

**Families**Australia  
**Annual Report**  
**2021-2022**



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Families Australia gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of our members and the Australian Government.

## 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 and families 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.



## 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

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



## OUR ORGANISATION

### *A national voice for families and children*

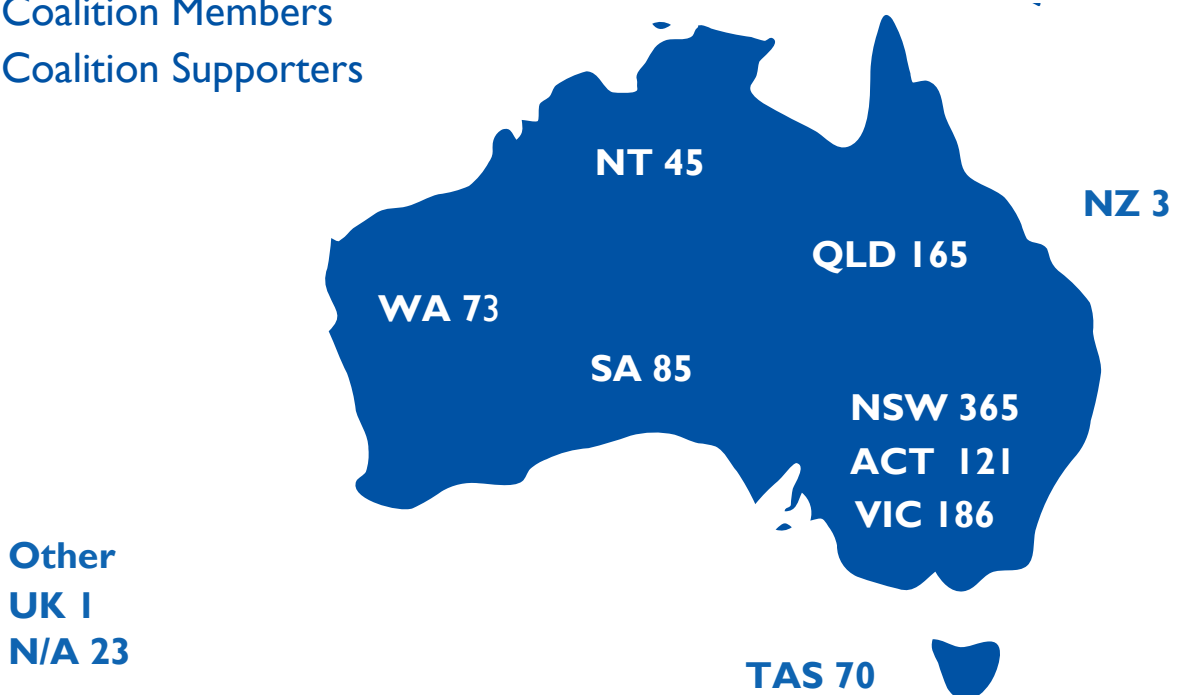
Established in 2001, and now in its 21st year, Families Australia is a national, peak, member-based, not-for-profit organisation that is committed to enhancing the wellbeing of all families, especially those experiencing the greatest vulnerability.

We work to build a nation in which all families, irrespective of their form, enjoy the greatest possible wellbeing. We believe that this objective is advanced by better protecting and valuing children, by celebrating families and supporting the most vulnerable amongst them, and by making genuine and lasting improvements to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We partner with government, service delivery organisations and researchers to suggest practical and innovative policy solutions to problems faced by Australian families, convene the National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing in support of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, and facilitate National Families Week which celebrates the vital role of families.

## OUR MEMBERS

- 3 Founding Members
- 26 General Members
- 443 Associate Members
- 195 Coalition Members
- 470 Coalition Supporters





## MEET OUR BOARD



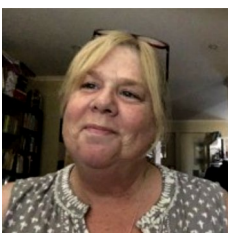
**Simon Schrapel AM**  
**Chair**

Nominee of UnitingCare  
Australia



**Melinda Crole**  
**Deputy Chair**

Nominee of YMCA Australia



**Naomi Nicholson**  
**Secretary**

Nominee of the Australia  
Foster Care Association



**Dr Sue Packer AO**  
**Public Officer**

Nominee of NAPCAN



**Dr Marilyn Casley**

Nominee of the School of  
Human Services  
and Social Work  
Griffith University



**Catherine Liddle**

Nominee of SNAICC –  
National Voice for our  
Children



**Kath Mandla**

Nominee of yourtown



**Prof. Morag McArthur**

Nominee of AFCA



**Annette Michaux**

Co-opted Member  
Parenting Research  
Centre



**Tricia Murray AM**

Nominee of CAFWAA



**Kathleen Pinkerton**

Nominee of SNAICC –  
National Voice for our  
Children



**Richard Weston**

Co-opted Member

Deputy Children's Guardian for  
Aboriginal Children and Young  
People in NSW

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

**Acknowledgement:** Families Australia celebrates more than 60,000 years of 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 respected 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"> <li>• Reconciliation with First Nations peoples is advanced and relationships with First Nations people, communities and organisations are strengthened.</li> <li>• ‘The Family’ is recognised and celebrated as the primary building block for society.</li> <li>• The authentic voice and lived experience of children and families inform all policy and program design processes.</li> <li>• Economic policies that improve the economic, health and social outcomes of children and families are core to our advocacy and representations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish new partnership arrangements with members, stakeholders, governments, and philanthropic bodies to form influential and diverse coalitions.</li> <li>• Leverage the collective knowledge and expertise of partners, including member organisations and the National Coalition, to strengthen policy formation and project delivery.</li> <li>• Engage in Collaborative decision making and collective action between members and other peak partners to drive reforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• We are the ‘go to voice’ for comment on issues impacting children, families, and young people.</li> <li>• 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>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversify and grow the revenue base, including expanded Government investment.</li> <li>• Embed a high-performance culture across the organisation.</li> <li>• Impact metrics are embedded across all aspects of the organisation’s work.</li> </ul>



# A YEAR OF CHANGE

## Mr Simon Schrapel AM – Chair, Families Australia



Twelve months ago, I wrote about the dual emotions of trepidation and of excitement, as Families Australia prepared for a period of transition. Following many years of consistent leadership we faced a period in which we farewelled our complete management and staffing team over the course of a number of months. Most organisations would rightly rate this level of turnover as a significant operational risk and for many it might constitute a time of instability and disruption. A year on and I am pleased to report to our members, supporters and colleagues, that we have successfully managed this transition.

As with all major change processes, their success lies across a number of factors. Those departing after many years of outstanding service had certainly established solid foundations including a positive reputation, strong relationships and a sound financial position. The consistency and authority of an effective and experienced Board has also played a major role. But in large part credit must go to our incoming Chief Executive, Jamie Crosby, and the new team he has assembled to lead the next phase of Families Australia's contribution to children, young people and families across Australia.

Families Australia's role in maintaining a strong and leading 'third' sector presence in the new National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (Safe & Supported) has been pivotal. There have been times where the future of the Framework - and in particular the influence of the Coalition established and supported by Families Australia - has been under threat. Through persistent and effective advocacy, Families Australia has helped to not only ensure the continuation of this national policy instrument but the ongoing engagement of a sector that has long championed the role and benefits of a national lens on Child Safety and Wellbeing. At a critical time in the Framework's life, Jamie has demonstrated decisive and influential leadership of the National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing through his representations and contributions to the establishment of the first action plan under the new Framework.

The reach and influence of Families Australia, however, extends well beyond Safe and Supported. Through all the challenges of another year dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have established a new Strategic Plan to guide the future priorities of the organisation. We are also on the cusp of Families Australia's first recognised Reconciliation Action Plan – an important development for an organisation that has striven to ensure that the rights and recognition of our First Australians should be paramount.

To ensure Families Australia remains contemporary and relevant to the changing environment in which we operate it has also been necessary to review our governance. What is being presented to this year's AGM is a range of considered changes to our constitution. Whilst not dramatic - and will be subject to the members' endorsement - simplifying our processes and modernising our objectives to better reflect our current operating environment are important reforms.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Families Australia Board, elected 3 years ago on the eve of the pandemic. They have provided invaluable guidance and leadership through challenging times, and I would like to thank each member for the contributions they have made. There will be an opportunity for Board renewal, (including a new Chair as I step down from the Board at the end of this term), which is always a positive and provides opportunity for our membership to engage in the governance of the organisation. In closing, I would particularly like to acknowledge fellow Board members who will also complete their engagement this term, including those who finished their involvement during the past year.

So, to Sue Packer, Tricia Murray, Morag McArthur, Naomi Nicholson and Kathleen Pinkerton – I would like to extend my particular thanks for the service you have provided during your time on the Board and for your support for my role as Chair. And as a final note of thanks, I also acknowledge Jennifer Horsfield, who stepped down as the Office Manager of Families Australia after a stellar career. Jennifer is one of many who have enabled Families Australia to maintain its high level of impact on child and family policy in Australia.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon Schrapel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'S'.

Simon Schrapel AM  
Chair

# A YEAR OF DISCOVERY

## Mr Jamie Crosby – CEO, Families Australia



I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which Families Australia's office is located and extended my deepest respects to Elders past and present.

I acknowledge and extend my respects to Elders of the multiple lands and sea country on which Families Australia's members are based.

2021-2022 has been an extremely rewarding and challenging year, full of change and discovery for Families Australia as an organisation - and me, as the new CEO.

On many occasions throughout the year, I have spoken of the benefits and opportunities of joining an established and well-regarded organisation with such a solid reputation across sectors and governments.

It was a privilege (and a little bit daunting) to take over the reins from Dr Brian Babington AM's extended tenure as CEO in October 2021. Along with the immeasurable contributions of Jennifer Horsfield who, following a short 19-year tenure with Families Australia, left us in March 2022, I and newer members of the team have benefited from their respective dedication and hard work.

Well-functioning teams are important across all organisations but none more so than in small entities. Our resilience, capacity to embrace change, and the continued efforts to advocate and influence national policy settings, is the result of the collective efforts of all staff. In addition to Brian and Jennifer, I acknowledge and am grateful for the contributions of Margaret Fisher, Fiona Langford, Aimee Ashcroft and Dr Bianca Williams in producing high quality work and continuing to deliver during a period of significant organisational change.

The ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather events continued to challenge our operating environment. With energy, adaptability and a little creativity at times, we remained present and active within key sector activities, met all our funding and operational requirements across the year, and extended our reach.

Of note, new elements were introduced to National Families Week, our policy forums were well attended, and joint submissions (with member organisations) were made.

Through the National Coalition, a significant amount of effort was invested in supporting the ongoing development of the Safe and Supported Actions Plans. We were also successful in extending two primary funding agreements due for renewal in June 2022, through to 2024 and 2025 respectively.

Internally, it has been rewarding to work with members of the Board and committees in progressing some 'big rocks': The development of a new strategic plan, drafting and working through the approval process of our first formalised RAP, giving thought to the growth and diversification of the organisation over the years ahead, and commencing development on an investment strategy. It has been a successful year.

I extend my thanks to our members for your contribution to, and support of, the work of Families Australia. Your experience, expertise and knowledge directly informs and influences the activities, policy positions and advocacy that we undertake to improve the welling of families, children and young people in communities across the country. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

And a huge shout out to my family as well; your support (and patience) during my transition to 'a big job' has been immense. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Crosby', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jamie Crosby

CEO

# OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

Families Australia's vision for reconciliation is an Australia that forges unity between First Nations peoples and other Australians, celebrates the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and histories, and enables the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities.

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 and Custodians 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 focus of our reconciliation journey over the past year has included:

- Drafting of our first formal reconciliation action plan under the Reconciliation Australia framework.
- Unequivocal support for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership group's critical role in the development of Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, including explicit support of the Leadership Group's formal decision making role and representation at Community Services Ministers level.
- Ensuring the presence of First Nation's perspectives and representatives in all policy forums, consultations and major activities of the organisation.
- Inclusion of First Nation businesses and entities within our resourcing and supply chains where possible.
- An ongoing presence of First Nations-focused resources, research papers, consultation opportunities and celebrations of the significant contributions First Nations peoples and communities make to our community in National Families News.

Our draft RAP is working through the final round of approval stages and will be released in 2022-2023. We have set ourselves an ambitious and challenging agenda for an organisation of our size.

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

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR YEAR



## National Families Week

Showcasing the strength, diversity and resilience of families in very difficult times.

**375** local events across all states and territories (and many more were registered).

Approx. **42,000 people participated** in local events.

### Activities included:

- A Children's Art show in Murray Bridge, SA
- A Nature trail walk and family picnic/morning tea picnic morning in Kings Meadows, Tasmania
- Numerous educator/staff development sessions on family centred engagement for policy and direct service workers
- A llama kissing booth!

## National Families Week - Celebrating Families Speaker Series

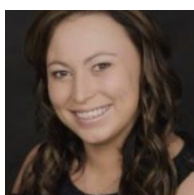
As part of National Families Week 2022, Families Australia hosted an online event series showcasing families and community leaders working to support families and helping all children to thrive.

Across four webinars, a diverse range of community leaders shared stories and personal anecdotes about the importance of families.

It was a privilege to hear about the rich and diverse range of backgrounds, cultural influences, and family compositions of the speakers – all different, but equally valued and worthy of celebration. The speakers shared how the ups, downs, achievements, energy and resilience of their own families have shaped who they are as individuals, and as community leaders working in their respective fields.

We were honoured to gain insights into the personal values and unique family stories of:

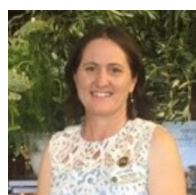
- Ms Felicity Kime, President, Family Inclusion Strategies Hunter (FISH)
- Ms Kathy Karatasas, Head of Multicultural Child and Family Program, Settlement Services International (SSI)
- Ms Alana Moller, President, Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA)
- Mr Brendan Moyle, Chief Executive Officer, Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (DLALC).



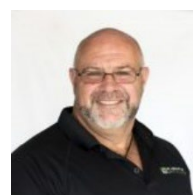
Felicity



Kathy



Alana



Brendan



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR YEAR



## National Family News

- 24 fortnightly editions
- 1500 recipients per edition
- A valuable and concise bulletin containing sector news, information and upcoming events

## National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing

- The National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing comprises over 200 non-government and research organisations including peak bodies, out-of-home care, child and family support, disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations who are committed to advancing the national campaign on child safety and wellbeing in Australia.
- The National Coalition acknowledges the experience and expertise of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership group in the development and implementation of Safe and Supported.
- The National Coalition welcomed the release of Safe and Supported in December 2021 and has been extensively involved in the development of Safe and Supported's Action Plans.



## Informing and influencing national policy

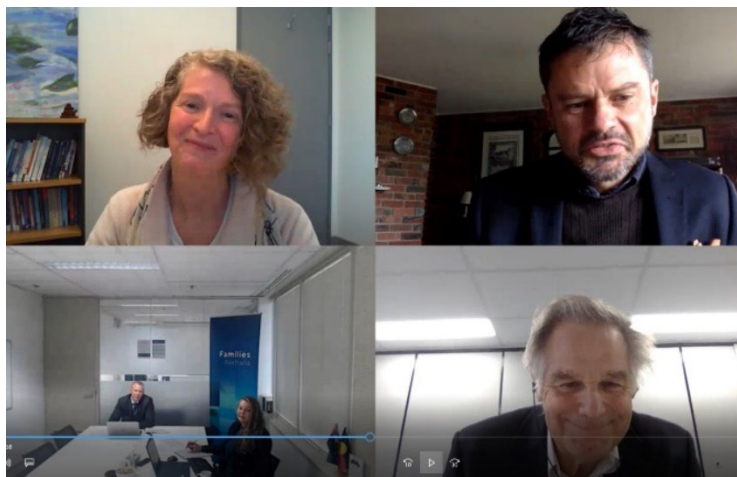
This year Families Australia:

- Continued membership and participation in the national Child Safe Sector Leadership Group convened by the National Office for Child Safety (NOCS).
- Along with the Institute of Child Protection Studies (ACU), provided a joint response to the Advisory Group Consultation paper of the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse.
- Continued Membership the Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS) Advisory Board.
- Made presentations to Community Services Minister (CSM) meetings.
- Had extensive involvement in the development of Safe and Supported Action Plans.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR YEAR

## National Policy Forums

### *Strengthening Workforce Capability and Capacity*



#### Keynote speakers:

- Dr Erica Russ, Senior Lecturer, Director of Field Education, Social Work and Community Welfare, Southern Cross University
- Mr Steve Kinmond OAM, CEO, Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies (ACWA)

#### Supported by case study presenters:

- Ms Dianne Potter, Manager, Learning and Development Centre, AbSec
- Ms Annette Michaux, Director Policy and Practice, Parenting Research Centre

This policy forum, which was co-chaired by Professor Daryl Higgins, Director, Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University, addressed a range of issues relevant to strengthening workforce capability and capacity. Topics and issues canvassed during the forum included:

- The significant gap between First Nations and non-First Nations education, training and employment outcomes.
- The need to value the expertise of First Nations Peoples and Families in policy design and service delivery responses.
- The need for a national social services workforce development strategy.
- The requirement for improved workforce data.
- Micro-credentialing and the need for additional vocational training outcome measures to be developed to strengthen career pathways and retain people within the sector.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR YEAR

## National Policy Forums

### *Supporting Children and Young People with Disability in Challenging Times*



#### Keynote speaker:

- Professor Sally Robinson, Professor in Disability and Community Inclusion, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Flinders University

#### Supported by case study presenters:

- Ms Sylvana Mahmic, CEO, Plumtree Children's Services
- Mr Paul Calcott, National Training and Resource Development Manager, First Peoples Disability Network Australia

#### The broad ranging discussion canvassed:

- Policy solutions don't always reflect the way that children want to live their lives.
- Co-designing programs and program evaluation with children and families is critical.
- Collaborative responses within and across sectors need improvement and more flexible and holistic funding models are required.
- Greater efforts are required to understand and deliver culturally appropriate supports - including increased numbers of First Nations support workers.
- The NDIS is not the only policy and practice solution for children with disability - and was never designed to be. All services and sectors need to increase their capacity and capability to engage with children and young people with disability.



# FAREWELLS

Following 16 years of dedicated service and contributions too numerous to list, in September 2021 we said farewell to our former CEO, Dr Brian Babington AM.

And following a short 19-year tenure, Ms Jennifer Horsfield - Office Manager and National Families Week Co-Ordinator, retired in March 2022.

Both Brian and Jennifer left indelible impacts on Families Australia, the sector more broadly and positively influenced the wellbeing of thousands of families, children and young people across the country.



**NATIONAL FAMILY NEWS**  
**8 September 2021**

**Farewell**

It's time to say farewell to Families Australia's CEO, Dr Brian Babington AM, who retires at the end of this week. Brian has been with Families Australia since 2005 and in that time has worked extensively across the sector and with Government to improve the wellbeing of Australian families.

Brian will be sincerely missed by the staff and Board at Families Australia as well as by members and colleagues across the sector and we wish him all the best for the future!



**National Family News**  
**29 March 2022**  
**Families Australia**

**Farewell Jennifer Horsfield**

After 19 years of wonderful service and support, we bid farewell to Jennifer Horsfield.

Jennifer's contribution to National Family News, National Families Week, our members and stakeholders - and to the wellbeing of children, young people and families - has been immeasurable.

Jennifer's welcoming smile, friendly voice, organisational skills and dedication will be missed by all of us.

Retirement beckons! and we extend our best wishes to Jennifer for her next set of adventures.

Jennifer's last day with Families Australia was Friday 24 March.



## Families Australia

# GENERAL MEMBERS 2022

Alliance for Forgotten Australians  
Anglicare Australia  
Australian Council on Children and the Media  
Australian Federation of Disability Organisations  
Australian Foster Care Association  
Barnardos Australia  
Blue Knot Foundation  
Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia  
CREATE Foundation  
Daniel Morcombe Foundation  
Grandparents Australia  
School of Health Sciences and Social Work, Griffith University  
Healing Foundation  
Interrelate  
Junior Adventure Group (JAG)  
Key Assets  
MYAN  
NAPCAN  
Oz Child  
Playgroup Australia  
Relationships Australia National  
Save the Children Australia  
Settlement Services International  
SNAICC - National Voice for our Children  
The Alannah and Madeline Foundation  
The Australian Centre for Social Innovation  
The Benevolent Society  
Tresillian Family Care Centres  
UnitingCare Australia  
Research Centre for Children and Families, The University of Sydney  
Wanslea  
The Y Australia  
yourtown

# **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

For the year ended 30 June 2022.

