



Foster & Kinship Carers
ASSOCIATION NT Incorporated



ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

OUR VISION

Confident carers

OUR PURPOSE

To empower carers through knowledge, support and advocacy

Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT is an independent, non-government, not-for-profit organisation supporting foster and kinship carers and strengthening the out of home care sector. We provide information on carers' rights and services, offer confidential advice and advocate on behalf of carers.

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CHAIR AND CEO REPORT

We are pleased to deliver the Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT Incorporated's Annual Report for 2018.

It has been a significant twelve months for Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT Incorporated as we continue to grow our organisation into a robust and inclusive association, Territory-wide.

Foster & Kinship Carers Association NT's role is to champion the rights of carers and ensure the best interests of the child remain foremost in the carer relationship.

As the Peak Body for foster and kinship carers we work closely with our carer members striving for excellence, ensuring they are valued as equal partners and recognised for the important role they provide the community, and most especially, the vulnerable children who are in care. Our association continues to advocate systemically for reforms in the out-of-home care sector to improve processes for foster and kinship care in the Northern Territory.

Working in partnership with Territory Families and other key agencies to affect positive change, we are recognised as the 'go to' agency for foster and kinship carers in the Territory. Local media seeks comment from Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT for a position on proposed legislation changes, current practice and future plans for out-of-home Care.

We continue to liaise with media to improve public awareness of the important role foster and kinship carers provide to the community. During 2018, the Association committed to a high visibility media campaign highlighting the value of the work foster and kinship carers do within the community. We have worked hard to lift the profile and public perception of carers within the community.

Many of our carers, have given up their time to help us prepare carer profiles for our media releases. For this, we are very grateful as we know that this is such an important part of 'who we are' as an organisation.

Over the past 12 months our membership base has expanded to almost 900 members right across the Northern Territory. The majority of our members are existing foster or kinship carers. We are pleased to note that many new members are now connecting with our organisation as one of their first steps to become a carer formally. It is testament to our standing in the community, that potential new carers are linking to our organisation as an information source and to connect with our carer networks to help them on their carer journey.

Our advocacy and support services stand strong as one of the most important services of our association. Advocating for our foster and kinship carers rights is pivotal to the sustainability of out-of-home Care in all areas across the Northern Territory. We are proud to have a team of



dedicated professionals as part of our hardworking team. Rosalyn, Lucja and Marie continue to work closely with foster and kinship carers advocating strongly in often challenging situations.

Our advocacy service has been under significant demand this year identifying the need for greater investment by government to improve out-of-home care services and increased support to foster and kinship carers.

It goes without saying that we could not deliver the high standards of services that we do without the support provided by our corporate services team. Our thanks to Cheryl, Anne-marie and Sharni who are an integral part of the team ensuring our day-to-day business continues smoothly. Visalini and Tracey have been our communication specialists throughout the year, committed to keeping our communication lines open.

Each year our elected board members make a substantial contribution by volunteering their time and energy to the organisation. Without their

generous commitment to our association, we could not do the important job that we do today, so it is with great appreciation that we thank each and every one of them.

Most importantly, thank you to all foster and kinship carers who work tirelessly to provide a warm and loving home for some of the Territory's most vulnerable children.

The work you do, changes lives forever!

Ann Owen
Chief Executive Officer

Kay Eade
Chair

Foster and Kinship Carers NT Board



Ann Owen

Kay Eade

OUR TEAM

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Our board of management is made up of volunteers, experienced foster and kinship carers, and professionals from across the Northern Territory. Each board member brings a unique perspective and experience to our organisation.

The board's focus is on the strategic direction of the organisation; ensuring that everything we do is in the best interests of foster and kinship carers, the children in their care, and the broader out-of-home care sector.

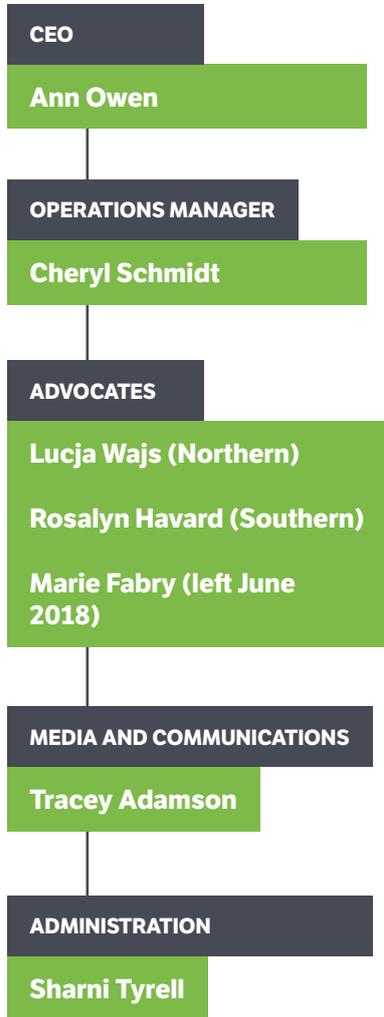
Board meetings in 2017-18 were held on August, November, February and May.

All members of the association are welcome to attend AGMs.

STAFF

Foster and Kinship Carers is supported day-to-day by a small team of dedicated staff, working to support and advocate for our carers and the children in their care.

We have an office in Darwin and in Alice Springs, and our staff frequently travel throughout the Northern Territory to meet with carers, key stakeholders and other care-based organisations.



WHAT WE DO

HOW WE SUPPORT OUR FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARERS

Being there for vulnerable children and young people isn't always an easy job; the right support can make all the difference. We are dedicated to empowering our carers giving practical advice and support and being their voice on issues that affect them every day.

We offer:

- ▶ **Guidance, support and advice** – online, telephone and in person with our Advocacy Team
- ▶ **Professional Development and Training** and events tailored especially for carers
- ▶ **Personal assistance and support** when dealing with complex matters with Territory Families
- ▶ **Information and advice** on the recruitment and assessment process through Territory Families
- ▶ **Networking opportunities to link** experienced carers with new and potential carers
- ▶ **Referrals** to service providers and other organisations
- ▶ **Regular updates** on relevant issues affecting carers
- ▶ A **comprehensive welcome pack** filled with useful information and contacts including a copy of the Charter of Rights to ensure our carers are full informed
- ▶ **Proactive lobbying** to government on issues affecting our foster and kinship carers.

HOW WE SUPPORT THE SECTOR

We have years of experience and knowledge of the child protection out of home care system and we use that to work collaboratively with a wide variety of sector partners to improve outcomes for carers across the Territory.

We support our sector by:

- ▶ **Advertising and promoting** the benefits of being a foster or kinship carer
- ▶ **Recruiting and screening** potential foster and kinship carers
- ▶ **Mentoring and supporting** our partner and emerging sector organisations
- ▶ **Sharing expertise** with community organisations
- ▶ **Representing** our members and the sector on local and national advisory groups
- ▶ Coordinating **conferences** and **forums** to bring the latest information to the sector
- ▶ **Collecting and analysing data** on carers and placements to inform decision-making and policy development
- ▶ **Lobbying government** for sector and system reform and improvements
- ▶ **Providing informed comment** to the media and the community about key issues affecting the sector.

Nathan & Emma

“Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT provided us with expert advice and support when we needed it.”

HOW WE HELP

ADVOCACY

We advocate for positive change in legislation and policy to improve the out-of-home care system and to make the work of our carers easier.

We also provide personal assistance when our carers are dealing with complex matters with Territory Families.

In 2017-18, we undertook a total of 281 advocacy cases with 121 of those in Alice Springs, 94 in Darwin and Palmerston, 29 with Out of Home Care specifically and the remaining 37 covering remote areas including Katherine, Darwin Remote, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek.

These advocacy cases included issues with Territory Families processes, finance and entitlement concerns, casework practice concerns, placement support issues and requests for advice and referrals.

Of these cases, 15% were ongoing from the previous financial year and 10% remained in progress at 30 June 2018.

We meet with Territory Families, the Minister and key sector partners regularly, as outlined below.

FKCA MEETINGS

We meet with a range of key decision-makers on issues affecting foster and kinship carers regularly on top of our advocacy work. .

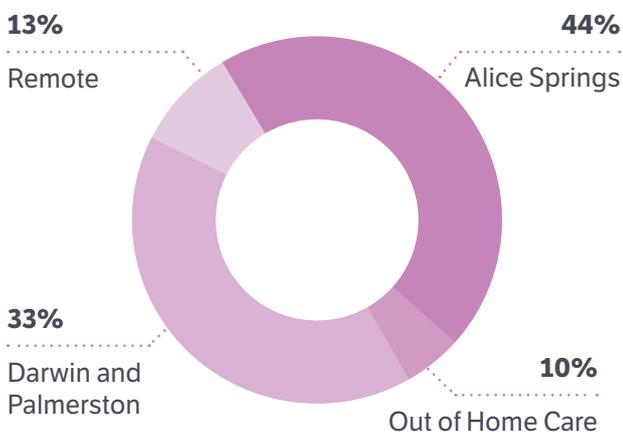
These include regular meetings with:

- ▶ Minister for Territory Families, the Hon Dale Wakefield MLA
- ▶ Territory Families head office staff including CEO, Mr Ken Davies, Deputy CEO Ms Jeanette Kerr and other members of the Executive Leadership Group
- ▶ Territory Families child protection and out of home care staff in each of the major centres
- ▶ Our sector partners and other peak bodies including Create and NTCOSS (board)

This year, we also contributed to the Royal Commission on the treatment of children and young people in detention, contributed to the carer recruitment and retention strategy project, undertook an Indigenous engagement strategy forum, chaired the Australian Foster and Kinship Carers Partnership (AFKCP) meeting and contributed to the new Territory Families Carer Handbook.

We also undertook a Territory-wide roadshow to share our Charter of Rights with foster and kinship carers and held the annual Children's Christmas Party.

Advocacy cases undertaken in 2017-18



TRAINING

We provide specialised information sessions, workshops and professional development opportunities for our carers. This includes sessions for people interested in becoming carers, training for those that have become or are about to become carers and sessions on issues of interest, particularly around the psychological and self-care needs of children and carers.

In 2017-18, we provided more than 20 professional development and training sessions across the Northern Territory, on the following topics:

- ▶ Centrelink Payments
- ▶ Legal responsibilities of carers
- ▶ NDIS
- ▶ FASD
- ▶ Positive development for children and young people
- ▶ How to become a foster and kinship carer

We ran an Indigenous Engagement Strategy Forum facilitated by Price Waterhouse Coopers Indigenous Consulting with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to suggest how we could better engage with our Aboriginal foster and kinship carer members to ensure a more respectful way forward. The outcomes from this forum are currently being implemented into our processes and events calendar.

Information sessions for potential carers are held monthly in Darwin and as required in other regions.

OUTREACH

In 2017-18, we supported a number of opportunities for carers to network and share their experiences. Our Kinship Carer Networking Group and FASD Networking Group are being reviewed and refreshed, with reintroduction of these groups due in 2018.

In addition, we hold information stalls in a range of shopping centres, community hubs and events to ensure the community is aware of what we do and how we can assist.

Sue & Darrin

“They help us with support and advice, and help us to get the right thing done by organisations like Territory Families.”

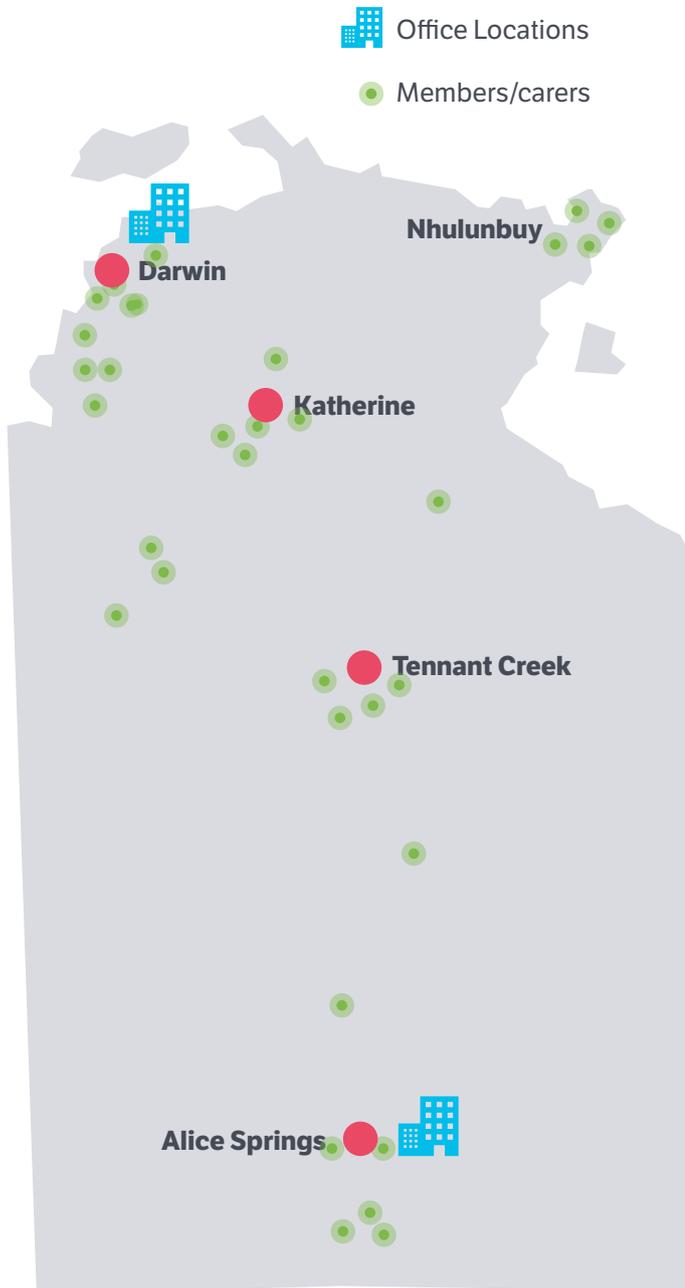
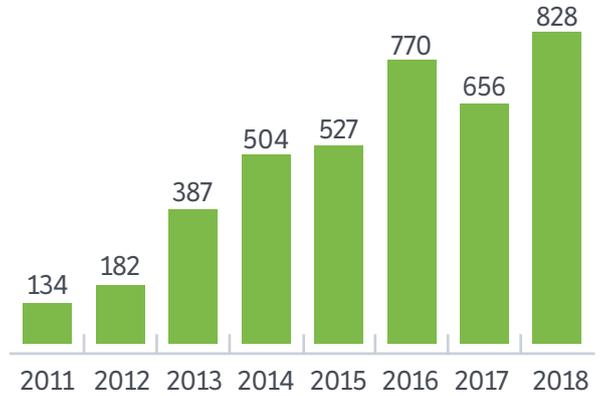


OUR MEMBERS

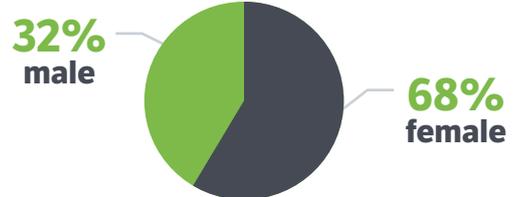
As at 30 June 2018, Foster and Kinship Carers had 828 active members on our database. 68% of those members are female and 32% male, with 10% of our members identifying as Aboriginal.

Since July 2017, we have lodged 81 expressions of interest with Territory Families for people to become registered carers.

Membership numbers as at June 30 2018



828
Members



10% of our members identify as Indigenous Australians

20% of our Board members are Aboriginal, representing both Northern & Southern regions

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

As a member of Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT, carers are provided with a number of benefits that help them and their families.

ADVOCACY, ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Our advocacy team are highly experienced in child protection and out-of-home care and can provide personalised advice, support and representation on key issues affecting carers.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

We provide a range of free and low-cost training services to foster and kinship carers. These include accredited first aid courses, further information to follow.

REFERRALS

Our advocacy team has extensive networks with service providers across the Territory. We can refer carers and the children in their care to appropriate services when issues arise.

CARER DISCOUNT CARD

Members of Foster Carers Association NT who are registered foster and kinship carers are able to enjoy a variety of discounts and special offers from participating businesses. Businesses include fashion retailers, cafés, fitness clubs and homewares stores. The list of participating businesses continues to grow across the Northern Territory and can be found on our website.

ONLINE & PRINT RESOURCES

Our website is packed with useful resources for carers that cover many of the issues faced with raising children in the out-of-home care system in the Northern Territory. These include information on child development, trauma, mental health, FASD, meeting cultural needs and child safety as well as contacts for key legal and support services across the Territory.

REGULAR NEWSLETTER

Our quarterly newsletter provides the latest information on Territory Families policies as well as useful advice on key stages of child development and the latest research. We frequently run competitions for carers and kids, share upcoming events and school holiday activities.

Koop family

“Advocacy is their major thing but they also do training, talks from time to time and workshops.”



OUT IN THE COMMUNITY



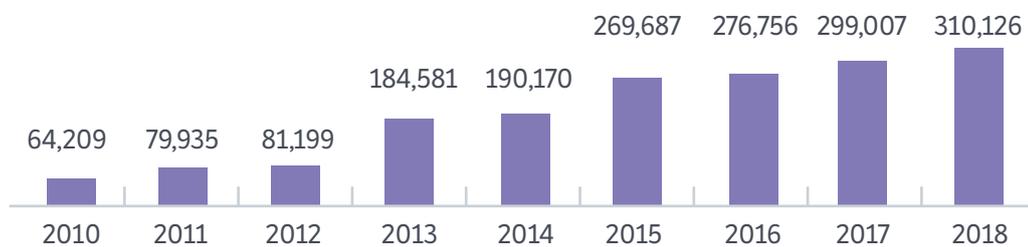
FINANCIALS

Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT Incorporated is pleased to present our audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2018.

The Association maintains a strong financial position with consolidated income for the 2017-18 financial year at \$965,274 carrying forward an operational surplus of \$11,119.

Our income for 2017-18 is attributed to the recurrent funding from the Northern Territory Government through Territory Families. We were able to negotiate a new funding agreement this year that will allow us to continue providing support and advocacy to foster and kinship carers through to 2021.

COMPARATIVE EQUITY GROWTH

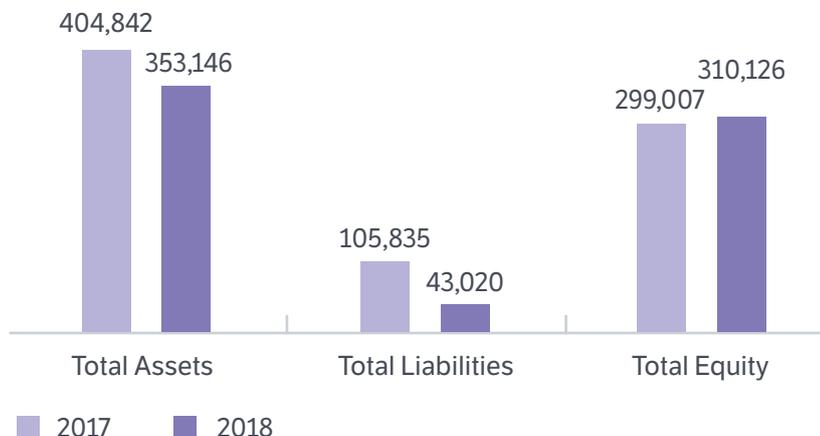


Our Balance Sheet shows a net accumulated surplus of \$310,126 as at June 30, 2018 which is attributed to sound management practices.

2018 shows a continued growth in members' equity through retained surpluses as demonstrated with this comparative chart covering the past 9 years.

The chart below demonstrates the breakdown of members' equity between 30 June 2017 and 30 June 2018. The chart demonstrates that member equity has increased by 4% over the financial year, with liabilities decreasing by 59% and assets decreasing by 13%.

MEMBER EQUITY BREAKDOWN 30 JUNE 2017 V 30 JUNE 2018



MILESTONES

2018

- ▶ Carer Charter of Rights roadshow across the Northern Territory
- ▶ Operations Manager commences on staff
- ▶ New 3-year service agreement negotiated with Territory Families
- ▶ Charter of Rights turns 1

2017

- ▶ Launch of the Charter of Rights for Foster and Kinship Carers after consultative forums and workshops throughout the Northern Territory by Minister Dale Wakefield at Parliament House.
- ▶ Commitment by Mr Ken Davies to embed the Charter into Territory Families policy and procedures in recognition of the Charter's importance.
- ▶ Roadshow throughout the Northern Territory, partnering with Territory Families to workshop the Charter to case managers, team leaders, senior practitioners and foster and kinship carers in the first steps of change management.

2016

- ▶ Hosted the 2016 National Foster and Kinship Care Conference in Darwin
- ▶ Sponsored 53 foster and kinship Northern Territory carers to attend the National Conference in Darwin
- ▶ FCA CEO re-elected as Chair of National Foster and Kinship Carers Partnership
- ▶ Strategic Plan 2016–2017

2015

- ▶ Sponsored 16 Foster and Kinship Carers to attend 2014 National Foster and Kinship Conference
- ▶ FCA CEO elected as Chair of National Foster and Kinship Carers Partnership
- ▶ Introduced full sponsored First Aid Training for all Foster and Kinship Carers
- ▶ Membership 531 foster and kinship carers
- ▶ Continued media to raise the profile of foster and kinship carers.

2014

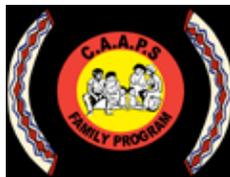
- ▶ Partnered with Department of Children and Families to participate in the re-write the Carer Induction Training
- ▶ Conducted carer forums for consultation around the new Carer Handbook
- ▶ Membership doubled to 387 members since July 2011
- ▶ Training programs for Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin regions
- ▶ Sponsored 14 foster and kinship carers to attend 2014 National Foster and Kinship Carers
- ▶ FCA CEO elected as Vice-Chair of National Foster and Kinship Carers partnership
- ▶ Media plan implemented to raise the profile of foster and kinship carers in the Northern Territory

2013

- ▶ Strategic Plan 2013–2016
- ▶ Membership doubled to 387 members since July 2011
- ▶ Training programs for Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin regions
- ▶ Launched new website for foster and kinship carers
- ▶ Sponsored 15 foster and kinship carers to attend 2013 National Foster and Kinship Carers

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT would like to thank the following organisations who have partnered with us over the past year.



DARWIN

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Casuarina NT 0811

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E info@fkca.org.au

ALICE SPRINGS

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KATHERINE, TENNANT CREEK, NHULUNBUY

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