



monaro **family**
support service

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO COUNTRY



Monaro Family Support Service respectfully acknowledges the Aboriginal groups who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which we currently deliver programs and services. The majority of the Snowy Monaro region is Ngarigo Country, but we also wish to acknowledge the Bidjawal people in the south eastern parts of the region around Delegate, the Walgalu people in the west of the region, and the southern Ngunnawal people in the far north east of the region. We also pay our respect to the wisdom and diversity of past and present Elders and leaders and to their commitment of nurturing future generations of strong young Aboriginal people.



ABOUT US

OUR HISTORY

Monaro Family Support Service (MFSS) is a highly respected community organisation with a firmly established presence across the Snowy Monaro LGA, having operated in the region since 1978.

MFSS offers no-cost support promoting mental health and well-being in all rural and remote areas of the Snowy Monaro region.

The Service provides a range of programs and services to children, young people, families, and communities, especially to those who may be vulnerable or experiencing adversity, including case management, counseling, advocacy, referrals, group programs, and community education events.



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OUR MISSION & VISION

OUR VISION:

To support children, young people and families to achieve their full potential.

Our MISSION:

Working together with families for positive growth and change.

PILLARS OF OUR WORK:

FAMILY FUNCTIONING	HEALTH and WELLBEING	SAFETY	SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS	EMPOWERMENT	RESILIENCE
Improved family functioning	Improved mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and parents	Improved safety of children and young people and reduced entry into child protection	Increased individual, family and community connectedness	Increased self determination and individual, family and <u>community agency</u>	Improved ability of clients to cope with challenges

GOALS

- Increased parental capacity through fostering of new skills and knowledge
- Family relationships are strengthened
- Enhanced mental health, wellbeing, and social and emotional skills (coping, self-regulation, resilience)
- Increased participation in community activities/events
- Improved access to and engagement with services
- Increased self determination and confidence
- Increased sense of belonging to community





WHO WE ARE

Monaro Family Support Service (MFSS) is a highly respected community organization with a firmly established presence across the Snowy Monaro LGA, having operated in the region since 1978. MFSS offers no-cost support promoting mental health and well-being in rural and remote areas of the Snowy Monaro region. The Service provides a range of programs and services to children, young people, families, and communities, especially to those who may be vulnerable or experiencing adversity, including case management, counseling, advocacy, referrals, group programs, and community education events.

MFSS delivers a flexible, responsive model of integrated services, using trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches to collaborate with clients to address their needs and goals. Recently, MFSS has sought to complement the uptake of these core programs through additional therapeutic services. In addition to having offices in Cooma, Bombala, and now Jindabyne, MFSS has a proud 43-year history of providing outreach to bring these services directly to where people are so that the barriers in having to seek help through traveling to services in regional centers are diminished.

MFSS receives a mix of state and federal government funding for its core programs, notably:

Dept of Communities and Justice NSW (Targeted Earlier Intervention)

Dept of Social Services Cth (Children and Parenting Support),

- In 2020-21 Resilience NSW (Recovery Support Service and Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund)

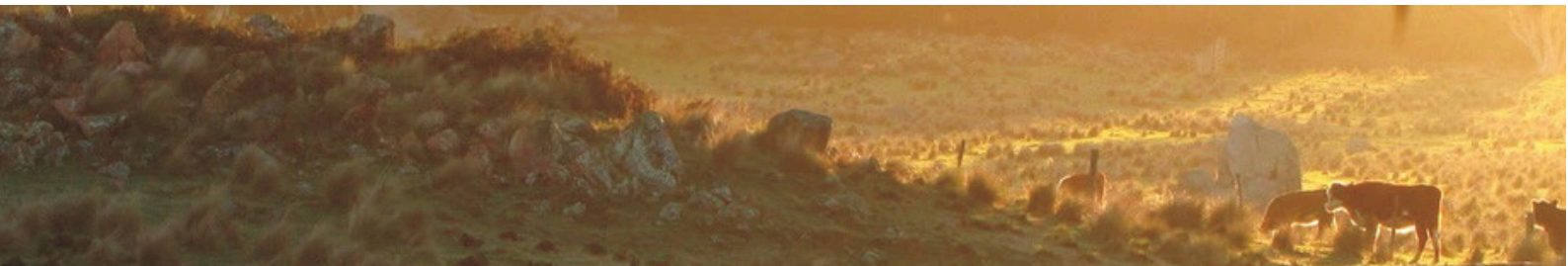
- Coordinate South Eastern NSW Primary Health Network (various)



Meet Our Team

Pauline Cook
Liz Maxwell
Luki Choudhury
PJ Ward
Lynda Nicholson
Paul Mackay
Yvi Henderson
Jodie Reed
Janet Beer
Kinza Newman
Emma Holgate
Jennifer Nicholls
Sharon Whitney
Tracy Crompton
George Walters & Nick Forbes

Manager
Casework Manager
Office Manager
Recovery Support
Family Support
Family Support
Family Support
Family Support Bombala
Family Support Jindabyne
Programs
Trakz Program
Equine Assisted Learning
Bookkeeper
Family Support
Rural Men's Wellbeing



Meet Our Committee

Mark Williams
Cathy Guion
Margaret Hillman
Kirsty Salvestro
James Sullivan
Dr Peita Lidster
Samara Byrne

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
Member
Member
Member



MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

In 2021-2022 we were once again faced with significant challenges. The most significant of which was the sad loss of our beloved leader Mark Williams. Mark Williams was the President of MFSS for many years and throughout this time, shared with us his devotion and commitment to the Monaro Community. We are so grateful for these enormous contributions and we wish this to be acknowledged.

The next challenge was the merger. This merger has taken a lot of perseverance, goodwill, and commitment to the vision of what is in the best interests of the community. Especially when bringing together two organisations which have been founded from the ground-up by passionate community members, these are not decisions to be taken lightly. Many many hours of work and thinking, and gathering the highest quality information and advice, has gone into getting us to this point.

Would like to thank all those involved in getting us here:

1. Firstly, the members of the Joint Steering Committee who have overseen the due diligence and had responsibility for many of the decisions about the course of the merger - Sharon Schulz, Mark Herbert, Marg Hillman, and Kirsty Salvestro.
2. Staff and management for their input, many hours of work, and patience through the process.
3. We would like to thank our consultant Stephen Angus, who supported Pauline and the Joint Steering Committee to sensitively and thoroughly project manage the many dimensions of change required as part of a merger process. We really enjoyed getting to know and work with both Stephen and Leecia and we hope to keep you informed about the future of the organisation.
4. Outgoing members of both the MEIS and MFSS Boards. There are a number of people here today who have been long standing members of our Boards and have contributed an enormous amount to the organisations. This includes from MFSS Marg Hillman and James Sullivan, and from MEIS Mark Herbert and Jan Sutcliffe. We thank all of our outgoing Board members for their time, their energy, their wisdom, and the integrity and commitment with which they have guided our organisations. We value your contribution immensely and hope you will remain a friend of the new organisation into the future.
5. We thank all the high quality applicants for the new joint Board and are confident that their leadership will support strong strategic direction and further growth of the organisation in this next chapter.

I want to reiterate what an exciting juncture we are at. Pauline and the team have worked so hard to create a smooth transition for staff and clients. Based with a strong foundation laid down by over 70 combined years of delivering services, we hope to become The Go-To organisation for wellbeing needs in our region - the leading organisation in Snowy Monaro and the single place that everyone knows to turn to for support when they need it. We also hope to increase the breadth, depth, quality and sustainability of the services we offer, and to establish a single entry point so that clients have seamless access to our entire suite of services.

Finally, whilst all of this was happening, we acknowledge the ability of Pauline and the staff to continue to obtain further grants for the service has to be recognised as this has us in a great position for the forthcoming years.

Thank you also to the clients. We appreciate this dedication and the required confidentiality that is associated with a service such as ours. Also, a tremendous thank you to all levels of the Government for their continued support over the years.

To Pauline, staff and the board members, thank you for all your support and your endeavours over what has been a challenging year. It does not go unnoticed.

Kirsty Salvestra

Monaro Family Support Service -
President



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MESSAGE FROM OUR MANAGER

The year 2021-2022 has entailed many important changes for Monaro Family Support Service. The most significant of these were related to securing final decisions and plans to integrate with our long-standing partner organisation, Monaro Early Intervention Service. In late June, a new skills-based Management Committee was appointed to oversee the merged organisation, and many long-standing members from both organisations handed over the reins to new members.

Though the first official day of operation of the new joint organisation was 1 July, a huge amount of work took place over the previous 12 months in order to reach that point. In particular, this included the work of the Joint Steering Committee (Sharon Schulz, Mark Herbert, Marg Hillman, and Kirsty Salvestro) who oversaw the governance of the merger. Staff and management also contributed countless hours of work and tremendous goodwill, as we moved forward towards integrating two long-standing community organisations. Consultants Stephen and Leecia Angus of Snowy Advisory, sensitively and thoroughly supported us with the project management aspects of the changes process.

Other changes which were ushered in during the year included the opening of our new office in Jindabyne. Snowy Monaro Regional Council, who own the Bent St building, have made it available for use for community purposes to enable improved on-the-ground access to support services for Jindabyne. We are thrilled to finally have a permanent space to provide our popular group programs (such as Snowy Kids Playgroup) and services, especially to meet increased demand from the Jindabyne area. Over the 40+ years we have been offering services to Jindabyne we have used many different locations, from the Neighbourhood Centre, to park benches, to the Scout Centre. It is great to have a base for our expanding services, and to provide better access for the Jindabyne community.

We have also embarked on a new project to formalise our relationships with a number of partner organisations, through the inception of a place-based alliance. This is aimed at proactively addressing challenges related to funding and commissioning arrangements which regularly rank large national organisations on expediency grounds ahead of smaller community organisations. It also recognises that in disaster contexts, such as fires, floods and Covid-19, it is place-based community organisations who consistently respond to the needs of their community, when government and institutions fail and external organisations cannot get traction. This alliance will seek to recognise the 'invisible infrastructure' which sets place-based organisations like ours apart – our intimate knowledge of local context, our deep and wide networks across the Snowy Monaro region, our team who are embedded in the local area, and our connections and care for our community. It is intended that the place-based alliance become a voice for change in this area.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our exceptional team in this period. Through further Covid upheavals, local flooding, the changing work environment (both internally and externally), and increased demand for our services, each and every one of our team members continued to demonstrate incredible adaptability, creativity, and commitment, all the while working tirelessly to support clients through complex challenges.

Our team has grown over the period, as we welcomed Kinza Newman, Tracy Crompton, Katie Phillips and Nat Warren. With the finalisation of the integration, we have also been preparing to launch a new organisational structure. This will bring many opportunities to gain efficiencies in our back-of-house operations, to add a new tier of leadership, and to strengthen service provision with a single entry point to a wider range of services.

I would particularly like to thank our previous MFSS Management Committee members of many years Marg Hillman (Treasurer) and James Sullivan, as well as outgoing MEIS Board members Mark Herbert, Jan Sutcliffe and Peter Irwin, for their dedication and guidance. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Kirsty Salvestro who has stepped into the role of our new President, and to the new members of our Management Committee – it would be an understatement to say I am excited about the many new possibilities you collectively bring as we strive to continue to build and grow our organisation.

It is with the greatest sadness that I note the loss of our President Mark Williams, who passed away on 7th April 2022. His contribution to the Cooma community, to our organisation, and to us personally, is immeasurable. He will be deeply missed by us all.

There are many reasons to look forward to the next year of operation for Monaro Family Support Service. Building from a position of substantial growth and leveraging the strong foundation laid down by over 70 combined years of delivering services, the merger between MFSS and MEIS means we are poised to become the go-to organisation for wellbeing needs in our region. We are excited about what lies ahead, working to ensure we become the leading organisation in Snowy Monaro, and the single place that every person in our community knows to turn to for support when they need it.

Pauline Cook

Monaro Family Support Service -
Manager



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In Loving Memory Mark Williams

January 20th, 1955 – April 7th, 2022



Mark Williams served as President of Monaro Family Support Service starting on 20/10/2011. Mark passed away in April this year after a fierce battle with cancer.

Mark Williams was an incredible Commander-in-Chief.

It is hard to think of a more widely loved and respected person in Cooma than Mark. His direct contribution to the work of MFSS, and his support of us as staff, is unquantifiable. He has left a huge void.

Through the ups and downs and all the in-betweens, Mark was always there to set a steady course, with absolute integrity, common sense, and assurance. Having such a well-known and respected community member as our President has set the tone for who we are, how we act, and why we are so trusted.

The difference we are able to make as a service, and in the lives of our clients, starts with the strength of leadership unfailingly shown by Mark, and filters right down to every member of our team. It's the sort of leadership that is fair, just, compassionate and reliable. Mark set the tone, and we do our very best to carry that forward.

Through countless hours of volunteer contribution, Mark was not just there to chair meetings, sign documents, and shepherd us through decisions. He was always there for a chat or a phonecall, or to lean on when things were difficult. Even from his hospital bed and during treatment, he continued to care deeply about building and strengthening the organisation into the future.

Monaro Family Support remains so very thankful for Mark's unwavering commitment to building a service which supports those who need our help in the community. He truly made us all feel like the work we do is important, and we couldn't do it without having had him behind us.

On behalf of all of us at Monaro Family Support, we would like to express our sincerest sympathies to Trish, Tom, Sam, Tim and their families.

We are immensely grateful for the time Mark has given and shared with us. He is deeply missed.

May he rest in peace.

FROM THE COMMUNITY

“

This group has been invaluable as a new mum who is also new to town. Meeting people and learning together in a safe/judgement free environment has been super helpful. Plus having so many knowledgeable speakers come in is always appreciated.

”

“

[MFSS family support worker] is also an amazing touchstone to have. She is kind and genuinely cares about all of us and our little ones. She has made being a new mum in a new place feel much less isolated.

”

“
MFSS are able to deal with the whole person.”

“ MFSS is a service that you can call, and they will have someone there that will be able to help you with what you need. You don't have to have an issue.”

”

“

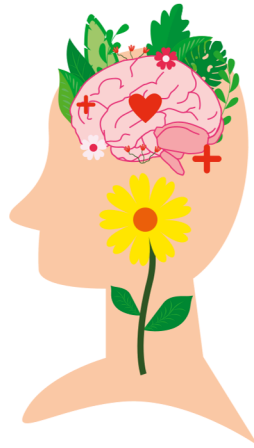
It's a great and enriching program and MFSS's work is much appreciated. Very happy with it and work recommend it to all new mums.

”

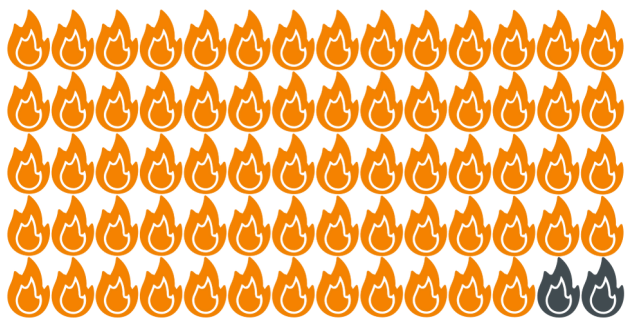
OUR YEAR IN A SNAPSHOT

MAIN PRESENTING ISSUES:

1. *Child/youth Mental Health Distress*
2. *Adult Mental Health Distress*
3. *Family relationships*
4. *Parenting Issues*
5. *Health and Safety*



FAMILY SUPPORT
148 FAMILIES
1246 SESSIONS



**68 DISASTER AFFECTED
INDIVIDUALS/FAMILIES
SUPPORTED**

**265 CHILDREN U12 IN
BUSHFIRE RECOVERY
SUPPORT
PROGRAMS**

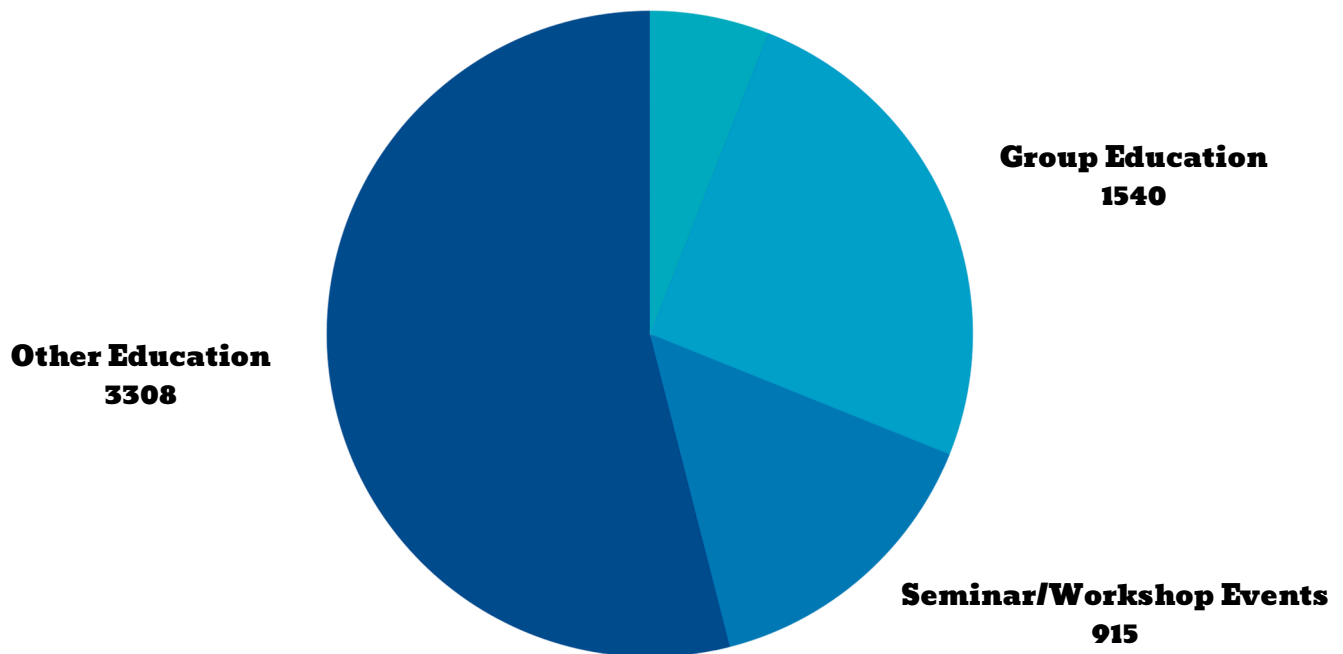


223 MEN IN RURAL MEN'S WELLBEING PROGRAM, 'AROUND THE CAMPFIRE' (BUSHFIRE RECOVERY SUPPORT)

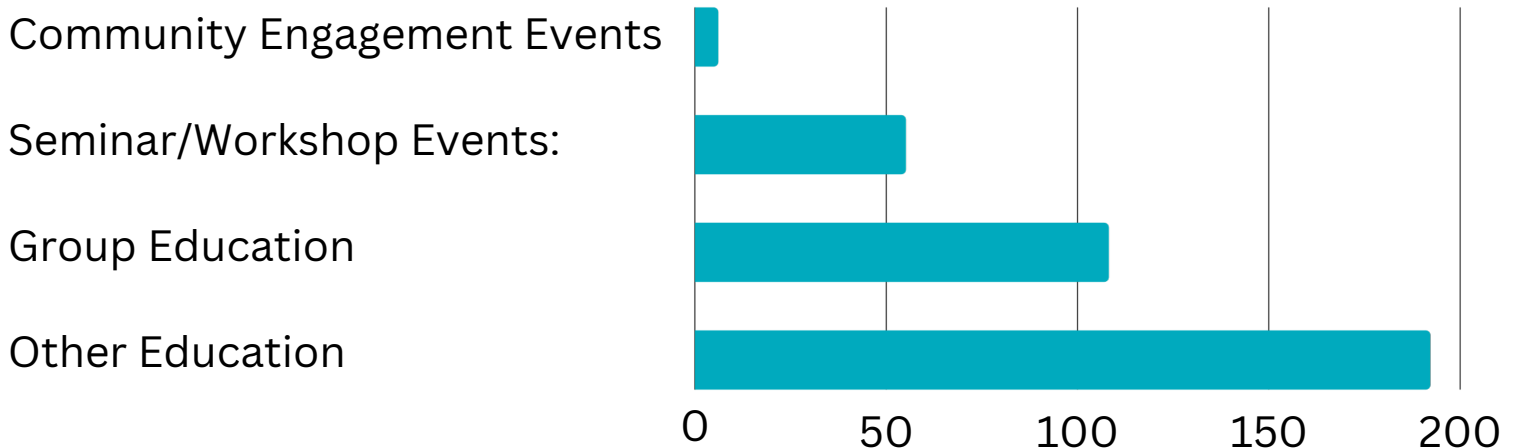


TOTAL CLIENT ATTENDANCES: 6128 PARTICIPANTS GROUP WORK (INCLUDING COMMUNITY EVENTS, EARLY CHILDHOOD, PLAYGROUPS AND WELLBEING PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS)

Community Engagement Event
365



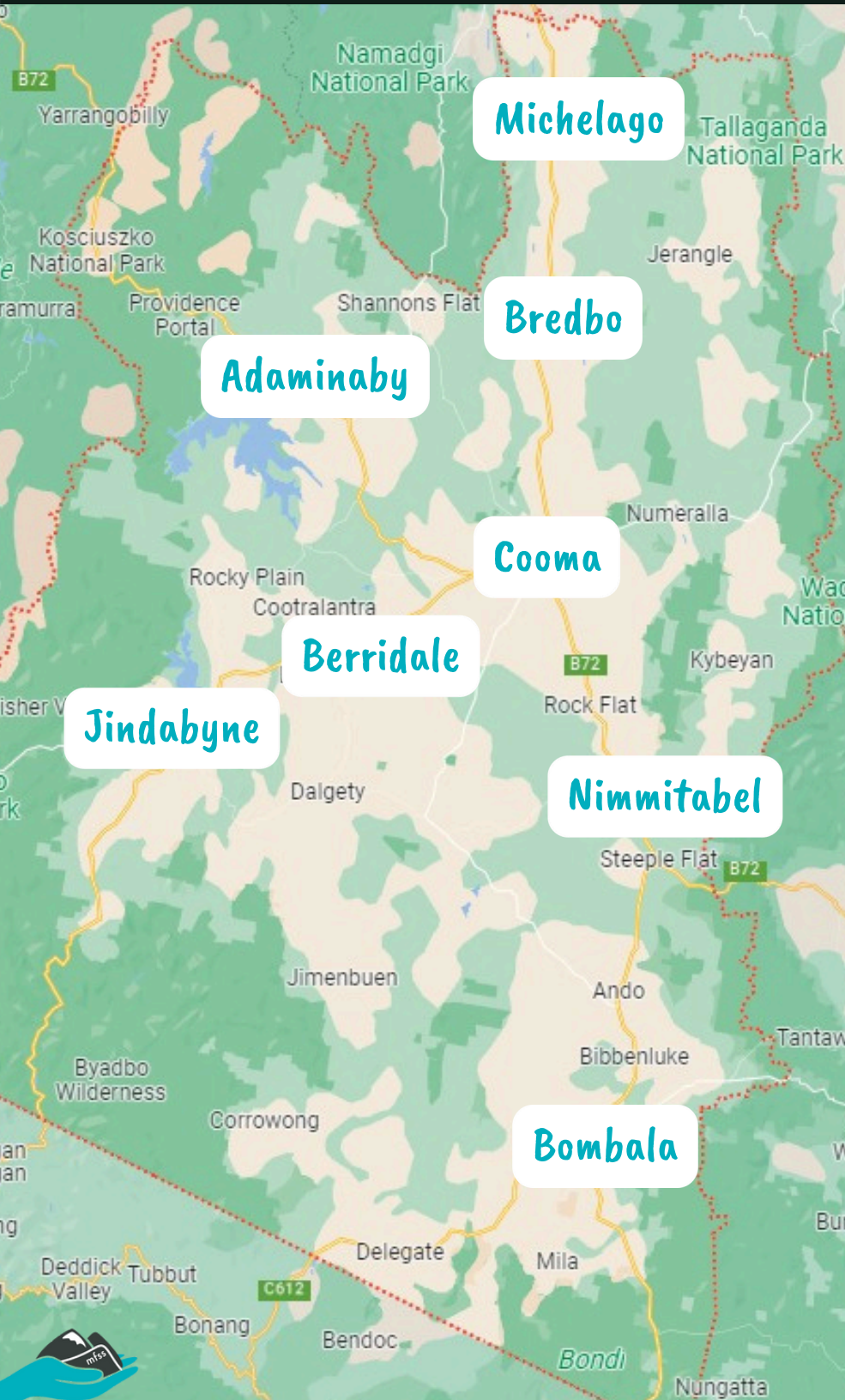
TOTAL 316 SESSIONS



Our Favorite Moments



ACROSS THE REGION



As well as on going casework this team managed to -

- facilitate several parenting programs.
- write and plan the Mothers and Daughters program
- participate in many interagency meetings
- attend training courses on line
- through the generous donations from the Muslim Community, distribute fresh meat and winter wood to those most in need
- work closely with the Cooma Show Committee to distribute Christmas toys to children across the LGA
- support the Community Chest to pack and distribute Christmas Hampers to local families.
- in collaboration with the P&A Society, coordinate a program of interesting and successful women from our region to present at the Cooma Show.





CASEWORK MANAGER REPORT

This financial year has been busy and challenging.
It also has been very rewarding.

Weather conditions, Covid and a nasty flu bug did impact on how we managed the constant flow of referrals. Our growing group programs and the huge pull from all facets of the service enabled us to respond to every incoming referral. We serviced families across the LGA with a mixture of home visits, phone and Zoom, as well as internal and external referrals.

Working from home, as needed, is now a way to continue to support our families. With practice and the families' willingness to receive support this way, I think we have done WFH well and to quote one mother **"Without my calls from Lynda I think I would have lost it"** Having this option has enabled our work to continue while allowing our caseworkers to care for their immediate families health needs and isolation requirements during somewhat fractured school terms.

We said farewell to Jodie Reed who was an integral team member as the Bombala Family Worker. As well as her casework and group work, Jodie will be missed as a member of the EAL team.

We were lucky to say hello to Tracy Crompton. Tracy was very able to take up a portion of the casework Jodie had been responsible for and she folded quickly into the team.

The tremendous team work and commitment to MFSS the caseworkers have shown during these often difficult times has been inspirational.

ISSUES

- 2021-2022 has seen an increase in the referrals for support with -**
 - **Anxiety in primary children**
 - Poor school attendance**
 - Self harming**
 - MH challenges in the teen and young person age group.**
 - Financial hardship**
 - Housing**
 - **Domestic and family violence**

CHALLENGES

- **Continuing stress with ongoing Covid related problems which keep families unable to plan.**
- **Difficulties accessing students in school settings**
- **Recruiting staff**
- **General housing crises exacerbated by the influx of Snowy 2.0 workers.**

OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS



“

Meeting people, learning from others, plus little recovery exercises.

Just very happy this service exists & keep up the good work!

”

29 Sessions



Jindabyne Pram Walk & Talk

On most days the walk will lead us to Jindabyne Lake, where half way Jac will provide exercises for the ladies before returning. When it is too wet to walk the sessions will be held inside at Bent Street for a core session.

There have been so many highlights for this group. It has been fantastic to see so much consistency for attendance with the walk even when it is very cold. Bubs just get rugged up and mums walk with their gloves and beanies on. Even with the challenges of the flooding of the foreshore we still manage to find some part that will allow us to walk with the lake in view and Jac is fantastic in providing the exercises and knowledge to assist the ladies.

For the talking component of this group we have had some fantastic discussions with mums, there is an ease about talking while you are walking in the fresh air, very different to an inside session.

Such a rewarding stand out point for me has been that the group had organized to meet on their own during the school terms, supporting each other with exercise and a chat over a cuppa afterwards. I received photos whilst they were on their walk and it was such a great experience.

“

The group is a fantastic opportunity to promote exercise (targeted specifically & professionally at new mums), socializing, fresh air & to ask questions of children's experts who accompany the walk.

”



OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Snowy Kids Bub Club

Snowy Kids Bubs Club 2021 had numerous venues throughout Covid and now the Bubs Club has a permanent home at Bent Street in Jindabyne and the space has been fantastic. It is a very bright open space and parents feel very comfortable in it. We have a room where the Child and Family Community Health Nurse can speak to the parents in private and also a separate space for parents to sit when they require a quieter moment.

For me each week is rewarding with some sort of experience witnessed within the group and people that support it like CWA nursing babies to sleep. I am proud of the fact that during the difficulty of lockdowns we were still able to provide support to the families online, keeping our connections and it was lovely to continue to see the Bubs and Parents throughout this period.

Some stand-out moments for me this year personally have been how much the community was longing to have that personal face- to-face interaction after the lockdown. This was demonstrated by the numbers attending our first get-together in the park after the lockdowns were lifted. I have been proud of how the community has rallied together and have kept in touch with each other outside of the group to meet when in town, go for a little walk, or catch up for a cuppa. Another surprising aspect has been how donations have happened within the group where all items of being a new parent have been shared, whether it is baby clothing, bottles, formula, toys, or blankets. It has been lovely to see that and be part of that journey.

“ **Amazing support group, amazing organizers**

So many new & sensory ideas for play at home ”

44 Sessions 

Attendance

Term 3, 2021 - average 12

Term 4, 2021 - average 14

Term 1, 2022 - average 10

Term 2, 2022 - average

“ **15** **From the beginning the group has been extremely welcoming, inclusive, informative, social & very supportive of mental health and wellbeing** ”



OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS



Snowy Kids Playgroup

We have had to move around to a number of venues due to the Covid Restrictions, where the group was run in the park for a while, at the Op Shop hall, online from home during lockdown and where it now has it's permanent home at Bent Street Jindabyne from mid October 2021. It has been an interesting past twelve months with Covid Lockdowns taking Playgroup online.

“
**WE LOVE
PLAYGROUP, WISH
IT WAS ON EVERY
DAY.**
”

We became very good at creating little videos at home of creating an activity using household items that families could participate in from home. We also created Zoom dancing sessions and morning online chats. As soon as we could we moved the Playgroup into the Park and it was a joy to meet face to face again in the fresh air.



We have had so much fun this year with lots of sensory messy play, going on bear hunts, dress ups and end of term outings to a park which have created so many rewarding stand out moments this year.

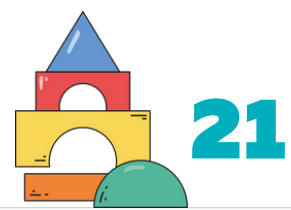
For me personally it was lovely to receive the online feedback from families which included pictures of children's creations of the activities we posted online during lockdown. When we were back face to face in the group the children brought their creations in to show us which was such a special moment for us all.

“
**Thank you for the quality
service you deliver each
week. Your commitment &
enthusiasm you have each &
every weeks (especially in
covid lockdown)**
”



Term 3 - 2021 - average attendance 32
Term 4 - 2021 - average attendance 20
Term 1 - 2022 - average attendance 28
Term 2 - 2022 - average attendance 18

Sessions 37



OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Little Mountaineers Playgroup

Each week we have new families registering to attend. During the year, we have seen more and more families come to Cooma for work due to Snowy 2.0. Some stay for only a short time and then move on, others stay for a longer time and use playgroup to develop networks and discover services and opportunities within the community.

In the 1st half of 2022, we saw:

103 registered attendees (children and adults)

40 families

63 children

7 CALD families

Session attendance numbers range from 18 minimum - 55 maximum people

Average session attendance per week across the 6 months was 29

Some fun activities and interests:

Parachute Play

Using natural and recycled materials for art and craft and sensory play

- Goopy fun with pasta, finger paint, cornflour goop, shaving cream, rice, water, and sand

Cooking pancakes, bread, cupcakes, and biscuits

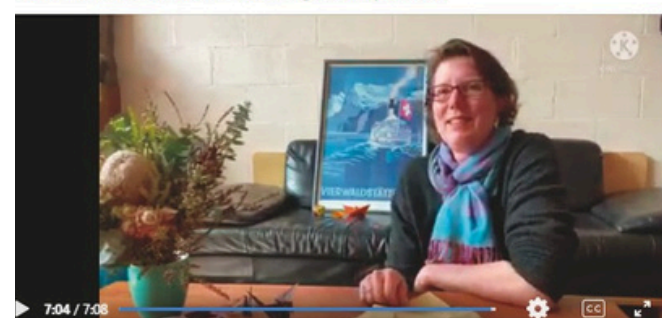
Easter and Mother's Day celebrations with Easter Egg Hunt and shared morning teas

- Dinosaurs and Autumn activities



Parent Child Mother Goose

Monaro Family Support Service
2 September 2021
Parent Child Mother Goose - Swiss Origami Story with Yvi



Parent Child Mother Goose is one of our regular playgroups, held in partnership with the Cooma Library. It strengthens attachment and interaction between parents and their young children by introducing them to the pleasure and power of using rhymes, songs and stories together. Our Parent Child Mother Goose playgroup staff have been sharing beautiful seasonal stories and resources online, just as they ordinarily do each week with the children and families at playgroup

OUR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLBEING PROGRAMS

It has been good to be back in the schools on a more regular basis after the isolation of Covid lockdowns.

Drumbeat has been held in many schools across the Monaro as well as Community Events including the Cooma Show and the Multicultural Festival.

The program has been further enhanced with the inclusion of a portable labyrinth, metal drums, chimes and boomwhackers.

Also incorporated into the programs has been physical stretches and breathing practices to enhance relaxation.

Frame drums rather than djembes were recently used at the mother and daughters' gathering and it is hoped that frame drums will be used in the Call to Rhythm Program for adults in Bombala.



EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING

EAL continues to be very popular with referrals from schools, community organisations, direct from families and internal referrals.

Changes in confidence and engagement are noticed within each session and schools have reported ongoing positive effects following engagement in the program. Both kids and parents have reported increased confidence and self awareness and look forward to returning each week.

Most families ask to come again and would like the program to run regularly because of the wonderful effects it has on every participant.



BUSH FIRE RECOVERY

Some highlights from our ongoing role in walking with the community to recover from disaster experiences such as the Black Summer bushfires, and to prepare better for future disasters include:

Multicultural Community and Emergency Services Preparedness Event – MFSS attended and supported a community recovery event hosted by the local multicultural community. This colourful event was very well attended and not only showcased the diverse multicultural community of the Monaro but used the opportunity to exhibit the emergency services available within the area. It encouraged interactive participation of the services and was an opportunity for people to gather vital information to strengthen their preparedness for the current bushfire season. The evening saw many barriers broken down and opportunities gained.

Recovery and Resilience Casework – Our Resilience NSW funded Recovery Support Service for bushfire affected individuals and families came to an end in January 2022, but fortunately due to a partnership with Anglicare, this critically needed disaster support work will be continued until June 2023.

Community Preparedness Planning – MFSS has been working with SMRC and communities to co-design a series of 16 small local community workshops for local community level planning and preparedness. The first workshops were held at Bumbalong and Countegany. These workshops aim to connect the strengths of individuals and communities so that they can cope better with all types of adversity, and be better prepared for future disasters. This builds on and integrates disaster preparedness action planning with individuals and families (at the micro level), to local community areas, to the Snowy Monaro region, right through to collaboration with the CRJO's Blueprint Project which covers South East NSW (macro level).



COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS



As part of the broader \$650 million national bushfire recovery package announced in January 2020 PHNs in impacted regions have been provided additional funding to commission services that foster community wellbeing. The Community Wellbeing and Participation measure is intended to increase and enhance the delivery of nonclinical supports which promote community wellbeing and participation in fire-affected communities in response to identified needs of each local region.

For Snowy Monaro, MFSS was commissioned to provide two non-clinical mental health and wellbeing programs:

- Providing early intervention strategies to engage young children under 12 years and their families and carers
- Providing strategies to engage rural men

Our Rural Men's Wellbeing Program works in partnership with South Coast Rural Relief's 'Around the Campfire' model, and offers activities which are aimed at building connections and engagement between rural men and the community. During this year, the program focussed particularly on supporting young men in Jindabyne and the Bombala region who are dealing with recent tragic loss.

Our Wellbeing Program for Children Under 12 has delivered universal wellbeing programs with integrated targeted support for children across the region. Tailored directly to the needs of children, families and schools, these programs have included:

- A custom-built short pop-up program 'REFRESH' to support children returning to school after Covid lockdown, giving them 10 easy to use strategies for regulating anxiety
- A Head-Heart Start to Life Program
- Meditation Capsules Program
- Drumming and music therapy
- Targeted Expressive Therapy Sessions for individual children with integrated family follow-up
- Equine Assisted Learning Program



A Head-Heart Start to Life

The children were introduced to the marvellous, creative properties of their own bodies and minds. This is achieved through providing creative, play-based experiences to grown awareness of self and others. The program promotes self-discovery and a growing sense of making good choices in life, as well as helping the children to know how to apply the principles of Mindfulness to daily life.

From the children:

“In mindfulness I feel very very calm”

“I have a lot of energy after mindfulness because I was so calm”

“I am really settled and calm and I don't mess around or talk”

“I get excited for mindfulness”

“I feel ready to learn and ready for anything that comes my way “

“mindfulness helps me feel calm and happy “

‘The kindergarten students were very engaged with the mindfulness program and looked forward to it each week. I found the class was more settled and focused after the mindfulness sessions and often heard or saw them practising the skills they learnt (e.g. breathing techniques, walking slowly to stay calm) in other playground and classroom contexts’. Classroom Teacher, Cooma North.

Expressive Therapy Program

The Expressive Therapies (ET) for children and families program aims to target vulnerable children, giving them a safe space where they can explore their feelings and emotions through an extensive range of activities that offer both therapeutic and educational components. Expressive Therapy aims to develop long-term skills that enable students to regulate their emotional responses more capably during times of stress. The inner life skills of ET include developing emotional literacy, building resilience, supporting emotional wellbeing and ongoing, positive adaptive behaviour. The program uses art therapy and somatic techniques to help children to release suppressed emotions and resolve conflicts, reduce symptoms and enhance interpersonal skills.

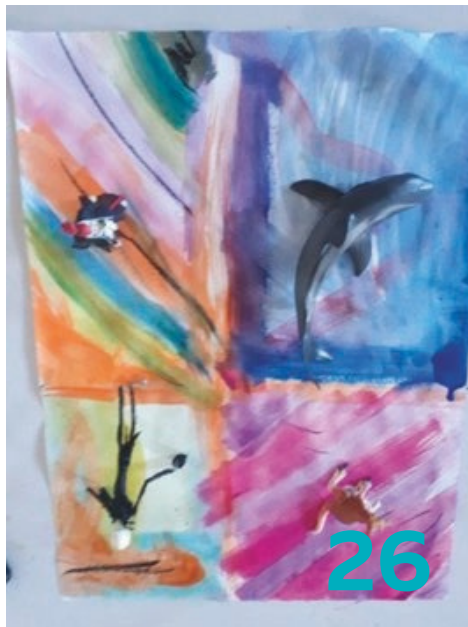
Children are supported to:

- Express feelings that maybe difficult to verbalise
- Explore imagination and creativity for healing
- Develop healthy and sustainable coping skills to self-regulate and build on existing strengths
- Improve self-confidence and resilience

From the children:

This helps me to express my feelings in a fun way’

‘ I don't get to talk about my feelings much at home...it feels good to talk about them here’



FINANCIAL REPORT



For the months of:

June 2021 – June 2022

