

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024





ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Community First Step acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities as the Traditional Owners of the land we work and live on and promote the continuation of their cultural and spiritual practices.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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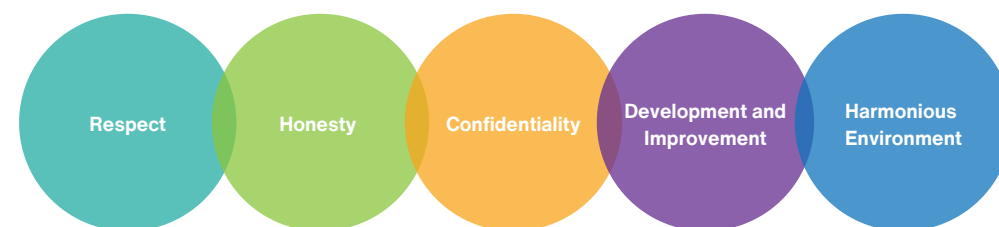
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OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

Our vision is Communities in South Western Sydney have equal opportunities to thrive in their lives and livelihoods.

Our purpose is to empower the community in South West Sydney to overcome social and economic disadvantage by identifying community need and supporting sustainable capacity building.

OUR VALUES



OUR STRATEGY



PERSON CENTRED CARE

Aim: High quality integrated, individualised services and supports that improve possibilities.

Outcome: Individual needs and wishes of our clients are met now and anticipated into the future.



MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT

Aim: Community First Step is a central player in South West Sydney's connected and thriving ecosystem.

Outcome: We are created by our community for our community, we are supported and embedded in South West Sydney, known as a leader in our field.



PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Aim: Enabling and engaging our people to make a positive impact.

Outcome: A skilled, informed and engaged workforce meeting the needs of our consumers underpinned by contemporary best practice.



QUALITY AND GOVERNANCE

Aim: A lean, fit, robust and well governed organisation.

Outcome: Programs that are financially sustainable and high quality underpinned by a culture of continuous improvement.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This past year has been one of reflection, growth, and laying the groundwork for the future at Community First Step. As we continue to support some of the most vulnerable members of our community, we recognise the need to strengthen our internal systems and capabilities to ensure we remain effective, responsive, and evidence-informed.

A key focus this year has been initiating the journey towards enhancing our data systems and research capability. We have begun the process of upgrading our systems to better capture and utilise data that informs service delivery, accountability, and impact measurement. At the same time, we have taken important steps to evolve our research and evaluation capacity, ensuring that we have the right frameworks in place to assess the effectiveness of our programs and advocate for the needs of our community. While these efforts are still in their early stages, they represent an important strategic shift—one that will strengthen our ability to deliver high-quality, evidence-based support well into the future.

Recognising the importance of financial sustainability and strategic growth, this year also marked the establishment of our Fundraising & Partnerships and Marketing & Communications functions. These initiatives have laid the foundation for Community First Step's first-ever fundraising strategy, alongside the commencement of our rebranding journey. As we look ahead, diversifying our income streams—including securing untied funding—will be critical in ensuring we can develop and tailor services that are more responsive to the needs of our communities.

Another significant milestone this year has been the commencement of our Strategic Planning process. This work will define our priorities for the coming years, ensuring that we remain aligned with the evolving needs of the communities we serve while strengthening our long-term impact.

We are also proud to have begun the development of Community First Step's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This represents an important step in our commitment to deepening relationships with First Nations communities, embedding reconciliation into our organisational culture, and ensuring that our services are inclusive and culturally safe.

A highlight of the year for me was our 50 year celebration of the foundation of Community First Step. Our event brought together many of the founders of Community First Step, our longstanding funding partners who provide the means to support our service delivery together with the staff of Community First Step. The event highlighted our long history in the community as we have supported generations of citizens in need in the committed and impartial manner Community First Step has always gone about serving the community.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the management and staff of Community First Step. For the 5 years I have acted as Board Member, I have watched in awe at the dedication and commitment of our staff and observed their passion for serving our community, and in many cases, persevering through complex challenges. The community is a better place for all the hard work and commitment of our staff, and for this, I am extremely grateful.

Edward Parker
Chair of the Board



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

It is a privilege to present Community First Step's 2023-24 Annual Report, which highlights our deep place-based expertise and commitment to supporting diverse communities across Fairfield and Greater Western Sydney.

This year, we continued to celebrate our 50-year history with a terrific event at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. Our rich legacy firmly embeds us as a trusted pillar of support in the community. As part of this milestone, this report outlines a 50-year timeline showcasing our journey—from our innovative beginnings to the evolving work we continue to deliver in response to the changing needs of our region. The timeline serves as both a celebration and a testament to the life-changing impact of Community First Step.

This year, we embarked on the development of our new strategic plan, ensuring our future direction remains aligned with community needs, policy landscapes, and sector trends. This plan will guide us in expanding our impact and I look forward to sharing it with you when it is complete.

A major achievement this year was the finalisation of our Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis, conducted in partnership with Urbis. The results were significant: for every \$1 invested in Community First Step, there is a social return of \$2.88. Imagine investing in a savings account and seeing nearly triple your investment in return. That's the kind of impact we're delivering—not in financial gain, but in community well-being, resilience, and opportunity.

This analysis strengthens our advocacy efforts, demonstrating that investing in Community First Step is an investment in the future of our communities. Following the release of the SROI report, we worked with NSW Council of Social Service to support their pre-budget submission, using our findings as evidence to advocate for core funding for neighbourhood centres.

Further advocacy efforts included partnering with place-based colleagues to ensure community funding remains responsive to local needs, establishing the Fairfield Reform Action Group on Gambling Harm, and contributing to the NSW Strategy for Young People's Health and Wellbeing, ensuring the voices of our communities shape policy decisions.

A particular highlight was receiving a Community Recognition Statement in Parliament from David Saliba MP, acknowledging 50 years of impact and the vital role Community First Step plays in strengthening our region.

The past year has seen no relief from cost-of-living pressures, further widening the disadvantage gap for individuals and families. In response, we have expanded our reach, strengthened our partnerships, and continued to innovate in service delivery to support those who need us most. We are proud of the growing engagement we have with our community and key stakeholders, creating new service delivery and development opportunities.

Quality and safeguarding are critical pillars of our organisation, and I am incredibly proud of the significant progress we have made in strengthening these areas over the last 12 months. Our enhanced approach has led to better client outcomes, increased trust from the community and stakeholders, stronger risk management practices, improved staff morale and well-being, and a renewed focus on continuous improvement.

None of this work would be possible without our dedicated and passionate team. This year's employee engagement survey results reflect the commitment of our workforce and reinforces that Community First Step is a great place to work. But we're not resting on our achievements—we have undertaken significant work in clearly defining our Employee Value Proposition, ensuring we continue to attract and retain talented individuals who share our mission.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Senior Leadership Team and the entire Community First Step staff for their dedication, adaptability, and passion in delivering real impact with heart. Your work changes lives every day.

To our Board of Directors, thank you for your guidance and support throughout the year. It is a privilege to work with you, and I look forward to continuing to build a strong partnership between the Board and management that strengthens the work we do at Community First Step.

Prof. Pandora Patterson
Chief Executive Officer





1973

A group of local residents meet and form the **Fairfield Community Council for Social Development**, conducting crucial groundwork and research to determine areas of need in the community, such as support for migrants and youth.

1977

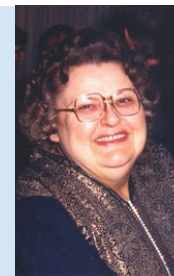
We evolve into **Fairfield Neighbourhood Centre** located in the School of Arts on Harris Street Fairfield and become a key community resource for residents in both the local community and neighbouring areas.



1979

With our support, Ulla Bartels forms the Carramar Activity Group to support Indo-Chinese refugees settling in the Fairfield area. This grows in size and scope and is the inception of two community organisations that continue to deliver vital services to the South West Sydney community today: CORE Community Services and Woodville Alliance.

We establish our first vacation care program.



1980

Our initiatives to support the community include the Fairfield Community Mediators Centre providing free help for community members to resolve neighbourhood disputes of a non-legal nature and appointment of a Community Development Officer at the Housing Commission Estate at Bonnyrigg.

Fairfield City Youth Refuge opens after a long battle for funding. Fairfield Neighbourhood Centre worked hard on this through the establishment of a youth committee, undertaking research and coordinating the submission. Young people in an emergency crisis accommodation situation previously had to rely on youth refuges in neighbouring areas and they were often full.

1982

With incorporation we become **Fairfield Community Resource Centre**, extending our goals even further to assist in the establishment of neighbourhood centres, support other community organisations, and undertake community research.



1983

We run vacation care programs at Bonnyrigg, Lansdowne, Bossley Park.

Villawood Neighbourhood Children's Centre, a multicultural community-based children's centre was established, providing long and short day, occasional and emergency care. The Fairfield Community Resource Centre children's project officer developed a local management committee and coordinated the management of staff as well as surveyed the need for after school care.

Together with four existing community children centres, we develop the Community Ethnic Children's Project to progress multicultural programming in childcare centres and train culturally and linguistically diverse women in childcare.

1984

Wetherill Park and Bossley Park Occasional Child Care opens in October, supporting parents in the community by providing a flexible child care option at an affordable cost.



1985

We assist in the operation of Neighbourhood Centres in Fairfield, Bonnyrigg, Wetherill Park and Villawood North.

We are asked by council to manage a new youth centre under construction in Bonnyrigg and to develop initiatives to achieve its aims.



1986

We employ 63 staff and 90 volunteers and manage specialist centres including Bonnyrigg District Youth Facility and the Tenancy Advice and Housing Referral Service across Fairfield and Liverpool, responding to inquiries amidst the worsening private rental market and undertaking community education with migrant communities in the area.

1987

Multicultural Child Care Worker Project is established to familiarise parents with Australia's early childhood education practices and services and develop multicultural teaching aides and resources.

We receive funding for Villawood Community Artworker Project to develop local people's skills and interest in the arts and to use community arts as a tool for the social development of the area.

1988

Managing 35 projects with a staff of 78, we are one of the largest community-based organisations in Australia. We move to the new Community Services Centre on Barbara Street, where we are located today. We manage new initiatives such as Greenfield Park Neighbourhood Centre.

A community consultation is held in November of our 15th year to assist in the process of charting the directions for the organisation over the next decade.

Our Wetherill Park & Bonnyrigg Transport Project publishes the report "Community Transport and the case for community participation in the transport planning process", influencing the direction of community transport planning in Western Sydney.

We procure four playgroups at Villawood, St Johns Park, Greenfield Park and Cabramatta.

Our Wetherill Park Youth Development Worker Project provides a range of services, activities and programs for young people in the new release areas of Wetherill Park, Bossley Park, Prairiewood and Greenfield Park.

Our Multicultural Women's Poster Project is launched at Powerhouse Museum in September. Eight local women from diverse cultural backgrounds design and print posters about women from their own culture, creating an educative tool to increase community understanding of women from different cultures to overcome negative stereotypes as well as develop new skills and opportunities for self-expression.

1989

We establish a new community centre at Greenfield Park, extend our before and after school programs and commence the East Fairfield Youth Service in Carramar.

St John's Park Before and After School Care opens in February.

Parks Occasional Care Centre commences operation.

We receive the support of the Australia Council and Ministry of Arts for a three year Community Arts Worker in Villawood and Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme support for the new Roving Child Care Service.



1991

We continue to grow with new additions to our team including a Special Migrant Placement Officer, Environmental Health Worker and Aboriginal Youth Worker.

1992

We are involved in community art projects including Stories of Migration and the Women's Theatre Project.



1993

Opening of The Shed Youth Centre at the old Carramar Girl Guides Hall, with drop-in services and a range of programs for young people.

One of our sponsored projects Wetherill Park Neighbourhood Centre incorporates under the new name Parks Community Network Inc., which continues to provide support to disadvantaged people in South West Sydney today.

1994

We run Female Creation Young Women's Project that aims to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of culturally diverse young women aged 12-24.

It is our first year as a Landcare and Environment Action Project (LEAP) broker organising training in job skills, related living skills, and conservation skills for 30 local disadvantaged young people. We receive a high commendation from the Keep Australia Beautiful Council.

We receive funding for English Classes. These are held in 8 centres and target people not eligible for other classes particularly women and the elderly.

1996

We begin to offer programs for young people with a disability including Post School Options, providing young adults with an intellectual disability with the necessary skills to enable their transition into the community and supported employment.

We received a six year grant from the Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme for an English Access and Outreach Program.

We open Canley Vale Before and After School Care at Canley Vale Public School to provide support for parents studying, working or actively seeking employment.



1998

East Fairfield Neighbourhood Centre advocates on behalf of over 150 families living in the housing estate set to be demolished and support them in their transition of residence.

We partner with the Business Enterprise Centre and tender to the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs under their JobNetwork program to provide employment services to the local community as well as Bankstown and Liverpool. Working Solutions becomes our employment and education services division, providing intensive assistance for long term unemployed and job seekers who face significant barriers to gaining employment. We establish offices in Fairfield, Wetherill Park, Liverpool, Bankstown, Bonnyrigg and East Fairfield.

Bonnyrigg Neighbourhood Centre holds a multicultural festival and our multicultural outreach workers commence work with newly arrived migrants.

We establish a partnership with Learning Links and receive funding to provide specialised services for students with learning difficulties in primary and high schools.



1999

Post School Options expands areas of support for young people with intellectual and physical disabilities to become the Adult Training Learning and Support Program, incorporating living skills, shopping, social skills, personal safety, music therapy and stress management.

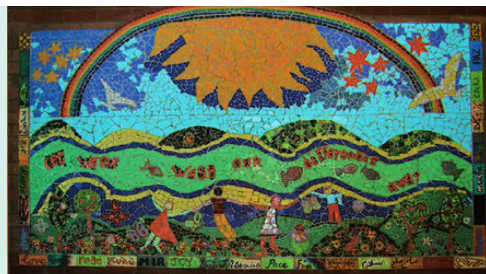
2001

We launch our Employment and Training Services division.

We run 9 multicultural playgroups across the Fairfield LGA, which support more than 100 families per week.

2003

Our neighbourhood centres in Bonnyrigg, East Fairfield and Fairfield run popular programs including Tax Help, craft groups, playgroups, English conversation classes and support groups, as well as activities in partnership with other agencies.



2004

We establish a regular opinion column in the local press and launch a research report into community needs in East Fairfield.

2006

Our Homework Help Program commences providing educational and social support for low income children and their families in Fairfield.

We expand our employment services to the Central Coast and Bankstown.

We are awarded a national award for the inaugural Fairfield/Liverpool Children Summit.

Our community radio program CFS Radio launches, offering young people the chance to gain practical experience and free training in the radio industry.



2007

Our name changes to **Community First Step**, enabling us to broaden our reach and offer a comprehensive range of services tailored to meet the diverse needs of our community.

We auspice the Autism Advisory and Support Service established by a group of local parents to empower children and adults with autism and their families through knowledge and support.

2008

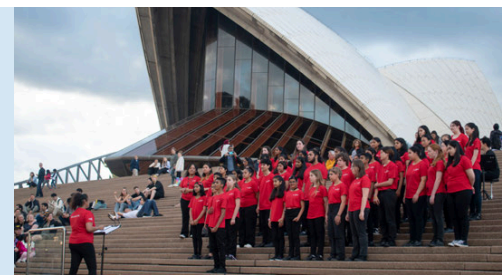
We launch our new employment and training service The Skills Development Hub in Fairfield to provide learning and support services for local community members to increase their skills and confidence to compete for local employment opportunities.

2009

In partnership with Hume Community Housing Association, we provide accommodation for homeless youth aged 16-24 or those at risk of homelessness.

2017

We proudly support the foundation of the Phoenix Voices of Youth Choir for young people from culturally diverse backgrounds in Greater Western Sydney to develop their skills and confidence, break through language barriers and make connections in the fields of theatre and the arts for the future.



2020

In response to COVID-19, we collaborate with NSW Parliament, Oz Harvest, Cabra-Vale Diggers Club and local organisations to support vulnerable and isolated people in the community during this challenging time, including the delivery of frozen meals and food hampers.



2021

We are successful in our application for the Emergency Relief Grant with Multicultural NSW to provide emergency relief, such as food vouchers, medical support and housing assistance, to vulnerable temporary visa holders and asylum seekers experiencing hardship due to the impact of COVID-19.

We open two new children's services centres at Lurnea and Warwick Farm to support the communities in Liverpool LGA.



2022

We receive a Community Partner Award from the South Western Sydney Local Health District and the ZEST Award for Exceptional Community Partnership, recognising the strong support we provided to the local community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2023

In partnership with Urbis, we embark on an analysis of the Social Impact of CFS' community services work. This analysis found that for every \$1 invested in our work, society receives \$2.88 in social and economic returns.

We contribute to the Select Committee on the Cost of Living.



We are a successful recipient of the NSW Department of Education Student Wellbeing Innovation Fund, allowing us to expand our Big School, Big Minds School Readiness Program.

We partner with South Western Sydney Local Health District on the development of the SWSLHD Multicultural Partnership Strategy: "Together for Better Health".



2024

In March, we celebrate 50 years of commitment and service to the communities of Fairfield and South West Sydney with a celebratory event at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Museum.

We launch our Digital Empowerment Initiative, creating digital inclusion by addressing digital poverty (access and affordability) and enhancing digital literacy and skills for our multicultural communities throughout South West Sydney.

We are a founding member of the Fairfield Reform Action Group on Gambling Harm and our first project is a campaign during Gamble Aware Week highlighting the harmful impact of gambling on our communities and providing guidance on where to seek help.



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



CONTINUING THE JOURNEY OF SUPPORTING, EMPOWERING, AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMUNITIES OF SOUTH WEST SYDNEY

In March 2024, Community First Step proudly commemorated 50 years of dedicated service to the communities of Fairfield and South West Sydney with a special event held at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Museum. Led by former world no. 4 tennis player Jelena Dokic, the celebration reflected the collective efforts and enduring commitment that have shaped our organisation's legacy.

The event opened with a traditional lion dance and concluded with Arabic drummers and dancers, symbolising our dedication to celebrating diversity and inclusivity, core values that remain central to Community First Step's mission. Images and quotes from our community, along with reflections from past and present staff, were projected onto the walls, filling the space with voices that echoed across our 50-year history.

Attendees included representatives from schools, universities, TAFE, health, police, and government, as well as past and present team members, founding members, and colleagues from other not-for-profit organisations, all sharing a commitment to supporting and empowering the culturally diverse communities we serve.

Our speakers delivered messages that resonated deeply with the audience. Community First Step's CEO, Pandora Patterson, shared key insights highlighting the impactful social return on investment of our work, reinforcing our ongoing commitment to breaking cycles of disadvantage and building an inclusive, resilient, and multicultural community. Chair Helen Wilson traced the organisation's history, reflecting on its evolution

from the Fairfield Community Council for Social Development to Community First Step, while consistently addressing the needs of our communities.



The evening featured a powerful testimony of resilience from one of our clients, exemplifying the personal impact of our services, and speeches from David Saliba, MP for Fairfield, and Marie Saliba, Councillor at Fairfield City Council, that reinforced the importance of collaboration in driving social change.



Master of Ceremonies Jelena Dokic delivered a moving and deeply personal talk, sharing her journey of triumph over adversity. Growing up in Fairfield, she faced significant challenges, including poverty, domestic violence, bullying, racism, mental health struggles, and body image issues.

Through her compelling story, she reflected on the strength it can take to navigate life's challenges and the importance of support, courage, and hope along the way—qualities that align closely with Community First Step's mission.

Jelena's journey embodies profound hardships and a beautiful resilience that we see every day in the people we support. Her story is a powerful reminder of the strength within our community and speaks to the purpose behind our work at Community First Step.





MEASURING OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

Community First Step worked in collaboration with Urbis to measure the value of the community services work we deliver through a Social Impact Analysis.

This analysis found that for every \$1 invested in Community First Step's work, society receives \$2.88 in social and economic returns.



This means that last financial year alone, over **\$5 Million** of social benefits were generated through our community services work.

The strength of these outcomes indicate that the community services work delivered by Community First Step is producing significant benefits for the people of South West Sydney and the broader community, helping to shape a better future.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

In collaboration with Community First Step's leadership, a Theory of Change for our community services was developed, outlining long-term outcomes for individual clients, including improved self-determination, financial, social, and emotional wellbeing, and enhanced family functioning.

Additionally, long-term outcomes were identified for the community, including breaking the cycle of inter-generational socio-economic disadvantage and fostering an inclusive and resilient multicultural community where everyone has an opportunity to thrive.



LEARN MORE

A VOICE FOR THE COMMUNITY

GAMBLING HARM

Western Sydney contains half of Sydney's population yet endures almost two-thirds of electronic gaming machine losses. Further, Fairfield Canterbury-Bankstown, and Cumberland account for a third of Sydney's losses.

During this last year, we partnered with our place-based colleagues to not only provide a submission to the ClubGRANTS Scheme review outlining the importance for community support and services as well as prevention and treatment of gambling harm in the Fairfield LGA, but to also establish the Fairfield Reform Action Group on Gambling Harm along with Wesley Mission.

Our first action was running a successful campaign during Gamble Aware Week highlighting the harmful impact of gambling on our communities and providing guidance on where to seek help.

We have also continued to contribute as members of Fairfield City Council's Fairfield City Health Alliance Gambling Working Group.



NSW STRATEGY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We were proud to have contributed to the consultations for the development of the NSW Strategy for Young People's Health and Wellbeing 2025+ and its Implementation Plan. This Strategy, led by NSW Health, replaces the NSW Youth Health Framework and prioritises youth-friendly, strengths-based care. It focuses on supporting priority populations, workforce training, co-design with young people, and stronger partnerships with community organisations.

By participating in consultations, we helped shape a strategy that addresses evolving challenges like mental health, social change and disadvantage ensuring better outcomes for young people in Fairfield and South West Sydney.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENT FROM DAVID SALIBA MP

We were honoured to receive a Community Recognition Statement from David Saliba MP.

During NSW Parliament, he stated: "Community First Step's 50-year journey in South Western Sydney is truly inspiring. From humble beginnings as the Fairfield Community Council for Social Development, it has evolved to address diverse community needs through children, youth and family services, community development, settlement services and disability services. With a focus on inclusivity and innovation, Community First Step has been crucial in supporting Fairfield during times of significant migrant influx. There are countless staff and volunteers who have shaped Community First Step into the organisation it is today. I thank them for all their work to support the community of Fairfield."



PARTNERING FOR THE COMMUNITY

READY, SET, START!

In partnership with The Parks Community Network and Learning Links, we proudly developed and delivered **Ready, Set, Start!**, a free 10-week program at Wetherill Park Library aimed at helping children and their caregivers transition smoothly and confidently to primary school. The program, funded by The Smith Family through the Communities for Children initiative, focused on key developmental areas such as social interaction, emotional maturity, language and communication, cognitive development, physical health, and independence, all critical skills for a successful start to school.

The program's unique approach not only supported children but also empowered parents and carers. Our parent sessions equipped caregivers with knowledge and strategies to foster resilience and independence in their children, while also strengthening their own parenting skills. Caregivers gained practical tools and insights into child development, learning effective ways to support their children's educational journey at home.

"As a parent, I really enjoyed the sessions where we discussed what to expect when our children start school, how to respond to their emotional needs, and how to better equip ourselves for that new journey ahead."
- Farrah

An important element of Ready, Set, Start! was creating a space where parents could connect with one another and share their experiences. Each week, families provided feedback on how the strategies learnt in the sessions positively impacted their children's behaviour and well-being. These sessions also offered caregivers a safe environment to discuss their own mental health and wellbeing, with many expressing appreciation for the support they received.

"My daughter has learnt so much. She has come out of her shell and gained significant social skills. With the parenting programs, I have learnt a lot of tools that I can use at home. I'm so grateful for this program."
- Laura



This program also brought awareness to additional services available within the community, helping families access further support when needed. With a specific focus on families who might not have access to early childhood settings, Ready, Set, Start! ensured children and parents alike were equipped to successfully navigate the new milestone of starting school.



BRING YOUR BILL DAY

This year, we participated in Bring Your Bill Day, an event hosted by Dai Le MP at Whitlam Library Cabramatta. The initiative focused on providing practical support to the community, particularly vulnerable groups facing rising living costs, such as the elderly and low-income households. At the event, we provided assistance with form filling and vital food relief, ensuring attendees felt supported and heard. Our participation in this initiative underscores our commitment to empowering the communities of South West Sydney during challenging times.



PARTNERING WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS' WELLBEING

We were proud to participate in Expo4Schools, an event organised by Fairfield City Council to strengthen connections between local schools and service providers. The expo allowed us to engage with school staff from the Fairfield and Liverpool LGAs, sharing how our Children's, Youth, Disability, and Community Services can benefit students and help schools develop effective referral pathways.



At the event, we presented on our partnership with Canley Vale High School through the delivery of the RAGE Workshop, a six-session program aimed at supporting students aged 11-17 in managing emotions like anger, anxiety, and sadness.

This partnership began when the school approached us with concerns about student wellbeing and emotional regulation. In response, our workshop equipped students with practical tools to manage their emotions, resulting in noticeable improvements in behaviour and emotional awareness. Feedback from students has also been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing a greater sense of self-awareness and confidence in handling their emotions.

"I started to think and feel better about myself because of this workshop"

"I enjoyed the workshop and I'll definitely use the 'I' language because that will really help me a lot in my life. Thank you for everything"

"I feel better and more confident when dealing with life. My emotions have improved so much since you guys came here. Thank you"

SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT AT LOCAL JOB EXPOS

During this year, we participated in two key local job expos: the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Recruitment Drive at Campbelltown TAFE and the Macarthur Jobs Expo. These events provided valuable opportunities to connect with job seekers and share our organisation's mission, current job openings, and the benefits of working with us.

CALD RECRUITMENT DRIVE

At the CALD Recruitment Drive, hosted by TAFE NSW and the Local Jobs Program, we engaged with graduates from the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), offering insights into the various roles available at Community First Step. The event highlighted the importance of bridging employment gaps for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

MACARTHUR JOBS EXPO

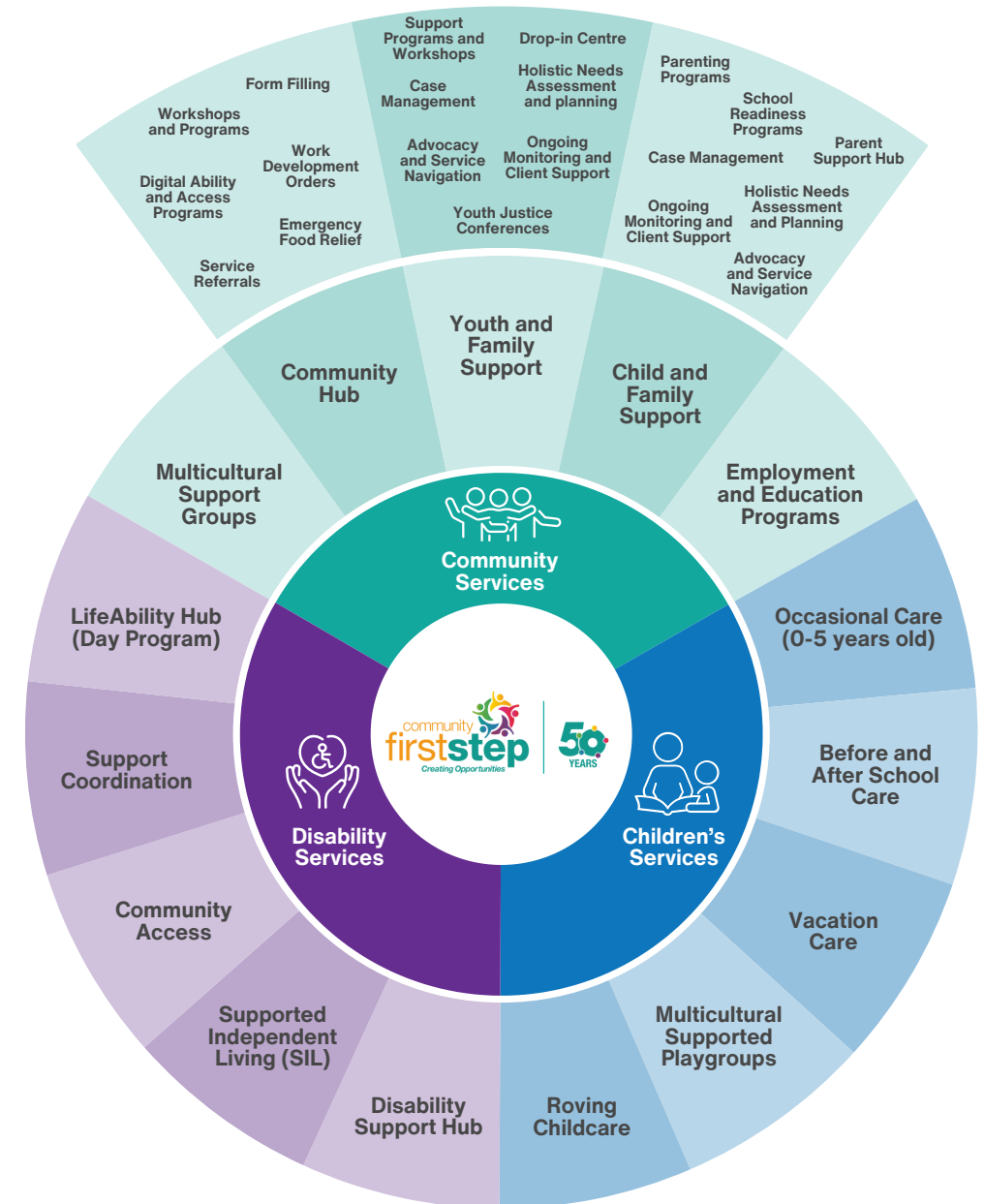
The Macarthur Jobs Expo, organised by Workforce Australia, brought together diverse talent, offering us the chance to showcase our 50-year history of community impact and the range of our programs. We highlighted the various roles available within our organisation and shared our commitment to fostering a supportive, inclusive, and collaborative workplace that values diversity and community-driven impact.





HOW WE SUPPORT

DELIVERING COMPREHENSIVE, HOLISTIC SERVICES THAT EMPOWER AND SUPPORT THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY



OUR YEAR OF IMPACT



27,138
Families benefited from our support



Over **75%** of clients come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds



Two-thirds of parents reported improved family functioning



99.9% of community services clients found us helpful for their needs



140% Increase in families supported by food relief hampers



64 Families trusted us to provide services for their family member with a disability



253 Parents supported through parenting programs

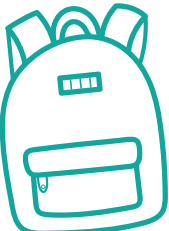


455 Children and caregivers participated in our Multicultural and Supported Playgroups

We supported more than



1500 young people across all our youth programs



634 Children supported in our Out-of-School-Hours and Occasional Care Services



110 Children graduated from our School Readiness Program - a 96% increase



90% of young people reported improved knowledge of services available to them after attending our workshops



89% of young people gained new skills through education, employment, wellbeing and life skills workshops





FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY HUB

A CORNERSTONE OF SUPPORT, FOSTERING RESILIENCE AND BELONGING

Our Community Hub is a vibrant and welcoming place, constantly buzzing with activity and interaction with community members. It serves as a vital resource for individuals and families seeking support, connection, and guidance.

One of the primary services offered at the Community Hub is Emergency Relief. This includes food parcels, provided in partnership with Oz Harvest. This year, we experienced a staggering 140% increase in the number of families supported by food relief hampers, highlighting the critical role the Hub plays in addressing food insecurity.

Our partnership with Wesley Mission also continues to provide essential emergency financial and brokerage assistance, a service that remains in high demand, underscoring the importance of these services to our community.

In addition to food relief and financial support, our Community Hub provides practical services to meet immediate needs. These services include helping individuals to access essential services, connect to the supports they need, and reduce fines through community service programs such as Work Development Orders.

This year, we undertook significant improvements to our Community Hub to create a more welcoming and functional space. The revamp included new furniture and the installation of partition walls which have been instrumental in providing greater privacy and confidentiality for clients.

We also introduced a dedicated kids corner, stocked with books and toys, to create a family-friendly environment where children can play while parents and caregivers access support.



Our Fairfield Community Hub continues to be a place of connection and empowerment, where community members can find not only immediate assistance but also opportunities for long-term growth and resilience. This year, we expanded our offerings to include digital ability and access programs, equipping community members with essential digital skills and resources to navigate an increasingly online world. By addressing essential needs, fostering a supportive environment, and adapting to these evolving demands, the Hub remains a cornerstone of our mission to empower and uplift those we serve.

We are proud of the impact the Community Hub has made this year and remain committed to expanding its reach and services to meet the growing needs of our vibrant and diverse community.

SENIORS SUPPORT

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING

At Community First Step, we proudly support the growing number of seniors in our community by fostering a welcoming space that encourages social participation, skill development, and connection.

With 1 in 5 of our community services clients aged 65 and over, we offer culturally sensitive programs to promote inclusion, strengthen bonds, and empower older adults.

Our groups and classes include Sewing and Crafts, English Conversation, Vietnamese Men's Group, Arabic Women's Support Group, and Arabic Men's Group.



FOSTERING FRIENDSHIP AND WELLBEING: THE IMPACT OF OUR ARABIC WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP



Our Arabic Women's Support Group provides a welcoming and inclusive space for women from an Arabic background to connect, share experiences, and build friendships.

Through regular gatherings, excursions, and activities, the group helps participants combat isolation and foster a sense of belonging within the community.

We conducted a consultation with group participants to evaluate their satisfaction and assess the overall impact of the group.

ARABIC WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP CONSULTATION



100%

of participants reported feeling happier after attending, with many noting a sense of belonging and making new, strong friendships within the group.



100%

of participants reported an increase in knowledge about local services, including health, laws, and Centrelink.



100%

of respondents expressed satisfaction with the group and staff, praising the kindness and support received, particularly from the group facilitator.



The group's social aspect and weekly gatherings were highlights, with members enjoying activities such as outings, events, and morning tea, all of which fostered a strong sense of togetherness.



MEET ROSIE, MEMBER OF OUR ARABIC WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Since moving to Australia from Syria in 2017 and living alone, Rosie has found the Arabic Women's Group to be an essential source of connection and support.

As a member of the group for the past two years, Rosie reflects on the difference it has made in her life:

"Because I live by myself, I feel lonely in my house. This group is a good chance for me to socialise with other people, make friends, and get involved with the community."

- Rosie



EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

Community First Step's youth programs focus on addressing the diverse and evolving needs of young people in Fairfield and South West Sydney. Through a range of programs and initiatives designed to promote personal development, build confidence, and strengthen community engagement, we strive to empower young people to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential by fostering independence and nurturing aspirations for a brighter future.

During this year we supported over 1500 young people across all our youth programs, equipping them with the tools, resources, and guidance they need to thrive.



CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

During the year we worked with over 50 young people and their families delivering case management support. We support young people in identifying their goals - health, employment and training, housing, managing family conflict, mental health issues and more - and work closely with them in reaching them.

We also work closely with other organisations, as important referral partners, in order to holistically meet the needs of each young person.

SUPPORTING YOUTH THROUGH WORKSHOPS

Our Youth Team continued to deliver targeted workshops aimed at supporting young people's emotional and personal development. Eighty-nine percent of young people reported gaining new skills through our education, employment, wellbeing and life skills workshops.

Our partnership with Canley Vale High School has been particularly impactful, with RAGE workshops delivered to students who needed support in managing their emotions. These six-session workshops provided students with tools to identify and understand their emotions while equipping them with practical strategies for emotional regulation - see also the 'Partnering for the Community' section in this Annual Report for more information.



YOUTH JUSTICE CONFERENCES

Community First Step supports young people through Youth Justice Conferences. Our Youth Team helps participants develop and implement outcome plans, encouraging them to acknowledge their actions, better understand how their behaviour affected the victim, and work towards positive behavioural change. The aim is to divert young people from traditional justice systems and foster lasting transformations.

SOCIAL INCLUSION VIA SPORTS PROGRAM WITH FAIRFIELD IEC

We partner with Fairfield High School's Intensive English Centre each school term to deliver Physical Health Workshops. These workshops use sports as a tool to teach new skills, promote the benefits of physical activity, and strengthen community connections for newly arrived students. Over the last year we supported 79 students through this program.

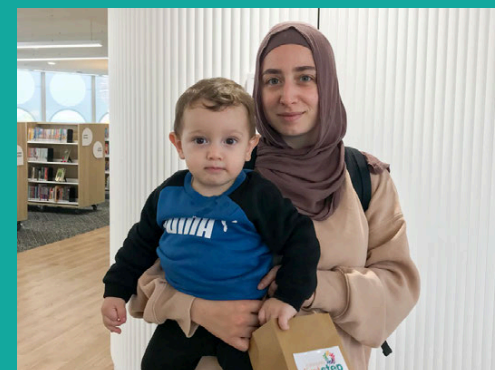


PARENTING PROGRAMS



Our evidence-based parenting programs, including *Tuning Into Kids*, *Ready Set Start: School Readiness for Carers*, and *1-2-3 Magic & Emotion Coaching*, equip families with the knowledge and strategies to foster positive behaviours in children and strengthen family relationships. Delivered by our dedicated and highly trained staff, these programs provide personalised support tailored to the unique needs of each family.

Over the past year, we supported 253 parents through our various parenting programs, empowering families to create nurturing and thriving home environments, build stronger connections, and foster resilience for the future.



BIG SCHOOL, BIG MINDS SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM

Following our success of being awarded funding through the NSW Department of Education's Student Wellbeing Innovation Fund to renew, deliver, and evaluate our school readiness program Big School, Big Minds (BSBM), this year saw us implementing this program of work with 110 children graduating from the program.

Following our work on renewing BSBM, which included aligning it to best-practice framework and guidelines including the Early Years Learning Framework (v2), strengthening the social-emotional components, and developing parent/caregiver sessions, we implemented the program at 4 sites during the year which also includes a mixed-methods evaluation in partnership with Western Sydney University.

To ensure appropriate guidance of the renewal, implementation and evaluation process, we established an Advisory Committee consisting of expertise in educational and developmental psychology, disability support, parents, Community First Step staff members, and local preschool and primary education.

PROMISING OUTCOMES

Although the evaluation is still underway, BSBM facilitators are observing an overall increase in children's skills, confidence, and positive and respectful behaviours. Additionally, feedback from parents and caregivers has also spoken to an increase in their knowledge and skills to more fully support their child with confidence as they transition to school.

"I would recommend to other parents because I have seen a big improvement already and I think it's very important."

"It removes the stress of your child starting school."

"[My son]'s more confident in reading, writing and talking. Once he started, it was a big help."

"It was good for parents to come and also get some advice about how to deal with certain situations."

HOW BIG SCHOOL, BIG MINDS BUILDS BRIGHT FUTURES

The BSBM program offers an innovative and holistic approach to addressing the multidimensional aspects of school readiness in South-West Sydney.

With a unique focus on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families in our target communities—who often experience disproportionate levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, social isolation, and heightened vulnerability at school entry—BSBM delivers high-quality early childhood and parent education to ensure young children and their families are well-prepared for a confident and smooth transition to school.

The program's integrated support system acts as a protective factor, reducing vulnerabilities during the transition to formal education. It includes:



20 children's sessions that foster early literacy and numeracy skills, academic self-concept, understanding of classroom routines, pro-social behaviour, and emotional regulation.



Three parent/caregiver sessions, including a **booster session delivered two months post-program**, which provide caregivers with practical strategies to support their child's development, manage behaviour, and build resilience.



A joint parent-child session midway through the program, where caregivers engage in shared activities with their children, learn strategies to support emotional regulation, and connect with other parents to share ideas about preparing for Kindergarten.

BSBM provides critical support to ensure children in South-West Sydney start school with confidence and a love of learning, while equipping caregivers with tools to support their child's transition.

In the longer term, BSBM aims to contribute to improved educational attainment, increased economic opportunities, enhanced health and wellbeing, and greater community participation.



BENJI'S STORY

When Benji commenced the program, he found it very difficult to separate from his mother and to remain in the room with the other children and our program facilitators. He struggled with emotional regulation and found it challenging to participate in activities and interact with his peers and the facilitators. The program facilitators were in close communication with Benji's mother to devise effective strategies to assist with his behavioural development in preparation for starting school.

With the aid of a range of sensory toys and one-on-one support from facilitators, Benji made significant and encouraging progress throughout the course of the program. Facilitators began to observe an increase in Benji's independence as he adapted to the routines of the sessions. Upon arrival, he became enthusiastic to start the session and displayed no separation anxiety. He demonstrated growth in social skills and self-regulation, as well as confidence as evidenced by his participation and willingness to showcase his knowledge and skills in various activities and overall desire to communicate with his peers and facilitator.

His mother Ellenore provided positive feedback about the impact of the program on her son and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in our Big School, Big Minds program.



I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate you ladies and all the work you both have put in with Benji. It's so amazing how much better he is doing. You have put in so much effort to learn about Benji and what makes him comfortable, and it's made such a difference. Seeing him so happy to go to his little class with you and staying in the classroom the whole time is amazing and now he is starting to interact with the other children more. It's so nice to see Benji looking forward to coming to school.

- Ellenore, Benji's mother



DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE



Fairfield remains one of Australia's most digitally excluded areas, particularly within its culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, where many face barriers to accessing technology and digital services. With over half of the local population born overseas, language, affordability, and digital skills gaps have deepened the digital divide. According to the report, *Uncovering the Digital Divide in the Western Sydney Parkland City (2023)*, Fairfield LGA's digital inclusion scores are significantly lower than the rest of Greater Sydney, with a 5.5-point gap in access, a 6.0-point gap in affordability, and a 10.6-point gap in digital ability.

ADDRESSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN FAIRFIELD

Here at Community First Step we are committed to bridging the digital divide in Fairfield by developing and delivering our Digital Empowerment Initiative that addresses the lack of culturally appropriate resources and opportunities to enable digital inclusion.

The initiative focuses on improving digital access, affordability, ability, and awareness. Improving digital poverty – that is digital access and affordability – alongside enhancing digital literacy and skills is critical in breaking the inequality loop and so our program also provides participants with a laptop and 12 months internet access at the completion of the program.

TAILORED PROGRAMS FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

The multi-session programs also addressed language barriers and ensured accessibility. We developed multilingual digital literacy programs tailored to the needs of specific groups, delivering a program for Vietnamese-speaking mothers and another, in partnership with TAFE NSW, for Arabic-speaking mothers.

We also understand the importance of wrap-around support, providing participants free child care, lunches, and transport during the program, along with access to other community and psychosocial supports as needed. By providing these holistic supports, women felt safe and supported and focussed on learning.

In addition to these tailored programs, we delivered broader digital literacy workshops for community members addressing common needs within the community, such as digital banking, employment assistance, and navigating government services online.



IMPROVING DIGITAL OUTCOMES

The Digital Empowerment Initiative has been instrumental in bridging the digital divide for these vulnerable communities. Participants reported significant improvements in their ability to use digital devices, navigate the internet, and access essential online services independently. Pre- and post-program surveys demonstrated statistically significant increases in digital skills and many participants indicated they now felt empowered to manage everyday tasks such as paying bills, applying for jobs, and accessing essential services online, highlighting how the initiative positively impacted their daily life.

The provision of laptops and data packages also played a critical role in reducing digital poverty and exclusion.

Going forward, we plan to continue expanding our Digital Empowerment Initiative, building on its success to reach more vulnerable communities and further bridge the digital divide.

We are very thankful to The Parks - Sydney's Parkland Councils for the grant to enable us to deliver this project. We are also grateful of the support of the Optus 'Donate Your Data' program and Good360 Australia.



PARTICIPANTS' GOALS



Improve general computer skills for everyday tasks



Increase employability through digital knowledge



Support family and household responsibilities



Learn online safety and cyber security basics



Keep up with technology



Build confidence in using digital tools

BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH PRACTICAL SKILLS

Over the course of the programs, participants developed practical digital skills to support their daily lives, including:



Sending emails and using social media



Using basic computer programs and creating documents such as CVs



Accessing services online and using banking apps



Staying safe online and avoiding scams



Sharing photos and communicating with friends and family

IMPROVING ACCESS AT HOME

To ensure long-term impact, participants in these programs received free laptops and data packages, significantly reducing digital poverty and empowering them to access online resources independently.

PROVIDING FREE WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT

- Childcare
- Meals
- Travel
- Access to other community and psychosocial supports

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



100%
of program participants reported increased digital confidence.



92%
felt empowered to make positive changes in their lives, including seeking work or further study.



85%
said having their own laptop enabled them to continue learning and applying their skills.

“The teacher was nice and easy going, she slowed down for us, was patient, ... The interpreter was very good too.”

“Everything was very useful. The biggest standout for me was learning how to use email, because we need email to register for things online, log into government services, and other services such as electricity, water, and gas.”

“I didn't know how to write a résumé before—now I can apply for jobs online.”

“We're going to improve because now we have this laptop at home. So now, whatever I learned in the course, I can go home and practice in my free time.”

“Having my own computer is a lot better. I can use it any time - day time or night time, because it is my own... With the public one I have to wait for my turn, travel there and book to use it. I will tell my children: I don't need your help anymore. I have my own computer. I don't need to be scared anymore.”

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

At Community First Step, we are deeply committed to supporting children and families as part of our broader mission to respond to the needs of our diverse community. We recognise the vital role of early intervention and quality children's services in giving every child the best possible start in life—creating supportive learning environments where they can grow, thrive, and reach their full potential.

This year, we have continued to strengthen the quality of our services, focusing on targeted training and development, improved learning environments, and a refined curriculum.

We were excited to celebrate our Lurnea and Guildford Out-of-School-Hours Care (OSHC) services each receiving a "Meeting" rating from the Department of Education. These milestones reflect our ongoing dedication to high-quality care and education. Not only did we support 634 children in our out-of-school-hours and occasional care services, we had 455 children and caregivers participate in our multicultural and supported playgroups.

Playgroups have consistently been at the forefront of supporting families throughout the Fairfield LGA. Our services continue to grow and evolve, adapting to the unique needs of the community. Each week, we create and nurture positive, welcoming environments, and strengthen learning and connection among our playgroup participants.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on fostering environments where every child can succeed, and where our team is empowered to continuously

evolve and grow alongside them. The achievements and improvements of this past year are a testament to the dedication of our educators, the support of our community, and the trust placed in us by families.



NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REGULATORY AUTHORITY FORUM

Shareen Nair, our Children's Services Development & Educational Leader and Community Services Family Coach, connects Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services with community resources to support families.

In early 2024, Shareen was invited to present at the NSW Department of Education Regulatory Authority Forum, where she addressed nearly 400 staff on the topic of "Engaging in Reflective Practice to Improve Regulatory Outcomes".

Her presentation focused on fostering a supportive approach between the Regulatory Authority and ECEC services and how reflective practice can strengthen relationships between service providers and regulators, ultimately benefiting children and families.

This opportunity showcased Community First Step's commitment to contributing to sector-wide discussions and emphasised our role in promoting collaboration within early childhood education.



“Community First Step St Johns Park OSHC has been everything we could have asked for. The staff make it an extremely comfortable environment which our children love and look forward to attending every single day.”

- Abuhamed Family



MEET DIYANA, OSHC COORDINATOR

Diyana Yawko is a dedicated OSHC Coordinator within the Children's Services team.

Diyana's journey began with Community First Step in 2018 when she enrolled her son, Gilyana, in a playgroup session. Both Diyana and Gilyana benefited from weekly playgroups, allowing them to connect with other children and adults in the community.

Diyana took the initiative to assist playgroup educators with setting up and dismantling activities, fostering interactions among children and helping other mothers build connections.

Recognising Diyana's commitment to creating high-quality, stimulating environments for children, Community First Step encouraged her to apply for an educator role and marked the beginning of her career as an educator within our Children's Services.

Diyana approached her new role with enthusiasm and a strong desire to learn, quickly demonstrating her passion for teaching and her nurturing disposition.



In 2022, Diyana was promoted to OSHC Coordinator, where she was tasked with establishing a new service at Lurnea Public School.

Over the past two years, Diyana has fostered meaningful relationships with the school community, children, and families.

In 2023 Diyana's daughter Evelyn joined as an OSHC educator and made an immediate impact, planning and facilitating engaging experiences for the children.

Diyana's story exemplifies the vision and mission of Community First Step, highlighting the invaluable connections our programs cultivate within the community.

At Community First Step, we help people find their place, grow their potential, and create opportunities —because we believe in them. Diyana's journey shows how we walk alongside our community, opening doors to connection, purpose, and meaningful work.



“
I enjoy working with Community First Step because they give us the opportunity to grow and to achieve goals.
- Diyana

DISABILITY SERVICES

This year has been a remarkable period of continued progress and support for our participants across a range of services, including group-based activities, support coordination, community access support, and supported independent living.

DAY PROGRAM: RENAME AND REFRESH

This year saw our group-based day program renamed to 'LifeAbility Hub' complete with new signage.

LifeAbility Hub also received an outdoor makeover thanks to the generous support of Villawood Bunnings Warehouse who donated beautiful native plants and their time in completing our garden transformation. A bird bath was also added, enhancing our participants' connection with nature and providing a sensory experience. Through gardening activities, our participants can engage in hands-on tasks that foster both enjoyment and skill development.

EXPANDING SERVICES: INTRODUCING RESPITE AND WEEKEND PROGRAMS

Looking ahead, we are excited to broaden our support offerings with the introduction of respite and weekend activity programs.

These new programs will give participants and their families greater flexibility and choice, offering meaningful opportunities to engage with the community while receiving high-quality, personalised care in a supportive environment.

EMPOWERING PARTICIPANTS THROUGH THE DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Building on last year's commitment, we focused on amplifying the voices of our participants by establishing a dedicated Disability Advisory Committee.

This committee brings together individuals passionate about advocating for people with disability, including participants and their family members. One of the committee's key initiatives has been introducing a monthly BBQ, where participants take great joy in preparing meals for themselves, their friends and families. This event has quickly become a monthly highlight, celebrated with enthusiasm by all who attend.



OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE

OUR STAFF ENGAGEMENT

At Community First Step, our people are our greatest strength. We know that when our staff feel heard, supported, and connected to purpose, it not only enhances individual wellbeing but drives the impact we can make together in the community. Staff engagement is more than just job satisfaction — it's about cultivating a positive culture where team members feel empowered to contribute, grow, and thrive. Each year, we listen closely to our team's experiences and insights through our staff engagement survey. The results guide our continuous improvement efforts and reflect the values that shape our organisation every day.

This year's staff engagement survey results reaffirm the strength of our workplace culture and the dedication of our team. Across key areas — from job satisfaction and professional development to alignment with our organisational goals — our staff reported high levels of engagement and trust. The results reflect a workplace where people feel proud to belong, supported to grow, and confident to share their voice.

Following is a snapshot of what our team shared with us.



87%

are satisfied working at CFS and proud to be part of the team



85%

feel comfortable raising concerns or giving feedback to their supervisor



92%

see a clear link between their work and CFS's goals



82%

are happy with feedback and training support



95%

would recommend CFS as a workplace



'CELEBRATING AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES' ALL-STAFF CONFERENCE

Our All-Staff Conference in January 2024 was a resounding success, bringing our team together to celebrate achievements, strengthen connections, and shape Community First Step's future.

Themed 'Celebrating and Creating Opportunities', the conference kicked off with a beautiful Welcome to Country from the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council followed by the Buuja Buuja Butterfly Dance Group. There were insightful presentations from staff members, Les Hems (Urbis) on the social impact of Community First Step's work, David Saliba MP, and Sector Connect's Tania Muchitsch.

There were multiple interactive strategic planning sessions using an Appreciative Inquiry approach which had the whole organisation engaged. Outcomes from these sessions will feed into our broader strategic planning process.

Staff not only valued the opportunity to connect, share knowledge, and engage in team-building, but also to speak into and contribute to Community First Step's next strategic plan.



PEOPLE AND CULTURE STRATEGY

We have taken significant strides in strengthening our internal culture and supporting our workforce through the establishment of a People and Culture Strategy Working Group. This group is guiding the development of a strategy designed to attract, retain, and nurture talent; foster a positive and inclusive workplace culture; and align our people practices with our broader organisational goals.

The resulting People and Culture Strategy will guide decision-making and investment in our workforce over the coming years, and lay the foundation for staff engagement and organisational resilience.

ADVANCING RECONCILIATION

Our commitment to reconciliation is embedded in our values and practice. During this year, we formalised this commitment by registering our intention to develop a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) with Reconciliation Australia. Guided by First Nations consultant Brendan Littlechild and supported by an internal Focus Group, we are working collaboratively to ensure our RAP is meaningful, respectful, and reflective of the communities we serve.

The process has strengthened internal awareness and dialogue around First Nations perspectives and will serve as a meaningful framework for action as we move toward formal endorsement of the plan.

STRENGTHENING QUALITY AND SAFETY THROUGH RISK MANAGEMENT

In 2023-24, the Quality and Safeguards Coordinator position has played a crucial role in supporting Community First Step's commitment to service excellence and continuous improvement. The approach taken to managing compliance ensures our programs and services meet quality standards while strengthening our risk management framework.

A key achievement has been the comprehensive review of Community First Step's approach to risk management. This began with developing a new risk appetite statement, which provided the foundation for modernising our risk policies and procedures across both board and operational levels. Through targeted staff training, we have built a robust risk-aware culture where team members are equipped to identify, prevent, and manage risks effectively across all service areas.

This project led directly into the updating of the Business Continuity plan, ensuring a business continuity and recovery system for potential threats to our service offerings.

We have also built a dynamic risk assurance program that keeps our policies and procedures current while ensuring staff are well trained and supported in their implementation. Our systematic approach includes regular service audits, thorough incident investigations, and frequent safety checks and emergency drills. This proactive stance allows us to identify and address emerging risks and knowledge gaps promptly, ensuring we maintain the highest standards of service delivery.

A cornerstone of our quality framework has been the reinvigoration of the Risk and Quality Committee, which brings together staff from across the organisation. Meeting monthly, this committee provides a collaborative platform for evaluating risks and implementing targeted solutions.

Looking ahead, Community First Step remains firmly committed to embedding quality and safety in everything we do. By fostering a culture of accountability, continuous learning, and proactive risk management, we are ensuring our services remain responsive, resilient, and aligned with the evolving needs of our community.



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OUR FINANCES

STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
REVENUE	5,553,658	5,583,308
Other income	90,706	34,138
TOTAL REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME	5,644,364	5,617,446
EXPENSES		
Advertising expenses	(106,801)	(64,270)
Accounting, audit and professional fees	(108,818)	(112,289)
Employee benefits expense	(4,321,370)	(4,340,703)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(60,861)	(52,878)
Consultancy fees	(130,080)	(191,806)
Insurance expenses	(41,095)	(33,658)
Motor vehicle expenses	(56,002)	(67,706)
Program costs	(183,442)	(229,021)
Rent expenses	(81,143)	(73,579)
Repairs and maintenance expenses	(27,030)	(36,223)
Workers compensation expenses	(126,478)	(74,644)
Finance costs	(21,698)	(8,233)
Other expenses	(366,035)	(261,031)
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,630,853	5,546,041
Surplus before income tax expense	13,511	71,405
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus after income tax expense for the year	13,511	71,405
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	13,511	71,405

The 2024 financial year has resulted in an operating surplus of \$13,508, demonstrating the organisation's resilience in adapting to continually changing circumstances while sustaining financial viability.

Revenue for the year amounted to \$5.6M, with 57% attributable to the delivery of children and disability services. This marks a decrease of 5% from the previous year. This decrease in service revenue has naturally been coupled with decreased staff costs compared to 2023.

Balance sheet position remains strong with accumulated reserve of \$1.8M, an increase of \$13K compared to the previous year.

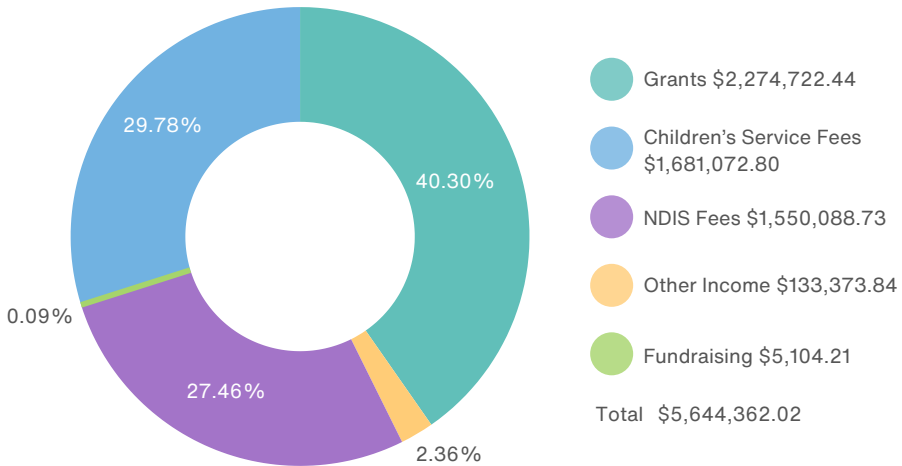
For more detailed financial information, please visit the ACNC website to access financial documents for Fairfield Community Resource Centre (trading name Community First Step).

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

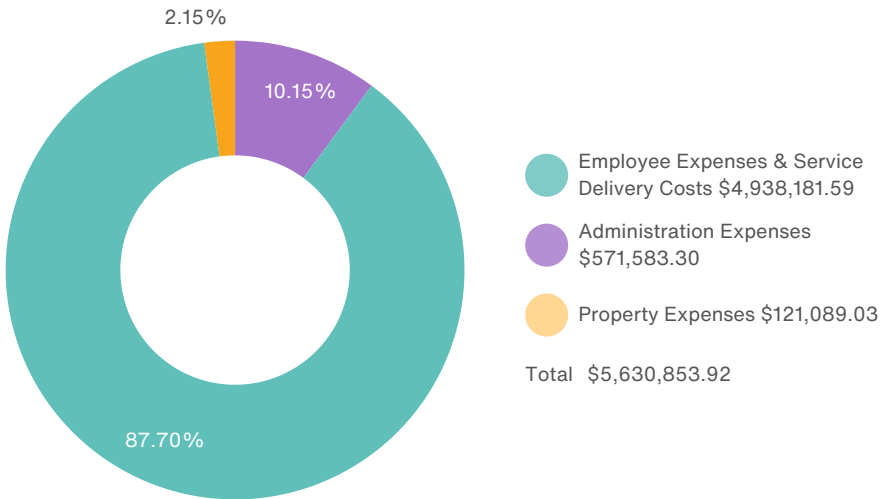
	2024 \$	2023 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	780,511	1,401,707
Trade and other receivables	113,791	246,502
Financial assets	1,817,013	1,003,750
Other assets	46,991	103,856
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,758,306	2,755,815
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	148,078	136,855
Right-of-use assets	81,374	247,198
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	229,452	384,053
TOTAL ASSETS	2,987,758	3,139,868
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	367,792	275,448
Borrowings	4,640	5,522
Lease liabilities	33,247	21,940
Employee benefits	528,969	439,849
Other liabilities	70,597	236,540
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,005,245	979,299
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Lease liabilities	55,277	233,966
Employee benefits	67,989	80,867
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	123,266	314,833
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,128,511	1,294,132
NET ASSETS	1,859,247	1,845,736
EQUITY		
Retained surpluses	1,859,247	1,845,736
TOTAL EQUITY	1,859,247	1,845,736

As a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity, we are deeply grateful to our funding partners and donors for their generous support which enables us to continue our work of empowering and supporting the communities of South West Sydney.

TOTAL REVENUE



TOTAL EXPENSES



DONATE

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please scan the QR Code, or visit <https://give.cfs.asn.au/donate>.

Your support will enable us to make a positive impact on individuals and families in need.

Together, we can continue to create impact with heart for the lives of people in Fairfield and South West Sydney.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our following collaborators and partners:

Anglicare	NSW Council of Social Service
Ashcroft Public School	NSW Department of Communities and Justice
Assyrian Resource Centre	NSW Department of Education
Asuria	NSW Health
Benevolent Society	NSW Police (Fairfield and Liverpool Police Area Command)
Bonnie's Support Services	Old Guildford Public School
Bossley Park Public School	Oz Harvest
Brolga Dance Academy	Passfield Park School
Bunnings, Villawood	Patrician Brothers High School
Cabramatta High School	Prairievale Public School
Campbelltown Youth Centre	Safe Haven
Carramar Public School	Salvation Army
Centrelink	Sarah Redfern High School
Community Connect Macarthur	Sarah Redfern Public School
Community She Shed	Sector Connect
Core Community Services	Service NSW
Department of Communities and Justice	Smith Family
EACH	Smithfield Public School
Fairfield City Council	South Western Multicultural and Community Centre
Fairfield Heights Public School	South Western Sydney Local Health District
Fairfield High School	SSI
Fairfield Hospital	STARTTS
Fairfield Library	St. Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School
Fairfield Public School	St. Johns Park Public School
Fairfield West Public School	St. Patricks Catholic Primary School Guildford
Family Planning	Staying Home Leaving Violence
Governor Philip King Public School	Stockland Mall – Wetherill Park
Guildford Public School	Stotts College
Head2Health	TAFE
Headspace Liverpool	The Grange Public School
Housing	The Inclusion Support Program (KU)
Hume Housing	The Parks Community Network
Increment	The Parks - Sydney's Parkland Councils
Juvenile Justice (Youth Justice)	The Silver Coin Project
Lead College	Uniting
LCSA	University of Sydney
Legal Aid	University of Wollongong
Life Squad	Urbis
Liverpool City Council	Villawood North Public School
Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre	Warwick Farm Public School
Local Community Services Association	Wesley Mission
Lurnea Public School	Western Sydney Community Forum
Macarthur Family and Youth services	Western Sydney University
Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School	Wise Employment
Meraki Foundation	Woodville Alliance
Minto Cobras	Young Spirit Mentoring Program
Mission Australia	Youth Action
MRC Liverpool	Youth off the Streets
Navitas	
New South Wales Rugby League	



CONTACT US

 www.cfs.asn.au

 (02) 9727 4333

 cfs@cfs.asn.com.au

 25 Barbara St, Fairfield NSW 2165

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