fka CHILDREN'S SERVICES INC

Annual Report

2017-18

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Operational Report

The Year in Review

It has been a busy 2017-18 for *fka* Children's Services (*fka*CS), this year seeing us act as auspice for Action on Aboriginal Perspectives in Early Childhood's (AAPEC) project 'Possum Skin Pedagogy'. The project has been funded by the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS) and has enabled us to support AAPEC as it works to enhance the way educators include Aboriginal perspectives in their work with children and families.

At the 2015 AGM the organisational report opened with the following statement: "The political and funding landscape in which we operate is a changeable one and this year was no exception. We have seen the rise of xenophobia within the general population and the Federal Parliament, with Muslims and refugees seeking Australia's protection being specifically targeted. *fka*CS is committed to supporting all members of Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse community through our service provision and advocacy work."

I have quoted the previous report as it is, unfortunately, still relevant. One concerning change is the view that is demonstrated in the "it's OK to be white" motion that nearly passed in our Parliamentary Upper House. In an environment where white people can construct a scenario where they are facing racism, it is vital that organisations like ours continue to advocate for a true celebration of multiculturism across all sectors of society. This organisation has always focused its work in the early years area and we are proud to continue to do so.

The changeable funding environment has continued and I am proud that, alongside the work of Executive Director Melodie Davies and her team, the Board has been able to consolidate operational structures and procedures so that we can continue to support all members of Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse community.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of all Board members this year for their generosity in sharing their skills and expertise, as well as the time commitment Board membership requires.

We also thank the Executive members for their oversight and additional support of the organisation, particularly Treasurer Karla Coombes.

Two Board members have reached the end of their terms and have decided not to re-nominate – Paula Woods and Bruna Pasqua – and whilst both Paula and Bruna have contributed to the Board's work, I would like to specifically acknowledge the long term commitment from Bruna. She has served on the Board for 20 years, with 4 of those years being President. I have personally enjoyed her guidance and support over my time as both Vice-Present and more recently as President. I remember former Executive Director Priscilla Clarke saying, "at last, *fka* has a bilingual President".

We have also received two resignations from Kirsten Slifirski and Mindy Blaise, who I would like to thank for their commitment to the organisation. I have also resigned from my position on the Board and I wish to thank everyone for their support, kindness and challenges over my time on the Board since 2006. I am proud to have been part of this organisation and to have had the opportunity to represent it in a variety of meetings and forums. I wish the incoming Board all the best for the future.

The Board provides the governance and strategic directions of *fka*CS but it is the work of the employees that ensures that our service provision and advocacy work meets the mission and goals of this organisation. Once again Melodie Davies has provided great leadership and guidance to her team in a challenging environment where there has been no certainty of funding or even of the organisation continuing. Thank you for your professionalism and passion for advocating for all children's cultural and linguistic rights.

I would like to acknowledge the challenge, for all staff members, in maintaining commitment and enthusiasm for the work when faced with this type of environment. Thank you for continuing to do so in such a professional and consistent manner.

Denise Rundle
President

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework provides a guide for working together with families in support of their children, embracing and responding to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Victorian Community and reminds us that all children influence, and are affected by, the environments surrounding them. However, recent community consultations undertaken by the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria found that culturally and linguistically diverse communities consistently underutilise early childhood services [ECCV, 2018].

This year on International Mother Language Day, Salzburg Global Fellows called on educators, businesses and governments to promote language diversity as a global norm.

"We urge individuals, corporations, institutions and governments to adopt a multilingual mindset that celebrates and promotes language diversity as the global norm, tackles language discrimination, and develops language policies that advance multilingualism."

- [Salzburg Global Seminar, 2018]

This demonstrates to us at *fka*CS that our work is not yet done and Victorian early childhood education and care services continue to look to *fka*CS for support to reduce the unintended barriers for children and families, to value and celebrate home and community languages and support children learning English as an additional language.

This year our programs have broadened to support early childhood education and care services to apply critical reflection and thinking to practice at:

- **Service level** (e.g. policies) to ensure inclusion and equity.
- **Curriculum level** to ensure each child is supported to actively participate in the program, exercise agency and develop confidence as learners - strong in their identity, wellbeing and connectedness to community - and is supported to learn English as an additional language.
- **Relationship level** with families and children to ensure respectful, responsive and trusting relationships to support a sense of belonging.
- **Personal level** to explore their own world view and enhance positive attitudes to differences.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Val McFarlane's UNDER THE MICROSCOPE interview with Professor Joseph Lo Bianco titled *Using Education to Create Cohesion from Conflict*, in which Lo Bianco states "we're just at the beginning of understanding all the ways in which language is connected to social cohesion". He then goes on to say "language can divide but it can also be used to heal" [University of Melbourne, 2017].

I would like to thank the Board and staff for their commitment to the principles and values of *fka*CS. I would like to particularly acknowledge Denise Rundle 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. I would also like to show my appreciation for the time commitment that was required from the voluntary Board as we steered the organisation through an exceptional year of challenges and opportunities.

Melodie Davies

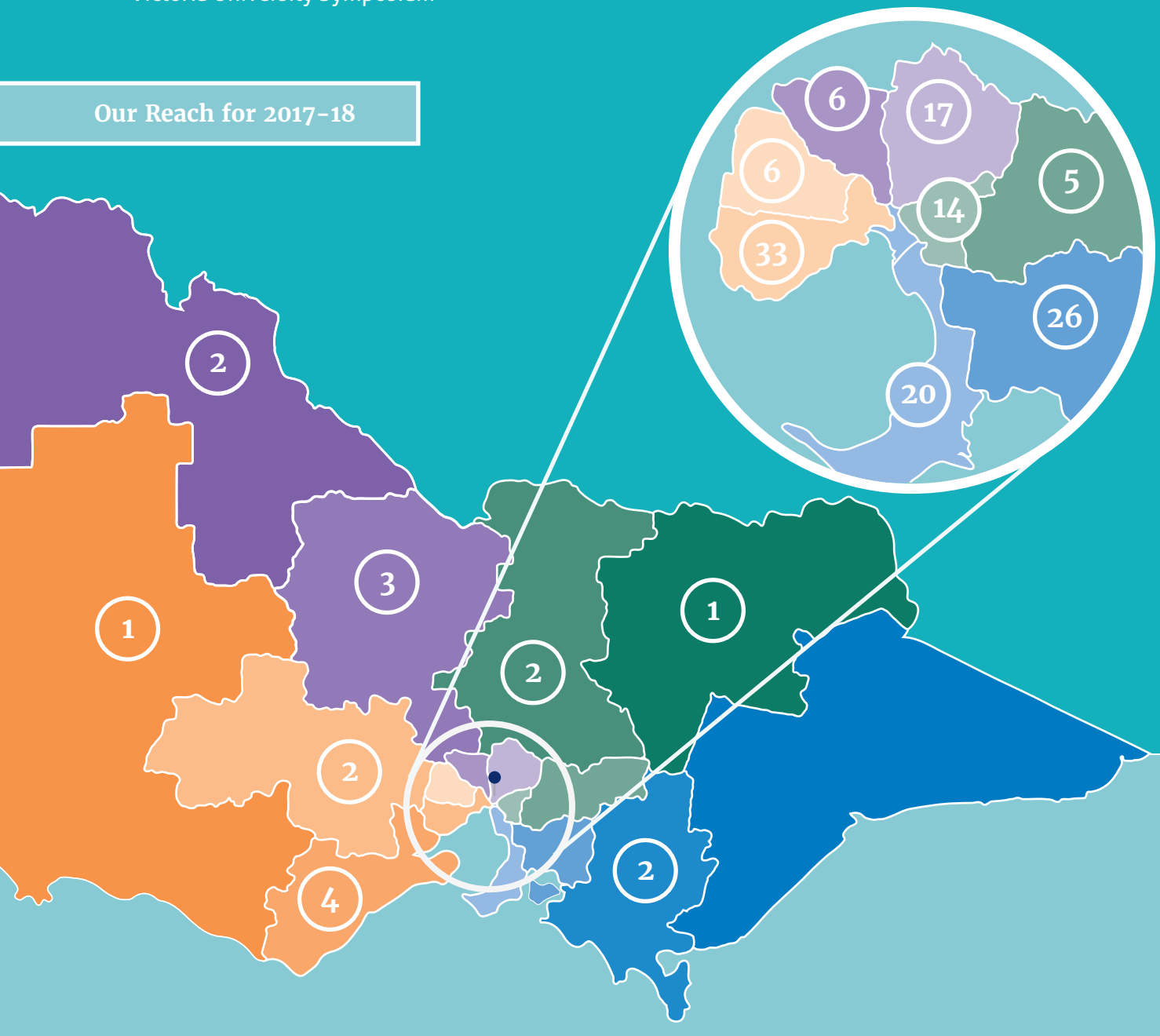
Executive Director

Service Delivery

Programs we participated in or delivered this year include:

- Victorian Kindergarten Cultural Inclusion Program
- Community Language support provided to eligible Playgroups and Kindergartens
- Professional Learning and Training
- Victorian Inclusion Agency Community Expos
- On-site coaching and mentoring
- Community language support to Victorian Kindergartens
- Improving Quality Through Leadership Program
- VicTESOL Symposium
- Innovative Solutions under the Inclusion Support Program (ISP)
- Mentoring and professional support to Victorian Inclusion Professionals
- Facilitated conversations at regional networks (ISP)
- Victoria University Symposium

Our Reach for 2017-18



The Multicultural Resource Centre

We continue to steadily develop new intentional teaching notes for various resources and audio story bags, as well as reproducing a number of Literacy Kits with support from the Forest Hill Foundation. Once again we provided Community Story Time at Romp and Stomp, where bilingual workers read stories to children in community languages and families read to their children in their home language.

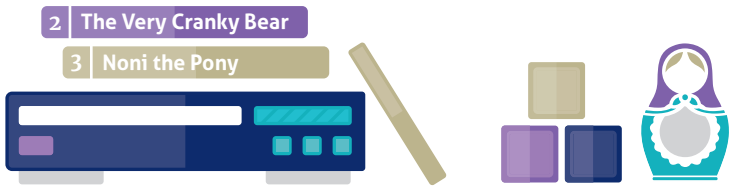
With generous support from the Peter Williams Trust *fka*CS developed a selection of Community Kits in the following languages:

- Arabic with a focus on the Syrian Community
- Dinka with a focus on the South Sudan Community
- Dari with a focus on the Afghanistan Community
- Persian/Farsi with a focus on the Iranian Community
- Karen with a focus on the Karen Community

Highlights from the Year

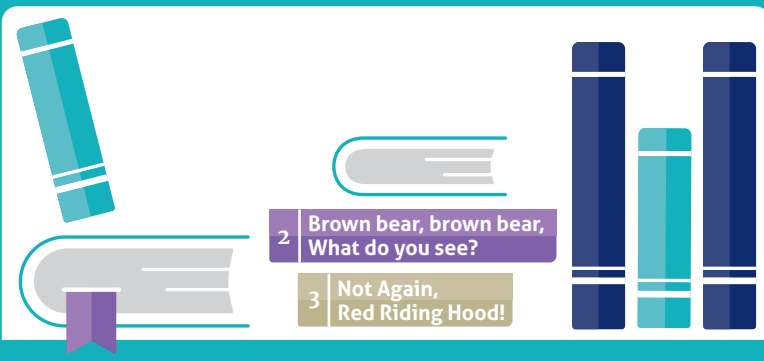
Most Popular
AUDIO STORY BAG

Walking Through the Jungle



Most Popular
CHILDREN'S BOOK

Jill and the Beanstalk
[Punjabi & English]



Most Popular
STORY BAG

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

1015 Resources
BORROWED OVER THE YEAR

206 OF THESE WERE
BORROWED **MULTIPLE TIMES!**

“ The fact that the rights of children are recognised as the rights of all children is the sign of a more accomplished humanity. ”

– Loris Malaguzzi

Treasurer's Report

2017-18 Financial Year

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. (*fka*CS) for the year ended 30 June 2018. For a complete understanding of the financial performance, position and cash flows of *fka*CS, the full financial statements should be referred to. The full statements also include a description of the accounting policies adopted by *fka*CS, explanatory notes and the independent auditor's report. The full financial report is available for download at www.fka.org.au or on request from *fka*CS.

Financial Summary - Year ended 30 June	2018 $	2017 $
Financial Performance		
Revenue from government	270,693	265,385
Philanthropic, membership, trading and other income	246,280	238,461
Total income	516,973	503,846
Total expenditure	692,998	753,301
Net result for the period	(176,025)	(249,455)
Financial Position		
Cash and cash equivalents	617,885	766,105
Other assets	77,266	115,361
Total assets	695,151	881,466
Total liabilities	128,368	138,658
Net assets	566,783	742,808
Reserves	500,000	500,000
Retained surplus	66,783	242,808
Total equity	566,783	742,808
Cash Flows		
Net cash flow from operations	(148,220)	(261,945)
Net cash flow from investing activities	-	(21,189)
Net change in cash held	(148,220)	(283,134)
Cash available at beginning of year	766,105	1,049,239
Cash available at end of year	617,885	766,105

The year to 30 June 2018 reflected the second year of operations for *fka*CS following the introduction of the new Commonwealth Government Inclusion Support Programme (ISP), which commenced 1 July 2016. As advised in last year's report, the new programme resulted in the cessation of prepaid block funding directly to *fka*CS for provision of bicultural support (of around $600,000), replaced with an alternative funding model requiring individual education and care services to directly apply for government funding in order to purchase assistance from a support provider (such as *fka*CS) on a fee for service basis.

As we had foreshadowed, the nature and magnitude of this change in Commonwealth funding, and issues with the new funding model, have placed significant constraints on *fka*CS's capacity to secure replacement revenue. As a result, our overall income remained at reduced levels (from over $1 million two years ago), not withstanding our continued efforts to generate new funds. This has meant another period of planned deficit spending, funded by retained earnings, in order to meet our existing service obligations and continue transitioning to a revised and sustainable long-term structure under the new funding environment.

Overall for the year, *fka*CS earned income of $516,973 and incurred expenditure of $692,998, for a net operating deficit of $176,025. The level of the deficit was within budgeted parameters. Income for the year was split relatively evenly between contracted grant funding from the Victorian Government for bicultural support and revenue from other non-government sources (e.g., philanthropic contributions, membership income and fee-for-service revenue), and was 3% up overall on the prior year. By contrast, although costs were in excess of income, overall expenditure was down by 8% on the previous year, reflecting the concerted efforts to contain costs where practicable.

Despite the recent planned deficits, *fka*CS remained in a positive financial position at year-end. Total assets at 30 June 2018 stood at $695,191 (most of which comprised cash holdings totalling $617,885), and liabilities at $128,368, for a net assets/total equity position of $566,783 (30 June 2017: $742,808). The level of net assets affords the association the capacity to provide further transitional support for a limited time.

The board remains committed to implementing a sustainable organisational structure and service delivery model while being cognisant of the association's financial constraints. In terms of the coming financial year, we continue to seek opportunities to secure new and reliable funding and remain hopeful that the initiatives undertaken during the transition process will return the association to a more balanced financial outcome.

In closing, on behalf of the board, I would like to sincerely thank our Executive Director Melodie and the whole *fka*CS team for their enormous efforts and dedication in steering the organisation through this period of uncertainty, and working tirelessly towards a more positive future. We extend our gratitude also to our partners and members for their ongoing commitment in working together with *fka*CS to support and promote quality education and care services, and help deliver the best possible outcomes for children and families. We look forward to working as one for the long-term!

Karla Coombes

Treasurer

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 Member	Bruna Pasqua
Board Member	Carolina Cabezas
Board Member	Paula Wood
Board Member	Professor Mindy Blaise

Staff

Executive Director	Melodie Davies	
Transition Coordinator	Heidi De Paoli	
Children's Services Consultants	Ashley Howden	Jennifer Voogt
	Christine Speziale	Leonie Bourke
	Jade Fraser	Philip Nicholls
Professional Learning & Training	Carolina Cabezas	
Project Coordinator	Elissa Stanovic	Victoria De Paoli
Resource Centre	Barbara Lew	
Finance Officer	Barbara Farrington	
Administrative Coordinator	Lorelei Camboni	Isabelle Beaupré

Life Members

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

Donors and Friends

*fka*CS would like to thank the following donors and friends for their ongoing generosity and support of the organisation, as well as those who wish to remain anonymous.

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

Bilingual Workers

*fka*CS is fortunate to have a team of bilingual workers to provide language support to children and families. This year the following languages where supported:

Arabic
Assyrian
Bahasa Indonesia
Bengali
Burmese
Cantonese
Chin (Zomi)
Dari
Dinka
Hakka
Hindi
Karen
Khmer
Korean
Kurdish
Mandarin
Nepali
Oromo
Persian/Farsi
Portuguese
Punjabi
Russian
Serbian
Sinhala
Somali
Telegu
Turkish
Ukrainian
Urdu
Vietnamese

The following bilingual workers provided support to Victorian children and families in the 2017-18 financial year:

Bahareh Irannejad
Bindu Santhosh
Bingshu Ma
Dabessa Gemelal
Dilkushi Sureshkuma
Durga Parajuli
Eang Kang
Elena Stepko
Farahnaz Taghizadeh
Fatima Mahzooz
Feng Lin
Guleser Yilmaz
Gulsoom Ali
Harvinder Kaur
John Dhieu
Lay Ooi
Leyla Halikias
Luisa Chiu
Lulu De Rose
Ly Doan
Maria Chiu
Maria Wardhani
Marina Rowan
Mayuri Mody
Melissa Siqueira
Melody Gualnam
Michael Garang
Michelle Szeto
Minjin Oh
Najmeh Tamaddoni Nezhad
Naseema Syed
Nasteha Mohamud
Naz Asim
Nuha Rofo
Nuni Berger
Paw Paw Moo
Phebe Yeo
Preeti Vaswani
Qianwei Ji
Roksana Hematizadeh
Samah Taha
Sandra Yam
Sanpai Thintuep
Shahida Yasmeen
Shell Shell
Shu Ge
Simerpreet Karir
Suniti Pabla
Usha Shenh
Van Le Ho
Vani Jasti
Violeta Velanovska
Zahida Baarini
Zahra Ali
Zainab Karimi

Moving Forward

2019 and Beyond

Following on from last years Department of Education and Training presentation at the Annual General Meeting, the Victorian Government has steadily rolled out the School Readiness Funding initiative. *fka*CS is delighted to be included in the new Menu of Evidence and looks forward to working alongside Tranche 1 Kindergartens in 2019.

Our School Readiness Program of support sits alongside the Victorian Kindergarten Cultural Inclusion Program and affords us the opportunity to work alongside Kindergartens to design a program of work that will support their needs and those of the children and families in their community.

This will allow *fka*CS to provide a holistic program of support covering;

- Why it is important to think about cultural inclusion;
- What needs to happen to provide and demonstrate culturally inclusive practice; and
- How to implement changes in practice, reduce barriers to participation and celebrate our diverse community.

We are grateful to the Victorian Government for recognising this important work and ensuring that Victorian Kindergartens have access to timely professional support to ensure the active participation of all children and families in their program.

Victorian Early Childhood Language Program

In recognition that learning languages other than English helps children to improve their overall literacy and understanding of how language in general works, the Victorian Government will fund the *Learn Languages at Kindergarten* program and the *Bilingual Kindergartens* program in Victorian Kindergartens.

We welcome the Victorian Governments commitment to valuing and recognising the importance of learning languages in preschools. It is important, however, to continue to maintain and strengthen support for children learning English as an additional language and support teachers to maintain the community/ home languages of children and families in their programs.

Board Renewal

We are excited to be moving into the new year with a new Board of Directors. The following members have been nominated for a place on the 2018/19 Board:

- Karla Coombes (Returning)
- Carolina Cabezas (Returning)
- Barbara Romeril
- Melinda Ackerman
- Julie Brooks
- Dr Sue Lopez Atkinson
- Dr Prasanna Srinivasan
- Helen Walker-Cook
- Deon Gill
- Heidi De Paoli

fka **Children's Services Inc**
42 Dight Street Collingwood VIC 3066
03 9428 4471 | fkacs@fka.org.au

Supporting children's cultural and linguistic rights...