



**Permanent
Care and
Adoptive
Families**



Annual Report 2021

Permanent Care and Adoptive Families

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All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

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Thanks and gratitude

To the many individuals and organisations who have contributed and supported Permanent Care and Adoptive Families this year, thank you for giving, sharing and caring:

Andy Dao, Finative Pty Ltd
Anne McLeish
Angelina Keskerides
Anglicare Victoria
Australian Childhood Trauma Group (ACT Group)
Bendigo Bank
Bernadette O'Brien
Berry Street Victoria
Berry Street Shepparton
Bethany Family Service (Geelong)
Brophy Youth and Family Services (Warrnambool)
Caroline Buchanan
Cas O'Neill

Cath Smith, Changesmith Consulting
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Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Inc.
Child & Family Service (Ballarat)
Chris Cook
Community Data Solutions
CREATE Foundation
David McNicol and Michael Daly
Deb Tsorbaris
Department of Education and Training
Elizabeth McCrea
Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV)
Fostering Connections
Gemma Morgan
Grandparents Victoria
Gregory Nicolau, ACT Group
Guy Rhynsburger, Mindfulness in Motion
Infin8it
Jaclyn Letts
Joanna Humphries
John Milburn Clark
Jose Torres
Judy Gouldbourn
Julio Gonzalez
Kaisey Hayes
Kate Vandestadt
Kildonan Family Services
Kristi Lambert
Kinship Carers Victoria
Laura Cashman
Linda Cooke
Louise Kay
Paula White – Carer KaFE
MacKillop Family Services
Maggie Minani
Mark Powell

Mary Natoli
Mirabel Foundation
Michael Scruse and Marty Friedel, MITY
Naomi Whaley
Nicholas Colicchia
OzChild
Liana Buchanan, Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People
Relationship Matters
Samantha Hauge- FCAV
Shelley Smith
St Luke's Anglicare (Bendigo)
Sue Kelsall – Rapid Impact
Swagata Bapat Consulting
Tory Nyabenda
Uniting Vic.Tas
Vanish
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
William Buckland Foundation

To the Minister for Child Protection the Honourable Luke Donnellan MP, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, including: Beth Allen, Mary Roberts, Mick Naughton, Emma Gilbert, Helen Brain, Catherine Gibson, Rebekah Beveridge, Michelle Chiko, Natalie Collings, Alana Gibson, and Kylie Hayden

To Adoption Services at the Department of Justice and Community Safety, in particular: Matthew Reeder and Vicki Shannon

Thank you to our members who have generously shared their experiences in the case studies and quotes presented in the annual report.



Acknowledgement of country

In the spirit of reconciliation PCA Families acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Everyone is welcome at PCA Families

We value and celebrate diversity in all its forms. PCA Families actively supports inclusion of people from LGBTIQ+ communities, people with disabilities, people from diverse cultural and linguistic communities, people with non-traditional family structures, and people with diverse religious beliefs and affiliations.

PCA Families is a child safe organisation

We believe that children have the right to feel and be safe at all times.



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From the Chair Meredith Carter



Children and young people who join a family through adoption, kinship care or permanent care may not have had the best start in life. We want our families not only to be able to meet their basic needs. We want them to be able to offer their children a stable childhood with the same experiences and advantages any other children can expect.

I said those words in our last Annual Report and they remain so true. PCA Families' purpose acknowledges this. *Permanent care, kinship care and adoptive families have committed to helping the children and young people who cannot live with their birth families thrive. And we are committed to helping them do it.* In the pandemic environment I think this commitment is especially important. So despite the pressures of the past year PCA Families board and staff have continued to work with our members and supporters to make sure you get the help you need.

We are keen to make a difference for all of you who make that commitment to the children and young people you have taken into your families. The pandemic has highlighted that so much of the caring work that supports the smooth running of our world is undertaken by women, often to their cost. And while it is wonderful when men join us this is just as true in the permanent care and adoptive community.

So we have been very pleased that the State Government has listened to our advocacy and increasingly recognises the contribution you make. At the end of June 2020, a review of all helpline services in out of home care had commenced. With your support we successfully made the case to government for the PCA Families Helpline to continue as an independent service for our community. And we're delighted that the funding of the Helpline has now been made ongoing. This is vital to stable staffing of the service.

A significant increase in the Flexible Funding has also been made ongoing. In addition, we're so pleased that access to Home Stretch funding has been extended to ensure young people in permanent care are supported into early adulthood.

Much of the focus of government initiatives has been directed to support permanent carers. However we are well aware that adoptive families- children and adults- also need and deserve support. So we were delighted that in a little window between lockdowns we were able to shout a large group of adoptive families and mostly women, a weekend away in Healesville.

I'd like to say a particular thankyou to our staff who have worked so hard mostly from home this year. They delivered the Helpline and Flexible Funding at a time when they were especially needed by families, many if not most also trying to manage their entire lives from home. Our staff also developed and delivered new ways to support our community such as Click and Connect peer support and our Lived Experience Parenting podcasts.

Selecting a savvy CEO along with strong strategic planning and advocacy are critical aspects of any Board's responsibilities. For these reasons when Lisa Milani commenced her maternity leave the Board was very grateful to be able to recruit Amanda Bresnan as Interim CEO and that we were able to take advantage of Kris Peach's availability to take the helm over the couple of months of transition. On behalf of all the Board I would also like to say how much we appreciate the diligent work of Jaclyn Letts who has volunteered her assistance to the Board taking the minutes and other duties again this year. I'd also like to acknowledge Vicki Coverdale, one of our longest standing staff members and wish her the best in her retirement.

Finally I'd like to note that PCA Families continues to support reunification of children with their birth families where possible. An ongoing challenge is to increase awareness of the crucial role played by permanent care (often provided by children's kin or former foster carers) and adoptive families when this is not possible. Raising the profile of your role has been a major focus of the Board in the last year and will continue to be as we move into an election year at the state and federal levels.

Thank you to all of you who have helped us along the way during 2020-21. We look forward to our continued collaboration in the interests of the children and young people and adults we are here for.

Meredith Carter
Chairperson – PCA Families

From the CEO

Lisa Milani



The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to be ever present for Australian families this year. The pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges and changed day-to-day life as we know it, particularly for people in Victoria and New South Wales who have endured extended lockdowns to stay safe. For some children and young people, the pandemic has derailed the non-linear journey of healing and recovering from complex trauma, attachment and grief/loss issues.

Yet obstacles bring opportunities and hope.

An opportunity to put a spotlight on how permanent care, kinship care and adoptive families' lived experiences are understood and improved within the service system. An opportunity to strengthen and enhance the supports available to families both during the pandemic and post-pandemic so your children and young people can reach their greatest potential. Thereby enabling families to be set up for success and to access tailored support when it's needed.

Hope for a better system in the future – a system that is truly child-focussed and family-centred, inclusive of permanent care parents, kinship carers and adoptive parents. Hope for our members to continue to be better heard, seen and recognised for the incredible difference you make in the lives of your children.

Thank you to parents and carers who participated in our advocacy work, including those of you who participated in focus groups related to service redesign, contributed case studies to lobby change and responded to surveys to help us and other key stakeholders better understand your experiences.

One of those surveys was the first Victorian home-based carer census commissioned by Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and undertaken by EY Sweeney to provide baseline demographic and attitudinal data from carers. This was an important piece of work to demystify the profiles of carers, better understand your lived experiences and ultimately improve policy, programs and services.

Thank you also to our Alliance partners and colleagues in government for collaborating with us to achieve systems change and improvements based on the priorities and experiences of our members.

I am thrilled that funding of our helpline is now recurrent. The helpline plays a critical role in supporting families post-granting of a permanent order when the placement agency and child protection services are no longer involved.

I was also excited to be informed that the total recurrent flexible funding budget increased from approx. \$1.1mil to almost \$2.107mil this year. Eligible families now have greater assurance of funding to meet the needs of their children. Previously most flexible funding was temporary and subject to change year-by-year. I'm very thankful to the Hon. Luke Donnellan, Minister for Child Protection and Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, for listening to sector feedback and championing a shift away from temporary funding models ('lapsing funding').

There was also an additional investment of \$1.2mil made by the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to support permanent care families and some adoptive families in the context of the pandemic.

Significant child welfare reforms were also introduced this year to extend the age of leaving care from 18 to 21 years. Disappointingly for many of our members this excluded young people on a Permanent Care Order. However, supported by members who powerfully gave voice to their experiences, the Better Futures and Home Stretch programs were expanded to include young people on permanent care orders from 1 July 2021.

It was also decided that the Carer KaFE would be expanded to include permanent care families. Until now, only Victorian statutory kinship and accredited foster carers were eligible for these valuable learning and development services. It makes sense for these opportunities to be officially available to all carers regardless of care type, inclusive of permanent care and adoptive families.

Many thanks to our Board, staff and volunteers for your amazing work this year. I'm grateful to be supported by an incredible team who are united in the vision of children who cannot permanently live with their birth parents thriving in strong, stable, and permanent families.

As many of you will know, my husband (Shawn), son (Charlie) and I welcomed our daughter, Zara, to the family in April of this year. Thank you to Amanda Bresnan for kindly holding the fort while I care for our young family.

I look forward to connecting or reconnecting with you all upon my return to work next year.

Lisa Milani
Chief Executive Officer – PCA Families



2020–22 Strategic plan

Who are we?

Permanent Care and Adoptive Families (PCA Families) is a not-for-profit member-based organisation representing the permanent care and adoption community in Victoria. Established by parents from this community in 2003, we continue to be guided by the lived experience of our members. We take a child-centred and family-focussed approach to supporting strong and stable families.

As the go to organisation for the community, PCA Families delivers peer support, therapeutic programs and advocacy informed by lived experience and research.

Our Vision

That every child who cannot live permanently with their birth parents thrives in a strong, stable, and permanent family.

Our Purpose

Permanent care, kinship care and adoptive families have committed to helping their children thrive and we are committed to helping them do it.

Our Mission

We advocate on behalf of and deliver peer support and other trauma informed services for permanent care, kinship and adoptive families. We inform, upskill and empower our parents/ carers to advocate strategically for the services and support their children and our communities need. Our independent support is trusted by our families and often critical to their success.

Our Pillars

Building on our history, our 2020-2022 strategic pillars seize opportunities to continue to build our membership base, strengthen our client services, advocate with and for our members and build a sustainable funding base to serve our community into the future.

Pillar 1: Grow and engage our membership

Reach all new permanent care and adoptive families. Develop evidence base of member needs. Build sense of community among members.

- Ensure new PCO and adoptive families are referred to PCA Families by placement agencies, relevant government departments and Courts.
- Establish a new consultative member group.
- Utilise social media and other communication channels to request input, provide needed information, resources.
- Update membership details in CRM (from foster or kinship care, placement breakdowns).

Pillar 2: Deliver high quality services to our clients

Deliver client-centred support, advice and advocacy programs – trauma informed, lived experience.

- Helpline and Flexi Fund Program member satisfaction > 75%, 100% funds distributed.
- Identify and target services to Indigenous and adoption cohorts.
- Provide targeted education to empower families to advocate strategically for services and support their children and our communities need.
- Reinvigorate Journal Club and other peer support related activities focusing on cohorts.
- Encourage research and evaluation activities, including longitudinal study of our members.

“We wouldn’t have survived without your support and advice. Thank you so much.”

Pillar 3: Engage and advocate with key stakeholders for strategic outcomes

Use lived experience, member’s voices and evidence to influence public policy and service delivery decision-making.

- Engage proactively with key stakeholders, governments, to be seen as a leader in the sector.
- Develop strategy to achieve Advocacy priorities, using the Advocacy Framework;
 1. Services based on child’s needs, not type of order
 2. Dedicated trauma informed services
 3. Homestretch to 21 for permanent care
 4. Court participation enabled for carers/parents, with own legal advice.
- Increase collaboration with KCV, FCAV, CFECFW, VACCA, assess alliances.

Pillar 4: Diversify and grow our revenue

Secure diverse and sustainable resources from government agencies, philanthropy, individual donors and private companies.

- Secure and retain government funding streams.
- Establish Board and CEO contact program with Ministers, key advisors and other influencers.
- Conduct two fundraising activities involving member engagement per year.
- Submit eight proposals per year.
- Quantify and seek funding in line with Advocacy Framework for;
 1. Education (strategic advocacy training, trauma informed parenting, life stories, engagement with schools, estate planning.)
 2. Flexible Funding equivalent for adoption.

Ensure strong organisational infrastructure to support our strategy

- Identify CRM needs for DFFH project with FCAV and KCV and improve links with OzChild portal.
- Finalise compliance register.
- Develop external communications and branding strategy.
- Resolve accommodation issues.
- Implement IT strategy and HR Strategy (induction, training and clinical supervision).

Information, advocacy and support services



Members

The majority of our 2,153 members are permanent carers 62%, with 22% adoptive parents, and 26% kinship carers. A member can be more than one type of carer, with 22% being permanent carers who are also kinship carers. This year the majority of the 177 new members were 80% permanent carers, 36% kinship carers and 8% adoptive parents. Of these new members 30% were both permanent carers and kinship carers.

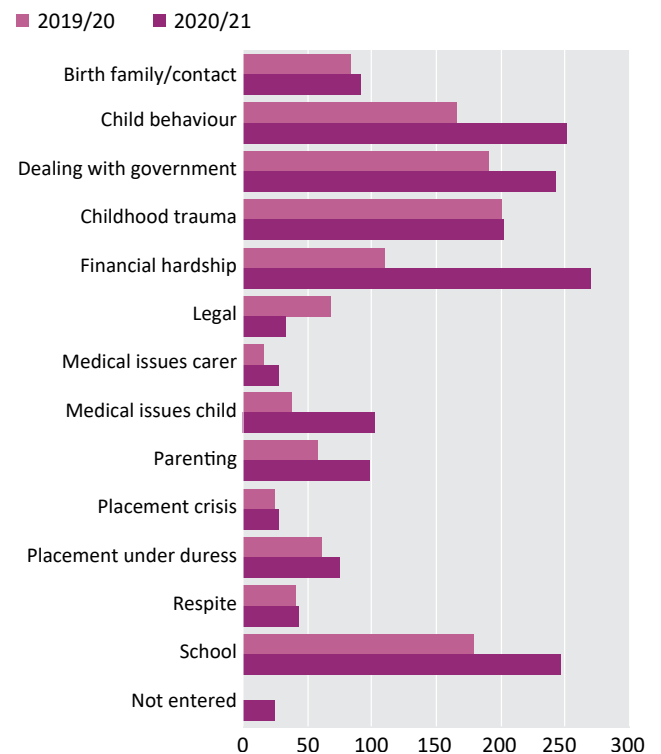
There were more new members in 2021 compared to 2020 (354). There was a Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) mailout in November 2019 which resulted in a particularly large number of new members in 2020. The last quarter of 2021 shows a larger number of new members, most likely due to increased social media and newsletters regarding Flexible Funding.

Helpline

PCA Families Helpline is a free, independent and confidential service, offering short term support, practical information, advocacy and referrals to other services. Our approach is child-centred, family-focussed and trauma-informed.

The 2020/21 presenting issues indicated some significant changes from the prior year, noting more than one category could be selected. Categories with significant increases were child behaviour, financial hardship and school. These changes can

Helpline queries by presenting issue for 2020/21



largely be attributed to the impact of COVID-19. Children/young peoples' behaviour has been reported as reflecting a decline in their mental health compounded by complex trauma experiences, with families finding it harder to access professional services due to restrictions. Many services are offering alternatives such as telehealth appointments and referrals to these are seeing a dramatic increase. Connecting with a new therapist can be challenging in ordinary times, but this is particularly difficult for younger children via telehealth.

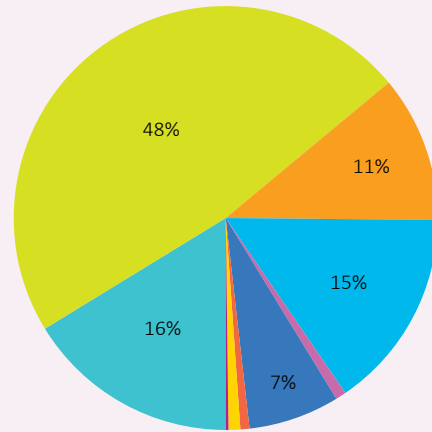
Flexible Funds

The Flexible Funding program for existing permanent care placements provides funds to support families and children on Permanent Care Orders, as well as children subject to a Family Court Order, or a Special Needs Adoption in Victoria provided families are in receipt of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) care allowance. The program is funded by the DFFH.

The service is jointly led by Permanent Care and Adoptive Families (PCA Families) and OzChild, with additional oversight from the Permanent Care Alliance made up of OzChild, PCA Families, Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV), Kinship Care Victoria (KCV), Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), the Mirabel Foundation and the CREATE Foundation.

COVID-19 spend against category

1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021



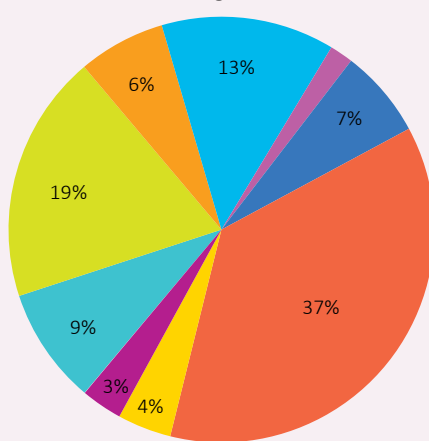
Total spend: \$420,522

Comment: The majority funding has been coded to Educational Support (48%) and Therapeutic Needs (16%)

Spend against funding categories as at 30 June 2021

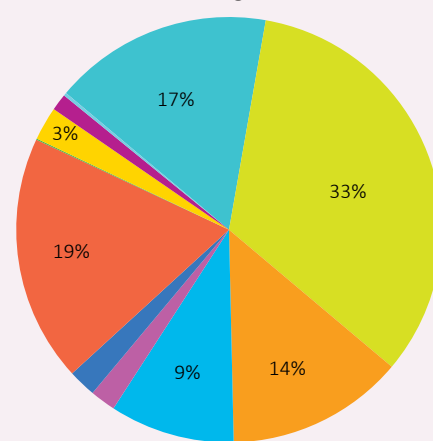
(excluding COVID-19 funding and spend)

Indigenous



Comment: This financial year, the majority funding is being directed to Vehicle Requirements (37%) and Educational Support (19%). Vehicle requirements are now the leading area of spend due to an increasing trend of motor vehicle purchases, and the quantum of these purchases.

Non-Indigenous



Comment: This financial year, the majority funding is being directed to Educational Support (33%). When Vehicle Requirements (19%), Therapeutic Needs (17%), and Health and Medical expenses (14%) are taken into account, 83% of the funding is accounted for.

Spending categories for FY2020–21



Peer support

Click and connect – Click and connect commenced in September 2020, held virtually on a Wednesday morning. Weekly sessions were held during the extended COVID-19 lockdown in Victoria, and are now held fortnightly. Click and Connect has continued as there is still a demonstrated need for a regular forum for carers to informally engage with other carers.

Journal club – Journal club sessions moved to virtual sessions as a result of COVID-19 in May 2020. The virtual sessions have consistently attracted higher average numbers per session. A Journal Club survey was conducted in early 2021 to assist in determining what would improve the peer support being offered.

Carer retreats – The first adoption carer retreat was held in June 2021 in partnership with Carer KaFE, with 31 parents attending. The feedback of those in attendance was overwhelmingly positive with parents grateful for receiving the opportunity to all come together as a group who have similar lived experience. PCA Families is planning further retreats for permanent care and adoptive families, including with Aboriginal families in the future and seeking funding for these to be held.

Communications

Podcasts – Podcasts of lived experience and research informed practices were shared for the first time on Youtube in early May. Topics covered included sensory play, developmental trauma, therapeutic parenting, same sex parenting, respite care via Carer Gateway, raising expectations for school leavers, managing blow ups, safeguarding financial interests and a child's story of having been in inter-cultural long-term care. Feedback from members is that the content gives them an opportunity to involve their partner in the ongoing parenting education – often this falls on one primary carer and they identify it can be hard to explain the different approaches and what works and what doesn't.

Member communications – Weekly communication updates were a new addition to our communication offering in 2021. The weekly communication updates cover a variety of topics from peer support dates and content, Youtube videos directly relevant to members, news items such as COVID-19 pandemic updates, and a variety of other trauma informed resources. Members are emailed these updates weekly with over 500 members accessing each update. This avenue is a way for PCA Families to maintain and cultivate community involvement and share purposeful content on a regular basis.

Facebook – Facebook membership has grown from 800 to 919 during the year. Members engage strongly with the positive wellbeing affirming and trauma related content, sources of funding and support around mental health. It provides a platform to include our podcasts and trauma related content which families often identify with. Facebook content is designed to offer members opportunities to bring their friends and families into their lives with a blend of light inclusive content and serious subject matter.



Photo: parents at adoption retreat

PCA Families Inaugural Adoption Retreat

PCA Families together with Carer KaFE held their first Adoption Retreat at Healesville in June with 31 parents attending.

The two-day Retreat aimed to support and celebrate the resilience of carers and provide an opportunity to reflect on their parenting journey through shared learning and networking. Parents participated in the professional development sessions, which also focused on self-care to enhance their feelings of safety, health and happiness through a variety of mindful practices.

We started with a Welcome to Country with the entertaining Uncle Ian Hunter who shared his life story and experiences of racism on Friday night telling his yarns and playing the didgeridoo.

Joanie Bartolo, of Emotion Wise delivered two sessions on Emotional Intelligence and Managing Anger. Joanie taught the group that although anger is an emotion, you need to decide on the type of person you want to be, which includes whether you are the boss of your anger or whether you want it to be the boss of you. Parents recognised this as very relevant to what they are dealing with and a great way to explain this to a child when they are not managing their emotions.

As part of our self-care session we included meditation and mindfulness along with a mindful art session which many found calming. The silent walking meditation through the beautiful surrounds was a welcome break.

The powerful key speaker was Joel de Carteret born in Philippines and adopted by a Melbourne couple at three years old. Joel spoke of his experience being lost in a Manila market and authorities being unable to find his birth family. After trying for a year, he was then put up for adoption.

"I loved the opportunity to get away and reflect and feel supported in taking the time out."

Joel spoke of what has helped him deal with his emotions of abandonment, feeling unloved along with racism and a lack of identity which a lot of adolescent children experience. He found his birth family 31 years later. He felt they were strangers, however a very helpful clinician experienced with inter-country adoption helped him work through the trauma.

Overall, parents really enjoyed the opportunity to connect with each other, replenish their energy and take away some useful resources.

“Thank you for the opportunity to get away for such a lovely break and for the chance to spend time with like-minded people.”

A message from Journal Club

PCA Families Journal Club was first established twelve years ago and has been conducted monthly ever since by a group of experienced members who have always strongly believed that regular opportunities for peer support for permanent care and adoptive parents plays a critical role in the successful, long-term placement of children.

PCA Families also saw great value in disseminating amongst members the growing body of research emerging in relation to raising children with backgrounds of trauma and attachment disorders, as well as promoting new therapeutic models of care and better parenting practices.

The establishment of a ‘Journal Club’ was a ‘take’ on the concept of the very familiar ‘Book Club’ model of people coming together to toss ideas around and of learning from the shared wisdom of participants.

It was understood that very busy parents and carers could well have very limited time for reading many books. The distribution instead of a short journal article each month was considered a good way to reach many members, some of who could then gather to discuss a particular article, while others, unable to attend, would still have access to topical material to read and learn from.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic last year and the restrictions on face to face meetings ever since, has meant that our monthly Journal Club meetings have moved to an online meeting platform.

Whilst we certainly appreciate that Zoom has not appealed to some members, online meetings have in actual fact allowed us to welcome many new faces, both regional and city-based, as well as from interstate! It has been such a pleasure for us to be reaching so many more PCA Families’ members on line who previously could not participate.

Journal Club in 2021 has continued to provide an opportunity for members to connect with other fathers, mothers and grandparents of children whose backgrounds span permanent care, foster care, kinship care, intercountry and local adoption. Some have had children just newly placed with them, while others are teenagers and older.

Applicants awaiting placement have also attended and have not only gained early insight into the challenges, as well as the joys, of raising non-biological children, but have also received great support in understanding the application process further.

Our monthly conversations have continued to be based loosely around short journal articles, or else guest speakers have facilitated our Zoom sessions, focusing on topics relevant to raising non-biological children.

Practical ideas have often been exchanged regarding how to care for children whose behaviour can be significantly dysregulated as a result of early trauma, as well as how to navigate departmental and legal requirements, such as contact orders with birth families, school matters, etc.

The essence of our meetings over 2021 has continued to be the deep appreciation of each family’s unique journey without judgement, together with a shared sense of good humour and genuine mutual support. They have provided opportunities to offload and / or celebrate with others who understand the stresses and joys of our caring roles.

We see that online meetings are here to stay – plus we understand that many families want to reconnect with others in person again, so there are plans to re-introduce some in-person meetings whenever possible.

“Very helpful people that help us give these kids the best of care and the extra support that otherwise we would be unable to afford, especially when on a Pension.”

“I felt heard and the advisor took the time to explain. I appreciated her conversation with me and felt supported. Thank you.”



Flexi funding – a parent’s perspective

Earlier this year, I suffered a most humiliating car breakdown. The children (all four of them, ages ranging from nine down to eight months) and I (an adventurous Senior Citizen/single Mum to my nephews and baby niece), plus my two cats took a trip up to the bush for an off grid pioneering cabin experience. Prior to the trip, I sensibly had my car serviced, checked the oil and water, and felt confident the car was in great condition. The cabin was at the very top of a remote area on the cusp of the Great Dividing Range, so we had a good ten minutes worth of unmade road to navigate. My car of choice was an imported Nissan El Grand and was my second car of this type.

At one point during the weekend, I did a bit of accidental ‘bush bashing’ when Google Maps led me down a steep mountain track which wasn’t conducive to the El Grand’s extraordinarily low chassis (the one downside to my dream car, which was designed for Japanese roads, not the Aussie bush).

On the way home, the car started to act a little strangely. It basically slowed right down, almost to a standstill, and it was all I could do to crawl slowly into the empty town called Rosedale. All I knew was that I’d never felt so alone in all my life, and I just wanted the earth to open beneath my feet and swallow me. I couldn’t afford to fix this car again, much less buy another one. I just didn’t have the funds.

Suddenly I heard the strangest thing ... the mother of a group of people in the middle of the deserted town called me by name and I distinctly heard her say, “Are you ok”? Well, as a matter of fact, no I wasn’t! From then on in, our story became one of the most amazing stories of my life. All of a sudden there were so many people who helped us! It turns out that this was the Receptionist at my children’s school. She, her husband and children kindly helped me look after my children for several hours,

as I negotiated with the RACV, a Service Station, a lovely passing by mechanic, tow truck drivers, and finally a Maxi Cab which took us all (smelly cats and rubbish included) back home again.

Our car was towed back home to my local service station to await a verdict. I was under no illusions; however, the prognosis wasn’t good. Eventually the car was declared dead, with its only hope of revival being a new motor. This was projected to be both expensive, and also quite difficult to procure. Fortunately, another kind-hearted soul lent me her car until a solution could be sought. The children were able to get to school and kinder, at least. Thereafter followed millions of emails, text messages and phone calls to my insurance company, my friend the cheap car dealer and when that didn’t work, finally I sought the help of PCA Families.

The Advisor I called was great; they patiently and kindly let me cry as I told them my story, and I really felt that they were listening to me. They really understood how I was feeling, which was quite extraordinary. We tried to ascertain whether it was worth resurrecting the car with a new motor but in the end PCA Families made a sensible call. My advisor encouraged me to hope for an even better outcome and said we’d try to buy a new car. I’d never owned a new car in my entire life. I now own the most beautiful four-wheel drive Haval H9 Ultra with all the safety features. We love it!

I’ll never forget the look on my children’s faces when we finally took delivery of the new car. My little four-year-old ran around the kinder car park that day, inviting all their friends to check out his new Haval H9 Ultra. He was almost spruiking, literally screaming out, “hey guys have you seen my new Haval H9 Ultra?” He wasn’t the least bit perturbed by their apparent lack of interest. We’re so grateful to PCA Families, OzChild and everybody who helped us out after such a difficult time. Thank you so much! We’re all still a little bit speechless, to be honest. **Thanks again!**

Board Members

Our Board is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organisation and ensuring it continues to deliver services of a high standard and in a sustainable manner.

Meredith Carter, Chair

Meredith Carter brings to PCA Families her lived experience of fostering and permanent care. She is also the author of *The Potential of Permanent Care* (2015). Her effective advocacy and strategic skills are based on wide experience in the private, public, and not for profit sectors, law reform and social policy consulting. A Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Meredith's strong commitment to community participation complements her governance and leadership experience. These roles include serving as a CEO of two not for profit organisations over 13 years and on tribunals and boards, including as Chair.



Naomi Colville, Deputy Chair

Naomi brings with her a diversity of experiences including corporate recruitment, leadership roles at a disability employment agency and migrant support services, and even a stint as site manager for Cirque Du Soleil. Most recently, Naomi was the Executive Assistant for a statutory authority's board of management. Now an 'at-home' parent of two children, one with various diagnoses and special needs who came through permanent care ... and one 'rainbow baby'. The days are busy as President of the Specialist School's Board and Secretary of the other school's Advisory Committee. With various other community governance roles, Naomi is a passionate advocate for regional and rural families with additional needs who face the challenges and complexities of poor service provision and support. Naomi brings a perspective representative of the unique challenges faced by marginalised and at times, isolated families.



Chris Lockwood, Secretary

Chris Lockwood has over 20 years' experience working across the Mental Health, Construction and Finance sectors. He has specific knowledge of mental health, safety and suicide prevention in the construction industry, and expertise in managing strategic growth, sustainable funding and partnership development. Chris is a director of Suicide Prevention Australia and is currently the National CEO of MATES in Construction, the leader in suicide prevention in workplaces and across industry in Australia, as well as being the proud father of two children adopted from China and Korea.



Roslyn Rule, Treasurer

Roslyn is a well-rounded finance executive with broad experience including management, strategic advice, reporting, governance and systems. She has forged her career working in both big and niche businesses and understands nuances and drivers for organisations of different magnitudes and in different stages of development. Roslyn is motivated to give back to the community and offers her diverse finance and leadership experience to the PCA Families Board.



Dan Barron, Director

Dan Barron is a father of three, and for many years was a full time carer for two of his children who joined the family via permanent care. His children's challenges have given him direct lived experience in navigating the social service and youth justice systems in Victoria. He has also worked for over 30 years in providing direct care and support to people in community and residential settings, who may be living with physical and intellectual disabilities, mental illness, young people leaving care or prison, and those in aged care. He came to Australia from the UK in 1995, and currently works as a Case Manager in a homelessness support service and facilitating a Social Support Group in a large housing estate. He loves the game of soccer and enjoyed coaching his daughter for many years- at least some of the time(!). He also has a passion for growing Australian native trees as a volunteer grower with 'Tree Project'.



Kris Peach, Director

Kris is an experienced Anglicare respite carer and appreciates the challenges and opportunities facing permanent care and adoptive families. She has strong financial and strategic skills, developed during her 5.5 years as Chair and CEO of the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB), 28 years with KPMG as a technical accounting expert and independent member of the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. As AASB CEO, Open Gardens Australia Board member and Audit Committee Chair, YHA Bushwalking Victoria President and Hawthorn Tennis Committee member she has extensive experience in developing and implementing strategies, policies and processes for small organisations, including managing risk, corporate governance and compliance.



Sarah Witty, Director

Sarah had a successful career in both the real estate and finance industries. After some time, she decided it was time to give back. As National Partnerships Manager, Sarah works closely with the CEO and external advisors on establishing new fundraising opportunities within the property development and banking industries. Her diverse experience gives her a unique understanding from the corporate and not for profit business world which she brings to PCA Families. Sarah also fosters children through MacKillop Family Services.



Leslie Annear, Director

A communications professional with 10+ years experience writing and raising funds for community sector organisations, Leslie has reached a wide variety of audiences with compelling content published across a range of print and online forums. As the Founder of Clarity Content, she has secured millions in grant funding for businesses and charities across a diverse array of sectors, including social housing, health, manufacturing, technology and R&D. Prior to this, Leslie campaigned for family-based care solutions for vulnerable children, delivering donor education and fundraising materials in an international aid & development context. With additional experience as a Grants Manager for a commonwealth government agency, responsible for a portfolio of projects worth over \$15 million, she also has in-depth project management experience. A fellowship with Progress Australia in advocacy, strategy and campaigning informs her advice regarding external communications.



Judy Gouldbourn, Director

Judy has over 20 years experience working in the field of human resources. During the last ten years she has held roles with a variety of not-for-profit organisations, in particular, volunteer organisations. Her current role provides Executive Officer support to a health promotion charity. She is well versed on issues of governance and strategy and skilled in building strategic partnerships. Judy has been a member of the PCA Families Finance, Audit and Risk Committee since January 2020. Judy was adopted at birth and now enjoys strong relationships with both her adopted and birth families. Judy has been a volunteer with OzChild's family/mentor support program and holds a Bachelor of Business and a Diploma in Frontline Management.



Board composition and skills

The PCA Families Board is committed to reviewing its skills matrix regularly to ensure the Board continues collectively to have a mix of skills aligned with the governance responsibilities of the Board. We also aim to recruit directors with diverse lived experience reflecting the community we represent.

The results of the assessment of the Directors' skills and experience for 2021 is presented below. It indicates some key attributes of our Board followed by the number of directors the Board considers are skilled or highly skilled in relevant areas. The Board considers this mix results in an appropriate set of skills, experience and expertise, as well as a diverse range of perspectives promoting effective oversight and strategic leadership of our organisation.

All directors are expected to possess the full set of personal attributes and behavioural qualities required to operate as an effective director including:

- **Commitment to our vision and mission:** A clear commitment to the vision and mission of PCA Families and its on-going success; allowing the time required to make a genuine and active contribution to the Board.
- **Leadership skills:** Appropriately represent our organisation; think clearly and take responsibility for decisions and actions; identify and guide change.
- **Being an effective listener and communicator:** The ability to listen, engage with and challenge other people's viewpoints constructively; and communicate effectively with a broad range of stakeholders.

Diversity and tenure

Our Constitution requires a minimum of seven board members with a maximum of nine. The Board must comprise at least five board members with a close personal or family connection to adoption or permanent care and at least two board members that are not involved via adoption or permanent care. Our Board composition policy recognises the need for diversity to also include factors such as a balance of age and sexes and including no more than one board member from any one family.

Lived experience

PCA Families currently has nine Directors including three with no personal connection to adoption or permanent care and six with a personal connection to adoption or permanent care.

Directors' skills in areas of expertise

Strategic planning

6 of 9

Organisational management e.g. HR, OH&S and risk management

6 of 9

Finance and audit

4 of 9

Legal and/or governance qualifications

6 of 9

Public policy and Government relations

2 of 9

Stakeholder engagement

4 of 9

IT/Technology

1 of 9

Fundraising, sponsorship and/or philanthropy

2 of 9

Marketing, Communications and/or Media

3 of 9

Business/commercial acumen

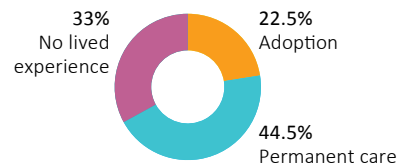
3 of 9

Board attendance

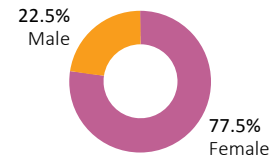
1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

| Board member | Number of meetings | | Date appointed |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------|----------------|
| | Eligible | Attended | |
| Meredith Carter | 7 | 7 | 2016 |
| Chris Lockwood | 7 | 6 | 2011 |
| Dan Barron | 7 | 5 | 2011 |
| Roslyn Rule | 7 | 7 | 2018 |
| Naomi Colville | 7 | 7 | 2019 |
| Kris Peach | 7 | 7 | 2019 |
| Sarah Witty | 7 | 6 | 2019 |
| Leslie Annear | 5 | 4 | 2020 |
| Judy Gouldbourn | 5 | 5 | 2020 |

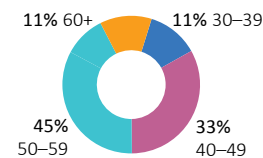
Lived experience



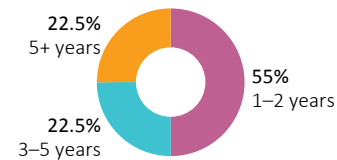
Gender



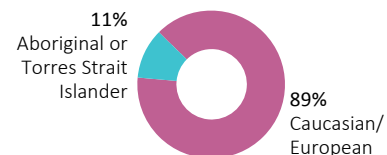
Age group



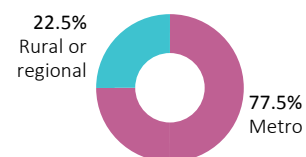
Average tenure



Cultural background



Geographic distribution



From the Treasurer

Roslyn Rule

The team at PCA Families has worked particularly hard during the last year. With increased need by our families due to COVID-19 the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) granted an extra \$785,000 for distribution and I'm overwhelmed that the team were able to deliver so many flexible funding packages.



It is very good news and a relief that as part of the Victorian State Budget outcomes this year DFFH has agreed to ongoing or recurrent funding for both the PCA Families' Helpline and Flexifunding. Further ongoing funding has also been agreed for PCA Families to help support the expansion of the Victorian State Government's Home Stretch program to young people with expiring permanent care orders. I am personally delighted that young people in out of home care will have support up to the age of 21. Most kids are not ready to leave home at 18 years old.

You will have noticed in the financials that we have declared a loss of \$25K for the 2020–21 year. While this is explained in the notes to the accounts I would like to clarify here. Under our funding agreements for both the Helpline and the Flexifunding, up to six months after the end of the financial year, DFFH has the right to claim back any unspent funds. So, whilst at 30 June we showed a surplus of \$177K, we are required under Australian Accounting Standard AASB15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers to take up a liability for Unspent Grants of \$202K, leaving the loss of \$25K. If by 31st December 2021 the funds have not been recalled, this liability will be reversed.

More good news from the year is that our CEO Lisa Milani had her second child. Her need to go on maternity leave earlier than planned certainly left a hole in our organisation and we have missed her dedication and efficiency. Luckily, Kris Peach was available and stepped in as Acting CEO, until we were able to recruit Amanda Bresnan as Interim CEO. In a very short time both Kris and Amanda have produced an amazing amount of work. Thank you both.

The majority of expenses for PCA Families is wages and on costs, making up approximately 69% of our costs. This includes Contractor Costs. These are wages for temporary staff that we engaged through a recruitment agency. We also had recruitment expenses for permanent placement of some new staff. Computer and IT expenses were particularly high this year. The most notable costs included here were our website update, and upgrade to our CRM and an upgrade to the Flexifunding portal. Events and fundraising expenses included funding of the Adoption Retreat, which the Board decided to fund out of reserves. Finally Consulting costs were spent on a review of the state of permanent care and adoption in Victoria, as part of our advocacy campaigns, a fundraising consultant, a grant writer and a member survey and data system review.

Although we showed a loss for the last financial year, PCA Families is still in a strong financial position with enough retained surpluses to sustain our operations for at least the next two years and the extended funding agreements mentioned above. I announced in my last report that the Board had made a decision to use some of the surplus to engage professional assistance to secure funding other than from government in an effort to diversify and not be solely reliant on government funding and that work continues.

The financial statements overview included in this report has been extracted from the PCA Families' Financial Statements for the year ended, 30 June 2021. The financial statements have been prepared as General Purpose Financial Statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Incorporation Reform ACT, 2012. For more detailed information, full financial details are available on our website www.pcafamilies.org.au.

"I am personally delighted that young people in out of home care will have support up to the age of 21. Most kids are not ready to leave home at 18 years old."

Income Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2021

30 June 2021

\$

30 June 2020

\$

Revenue

Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method

Expenses

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Administration expenses | (158,725) | (76,980) |
| Rent expenses | (15,043) | (25,911) |
| Employee benefits and consulting | (808,962) | (565,094) |
| Depreciation and amortisation expense | (9,957) | (11,507) |
| Other expenses | (38,889) | (19,397) |

Surplus before income tax expense

(25,439)

168,222

Income tax expense

–

–

Surplus after income tax expense for the year attributable to the members of Permanent Care & Adoptive Families

(25,439)

168,222

Balance Sheet

For the year ended 30 June 2021

30 June 2021

\$

30 June 2020

\$

Assets

Current assets

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|
| Cash and cash equivalents | 850,510 | 536,983 |
| Trade and other receivables | 8,537 | 35,660 |

Total current assets

859,047

572,643

Non-current assets

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Property, plant and equipment | 15,442 | 20,314 |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|

Total non-current assets

15,442

20,314

Total assets

874,490

592,957

Current liabilities

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------|--------|
| Trade and other payables | 343,257 | 47,906 |
| Employee benefits | 40,697 | 29,076 |

Total current liabilities

343,257

76,982

Total Liabilities

383,954

76,982

Net assets

490,536

515,975

Equity – members' funds

| | | |
|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Reserves | – | – |
| Retained surpluses | 490,535 | 515,974 |

Total equity members' funds

490,535

515,974

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

We have audited the financial report of Permanent Care & Adoptive Families Inc, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity, the statement of cash flows, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the responsible entity' declaration.

In our opinion the financial report of Permanent Care & Adoptive Families Inc has been prepared in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, and *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures of the Australian Accounting Standards Board as disclosed in Note 1.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the registered entity in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, and *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibility of the Responsible Entity for the Financial Report

The responsible entity of the registered entity is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, and *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012* and the needs of the members. The responsible entity's responsibility also includes such internal control as the responsible entity determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the responsible entity is responsible for assessing the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible entity either intend to liquidate the registered entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.



George Georgiou FCA
Managing Partner
Connect National Audit Pty Ltd
ASIC Authorised Audit Group No. 521888
Date: 15 September 2021

Connect National Audit Pty Ltd is an Authorised Audit Company

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We would like to thank and acknowledge the support of



Families,
Fairness
and Housing

There are many ways you can make a difference in the lives of permanent care and adoptive families

PCA Families exists to support strong, stable families who have the support they need to provide nurturing and permanent homes for the children and young people who come into their care through permanent care, kinship care or adoption. We know first-hand that the journey for families is rewarding but not always easy.



How your support will make a difference

Supporting PCA Families will enable us to continue to develop and roll out programs that promote strong and stable families through parenting and peer support services that directly benefit children, young people and their families. It will also support us to continue our advocacy work to improve the lived experience of permanent care and adoptive families.

How you can get involved

There are many ways you can play an important part in helping us to support our community.

Donate

You can donate online at www.givenow.com.au/pcafamilies. Donations over \$2.00 are tax-deductible.

Regular giving

Monthly giving is an effective way to ensure PCA Families can sustain our vital programs and services to the permanent care and adoptive community. You can become one of our regular givers at www.givenow.com.au/pcafamilies.

Include a gift in your Will to PCA Families when you are planning your estate, or donate in memory or celebration of a loved one.

Host a fundraising event to bring the community together and raise essential funds to support permanent care and adoptive families. This could involve:

- Fun runs, marathons or other sporting adventures
- Dress-up days or movie nights
- Sausage sizzles or bake offs
- Art exhibitions or trivia nights

See here if you're interested in organising an event: www.pcafamilies.org.au/support-us/fundraising-campaigns

Volunteer

We welcome applications to join us as a volunteer. Visit www.pcafamilies.org.au/about/employment-volunteering to view the volunteering positions that are currently available.

Join our team

Work with our small, dedicated and skilled team who are passionate about supporting strong and stable permanent care and adoptive families. See www.pcafamilies.org.au/about/employment-volunteering for more information.

Become a member

It's free! See www.pcafamilies.org.au/membership for more information about member benefits and to sign up.

Get social

Follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn to keep in touch with the work we're doing! www.facebook.com/pcafamilies
www.linkedin.com/in/pca-families

Thank you for your continued support of PCA Families.



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