



FAMILIES AUSTRALIA
BOARD OF GOVERNANCE

SUMMARY INFORMATION
FOR POTENTIAL BOARD MEMBERS

2022

FamiliesAustralia

Acknowledgement

Families Australia celebrates more than 65,000 years of custodianship and connection to lands and sea country of First Nations people.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and pay our respects to Elders and Ancestors.

For millennia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been nurturing children and young people through law, kinship systems and the powerful cultural role of Elders.

The wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities is fundamental to the health and prosperity of this country.

Families Australia's purpose is to improve the wellbeing of all families. To achieve this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities must be at the forefront of policy and community conversations on strengthening all families.

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Families Australia: the high-level view

<p>WHO ARE WE? WHAT DO WE STAND FOR?</p>	<p>Established in 2001, Families Australia is a national, peak, not-for-profit Member-based organisation that advises the Commonwealth Government on family policy issues, especially on ways to increase the engagement of families who experience vulnerability and the economy at large. Our vision is that Australian families, in all their diversity, enjoy the greatest possible wellbeing. We work to improve the recognition of, and support for, the social, economic, cultural, spiritual, and developmental needs of families, young people and children. We focus on those experiencing the greatest vulnerability and disadvantage so that their wellbeing is enhanced. To achieve these objectives, we foster a national public policy environment in which family-related issues prosper.</p>
<p>VALUES</p>	<p>Families Australia highly values the quality of its work and its independence and strives to foster a national public policy environment in which family-related issues and the family and community sector can prosper. It works to inform and influence at the highest government levels, works closely with Members in developing policy, strongly advocates for the diversity and value of families, and proactively supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations. Families Australia takes a broad and inclusive approach, is practical, constructive and collaborative, and is governed and managed to the highest ethical and regulatory standards.</p>
<p>APPROACH</p>	<p>An apolitical, non-sectarian organisation, our approach is to partner with government, service delivery organisations and researchers to suggest practical and innovative solutions to problems facing families. Our work is evidence-based and focused on root causes. We work with partners to engage with and influence decision-makers to establish ourselves as a trusted and credible voice and to build sustainable solutions. We are creative and agile, seeking innovative solutions to extend our reach and impact. We take a collaborative and facilitative approach in all we do.</p>
<p>ACCOUNTABILITIES</p>	<p>We hold ourselves accountable to our members, funding and regulatory bodies and other stakeholders by developing and reporting on a three-year Strategic Plan and an Annual Business Plan. Key performance indicators are developed for all our activities, which are reviewed by our Board on a quarterly basis as well as through the annual external audit. We produce an Annual Report available to all Members and to the public.</p>
<p>BUSINESS PLAN GOALS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure that the Australian Government remains committed to and invests resources in Safe and Supported the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children. ii. Tangibly advance Reconciliation with First Nations peoples. iii. Obtain new or additional funding to help ensure Families Australia’s future sustainability. iv. Achieve more effective, ongoing Australian Government policy and program responses to assist families adversely affected by COVID. v. Support our Members and the NGO sector, especially those negatively impacted by COVID. vi. Build community awareness and support for families facing difficult times especially in the wake of COVID through National Families Week and its messaging. vii. Ensure governance and management standards are fully met, and ideally exceeded.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2025

Acknowledgement: Families Australia celebrates more than 60,000 years of the ongoing connection to lands, sea country and community of First Nations peoples. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and extended our respects to Elders past and present.

Vision: Australian families, in all their diversity, enjoy the greatest possible wellbeing.

Mission: To improve the wellbeing of all Australian families, especially those experiencing vulnerability and being excluded from being able to fully participate in our community.

Values: Inclusive, practical, collaborative, ethical.

Strategic Intent: In 2025 Families Australia will be the leading and highly respect authority advising Government on child, youth, and family wellbeing, supported by diverse and active partnerships, robust business practices and an engaged community.



Child, Youth & Family Wellbeing	Partnerships	Engagement	A Thriving Organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconciliation with First Nations peoples is advanced and relationships with First Nations people, communities and organisations are strengthened. 'The Family' is recognised and celebrated as the primary building block for society. The authentic voice and lived experience of children and families inform all policy and program design processes. Economic policies that improve the economic, health and social outcomes of children and families are core to our advocacy and representations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish new partnership arrangements with members, stakeholders, governments, and philanthropic bodies to form influential and diverse coalitions. Leverage the collective knowledge and expertise of partners, including member organisations and the National Coalition, to strengthen policy formation and project delivery. Collaborative decision making and collective action between members and other peak partners to drive reforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realise the potential of our partner networks as advocates, stewards, and champions stakeholders, which includes First Nations people, children, young people and families to affect change. We are 'go to voice' for comment on issues impacting children, families, and young people. As a broader and more diverse National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing, we are a respected prominent body that directly influences <i>Safe and Supported</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify and grow the revenue base, including expanded Government investment. Embed a high performance culture across the organisation. Impact metrics are embedded across all aspects of the organisation's work.

Families Australia - 2022 Board Elections

Families Australia is led by a 10-person Board of Governance. The three-year term of the current Board expires at the 2022 AGM and an election is being held.

Becoming a Families Australia board member is a great opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of the organisation through a governance leadership role. Most importantly, the skills, experience, counsel and energy of our Board increases our capacity to lead sector wide efforts and create positive change to the wellbeing of families, children and young people.

A ballot of General Members is being held to elect people to seven (7) board positions.

Nominations are now open and will close Friday 7 October 2022.

We are seeking committed individuals who are collaborative in their approach, open to being challenged, have the capacity to consider the viewpoints of others, are solid communicators and have policy and political nous.

As we embark on our next growth and development phase, skills and experience that will serve the Board and the organisation well include:

- strategy and organisational enhancement skills;
- financial acumen – income diversification, product development and revenue growth;
- experience of working in the intersections between government and the sector – understanding the bigger picture; and
- a systems thinking mindset.

The 2022 Nomination Form can be accessed on the Families Australia website [HERE](#).

Role and expectations of the Board

The Board acts in the best interests of Families Australia as a whole and is accountable to Families Australia members for the overall direction, management and corporate governance to achieve Families Australia's objectives, taking account of, and managing, risk.

The Board's principal roles are to:

- provide leadership in the development of Families Australia's vision, purpose, strategic plan and related objectives; and
- to ensure that appropriate management, policies, procedures and systems are in place to optimise performance as a public policy advising agency whilst maintaining high standards of ethical behaviour and legal compliance.

What is the commitment?

The current Board meets six times per year:

- four online meetings of approximately three hours duration; and
- two full day, face to face board meetings (one being an annual planning day).

Board members are also encouraged to participate in at least one sub-committee of the Board. There are three sub-committees in operation:

- (i) Finance and Financial Audit Committee – six meetings per year 60-90 minutes in duration;
- (ii) Corporate Governance Committee – four to six meetings per year, 60 -90 minutes in duration;
- (iii) The Reconciliation Working Group - four to six meetings per year, 60 -90 minutes in duration.

A Board member would need to invest eight hours (approx.) per month in preparing for, and participating in, Board related activities.

Costs for travel to and from Board meetings, accommodation and travel allowance (where necessary) are reimbursed by Families Australia.

Eligibility to nominate for election to the Board

Under the Families Australia constitution, you must be a representative of an organisation that is a *General Member* of Families Australia to be eligible for involvement at Board level.

Information on Families Australia's membership categories and member application forms can be accessed on the Families Australia's [Become a member](#) webpage.

You may need to gain the endorsement/approval of your organisation to become your organisation's representative to Families Australia and nominate for a Board position. You are encouraged to check the requirements of your organisation in supporting your nomination now.

Board members are required to hold either a current working with vulnerable persons card or equivalent from their local jurisdiction or be prepared to sign a Statutory Declaration to the effect that there is no Commonwealth, State, or Territory law that prohibits them from being engaged in any capacity where they may have contact with vulnerable persons.

I'd like to discuss a potential nomination ahead of submission

Mr Simon Schrapel AM, Chair of Families Australia would be happy to respond to any questions you may have regarding potential involvement at board level.

Mr Jamie Crosby, CEO can provide information on recent activities, operational priorities and upcoming events of the organisation.

If you would like to discuss a potential nomination or obtain further information, please email admin@familiesaustralia.org.au or call the Families Australia office on 02 6273 4885.

It is a great time to become directly involved in the leadership and growth of Families Australia and to influence the national agenda. Assist us to create the conditions that support families, children and young people to thrive.

Yours sincerely



Naomi Nicholson
Secretary

21 September 2022

Families Australia - Code of Conduct

Overarching principles

Families Australia expects all Board members to respect the following principles in their dealings with the Board, the Chair and the CEO, individually and collectively:

- treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, honesty and fairness, and have proper regard for their interests, rights, safety and welfare
- not harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate (directly or indirectly) toward fellow board members, or any other person (ref: workplace policies on harassment/bullying)
- contribute to a harmonious, safe and productive working environment and culture through professional relationships, and
- contribute in a positive way, expressing views that may acknowledge points of difference without being personally critical, and actively listen for understanding and clarification.

Rationale

Families Australia has developed this code of conduct to:

- maximise the contribution from all stakeholders;
- facilitate internal and external alignment of stated organisational values;
- attract and retain Board members;
- allow the Chair to call Board members on appropriate behaviours;
- act in the best interests of Families Australia;
- enhance and implement the organisational strategy;
- enable robust conversations and debate;
- challenge behaviours, not the person; and
- facilitate critical thinking.

The members of the Board of Families Australia are bound by this Code of Conduct.

The Board of Families Australia is expected to comply with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act (Cth)* and governance standards, the *ACT Associations Incorporation Act 1991*, the Constitution, the Board Charter and related governance documents, strategies and policies related to the business of Families Australia.

This Code of Conduct describes in summary the Board members' responsibilities and duties to Families Australia. New Board members will be provided with this Code of Conduct as part of a Board induction process. This Code of Conduct will be a standing item for reference at each board meeting and will be reviewed by the Corporate Governance Committee on an annual basis with recommendations from this review provided to the wider board for consideration.

Every Board member of Families Australia is expected to comply with this Code of Conduct, as agreed from time to time.

Families Australia - Code of Conduct

A Board member should comply with the following standards of conduct.

The Board member should demonstrate leadership and stewardship of Families Australia by:

- promoting, supporting, and actively applying the values of Families Australia;
- acknowledging and acting in accordance with the responsibility Board members have with regard to the rights of members of Families Australia and other stakeholders; and
- observing collective ownership of, and support for, decisions reached by the Board.

The Board member should act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of Families Australia.

The Board member has a duty to use care and diligence in fulfilling the functions of office and exercising the powers attached to that office.

The Board member should use the powers of office for a proper purpose, in the best interests of Families Australia.

The Board member should recognise that the primary responsibility is to Families Australia but may, where appropriate, have regard for the interest of other stakeholders.

The Board member should not make improper use of information acquired as a Board member.

The Board member should not take improper advantage of the position of Board Member.

The Board member should properly manage any conflict with the interests of Families Australia.

The Board member has an obligation to be independent in judgement and actions and to take all reasonable steps to be satisfied as to the soundness of all decisions taken by the Board.

Confidential information received by the Board member in the course of the exercise of directorial duties remains the property of Families Australia and it is improper to disclose it, or allow it to be disclosed, unless that disclosure has been authorised by Families Australia, or the person from whom the information is provided, or is required by law.

The Board member should not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit upon Families Australia.

The Board member is not aware of any issues that may have an adverse impact on Families Australia, or of any circumstances that would bring Families Australia into disrepute and agrees to notify Families Australia in 48 hours if any change occurs.

The Board member has an obligation, at all times, to comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law and with the principles of this Code.

The Board member is expected to attend all Board meetings.