



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

*fka Children's Services
acknowledges the Traditional
Owners of Country throughout
Australia and their continuing
connection to the land, skies
and waterways. We pay our
respects to Elders past and
present, and acknowledge the
strength and resilience of all
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander people, families and
communities.*

President's Message

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to share and acknowledge the work undertaken by *fka* Children's Services (*fkaCS*) over the past year. The team at *fkaCS* has worked diligently to provide professional and expert support to the early years' sector in Victoria. The data provided in this Annual Report demonstrates the breadth and quality of work delivered by a highly valued and committed team.

The governance of *fka* Children's Services continued to be the focus of the Board with the four pillars of the Strategic Plan – Lead, Advocate, Respond & Collaborate, and Build – as the basis for identifying the program priority areas, with regular progress reports provided by the Executive Director.

The ongoing viability and sustainability of *fka* Children's Services continued to be a focus area. Reliance on government funding is a key factor for the Board as membership income alone is insufficient to sustain the work of the organisation. To this end, the Board undertook a strategic planning exercise to identify the strengths and opportunities that will guide the future work of the Board and contribute to the sustainability of this key organisation.

The newly formed Finance Subcommittee provided timely and considered advice to the full Board. This Committee is ably led by the Treasurer Rakhi Khanna and supported by Vice President Vanessa Field. Executive Director Melodie Davies and external consultant Robert Pisano are also key members of the Committee.

Whilst regular financial reporting and commentary has been a standing agenda item, this group has extended their work to include the development of policies and procedures that relate specifically to financial management.

Early childhood continued to be focus for

all levels of government, particularly noting the support of the Victorian Department of Education who provided funding to deliver *fkaCS* Cultural Inclusion Support, the Early Childhood Language Program: Quality Support Program and the End-to-End Career Support Program. As a small community owned organisation such funding is vital to enable specific training and support to be delivered to educators and teachers.

The Board of Directors, all busy professionals, have given their time and energy willingly to support the organisation. Each bring a great deal of experience and knowledge that enhanced the governance and strategic direction of *fka* Children's Services. It is a pleasure to work alongside such a committed group of professionals.

Long term Board Director, Melinda Ackerman resigned as a Board Director and on behalf of the Board, I extend sincere gratitude to Melinda for her contribution to *fkaCS* and wish her all the very best for the future.

To the team at *fkaCS* – our most valuable asset, thank you for your loyalty and dedication. To the Executive Director, Melodie Davies, your undying passion and commitment to inclusion, diversity and collaboration are just some of the qualities that has supported your strong advocacy that continued to be child focused. On a personal note, thank you Melodie for your collegiality and strong leadership.

Ros Cornish
President

Operational Report

In 2024, *fka* Children's Services (*fka*CS) continued to champion quality, inclusive and culturally responsive practice across the early years, with a strong focus on the Victorian Government's **Best Start, Best Life** reforms.

At the heart of our work is a deep commitment to upholding the **safety and rights of all children**. Guided by the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, we affirm that children have the right to be protected from harm, to participate in decisions that affect them, and to grow up in environments that are inclusive, culturally safe, and respectful.

In the early childhood education and care sector, we often speak of belonging, identity, wellbeing, and inclusion. Beneath these aspirational concepts lies a foundational responsibility: to uphold the rights of every child.

In the Australian context, this is especially critical given our mixed economic model of providers, our multicultural society, the cultural and linguistic diversity of communities, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation for First Nations children and families.

Children's rights are not aspirational ideals; they are legal, ethical, and pedagogical responsibilities that when embedded meaningfully, enhance children's wellbeing, strengthen relationships, encourage ethical decision-making, and promote inclusive, democratic learning environments.

Despite the strong alignment between the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and

the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework children's rights remain inconsistently understood across the sector.

Sector feedback suggests ongoing learning is required to embed children's rights meaningfully, particularly in relation to cultural inclusion, multilingualism, culturally and child safe practices.

Many educators report uncertainty in how to translate these rights into practice. For some, the language of rights feels abstract or disconnected from the pressures of day-to-day work. For others, children's rights have been reduced to a display on the wall or a planned activity during National Children's Week—well-intentioned but ultimately limited in impact.

To truly embed rights-based practice, we must examine how our pedagogies, environments, relationships, and systems respond to the **rights and safety of all children**, every day.

Upholding and embedding children's rights is not just an aspiration, nor is it a compliance task, a philosophical ideal or an isolated action—it requires a systemic commitment and a cultural shift that calls for sustained shared thinking, relational pedagogy, ethical leadership, and systemic support.

We must move beyond symbolic, tokenistic gestures and compliance-based approaches to invest in building the capacity of the Early Years workforce to reflect on and enact children's rights in contextually relevant and relational ways. This requires shifting mindsets, disrupting dominant narratives,

and co-creating a sector where every child can thrive.

Over the last year *fkaCS* has offered sustained and multi-layered professional learning centred on critical reflection, collaborative learning, and intentional leadership. Facilitated discussions, coaching, and inquiry-based learning communities help unpack what rights mean in individual settings.

This approach acknowledges local community contexts, and the varying levels of experience and confidence across teams. It supports participants to explore the biases or assumptions that might influence practices, the microaggressions families and children may be experiencing, questions assumptions by examining power dynamics, and allows space for difficult conversations, unpacking ethical dilemmas, and critical inquiries into how rights are—or aren't—being upheld in practice.

As Victoria's Early Years sector continues to evolve alongside the Victorian Governments commitment under the Best Start Best Life and Pre-Prep reforms, we have a unique opportunity to ensure that all child's rights are foreground in daily practice and their culture, language, and identity is reflected, respected, and celebrated in early learning settings.

Children's rights are the foundation of ethical and high-quality early childhood education. Embedding them into the heart of practice is both a professional responsibility and a powerful opportunity to shape a more just, inclusive, and respectful society.

In the year ahead, *fkaCS* will continue to work with sector partners, policymakers, and communities to:

- Advocate for systemic supports that sustain rights-based practice across diverse Early Years contexts
- Support systemic change through policy influence, professional learning, and cross-sector collaboration
- Strengthen the connection between children's rights, equity, and quality improvement
- Support educators to lead and sustain rights-based, culturally safe practices in their contexts

Thank you to the Victorian Government, and our valued partners for their continued support and commitment to this work.

To our **Board of Management**, the *fkaCS* team and I express our gratitude for your generous contribution of time, leadership, and guidance. And to our **dedicated team of professionals**: thank you for your unwavering commitment to children's cultural and linguistic rights.

Together, we are building an **equitable early childhood system** where the rights of all children and families are upheld, and every child is supported to thrive.

Melodie Davies
Executive Director

Acknowledgements

Thank you to...

The Victorian Department of Education for their commitment to Victorian early year's services and children's cultural and linguistic rights.

The Early Childhood Language Program (ECLP): Quality Support Program Steering Committee supports the delivery of the ECLP: Quality Support Program and provides us with valuable expertise and guidance in the delivery of our support to kindergartens teaching in a language other than English:

Vaso Elefsiniotis

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI)

Jo Weeden

Expression Australia

Dr Yvette Slaughter

The University of Melbourne

Anthony Semann

Semann & Slattery

Colin Slattery

Semann & Slattery

Kylie Farmer

Modern Languages Teachers Association of Victoria (MLTAV)

Board of Management

Ros Cornish

President

Rakhi Khanna

Treasurer

Karla Coombes

Board Member

Vanessa Field

Vice President

Melinda Ackerman

Board Member

Hodan Abi

Board Member

Julie Brooks

Secretary

Dr Wendy Roberts

Board Member

Subcontractors & Consultants

We thank the following subcontractors and consultants who supported *fkaCS* in our work:

Kylie Farmer

ECLP Quality Support Program Mentor

Dr Anne Kennedy

Heather Barnes OAM

Fay Muir

ECLP Quality Support Program Mentor

Semann & Slattery

Linton Roe

ECLP Quality Support Program Mentor

Dr William Forshaw

ECLP Quality Support Program Mentor

Dr Sue Atkinson Lopez AM

Staff

Melodie Davies
Executive Director

Allison Jackson
Finance Officer

Angela Ditchmen
Professional Learning & Mentoring Lead

Ashlea Hogg
Communications & Engagement Officer

Ashley Howden
Manager Social Inclusion Pedagogy & Practice

Barbara Lew
Librarian

Bharti Gautam
Pedagogy & Practice Consultant / Mentor

Caroline Woods
Operations & Executive Support Manager

Casey Howden
Project Manager

Emily Dolman
Program Support Officer

Emma McGrath
Manager Partnerships & Projects

Jennifer Nicholls
Senior Project Manager

Kath Hillier
Senior Pedagogy & Practice Consultant / Mentor

Kristen Roberts
Pedagogy & Practice Consultant / Mentor

Nidhi Singh
Senior Pedagogy & Practice Consultant / Mentor

Rajni Bala
ECLP Quality Support Program Mentor

Samantha Gould
Pedagogy & Practice Consultant

Dr Siobhan Hannan
ECLP Quality Support Program Mentor

Victoria Ostrowski
Program Support Officer

Community Language Support Workers

Thank you to those who provided language support in 2024:

Fatema Hussaini

Nazia Raza

Habiba Fatima

Sohaila Mazoori

Life Members

Ms B Romeril

Mrs K Coombes

Mrs G Johnson

Ms B Pasqua

Mr I Renard

Mrs P Montgomery

Ms D Rundle

Mr J Emerson

Dr A Kennedy

Mr L Cox

Dr P Clarke OAM

Mr T Rush

Donors & Friends

fkaCS would like to thank donors and friends for their ongoing generosity and support.



fkaCS support allowed us to focus on culture in a different light, recognising culture within our context rather than different nationalities. We now have a clear action plan to make our space more welcoming and respectful of all children and families within our service.



My mentor was great every session, especially when he gave me advice, examples and tips (during kinder sessions) on how to interact with the kids in the target language without relying on English. Also he shared with us a lot of resources and bilingual techniques very helpful on the implementation of the language program.

““

Our *fkaCS* consultant was insightful, playful and supported my teams to think deeply about their own culture. How culture influences all that we do. My teams are amazing, and we had some very informative and enjoyable training with *fkaCS*. We loved it so much we are going to try and work with them again in 2025.

““

Online training greatly helped us understand how to use the tool kit appropriately.

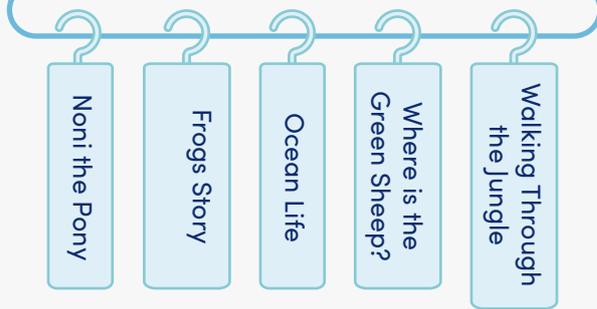
This also benefited us in beginning some reflective thinking and following through on our first action.

““

The overall mentoring program is great. The best part was getting help in planning as this is my first year as a language teacher.

Multicultural Resource Centre

MOST POPULAR STORY BAGS



239 ★ 
**RESOURCES
ADDED TO THE MRC**



TOP 5 BOOKS

- 1 Mirror [Wordless]
- 2 Food, Food, Fabulous Food [Punjabi & English]
- 3 Book of Family [Chinese Simplified/ Mandarin, Pinyin & English]
- 4 The Black Book of Colours [Braille & English]
- 5 Families in Many Cultures [English]

47
**OUTREACH
PARCELS
SENT**



1.9k
**RESOURCES
BORROWED**



Community Language Support



34

**COMMUNITY LANGUAGE
WORKERS EMPLOYED***

*At 31 December 2024



1291 HOURS OF
SUPPORT PROVIDED

**ACROSS 197
SITES**

Membership



570
**MEMBERS
IN 2024-**

149 MULTI-SITES

204 SINGLE SITES

194 INDIVIDUALS*

7 STUDENTS

3 OTHER ORGANISATIONS

13 LIFE MEMBERS

*Incl. 173 complimentary memberships as part of the Early Childhood Language Program: Quality Support Program.



Online Engagement



INSTAGRAM
234 Followers
1.2k Reached



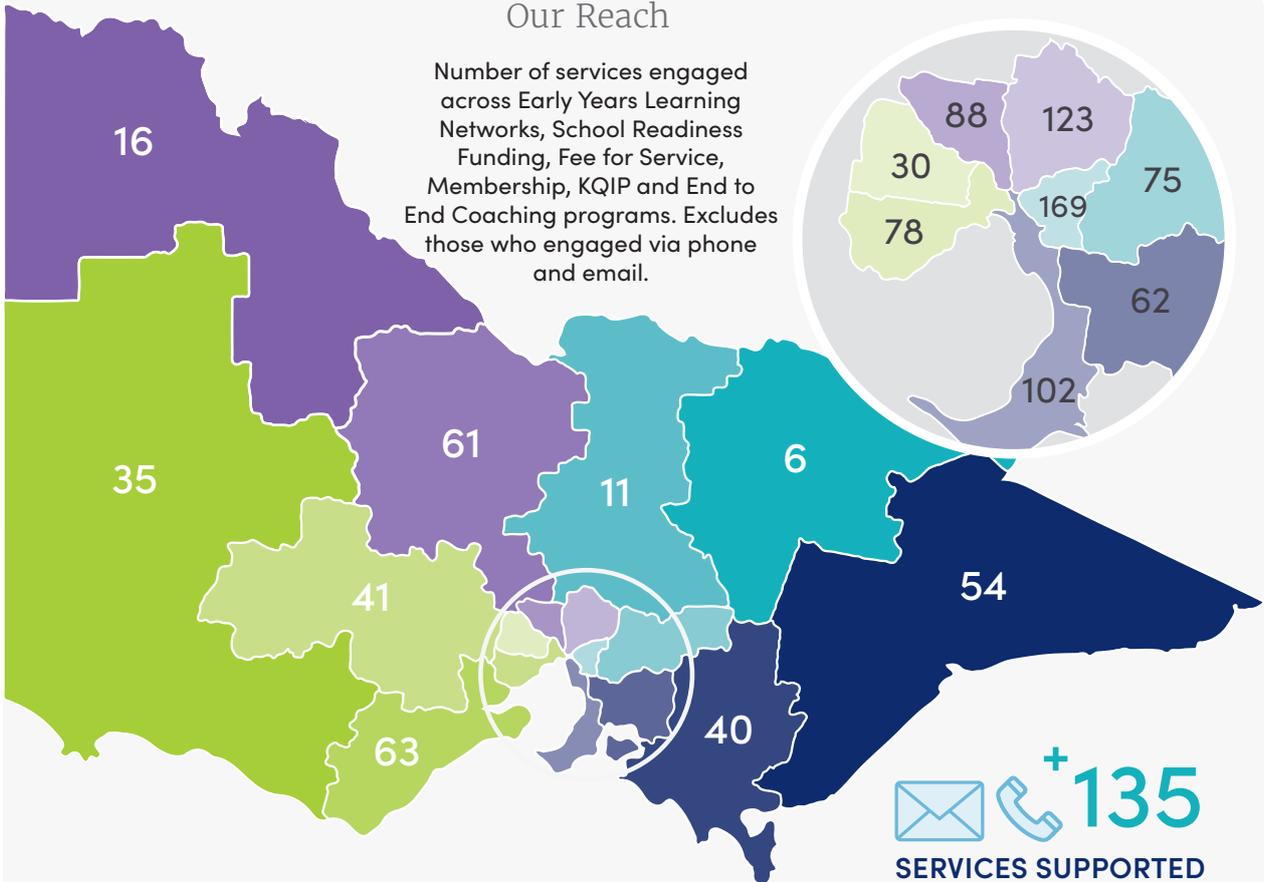
FACEBOOK
1.3k Followers
7.8k Reached



My mentor provided me suggestions on how to run the language program alongside the early childhood program. She also visited my kinder and supported me to communicate with my team members, explained to them what my role is.

Our Reach

Number of services engaged across Early Years Learning Networks, School Readiness Funding, Fee for Service, Membership, KQIP and End to End Coaching programs. Excludes those who engaged via phone and email.



+135
SERVICES SUPPORTED FOR FREE BY EMAIL + PHONE

“From the forum, my biggest takeaway was the profound impact of early childhood education on long-term cognitive and social development. It highlighted the importance of investing in quality programs to ensure children develop essential skills early on.”

Early Childhood Language Program: Quality Support

1003
SUPPORT EMAILS

1 ANNUAL FORUM
+ **30 NETWORK MEETINGS**

517
SUPPORT CALLS

1 ONLINE HUB REPOSITORY

509 HOURS OF MENTOR SUPPORT

4
NEWSLETTERS

“We are bringing in emotional intelligence, play and human connection into our awareness as educators.”

39
SURVEYS

Treasurer's Report 2024

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

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 31 December 2024. 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 for download at www.fka.org.au or on request from *fkaCS*.

Financial Summary	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Financial performance for the year		
Income	3,629,271	3,157,257
Expenditure	(3,450,503)	(2,872,015)
Net income	178,768	285,242
Other comprehensive income (expense)	5,528	8,112
Total comprehensive income	184,296	293,354
Financial position at end of period		
Assets	2,654,734	3,277,945
Liabilities	(1,030,957)	(1,838,464)
Net assets	1,623,777	1,439,481
Reserves	541,400	535,872
Retained surplus	1,082,377	903,609
Total equity	1,623,777	1,439,481
Cash flows for the period		
Net cash flow from operations	(230,495)	815,624
Net cash flow from investing and financing activities	(148,194)	(148,551)
Net change in cash held	(378,689)	667,073
Cash available at beginning	2,615,618	1,948,545
Cash available at end	2,236,929	2,615,618

fkaCS' financial year ending 31 December 2024, like recent years, reflected the impact of increased activity levels, driven by continued State government focus and investment in early childhood sector support, as well as ongoing strong demand for our professional support services.

The association recorded income of \$3.63 million and expenditure of \$3.45 million, resulting in an annual operating surplus (or net income) of \$179,000. This marked the fifth consecutive annual surplus, highlighting both the scale and impact of *fkaCS'* work over recent years and our commitment to financial sustainability in supporting the early childhood sector. Both income and expenditure increased compared to the previous year, by \$472,000 (15%) and \$578,000 (20%) respectively.

Most of our income came from contracts with the Department of Education (Victoria) – notably for the *Early Childhood Teacher End-to-End Career Supports* and *Early Years Learning Networks* and *Early Childhood Language Program: Quality Support Program* initiatives – as well as grant funding for the *Community Development and Assistance Program*, and direct revenue from delivering *School Readiness / Cultural Inclusion Support* and *Kindergarten Quality Improvement* Programs.

Expenditure continued to reflect the demands of our service delivery commitments, including planned sub-contractor costs and investment in staffing to support growth and operations. We also further invested in key organisational resources (such as communications management, technology upgrades, and e-learning development) to strengthen future capability.

In addition to our funded programs, we continued to support our members through a range of valuable services, including access to our curated resource library, regular

sector updates, and discounted professional support. While membership fees represent a relatively modest share of our overall income, member engagement continues to be a core part of our work and mission.

In terms of *fkaCS'* financial position, as at 31 December 2024, total assets stood at \$2.65 million, with liabilities at \$1.03 million, resulting in net assets of \$1.62 million. Most assets were held in cash (\$2.24 million), which was down \$379,000 from the previous year due mainly to drawdowns of prepaid funding. *fkaCS'* net asset base remains appropriate and essential to support ongoing planning and financial viability, particularly given the variable nature of much of our funding streams.

Looking ahead, some contracted programs are expected to conclude in the coming year, requiring some adjustments to activities and cost structures. We continue to actively monitor the funding pipeline and adapt our financial planning accordingly. With a healthy financial foundation, *fkaCS* is well positioned to meet current program objectives and plan effectively for future operations.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend sincere thanks to our Executive Director Melodie Davies and the entire *fkaCS* team for their dedication and tireless work supporting our members and meeting the needs of the sector. We also thank our external consultant Robert Pasino who has provided timely and professional financial reports to support financial planning and decision making for the organisation, partners and members for their continued trust and commitment in working together to advance the best possible outcomes for children and families.

Rakhi Khanna
Treasurer

Embedding children's rights is not a destination, but a continuous process of reflection, learning, and growth.

"Every child is a new chance for the whole human race." –The Honourable Landon Pearson

"When children are seen and heard, respected and included, we build a stronger society for everyone." – The Honourable Landon Pearson

When we understand that valuing a child's language is a safety strategy, that honouring a child's culture is an act of protection, and that listening to children is a tool for wellbeing, we move closer to a truly inclusive and rights-based sector.