

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



CAPS
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CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION SERVICE



About CAPS

Established in 1973, the Child Abuse Prevention Service (CAPS) is the oldest organisation in Australia dedicated to the prevention of all forms of child maltreatment. We are a non-government, non-religious charity with a vision that is simple but powerful: that all children are safe, supported and loved.

Our staff are experienced psychologists, educators and policy experts who are well-equipped to create positive childhood experiences through our award-winning community education programs, national case review platform, training workshops and child safe organisation solutions.

Our story began when nurse and mother Dorothy Ginn began volunteering at the Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross. There she helped to care for runaway children and people struggling with addiction.

Through this work she began to notice that childhood maltreatment and neglect were often the root cause of the trauma being experienced by the people in her care. One day Dorothy encountered a distressed man in the chapel. His wife had killed their baby. He asked her, “Where do you go when something like this is happening, before it’s too late?”

Dorothy would soon have the answer. She and a handful of other volunteers went on to found Prevention, the first organisation of its kind in Australia. Today, we are just known as CAPS.



Message from our leaders




Like no other, 2021 has been an enormously challenging, exhausting and rewarding time for CAPS. Despite having more than a few hurdles placed in our way thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, this past year has been an incredibly productive one for our passionate child protection team. It saw the funding, development and delivery of four new programs designed to create positive childhood experiences for families across NSW and abroad.

While navigating a lockdown or two we were able to launch Safe Arrival, our domestic and family violence community education program specifically designed to address the needs of recently arrived women and their children. This culturally safe, strengths-based program has been a long-held dream of mine and I am so proud of what our staff have already achieved at three locations across Sydney, together with the support of our fantastic delivery partners. Most of all, I was touched by the incredible resiliency of the participants who attended each workshop and bravely shared their stories to help build the safe and supportive environments all women and children deserve.

In an exciting and innovative development for CAPS we partnered with HubHello on SAFE, a national case review platform that uses AI to identify children potentially at risk of abuse or neglect. Thanks to the generous support of Westpac through the Safer Children, Safer Communities program, CAPS was able to employ an experienced Case Review Specialist in January 2021. The employment of a dedicated staff member assigned to the SAFE platform means all cases can be reviewed in a timely manner, ensuring that vulnerable kids are identified and supported - well before risks can escalate further.

We also launched Child Safe Leaders, which saw our team work closely with three clients (Tresillian, The Jacaranda Centre and Guthrie Early Learning Centre) to help them implement the Child Safe Standards long before the legal need to do so. With the NSW Government mandating the standards in November 2021, the program will undoubtedly help even more organisations to become child safe in the years to come.



On top of this, CAPS rolled on with the delivery of our award-winning protective behaviours program, Safe Children, Safe Families. The lockdowns provided us with the perfect opportunity to refresh the program content to incorporate the latest and greatest child protection resources and ensure our pivot to online delivery was as smooth as possible.

And speaking of lockdowns we scrambled together to launch our new online parenting program, Supporting Kids, as soon as we were able to return to the office. Designed to improve family mental health and wellbeing during the current times of uncertainty and anxiety, this engaging and informative webinar series has already been a hit and we hope to extend it well into 2022 and beyond.

I should mention that our impressive program development work was complemented by strong financial growth that saw CAPS finish the 2020-21 year with a comfortable surplus of \$124,619. This fantastic result sets a firm foundation that will allow us to keep evaluating the impact and expanding the reach of our programs moving forward.

Of course, we could not have achieved this success over the past year without the passionate dedication of our great little team, the strong support of our volunteer board and the wonderful generosity of our donors and funders.

Thank you kindly all!

- Reegan Barber, CEO



Dear CAPS supporters,

We appreciate your support through the many challenges of 2021.

While there has been much doom and gloom associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also experienced many great things happening at CAPS. The lockdowns allowed us to tweak our programs, update some of our collateral and work on new programs. We emerged from Sydney's first lockdown with the new service offering of Child Safe Leaders and managed to launch SAFE as well. Lockdown restrictions meant that Safe Children, Safe Families programs were delayed and rescheduled, but our delivery of this core program roared back to life as soon as possible.

Of course, when I refer to "we" in this context, I refer to the inspired leadership of CAPS CEO Reagan Barber, who has steered our ship safely through these times. I commend his drive and persistence, in ensuring that CAPS has been able to reach a wider group of clients through the launch of innovative new programs. Reagan has been supported by wonderful staff who have rallied together, and I extend my gratitude to them.

After 11 1/2 years on the CAPS board, with 9 1/2 of those as chair, I will step down from the board at our December 2021 AGM. Our collaborative and steady board will be led by John Cowell, a stalwart of our board over a number of years. I offer my thanks to the board collectively, and individually, who have given so freely of their time and expertise, providing sound governance to our organisation.

Ultimately, we can only continue to deliver our programs and reach, support and help children through the generosity of our many supporters, and the organisations with which we work. Thank you for your support and trust. It encourages us for the work ahead!

- Andrew Grech, Chair

Our Programs

Safe Children, Safe Families

Safe Children, Safe Families (SCSF) is our award-winning (2020 Zest Award for Exceptional Project in a Not For Profit Organisation) protective behaviours program. Delivered in childcare organisations and schools since 2016, the program teaches young children the personal safety skills they need to reduce their vulnerability to abuse and how to get help sooner if they do experience unsafe situations.

In addition, childcare professionals and educators receive training on how to recognise the early warning signs of maltreatment. They are given expert guidance on mandatory reporting and responding to disclosures in a supportive manner. Parents are also equipped with the information they need to better protect their kids from sexual abuse and other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as bullying and online threats. [Learn more](#)

2021 Program Achievements

- Despite the COVID-19 lockdown, more than 200 children were able to receive life-changing personal safety skills at 15 childcare locations
- More than 60 parents and 50 staff across the Sydney region received expert advice on how to keep the kids under their care safe and supported.



Safe Arrival

Safe Arrival is our community education program designed to raise awareness of domestic and family violence (DFV) and provide critical harm prevention skills for refugee and recent migrant women.

In a respectful, accessible and culturally safe setting, participants learn how to identify and respond to DFV, including issues particularly relevant to this vulnerable cohort such as coercive control, financial abuse, reproductive coercion and immigration-related violence. Other intersecting factors are also discussed over five face-to-face workshops, including migration pathways and traumatic pre-arrival experiences, as well as settlement issues such as acculturation stress and social isolation. [Learn more](#)

2021 Program Achievements

- Since late 2020, 42 clients have participated in the program at three locations across Sydney
- These clients represented 24 different countries from around the world
- CAPS is currently developing a youth version of the program, which will be delivered next year alongside the standard program.



Child Safe Leaders

Drawing on almost 50 years' experience delivering child protection programs, our Child Safe Leaders program is designed to make it as easy as possible to implement the Child Safe Standards at workplaces across NSW.

We work with organisations of all sizes to review their policies and processes relating to children and provide expert guidance on what needs to be done to embed a child safe culture at the heart of the organisation. This can include the delivery of a CAPS Health Check Report that states how well an organisation is implementing each of the ten Child Safe Standards and the development of a bespoke child protection solution based on an organisation's unique needs (such as a new Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct, staff training workshops and more). [Learn more](#)

2021 Program Achievements

- CAPS delivered Child Safe Leaders certification and child protection training at four organisations
- More than 80 client staff participated in our training workshops.



SAFE

CAPS is a partner with HubHello on SAFE, an innovative national case review platform that uses AI to identify children potentially at risk of abuse or neglect. The system does not replace the child protection processes that exist in states and territories. It has been designed to support the systems that are already in place. It does so by making it as easy as possible for organisations to recognise and respond to child protection risks, particularly for cases that do not meet the high threshold needed for referral to the child protection system.

SAFE has been in operation for over seven years and its machine learning has developed a 96.2% accuracy rate at predicting at-risk children, as verified by CAPS. [Learn more](#)

2021 Program Achievements

- SAFE currently holds case data for over 68,000 children across Australia
- CAPS staff reviewed over 300 cases
- Over the next year, CAPS will drive awareness of the platform and develop new referral partnerships.



Supporting Kids

CAPS developed Supporting Kids in response to the array of impacts on children and families everywhere due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar series has been designed to teach parents how to support their children's mental health and wellbeing during these times of heightened uncertainty and anxiety.

Delivered by our experienced psychologist, each 60-minute interactive webinar addresses topics such as Storytelling to Support Mental Health, Mindful Parenting, Emotional Regulation and Supporting Teens in an expert but engaging manner. [Learn more](#)

2021 Program Achievements

- Since its launch in October, CAPS has delivered eight free weekly webinars
- A total of 82 parents and carers have engaged with the program
- Next year, CAPS plans to expand Supporting Kids to cover a wider range of topics and reach as many families as possible.

Emotions

"Emotions signal threats and rewards. Much like a compass that guides us in the right direction, emotions have the power to guide us to the right actions"

PositivePsychology.com

Emotional development starts from a very young age and continues through adulthood. As children grow and are exposed to new situations, their emotional interactions become more complex.

Experiences of emotions can start off as physical responses, then start having thoughts and judgements associated with them. This can trigger intentional or unintentional actions.

Many things influence how children express their emotions through words and behaviour



SAFE Case Study



Jason's* Story

Jason* is a 7-year-old boy attending a before/after school care organisation in Western Australia. After noticing some child protection concerns, a staff caregiver completed a SAFE assessment for Jason.

Jason's data was reviewed by the CAPS Case Review Specialist, who assessed that the child faced a high level of risk due to:

- Domestic violence (at the hands of his father)
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect.

The SAFE dataset indicated that Jason and his family were not known to child protection services and were not the subject of a report made by the organisation.

After reviewing all available data, CAPS advised staff at the organisation to report Jason's situation to the WA Department of Child Protection. They were reluctant to do so, as they lived in a small community and were afraid of the consequences should Jason's father find out.

In light of this, CAPS made a report to the Department. An agency rep advised they had not previously known about Jason's family.

The next day, CAPS received a call from the service coordinator at the organisation, advising that the Department had contacted them earlier that day to investigate Jason's case.

The service coordinator said they felt "a weight has lifted from our shoulders". They said that they would make child protection a higher organisational priority moving forward and will arrange for specialised staff training.

Over the months ahead CAPS will follow up with the before/after school care organisation to support them with their child protection needs. We all hope Jason is now receiving the help he needs to stay safe.

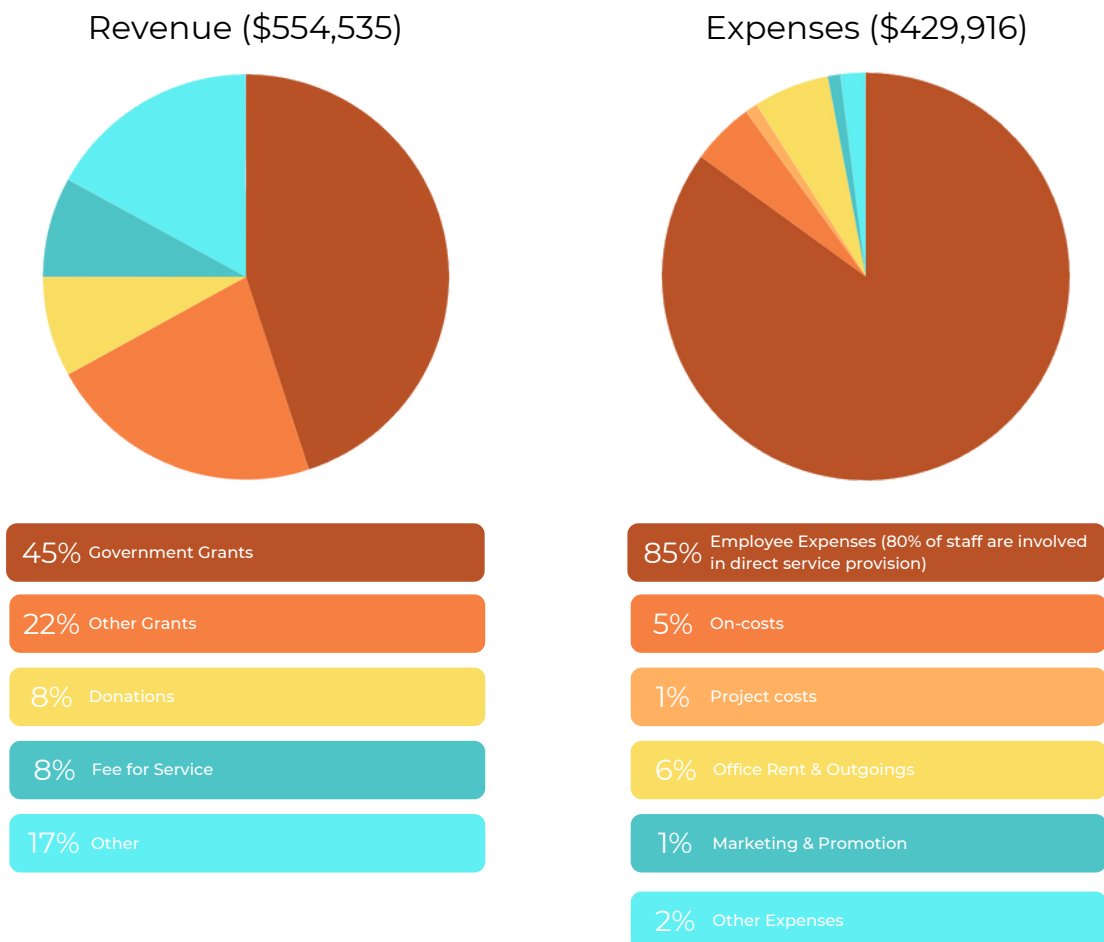
*Not his real name

2020-21 Financial Report

2020-21 was a year of growth for CAPS. We recorded a return to surplus (\$124,619) following the significant expansion of our program offerings. New programs that were successfully funded and delivered over this period include Safe Arrival, Child Safe Leaders, and ongoing specialist case review work through the SAFE platform.

Like many organisations, our income was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw a reduction in donations and the amount of funding available through grant programs nationwide. The delivery of our frontline programs was similarly disrupted due to the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021. Throughout the restrictions CAPS staff developed new digital resources that allowed us to help as many families as possible during a time of heightened need for our work. We also benefited from the JobKeeper and JobSaver support programs, which mitigated some organisational costs during these disruptive periods.

In late 2021 CAPS completed an organisational restructure to accommodate our new program suite and ensure our sustainability moving forward. We are now well-placed to continue on our upward trajectory into 2022 and beyond.



CAPS is externally audited by LBW & Partners

Acknowledgements

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Our Partners



Our Funders



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