ANNUAL REPORT





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* Names of service users in the entire report have been de-identified to protect their identity, privacy, and confidentiality.



Annette Jackson Chair, UnitingCare Kippax Board October 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

UnitingCare Kippax is proud to be an integral part of the Belconnen community, supporting individuals to improve outcomes for all. Our values-led services ensure a welcoming and inclusive organisation with a reputation for personalised care and support. We see and respond to the whole person, whether that be in times of crisis or additional support as people transition to a new stage in their lives.

Watching the growing success of the collective impact model, where we are working in partnership with government and nongovernment organisations to bring about systemic change, has been a highlight for me as Board Chair this year. The maturing of A Village For Every Child and the commencement of Connected Beginnings have seen the groundwork laid for lasting change. The development of our partnership with Yerrabi Yerwang, to co-deliver Connected Beginnings, has also provided opportunities for UnitingCare Kippax to engage more effectively with our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and enrich the culture of our organisation and work practices.

A key focus area for UnitingCare Kippax is providing training and employment pathways for Canberrans. The Mower Shed, our social enterprise, provided employment to 10 people who had struggled to secure employment whilst providing garden maintenance services to a range of customers, including people in financial hardship.

Our partnership with Ginninderry to deliver the SPARK Training and Employment Initiative has resulted in training opportunities, work experience placements and job outcomes across a range of sectors. Whilst the SPARK Program is on pause during the 2023/2024 financial year, we are excited to be exploring other opportunities to ensure we continue to offer pathways into education and employment. UnitingCare Kippax will continue to offer support to past SPARK program participants.

The UnitingCare Kippax Board has had a strong focus on forward planning for the organisation, working to maximise UnitingCare Kippax's positive impact in the local community in changing times. Risk and governance processes have been systematically revised under a process of continuous improvement, and improvements to the board cycle and governance calendar implemented to improve effectiveness. UnitingCare Kippax is strengthened by the quality and diversity of the Board, and I thank the Directors who generously donated their time and expertise this financial year - Simon Ash, Clare Camilleri, Penny Burns, Trish Hepworth, Andrew Johnson, David Smith, Shara Ranasinghe and Chris Tinning.

To all our staff and volunteers, it is you who makes us who we are. The positive impact we have on our community and peoples' lives is because of you – your passion, values, commitment, professionalism and expertise. Thank you for walking alongside and empowering each person who engages with our organisation.

To all our funding bodies and supporters, thank you for your partnership, expertise and support as we work together to support our Canberra community.

With all the successes, UnitingCare Kippax can also see the challenges in the coming year. The increase in cost of living has left more Canberrans seeking support. This increase in demand has put additional pressure on service delivery as we seek to support clients' material needs and work with clients who are feeling vulnerable and stressed. These broad societal impacts look to continue into the next financial year, requiring a whole of community response.

Looking forward, I am confident that UnitingCare Kippax will continue to adapt to the changing needs of our community and changes to the community services sector. UnitingCare Kippax will focus on providing person centred, innovative service delivery to our community to foster wellbeing, inclusion and empowerment, and working in partnership to achieve outcomes. If you are interested in making a difference to our local community, UnitingCare Kippax is always interested in talking to people working in or supporting the community, and we would love to hear from you.



Michael Nurmi CEO October 2023

CEO REPORT

Together, Create Community. This is UnitingCare Kippax's commitment to our local community, to help families and individuals thrive. I am proud of the outcomes that our organisation has achieved in yet another difficult year for many Canberrans. As I look back over the past three years and reflect on the challenges our community has faced during COVID, and now the cost of living pressures, it also gives me much pride to witness the care and resilience shown by people in our community. I arrive at the Community Centre each morning and meet people coming for coffee and breakfast, or in need of some bread, followed by mums and dads arriving for a playgroup and seniors getting ready for their exercise class. Throughout the day there is a constant stream of individuals and families seeking support, joining programs and engaging in activities providing social inclusion. There is such a diverse range of people, groups and programs that call the Kippax Uniting Community Centre home, and everyone in our community is valued and welcome to participate regardless of race, gender, marital status, nation of origin, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation or economic status.

Despite the challenges in Canberra and across Australia that affect us all, UnitingCare Kippax has been productive and new opportunities have presented themselves over the year. UnitingCare Kippax staff, volunteers and students focus on making the community centre a welcoming space for First Nations peoples, where we respect and celebrate the culture and heritage of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples, on whose traditional lands we work and live. Our organisation is fortunate to partner with Yerrabi Yurwang on a collective impact initiative, Connected Beginnings. This is an Australian Government grants program that helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to get the best start to life. This has been a wonderful journey and we look forward to more collaboration in the future.

The aim of our health and wellbeing strategy is to ensure that our staff have time to come together and celebrate our achievements and have down time from very demanding jobs. This year we held a winter bake off for staff, allowing them to showcase their cooking skills. The food was amazing and demonstrated the many talents our staff possess.

Many students participate at UnitingCare Kippax as part of their practical placements in their university programs, which adds great value to our organisation and gives the students an opportunity to work with experienced professionals helping them put their studies into practice. On Harmony Day, our students treated us to an incredible lunch celebrating the diversity of different cultures and the contribution that they make to society. This year was not without sadness and loss. A staff member was involved in a serious accident that had a considerable impact on our staff, volunteers, students and congregation. I remember the pastoral support that was provided to staff and others during this difficult time and witnessed our community rallying around our staff member and family with prayers, financial donations, cards of support, visits to hospital, and so much more. I am happy to say that, against the odds, the staff member is making a recovery. We continue to provide support as we are one big family and this is what really makes UnitingCare Kippax a special, caring place.

WHAT YOU DO

DO WHAT YOU

All of our programs and activities had a very busy year and demonstrated that they are much needed in our community. As CEO, this gives me confidence that our strategic direction is on the right trajectory. Moving forward over the next two years, the CEO and UnitingCare Kippax Board will continue to evaluate need and identify any gaps in our service delivery. Finally, I would like to thank everyone that contributes to UnitingCare Kippax. With your ongoing support, we can help our community thrive.

The Impact Statement on the following page gives a picture of some of the areas of concern in the Belconnen area and how UnitingCare Kippax is making a difference in those areas.

UNITINGCARE KIPPAX RESPONSE TO COST OF LIVING CRISIS

To live on your own in Canberra, you will need approximately AU\$31,200 a year to cover basic costs such as accommodation, food, utilities and clothing (approximately AU\$600 per week). In Table 1.0, the percentage of Belconnen households with a weekly income of less than \$650 a week was 12.4% compared to 9.0 % in the ACT.

As seen in Fig - (1), the Belconnen community is facing significantly more rental and mortgage stress than the rest of the ACT. 25 % of Belconnen residents are spending more than 30% of their household income and 23% are spending more than 30% of their household income on mortgage repayments.

Homelessness is on the increase in Belconnen. During the 2006 and 2011 Census, Belconnen reported a slightly lower rate of homelessness compared to the ACT. In 2021 this trend shifted and not only did prevalence of homelessness increase in Belconnen but it has surpassed the ACT average.

Table 1.0 - Census 2021 - Household income

Occupied private dwellings (excl. visitor only and other non-classifiable households)	%Belconnen	%Australian Capital Territory
Less than \$650 total household weekly income (a)	12.4	9.0
More than \$3,000 total household weekly income (a)	17.3	38.3
(a) Percentages (%) exclude dwellings with 'Partial income stated' or 'All incomes not stated.'		

Rental and mortgage stress - Census 2021 Fig - (1)





UNITINGCARE KIPPAX WELFARE SUPPORT PROVIDED



UNITINGCARE KIPPAX RESPONSE TO UNDER EMPLOYMENT

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Labor Force report, the ACT's unemployment rate remained unchanged at 3.2% in August 2023 in trend terms, the lowest unemployment rate across jurisdictions.

In the March quarter 2023, across Australia there were 3.3 million people who did not have a job, 42% of these people wanted a paid job. Those that wanted to find employment stated the most important incentive to encourage them into the labor force was 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience', which was rated as 'Very important' by 32% of people without a job. Also highly rated as an incentive was 'Support for training or study to improve skills.'

In the financial year 2020-2021 the main difficulties reported for finding work or more hours included:

- Other difficulties (likely including a range of pandemic-related factors during 2020-21) 19%
- Too many applicants for available jobs 18%
- No jobs or vacancies in locality, line of work or no jobs at all – 17%
- Lacked necessary training, qualifications, or experience – 12%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR MALES **3.6%**

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR FEMALES

Females

Males

Fig - (2) - Main difficulty in finding a job or more hours, by sex

Other difficulties 1 Too many applicants for available jobs No jobs in locality, line of work, or no jobs at all Lacked necessary training, qualifications or experience No jobs with suitable conditions or arrangements Consideted too old by employers Believes disability discourages employers 0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australian 2020-21 financial year

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR YOUTH



*Youth employment is defined as the employment for those aged 15-24 years.



UNITINGCARE KIPPAX TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROVIDED

In the 2022-2023 FY, UCK/SPARK co delivered the SPARK training and employment initiative resulting in the following programmes and outcomes with a focus on job readiness

- Ginninderry Conservation and Horticulture
 Taster Program 2022
- ATC Women in Construction Program 2022 Winner of the 2023 ACT Training Awards Industry Collaboration
- ClubsACT Hospitality Program 2022
- Ginninderry Construction Program 2023
- Women in Civil Construction Program 2023
- ClubsACT Hospitality Program 2023



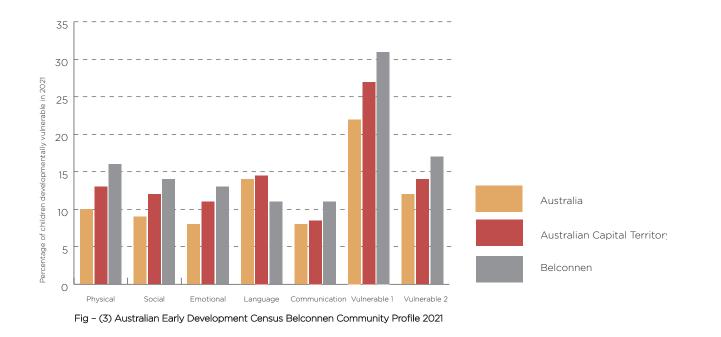
UNITINGCARE KIPPAX SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

Mower shed employed 10 people over the financial year and we provided training in Cultural Awareness, First Aid and Mental Health First Aid. In addition we have \$12,727.27 worth of funding to do yard clean ups for vulnerable people in the community as well as \$2,352.73 worth of funding to buy lawn mowers and whipper snippers to lend to people for low/no cost so that they can maintain their gardens.

VULNERABILITY OF FAMILIES IN ACT

As at December 2022, the average childcare cost in Canberra is estimated to be \$690 per week or \$138 per day,

A measure of how well children are doing is the Australian Early Development Census. This survey measures the physical, social, emotional, language and communication development of children as they start their first year of full-time school. Fig (3) shows that in Belconnen in 2021, children are starting school more vulnerable across the majority of domains compared to ACT and significantly more vulnerable than national levels.



UNITINGCARE KIPPAX ASSISTING FAMILIES TO THRIVE

UnitingCare Kippax continues to help families thrive through a Village for Every Child, Hippy and its Integrated Family Support Services that consist of the Parenting Engagement Program, Case management and health programs.

Belconnen - A Village for Every Child

An initiative that sits within UnitingCare Kippax, was established to bring the community, service providers and government together to improve the development outcomes for children.

In 2022/2023 Village:

 Partnered with over 70 people, representing community members, service providers and government to create 6 leadership and working groups to lead various activities to improve connections between families and early years services, improve the way that children and families transition into early years education and schools and provide educational resources about childhood development.

- Secured funding to roll out the Dolly Parton Imagination Library which will enable 146 children to receive free book, increasing exposure to literacy in homes.
- Designed the first Belconnen Child and Family Service and Program Directory which was distributed to over 400 users.
- Designed and distributed campaign resources, videos and posters to help families enrol in and transition to school.
- Gathered together staff from 12 local schools and early years education centres to create the first improved transitions network which will build connections, share knowledge and resources to strengthen the bridge into schools for families.

HIPPY Program

4 Tutors supported parents through the HIPPY program to be the first teachers for their children, directly benefiting 61 children.

Road to Health

- 29 participants attended Oral Health and Nutrition workshop.
- 22 Participants attended Mental Health workshop.
- 20 participants attended Childhood Development workshop.

Case Management. had 17 already engaged service users and received 35 new referrals.

Parenting Engagement Program

Engaged 11 volunteer mentors, and assisted 10 families with regular home visits, external referrals, resources and individual parenting program delivery.



STORIES OF UNITINGCARE KIPPAX COMMUNITY



Rachael Perkins

My time at Kippax:

In 2022 I started working at UnitingCare Kippax for the Mower Shed. Throughout my time at UnitingCare Kippax, I have been working as a fulltime administration assistant whilst completing a Certificate III in Business. This job has provided me with knowledge of business technology, customer service and work practices, and the skills needed to progress my career in business. Working at UnitingCare Kippax has opened new opportunities for me and helped me to build my confidence in the workplace.

The Mower Shed is a social enterprise that helps people gain the skills and knowledge they need to find mainstream employment. This business offers unemployed people work and helps them build a pathway to increased opportunities. I have enjoyed my time working at the Mower Shed and getting to know the team. I feel proud working with them as we make a difference in people's lives. I took on this traineeship to explore potential career opportunities and learn the skills of administration and office support. Working at UnitingCare Kippax has given me firsthand experience in the workplace while having the flexibility of completing my study. I feel motivated to continue building upon my current skills and taking on new challenges.

UnitingCare Kippax is deeply focused on the community, which I am enjoying learning more about each day. I feel very welcomed by all members of UnitingCare Kippax and well supported. When first starting here I had no prior experience as an administrative assistant; through the support from my supervisor and coworkers I was able to fit right into the organisation. During 2023, I was nominated for the award of ACT Trainee of the Year. I am very proud of that achievement and appreciative of UnitingCare Kippax for the experience they have provided me, which made it possible. I am immensely grateful for all the knowledge I have acquired.



Shirin

My time at Kippax:

I commenced my placement with UnitingCare Kippax in 2022 as part of my Social Work degree at the Australian Catholic University (ACU). During my time at UnitingCare Kippax, I primarily worked with Emergency Material Financial Aid and participated in providing triage services and brief therapeutic counselling to clients. I focused on improving various aspects of my practice, including values, ethics, professionalism, culturally responsive and inclusive practice, application of knowledge into practice, and communication and interpersonal skills.

I was initially nervous during the interview process, but this was quickly alleviated upon entering the building and hearing cheerful sounds from the reception area. This positive atmosphere has had a significant impact on my engagement with clients, volunteers, and fellow students. UnitingCare Kippax has taught me the importance of being appreciative and grateful in building interpersonal relationships.

I had the opportunity to shadow my supervisor and engage in reflective practices, particularly when faced with ethical dilemmas. Through oneon-one supervision, I learned how to externalise issues and handle them in a professional manner, while enjoying the insightful discussion at the same time.

Working at UnitingCare Kippax allowed me to interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds, contributing to my understanding of culturally responsive and inclusive practice. Within my second week, I joined the inclusion program organising team, which I am very grateful for, where I received guidance on culturally appropriate behaviour and fostering a welcoming environment. The best learning comes from doing, and I learnt a great deal about being culturally safe and responsive through having a heart-to-heart chat with culturally diverse people during Good Morning Breakfast inclusion program.

UnitingCare Kippax has provided me with the opportunity to apply my theoretical knowledge into practical situations. As an emerging social worker, the values and principles embedded in UnitingCare Kippax's approach to working with individuals from all walks of life have greatly influenced my practice in a positive way and will continue to do so. My experience at UnitingCare Kippax has been invaluable in developing my skills and understanding of social work practice.



My time at Kippax:

I have been volunteering at UnitingCare Kippax for 2 years. I have been fortunate to volunteer at reception, and it has been a rewarding experience. This is not my first stint as a volunteer here, I helped out at reception a few years ago before taking time out to enjoy some travel. After returning to Canberra, I was volunteering in a retail setting when a UnitingCare Kippax staff member came into the store. She was so friendly and remembered me! When she suggested I come back to UnitingCare Kippax, I jumped at the chance. The staff members here display exceptional care and support, creating a pleasant and welcoming work environment. I find great satisfaction in assisting service users with their needs and inquiries, and many of them express their appreciation.

Volunteering in reception has certainly improved my computer skills. The staff and students are patient at explaining and have helped me build me confidence with technology.

The UnitingCare Kippax value of offering care without judgement has become very important to me. Service users are respected and assisted regardless of the circumstances that may have led them here.

Over the past six months, I have observed that service users' needs have become more complex. Their requirements have extended beyond what we can provide for both emotional and material needs at times, for which we need more support and resources to address their evolving challenges effectively.

I thank UnitingCare Kippax for the opportunity to volunteer and contribute to my community.



Imagination Library inspires a love of reading

In March this year, A Village for Every Child's Connections Working Group successfully secured seed funding from philanthropic partners Lyone and the Snow Foundation, which was combined with funding from Village and HIPPY, to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Belconnen. Managed and distributed through UnitedWay Australia, this program offers a simple way for communities to engage more children in early literacy.

Imagination Library is a book gifting program for children O -5 years. Every child in the program receives a free high quality, age-appropriate book each month, delivered to their door until the child is 5 years old. Reading tips are provided to parents to support positive engagement between children and parents/carers. This opportunity aligns with the Early Childhood Strategy and Best Start for Canberra's Children and will improve the school readiness of children in Belconnen through increasing exposure to literacy in the home.

There will be two Imagination Library pilot sites in Belconnen, covering 6 suburbs in total. The suburbs were selected based on 2021 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data which identified higher numbers of children with developmental vulnerabilities living in these suburbs. The enrolment strategy has been to work with targeted and partner services that have existing relationships with families to ensure that children who would benefit the most from the program are priority in this first phase of the roll-out. These services include HIPPY. The Smith Family, EACH, MACH nurses, Early Family Support Services, Uniting, UnitingCare Kippax, Kingsford Smith preschools, YMCA Holt Early Learning Centre, ACT Playgroups and Capital Region Community Services. Libraries ACT will take on an administrative and wrap around role in this program. As additional funds are secured to increase enrolments, enrolling partners will be expanded to include schools and Early Childhood Education Centres in those suburbs.

The process to get Imagination Library from idea to implementation in less than six months demonstrates the strong engagement of a diverse range of stakeholders in the Village network and the degree of confidence and trust that they have in Village to commit to the initiative.



Partnership with Yerrabi Yurwang

This year UnitingCare Kippax, through its A Village for Every Child (Village) initiative, partnered with Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation (Yerrabi) to deliver the Commonwealth Department of Education's Connected Beginnings program. Yerrabi is an Aboriginal Community Controlled organisation based on Ngunnawal Country in Canberra's North West. The Village and Yerrabi teams share infrastructure, skills, and resources to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to thrive.

The joint project has enabled Yerrabi Yurwang to bring two community development workers on board. The team has brought together women from the community to form the Women's Circle. This group is central to engaging the community and responding to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children.

The Yerrabi team invests in Village's work through their role as co-chair of the Leadership Group and membership of several leadership groups. The team has been instrumental in facilitating cultural awareness sessions in each Leadership Group meeting. The Yerrabi team initiated conversations about the challenges faced by families with ADHD which resulted in the formation of the ADHD Action Group. This group involved 14 members from nine organisations including ACT Government Directorates and service providers. It began meeting in late June to identify and address systemic issues affecting families experiencing ADHD.

The CEO of Yerrabi, Dea Delaney-Thiele, stated that "our partnership with UnitingCare Kippax is an example of UnitingCare Kippax's commitment to equity and self-determination for Aboriginal People, particularly our Women and Children. We are also very appreciative of UCK's desire to work with us to transition the Connected Beginnings program fully to Yerrabi. UnitingCare Kippax walk the talk to improve outcomes with us".

Michael Nurmi, CEO of UnitingCare Kippax, said "our partnership is respectful and two way, and I believe both organisations have been strengthened by working together".

UNITINGCARE KIPPAX CARING FOR OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Walk on Country

The staff wellbeing committee organised an Aboriginal culture and heritage tour with a guide at Tidbinbilla for staff, students and volunteers from UnitingCare Kippax. The cultural tour described the way of life of the First Australians in this area and provided insight into Tidbinbilla's early Aboriginal history. The group learnt about bush tucker and native medicines found along the track and developed an understanding of how the Ngunnawal People have lived here for thousands of years. UnitingCare Kippax is a dynamic and multiculturally diverse workplace and many of the group who went had limited knowledge of the traditional custodians of Canberra, so this was a great opportunity to learn and connect with culture and each other.





RU OK day

RUOK day was celebrated with a lunch put on by staff from the HIPPY program. Staff, students and volunteers were invited to come and eat together, to connect and check in on one another. The chair of the staff wellbeing committee shared techniques to reach out and start a conversation with a colleague; signs to look out for to know if someone needs help; what to do if you identify someone needing help; and general tips and information.





UNITINGCARE KIPPAX PROGRAM UPDATES

IFSS

The Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) supports families and individuals to achieve their goals, resolve challenges, and improve their future outcomes. *The IFSS team is passionate about building strong families and giving them the opportunity to access various branches of services to support their wellbeing. We provide evidence-based information, parenting groups, activities for social inclusion and we journey with families towards the goals they want to achieve.*

To achieve these outcomes, IFSS brings together two programs, the Case Management (CM) and Parenting Engagement Programs (PEP).

The CM program assists families to navigate government and non-government services and provides them with appropriate support and advocacy. Case managers provide families with referrals to relevant specialist services, practical support to participate in meetings and appointments, and advocacy to help them access appropriate supports and resources on an ongoing basis. The program assisted 17 existing service users and 35 new intakes.

The Service Users engaged in the program in 2022-23 expressed a significant increase in their wellbeing, skills, capacity and strengths.

PARENTING ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

In the PEP program, parent mentors and the Parenting Education Officer provides families with practical parenting support to enhance parenting skills and capacity to be "good enough parents". This year, 30 parents attended two evidencebased parenting programs in partnership with West Belconnen Child and Family Centre, *Circle of Security and Tuning in to Kids.* The Parenting Education Officer provided families with one-onone sessions of parenting programs if the parent was unable to attend a parenting group.

Across the year IFSS successfully delivered a number of targeted programs. Body, mind and soul workshops for mums and bubs equipped participants with relaxation skills, plus the ability to role model exercise within their families, selfregulatory skills to manage their stress levels, for a positive impact on wellbeing. Three Road to Health workshops increased health literacy for parents and carers of children pre-birth to 5 years of age, covering oral health and nutrition (29 participants), mental health (22 participants) and childhood development (20 participants). Participants were provided with printed materials and information about low or no cost services. in collaboration with Canberra Health Services. Women Youth and Children Services, Community Nutrition Team. Oral Health Services. Parentline. Tresillian Parenting ForWhen Program, EACH and ACT Libraries. Another 3 workshops are planned for next year.

The diversity of clients from different ethnic, gender and economic social levels provides the opportunity for the program to grow and adapt to the different trends in the community. CM welcomes clients for who they are and through assistance and assessment, the program provides case management and soft referrals to clients. PEP provides opportunities for families to increase their parenting skills and capacity with the help of parent mentors.

Looking back across the year it is easy to see the impact IFSS has made to people in the community. Positive changes include clients successfully accessing the Disability Support Pension, NDIS funding, public housing, and transitional housing. The program has also been able to reconnect parents with their children in care (foster and/or kinship), successful restoration of children into their birth families, and support at court for family violence matters. In addition, through our parenting programs, we've helped parents and carers develop skills and capacities to care and respond to their children in appropriate, mindful, and nurturing ways.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (MHFA) TRAINING:

IFSS delivered 2 MHFA courses to a total of 25 participants. Uniting Care Kippax staff and volunteers attended the first training in January and February followed by other members of the local community services in June.

This training equips participants to recognise common mental health problems, provide initial help using a practical, evidence-based Action Plan, seek appropriate professional help, and respond helpfully in a crisis situation. Participants develop essential tools to engage with clients who are experiencing mental illness. 25 frontline workers trained and able to support mental health creates positive impacts at both individual and community levels.

BODY MIND AND SOUL YOGA AND MINDFULNESS WORKSHOPS:

In May and June 2023, the team hosted four Body, Mind & Soul workshops for Mums and Bubs, aimed at encouraging connection and sense of wellbeing. Six mothers and their babies attended the workshops. The relaxation skills learned, along with promoting exercise within their families through role modelling behaviour and equipping them with self-regulatory skills to manage their stress levels created a positive impact on participant wellbeing.

ROAD TO HEALTH WORKSHOPS:

IFSS team successfully secured a grant to deliver 6 health workshops in 2023, the first three in this financial year. These workshops intend to increase health literacy for parents and carers of children pre-birth to 5 years of age. Workshops delivered evidence-based information, in an easy-tounderstand language. IFSS team partnered with external organisations Canberra Health Services. Women Youth and Children Services, Community Nutrition Team, Oral Health Services, Parentline, Tresillian Parenting ForWhen Program, EACH and ACT Libraries to deliver the content and create referral pathways. Participants were provided with printed materials, information about low or no cost services, and other printed and material resources.

PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED THE ORAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION WORKSHOP IN FEBRUARY

22

PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED THE MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP IN MARCH

20

PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED THE CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP IN MAY

EMFA

The cost-of-living crisis has been very evident to the frontline staff running UnitingCare Kippax's Emergency Material and Financial Aid program (EMFA). EMFA assists members of the community who are in a crisis and seeking assistance for their immediate material and financial needs. Over the last year, EMFA provided 889 people and families with emergency relief assistance across 1899 occasions. More than 580 service users received assistance during the Christmas Campaign, and indications are that the demand for all these services continues to increase sharply.

The program is delivered by a small team of community sector workers and volunteers. Supporting the next generation of community sector workers, UnitingCareKippax staff also supervise students undertaking their practical placements. Our workers and supervised student placements provide triage assistance for walk-ins requiring immediate help with food, prescription costs, food vouchers and so forth. Our volunteers assist with organising our resources such as receiving food deliveries, maintaining the pantry, and packing food hampers. UnitingCare Kippx staff engage with clients on a short-term basis to ensure their immediate crisis needs are met. and that appropriate referrals and connections are established to provide further support to the clients and organise social inclusion programs to

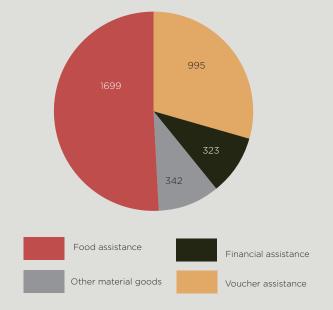
reduce social isolation and build individual and community connections.

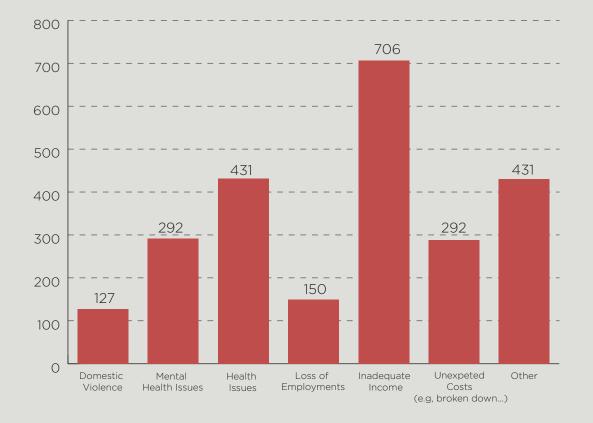
On any day, EMFA will be providing people with assistance such as:

- Food hampers and fresh produce, enabling people to have a healthy diet.
- Prescription assistance including prescribed medications and access to non-script medications such as Children's Panadol, supporting people's physical and mental wellbeing.
- Bills assistance to ensure that people's electricity and gas stay on, and they are able to attend medical appointments/tests/procedures not covered by Medicare.
- Car registration assistance enabling people to transport themselves and their children to work, training and medical appointments.

Social inclusion is a core part of EMFA's work. Activities this year include the monthly Welcome Café for 60-80 people each month. This intergenerational program creates space for relationship building and recreation over a high quality, tasty, nutritious meals. The weekly Good Morning Breakfast provides free breakfast and social connection every Thursday for 25-35 attendees, with numbers steadily increasing post-covid.

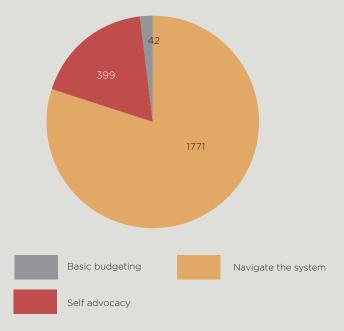
Emergency relief assistance provided 2022-23





Presentations with the following crisis situations

Skills Services Users received assistance with:



Stories from our participants:



Working as part of the EMFA team I am able to make a real difference to the lives of those experiencing crisis and hardship. The impact our work has on individuals and families is rather significant in the way that we are able to help guide clients through the fast-paced society we all face today. We help them overcome barriers and help them move forward and achieve their goals. Some of the support we help with is food hampers and vouchers, fuel vouchers, taxi/bus fares to get to doctor's appointment's or in some cases to help escape domestic violence. Without services like EMFA supporting our community members there would be a lot of individuals and families that simply wouldn't make it through the hard times. We are here for the people when times get tough, and we help get people through the tough times with strength-based personcentered practices designed to empower clients to live their best lives with a decent standard of living.

(EMFA Worker, September 2023)



I have been coming here for years and keep coming back – you guys are awesome, thank you! (EMFA Client, 2023)



You are good, you are bridging the gap but this mediocre system has no emotion but you are caring.

(EMFA Client, 2023)

Case study 1

Sonya scheduled an appointment with a counsellor and came with a list of supports she needed as she was planning on escaping the domestic violence situation she was living in. EMFA was able to provide items necessary for the escape such as a sim card (new phone number with credit), taxi vouchers and food vouchers. Sonya was making her safety bag to have at a friend's place for if she managed to escape. The very next interaction UnitingCare Kippax had with Sonya was a couple of months later just after she had used the supports we provided to assist her to leave her unsafe situation. Sonya was then being supported by DVCS and reached out again for some extra support from UnitingCare Kippax to help move forward and get back on her feet. Sonya is now back in the home that she had to leave, and the perpetrator has been removed from the property. Sonya is receiving ongoing support while she is piecing her life back together and now has goals such as purchasing a car so she can find employment. The EMFA support Sonya received went a long way to helping her achieve her goal of living in a safe environment.

Case study 2

Rosanna attends EMFA walk in service on occasion. Rosanna booked a counselling appointment. Rosanna presented to the appointment facing financial hardship because of numerous bills piling up. Rosanna is living alone with her beloved pet who is an important emotional support for Rosanna. Rosanna's pet has a medical condition requiring ongoing treatment and care, adding to Rosanna's financial stressors. Rosanna was assisted with an emergency food hamper, food and petrol vouchers, pet food, fruit and veggies and brokerage towards an overdue bill. A referral was made to an external service who specialise in pet services to provide further financial assistance with Rosanna's medical pet costs.





The Mower Shed is a social enterprise of UnitingCare Kippax, providing employment opportunities for people who find it hard to gain and maintain employment. The Mower Shed has a considerable portfolio of work maintaining the grounds of ACT Government public housing properties. Alongside this there are a number of other clients. The Mower Shed is committed to helping people in the community, with 128 general gardening services provided to members of the community; 25% of those jobs were done at a reduced cost to assist people experiencing financial hardship.

By addressing intergenerational disadvantage, building pride in place, and modelling ways in which employment programs and mainstream employment overall can be more inclusive and supportive we are building a strong and positive community.

This year the Mower Shed has provided employment to 10 people in the community who have found it hard to gain and maintain employment in the mainstream market.

During their time with us, the casual staff reestablish work habits and capacities. We are able to assist their applications for common job pre-requisites such as Working with Vulnerable People card, police check, white card and Programmed Identification for ACT government roles, as well as training and certification such as working at heights, chainsaw ticket, and other similar role-specific certificates.

The two Team Leaders play an integral part in the process of re-establishing work habits by modelling a positive work ethic, engagement, and high-level team skills. They provide support for staff who are experiencing difficulty with implementing soft skills effectively, identifying areas requiring further development and identifying who is ready for further professional development and/or alternative employment opportunities.

Five of the ten casual workers in the 2022-2023 year have already moved into other employment or further study. The outcomes of this have been increased social engagement, increased capacity to participate in the economic and social aspects of the community, increased connectedness and, through these, increased wellbeing.



HIPPY - Empowering Families

The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is a two-year, home-based early learning and parenting program that works with families with young children, starting when the child is 3 years old and continuing to the end of Pre-School. HIPPY builds upon family strengths so families can provide their child with the necessary skills and confidence to begin school with a positive attitude. Through the program, families are empowered to take an active role in their children's education, development and overall well-being, and parents are supported to be their child's first teacher. Parents guide children's early learning experiences, which helps prepare everyone for a successful transition to school. HIPPY supports parents in becoming more confident in their own parenting skills and their ability to have a positive effect on, and an active role in, their child's learning at home, in school and beyond. HIPPY also seeks to empower parents to become advocates in their child's education, expanding their understanding of their child's development, learning and the expectations of formal schooling.

When families are enrolled in HIPPY, they are matched with a HIPPY Tutor. HIPPY Tutors are employed after they themselves have completed one year of the program, a model designed so it is parents helping other parents. HIPPY Tutors work for 2 years in the program following a cohort through from beginning to end. During this time the tutors upskill, enhancing their further employment opportunities. In 2023 Belconnen HIPPY employs 3 HIPPY tutors.

In 2023, 29 families were enrolled into HIPPY Belconnen at the 3 year old level. The program for 3 year olds focuses on the importance of play for childhood development. Families are delivered 15 booklets fortnightly with play-based activities in them. The HIPPY Tutor goes through the booklet with the parent and offers further other ideas on activities that suits the child's individual learning needs. The HIPPY Tutor is also a connection to the community services sector that can provide extra support for families if needed. Families also attend gatherings focused on different types of play and how that benefits development. The 4 year old program aims to get children school ready, with more structured learning, one booklet is delivered each week, over 30 weeks and activities related to thinking and exploring, communication, creativity, social and emotional development, and family and community.

Families also attend 12 'Parent Groups' that have enrichment topics related to child development and getting ready for school.

In November 2023, 19 families are due to graduate from the Age 5 cohort, a fantastic commitment from these families throughout the COVID-19 disruptions.

HIPPY is delivered by UnitingCare Kippax in partnership with the Brotherhood of Saint Laurence.



Kippax Kids - connection through play

Kippax Kids provides a safe, welcoming and engaging play space for community groups and organisations, to hire and use for their self-run playgroups and parenting sessions. Playgroups are incredibly valuable for children and families; children who attend playgroup are more likely to be developmentally on track on all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census by the time they commence school.

After a couple of very challenging and disruptive years, it has been wonderful to see families returning to Kippax Kids playgroups and reconnecting once again. Throughout the reporting year we have had 5 regular playgroups running, all with steady attendance numbers, even during the winter months. A total of 153 playgroup sessions were held with 146 families/345 individuals attending one or more of those sessions.

Kippax Kids participated in a couple of local community events such as A Village for Every Child – Neighbourhood Day and West Belconnen Tracks to Reconciliation, and playgroups have also enjoyed celebrating significant events such as National Families Week, Father's and Mother's Day, Book Week, Dental Health Week, Science Week, Easter and Christmas.

Kippax Kids playgroups allow all families to feel included, build relationships and access support networks both internally at UnitingCare Kippax and through external service providers. Throughout the year we have been able to assist many families, some of whom are new to the area and even the country, with creating and joining a playgroup and have also referred families to services provided by EFMA, HIPPY, and IFFS. Our partnership with local organisations has greatly assisted families with joining a playgroup, in particular new parent groups who are looking to continue to meet once their facilitated New Parents Group has ended.

The Kippax Kids Administrator continues to visit each playgroup throughout the year to connect with families and provide information on upcoming events, services and resources that may suit their families interests and circumstances. Activities, crafts, and games are also provided in the creche room by the Kippax Kids Administrator, to aid and support child developmental skills, family connection and bonding, and encourage families to start early literacy and numeracy with their children, to instil a love of learning and give them the best start in their education. Groups have expressed their appreciation for the check-ins and resources provided as it has assisted with making their sessions engaging and run with ease.

Good News Story

A playgroup parent with three kids, one of whom was born during COVID and at the beginning of starting playgroup had quite a lot of separation anxiety and was hesitant to interact with other children or parents. By regularly coming to playgroup the parent has seen amazing improvements in her child's social and emotional skills and has enjoyed watching new friendships be made.

Family Feedback

[Kippax Kids] Playgroup has been really good to us. It's been a great experience - easy access to everything - craft, toys and kitchen, it's just like our second home.

My kids really improved in socialising to other kids and we have other mums who come with their kids that are having a hard time socialising, but thanks to this playgroup [they're] improving.'

"The place is really secure, it makes me and the other parents relax cause it's fenced the kids can just run around freely and it gives time to us parents to socialise to others as well and find a new mum friend."











SPARK Training and Employment Program

UnitingCare Kippax has worked in partnership with SPARK Ginninderry to deliver mentoring and wrap around support on SPARK programs that support long term unemployed and those disconnected from the labour market and education to engage in training and employment through a supported pathway.

The SPARK Training & Employment Initiative is well known across the Capital Region for the impact that it has had on the local community and its unique holistic approach to supporting participants.

The program focusses on people who are currently disconnected from the labour market, lack entry level skills, and often face multiple barriers to employment. SPARK offers a different pathway than traditionally offered to support people to be successful. Relationship Managers engage with participants from the information session, throughout the training and then into employment. This supported pathway ensures that when barriers come up there is someone there to mentor and assist where they can. Areas of support specifically target the following areas:

- Housing support, including identifying barriers, assisting with applications, advocating for participants, and connecting participants with relevant organisations.
- Childcare support, including assistance with applications, advocating for participants, and connecting participants with relevant organisations.
- Program Engagement, including daily checkins, one-on-one mentoring, goal setting, social activities, and program snacks.
- Learning resources required for the course, including organising and facilitating the provision of Personal Protective Equipment for each participant.
- Travel assistance, including the provision of fuel

cards and bus tickets if required.

- Employment preparedness, including resume support, interview skills, communication, basic digital technology assistance.
- Industry placement management and support, including facilitating site tours, visiting participants whilst on placement, and communicating participant individual support needs with human resource managers.
- Transitioning from training to employment, including ongoing support post program for individuals who need further support finding employment and for individuals who do not successfully complete the training.

In the 2022-2023 financial year, the SPARK Training and Employment Initiative supported 178 people, 110 in training places plus 68 in work experience placements. From the 110 training places, 75 people have already successfully obtained alternative employment or taken up training or apprenticeship/traineeship positions.

SPARK hospitality program a proven pathway to employment

SPARK Hospitality graduate testimonials

The SPARK JobTrainer ClubsACT Hospitality program offers a proven pathway into Canberra's vibrant hospitality industry. The program is designed specifically to provide individuals with the skills, knowledge and resources needed to enter the workforce.

This award-winning program, delivered in partnership with the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) and ClubsACT has a focus on skills development, hands-on training, and work experience placements.

Mel Lyons, SPARK Training and Employment manager says *"This model was specifically*

developed to provide individuals with a pathway into employment. The link between training and industry is key to its success."

Fully funded through JobTrainer, the program offers participants all the benefits and opportunities at no cost. Participants are provided with the Personal Protective Equipment needed to fully engage in CIT's simulated bar and live training café, and industry work placement.

"The program is suitable for a diverse range of individuals, whether just beginning in a career path or looking to change directions" says Ms Lyons.



Beatrix, a Dickson College graduate, was taking a gap year when her mum introduced the idea of SPARK. "I didn't like school too much," Beatrix says. "I wasn't doing a whole lot, just working casually and trying to figure out where I wanted to go."



Dzaky had been working as a visual merchandiser, a job that paid well, but was irregular and involved a lot of travel.

"I was referred to the SPARK program by my employment provider as I was looking for a new job with a more stable and routine schedule," Dzaky says. "The program helped me in attaining the qualifications and experience needed for me to get a foothold in the hospitality sector."

A key part of the SPARK program is job readiness. A dedicated SPARK Relationship Manager journeys alongside the participants to offer wraparound support before, during and after completion of the program.

After the four-week program, successful participants were offered a five-day work experience placement with a partnering ClubsACT member. Ainslie Group were very excited to be part of the SPARK program as they felt it aligned with the club industry's own values and vision.

"We were inspired by Ginninderry's passion for community engagement, and their commitment to educate and support individuals who may face challenges to attaining employment," says Molly Star-Hossack, Ainslie Group human resource manager. Dzaky and Beatrix both completed their five-day work placement at the Ainslie Football and Social Club. During this time, they gained valuable experience across various roles, before choosing an area of focus for their remaining time.

"The five-day work experience let me get familiar with café, bar, and restaurant operation. It also led me straight into my current employment, as I was offered a position as soon as the work experience period was over," says Dzaky.

Matt Nunn, Ainslie Football Club operations manager says, "Dzaky was brilliant in the café,

even stepping behind the coffee machine during busy periods. Meanwhile in the restaurant, Beatrix was running meals with efficiency, spent time as cashier, and her customer interaction was second to none.

"I was so impressed by the effort and achievement of Dzaky and Beatrix that I offered them both employment and was extremely pleased they both accepted," Matt says.

When asked about the benefits of the SPARK program, Molly explains that "it allows prospective employers to tap into a diverse pool of talent, potentially bringing new perspectives, skills, and experiences to your organisations."

Since completing the program, both Dzaky and Beatrix continue to enjoy working and developing skills as employees of the club.

"Beatrix has become a reliable member of our wait staff, and Dzaky has proven to be a valuable staff member across a number of areas," says Matt. When asked if she would recommend SPARK to others Beatrix replies, "Absolutely! As someone who has struggled with learning most of my life, it was great to have something short and sweet. It made learning a whole lot easier for me."



A Village for Every Child

The vision of A Village for Every Child (Village) is that children in Belconnen are physically healthy, socially, and emotionally strong and ready to engage fully in learning and life.

This vision will be realised if we work collectively to ensure that the children have the best conditions to develop emotionally, physically, and socially so that they are ready to learn. This requires a community, families, and carers that understand child development and a strong and connected system across health, education, and community services to support children as they transition through developmental stages and learning environments.

UnitingCare Kippax provides the backbone organisation for Village. The Village team and partners facilitate various activities and projects designed to strengthen the system that supports children in the early years so that they are ready for learning. These activities respond to what people on the ground are experiencing. Over the 2022-2023 financial year, these have included:

- Hosting community workshops where more than 75 people learnt more about what the results of the Australian Early Development Census mean for the children of Belconnen. This data gives a picture of how children are developing emotionally, cognitively, socially, and physically, and the knowledge created underpins decisions about Village's activities and strategies.
- Creating and disseminating a range of practical resources that have been distributed to over 100 early childhood education & care centres, schools and community and health services. These are being used by parents, services, early learning centres and schools. Resources include:
- * The Belconnen Child and Family Service Directory which provides information about local services. There have been over 400 downloads of the Directory since its launch in early 2023.
- * Phase one of the Transitions Information Campaign which gives targeted information

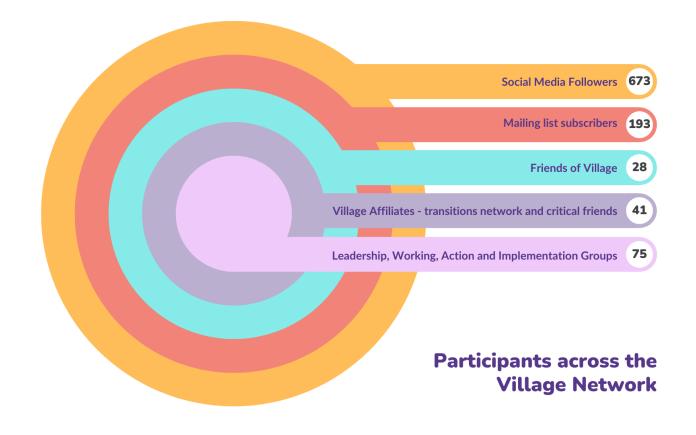
about school enrolment to parents and early learning centre educators.

- * A child development poster that reminds families to attend developmental and health checks as recommended by the ACT Health book (Blue Book), and a pathways map to assist families navigate into the appropriate services if they have a child development, health, or disability concern.
- The establishment of the Early Years Community of Practice and other networking opportunities that bring together people involved in providing early years education, health, and community services to families in Belconnen and beyond.

This year Village also directly engaged people who live in the Belconnen area.

In March, the Village Backbone team hosted a Neighbour Day event to connect with families. The theme was 'Create Belonging.' Fifteen families attended with close to 20 children, several who will be commencing preschool in the next two years and connected with the pathways to preschool resources. The purpose was to promote social connection amongst families of young children, provide children with an opportunity to engage in healthy learning and play, provide information for families about services and programs for children and families in the region and an opportunity for families to meet representatives from these organisations. The event was supported by Village partners Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation, The YMCA Holt Early Learning Centre, Libraries ACT, Capital Region Community Services, Mosaic Baptist Church, UnitingCare Kippax, A Good Start in Life, HIPPY and ACT Education Directorate.

The activity and milestones achieved in 2022-23 continue to demonstrate the value of Village's capacity to bring together a growing number of people and organisations to act for children and families in Belconnen. This progress is possible because of the strength of trusted relationships and the continued investment in partnerships across all sectors involved in supporting families. The activities and their impact are examples of how a place-based way of working connects community-led solutions with the implementation of government strategies, including the Future of Education Strategy, the Best Start Strategy, the ACT Wellbeing Framework, and the proposed actions in the Draft Preventative Health Action Plan.



HOW IS UNITINGCARE KIPPAX FUNDED

UnitingCare Kippax has many financial contributors that enable us to carry out the important work that we do in our community. A large proportion of our funding is from the ACT Government and UnitingCare Kippax is grateful for this financial support.

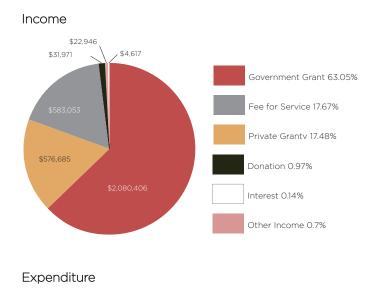
In these difficult financial times for many people in our community, the demands placed on community organisations to provide more assistance have only increased. It is paramount that we diversify our income streams to become less reliant on government funding. UnitingCare does this through innovation and collaboration. Our partnership with Yerrabi Yurwang demonstrates a way to share costs and provide additional staff resources to assist both organisations. Our social enterprise provides social good in employment, training and low cost services, but in addition also helps contribute to UnitingCare Kippax's cash flow and sustainability.

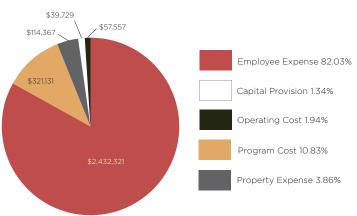
We are also grateful for our philanthropic supporters, including Snow Foundation, Hands Across Canberra, and many others who contribute a significant amount of financial support to the Not-For-Profit sector.

I would also like to acknowledge the support that we receive from the business community, both financial and pro bono. Building relationships with like-minded business is essential to the long-term sustainability of our organisation and ongoing delivery of programs and activities such as the Let's Give Everyone a Christmas campaign and the operation of the Mower Shed services.

Finally, a big thank you to our community members that make regular donations and volunteer their time to help us to make a difference in our local region.

Income and expenditure 2022-2023:







WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR UNITINGCARE KIPPAX

Moving into another busy year, UnitingCare Kippax will encounter new opportunities and challenges. We look forward to designing new programs and activities that meet the needs of our community and continuing our core services.

With the ACT government's move to commissioning, UnitingCare Kippax will be commissioning for services in 2023-2024. Commissioning is a new way of designing, funding, and delivering a fit for purpose human services system within the ACT. It is a methodology that ensures the system and the services and programs within it are meeting the needs of our community. UnitingCare Kippax hopes commissioning will provide longevity in funding for our essential programs.

UnitingCare Kippax Campaigns

Campaigns play an essential role in sustaining and funding our work at UnitingCare Kippax, ensuring that we can continue to support families and individuals in need. Keep an eye out for the following campaigns UnitingCare Kippax will run over the next year, and support your community to thrive:

- UnitingCare Kippax Return Back to School Appeal
- Hands Across Canberra Appeal
- UnitingCare Kippax Winter Appeal
- The Mower Shed Appeal
- Let's Give Everyone a Christmas Appeal

Caring Dads

There is a possibility of a collaboration with Yerrabi Yurwang to trial the Caring Dads program. This program exists to change current practice to better include fathers in efforts to enhance the safety and well-being of their children. At this stage, we are seeking suitable funding to work with Indigenous men leaving the prison system, to provide a program that focuses on intergenerational change for Indigenous children. Both organisations feel that this program will have a positive impact on the Indigenous community.



Kippax Movers

This new social enterprise's purpose is to create avenues for vulnerable people to move, change, grow, by minimising the financial burden and stress in times of physical relocation for families and individuals requiring support, especially those escaping domestic violence. The social enterprise will focus on removal of rubbish and items that are no longer required, and raising money by selling suitable items. Domestic and family violence can affect people of all ages and backgrounds, but we recognise that it mainly affects women and children. UnitingCare Kippax wants to help and hopes to launch Kippax Movers in 2024.





Training and Employment

UnitingCare Kippax continues to grow our relationships with like-minded social-good businesses looking to help people upskill and find employment.

Moving into the next year, we have partnered with The Umbrella Collective Pty Ltd, an organisation that provides strategic consultancy services supporting industry, education, government, and not-for-profits across Australia to deliver social impact. We will also continue to work with Empowered Collective, which provides services focusing on encouraging people to identify their strengths and increase self-esteem with practical tools and support.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Snow Foundation
ACTCOSS
ACT Playgroups Association
Brotherhood of St Lawrence
Canberra City Care
Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)
Canberra Quilters Inc
Canberra Refugee Support
Capital Region Community Services
Care-More Pharmacy Kippax
Care Financial Inc
Community Services Directorate
Hands Across Canberra

Corrective Services, ACT Even Dots Families ACT Ginninderry Joint Venture Housing ACT Housing ACT Kingsford Smith School Legal Aid ACT Lifeline Training Masonicare Migrant and Refugee Support Service (MARSS) Multicultural Employment Services Multicultural Youth Services North Belconnen Uniting Church Onelink
OzHarvest
Police and Citizen's Youth Club
Programmed Facilities Management
Rotary ACT
SPARK Program, Ginninderry
St Vincent de Paul Society
Storage King, Belconnen
Supportive Tenancy Services
ACT Health Directorate
ACT Community Services Directorate
Libraries ACT (Transport Canberra and City Services)
The ACT Multicultural Hub

University of Canberra The Millhouse Ventures Ltd Uniting NSW/ACT UnitingCare Australia West Belconnen Child and Family Centre Women's Legal Service Woolworths Kippax Charnwood Capital Chemist ACT Education Directorate Mackenzie Workplace Law Child and Youth Protection Service SOLVit – IT Network Support Australian Federal Police (Constable Kenny Koala)

The Riverview Group National Zoo and Aquarium Ginninderra Rotary Downer The Umbrella Collective Empowered Collective Yerrabi Yurwang Australian Catholic University Kippax Uniting Church St John's Reid St Paul's Ginninderra YMCA Canberra Helping ACT Menslink ARACY Evatt Primary Latham Primary The Smith Family EACH Woden Community Services Baringa Early Learning Centre Share the Dignity Foodbank NSW/ACT HELYAR & Co Belconnen Golf Club



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