

Extended Families

A decorative graphic featuring a network of white lines and nodes. Various icons are scattered throughout, including a play button, a group of three people, a gear, a bar chart, a line graph, a pie chart, and a hexagonal grid. Some nodes are highlighted with colored circles in red, green, and blue.

CAPACITY BUILDING

A decorative graphic featuring a network of white lines and nodes. Various icons are scattered throughout, including a bar chart, a line graph, a pie chart, a gear, and a hexagonal grid. Some nodes are highlighted with colored circles in red, green, and blue.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Building Capacity Through Partnerships

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OUR PEOPLE

Committee of Management

President	Katherine Shamai
Vice-President	Anthony Privitelli
Treasurer	Mei Wu
Members	Peter Ernst-Russell Michael Louis Bryce Williams Kim Burggraaff (resigned 2/23)

Management Team

Chief Executive Officer	Julie Langdon
Support Coordination Manager	Rosemary Nicholls
Business Manager	Diana Abelardo
Project Manager	Julia Klieber
General Manager	Nicole Leathem
Volunteer Program Leader 10/22)	Amanda Perry (resigned)
Plan Management Leader	Roz Talib
LinC Leader	Cheryl Chen

Administration Team

Administration	Margaret Fitzgerald Olivia Nam Sarah Sherry
Finance	Nurasikin Ahmad
Plan Management	Hai Tran Cindy Cheng Ahysa Ahmad Peany Nguyen Long Bui Henry Hoang
HR/Data Officer	Cindy Cheng

Staff team

Coordinators and Group Facilitators

Chloe Anderson (resigned 1/23)	Alison Lambden (commenced 6/23)	Chi Phan (commenced 5/23)
An Bui (commenced 1/23)	Thuy Thi Le	Samantha Potter (5/23)
Vi Bui	Shuhan Liu (resigned 9/22)	Jade Purchase (resigned 1/23)
Rachel Collins	Quyen Ly	Helen Roberts (resigned 8/22)
Emily Curran (resigned 3/23)	Emily Ma	Megan Sapiano
My Loan Dang (from 7/22 - 11/22)	Wynn timer Ma (commenced 4/23)	Zoe Sweeney (resigned 7/22)
Danny Do	Nicola Marriot	Yoyo Tang (resigned 6/23)
Nga Do	Lauren Martin (commenced 6/23)	Quyen Tran
Sarah Drucza	Georgina Moore	Nghi Trinh
Ashleigh Gibson	Hung Nguyen	To-Chau Truong
Keely Hay	Kim Anh Nguyen	Nina White
Hannah Helmy	Mai Thanh Nguyen (commenced 9/22)	Georgia Woodrow (commenced 1/23)
Ashleigh Hicks	Thanh Nguyen	Yuki Yuen
Karlie Ignatiadis	Thi Mai Tinh Nguyen	Doris Zhang
Jessica Jones	Nghia Nguyen	
Amy Kam		

Inclusion Support Worker Team

Dau Akol	Kate English	Ellie Kouta
Lawra Alkalame	Celine Escalante	Poorvaja Krishnan
Reem Allahham	Hannah Fitzgerald	Venkateswaran
Chloe Anderson	Emily Fitzsimmons	Claudia Lawrence
Madeline Atanasovski	Emily Forbes	Bobby Le
Halime Ayranci	Charlotte Fortuyn	Isabelle Leong
Zoe Barber	Angela Gardner	Shaun Lim
Jacoub Barsoum	Emily Gell	Anna Luhrs
Nicola Bilson	Tahlia Genovesi	Chantelle Lyons
Rem Boih	Maria Gergis	Grace Macciolli
Chantelle Boucher	Brooke Getley	Kathryn Mackie
Amy Bowen	Dylan Gillies-Parsons	Kasun Madava
Jarryd Brand	Vanessa Ginnane	Eliza Mahar
Thomas Brand	Monique Grech	Yvonne Makowska
Eamon Brodie	Ksenia Grosheva	Dewni Manamperi
Genevieve Brott	Hilina-Asres Hagos	Nelson Mancini
Ruby Brown	Ayden Hamilton	Anna Mangan-Georgiou
Gemma Brunetti	Spencer Harrop	Esther Manoharan
Lewis Burns	Keely Hay	Sarah Mapleson
Sophie Cameron	Lachlan Heath	Ryan Marinelli
Luke Camilleri	Hannah Helmy	Elizabeth Matassoni
Madeline Carney	Madhavee Hetti Arachchige Dona	Ashlee Maynes
Alexander Carroll	Georgia Hill	Charley Mcfawn
Sophie Carter	Dhruvit Hirani	Charlotte McMaster
Tianqi Cen	Jennifer Hoang	Cara McWilliams
Natasha Chahda	Amelia Holden	Snjezana Merlo
Natalie Chan	Ainsley Hughes	Johanna Mihalas
Judith Cheuk	Paris Hughes	Joshua Morrissy
Nicole Cheung	Josephine Hurrel	Abbey Nation-McGurgan
Nikki Chong	Lianna Hutchinson	Kang Ren Adam Ng
Emily Clark	Chelsea Huynh	Hung Nguyen
Mikayla Clark	Jonathan Huynh	Thanh Ngoc Dan Nguyen
Zoe Claus	Karlie Ignatiadis	Olivia Nicholson
Alexandra Comben	Mia Incerti Zapedowski	Savio Nona
Kaitlyn Corso	Eve Isaac	Maria Ntotas
Vildan Cosgun	Ninwe Issac	Jude O'Sullivan
Alisha Cox	Chloe Jackson	Mikaela Ottoson
Madeline Decru	Maryana Jamil	Siv Cheng Pang
Claudia Del Brocco	Jan Johnston	Yiannis Patogiannis
Despina Despotellis	Teodora Jovanoska	Chanel Pavitt
Domenic Dessmann	Veronica Karam	Jade Payne
Melissa Di Bartolo	Harsimran Kaur	Erin Phillips
Britney Di Gregorio	Manjot Kaur	Nicholas Plail
Gabrielle Down	Mirette Keriakes	Carla Presutti
Emma Druce	Madeleine Khalu	Finn Pritchard
Sarah Drucza	Mona Khoder	Yan Tung Pun
Mollie Duncanson	Minho Kim	Jade Purchase
Madeleine Dunn	Kayleigh Knipe	Adriana Radi
Cristine Enero	Carolina Koesnadi	Nicole Raposo

Ashleigh Rattan
Tanna Reynolds
Hendrik Rijke
Alexander Rischitelli
Jessica Robinson
Scarlett Robinson
Jessica Ryan
Rebecca Salib
Charli Sargeant
Madeline Simioni
Nikita Smith
Paulette Sola
Sarah Stevens
Mark Stolk
Rebecca Tang

Sophie Tasker
Alannah Taylor
Dinotha Thanapalan
Kate Thompson
Elise Thurman
Wai Nok Tong
Cindy Tran
Hong Tran
Ruby Treweek
Billy Trewin
Oliver Turner
Myah Turner-Revach
Mary Van Gils
Kathryn Vlahopoulos
Urwah Vusqa

Steffi Walton
Tiffany Wasnig
Hannah Webb
Sienna West
Emily White
Emma White
Jayden Williams
Rebecca Withers
Natalie Wong
Yue Ting Ferris Wong
Hayden Woodhouse
Georgia Woodrow
Amy Zhou

Financial Auditor

Mitchell Wilson and Partners, Chartered Accountants Malvern

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am pleased to submit the President's Report for Extended Families Australia.



Partnerships are vital for organisations to advance their purpose and achieve their objectives. It can take many forms, and for Extended Families Australia, we see our relationships with our stakeholders as partnerships; we work collaboratively together to achieve capability and capacity uplift for all involved, as we focus on **Building Capacity Through Partnership**.

Extended Families Australia has continued to partner with different community groups and funders on projects; building on the success of previous years and refining our delivery approach based on feedback and reflection. As you will read in this annual report, these partnerships have added breadth and depth to our range of support and amplified the value we bring to our community.

These partnerships will have increasing importance in the changing landscape of NDIS funding, and how we continue to develop and refine our services. We will continue to look for opportunities to expand our range of partnerships to meet the goals and objectives of the clients we support. The outcomes from the Royal Commission into Disability Services will also be of keen interest as we focus on how quality and service delivery practices can be further uplifted to reflect the learnings from the Royal Commission hearings.

I would like to recognize the great work by Julie, the Management team, and the staff at Extended Families Australia, and for their dedication and passion in providing the best support for our community. It is a pleasure to work with and support such a dedicated group. Their commitment to Extended Families Australia's community is inspiring and their commitment to providing their very best to our clients shines through in all their interactions with the Committee of Management. I also thank my fellow Committee of Management members for their time and contributions to support Extended Families and ensure strong governance.

As we keep evolving and building capacity with our community, I look forward to hearing more inspiring stories with Extended Families Australia in the year ahead.

Katherine Shamai
Chairperson

CEO'S REPORT

'Building capacity through partnerships' is a fitting theme for our 2023 Annual Report. Working in partnership is so important to us that it became a part of our review of our statement of purpose - we are proposing to change our Mission to *'To work in partnership with people with disabilities and their families to achieve outcomes they value through building strengths, developing skills and creating meaningful community connections.'*



What does working in partnership mean? It is about working together, recognising the strengths, skills, knowledge, experience, goals and rights of people with disabilities and their families and believing that we will achieve better outcomes working together. It is not just what we bring to the table, it is what we are able to do together.

We seek to work with other organisations in a collaborative way, sharing resources, knowledge and skills. We work together for the best outcome for participants, recognising different skills and roles. We value those who work with us on both an individual participant level, and at a service delivery and service creation level. Of note is our long-term relationship and partnership with the Vietnamese Families with Special Needs (VFSN) who through their understanding of their community, along with relationships, respect and trust; enable us to build meaningful services, targeted to specific needs and achieve incredible outcomes. In the last year we have developed a new partnership with Positive Partnership to deliver Autism training and with the support of Brimbank City Council we have entered a 'memorandum of understanding' with Neighbourhood Houses who will share resources with us as we work to help people access community activities.

We also work collaboratively within the organisation with staff sharing knowledge, skills and time to ensure the best possible service is provided.

The whole is definitely greater than the sum of the parts.

Being a parent is an important job, parenting a child with special needs brings additional challenges and can be isolating. Many of our services support carers – often directly through Support Coordination, Plan Management, our Carer Support Program ReBalance and parenting groups with VFSN and through our Vuon Len program; but also, by supporting and promoting skill development of their children in these and other direct support services.

We have a strong focus on children and families; however we are increasingly working with a wide range of ages and situations. Being asked to support adults is especially prevalent when people need our staff with culture and language skills such as Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese. We value our cross-cultural staff and the unique skills they bring bringing cultural safety, reducing isolation and helping people manage confusing systems.

We have been reviewing our Vision, Mission and Goals to bring them up to date with changes we have already made in who we support and our way of working.

The NDIS space is a difficult one to work in for many reasons. We recognise the need for strong standards and compliance as we work with vulnerable people and are proud of our quality systems.

However, the increasing requirements place stress on the organisation to consistently do more without funding for this service improvement and compliance work. This impacts all. With the NDIS review and the Disability Royal Commission handing down decisions in the coming months, we predict significant change in the year ahead as further learnings and decisions are made. We will need to continue to be creative, flexible and strategic as we face new challenges.

I want to thank the staff, who all work hard and clearly share our organisations values and mission. Each year we reflect how much more complex our work is getting, yet despite this there is genuine care and respect for those we work with and for each other. Our finance and admin staff keep us running effectively, we rely on them so much to keep our systems and processes in place. I want to especially thank the supervisors, team leaders and Managers who support their teams, and give a lot whilst facing constant pressure and demands.

Thanks also to the Committee of Management, who under Katherine Shamai’s leadership continue to ensure good governance and from whom I feel supported.

We thank our funders who have shown they believe in our service models and support us to create services to build capacity and provide support to people with a disability and their carers and family.

In the last year I have reduced my work hours and Nicole Leathem has taken on the role of General Manager, alongside her quality role, to provide support to leadership functions. Across the organisation I see staff stepping up to fulfill needs and contribute and take on new roles. Over the last couple of years, we have created a more diversified and delegated structure.

As I reflect on the last year, I do so with pride. We have innovative service models; a strong team and I recognise a positive organisational culture.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR

Across the Organisation in 2022-23	
Hours of Support	Number of Groups / Activities
64403 hours	667 groups

NDIS Supports

- We supported 1100 NDIS participants
- We provided 57530 hours of service to NDIS Participants

NDIS Services	Hours of support provided	Total number of unique participants
LinC / Vol Match	42323	228
Support Coordination	15207	555
Plan Management	na	488
Total	57530	1100

SUPPORT COORDINATION

For a family, having access to NDIS funding for the first time can often be a bit like understanding a foreign language! They often describe feeling completely confused about what it all means and overwhelmed with where to start with accessing their funding!

When they first receive their plan, they generally need help to understand what the different categories of funding will actually provide, and how to go about linking up with all the different services. About a third of people with an NDIS plan are fortunate to get funded for a service called Support Coordination to help them navigate the process.

This role helps them understand the following:

- what the different funding categories in the plan are for
- assist them with understanding and paying invoices for services that are funded in the plan
- explain options regarding services to engage, including helping them access mainstream services like Centrelink link them with external providers to provide specific services
- arrange and coordinate Care Team meetings of the professionals involved with the participant and family provide practical and emotional support regarding a range of issues in their life
- work with them to achieve their NDIS goals assist them with preparation for any plan reviews and seeking additional funding where needed

Extended Families currently have 525 NDIS participants with a service agreement for Support Coordination. Some of these participants also use other services within the organisation including Plan Management, the LinC Program, My Time or one of our social group programs.

Extended Families currently employs about 20 Support Coordinators across two teams, one based in Coburg and the other in Box Hill. Our staff are highly qualified and experienced, mostly in social work, disability or community services. We also have a number of staff who speak languages other than English, there are four Support Coordination staff who speak Cantonese and/or Mandarin, and six staff who speak Vietnamese. The NDIS participants they work with greatly appreciate their understanding of their cultural issues and being able to speak their language.

Support Coordinators provide a great deal more than support regarding implementation of the participant's NDIS plan. Due to the good reputation, we have built up with NDIS and other provider organisations, we tend to be referred more complex cases requiring a high level of support.

In many cases the Support Coordinator is the main support in the family's life and can sometimes have daily contact with them to support them with many challenging issues. Many of the families we work with have significant personal and family issues such as family violence, mental health issues, child protection involvement, housing issues including homelessness, limited informal

supports, being an ageing or young carer, substance abuse issues and multiple family members within the one household who have NDIS plans.

Support Coordinators develop close working relationships with families, and in many cases the NDIS participants and their families rely heavily on their Support Coordinator. We greatly value our skilled and committed Support Coordinators who work hard to support the families they work with in a very caring and supportive way.

SUPPORT COORDINATION STORY

Johnny's story - written by Support Coordinator Quyen Tran

Johnny is a 27-year-old male from a Vietnamese cultural background. He has a diagnosis of autism and is currently living in supported disability accommodation (SDA) with two other residents. He enjoys cooking, puzzles, group activities and supported learning. Johnny attends the Miti day program 5 days a week. His days are structured and include enhancing his literacy and numeracy skills and acquiring valuable socialisation skills.

On a daily basis, Johnny's mother visits Johnny in the evenings bringing a home-cooked meal or groceries to prepare dinner together with Johnny and the dedicated support staff from Rosie Love and Care.

Day to day, Johnny assists with basic household chores preparing meals. On weekends, staff encourage Johnny to participate in group activities with other clients such as cooking classes and sporting activities. They accompany Johnny to various community location such as the library, Time-zone, and the swimming pool, with the aim to foster social connection, acquire new skills and improve overall quality of life.

Johnny is supported by a team of providers including an occupational therapist, and a positive behaviour therapist from Sal Consulting and speech pathologist from Anecdote Clinical Support. Johnny's team of support workers from Rosie Love and Care have been exceptional at implementing clinical strategies to provide him with a structured, supportive, calm environment, and providing feedback as needed.

Extended Families has provided Johnny with Support Coordination services since 2019, at that time he was living with his mother and younger sister in their home in St Albans. At home he required high level of support due to his complex needs and had a history of concerning behaviours including verbal and physical aggression, property damage and a lack of personal hygiene. Johnny refused any form of support or therapist in his home and therefore Johnny's mother and younger sister were managing these incidents with no support.

In March 2021, Johnny was hospitalised for four months due to a seizure. It was at this time that Johnny's mother agreed that, given Johnny's high level of support needs, once Johnny was able to leave the hospital, Johnny would reside in SDA.

Currently Johnny is engaging well, and all supports are in place. His new living environment and lifestyle have resulted in Johnny thriving. He is enjoying being busy with lots of structured activities and outings. His family continue to be a big part of his life. Johnny's mother and younger sister are much happier at home knowing Johnny is living in a safe, and supported environment.



MY TIME

MyTime groups are for families who have a child with a disability or chronic medical condition to come together and provide support, ideas and experiences with one another and learn more about parenting and available services.

Extended Families has been providing MyTime for many years. MyTime is funded by the Australian Department of Social Services (DSS) under the 'Families and Children' program. The Parenting Research Centre manages the program across Australia and starting July 2022, Down Syndrome Victoria became the agency that manages the contract with Extended Families to run three MyTime groups.

Over the past year we have continued to run three groups - Forest Hill and Springvale run as parent support groups, whilst Deer Park has traditionally operated as a playgroup (with pre-school children) alongside parental information and educational support. The Deer Park group has been transitioning into a broader carers peer support group, providing enriching activities for carers of all children, of all ages, whilst continuing to provide a safe playground for pre-school aged children. The Springvale and Deer Park groups are for Vietnamese speaking families and the Forest Hill based group is for Chinese speaking families. We are very fortunate to have skilled and experienced multilingual staff run these groups.

MyTime plays an important role in supporting parents and creating community, providing education and support and encouraging self-care, something which many carers find difficult to prioritise in their busy lives and in face of the needs of others.



MyTime sessions offer a diverse array of activities. These include disability-specific training workshops for parenting children with special needs, NDIS planning and utilisation, and information on related services. Participants have also had opportunities to learn about personal growth and fostering meaningful relationships.

The groups serve as a sanctuary for participants to relax, share experiences, and seek peer support. Self-care practices have been actively encouraged, with individuals enthusiastically partaking in activities such as sports, sightseeing, dining out, and relaxation massages.

Throughout the group sessions and excursions, emphasis is placed on promoting positive values such as integrity, respect, diversity, and dedication. These principles form the bedrock of our community and guide the interactions and experiences within the groups.

This year has marked a significant milestone in the growth and impact of our MyTime groups. The groups have remained incredibly popular, providing a valuable space for parents to connect with others from their cultural background. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, these groups have seamlessly transitioned back to in-person meetings. The enthusiastic engagement from participants showcases the invaluable role these groups play in supporting parents with children with special needs in their journey.

We look forward to another year of fostering connections, learning, and personal growth within our vibrant communities.

MyTime Data

	Number of sessions held	Numbers of hours of support provided	Total number of unique participants	Average participants per session
Springvale	28	67.5	29	8.3
Deer Park	30	63.5	28	4.6
Forrest Hill	34	79	74	9.2
Total	92	210	131	7.4



LinC - LINKING, INCLUDING AND CONNECTING

The Extended Families LinC Program is dedicated to supporting people with disabilities in their pursuit of personal goals by fostering relationships, community connections, and supporting with skill development. The program attracts passionate disability support workers who provide safe and high-quality 1:1 supports within the community.

Throughout the 2022/2023 financial year, LinC faced significant challenges while navigating the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our Inclusion Support Workers had to manage the repercussions of missed activities by fitting student placements and overseas trips into a short period. This in turn had a negative effect on staff availability during a period of reduced recruitment. Nonetheless, we remained unwavering in our commitment to attract and retain the best talent in the disability support field. Our relentless efforts have positioned Extended Families as the preferred employer for disability support workers. As we move forward into the next financial year, we are pleased to report an increase in staff numbers, which allows us to focus on delivering exceptional services.

During the 2022/2023 FY, LinC successfully recruited 60 disability support workers and provided 41,058 support hours. Additionally, we expanded our services to include Short Term Accommodation, meeting the demands of participants while offering valuable assistance in their journey towards independent living. It has been truly gratifying to support participants to gradually regain their enthusiasm for school, social interactions and recreational activities while cautiously overcoming the challenges presented by the pandemic.

As we anticipate the year ahead, LinC embraces the future with passion and purpose. We remain committed to our mission of supporting individuals with disabilities, enabling them to experience genuine inclusion in all aspects of their lives.



LinC Story

Hi, my name is Karlie and I'm an Inclusion Support worker and Rostering and Data Administration Officer at Extended Families.

I started with Extended Families in June 2017 when I was studying my diploma of community services and I had intended to finish my studies and find work in a remote community working with indigenous youth. I never would have thought that my 2 hour a week support worker job would change my entire career path – but then I walked the cheeky 9-year-old Noah and his mum Hana, and I realised I had found where I belong.

Noah is on the Autism Spectrum and is non-verbal. His long-term goals were to be able to walk around the block and to play at his local park. His profile said he had never spent time alone with anyone outside of his immediate family. That really stuck with me, and I remember thinking “I've never done anything like this before. How can I possibly be everything this little boy needs me to be? I'm just a support worker, I don't know anything about working with non-verbal participants or behaviours of concern, what if he doesn't like me?”.

Fast-forward 6 and a half years and Noah and I are still working together every week. We have been to play centres, swimming pools, parks, supermarkets – we've worked through some of Noah's really difficult behaviours and some of the challenges that come along with new life stages, and we have met so many of his goals along the way.

When we were recording the presentation that will be viewed at the Annual General Meeting, Noah's Mum, Hana said she didn't know what she would do without our support, and I feel the same way about my role as a Support Worker. Who would I have become without having worked in such a rewarding job for so long? Would I have this compassion and deep respect for families with children with special needs if I hadn't met Noah and his family? I honestly don't know. But I am so grateful for this role, it is incredibly rewarding to be able to see how a single support worker can make such a positive impact for participants and their families.



ExtendABLE – ONLINE PROGRAM

ExtendABLE Online evolved in response to the dynamic shifts in community interaction brought about by the pandemic. Initially conceived as a solution to the challenge of maintaining connections during lockdowns, we introduced a range of online social group programs. These initiatives provided individuals with the means to stay connected with others from the safety of their homes.

In the post-pandemic era, we have not only sustained our online social groups but have successfully nurtured authentic friendships and cultivated shared interests. Throughout the past year, ExtendABLE Online has played a crucial role in helping participants sustain their social connections and actively engage with their community through convenient online sessions. Our commitment to inclusivity is reflected in our ability to adapt to diverse schedules, creating a welcoming environment for a broad spectrum of individuals to enjoy. We aim to provide spaces where people feel at ease pursuing their hobbies and acquiring new skills.

In 2023, we have enjoyed greater flexibility in engagement, allowing us to explore different avenues. We remain dedicated to the goal of establishing social groups within the community, fostering a sense of connection and camaraderie. Notably, some of our longstanding online groups, have had the opportunity to meet in person, further deepening their friendships.

While the transition to a post-pandemic world has led to a natural reduction in online group participation, we continue our commitment to infusing vitality into our programs. Collaborating closely with participants and their families, we continue to refine and expand our group services, ensuring they remain enjoyable, convenient, and imbued with a genuine sense of friendship.



CARER SUPPORT SERVICES

Extended Families Carer's Rebalance Wellbeing and Respite program and our Vietnamese Sibling Carer Support Group, VƯỜN CAO are funded by the Victorian Government Support for Carers Program, designed to support the needs of carers in Victoria.

After successfully implementing both service on a short-term pilot basis, in July 2022, Extended Families secured ongoing funding to continue supporting carers over the next 4 years.

REBALANCE

People who care for young people with a disability or specialist needs can obtain funding to access health, respite, work, education, or wellbeing needs that they may otherwise be unable to access. Our services are designed to offer flexibility, and we collaborate with caregivers to determine the type of support that will be most beneficial to them.

Over the 2022-2023 period, Rebalance supported 34 carers with various supports, including, respite, domestic assistance, purchase of technology, educational funding, leisure center memberships, access to mental health services and many more. Feedback from carers has been overwhelmingly positive, and we look forward to continuing making a difference to these carers in the years to come.



“VƯỜN CAO” Group Sibling Carer Group



Our peer support group for Vietnamese teens in the west who help their parents care for a sibling with a disability continues to meet monthly to undertake a range of exciting and fun community excursions. At the beginning of 2023 the group decided that meeting over zoom once a month was difficult given study and home life commitments and felt they derive more benefit from gathering together in person.

The group currently has 11 enrolled members ...and we are looking for more! Outlined below is some commentary from a focus group we held with the VC participants about how the program has impacted their lives:

<i>VC Participants Reported:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased feelings of comfort in the group • Developed new skills to manage challenges in life • Finding respite beneficial • Feeling more resilient • Developed new friendships and feeling more socially connected
<i>Some Key Learnings VC Participants Mentioned:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “That I have a lot of strengths”. • “Self-care plays a very big role in taking care of yourself”. • “Trust cannot be earned quickly, it's good to build a strong relationship first and show empathy towards someone”

	Total number of unique Carers	Number of hours of support / respite provided	Arrangements / Sessions
ReBalance	34	856	41
Vuon Cao	13	375	19
Total	47	1231	
Target	40	800	
% Target	118%	154%	

VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY PROJECTS / PROGRAMS

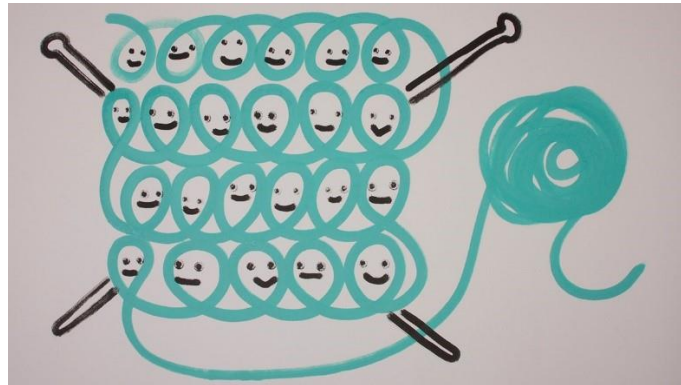


Image by Dave Wheeler For Harvard Business Review

The connections, relationships, and partnerships that we develop between ourselves, and others can so often be the magical ingredient that significantly helps us to learn and grow. If the connections we make are of a high quality – if they are vital, positive and generate a sense of security and capability – they will provide a strong foundation for growth. High quality, meaningful connections help us to broaden our thinking and increase our knowledge. They usually help us to be more engaged, more open, and help strengthen our level of resilience when facing and recovering from life’s challenges. On the flip side, poor-quality connections – ones marked by feelings of inadequacy, defensiveness, and a lack of safety tend to do the opposite – they tend to hinder opportunities for growth.

Developing high quality connections between people to build capacity lies at the heart of all levels of work that we do at Extended Families.

Whether we are supporting young people working side by side in groups to practice key life skills; or staff working closely with community partners to design and host large inclusion events; or teams developing program guides and evaluation tools – in all instances, we are doing it together, with a sense of security and fun, with respect for each other’s insights, experiences, and skills and with the knowledge that we are continually growing, achieving, and learning with and through each other. It is the reason why our various programs across the organisation are so successful and the outcomes achieved are so significant.

Vườn lên Program – VL – Autism Peer Support Groups

Our VL Groups continue to flourish with peer group meetings for Vietnamese teens and young adults occurring fortnightly throughout the year. Parent support groups run alongside participant groups on a bimonthly to quarterly basis. Our western and southern VL groups have been funded through Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) since 2020 and are delivered in collaboration with our grant partner Vietnamese Families with Special Needs.

In December 2022, our southern VL group was transferred to run under our Southern Home and Community Care Program allowing the focus of the ILC funded programs to be on the three western region participant and parent groups. As our ILC funding officially draws to an end in April 2024, we anticipate continuing these highly popular groups under individualised NDIS plans from May 2024.

What coming to our VL Groups has meant for our young people:

"It has helped me build my confidence, learn how to cook, help those around me, use empathy, engage in social interaction, and to always try new activities"

"A sense of community I can't find anywhere else".

"It's a space I'm comfortable (I'm shy outside of VL)"

"A safe place where I can comfortably express myself"

"I am more motivated to get involved with the community because I feel more self-confident".

"VL has helped me to have more confidence in the future – I feel more confident about the future".

	Number of sessions held	Numbers of hours of support provided	Total number of unique participants	Average participants per session
Vuon Len	65	1341	34	6.9

Tham Gia West School Holiday Program



Tham Gia means **To Participate in Vietnamese** and our TG School Holiday program offers adventurous, fun school holiday events that are all about trying community activities in an accessible, bi-lingual environment. The aim of TG is to help Vietnamese youth and families with disability to connect with others and with local community opportunities in an ongoing way. Each school holiday period we provide 4 events for families living in Melbourne’s West: one event each for primary school aged children, secondary school aged youth; teens aged 13-19 years and for families. Each event is 3-4 hours in duration and takes place in local community venues at no cost to participants.

Over the last year we have partnered with a number of wonderful Community Activity Providers to open new worlds of activities to many participants. Below is a **snapshot** of just some of the activities we have undertaken in collaboration with partners and some notable feedback from happy participants.

<i>Activity Provider Partner</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>What the families Rated the Session</i>	<i>Participant/family quote</i>	<i>Activity Partner response about whether working with us has helped them better understand disability</i>
Southern Cross Archery Club	Archery	9.2/10	The best part of today was that I got to do archery. I think I have improved my technique and my score as well. Setting and achieving set goals and receiving a reward.	Yes
RecWest Braybrook	Badminton Table Tennis Indoor	9.25/10	Everything. Sports. Soccer. Basketball. Badminton. They were all good!	Yes. Thanh was awesome to work with and we look forward to having him back in September

	Soccer Basketball			and continuing the relationship with Extended Families.
Bricks 4 Kidz	Lego Modelling and construction	9.38/10	A lot of different activities for different age groups to play and participate in. Love it, best ever. Great activity. Interesting and different difficult levels	Yes. Thank you for collaborating with Bricks 4 Kidz ...We enjoyed supporting your program and it was very well planned.... All the attendees of various ages seem to enjoy and get involved with the activities... They are lucky to have an organisation such as yours for support.
The Boite	Accordion and Harmonica	9.75/10	Music teachers are very friendly. Fun event. Children learn to play new instruments and interacted with the music teachers.	Yes
AYCW	Cooking	9.46/10	Cooking together. The whole cooking process. Learning new chicken recipe.	From my experience last week, I can say that it was lovely collaborating with Extended Families. I look forward to working with you many more times as I can see the significance of the program to the community.

Our funding for Tham Gia West which is through ILC will draw to an end in April 2024 and given the huge success of this program we are trying to find other ways to continue and further develop the program.

Tham Gai	Number of sessions held	Numbers of hours of support provided (child participant)	Total number of participants (Children / young adults)	Total number of families	Average participants (child) per session
Primary	4	312	31	24.0	26.0
Secondary	4	216	22	22.0	18.0
Family	4	340	103	82.0	85.0
Explorer	4	132	15	11.0	11.0
Total	16	1000	171	139.0	

Kết nối Brimbank - Kết nối Brimbank means Connect In Brimbank!

In 2022 we successfully applied to Brimbank Council for a \$10,000 grant to implement an additional school holiday program for Vietnamese families with disabilities living in the Brimbank local government area. This program was implemented in response to the overwhelming demand in the Tham Gia West program and it started in December 2022. The current Ket Noi grant allows for 4 x 3-hour events supporting a minimum of 30 families across 2023 during school holiday times. We have reapplied to the Council for more funding for a similar kind of program in 2024 and are awaiting the outcome of our application!

So far, we have held two very successful Ket Noi events in April and June this year. These events were run in partnership with Westvale Community Centre and The Hunt Club Community and Arts Centre. Activities included veggie gardening, roasting corn over a fire pit, learning about bees and their importance in the ecosystem, Zumba dancing, doing Japanese Kokedama plant making and modelling clay elephants. Much fun was had by all and both events were well attended!

Working with our event partners – Westvale and the Hunt Club was wonderful and led to the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between Extended Families and Brimbank’s Neighbourhood Houses whereby they will provide venue space for Ket Noi events to us at no charge. This is a super outcome that will provide a huge saving to the program, enabling more funding to be spent on activities for children!

	Number of sessions held	Numbers of hours of support provided	Total number of unique participants	Total number of families	Average participants per session	Average Feedback Score
Ket Noi	2	405	90	30	67.5	9.3



Positive Partnerships

Earlier this year Extended Families made a valuable connection with Positive Partnerships Australia, to bring bilingual educational workshops to the Vietnamese community in the outer south of Melbourne. These workshops focus on understanding Autism and the supports available in raising a child on the spectrum.

Extended Families staff will continue to work closely with Positive Partnerships in delivering tailored workshops to the Vietnamese community and a number of follow up workshops for both the south and the west have been planned for later this year and into 2024.

Together by sharing our organisational resources, knowledge, experiences, and community links, we are helping families to build their capacity and maximise the outcomes for their children.



VIETNAMESE PARENT SUPPORT



For many years we have worked in partnership with the Vietnamese Families with Special Needs (VFSN) to deliver services and to support this dynamic grass roots organisation to survive and thrive. For nearly 10 years we have supported the weekly Thursday Parent Support Group by funding a facilitator.

The Thursday Parent Group has up to 41 attendees, and provides a range of education, information, peer support and wellbeing activities. These include topics like Autism, parenting, advocacy, NDIS, music therapy, self-care, assertiveness, CPR and fire safety; and activities like accessing community resources, visits to local councils, yoga and picnics.

The group meets weekly during school term and provides a vital point of contact and support for Vietnamese parents in the Western and Northern Regions.

PLAN MANAGEMENT

Extended Families Plan Management service supports NDIS participants by providing financial intermediary services. The service has grown moderately from 440 participants in July 2022, to 480 participants as of June 2023. We receive regular referrals from Early Childhood Coordinators, Local Area Coordinators and service providers for CALD families/participants and we are proactively providing our services to participants and families from various backgrounds in CALD community, who speak Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Mandarin.

Adjusting from the changing work environment that the pandemic had, the Plan Management Team is alternating between working from home and in the office; we are rostered in a way that the Team is always reachable in office 5 days a week.

This year we have rolled out the new plan management system, MYP, to provide participants and their family greater control and visibility over their NDIS funding. This new system offers dashboard access to our participants, and any other authorised user(s) they nominate, enabling real-time access to funding information and ability to easily track their spending. Participants can also choose to approve invoices on their dashboard. This helps minimise our approval processing time and allows the team time to focus on meeting the participant's needs. MYP also enables the use of digital signatures on our Service Agreements which helps improve funding management.

Through ongoing feedback, we are collaboratively partnering with MYP to consistently enhance and refine the invoice-processing system, ensuring it aligns with NDIA policy and developmental standards.

We recognise the benefits of building good affiliation with service providers, especially support coordinators from outside the organisation. The effort is certainly paying off as resolutions are being reached in a more timely manner.

As we grow and mature as a team, we forge to be more attuned to the participants needs and sensitivities and strive to continuously improve our plan management system, processes, and procedures to serve our participants' current requirements and enterprisingly anticipating future needs.



VOLUNTEER MATCH

Extended Families values our volunteers and the vital role they play in supporting people with disability and their families. However, volunteering has decreased under the NDIS framework and the program has been greatly reduced, as young participants do not receive funding in this category. We only have a few remaining matches under NDIS, and plan to not develop more unless in special circumstances. Part of the change also reflects positive changes, that people with a disability now have access to a greater range of services and are having some of their social support, community access and skill development needs met in other ways.

We have fortunately retained specific volunteer support funding in the Southern Region through Home and Community Care (HACC), so can still offer this program to Southern Families. During the last year, we have been able to develop a range of creative responses including exciting group programs, including Tham Gai.

We have identified group volunteering as an important way that volunteers can be involved, and a pathway in some instances for one-on-one volunteer matches developing.

Over the last year our Projects team linked into the Volunteer Program trialling the involvement of volunteers in community inclusion group programs run in school holidays for the Vietnamese community living with disability in Melbourne's West and Outer South. Altogether seven trainee Groups-Volunteers put their hand up to take part in a small pilot which we hope will lead to a more established program in the coming year. All of the volunteers were young people involved in university studies (or in their final year of VCE studies), interested in community or disability related work but with limited time available for volunteering because of their studying commitments. The volunteers attended specialised training, cleared NDIS screening checks, and worked alongside Extended Families inclusion support staff and community activity providers in delivering a variety of fun filled community-based activities for children with disabilities and their parents.

We would like to thank these wonderful young volunteers for the time and effort they put into helping us develop program processes and for participating in this year's Volunteer Program. We look forward to working with them in the future as we further develop group volunteering as an arm of the Volunteer Program.

Thank you to our volunteers for their time and dedication in helping support our vision.



TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to report the financial results for the year 2022/23.

Overall, we saw another positive financial result for Extended Families. The year however brought some financial challenges, we saw increases in inflation which had impacts on interest rates, causing the standard of living to increase significantly. One challenge we have here is while we face cost increases, the service fees collected on some services remained the same as before. The NDIA has not increased the price limit for Support Coordination or Plan Management for a few years, which, in the case of Support Coordination, means that income does not meet core service delivery costs.

We saw a decrease in NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) funding related to the completion of one project and the timing of when services were delivered.

The finance team work hard to keep tabs on the budget and cashflow ensuring a tight lid is kept while still being able to deliver our service to the clients and ensuring efficiencies are achieved internally.

Our 2023 financial year performance highlights include:

We enjoyed a surplus/profit of \$86,004

New funding from the Victorian Government 'Support For Carers' Program

The decrease in NDIS-ILC income was 16.2%. However, total revenue excluding grants, increased by 0.01% compared to 2022 year. Overall, total revenue decreased by 0.2%

Total expenses increased by 2.5%

The net asset position was \$1,682,055 as at 30 June 2023, which translated to an increase of 5.39% from last year's net asset position

As a result of the increase in net asset position, the cash reserves have also increase by 28.24%.

This position meets our KPI and will cover the organisation's short-term obligations for approximately four months, using only cash or cash equivalents

With the remaining NDIS pricing issues and other proposed changes, maintaining our financial position in the year ahead will present a challenge.

We thank our Financial Auditors Mitchell Wilson for your ongoing support.

For more details on the financial position of Extended Families Australia, please refer to the Audited Financial Report.

Mei Wu
Treasurer

FINANCES

Extended Families Australia Inc
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue	4		
Receipts from grants and services		6,023,914	6,051,531
Revenue from other sources			
Donations		9,410	6,465
Other revenue from other sources		47,024	45,921
Total Revenue from other sources		56,434	52,386
Total Revenue		6,080,348	6,103,917
Gross profit		6,080,348	6,103,917
Finance income	5	11,838	2,008
Expenses			
Administration expenses		(297,015)	(186,518)
Auditor Remuneration		(5,800)	(5,700)
Depreciations		(12,360)	(10,278)
Finance expenses		-	(5,869)
Rental expenses		(32,401)	(28,369)
Occupancy expenses		(7,564)	(8,301)
Special event expenses		(25,620)	(55,462)
Staff expenses		(5,625,074)	(5,566,543)
Volunteer expenses		(348)	(1,278)
Total Expenses		(6,006,182)	(5,868,318)
Profit (loss) before income taxes		86,004	237,607
Income tax		-	-
Profit (loss) from continuing operations		86,004	237,607
Profit (loss) for the year		86,004	237,607
Total comprehensive income for the year		86,004	237,607

Extended Families Australia Inc

Statement of changes in equity
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Retained earnings \$	Revaluation surplus \$	Total \$	Total equity \$
2022				
Opening balance	1,350,299	8,145	1,358,444	1,358,444
Profit for the year	237,607	-	237,607	237,607
Closing balance	1,587,906	8,145	1,596,051	1,596,051
2023				
Opening balance	1,587,906	8,145	1,596,051	1,596,051
Profit for the year	86,004	-	86,004	86,004
Closing balance	1,673,910	8,145	1,682,055	1,682,055

*For a complete copy of our Audited Financial Statement including the accompanying notes that form part of these financial statements please send a request to Extended Families by emailing info@extendedfamilies.org.au

DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

At Extended Families we celebrate the generosity and long-term commitment of our donors and funders whose gifts enable us to continue to positively impact people's lives. We sincerely thank our donors and supporters for their contributions.

Charitable Grants and Sponsors

We thank our charitable partners for generous support.

Jack Moody Charitable Foundation
The Jack and Hedy Brent Foundation
Save the Children
Good Company Karma Currency

Government funding

We acknowledge the support of the Victorian and Federal Governments, with significant funding provided by:

- The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing - Home and Community and Support for Carers
- The Department of Social Services – Information, Linkages and Capacity Building and MyTime.

We also acknowledge the support from local government through grants and valuable resourcing, networking and advice

- Brimbank City Council

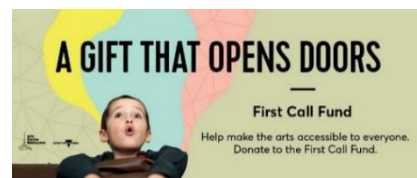
Sponsored or subsidised office

City of Whitehorse



Donors

Mei Yong Wu
Carolyne Jones
Nicola Grant
Norah Breekveldt
Margaret Morrissey
Stephen Lawrence
Patricia Kasongo



SERVICES



Volunteer Match

Our volunteers provide genuine friendship, practical assistance and mentoring support to a child/young person, helping them to develop life skills. They help them take part in sport, recreation and leisure activities that are of interest to the child. Some volunteer matches also provide direct support for the family.



LinC (Linking + Including + Connecting)

LinC provides skilled inclusion support workers to support participants with skill development, capacity building to overcome barriers and assistance to engage in the community, social and recreational activities. Our workers support the achievement of specified social, personal and developmental needs and goals.



ExtendABLE

ExtendABLE is an online social inclusion program that was developed in response to the social distancing requirements of COVID-19. The ExtendABLE program aims to reduce the experience of social isolation for people with a disability by creating an opportunity to connect with others through online groups.



Rebalance

The Carers Rebalance Wellbeing and Respite program provides flexible and individualised supports to carers of young people with specialised needs. The Rebalance program aims to help carers to identify and relieve stressors in their lives and to support them to continue to provide vital care.



Support Coordination

Extended Families provides independent support coordination to help you manage your plan. Our team of experienced staff, source and assess support options, connect with services, access the NDIS portal, coordinate services and manage your plan, respond and deal with any crisis, build your skills and confidence, implement and monitor your NDIS plan and re-develop your goals before your plan review.



Plan Management

Extended Families is a registered plan management provider and can manage NDIS funding for supports on a participant's behalf. Plan Management is an intermediary financial service that manages the financial and administrative aspects of a NDIS Plan.



Parent and Peer Support Programs

Regular get-together programs for parents and children with a disability to share experiences, develop connections and receive support, information and education relevant to their care role.



Projects

The Projects Team collaborates with various stakeholder to improve support for people with disabilities through innovative program development using action research methodology, that addresses the unmet service needs. The program has a strong community inclusion focus.



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