# Annual Report 2026

Thriving Children • Confident Families • Connected Communities •



KARITANE®



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## Acknowledgement of Country

Karitane acknowledges the Traditional and Continuing Owners of the land and waters of Australia, and pays its respects to Elders, past and present. We pay tribute to the wisdom, richness, diversity and resilience of First Nations peoples and cultures.

The First Nations artwork elements featured throughout this Annual Report are taken from *Connected Journeys*, a commissioned piece by artist Shareen Clayton. This artwork tells the story of families and communities coming together through Karitane's services, creating a strong network of care that helps families grow and thrive together.

View our Innovate RAP



# Chair and Chief Executive Officer's foreword

## Across more than 100 years of service, one thing has remained constant at Karitane: our belief that when families are supported, children have the opportunity to thrive.

This year, national research involving more than 10,000 Australian parents reinforced what we have witnessed for generations. Parents thrive when they feel connected, supported and confident. When parents experience isolation, self-doubt or distress, the effects can be felt across family life and child development. These findings affirm Karitane's purpose and the important role we play alongside families during the earliest and most formative years of a child's life.

This was a significant year for Karitane, marked by the development of our Vision, Purpose and Strategic Plan 2027–2032. Shaped with consumers, staff, partners and stakeholders, our new vision – *Thriving children, confident families and connected communities* – captures both the difference we seek to make and the way we believe lasting change is achieved: together.

Our new strategy builds on Karitane's deep specialist expertise from pregnancy through the first five years, while strengthening our focus on prevention and early intervention. We know that supporting parents, strengthening parent–child relationships and responding early to emerging mental health, developmental and behavioural needs can change trajectories. Increasingly, our impact also comes from connecting services, sharing expertise, building workforce capability and working in genuine partnership with families, communities and other organisations.

The opening of the Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub brought much of this thinking to life. Co-designed with more than 250 parents, community members and service providers, and delivered through an extraordinary network of partners, the Hub brings parenting, health, developmental and community supports together in one welcoming place. It demonstrates what is possible when services organise themselves around families rather than expecting families to navigate fragmented systems.

Innovation also continued to extend the reach of our specialist expertise. We expanded access to Parent–Child Interaction Therapy through partnerships with the NSW Medicare Mental Health Kids Hubs, strengthening early intervention for young children experiencing behavioural and emotional difficulties. Our virtual models of care continued to improve access regardless of geography or circumstance, with independent evaluation of the Virtual Residential Parenting Service demonstrating outcomes comparable to traditional residential care.

Nationally, ForWhen continued to demonstrate the importance of helping parents with moderate-to-severe perinatal depression and anxiety find the right support at the right time. ForWhen supported more than 3,200 families during the year, and more than 12,000 since the service began. We are particularly proud of its growing reach to over 800 First Nations families, as well as emerging evidence of the positive impact of timely navigation on parent wellbeing and parent–infant relationships.

Research, education and evidence remain fundamental to Karitane. Our partnerships with universities, researchers and health and community services continue to strengthen evidence in parenting, child development and perinatal mental health, while initiatives such as our *My Toddler* and *Me video* series help translate research rapidly into practice.

Our education and training expertise also enables Karitane's knowledge to reach beyond our own services, strengthening the capability of those working with children and families across the broader system. Central to all of this is partnership with families themselves. Families are experts in their own experiences, and their voices continue to shape our services, environments, governance and improvement.

Our commitment to family partnership sits alongside our work to create culturally safe, inclusive and welcoming services. During the year, we continued to advance our *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan*, deepen engagement with First Nations communities, strengthen cultural capability and progress our broader diversity, equity and inclusion commitments.

None of these achievements would be possible without our people. To our staff, thank you for the expertise, compassion and commitment you bring to children and families every day. Our Culture Survey result, placing Karitane in the *Soaring* culture of engagement, reflects the strength and shared purpose of our team.

We also thank our volunteers, consumer representatives and community members for the generosity, experience and insight they contribute, and our government, health and community partners, as well as university, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and philanthropic partners, for their trust and collaboration. Our impact is stronger because we work together.

We thank our Patron, The Hon Jillian Skinner AM, for her ongoing support and advocacy, and our Board Directors for their stewardship and dedication throughout the year.

Most importantly, we thank the children, parents and families who place their trust in Karitane. It is a privilege to walk alongside families during some of life's most important moments.

As we begin our new strategy, we do so with confidence in what makes Karitane distinctive and our ambition for what comes next. Our goal is not simply to deliver more services, but to extend the impact of our expertise – through prevention, early intervention, evidence, innovation and partnership – so that more children and families can benefit.

Together, we are working towards a future of thriving children, confident families and connected communities.



**Grainne O'Loughlin**
Chief Executive Officer



**Lee Carpenter**
Chair

# Message from our Patron

Karitane continues to demonstrate what is possible when expertise, innovation and genuine partnership come together around the needs of children and families.

It was a particular pleasure for me to be at the opening of the Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub this year. The Hub brings parenting, health and family support services together in one welcoming place. It is an inspiring example of how strong partnerships can make support more accessible and connected for families.

This year also marks an important new chapter with the launch of Karitane's 2027-2032 Strategic Plan and new vision: *Thriving children, confident families and connected communities.* Building on more than a century of trusted care, the strategy looks to the future through a continued focus on early intervention, evidence and innovation, strong partnerships and greater impact for families.

Across Karitane, an exceptional team continues to extend this impact through clinical, virtual and community-based care, research and education. Their expertise, compassion and commitment make a real difference to children and families every day.

It is a privilege to serve as Patron, and I congratulate the Board, leadership, staff, volunteers and partners on another significant year, and look forward with confidence to Karitane's next chapter.



**The Hon Jillian Skinner AM**
Karitane Patron



# The need

## Supporting children begins with supporting parents

The first 2,000 days of life are one of the most important periods in human development. This time lays the foundations for lifelong health, learning, relationships and wellbeing. During this critical window, parents and caregivers play the most important role in shaping a child's early experiences and development. Supporting children, therefore, begins with supporting the people who care for them.

While parenting can be one of life's most rewarding experiences, today's parents navigate an increasingly complex world. They need to balance conflicting advice, growing expectations, financial pressures, work commitments and reduced social connection. Often, they need to do all this while trying to determine what information they can trust.



Karitane's Parenting Today survey in 2021 first highlighted that many parents delayed seeking help because of shame, judgement or uncertainty about where to go. Five years later, the Parenting Research Centre's national Parenting Today survey of more than 10,000 parents reached remarkably similar conclusions, identifying loneliness, self-doubt and low self-compassion as the strongest factors associated with parent psychological distress. Their research concluded that:

***"What matters most for parents' wellbeing is the quality of connections they have, how supported they feel, and the emotional climate in which they're parenting."***

Parent Mental Health and Wellbeing – Parenting Today Insight Brief, Parenting Research Centre

Across two national surveys, the evidence is clear: when parents feel connected, supported and confident, children are more likely to thrive.

For more than 100 years, Karitane has partnered with families through the first 2,000 days, providing trusted, evidence-based support that strengthens confidence, reduces isolation and helps parents build the secure relationships that give children the best possible start in life.

**90%**

of a child's brain develops by the age of five[1]

**85%**

of parents say they have a moderate-to-high need of support[2]

**42%**

of all parents wish they had asked for help sooner[2]

**1 in 5**

parents who needed help didn't reach out because they were unsure where to go, had cost concerns or feelings of shame and judgement[2]

- 1 in 5 mums and 1 in 10 dads experience postnatal depression or anxiety[3]
- 57% feel lonely at least occasionally[4]

1. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development – NICHD Study
2. Karitane Parenting Today Survey, 2021
3. Australian Government Productivity Commission
4. Parenting Research Centre – Parenting Today Survey August 2025

### How parenting challenges make parents feel

Parents' descriptions of their feelings can be broadly grouped into three themes: guilty/like a failure, stressed/overwhelmed or helpless/lonely[2]

### Guilty/like a failure

"I felt like a failure"

"I felt I wasn't good enough"

### Stressed/ overwhelmed

"I felt overwhelmed and had no idea how I was going to navigate it"

"I felt stressed, exhausted and unhappy"

### Helpless/lonely

"I felt really alone, beyond tired and without support"

"I felt like I didn't know what I was doing – I felt helpless"

# About us

## Who we are and what we stand for

### Vision

**Thriving children, confident families and connected communities**

### Purpose

**We partner with families in the early years through connection, trusted support and inclusive care, building strong foundations for life.**

### Values

**Respect**
We see, hear and value every person, creating welcoming, inclusive and culturally responsive care.

**Collaboration**
We partner with families, communities and care providers to achieve the best outcomes for children.

**Excellence**
We deliver safe, high-quality, evidence-informed care that families can trust.

**Innovation**
We learn, adapt and improve to meet the changing needs of families.

## Strategy for 2027-2032

During the year, Karitane developed a new five-year strategy to guide our organisation through a changing child and family landscape. It positions Karitane to further extend our impact – through the services we deliver, the evidence we translate, the capability we build, the partnerships we foster and the systems we help to shape.



### Strategic priorities

1. **Person-shaped, community-responsive care**
   Co-designing our services with children, families and communities and then placing them at the centre of everything we do
2. **Our people: strengthening culture, capability and wellbeing**
   Building a thriving, inclusive and future ready workforce
3. **Evidence, innovation and impact**
   Leading and translating research, lived experience and innovation into measurable outcomes
4. **Partnerships, influence and system leadership**
   Creating greater impact through collaboration, advocacy and influence
5. **Sustainable growth and stewardship**
   Reaching more families by growing sustainably where we can create the greatest value

## How we create impact

Children and families need services that are connected, evidence-informed and responsive to the challenges they face. At Karitane, we bring together clinical excellence, research, education, lived experience, digital innovation and strategic partnerships to improve outcomes for children and families, and to strengthen the broader child and family system.

Together, these six areas of expertise inform how we design services, translate evidence into practice, build workforce capability and drive meaningful change. As a result, we help children to thrive, families to grow in confidence and communities to become more connected.





### Clinical excellence

**We deliver** evidence-informed, high-quality relational care that responds to the changing needs of children, parents and caregivers across diverse communities.

### Person-shaped care

**We partner** with families, consumers and communities to shape design, delivery and evaluation of our services. Lived experience is embedded across our organisation, ensuring services remain relevant, accessible and responsive.

### Evidence into practice

**We embed** research, evaluation and implementation science into how we work. We translate evidence into practice that strengthens service quality and effectiveness, improves outcomes and informs policy.

### Education and workforce development

**We build** capability within Karitane and across health, early childhood and community sectors through education, leadership, partnership and knowledge translation.

### Partnerships and system leadership

We work alongside government, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, and health, community, research and philanthropic partners to design integrated solutions that no organisation could achieve alone. Together, we help inform policy, strengthen systems and extend our impact.

### Innovation that makes a difference

**We embrace** innovation, technology, data and new models of care to improve access, quality, efficiency and outcomes. And we do this while ensuring trusted relationships remain at the heart of child and family care.

# Our impact

A snapshot of our impact this year

## Thriving children

84%

### Improved child behaviour

Children attending our Toddler Clinics showed fewer and less intense disruptive behaviours.

75%

### Reduced sleep resistance

Families reported their child was less resistant to sleep following support from our Residential Unit.

### 644 Children supported

Children's development was supported through early intervention groups, supported playgroups and school readiness programs across NSW.

85%

### Improved social skills

Toddlers showed improvements in their social skills after participating in the *My Toddler and Me* group program.

**200+**

### High school students reached

Young parents shared their lived experiences of parenthood and the importance of healthy relationships with students across South Western Sydney.

**488**

### Virtual breastfeeding consultations

Our consultations supported breastfeeding and healthy feeding practices for babies' growth and development.



### Designed with children, for children

Children's voices helped shape the colours, graphics, imagery and play spaces throughout our new Fairfield Hub.

## Confident families

### 98% of families feel supported

Parents found Karitane's care supportive and helpful.

**16,000+**

**Children and parents received trusted support from Karitane services**

**175,000+**

**People accessed Karitane's parenting information and resources online**

82%

### More confident

Parents reported increased confidence in their parenting.

### 73% Improved mood

Parents receiving perinatal mental health support experienced an improvement in their mood.

98%

### Improved knowledge

Parents reported improvements in their knowledge following support from Karitane.

90%

### Improved wellbeing

Parents reported better personal wellbeing.

## Connected communities

**1** Hub + **12** Partners + **Hundreds** of families

Our new Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub brings parenting, health and family supports together in one welcoming place.

**729**

**First Nations clients**

**67%**

**Increase in First Nations clients accessing ForWhen**

ForWhen

### 1,930 Culturally and linguistically diverse clients

### 4 Services with dedicated Navigators

We help families navigate complex service systems and connect with the right support at the right time.

**284**

**Young parents received specialised support**

# Our reach

## Every family deserves access to trusted support, wherever they live

Through place-based, virtual and hybrid models of care, Karitane provides specialist parenting and child and family services across New South Wales.

Through ForWhen, we also provide national perinatal and infant mental health service navigation, helping parents across Australia find the right care at the right time.

KARITANE®








### Virtual care across NSW

Careline
Digital Care Navigation
Webinars
Internet Parent-Child Interaction Therapy
Virtual Breastfeeding Clinic
Virtual Home Visits
Virtual Perinatal Infant and Child Mental Health
Virtual Perinatal Infant and Child Mental Health Service

### Volunteer Family Connect

Campbelltown
Fairfield
Shellharbour
Taree

### Community programs

Bankstown
Camden
Campbelltown
Fairfield
Forster
Liverpool
Macarthur
Miller
Shellharbour
Taree
Wollondilly

### Residential service

Campbelltown

### Toddler clinics

Campbelltown
Carramar (Fairfield Hub)

### Integrated child and family hubs

Campbelltown
Carramar (Fairfield Hub)
Newcastle
Oran Park
Randwick
Shellharbour
Wolli Creek
Warrawong

### Perinatal infant and child mental health services

Campbelltown
Carramar (Fairfield Hub)
Randwick

### Perinatal infant and child mental health navigation

National

*Source: aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia*

# Continuum of care

The first 2,000 days of life shape a child's future



Sleep & Settling

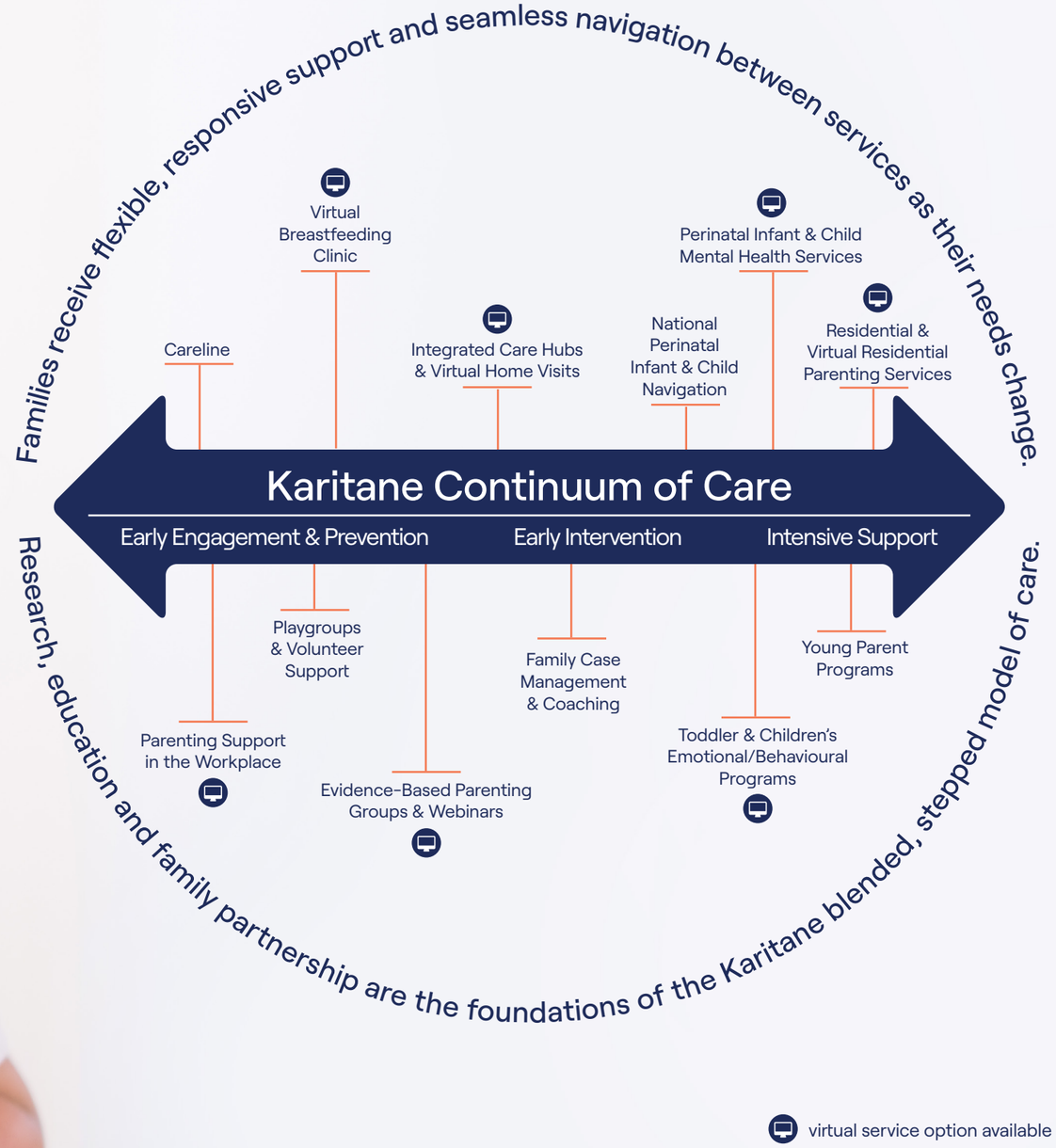
Feeding & Nutrition

Establishing Routines

Toddler Behaviour

Perinatal Infant & Child Mental Health

Families with Complex Needs




virtual service option available

# Services

## The right support, at the right time

**16,000+**

**Children and parents supported across Karitane**

**98%**

**of parents found the service supportive and helpful**

Karitane works across the full continuum of prevention, early intervention and specialist support. We deliver place-based services, virtual services, hybrid models of care, and national navigation services. This means we can provide flexible pathways to support that respond to the unique needs, preferences and circumstances of each family.

Our team works in partnership with families, with relational care at the heart of our approach. We deliver child-focused, family-centred care that is evidence-informed and culturally responsive. We build trusting, collaborative relationships that recognise families' strengths and support shared decision-making.

A coordinated intake and triage process helps connect each family with the most appropriate service at the right time. This ensures timely, personalised support that builds confidence, strengthens relationships and improves outcomes for children and families.

## Top primary reasons for referral

1. **Sleep and settling**
2. **Toddlers' behaviour**
3. **Adjusting to parenting, and mental health**
4. **Feeding**
5. **Isolation and lack of social support**

> ***"The nurses will tell you that they're not miracle workers but they're pretty close! This is a place for all the families out there that feel unsure and need a little guidance. All the staff are so lovely and helpful. They genuinely care about you and are there to offer all the help they can give. Thank you – you have helped lift the dark clouds. I feel seen and empowered, knowing I've got this and all will be okay. Karitane is a truly remarkable place."***



# Service highlights

Across 2025–26, Karitane continued to strengthen how families experience and access support: bringing services together, listening to families, measuring outcomes and developing models that respond to the needs of diverse communities.

Across clinical services, community programs and ForWhen, our focus remained on delivering care that supports thriving children, confident families and connected communities.

The following highlights offer a snapshot of the many achievements delivered during the year.

# Transforming how families access support – Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub

The opening of the Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub in 2026 marked a major milestone in Karitane's approach to integrated child and family care. Developed in response to the needs of one of Australia's most culturally diverse communities, the Hub addresses barriers that include fragmented services, challenges accessing support across multiple languages and difficulties navigating support.

### Fairfield

- **#1 Most disadvantaged LGA in NSW***
- **56% of residents born overseas***
- **Australia's largest refugee population**

** Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021*

***"For the first time since having my baby, I feel like I have somewhere to go where people understand what our family needs."***
– Parent, Fairfield Hub

### Reach in the first 17 days

**Fairfield Hub shows how integrated, community-designed services can transform support for children and families.**

**1,112** families visited

**24** preferred languages

**65** countries of birth

**20+** LGAs

*Image below. The Hon Jillian Skinner AM; Dr David Saliba MP; Lesley Jordan, Board Director, Karitane; The Hon Ryan Park MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health; Elizabeth Wood, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Health; Grainne O'Loughlin, CEO, Karitane; The Hon Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; Sonia Marshall, Chief Executive, SWSLHD; Liz Yeo, Chief Alliances Officer, Paul Ramsay Foundation; Sally Grimsley Ballard, Head of Partnerships, Snow Foundation.*









## Integrated care built around families

The Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub brings parenting, health and family support services together in one welcoming location. Designed to make support easier to access, the Hub helps families connect early, build trusted relationships and find the services they need without having to navigate multiple services on their own.

Families can connect through welcoming soft-entry opportunities such as playgroups, play experiences and community programs, providing a simple and informal way to seek support before challenges become more complex. They can also access clinical and specialist services and receive personalised guidance through service navigation. By bringing services together in one place, the Hub creates clear and connected pathways to care, reducing the burden on families and helping them access the right support at the right time.

## Delivered through partnership

Twelve partner organisations bring parenting, health and family support services together through the Hub. Partners include South Western Sydney Local Health District, Playgroup NSW, STARTTS, Woodville Alliance, Each, Uniting, 54 Reasons, The Parks, Fair Foundations and other local organisations. Together, these partnerships improve access to support and help meet the developmental, social, health and wellbeing needs of children and families.

**1** Hub + **12** Partners + **Hundreds** of families

## Co-designed with families and communities

Consumer and community voices were embedded into the Hub's development from its earliest stages. More than 250 parents, children, community representatives and service partners participated in its co-design, helping to shape the physical environment, service model, pathways to support and governance.

Co-design and community consultation were offered in multiple languages, enabling culturally diverse, refugee and newly arrived families to participate and share their experiences, priorities and needs. This helped ensure the Hub was designed with, and for, the families and communities it was created to support.

Consumer partnership also continues as the Hub evolves. Two consumer representatives work alongside the Hub team, bringing family voices into ongoing service development, delivery and improvement.

**250+ voices**
**helped to shape the Hub**

## Building the evidence for integrated care

The Hub brings research and practice together through the STARS for Kids Centre of Research Excellence, led by Scientia Professor Valsamma Eapen, and a Paul Ramsay Foundation-funded research program led by Karitane's Director of Research, Associate Professor Jane Kohlhoff. Together, these initiatives provide an opportunity to further contribute to the evidence for integrated models of care and better understand optimal approaches to improving child development and family wellbeing during the first 2,000 days.

***"I came for help with feeding my baby but left knowing where to get support for mental health and developmental concerns. Everything was in one place."*** – Parent, Fairfield Hub





# Evidence driving better outcomes

Karitane continued to strengthen how we evaluate our services by combining validated clinical measures with family-defined goals, direct observation and client feedback. This gives us a clearer understanding of what works for families and helps ensure our care remains responsive to their needs.




### Improved wellbeing

Parents reported positive changes in personal wellbeing.




### More confident

Parents reported increased confidence in their parenting.




### Improved behaviour

Children experienced fewer and less intense disruptive behaviours.

## Evidence for flexible models of care

An independent evaluation completed last year found that the Virtual Residential Parenting Service (VRPS) achieved outcomes comparable to face-to-face residential parenting services, while offering greater accessibility and flexibility for families. Delivered in the family home, VRPS enabled more families – particularly those in regional and remote areas – to access intensive parenting support. It was also associated with higher service completion rates. Additionally, the evaluation found that VRPS was delivered at a lower cost per episode of care, strengthening the case for virtual care as an effective, accessible and cost-efficient model of intensive parenting support.

These findings build on earlier research led by Karitane's Director of Research Associate Professor Jane Kohlhoff, which demonstrated improvements in parenting confidence, the sustained application of parenting skills within the home environment, and the potential for virtual delivery to provide a clinically effective alternative to residential care.



### Specialist support without leaving the home

Families accessing VRPS achieved outcomes comparable to families receiving face-to-face residential care.




### Reduced sleep resistance

Families reported less resistance to sleep in their children following VRPS.

## Expanding access to specialist behavioural care

This year, Karitane expanded access to Internet Parent–Child Interaction Therapy (I-PCIT) through NSW Medicare Mental Health Kids Hubs. Building on Karitane's leadership in I-PCIT delivery in Australia, this new pathway extends access to the gold-standard, evidence-based intervention for young children with clinically significant behavioural difficulties by including families in regional and underserved communities.

The model combines Karitane's specialist behavioural expertise with local care navigation and multidisciplinary support, creating more connected pathways to care for families.



### Extending specialist care to regional families

## Strengthening how we measure impact

Led by Karitane's Director of Research, a consumer qualitative study explored what meaningful change looks like for families receiving perinatal and infant mental health care at Karitane. Parent interviews and staff focus groups identified three key areas for measuring change: parental mental health, parenting capacity and psychotherapy outcomes.

As a result, three measures have been selected for integration into routine clinical practice, strengthening how we evaluate outcomes and tailor therapeutic care to the needs of families.

***"They supported me in one of the hardest times of my life, and I couldn't be more grateful for all their support."*** *– Parent*




# Partnering with families to improve care

Families help us create better services. Their experience and insights inform how care is planned, delivered and improved. At Karitane, we continue to strengthen opportunities for consumers to contribute at every level, from their own care through to service design, governance and organisational planning.

This year, we introduced a new Consumer and Community Engagement Guideline and welcomed five new consumer representatives. Together, these initiatives have strengthened and embedded consumer partnership across Karitane.

## Consumer voices in action

**Wolli Creek**
Through the Community Advisory Group, parents have influenced communication, signage, service promotion, governance and strategic planning.

**Village Connect**
Parents have contributed to recruitment, program delivery, consultation and advocacy. Three Village Connect team members also bring lived experience as former participants in Karitane's young parent programs. The Aboriginal Core Design Group continues to provide a strong community voice, helping shape Village Connect's community-led model.

**ForWhen**
Former clients have contributed to governance, service development and resource design through the Community Voice Advisory Group.

**Residential Unit**
Family feedback informed the redesign of clinical and shared spaces, creating a more welcoming and supportive environment.

## Listening, learning and improving

Feedback from families helps us understand what is working well and where we can do better. This year, 98% of respondents found our care supportive or helpful, and our Net Promoter Score of +76 reflects the high level of trust families place in Karitane.

**+76**
**Net Promoter Score** reflects a high level of trust

**98%**
Found care supportive or helpful

# Expanding the reach of Village Connect: a proven model for priority populations

Originally designed to support young parents aged 25 and under, Village Connect was co-designed with members of the South Western Sydney First Nations community and guided by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Aboriginal Core Design Group. Delivered by Karitane, in partnership with Uniting and Sonder, the integrated model brings parenting, family, primary and allied health support together in a coordinated 'village'. Key workers within Village Connect help families to navigate services earlier and access the support they need.

Village Connect continues to provide specialised support for young parents, but this year expanded their model to also support parents aged over 25. The multidisciplinary team grew in response to emerging needs, with new specialist Father Inclusion and Community and Family Connector roles. Village Connect parents helped to recruit these positions, bringing their lived experience to the interview panel and sharing in the decision-making process.

**499**
**children and adults supported through Village Connect**

**61**
**referrals received for parents aged over 25 in 5 months**



# Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging

## Care that reflects the communities we serve

Families come to Karitane with different cultures, languages, abilities, experiences and ways of connecting with services. Providing equitable care means recognising those differences and adapting how we design, communicate and deliver support. By doing so, we help to ensure more families can access services, participate fully and feel understood and respected.

Karitane is committed to inclusive, culturally responsive care that reflects the communities we support. Across our clinical and community services, this means listening to families and communities, adapting models of care, providing in-language and interpreter support, and working alongside Aboriginal and community organisations to create more accessible pathways to care.

**1,930**
**clients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds**

**729**
**First Nations clients**

**70%**
**of families supported by Linking Families come from CALD backgrounds**





## Responsive care around families and communities

Across Karitane, teams are adapting programs and approaches to respond to language, culture, ability and local need.

In South Western Sydney, we demonstrated this approach by co-designing a Vietnamese-language parenting group with the local community. This provides an accessible alternative for families with low confidence in spoken English, where Parent–Child Interaction Therapy could not be delivered through an interpreter. Fathers and grandparents participated alongside mothers, extending support across the family.

Another example is our community programs, which provided multicultural and in-language supported playgroups and worked with local organisations to deliver support in trusted community settings. On the Mid Coast, partnerships with Biripi Aboriginal Services and the local Aboriginal Health Service supported parenting groups and playgroups for First Nations families.

Inclusion also means adapting programs and environments so children and families with different abilities can participate. Village Connect introduced an inclusive sensory-aware playgroup incorporating Key Word Sign, visual communication supports and adapted environments for families with children who experience neurodivergence, developmental concerns or learning difficulties. The Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub also includes sensory-friendly indoor and outdoor spaces designed to support children with different sensory and developmental needs.

For multilingual families, we incorporated professional interpreters and bicultural support throughout care. This included during assessment, shared goal-setting, therapy, parent coaching and review. Broadening resources in more languages continued to be a focus this year, including producing the *My Toddler and Me* video series in Vietnamese, Arabic and Chinese.



## Strengthening First Nations relationships

Karitane continued to strengthen relationships with First Nations families, communities and organisations through an approach centred on trusted relationships, local expertise and community connection. Dedicated Aboriginal roles, including an Aboriginal Community Engagement Lead and a team of Aboriginal Family Support Workers, grow these relationships and culturally responsive practices across Karitane and ForWhen.

This is reflected in long-standing and locally designed programs. The Lil Possums Aboriginal Supported Playgroup has operated for 24 years, while Village Connect was designed by the Aboriginal Core Design Group and continues to receive cultural advice from the Southwest Sydney Aboriginal Community Consultation Group. For the first time, Karitane was represented at Yabun, connecting directly with hundreds of community members.

### ForWhen: lived experience and cultural knowledge shaping the service

ForWhen continued to build strong relationships with First Nations communities through representation at four First Nations cultural events, conferences and connections. The service also built relationships with many local Aboriginal organisations and services in each State and Territory to support the social and emotional wellbeing of ForWhen families.

Drawing on First Nations consumer voices, we also developed six new perinatal and infant mental health factsheets to address a gap in culturally relevant resources. This brought lived experience and cultural knowledge into resources for families and the services that support them.

**293** **First Nations families supported by ForWhen, 67% increase on last year**

# National leadership in perinatal infant and child mental health

The ForWhen service, delivered with valued partners nationally, continued to grow in 2025–26. The service supported 3,270 families, which is 7% more than in the previous year. This takes the total number of families assisted since ForWhen began in 2022 to 12,000. About two-thirds (65%) of referrals were initiated by health professionals, while 32% were initiated by parents themselves and 3% from other family members. This reflects the service's role both within the health system and as a direct pathway for families.

ForWhen

**3,270**

**families supported, 7% more families than the previous year**

**293**

**First Nations families supported, 67% more families than the previous year**

**532**

**Culturally and linguistically diverse families supported, 30% more families than the previous year**

## Evidence that navigation makes a difference

ForWhen's ongoing evaluation is funded by the Australian Government and led by Karitane in partnership with the Australasian Association of Parenting and Child Health and UNSW. The evaluation aims to build on current evidence for the impact of specialist perinatal and infant mental health navigation. This year's research has found improvements in childbirth-related post-traumatic stress symptoms and parent–infant attachment following ForWhen support. This strengthens the existing evidence that timely specialist navigation can make a meaningful difference for families.

**Severe psychological distress reduced from 38% to 17%**

**The number of parents experiencing severe psychological distress more than halved between service entry and three-month follow-up.**

**12,000+**

**families supported since the service launched in 2022**

## Cultural knowledge shaping the service

Cultural knowledge and First Nations voices continue to play an important role in shaping ForWhen's service model, workforce and approach to supporting First Nations families. The culturally led ForWhen Aboriginal Families Practice Guide, together with workforce cultural learning and findings from the UNSW evaluation of First Nations clients that used ForWhen services, has strengthened culturally safe engagement and practice across the service.

The role of Aboriginal Family Support Workers has also continued to evolve, working alongside Navigators to provide culturally informed support and strengthen connections with families and community. The Yarning Team has built relationships with Aboriginal Health Teams, Aboriginal Medical Services and Aboriginal community organisations across Australia, helping to increase awareness, referrals and access to culturally appropriate perinatal and infant mental health support.

This commitment has also extended to the development of culturally relevant information and resources. Six First Nations-focused perinatal mental health factsheets were developed. The resources were reviewed by First Nations parents, helping ensure the information, language and presentation reflected the needs and experiences of the families they were created for. The factsheets have since been shared through national platforms including COPE Resources, the COPE Clinical Library, the National Health Services Directory, and Raising Children Network, extending access to culturally relevant information beyond the ForWhen service itself.

***"I felt empowered and educated about my choices for support by the end of the call, and relieved that I would access help and support much more easily than I had thought."*** – ForWhen client



# Building stronger communities

Karitane provides specialist clinical services and community-based programs across the early years, creating pathways from prevention and early intervention through to intensive support. Community programs play an important role by helping families to build connections, strengthen parenting confidence and access help early, including before, alongside or following clinical care.

Delivered in trusted partnerships across metropolitan and regional New South Wales, these programs include parenting support, playgroups, peer and volunteer programs, service navigation and practical assistance. In 2025–26, they reached 1,668 adults and children across Fairfield, Campbelltown, Taree and Shellharbour, helping families connect with services and support within their local communities.

**1,668** Adults and children supported

**70** Volunteers supporting families

**99%** Client satisfaction

# Making support easier to navigate

Navigators play a critical role in helping families find their way through complex, fragmented service systems. By building trusted relationships, understanding each family's goals and connecting them with the right support, Navigators make it easier for families to access help when they need it.

Navigators now work across four services and models: ForWhen, First Steps Count, Village Connect, and this year, the Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub. Three Navigators in the Hub are now helping families connect with parenting, health and family support services. This growing navigation capability is helping families connect with support across local, regional and national service systems.

## 4 Services | One continued approach

Helping families navigate complex systems and connect with the right support.

## Long-term investment in family support

Two of Karitane's key community programs secured extended funding this year, strengthening ongoing support for families across New South Wales.

**Karitane Linking Families (KLF)** has supported families across Fairfield, Bankstown and Liverpool for more than 20 years. This year, KLF secured a further five-and-a-half years of funding through the NSW DCJ. The new agreement also includes a new school readiness program, *Little Learners for Big School,* following a successful pilot. This will help more children and families prepare for the transition to school.

**5.5 more years of funding**

**Village Connect**, established to support parents aged 25 and under, also secured extended funding, continuing its relational model of parenting support, connection and practical assistance for young parents.

**1 more year of funding**

## Strengthening regional support through partnership

Across regional New South Wales, Karitane is working with local organisations to create more connected and accessible support for children and families. On the Mid Coast, our partnership with the First Steps Count Child and Family Centre brings together parenting education, therapeutic programs, navigation, volunteer support and community connection. As a result, local families will find it easier to access the support they need.

This year, Karitane progressed the business case for a new integrated child and family hub in Shellharbour. Developed in partnership with Barnardos Australia, UNSW and local stakeholders, the proposed hub aims to create a more connected approach to supporting children and families by bringing services together in one welcoming and accessible location. The project builds on Karitane's experience in integrated child and family care and reflects growing recognition of the value of early intervention, service integration and community-led design. We thank the Australian Government for its investment in this important planning phase and its commitment to improving outcomes for children and families across the Shoalhaven and Illawarra region.



# Research

## Driving innovation through research

**$7.3 million**
in active partnered research funding

**$900,000**
in new research funding awarded during 2025–26

**17**
peer-reviewed journal articles published

**7**
national conference presentations

Research is central to Karitane's commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based care for children and families. Through strong partnerships with universities, health services and community organisations, our research informs clinical practice, contributes to policy development and strengthens services for families across Australia.

During 2025–26, Karitane had $7.3 million in active partnered research funding. We also secured an additional $900,000 in new research funding, published 17 peer-reviewed journal articles and presented at seven national conferences. These include the Australasian Marce Society/ Australian Association for Infant Mental Health conference in Melbourne, September 2025, and the Helen Mayo House conference in Adelaide, November 2025. Our researchers shared findings through national conference presentations, helping to strengthen policy, practice and service delivery across the early parenting, perinatal and infant mental health sectors.

This year, Karitane-led research focused on improving outcomes for families through innovative parenting interventions, perinatal mental health support, culturally responsive service delivery, and integrated models of care. Major projects included evaluations of the *My Toddler and Me* program and the national ForWhen perinatal and infant mental health navigation service. They also included a Paul Ramsay Foundation Fellowship investigating how evidence-based parenting programs can be effectively expanded across regional, rural and remote Australia.

Our research program is led by Associate Professor Jane Kohlhoff and supported by a dedicated team of researchers, students and clinicians. Together, they ensure Karitane's services remain responsive to emerging evidence, grounded in the lived experiences of families, and focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for children and parents.

## Research highlights

### Toddler research

In 2025–26, we continued to evaluate our innovative new *My Toddler and Me* group program, an eight-week parenting group for caregivers and toddlers aged 12–24 months. Adapted from Parent–Child Interaction Therapy for Toddlers, the program is based around play. It supports parents in using positive and developmentally tailored parenting skills, and in being sensitive to their toddler's emotional needs. Weekly group sessions include parenting information, group discussions, role-plays and live parent coaching with trained early childhood experts.

We conducted an initial pilot study with 19 families, followed by a randomised controlled trial funded by Paul Ramsay Foundation.

#### Outcomes

More than 250 families participated across four locations.

Demonstrated benefits:

- Greater empathy among parents
- Increased affection and parenting confidence
- Improved social and emotional abilities among toddlers

***"The great thing is that our kids are with us, we put into practice what we learn, and we get guidance. I haven't got that anywhere else."***
– Parent

Building on these positive findings, we are working to embed the *My Toddler and Me* program across Karitane and develop facilitator training to support delivery by services across Australia.

### Scaling early parenting programs in regional, rural and remote Australia

**Our Director of Research, Associate Professor Jane Kohlhoff, was one of five 2024–25 Paul Ramsay Foundation fellows.**

Her fellowship explored how evidence-based early parenting programs can be successfully scaled across regional, rural and remote Australia. Ultimately, this research aimed to strengthen equitable access to parenting support by identifying the policy, service-system and implementation factors that enable sustainable expansion of proven interventions. This work comprised a series of studies:

1. A systematic review of international literature
2. A qualitative study involving interviews with 23 Australian and international experts in implementation and service delivery
3. A comprehensive analysis of 238 Australian policies related to children and families and regional, rural and remote healthcare
4. A qualitative case study analysis of eight examples from across rural and regional areas of Australia.

The research found that factors which enable successful scaling of early parenting interventions include:

- business model
- buy-in
- implementation approach
- intervention quality
- team composition
- time and planning.

**Key findings:**

- Evidence-based parenting programs can improve child and family outcomes when delivered at scale.
- Successful scaling requires strong business models, buy-in from a range of stakeholders, strong partnerships, effective implementation, high-quality interventions that are liked by families and practitioners, well-functioning teams, and time and planning.
- Australia's current policy landscape does not support scale-up of new early parenting programs in regional, rural and remote Australia, highlighting an important area for improvement.

Findings from this research will inform practical recommendations for Karitane as we seek to expand the scale and impact of our programs. Findings will also be of wider use for governments, service providers and community organisations seeking to improve access to early parenting support for families, regardless of where they live.

### Major research partnerships

Karitane leads the way in contributing to large-scale statewide and national projects, including:

- NHMRC STARS for Kids Centre of Research Excellence (CRE), led by Scientia Professor Valsamma Eapen AO (UNSW)
- Integrated Kids Hubs (ARC Linkage Project) in partnership with UNSW and Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, led by Professor Sue Woolfenden (University of Sydney)
- Integrated Kids Connect Program project (NHMRC Partnership project), led by Scientia Professor Valsamma Eapen AO (UNSW)
- Kids Connect Integrated Hybrid Program (NSW Health Translational Research Grant Scheme project), led by Scientia Professor Valsamma Eapen AO (UNSW)
- Enhancing Primary Care Workforce Capacity and Cultural Competency to Optimise Early Childhood Growth: A Co-Design Approach (NHMRC Partnership project), led by Prof Li Ming Wen (USYD)

We also collaborate with institutions such as Griffith University, Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI), the Parenting Research Centre, the University of Sydney, the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), West Virginia University and Western Sydney University on translational research initiatives.

View more on our research

# Education and training

## A key driver of quality, innovation and impact at Karitane

Together, education and training are a key driver of quality, innovation and impact at Karitane, strengthening our ability to respond to the evolving needs of children and families. Our education programs also extend Karitane's expertise beyond our own services, helping to build capability across the broader child and family sector. Accessible parent education provides families with timely, practical information and strategies, supporting parents to build knowledge and confidence when needed.

### Parent education

**1,730**

**parents registered for Karitane webinars**

### Professional education

**119** sessions **812** participants

**Including 25 Family Partnership Model workshops reaching 146 participants**

**90%+**

**achieved their learning outcomes**

### Strengthening practice through education and relational care

Karitane's professional development program strengthens the knowledge, clinical confidence and reflective practice of our workforce, supporting evidence-based, family-centred care. We underpin this training with family partnership, recognising that meaningful and lasting change is strengthened through connection, collaboration and respectful engagement.

Our Family Partnership Model (FPM) brings these principles into practice, supporting practitioners in recognising parents as experts in their own family, exploring family concerns and strengths, and developing meaningful goals and strategies together. In 2025–26, Karitane expanded FPM to staff in non-clinical roles, helping to embed relational and family partnership principles across the organisation. We also continued FPM supervision and facilitator training, refreshers and communities of practice.

### Building capability across the child and family sector

Karitane's professional education program strengthens workforce capability across child and family practice areas. Targeted education builds knowledge, informed decision-making and clinical confidence, while supporting practitioners in applying evidence-based approaches in practice and strengthening family-centred communication skills.

Karitane extended its comprehensive child and family education program to child and family teams across South Western Sydney, increasing collaboration and stronger support for children and families across the district. During the year, the Education Team also worked with Northern Sydney Local Health District and Nepean Blue Mountains, with positive feedback.

Our academic partnership with Western Sydney University plays an important role in developing the child and family health workforce. The Master of Child and Family Health program continued to demonstrate strong growth and positive student outcomes, with students reporting that learning, teaching content and assessments were highly relevant to current and future clinical practice. The strong alignment between theory and practice supports the development of a capable and confident workforce. Meanwhile, the program's flexibility enables students to balance study with professional and personal responsibilities. During the year, Karitane Nurse Educators also completed the rewrite of the Infant Feeding and Nutrition unit, ensuring content remains contemporary, evidence-based and focused on workforce readiness.

### Enrolments this year (vs last year)

**158**
**Graduate Certificates** +5%

**24**
**Graduate Diplomas** +33%

**17**
**Masters** +21%

Our focus on connecting learning with clinical practice is also reflected in Karitane's New Graduate Program. In 2025–26, two new graduates were supported through a structured program that combines education, clinical support, mentoring and practice-based learning. The program builds confidence and capability, and translates theory into practice to deliver safe, high-quality, family-centred care. Graduates are also supported in completing two units of the Graduate Certificate through Western Sydney University, while collaboration with South Western Sydney Child and Family Health teams provides shared clinical experience opportunities for new graduates.

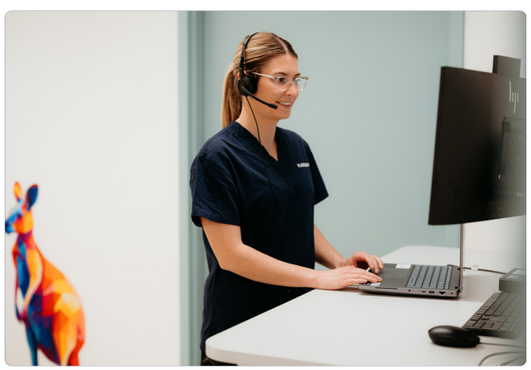
*"Absolutely loved the content. Extremely applicable to my role."*

### Empowering parents through accessible education

Karitane's parent webinars provide timely, evidence-based parenting information before challenges become more complex or entrenched. The webinars give families practical knowledge and strategies during key developmental stages of infancy and early childhood. This supports parents in identifying concerns early and responding proactively.

Online delivery enables families to seek support at the point of need, regardless of location or circumstances, reducing barriers to trusted child and family health information. Topics such as infant feeding, sleep and settling, toddler behaviour and fussy eating address common challenges that can affect parental wellbeing and child development.

Feedback shows that parents gain new knowledge and confidence, while describing practical strategies as achievable, relevant and immediately applicable at home. The webinars also provide reassurance and validation, helping parents understand that their experiences are common and that they are not alone in navigating parenting challenges. This combination of timely information, practical support and reassurance strengthens parents' capacity to make informed decisions and support their child's development.










# Governance

## Excellence, safety and accountability

Karitane is uncompromising in our commitment to excellence, safety and ensuring that consumer voices inform our governance. Our Clinical Governance Framework provides the foundation through which the Board, Executive, service managers and front-line staff share accountability for continuously improving the quality, safety and effectiveness of services for families.

Through strong oversight, consumer partnership, evidence-informed practice, workforce capability, risk management, incident learning and continuous quality improvement, we ensure children and families receive safe, high-quality, person-centred care that supports the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes.

**Safe, high-quality, person-centred care is a shared responsibility across Karitane**

**+76**

**NPS world-class client recommendation score**

**Families consistently recommend Karitane to others.**

### Quality and safety independently recognised

In February 2026, Karitane successfully completed its Short Notice Accreditation assessment against the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards. This assessment reaffirms our commitment to delivering safe, high-quality and person-shaped care.

Conducted by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS), the assessment resulted in an exceptional outcome, with no formal recommendations for improvement. This reflects the strength of Karitane's clinical governance systems, quality processes, consumer partnership and commitment to continuous improvement.

The Lead Assessor also acknowledged the dedication and capability of our workforce, noting that "your people are your strength." This recognition reflects the expertise, compassion and focus on quality that our people bring to supporting children and families every day.

#### NSQHS-accredited

**No formal recommendations for improvement**

***"Your people are your strength."***

Lead Assessor, ACHS

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care | NSQHS Standards | ACCREDITED HEALTH SERVICE ACHS





## Quality in practice

Our commitment to quality extends beyond accreditation. Evidence-informed practice, outcome measurement, consumer engagement and continuous evaluation help us understand what is working and identify opportunities to strengthen the care we provide.

### Recognition of Quality in action

The *My Toddler and Me* video series provides a practical example of this approach, bringing together evidence-informed practice, trained clinicians, outcome measurement and continuous service evaluation. During the year, *My Toddler and Me: A Video Series to Promote Toddler Mental Health and Wellbeing among Multicultural Families* was recognised in the 2025 ACHS Quality Improvement Awards in the Clinical Excellence and Patient Safety category. It was also named a finalist in the 2025 South Western Sydney Local Health District Quality Awards. This recognition demonstrates how evidence, evaluation and consumer engagement can translate into practical improvements in quality and culturally responsive care.

As part of our commitment to clinical excellence and continuous quality improvement, Karitane also monitors breastfeeding outcomes to ensure families receive safe, evidence-based, effective support. This commitment was recognised through the successful renewal of our Best Practice Accreditation as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace. Renewed for a further two years until 30 April 2028, the accreditation provides assurance that Karitane's policies, practices and workplace environment align with recognised best-practice standards for promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding for families accessing our services and employees returning to work.

### Quality highlights

**2025 ACHS Quality Improvement Awards**
*My Toddler and Me* video series recognised in the Clinical Excellence and Patient Safety category

**2025 SWSLHD Quality Awards**
*My Toddler and Me* video series finalist

**Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace**
Best Practice Accreditation renewed to April 2028

## Partnering with families to improve care

Consumer partnership is embedded within our governance approach, ensuring the experiences and perspectives of children, parents, carers and families inform service planning, design, evaluation and continuous improvement.

We actively seek feedback through surveys, outcome measures, compliments, complaints and consumer co-design activities. These insights help us understand what is working. They also help us to identify opportunities for improvement and to make informed decisions about the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of our services. By listening and responding to families, we strengthen a culture of openness, accountability and continuous learning.

## Safety, risk and accountability

Karitane maintains high standards of safety and compliance across our services. Risk management is embedded throughout the organisation, with our Audit, Risk and Governance Committee overseeing organisational risk and compliance, and our Clinical Governance Committee providing oversight of quality of care.

During 2025–26, Karitane continued to meet regulatory requirements, including the successful HACCP Food Safety Audit at the Campbelltown Early Parenting Centre and compliance with the NSW Health Healthy Food & Drink Audit for Café on Mitch. We also worked with the NSW Ministry of Health on capital works at the Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub, helping ensure a purpose-built, safe environment for staff and families.

### Strengthening child safety

Our commitment to child safety is guided by the *10 Child Safe Standards,* embedding child safety within leadership, governance, culture, service delivery and continuous improvement.

During the year, we continued to strengthen our child-safe culture and worked with families to develop Karitane's *Child Safe Statement of Commitment,* now displayed across our services and online. All Karitane services also completed risk assessments for child safety.

Through safe physical and online environments, strong policies and procedures, workforce education and shared accountability, we remain committed to creating environments where every child feels safe, respected, heard and supported to thrive.

**10**

**Child Safe Standards guide our approach**

**All Karitane services completed risk assessments for child safety**

### Protecting information and strengthening resilience

Protecting the privacy, security and integrity of client, workforce and organisational information remains a key priority. During 2025–26, Karitane continued to strengthen its cyber security maturity by collaborating with NSW Health, UComm Group and external cyber security specialists through our partnership with Cisco.

Independent reviews of our cyber security posture, including an Australian Cyber Security Centre Essential Eight assessment and comprehensive threat modelling exercise using OCTAVE Allegro methodology, provided valuable insights into our technology environment, critical information assets and cyber risks.

Throughout the year, we continued to strengthen our cyber governance, the visibility of key systems and data, and our oversight of third-party providers. By embedding cyber risk management within our broader governance framework, we strengthen our ability to safeguard information, maintain service continuity and protect the trust placed in Karitane by children, families, staff and stakeholders.

# People and culture

## Our people, our strength

Our people are central to the care and support we provide to children and families. We are committed to creating a workplace where people feel valued, connected and supported – and where a strong culture enables our people to do their best work.

***"No words can describe how good the nurses and staff were. They genuinely care and support you and your child."*** – Parent, Residential Service



### A culture where people thrive

Karitane conducted our two-yearly Staff Culture Engagement Survey in late 2025. We again achieved an outstanding result, demonstrating the strength of our culture and employee experience when benchmarked against comparable organisations.

The organisation rated in the *Soaring* culture group, with 91% of staff describing Karitane as a truly great place to work. Characterised by high levels of engagement, empowerment, connection and collaboration, a *Soaring* culture reflects a workforce committed to shared success. These results continue to position us strongly against sector benchmarks and reflect the deep belief our people have in Karitane's purpose and impact.

Staff feedback highlighted many of the qualities that make Karitane a special place to work, with appreciation, support, teamwork and our services and programs among the strongest positive themes.

Karitane achieved a Benchmarking Strengths Index (BSI) of 89%, compared against the healthcare sector benchmark comprising more than 355,000 respondents. A BSI of 60% or above indicates performance significantly stronger than most benchmarking partners, making Karitane's result particularly strong. Together, these findings reflect a workforce connected to Karitane's purpose, to one another and to making a difference for children and families.

While the survey celebrates these achievements, it also provides valuable insights to guide our continued investment in our teams. We will build on this strong foundation by continuing to focus on workforce wellbeing and sustainability, leadership and communication, equitable people practices and creating an environment in which our teams can thrive.

As Karitane continues to grow and evolve, maintaining the culture our people value will remain central to our success.

***Soaring culture***

**Karitane achieves *Soaring* result in our 2025 Culture Survey**

**91% of staff describe Karitane as a truly great place to work**



### Supporting our people

Supporting the wellbeing of our workforce is fundamental to maintaining a healthy and sustainable organisation. During the year, we continued to embed wellbeing across Karitane, creating opportunities for connection and supporting physical, social and psychological wellbeing.

Flexibility remains an important part of the employee experience, helping staff to balance work, family and other responsibilities. As an accredited Family Inclusive Workplace™, we continue to strengthen practices that recognise different needs and circumstances across all stages of working life.

Our focus on wellbeing is complemented by Karitane's strong commitment to professional development and continuous learning. These combine to create an environment where employees can grow, develop and contribute at their best while delivering high-quality, relational care for families.

**97%** **women**

**75%** **part-time**

**Accredited Family Inclusive Workplace™**

Family Inclusive Workplace™ Certified 2025-2027

### Strengthening diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging

We are committed to creating a workplace where every employee feels respected, valued and able to thrive. During 2025–26, workforce insights highlighted the strength of our diverse, values-driven team – 48% of our people come from culturally diverse backgrounds – alongside opportunities to further strengthen inclusion, belonging and cultural capability.

In response, we established a staff-led Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, creating a stronger employee voice in shaping our workplace. We partnered with MindTribes and Careers in Colour, bringing in specialist expertise to develop a long-term DEI roadmap that is informed by our people, workforce data and leading practice.

We also continued to progress our *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan*. An independent review by the Burbangana Group in July 2026 found "significant and authentic progress", recognising stronger First Nations workforce representation and leadership, greater community visibility and engagement, increased staff confidence and greater shared responsibility for reconciliation across Karitane.

This work is strengthening inclusive leadership and workplace practices, supporting a more diverse workforce and building our capability to deliver culturally responsive care to the communities we serve.

# Board of Directors



**Lee Carpenter**
Chair
CPA, MBA, GAICD



**Jean-Baptiste Naudet**
Treasurer
Chair Finance Committee
BA, CA, GAICD



**Lesley Jordan**
Director
Chair Clinical Governance Committee
DipAppSc Nursing, CM, Grad Cert Women's Health, MHM, GAICD



**Paul Herbert**
Director
Chair Audit Risk & Governance Committee
MSc (Hons), PhD



**Marion Skulley**
Director
Chair Innovation & Business Development Committee
MBA IMD, AICD, DipPsych



**Zulpha Styer**
Director
MPA, LLM, LLB, BA, GDLP



**Servena McIntyre**
Director
MBA



**Paul White**
Director
MSc, FCHSM, CHE, GAICD



**Matthew McLean**
Director
LLB (Hons), LLM (Corporate & Commercial)



**Karen Patterson**
Director
RN, RM, GDipAEd, MMid (Research), PhD, FCHSM, CHE

# Executive team



**Grainne O'Loughlin**
CEO & Company Secretary
BSc (Hons) Sp. Th., MBA, GAICD



**Sharlene Vlahos**
Director Education & Business Development
BA Nursing, Cert Child Family Health, M Nursing – Clinical Leadership, Mgmt Cert – Executive Management & Leadership



**Dinethra Nandakoban**
Director Governance & Corporate Services and Company Secretary
BSc, MICDA, GIA (Affiliate)



**Angela Wood**
Director Clinical Services
Dip App Sc, Nursing, Grad Dip Child Family Health, Grad Dip Critical Care Nursing, Dip Mgmt



**Peter Yeung**
Chief Financial Officer
BComm, CPA, HKICPA

## Volunteers and consumer representatives

Karitane's 91 volunteers and consumer representatives are a much-valued part of our community. They bring something very special to Karitane, generously giving their time, lived experience, compassion and genuine desire to make a difference for children and families.

Our volunteers work alongside families and teams, offering a listening ear, practical support, encouragement and connection during some of the most important moments of early parenthood. Their kindness can help a parent feel less alone, more confident and more connected to their community.

Our consumer representatives contribute in a different but equally important way, generously sharing their lived experience to help shape and improve our services. By bringing the voices and experiences of families into our work, these representatives help us understand what matters most and ensure our care remains responsive to the people and communities we serve.

Supported through training and ongoing guidance, our volunteers and consumer representatives each make a unique and lasting contribution to Karitane. We are deeply grateful to every person who chooses to give their time, experience and heart to our work. Thank you for the care, humanity and commitment you bring, and for the difference you make every day.

# Treasurer's report

It is my pleasure to present the Treasurer's Report for the year ended 30 June 2026. The 2025/26 financial year was significant for Karitane, with continued service growth, strong funding outcomes, completion of major strategic infrastructure investment and a substantially strengthened balance sheet. These results position the organisation well to continue supporting children, parents and families across New South Wales and Australia, while investing in future service delivery and innovation.

## Financial highlights

| Financial metric | FY25/26 |
|---|---|
| Total revenue and other income | $28.4 million |
| Total revenue and other income excluding one-off capital grants[1] | $22.5 million |
| Total expenditure excluding one-off capital-grant-related expenses[2] | $22.7 million |
| Statutory surplus | $5.4 million |
| Net assets | $29.2 million |
| Liquid assets | $15.4 million |
| Government funding[3] | $23.1 million |
| Revenue secured under multi-year funding agreements[4] | 88% |

1. This excludes a $5.9 million one-off capital grant from the NSW Ministry of Health identified via management accounts
2. This excludes $0.2 million of one-off capital grant expenses identified via management accounts
3. This includes a $5.9 million one-off capital grant from the NSW Ministry of Health identified via management accounts
4. From Karitane's funding register

## Revenue and growth

Karitane generated total revenue and other income of $28.4 million during FY25/26, compared with $20.5 million in the previous year. Management accounts identify that this result included a one-off capital grant of $5.9 million from the NSW Ministry of Health to support the redevelopment of the Karitane Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub. Excluding this one-off funding, operating revenue was $22.5 million, representing continued growth in Karitane's recurring revenue base and reflecting increasing demand for our services.

Revenue has more than doubled since FY18/19. This demonstrates both the growing reach of Karitane's services and the confidence placed in the organisation by government partners, philanthropic organisations, donors and the wider community.

During the year, Karitane received a total of $23.1 million from the Australian and NSW governments. Government funding remained the cornerstone of our operations, contributing 81% of total revenue and other income, and the government funding proportion of funding contributions remains steady compared to last year.

## Strategic investment and service expansion

A major milestone during the year was completing the redevelopment of the Karitane Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub.

This transformative project was supported by a combined investment of $13 million. The investment comprised $6.5 million of one-off project capital works funding from the NSW Government, and a matching $6.5 million operating funding contribution from Paul Ramsay Foundation over 5 years. Construction was completed in June 2026, and the facility officially opened on 18 June 2026.

The redevelopment significantly enhances Karitane's capacity to deliver integrated and accessible services and strengthens our ability to respond to the needs of families in one of Sydney's fastest-growing communities. It also provides a strong platform for future partnerships, innovation and service delivery.



## Revenue and growth

Karitane continued to achieve positive funding outcomes during the year, securing both extended funding commitments and new program investments.

Notable achievements included:

- extension of the Karitane Linking Families Program for a further 5.5 years, with funding exceeding $4.4 million
- extension of funding for the Village Connect Young Parent Hub, valued at $1.8 million
- new funding support for the National Community Hubs Program through partnerships with Community Hubs Australia, the Australian Government Department of Social Services, and philanthropic partners
- funding support from the NSW Ministry of Health for the I-PCIT in Kids Hub initiative.

Based on Karitane's funding register, 88% of recurring annual revenue is secured under contractual or funding arrangements extending between three and five years. This funding certainty provides a stable foundation for long-term planning, workforce development and strategic investment. It also demonstrates confidence in Karitane's national leadership role in early parenting, child and family health and perinatal infant and child mental health services.

## Operating performance

Total expenditure increased to $22.9 million during the year, compared with $20.0 million in FY24/25. The increase primarily reflected statewide salary increases for nurses and midwives, consultancy costs associated with the Shellharbour Hub project, and strategic system implementation costs relating to the Fairfield redevelopment project. These movements should be considered alongside the one-off nature of some project costs and the recurrent impact of workforce cost increases.

Karitane reported a statutory surplus of $5.4 million, compared with $0.5 million in the previous year. This year's result included approximately $5.6 million in one-off net capital grant surplus associated with the Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub redevelopment. The previous year's result also included $0.7 million of one-off net capital grant surplus.

While the reported surplus reflects a strong overall outcome, it is important to note that this result was significantly influenced by non-recurring capital grant contributions. Excluding these one-off items, Karitane's underlying operating performance was broadly break-even, with a small underlying deficit of approximately $0.2 million after absorbing increased workforce and operating costs during the year. This result compares favourably to the budget of $0.28 million deficit.

## Financial position

Karitane's financial position remains strong and provides a solid foundation for future growth.

Net assets increased to $29.2 million as at 30 June 2026, compared with $22.1 million in the previous year. Compared to the $14.7 million shown in the FY18/19 audited financial statements, net assets have almost doubled, reflecting sustained growth and prudent financial stewardship.

Liquid assets, comprising cash and short-term investments, were $15.4 million as at 30 June 2026. Compared to the $5.6 million shown in the FY18/19 audited financial statements, liquid assets have shown sustained growth. While this remains a strong liquidity position, these assets have reduced from the prior year as we deployed cash into strategic investment, including the Fairfield redevelopment and financial assets.

This liquidity position enhances organisational resilience and provides capacity to invest strategically in services, infrastructure, workforce capability and innovation.

## Financial risk and governance

The Board and its Audit and Risk Committee continue to actively monitor the key financial and strategic risks facing the organisation.

Key areas of focus include maintaining long-term government funding, managing workforce cost pressures, addressing broader inflationary impacts on service delivery, overseeing major capital and transformation projects, and ensuring continued diversification of funding sources where appropriate. The Board is satisfied that Karitane's strong financial position, multi-year funding commitments and disciplined financial management provide an appropriate basis for managing these risks.

## Outlook

Looking ahead, Karitane is well positioned to continue delivering sustainable growth and high-quality services to children and families across New South Wales and Australia.

The completion of the Fairfield Integrated Child and Family Hub, combined with secure multi-year funding commitments and a strengthened balance sheet, provides a strong platform for future investment and service innovation. The Board remains committed to maintaining sound financial governance while supporting strategic initiatives that advance Karitane's purpose and maximise community impact.

## Acknowledgement

On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of our government partners, donors, philanthropic organisations and community stakeholders. I also extend my sincere thanks to Karitane's leadership team, staff and fellow Board members for their dedication, professionalism and commitment to ensuring the organisation remains financially sustainable and focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for families and communities.



**Jean-Baptiste Naudet**
Treasurer
Chair Finance Committee
BA, CA, GAICD

# Financial reports

## Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2026

| | Notes | 2026 ($) | 2025 ($) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Revenue from continuing operations** | 3 | **28,048,775** | **20,141,620** |
| Other revenue and income | 4 | 313,053 | 354,901 |
| **Total revenue and other income** | | **28,361,828** | **20,496,521** |
| **Expenses** | | | |
| Employee benefits expenses | | (16,579,253) | (15,039,614) |
| Provision for doubtful debts | | - | 72,974 |
| Printing and stationery expenses | | (114,670) | (91,548) |
| Telephone expenses | | (122,155) | (100,144) |
| Depreciation and amortisation expenses | | (758,021) | (643,425) |
| Repairs and maintenance expenses | | (205,868) | (296,596) |
| VMO expenses | | (312,275) | (371,891) |
| Consultancy expenses | | (1,133,940) | (556,967) |
| Occupancy expenses | | (1,145,144) | (754,732) |
| Other expenses | | (2,558,388) | (2,176,595) |
| **Total expenses** | | **(22,929,714)** | **(19,958,538)** |
| **Surplus before income tax expense for the year** | | **5,432,114** | **537,983** |
| Income tax expense | | - | - |
| **Surplus after income tax for the year** | | **5,432,114** | **537,983** |
| **Other comprehensive income**<br>Revaluation of land and buildings | 9 | 1,671,287 | 3,602,702 |
| **Total comprehensive income for the year** | | **7,103,401** | **3,600,685** |

## Statement of financial position for the year ended 30 June 2026

| | Notes | 2026 ($) | 2025 ($) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Current Assets** | | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 5 | **7,848,632** | 13,906,681 |
| Trade and other receivables | 6 | 500,205 | 264,912 |
| Financial assets | 7 | 7,525,106 | 5,856,338 |
| Other assets | 8 | 180,051 | 109,871 |
| **Total current assets** | | **16,053,994** | **20,137,802** |
| **Non-current assets** | | | |
| Property, plant and equipment | 9 | 24,050,276 | 17,263,405 |
| Right of use asset | 10 | 130,763 | 149,012 |
| Financial assets | 7 | 757,973 | 709,041 |
| **Total non-current assets** | | **24,939,012** | **18,121,458** |
| **Total assets** | | **40,993,006** | **38,259,260** |
| **Current liabilities** | | | |
| Trade and other payables | 11 | 3,070,876 | 2,286,577 |
| Employee entitlements | 12 | 3,394,148 | 3,216,383 |
| Lease liabilities | 15 | 149,821 | 119,391 |
| Contract liabilities – revenue in advance | 13 | 4,861,598 | 10,190,570 |
| **Total current liabilities** | | **11,476,443** | **15,812,921** |
| **Non-current liabilities** | | | |
| Employee entitlements | 12 | 283,300 | 245,336 |
| Lease liabilities | 15 | - | 71,141 |
| **Total non-current liabilities** | | **283,300** | **316,477** |
| **Total liabilities** | | **11,579,743** | **16,129,398** |
| **Net assets** | | **29,233,263** | **22,129,862** |
| **Funds** | | | |
| Accumulated funds | | 16,809,301 | 11,249,931 |
| Reserves | 14 | 12,423,962 | 10,879,931 |
| **Total funds** | | 29,233,263 | 22,129,862 |

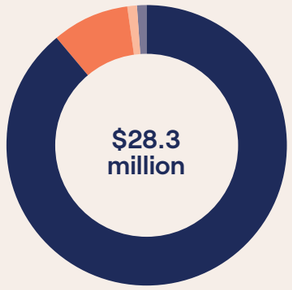
# Funding and partnerships

As a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity, Karitane relies on the generous support of government, philanthropic partners, donors and supporters to help more children and families access the care and support they need.

**Your support helps us to strengthen services, develop new models of care and respond to the changing needs of children, families and communities.**

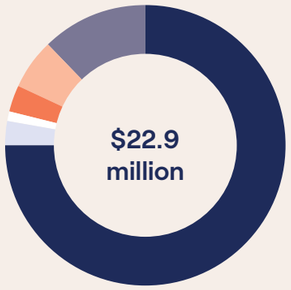
We are deeply grateful to everyone who supports Karitane and shares our commitment to helping children to thrive, families to feel confident and communities to stay connected.

### Total revenue




- Government subsidies and grants 89%
- Donations and sponsorships 9%
- Other income 1%
- Patient fees 1%

### Total expenditure




- Employment 73%
- Information technology 3%
- Property maintenance 1%
- Depreciation and amortisation 3%
- Contributions to entities for program delivery 6%
- Other expenses 14%

## Donations

A special thank you to our donors for their generous donations to support Karitane this year.

| Donor | Value | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Anonymous Donor | $ 1,630,733 | Clinical Services Support |
| Anonymous Donations | $ 19,666 | Gift |
| Paul Ramsay Foundation | $ 138,806 | Research and Education |
| Rotary Club of Narellan | $ $19,666 | Clinical Services Support |
| **Total** | **$ 1,814,205** | |

## Our funding partners

NSW Ministry of Health

South Western Sydney Local Health District

NSW Department of Communities and Justice

Australian Government Department of Social Services

Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Paul Ramsay Foundation

Mission Australia

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation

University of New South Wales

Barnardos Australia

South Western Sydney PHN

Australian Communities Foundation

Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research

Community Hubs Australia

NSW Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, represented by the Office of Responsible Gambling

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Fairfield RSL

Mounties Group

Perpetual Foundation – The Julian Flett Endowment

Snow Foundation

EMDR Research Foundation

Transport for NSW

Australian Government Department of Industry, Science and Resources

## Our strategic and academic partners

University of NSW

Western Sydney University

The University of Sydney

University of Newcastle

PCIT International

Murdoch Children's Research Institute

Parenting Research Centre

Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA)

Centre of Perinatal Excellence (COPE)

Australasian Association of Parenting & Child Health

MindTribes

Careers in Colour

Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue

## Our community and service partners

Sonder

Uniting

Parents At Work

Playgroup NSW

Gidget Foundation Australia

Weave Youth & Community Services

Burbangana Group

First Steps Count

STARTTS

Fairfield City Council

Woodville Alliance

Each

54 Reasons

## Our corporate supporters

Cisco

MinterEllison

Stevens & Associates Lawyers

Stockland

GAIA

HESTA

Linéaire Projects

Johnson Winter Slattery

## Make a donation

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please visit **karitane.com.au/donations**

**Our payment options**
Credit card EFT
BSB: 062265
Account: 1539034
(Ref – Donation)

*All donations and community grants are used to support more families with our life-changing services*

KARITANE®

*"What a difference Karitane has made to my family dynamic. It's all going so well now – we can't thank you enough, and [the nurse] was so lovely."*

– Parent

**Karitane Head Office**
138-150 The Horsley Drive,
Carramar NSW 2163
(02) 9794 2300

Careline 1300 227 464
Karitane.com.au