



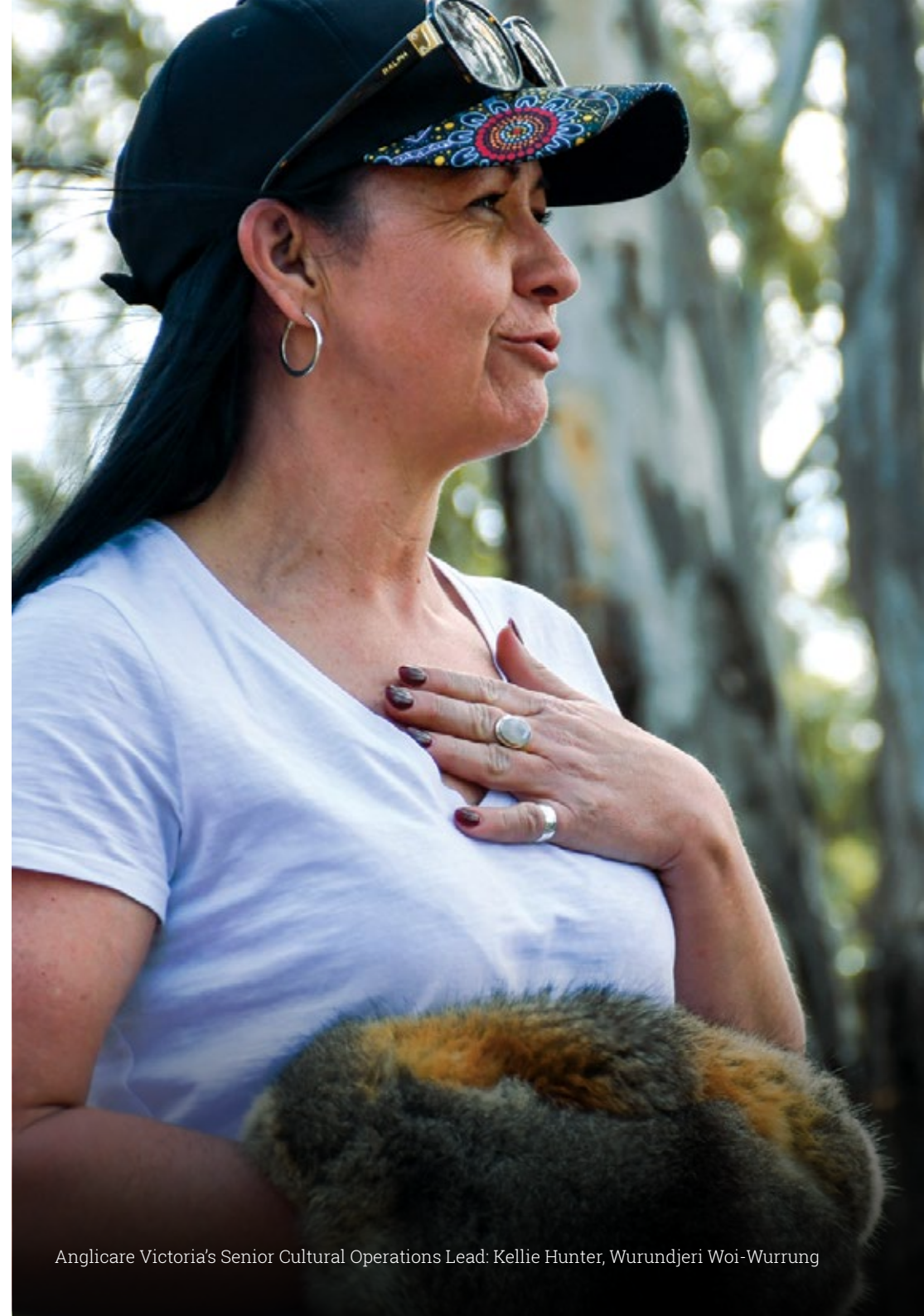
**25 YEARS
OF WORKING
FOR BETTER**

25
Years

WE WORK ON ABORIGINAL LAND

We acknowledge the cultural disruption, through the forced separation of Aboriginal families. Today Anglicare Victoria champions the reunification, empowerment and self-determinism of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Anglicare Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal people of this land. We pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.



Anglicare Victoria's Senior Cultural Operations Lead: Kellie Hunter, Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung

25 YEARS OF HELPING THOSE IN NEED

On this date, 25 years ago, AV was formed by the amalgamation of several Anglican missions: Mission to the Streets and Lanes of Melbourne (established 1886); Mission of St James and St John (1919); and St John's Homes for Boys and Girls (1921).

The amalgamation wove together more than a century of caring for families, young people and children facing hardship and dislocation. Over the past 25 years AV has diversified the services it is able to offer Victorians who are most in need. In 2014, St Luke's was brought in under the AV banner, expanding our ability to care in Central Victoria. Today we celebrate growing together by reflecting on the highlights of Anglicare Victoria's first 25 years.

25 years on, the work we do at AV everyday is the expression of the Christian values our founding agencies instilled in the organisation - no one in this life should be left behind.

Welcome to our 25th Anniversary celebration.

Tony Sheumack
Chairperson Anglicare Victoria



OUR MISSION TO SERVE CONTINUES

Anglicare Victoria's work today is the continuation of a faithful mission to serve and care for the underserved and marginalised families and children within Victoria that began over 130 years ago. The love and kindness that drove our care so many years ago, remains as strong today in our staff, volunteers, parishes and friends, and the same generosity of spirit can be seen in our work every day, in every centre.

I trust you share my gratitude for the significant progress Anglicare Victoria has made since the unification of our holy Missions in 1997. Celebrating these important milestones reinforces the great service we provide today and into the future. With our faith and drive to serve steadfast, our care for the vulnerable members of this community will continue to make genuine difference in God's world.

May God be with you,

The Most Reverend Dr Phillip Freier

President of the Council
Archbishop of Melbourne



25 YEARS OF EMBRACING OUR CULTURAL JOURNEY

With around 30 per cent of all children in Anglicare Victoria's (AV) care identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, building a strong framework for reconciliation, cultural safety and empowerment has been a focus of our work over the last 25 years.

Early in 2011, Anglicare Victoria established its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Steering Committee and appointed Josie Stubbe, a Jardawadjali woman and Darren Youngs as joint Chairs.

"Our kids have much trauma in their life, and they need to be on country to heal. The Buldau Yioohgen Leadership Academy is where our children get to do this. It's about connecting to mother earth and our culture." - Aunty Kellie, Senior Cultural Operations Lead

AV has made significant progress since the first RAP. Uncle Ian Goolagong was appointed as AV's Cultural Ambassador, along with Aunty Kellie Hunter taking on a role as Senior Cultural Operations Lead.

AV also established an Indigenous staff network, embedded Indigenous perspectives and staff requirements strategically in our TEACHaR education program, enabled Indigenous internships, and created the Buldau Yioohgen (BY) 'Big Dreams' Indigenous Leadership Academy.

BY is an Aboriginal-led cultural program formed by AV that seeks to raise the aspirations of Aboriginal children in care through immersion in cultural experiences, career opportunities and professional mentorship.

In our next 25 years, we will continue to grow our cultural awareness, embrace culture and empower tomorrow's Aboriginal leaders.



Anglicare Victoria's Cultural Ambassador, Uncle Ian Goolagong and Senior Cultural Operations Lead, Aunty Kellie Hunter.



25 YEARS OF CARING IN THE HOMES OF FOSTER AND KINSHIP FAMILIES

Anglicare Victoria (AV) and its foundation organisations have a long history of caring for children and young people on behalf of the state and their parents. Now 25 years later on any given night, AV has over 700 children and young people in our care.

The work we do wouldn't be possible without our wonderful 998 foster carers and 314 kinship carers. These incredible people welcome children and young people into their homes and provide love and support to them when their own families are not able to.

"Historically the organisation chose caring for children as the most important contribution it could make to the Victorian community," says AV CEO Paul McDonald. "AV has taken that beginning and accepted the challenge: We want to be the best provider of care for children in the care system."

AV has grown to become Victoria's leading provider of Out-of-Home Care (OoHC). The agency has high aspirations for the young people paired with its foster carers, in kinship care arrangements or living in residential care homes.

AV is a passionate provider of care – refining and improving existing models of care to ensure the best possible start to life for every child and young person rest assured, for the next 25 years, the organisation will continue to advocate strongly for all of Victoria's most vulnerable young people to receive regular therapeutic support as part of their living arrangements.

Life-changing care

Frazer was placed in foster care at 14 after a period of homelessness. "My care worker at Anglicare Victoria was April. She made the whole experience really easy," Frazer recalls. "My foster carer was Hilary. I remember I was so thankful for a warm bed, food and the love and support of a family."

Now in his 20s, Frazer runs his own café along with his partner and a team of eight staff. Frazer believes AV's foster care helped him navigate challenging times and gave him the confidence to pursue his dreams.

Continuing kindness

An AV foster carer for over 26 years, Kim Bolton received a Premier's Volunteer Champion Award in 2018 for her dedication to vulnerable children. While some of the children she fosters stay with her for short periods of care, others have called her place home for as long as 13 years. "Of course it's heartbreaking when they go," says Kim. "But you just love them for as long as you have them."

Victoria's first foster care support 'constellation'

Mockingbird Family, an evidence-informed model, has had great success internationally and was brought to Victoria by AV. It creates a 'constellation' of six to ten local foster carer households that work together and support one another like a traditional extended family would. Research from existing constellations has shown that this approach increases placement stability and foster carer retention.

25 YEARS OF PROVIDING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN HOMES THEY FEEL SAFE IN

When it's no longer possible for a child or young person to live with their own family, Anglicare Victoria's (AV's) residential care homes provide a safe, supportive environment where they can grow and thrive.

Skilled and caring staff in every residential care home help children and young people recover from trauma, develop independence, gain education and build a better tomorrow.

From the children's homes first operated by AV's three foundation agencies, over the last 25 years our organisation grew to become one of Victoria's largest providers of residential care in Victoria.

New models of residential care, such as Keep Embracing Your Success (KEYS), are bringing specialised workers into our residential care homes to provide tailored education and employment support to young people. The staff members work with each young person for a long period to encourage positive relationships with their families and the people they live with.

Today AV operates 28 residential care homes across the state.

An inspiring transformation

When Aiden* first arrived at one of AV's residential homes, he was struggling. His case manager Ben* recalls: "He was a young boy who'd just come out of some very traumatic years. He was self-harming and suicidal."

The residential team created a welcoming family environment around Aiden, with the financial and in-person support he needed to thrive.

Today, Aiden is happy and confident – busy with school, sport and his social life – with his sights on a career in sales.

"Everything has changed! My mental health, my physical health, my knowledge my discipline, my confidence – everything!" says Aiden.





VICTORIA'S PRE-EMINENT PARENTING ORGANISATION FOR OVER 25 YEARS

Anglicare Victoria (AV) understands that if parents and carers are confident in their parenting skills and have tried and tested tools at their disposal, that positive change can happen in families.

Parenting groups, workshops, resources and training is available to cater to parents of newborns through to teenagers, with sessions run by AV's skilled and experienced facilitators.

In the past year alone, 4,653 parents were assisted and supported by AV's ParentZone program. The popularity of ParentZone led to the program recording 'ParentZone Pods' – a podcast that provides ready-to access-parenting advice on the most-requested topics addressed by the Parent Group Facilitators.

"The pandemic has caused a lot of stress and anxiety, and with children at home for long periods it can also turn the home into a bit of a pressure cooker," said ParentZone Pods Co-Host Anita Weber.

"Parenting is the hardest and most important job you'll ever have," Anita said. "ParentZone can help you feel back in control again as you form a closer and happier relationship with your children."

"Lots of people are reaching out to us, but they aren't always able to get to the sessions, so we decided to put together the ParentZone Pods series so that anyone could access strategy whenever they need it most."
– ParentZone Pods Co-Host Anita Weber.



TRANSFORMING EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN OUR CARE OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS

Anglicare Victoria (AV) believes that providing a young person with a good education goes hand-in-hand with giving them a good upbringing in care. One example of how Anglicare Victoria (AV) has evolved since it was formed are innovative home-grown programs to support parents and help at-risk young people with their education.

As a result of this aspiration, TEACHaR (Transforming Educational Achievement of Children at Risk) was developed in collaboration with AV's clients and have proven highly effective in responding to community needs.

The TEACHaR model offers one-to-one specialist tutoring of the Victorian curriculum to help young people accelerate their learning over an intensive period.

Over the past year, 34 education specialists delivered dedicated support to more than 300 young people across the state, almost a 40 per cent increase from the previous year.

For the next 25 years, AV will continue to engage the most current educational tools, and employ quality education experts to deliver education effectively to our young people in care.

When Billy* began AV's TEACHaR program at age 11, he couldn't read or write. He often referred to himself as "dumb and unworthy". Billy's temporary foster carer Teresa* recognised he needed a gentle and caring approach to help him learn. "Billy's capacity to learn is dependent on emotion regulation and feeling safe in both his learning environment and the relationship," Teresa explained.

"Billy began to show interest in books and creating stories, demonstrating pride in his achievements – he even wrote apology notes for cheeky behaviours!" Teresa says.





25 YEARS OF SUPPORTING VULNERABLE FAMILIES

At Anglicare Victoria (AV), we know real world problems don't fit into neat boxes, so we build flexible solutions around each family's unique challenges and strengths.

We are there – at the kitchen table with families, and reaching out to connect in streets or schools.

Family life is complex, so we provide a broad range of services. When parenting seems a struggle, when there is violence in the home or when a family member is struggling with alcohol and drug use, AV is ready to step in.

We are there for families when they are at risk of losing their children to care, or when they return. We are there for young people who can't stay at home, and we are there for them when they leave care, always working to safely reconnect families.

Overcoming these challenges means our staff draw on the best evidence and research and offers understanding, expertise and hands on experience.

"We had one goal by taking part in Functional Family Therapy (FFT), and that goal was to reunite our family. Now our life is very, very different. We're much more confident in communicating with one another, and we're connected, which is the main thing."

– Lynn*, Mother and FFT-CW participant.



WE WORK



25 YEARS OF DEVELOPING LEADING PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

Anglicare Victoria (AV) has historically adapted international evidence-based models locally, but more recently we have developed our own from the ground up – and have been recognised internationally for it. An example of this is Rapid Response™, an intensive intervention to help families in crisis stay together safely and avoid the need for children to be placed in Out-of-Home Care.

Developing these models starts with in-depth needs analysis, including psychometric testing and questionnaires. Programs are trialled and evaluated using a range of assessment tools to ensure effectiveness. Evaluation and improvement continues as programs are rolled out more widely.

In the case of Rapid Response™, a 2019 Monash University study found that 82 per cent of children remained with their families six months after completing the program. The results were supported by independent evaluation, and were so impressive that AV was invited to present on Rapid Response™ as a family preservation model at a global conference in Norway.

“Everybody has strengths but they can't always see that. During the interventions, Rapid Response workers slowly step back and the family starts to take over and lead. It's a huge thing to see. It's amazing.” – Eliza Todd, Practice Leader

Care that works

Sabrina* grew up around violence and was later frequently violent and threatening to her own family. Through the Rapid Response™ program, Sabrina was supported to understand the complex emotions she experienced as a result of her upbringing and see how they contributed to her outbursts. The Rapid Response™ program empowered her family to communicate in safe ways and remain safely together.





ANGLICARE VICTORIA BRINGING SPECIALIST SERVICES TO THOSE WHO NEED THEM

Now Victoria's largest provider of financial counselling

Anglicare Victoria (AV) has expanded its financial counselling services over the last 25 years to the point where it is now the largest provider in Victoria, helping record numbers of families and individuals who have been pushed into financial hardship and insecurity.

"Issues around finances are stressful, shameful and can break families apart," says Lesley Conway, AV's Team Leader Financial Counselling, Eastern Region. *"Financial counselling assists in empowering clients to gain or regain financial control. This is at the core of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, helping them with their physiological needs, safety and security."*

AV has continued to evolve its financial counselling services to meet the diverse needs of our communities, offering services such as family violence Financial counselling and the Gambler's Help program.

"What you have done for me is truly amazing and I am holding back the tears at the sense of relief you have given me. I could not have done this without your help."

- Jane*, family violence financial counselling client

Bringing alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment and support to the community

AV AOD staff have seen an increase in drinking and substance use across vulnerable groups in the community over the past couple of years. AV provided 3,470 outreach, assessment and counselling services in 2021 alone to clients. Reach Out is a one-stop-shop which provides a broad range of services for those struggling with drinking or drugs. Care and recovery clinicians can help with more complex cases, connecting clients with whatever services are needed most, from general AOD counselling, food and housing to mental health support, transport to and from vaccination appointments, and reunification for families which have struggled with addiction.



WE WORK

AND WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, ANGLICARE VICTORIA HAS BEEN ON THE FRONT LINE FOR 25 YEARS

We'll always be there

Through bushfires, floods, storms and a global pandemic, Anglicare Victoria (AV) has responded with vital services and compassionate care, making sure no one is left behind.

"We are a 'can-do' organisation and we respond with practical, hands-on support," says Sue Sealey, Deputy CEO.

In the face of natural disasters like the bushfires in Marysville (2009) and East Gippsland (2020) and the flooding in Mt Dandenong (2021), AV staff have provided immediate relief, a kind ear and ongoing support to help communities recover and rebuild.

Providing covid-safe care and support

When nine public housing towers in Kensington were suddenly locked down during the pandemic in June 2020, AV immediately responded to the call from the Andrews Government to provide critical support to over 200 families. Our teams orchestrated the safe delivery of culturally-appropriate food, information and education packs to families under pressure.

"Within 24 hours we had 20 staff on the ground," says Sue Sealey.

AV also opened Atrium Place, our inner-city property, to homeless young people so they could have a safe place to self-isolate and recover from the virus.

As we move into the future, AV will always be there with essential care when it's needed most.

Bushfire recovery

When bushfires swept through East Gippsland, AV provided immediate relief and ongoing financial counselling to affected families. One couple AV supported had their farm destroyed, and lost access to running water. They waited eight weeks for a response to their insurance claim, before coming to AV in distress. AV's financial counsellors had their claim elevated, and within six days water was restored to their property. Three weeks later they were approved for funds under bushfire reparations.

Storms in the Dandenongs

When close to 174 families needed urgent assistance after storms ravaged Mount Dandenong in Melbourne's outer East, AV was quick to respond. People's houses and possessions were damaged, there was no electricity or internet, and the roads were blocked by fallen trees. AV's recovery support team assisted with immediate food and essential relief, clothing and furniture, and financial counselling support to begin insurance claims. A year on, residents' lives are returning to normal, AV marked a year since the storms by delivering wellness packs to those who were affected, and ran activities for the community to participate in together.

WORKING TO BETTER SUPPORT OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

At Anglicare Victoria (AV), we want all of our families and young people to feel loved and included, and we pride ourselves on being a diverse and vibrant community. Since its inception, AV has valued – and celebrated – diversity and inclusion. We’re continually evolving policies, services and workplaces to ensure all staff, volunteers and clients feel safe, welcome and free to be their whole selves.

In 2019, AV obtained Rainbow Tick accreditation, a nationally-recognised mark of quality reserved for organisations that achieve the highest standard of LGBTIQ+ inclusive practice and service delivery. AV’s Rainbow Tick lets our clients know they can access services where their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or intersex status will be valued and their needs understood.

“I’ve definitely noticed that I can just be myself, like, I don’t have to (pretend). There’s been times in my life where I’ve had to hold back on that part of myself, like my sexuality and stuff. It’s a place where you can just really be yourself. So yeah, I felt super accepted in every way, shape and form.” - Grace, a young client from AV’s Korrang Wilam Youth Refuge



Anglicare Victoria staff at the 2021 Midsumma Pride March



A LEADING ADVOCATE AND CHANGE MAKER FOR THE VULNERABLE

With CEO Paul McDonald at the helm, AV launched the Home Stretch campaign in 2016. The goal is to extend state care to 21 years in each Australian state and territory.

This means support for young people in foster, kinship and residential care is not cut off at 18, as was the case nationally when the campaign started. This simple reform transforms young lives. It halves homelessness among this group and doubles their chances of both employment and higher education.

"Most of Australia's 18 to 21-year-olds still live with their parents," says Paul McDonald. Yet we've got a different set of rules for the children under our care. We could not sleep easy as a care provider tolerating that."

Paul was determined to amplify the voices of young people and mobilise a national movement to create change.

Home Stretch was adopted universally in Victoria in 2021, and has since been introduced in five other states and territories around the country. It has been described as the most important child welfare reform in a generation.

In the next 25 years, AV aims to ensure that the child protection system is relevant and is working the best it can for the young people in it. In Victoria we have a good care system, but it is our responsibly to make sure it works for better.

Alone at 18

Home Stretch spokesperson Dylan Langley grew up in foster care and residential care homes. When he turned 18 and was required to leave Out-of-Home care, he ended up homeless.

"I ended up couch-surfing and sleeping rough," Dylan says.

Dylan was eventually able to make a home with the help of friends. Nowadays, he advocates for the rights of vulnerable young people and works with organisations sharing his lived experiences. Dylan was nominated for a Young Australian of the Year award in 2021.



Care leaver Dylan Langley, and MC Gretel Killeen, speak at the Victorian Home Stretch Election Campaign Launch in May 2018.

Contact us if you need this information in an accessible format such as large print: please telephone 1800 809 722 or email Info@anglicarevic.org.au
This report is available on our website: anglicarevic.org.au

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.



Central Office

103 Hoddle Street, Collingwood VIC 3066

PO Box 45, Abbotsford VIC 3067

P. 1800 809 722 **E.** Info@anglicarevic.org.au



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