
Dr Megan Adams	Paula Wood
Professor Mindy Blaise	Khan-Tho Nguyen

Life Members

Dr P. Clarke OAM	Mrs G. Johnson	Mrs P. Montgomery
Mrs Rosemary Waite	Mrs G. Kelso	Ms H. Moorhead
Mr L. Cox	Mr. G. Kelso	Mr I. Renard
Mr J. Emerson	Dr A. Kennedy	Mr E. Rush

Staff

Executive Director	Melodie Davies
Program Director	Jennifer Nicholls (to 8/7/2016)
Bicultural Support Coordinator	Kathryn Kent (to 2/12/2016)
Children's Services Consultants	Ashley Howden Christine Speziale Jade Fraser
Professional Learning & Training Project Coordinator	Carolina Cabezas Elissa Stanovic
Resource Centre	Barbara Lew
Finance Officer	Barbara Farrington
Administrative Coordinator	Lorelei Camboni
Administrative Assistant	Shruthi Gurram

Donors and Friends

fka Children's service would once again like to thank the following donors and friends of *fkaCS* for their ongoing generosity and support of the organisation.

Ms Shirley Lancaster	Mrs June Danks	Melbourne Girls Grammar
Mrs K Withell	Mrs Esma Kelso	The Foresthill Foundation
Ms Gwenda Sibson	Ms Gwenda Martin	The Miller Foundation
Mrs Joan Waters	Mrs Angela Rodd	Mrs Gillian Beddington
Mr Sam Parasol	Freda Barrow Trust	
Mrs Judith Cutler	Scanlon Foundation	

And other friends of *fka* Children's Services who wish to remain anonymous.

Special Task Volunteers

fka Children's Services has been privileged to have a group of dedicated volunteers who support the organisation behind the scenes, these volunteers have assisted with many tasks including administration, archiving, mail-outs, sorting and repairing equipment and have helped us maintain our unique history and connection to the Free Kindergarten Association and the important work the association does to support and promote the value of Kindergarten education.

Mrs Cathy Rogers	Mrs Esma Kelso	Mrs Kathy French
Mrs Charmain Wright	Mrs Gillian Johnson	Mrs Patricia Nickel
Mrs Dianna Lerk	Mrs Jenny Hollander	Mrs Penny Montgomery
	Mrs Kay Hirst	Ms Barbara Fotheringham



Bilingual Workers

fka Children's Services is fortunate to have access to a team of bilingual workers to provide language support to children and families. This year the following languages were supported:

Amharic, Arabic, Assyrian, Bahasa Indonesian, Bengali, Bosnian, Burmese, Cantonese, Chaldean, Chin (Tedim), Chin (Falam), Chin (Hakha), Chin (Zomi), Chin (Matu), Dari (Afghanistan), Dari (Pakistan), Dinka, Dutch, Filipino, French, Greek, Gujarati, Hakka, Hazaragi, Hebrew, Hindi, Hokkien, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Karen, Karen (Pwo), Karenni, Khmer, Korean, Macedonian, Malayalam, Mandarin, Mongolian, Nepali, Oromo, Pashtu, Persian/Farsi, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Shanghainese, Sinhalese, Somali, Sinhala, Swahili, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Telegu, Thai, Tigrinia, Turkish, Tagalog, Urdu, Vietnamese.

The following bilingual workers provided support to Victorian children and families in the 2016/17 financial year:

Anisa Ibrahim	Maria Wardhani	Roksana
Anna Kim	Mariam Sharobeem	Hematizadeh
Annemiek Kortekaas	Mayuri Mody	Rosanna Balod
Bahareh Irannejad	Mebrat Kebede	Sabahate Halili
Bahareh Irannejad	Melissa Siqueira	Samah Taha
Baleke Rutebeza	Melody Gualnam	Samreet Kaur
Biak Thangnet	Mi Tchong	Sandra Vong
Bindu Santhosh	Michael Garang	Sang Lian
Bingshu Ma	Michelle Szeto	Sanpai Thintuep
Binita Maskey	Minjin Oh	Sarojini Asirvatham
Dabessa Gemelal	Mireille Molitor	Sepideh Fallah
Devahoti Hazarika	Mojgan Dehghan	Serena Ott
Dhan Rimal	Mujing a Mulenda	Shahida Yasmeen
Di Song	Najmeh	Sharenya
Dilkushi Sureshkuma	Tamaddoni Nezhad	Umakanthan
Diptiben Panchal	Naoko Gatti	Sharon Mundadi
Dung Vu	Naseema Syed	Shell Shell
Durga Parajuli	Nasteha Mohamud	Shu Ge
Eang Kang	Naw Wah Wah Paw	Siew Chon
Elizabeth Nugraha	Win	Simerpreet Karir
Fatima Mahzooz	Nay Aung	Sitina Mustafa
Feng Lin	Naz Asim	Sujata Kumar
Hameedullah Azimi	Nhi Le	Sunah Lee
Harvinder Kaur	Padmini Narayanan	Suniti Pabla
Humaira Hussaini	Paru Ojha	Togtokhjargal
Janet Mekhael	Phebe Yeo	Montoon
Khin Nyo	Piumi	Tuyen Luong
Lay Ooi	Kankanamalage	Van Le Ho
Leyla Halikias	Poh Wong	Violeta Velanovska
Lian Lianzaw	Poonam Gandhi	Wei Han
Luisa Chiu	Preeti Vaswani	Xiaonan Zou
Ly Doan	Qianwei Ji	Yachna Shethia
Majida Bibi	Rahamath Shaik	Zahida Baarini
Maria Chiu	Rita Atallah	Zahra Ali
Maria Perez Trevino		Zainab Karimi



Treasurers Report 2016/17

Important notice:

Information used in the following table is highly summarised and extracted from the full detailed financial statements of *fka* Children's Services Inc. (*fkaCS*) for the year ended 30 June 2017. For a complete understanding of the financial performance, position and cash flows of *fkaCS*, the full financial statements should be referred to. The full statements also include a description of the accounting policies adopted by *fkaCS*, explanatory notes and the independent auditor's report. The full financial report is available on request from *fkaCS*.

Financial summary for year ended 30 June	2017 \$	2016 \$
Financial performance		
Revenue from government	265,385	896,929
Philanthropic, membership, trading and other income	238,461	194,221
Total income	503,846	1,091,150
Total expenditure	753,301	1,113,446
Net result for the period	(249,455)	(22,296)
Financial position		
Cash and cash equivalents	766,105	1,049,239
Other assets	115,361	64,642
Total assets	881,466	1,113,881
Total liabilities	138,658	121,618
Net assets	742,808	992,263
Reserves	500,000	500,000
Retained surplus	242,808	492,263
Total equity	742,808	992,263
Cash flows		
Net cash flow from operations	(261,945)	(33,841)
Net cash flow from investing activities	(21,189)	(32,224)
Net change in cash held	(283,134)	(66,065)
Cash available at beginning of year	1,049,239	1,115,304
Cash available at end of year	766,105	1,049,239

The year to 30 June 2017 was one of major change for *fkaCS*, with the association's financial results reflecting the impact of the first full period of operations since the introduction of the new Commonwealth Government Inclusion Support Programme (ISP).

As advised in last year's report, the ISP commenced 1 July 2016 and led to the cessation of around \$600,000 of prepaid block funding to *fkaCS* for the provision of bicultural support and associated capacity building strategies. This block funding was replaced with a funding model requiring individual Education and Care services to first apply to the government for direct funding and then if approved purchase support from a provider (such as *fkaCS*) on a fee-for-service basis.

Given the nature and magnitude of this change and the uncertainties and issues associated with the new funding model (discussed in previous sections), we foreshadowed that *fkaCS*'s capacity to secure replacement revenue would be restricted and accordingly place a significant strain on the association's finances and operations.

The Board carefully considered this outcome and deemed it necessary to underwrite existing service commitments and the development and implementation of strategies for continued support to our stakeholders and to fund the deficit with retained earnings.

That risk was essentially realised, notwithstanding our continual and concerted efforts to work with the new model and generate new funds and as anticipated, *fkaCS* recorded an operating deficit for the year of \$249,455.

The financial year saw a substantial drop in our overall income, down from nearly \$1.1 million in the previous year to \$503,846, a reduction of \$587,304 or 54%. The fall was concentrated in Commonwealth Government grant funding, offset partly by moderate growth in other income sources, including fee-for-service revenue. Victorian Government block funding for bilingual/bicultural support continued during the year, and will continue to the end of June 2019.

The drop in grant income was mitigated by some associated cost reductions with overall expenses down from just over \$1.1 million to \$753,301, a drop of \$360,145 or 25%. Costs could not be reduced further without severely undermining the association's capacity to provide core services and support and negotiate the transition process.

Despite the adverse operating result, *fkaCS*'s financial position remains positive at year-end. Net assets held at 30 June 2017 totalled \$742,808 (30 June 2016: \$992,263), i.e., assets of \$881,446 less liabilities of \$138,658. The level of net assets affords *fkaCS* the capability to provide further transitional support for a limited time.

Cash flow for the year largely mirrored the operating performance, with overall cash falling to \$766,105 at 30 June 2017 (30 June 2016: \$1,049,239). Cash held at year end included both general funds held plus funds set aside for specific commitments.

The board has assessed the options for the association and believes that further deficit spending for the 2017/18 financial year is needed to allow *fkaCS* to meet its existing service obligations and move towards a sustainable operating structure, once again this will be supported by existing reserves.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to express our sincerest gratitude to Melodie and the whole *fkaCS* team for their dedication and continuous efforts in supporting and promoting quality Education and Care services, and striving for best possible outcomes for the children and families we serve. Our sincerest thanks also to our partners and members for their ongoing commitment in working together to achieve our common vision.

Thanks also goes to Robert Pisano for his expertise in financial management and sustainability in the not-for-profit sector.

Karla Coombes, Honorary Treasurer



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