



ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16





Interrelate is pleased to acknowledge our Patron, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of New South Wales, who granted Interrelate his Vice-Regal Patronage on 2 October 2014.



ABOUT

Who We Are	04
Chairperson's Message	06
CEO'S Message	08
Our Board Directors	10
Governance and Accountability	12
Our Leadership Structure	14
Staff Reference Groups	16
Organisational Chart	20
Who We Help	22
Partners and Stakeholders	25
Corporate Social Responsibility	26



WHO WE ARE

Since 1926, Interrelate has specialised in supporting parents and children to strengthen family relationships. We provide affordable services including family dispute resolution, case management, counselling, services for carers, children's contact services, specialised mental health support and relationship education to the largest relationship services client group in NSW.

This year Interrelate assisted more than 61,000 people to strengthen their relationships through our network of centres and school based programs. Our school based education programs were delivered to over 38,600 children and families across 560 schools.

Purpose, Vision and Values

Our purpose

To enable people to work through life's challenges and strengthen their relationships.

Our vision

To lead the way in providing responsive, cutting-edge, transformative relationship services with and for our diverse communities.

Interrelate provides a range of quality services, relevant to community needs, which aim to empower people to live and relate more effectively. We are committed to responding to the vulnerabilities of families and children in their communities and to building stronger relationships. Interrelate's work is underpinned by the principles of strengthening family relationships; fostering more resilience within families and communities; and working in the best interests of children to create supportive family environments.

Our values

The **RELATE** values that guide all that we do at Interrelate are:

Respect: Foster an environment of respect and a strength-based culture in all contact with clients and each other.

Equity: Provide people with equitable access to services and information, acknowledging the diversity, needs, rights and worth of all people.

Leadership: Be recognised as a leader in providing quality relationship services in a way that maximises outcomes for a diverse range of target groups.

Accountability: Commit to sound ethical principles and standards of practice and operate within an outcome-based framework that recognises shared responsibility and accountability.

Transparency: Serve the needs of staff and clients in a fair, ethical and impartial manner and providing consistent and transparent practices and procedures.

Empowerment: Offer services that focus on empowering people to build capability and resilience.



Our Service Charter

Interrelate promises to:

- provide you with a safe environment
- protect your privacy
- recognise diversity and provide equal service opportunities among all communities, families, couples and individuals regardless of gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, race, ethnicity or disability
- have highly skilled staff to help you
- provide you with up-to-date information
- refer you to other services as appropriate and help you contact them
- listen to any complaints and feedback you might have

Confidentiality

Anything you tell our staff is confidential. We will only disclose personal information if you give us permission or if required or authorised to by law, for example, to protect children or others from harm.

Where We Are

Interrelate has 10 major regional locations across NSW with 27 outreach locations into the broader community.





CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE



ALAN GIBSON

“ Interrelate’s pursuit of excellence across the breadth of the strategic plan is making Interrelate fit for this future. ”

It is a privilege to present this report to our members on the 2015-16 financial year on behalf of your Board.

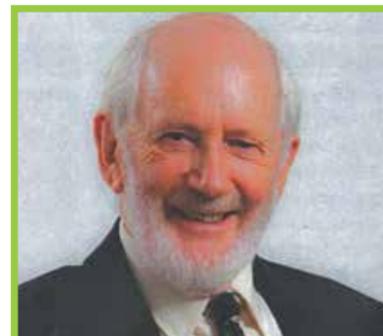
Stability, cohesion and determination in our Executive team over the last two years has facilitated pleasing progress against all five pillars of our strategic plan. Our Services, Staff, Funding, Relationships and Meeting our Responsibilities are all in good shape, but challenges are ahead.

The 2016 “Future Focus of the Family Law Services” Attorney-General’s Department Commissioned KPMG Report sets out the expected landscape for the Family Law Services sector in Australia. The report looks to increased service collaboration and reform to address the sustainability of long-term funding and flexibility to improve outcomes for clients. A “personal budgets model”, would provide each departmental client with a personal budget to utilise on whichever family law or socio legal services they may choose.

Agencies with excellent services, staff, quality, efficiency, flexibility, technology, reputation, and collaborative relationships will perform well in such an environment. Interrelate’s pursuit of excellence across the breadth of the strategic plan is making Interrelate fit for this future. The Board’s conscious and measured investment in budgeting resources from Interrelate’s reserves for this continuing reform is important to prepare us for the future funding environment.

Board Director Lisa Sweeney has led the process of digitally capturing the history of Interrelate in a “History Project” marking 90 years since the organisation began. The Board hopes that the stories of the organisation across the last 90 years will inspire and energise the good work of Interrelate now and in future generations. My special thanks to long term staff and members who participated in interviews for this project. Please refer to www.interrelate.org.au for more information on our history.

I regret to inform members that life member, Graham Seton, passed away on 26 September 2016. Interrelate’s Lower Mid North Coast NSW centre recently relocated to a newly purchased building in Merrymen Place Port Macquarie. The Board was grateful to receive Graham’s consent to



In memoriam Graham Seton

name this building in honour of the Seton family’s contribution to the organisation.

During the last year, the Board joined with staff in celebrating 40 years of service to the communities in Dubbo and Coffs Harbour, and Interrelate opened a new office in community space at Rouse Hill in Sydney’s north. The Board and Executive are working together on many property challenges and opportunities across NSW, seeking to facilitate quality workspaces for both our staff and clients.

Reconciliation Australia approved Interrelate’s Innovation Reconciliation Action Plan (“RAP”) on 9 March 2016. Our RAP explains our relationships and respect and the opportunities for participation in the life and programs and staffing of Interrelate. The Board acknowledges the good work of staff reference group “Kutanya” for the development of Interrelate’s Innovation RAP. I also appreciate the contribution of Board Director, Paul Newman, in teaching his Board colleagues about Aboriginal history and culture.

Breda Diamond stepped down from the Board in January 2016, and Board renewal is continuing. There’s strength in diversity of Board composition across relevant skill specialisations, backgrounds and gender. In keeping with Interrelate’s value of Transparency, for the first time, during the 2015-2016 financial year, the Board advertised for expressions of interest in membership of the

Interrelate Board, taking the pool of candidates well beyond the existing professional networks of existing Directors. Nur Oyman and Paul Newman both applied and have contributed significantly to the Board. The Board appreciates the quality of the expressions of interest and expects to continue to renew and strengthen the Board in the year ahead.

I am grateful to all of my Board colleagues for their continued diligence in governance and passion, to our CEO and Executive for their unrelenting determination, to our staff for their quality, care and professionalism, and I thank all members for your support for this great organisation across your share of its 90 years of service.

Alan Gibson
Chairperson, Interrelate



CEO'S MESSAGE



PATRICIA OCCELLI

“ To respond to this Interrelate is positioning itself to respond and be at the forefront of thinking and development. ”

This year is a landmark year for Interrelate as it celebrates its 90th year of service to the community. Since our humble beginnings as the Father and Son and then mother and daughter movement, we have continued to work with individuals and families to support the development of healthy relationships and to support the development of new skills and resilience to strengthen relationships.

The collective wisdom and passion of our staff continues to be captured through our staff reference and service practice groups who have achieved many successes in strategic reform, program development, cultural alignment and service access and quality and social corporate responsibility.

These reference groups had many successes including: the endorsement by Reconciliation Australia of the Interrelate Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. The representation of Interrelate at the Indigenous women's and men's health conference and being recognised as a top 5 finalist for the City Switch awards against organisations such as Bupa and NAB amongst other quite large organisations. These efforts show how our collective efforts can make a significant impact. I would like to thank our staff who contribute to these groups and our executive whose leadership help drive results.

In addition to great results this year we saw another reduction in real government spending into our

services by the Commonwealth Government. A freeze to CPI Indexation to the Family Law Services resulted in a net reduction of \$300,000 to our budget. Costs of service delivery increases each year: this is due to actual expenses in operating and more significantly increase in staffing costs with the Equal Remuneration Order, increases committed through the enterprise agreement and our current commitment to stay 5% ahead of the award for wages. Despite this, we were able to maintain service to more than 61,000 people in our network of centres and school based programs.

The decision by government to stop the drought funding support in the Central West also saw a reduction in service delivery in those areas. Nonetheless as an organisation, we continue to be committed to doing all that we can to ensure that the communities of Warren, Cobar and Walgett are supported.

Significant efforts undertaken at a Regional and Head Office level to manage our expenditure more effectively has enabled us to retain the level of service delivery across the organisation. These efficiencies have been managed through reduction in expenditure (telephone, internet, printing, amenities, property costs and staff vacancy based on turn over and replacement of staff) and increased collection and management of client fees. Staff have all played a significant part in coordinating and enabling these strategies.

The Overall Budget position enabled Interrelate to carry a deficit for the year for investment including:

- business development to expand school services and to develop new business models enabling growth and additional income to support our work
- marketing to build brand recognition and awareness, to embed the I relate strategy in all marketing activities and development of a new website and
- research and service development to enable Interrelate to guide service improvements

In addition Interrelate continues to be committed to the deliverables as articulated in our strategic plan. More over there is an expectation of government for greater efficiencies and innovative ways for us to deliver flexible, customer centred services.

To respond to this Interrelate is positioning itself to respond and be at the forefront of thinking and development. Our strategic plan commits us to continue work through:

- service development in refining our products, enabling a suite of programs that are responsive to customer needs
- the use of technology to further reach clients and to also expand our client reach and service scope
- the refining of our client outcome measures to demonstrate to government and ourselves

that the funding provided through government contracts achieve positive client outcomes and ultimately reduce the costs of social issues

- the use of technology to better service our staff and to reduce our administrative burden

Regional Plans now inform Interrelate on community need and guide service growth in line with the Strategic Plan enabling regions to advance project grants at a local level and enhancement of local networks and partnerships.

This year we have also had a focus on our clinical governance through the Quality Staffing Framework (QSF) supporting staff through the on-boarding process and the Client Outcomes Framework now enabling us to measure success of our programs and interventions.

I would like to thank the staff and Board for another successful year in delivering high quality services to the many communities across NSW.

Patricia Ocelli
CEO, Interrelate



OUR BOARD DIRECTORS



Alan Gibson, Chairman

Finance expertise
Appointed: 28/10/2008



Colin Adams

Finance/asset management expertise
Appointed: 31/10/2003



Doug Sotheren

Clinical expertise
Appointed: 28/08/2007



Hon. Graham West

Youth/management expertise
Appointed: 01/07/2011



Lisa Sweeney

Marketing/media expertise
Appointed: 27/11/2009



Nur Oyman

Information technology/
general management expertise
Appointed: 12/10/2015



Paul Lewis

Legal expertise



Paul Newman

Mediation/
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Engagement

Outgoing Board Director



Breda Diamond

In 2015-16, Interrelate said goodbye to Board Director, Breda Diamond after 8 years of service. During her tenure, Breda provided a significant contribution as Chairperson of the People, Culture and Performance Board Committee and led the Board's processes for succession planning. Breda was instrumental in the recruitment of our current CEO, Patricia Ocelli and several Board Directors.

During her years of service Breda added to the character and culture of the Board and Interrelate is a stronger organisation because of her contribution. We thank Breda for her years of service and wish her well in her future endeavours.

“ I am so thankful to have had the opportunity on the Board over the last 8 years and to contribute to an organisation that continues to grow and improve. ”



GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Interrelate is a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Board of Directors is the governing body of Interrelate and is supported by the CEO and Executive Team. The Board has broad powers to make decisions and exercise the powers and functions of the organisation within the constraints of Interrelate's Constitution and the Corporations Act 2001.

The Board's task on behalf of our members is to ensure that Interrelate achieves its vision, mission and objectives, and in doing so, avoids adverse and unacceptable outcomes. The Board focuses on ensuring the values of Interrelate are respected, along with ensuring that Interrelate members are represented in determining appropriate organisational performance. To achieve this, the Board maintains a clear link between Interrelate and our members whilst monitoring Board-level policies which provide direction and boundaries for both the functions of the Board and the CEO.

The Board's focus is on ensuring it:

- operates in accordance with Interrelate's Constitution
- gives attention to the systems and processes that ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of the organisation
- operates efficiently and effectively, with a shared understanding of the governance role of the Board and the specific responsibilities of the CEO and the Executive Team.

Board Committees

Interrelate has three Board Committees which assist the Board to carry out its role. In 2015-16 the following committees were active:

- Finance, Audit and Asset Management Committee (FAAM)
- People Culture and Performance Committee
- Governance and Engagement Committee

Finance, Audit and Asset Management Committee

The Finance Audit and Asset Management Committee met 6 times this year and in addition to undertaking the risk management and quality assurance functions reflected in FAAM's committee charter, a major focus of the committee's work over the last year has been a review of the organisation's long-term asset management strategies. This has included working with the Executive in relation to recommendations to the Board on the acquisition and sale of real property. Positive examples of the committee's work include the purchase and fit-out of our new Port Macquarie premises and the ongoing scoping of our real property needs and infrastructure management in the Newcastle, Lismore and Greater West areas.

The committee has been well served by the members of the senior executive on the committee and it has drawn upon the services of external consultants approved by the Board when necessary in relation to real property matters.



People, Culture and Performance Committee

The People, Culture and Performance Committee met 3 times this year and:

- undertook a review of governance and grievance policies in conjunction with the rest of the board and supported the continued rollout of the performance framework and staff scholarships
- discussed and reviewed cultural enhancement project outcomes such as: the Cultural Survey, the S2S Reference Group, and the Staff Portal
- developed the CEO Performance Review
- discussed and commented on the workforce development projects, such as the Workforce Development Plan
- stayed informed on high risk staffing issues, such as unfair dismissal claims and matters under workplace investigation.

Governance and Engagement Committee

The Governance and Engagement Committee met 4 times this year and supported the review of the Governance Manual, Board Induction and the process for engagement with our stakeholders and research partners. The committee reviewed the scope of work to be undertaken under the S60I research project approving the ethical parameters.



Interrelate Board on country in Yellomundee region



OUR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Board of Directors is responsible for governance and is supported by the CEO and Executive Team. There are four business units to support our work:

- Corporate Services & Business Development
- Operations
- People Culture & Performance
- Research & Service Development



Our Executive Team



Patricia Occelli

Chief Executive Officer

Over 29 years of experience in design, delivery and leadership in the human service industry in government and non-government sectors.



Melanie Bale

Head of People, Culture & Performance

Over 22 years of experience in youth work, community planning and development, and human resource management in the government, non-government and private sectors.



Graeme O'Connor

Head of Corporate Services & Business Development

Over 23 years of experience in financial and business management across both the private and non-government sectors.



Matthew Stubbs

Head of Research & Service Development

Psychologist with over 21 years of experience as a counsellor, educator, writer and manager in diverse fields including family relationship services, mental health, youth, alcohol and other drugs and homelessness.



Suella Wright

Head of Operations, Regional Services

Over 26 years of experience in delivery and leadership in health and social care services in the government and non-government sectors.



Sharon Grocott

Head of Operations, Sydney & Statewide Services

Over 27 years of experience in the community sector with a focus on young people, families and people with disabilities. This includes senior management roles and experience in building sustainable cross sector partnerships.



STAFF REFERENCE GROUPS

Interrelate values the contribution and expertise of our staff. As a result, we have a number of staff reference groups that help to improve operations, maintain quality service delivery and support staff in the workplace.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Interrelate is committed to supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities and to providing a diverse and inclusive workplace. In 2015-16, the CALD Staff Reference Group was established to support the organisation in being responsive and appropriate in meeting the needs of CALD individuals, families and communities. By supporting the strengths that reside in those communities, Interrelate will help address the barriers that can exist to education, employment and the wellbeing of these communities.

The CALD Staff Reference Group consists of 14 individuals from across the organisation who have varied experiences including staff who are recent or long term migrants or refugees, have worked with CALD communities or are committed to improving access for CALD communities.

Role of the CALD Staff Reference Group:

- Provide cultural, collegial and professional support to all CALD staff members of Interrelate and those staff working closely with CALD communities.
- Support CALD initiatives across regions; with a particular emphasis on the organisation's Access Strategy, including the appropriate use of language interpreters.
- Provide cultural advice and consultation support across operational and service development areas of the organisation.
- Lead by example in promoting understanding and respectful relationships between CALD individuals and other community members.
- Identify service gaps and support the establishment of relationships with external CALD services or community groups.
- Assist in translating research into practice across Interrelate's service delivery with a focus on CALD families and communities.
- Provide guidance to the organisation on how to increase job satisfaction, employment opportunities and pathways and professional development for all CALD staff across regions.
- Provide guidance to the organisation on increasing its engagement with CALD staff.

The group recently finalised their Terms of Reference and developed a work plan to assist Interrelate to improve access for CALD clients to our services.



Environmental Committee

The Environmental Committee was established with the aim to minimise our environmental footprint by working with staff and stakeholders to ensure that we have a sustainable future. The committee has staff representation from each main office and region and meets on a monthly basis via teleconference.

Please refer to the Corporate Social Responsibility section for 2015-16 committee outcomes.

Kutanya

Kutanya, which means 'all' or 'together' in the Barkindji language, is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal) Staff Reference Group, which works to strengthen and advance reconciliation both within Interrelate and the broader community.

Kutanya consists of the CEO, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff from across the organisation and meets bi-monthly. The group brings together expert knowledge and experience to support Aboriginal staff and to help inform best practice to ensure our service delivery is focused, appropriate and meets the needs of local Aboriginal communities.

In 2015-16, Kutanya was excited to engage with new Board Director, Paul Newman and to benefit from his vast experience in Aboriginal engagement. The group participated in a workshop on racism and lateral violence, which considered the implications for Interrelate and further developed the Aboriginal Supervision Framework. Their greatest achievement was the development, and subsequent endorsement by Reconciliation Australia, of Interrelate's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2016-18 that will guide our work with Aboriginal children, families and communities over the next two years.

In May, the part-time position of Organisational Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Project Worker was appointed to assist Kutanya in achieving their strategic deliverables over the next 6 months, which include a Cultural Induction Training Program, Cultural Audit Tool and increasing the cultural depth of our Aboriginal Building Connections program.



Kutanya is proudly working together to strengthen and advance reconciliation both within Interrelate and the broader community. Please accept this gift for you to wear on our ongoing journey towards reconciliation.



Watch the Kutanya video at <https://youtu.be/RK6AgbQQWkw>



Strength to Strength

Strength to Strength (S2S) is a consultative group that works to support the cultural enhancement of the organisation, focusing on culture, behaviour, practices and communication. The group identifies areas in which program, process and/ or policy development may be needed.

The objectives of the group are to:

- operate as a mechanism for the review and development of projects within the scope of S2S
- bring together expertise and diverse organisational knowledge
- be an equitable forum where staff have the opportunity to be involved in discussions about S2S projects, engagement and deliverables
- complement other elements of Interrelate's broader consultation framework
- be a means of identifying innovative ideas that can enhance the strengthening of staff relationships across the organisation.

Please refer to Strength to Strength in the People & Culture section for 2015-16 outcomes.

Service Practice Groups

Service Practice Groups (SPG) review and improve different aspects of our service and program delivery. These groups are made up of suitably qualified and experienced staff representatives from across the organisation. These representatives provide expert input on behalf of their colleagues to improve the quality of our products and services.

In 2015-16, the following SPGs were active:

- **Building Connections** – examined how this program can be refreshed, terminology made more applicable to various family structures and how the program can better connect with clients. A new video resource was developed with children talking about their experiences of separation.
- **Child Inclusive Practice (CIP)** – produced a discussion paper outlining the matters requiring attention to strengthen our practice and capacity to deliver CIP.
- **Children's Contact Service (CCS)** – developed a draft version of a handbook, incorporating the new procedural aspects of CCS and agreed areas of consistency of service.
- **Building Stronger Families and Mental Health** – both these groups completed a clear description of program logic and underlying models.
- **Aboriginal Building Connections (ABC)** – This group commenced its plan to increase the cultural depth of content within the ABC program by including the effects of intergenerational trauma and embedding audio recordings of appropriate dreamtime yarns and stories.



Work Health and Safety Consultative Committee

The Work Health and Safety (WHS) Consultative Committee encourages a proactive and co-operative approach to WHS between management and staff. The committee, elected by employees, meets once a quarter via teleconference to discuss issues relating to WHS and provides advice on these issues to management. The committee acts on any concerns raised by staff and investigates risks to health and safety.

The WHS committee members personally induct all new staff in their regions in WHS. They coordinate the Emergency Wardens and First Aid Officers and monitor or organise fire equipment and evacuation/lockdown drills. They also conduct proactive audits of all permanent and regular outreach sites annually, to identify and control risks.

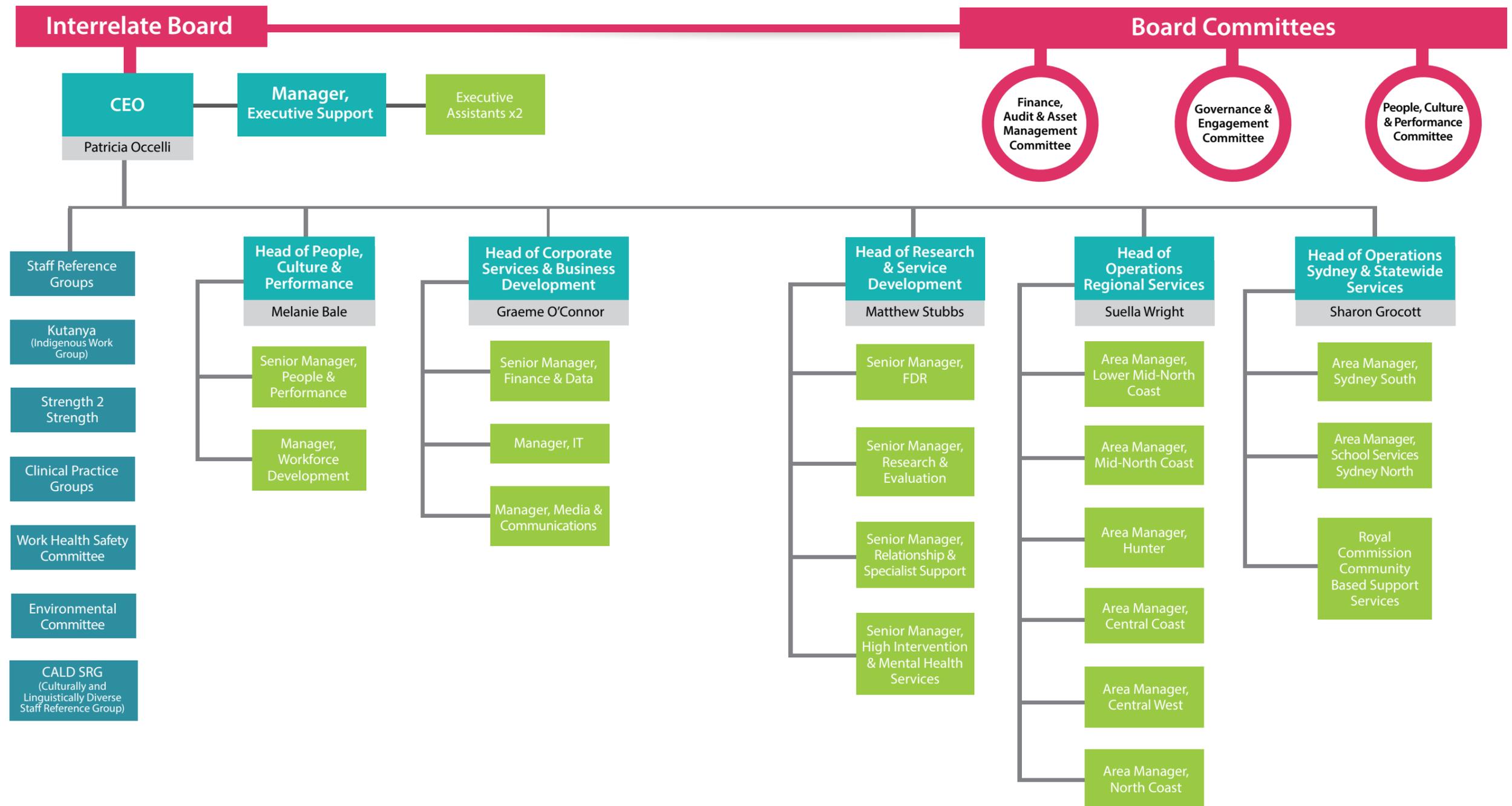
Please refer to the Corporate Social Responsibility section for 2015-16 initiatives.



“ *The WHS Consultative Committee encourages a proactive and co-operative approach to WHS between management and staff.* ”



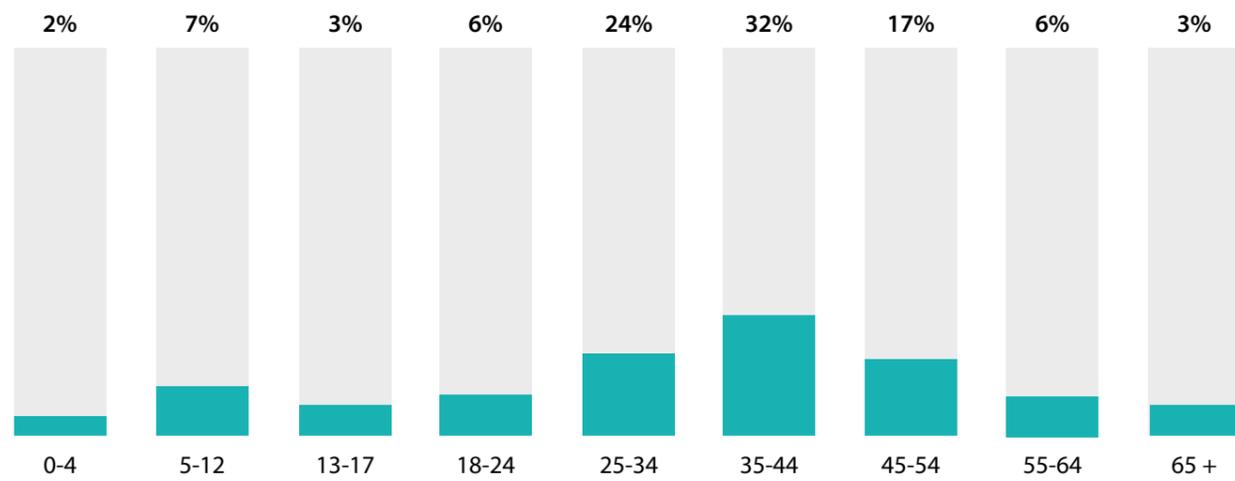
ORGANISATIONAL CHART



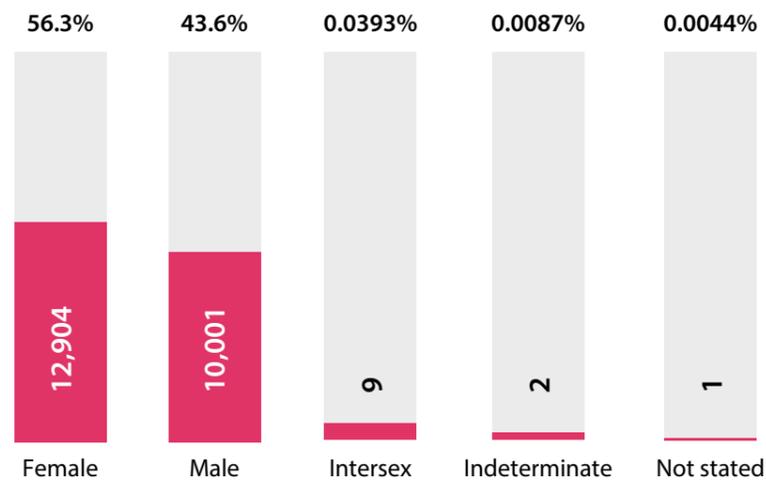


WHO WE HELP

Age



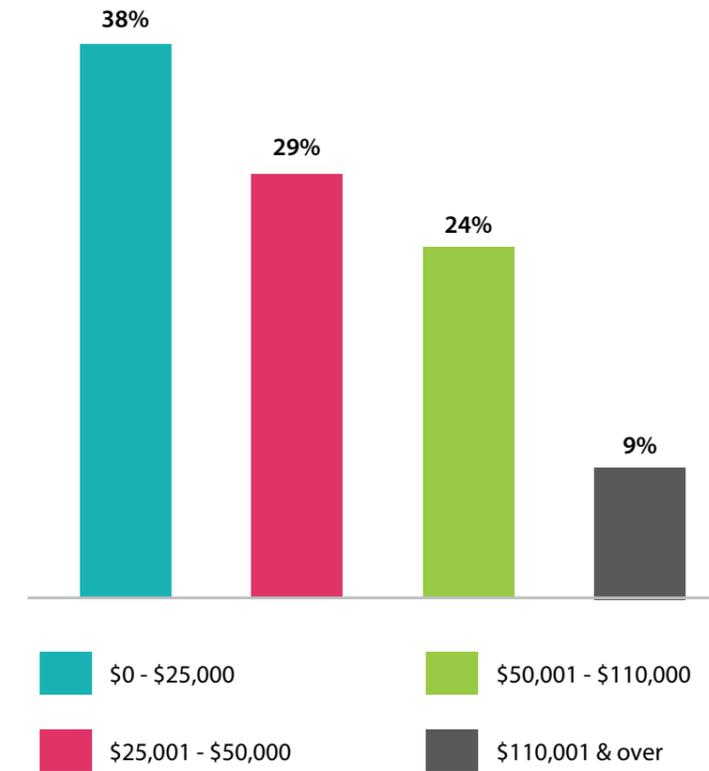
Gender



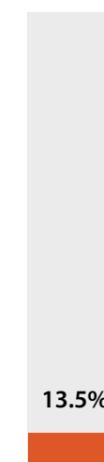
*Does not include School Services clients



Income



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander

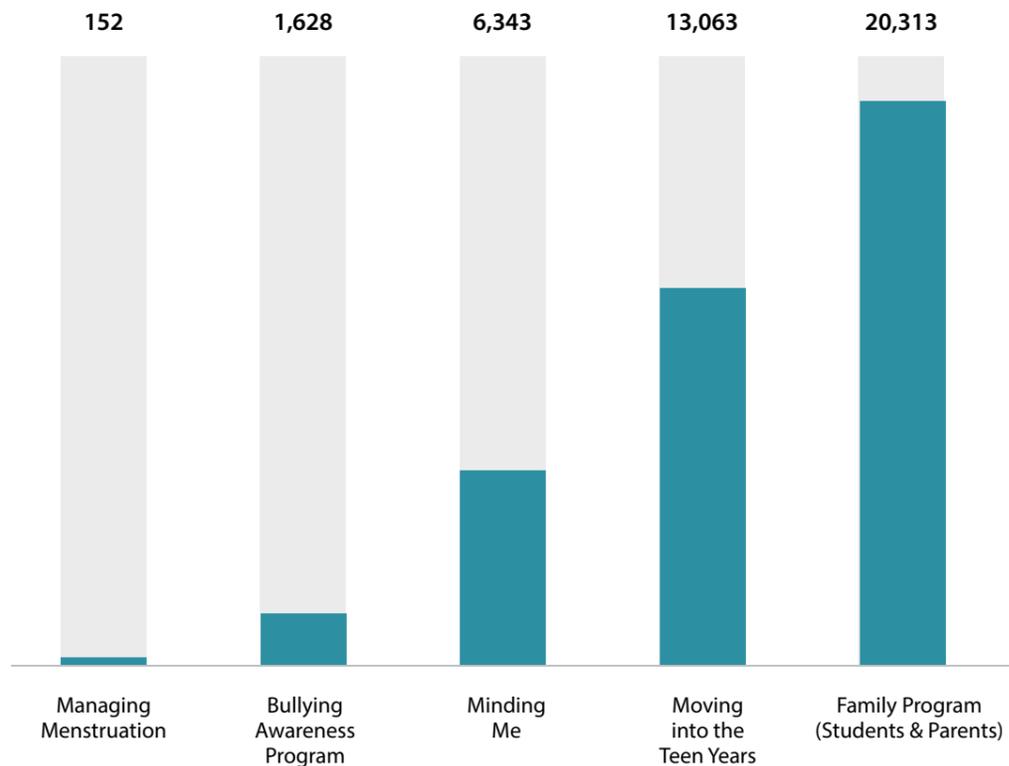




Top 10 Presenting Issues

Communication Issues	86%	Dealing with Relationship Difficulties	64%
Conflict	81%	Grief / Loss	57%
Stress	70%	Anger	55%
Post Separation Parenting	66%	Relationship Breakdown	50%
Anxiety	65%	Parenting	50%

School Services: Number of Students by Program



PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Interrelate works closely with many organisations and partners to provide the best possible services to our clients. We appreciate and acknowledge the contribution that our stakeholders provide to our service delivery.

This year we established or continued partnerships with:

1. Department of Social Services
2. NSW Health
3. NSW Family and Community Services
4. Attorney-General's Department
5. Aboriginal Benefits Foundation Limited
6. Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS)
7. BaptistCare NSW and ACT
8. Bracken House
9. Carers Australia NSW
10. Community Care Services – Central Coast Ltd trading as Delphis Australia
11. CRANES Community Support Programs Limited
12. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
13. ETC Lismore
14. Faber-Castell Australia
15. Family Support Network Inc Lismore
16. Filmpond
17. Headspace (Central Coast Local Health District)
18. Headspace (EACH) Port Macquarie
19. Kudos Knowledge
20. Lismore City Council
21. Mental Health Association of NSW
22. Mid Coast Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Inc
23. Multitask Lismore
24. Newcastle City Council
25. Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner
26. South Eastern Sydney Local Health District
27. Stockland
28. The Hills Shire Council
29. The Smith Family
30. University of Canberra
31. YWCA NSW Northern Rivers



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Interrelate recognises that Corporate Social Responsibility is key for any organisation seeking long term sustainability. We acknowledge that economic security is just one part of the journey and that we must also consider the social and environmental impacts of what we do. Our aim is to not only be a good corporate citizen, who engages and encourages ethical behaviours within communities but to be a leader in the sector.

CitySwitch National Awards



AWARD FINALIST
2015

In November 2015, Interrelate was excited to be recognised in the top five of the NSW New Signatory of the Year category of the CitySwitch National Awards. This category was open to newly joined signatories who had demonstrated a substantial commitment to improving environmental performance.

CitySwitch is a federally funded program that assists organisations, at no cost, to undertake energy audits and introduce more efficient and sustainable work practices.

Interrelate signed a Commitment to Act with CitySwitch in March 2015 and was recognised in the finals for initiatives developed under our Environmental Strategy. Interrelate was recognised in the finals alongside organisations such as Bupa and NAB, proving that all of us have a role to play in considering the social and environmental impacts of what we do and that the efforts of smaller organisations like ours can still have a big impact.



Environmental Sustainability

Interrelate acknowledges the importance of protecting the environment. We aim to minimise our environmental footprint by working with staff and stakeholders, in compliance with legal and other requirements, to ensure that we are sustainable now and into the future. Our Environmental Strategy sets the priorities of our work in this area.

During 2015-16, there were four key programs that delivered on this Strategy:

1. LED light replacement program

As a result of the energy audits completed in early 2015, the three regional offices of Caringbah, Dubbo and Taree had their lights replaced with LED lighting.

LED lights require very little electricity to power up and due to their extreme efficiency their design converts approximately 90% of the electricity they consume into light (compared to 10-15% for a conventional light). LED lights also have a significantly longer lifespan to that of traditional incandescent, halogen and fluorescent lights.

This light replacement program has already made a significant difference to the working conditions for staff. We will monitor the energy usage over the next 12 months to see the impact they have made in this area.

2. Waste Reduction

Interrelate has made a firm commitment to minimising our waste across all our centres. Seven centres across the organisation participated in a national waste audit run by CitySwitch which involved staff volunteers reviewing our waste for five days and compiling the results. Based on the information collected, CitySwitch provided an action plan for each centre to improve our waste management. Work on these plans has commenced with new colour coded bins already installed in several centres.

3. E-waste

As an organisation we are continually upgrading our IT hardware and have partnered with Computers for Young and Old to ensure that our decommissioned equipment can be recycled or reused. Computers for Young and Old have facilities in Sydney and use redundant e-waste to offer free computer equipment to students, the elderly, disabled and disadvantaged from all walks of life. Interrelate has recycled more than 360 computers, monitors, screens and phones through Computers for Young and Old which is approximately 990kg of IT equipment.

4. Paper

Interrelate aims to become paperless over the next few years. Part of this commitment was the introduction of the Paperless Penelope (client database) Project in all service delivery centres during 2015-16.

In addition, the replacement of our photocopier fleet with Fuji Xerox machines throughout the organisation and our move to using 50% recycled paper has led to an increase in our environmental sustainability. The new Fuji Xerox equipment features environmentally responsible design and energy efficient enhancements, including software and digital technologies that reduce paper wastage.

We have also committed to recycle all used paper. In 2015-16 at the Bella Vista office alone, over 2.5 tonnes of confidential used paper was shredded, pulped and recycled through Advance Security Destruction.



Work Health and Safety

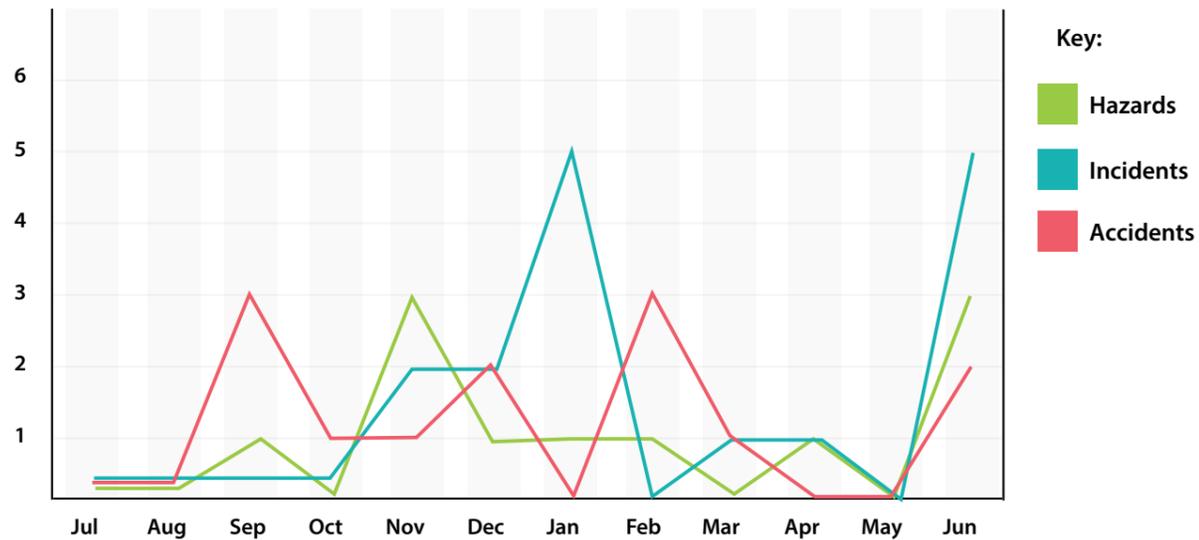
Interrelate is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for both staff and clients. All services and regions must comply with the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Policy and are supported in WHS matters by their representative on WHS Consultative Committee and by management. The needs of remote workers, travel distances, vehicle usage, client aggression and staff emotional wellbeing are the main challenges for WHS.

In 2015-16, WHS Committee members conducted proactive audits of all permanent and regular outreach sites to identify and control risks. As a result of these site audits, the following projects were initiated:

- The development of an organisational process for the use, and response to, duress alarms
- The development of a partnership with a security monitoring company with a Grade A1 rating that will cover all Interrelate sites
- The development of a process for the duress monitoring of Outreach Workers

In 2015-16, online reporting of hazards, incidents and accidents was introduced through ConnX. Use of an online system allows timelier reporting which supports the organisation to manage events more efficiently, ensuring safer workplaces.

Hazards, Incidents and Accidents



Hazard: A Hazard is defined as an object, situation or any other source of danger with the potential to cause harm to people, equipment or property, or that could create an unsafe working environment.

Incident: An Incident is defined as an event which has the potential to cause injury or illness to a person or damage to equipment or property.

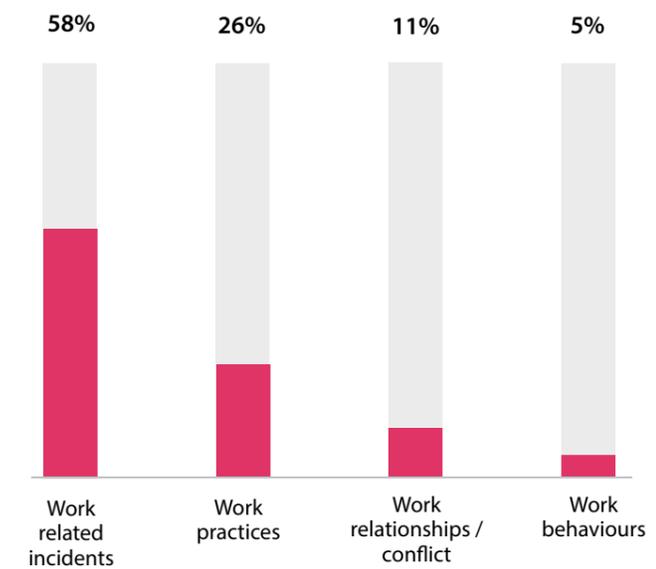
Accident: An Accident is defined as any event which results in an injury or illness to a person or damage to equipment or property.



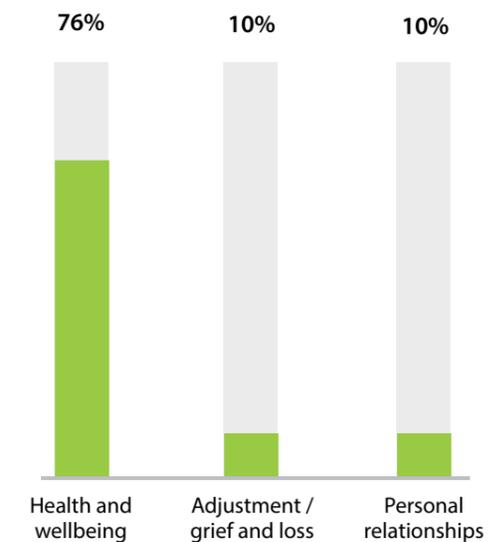
Employee Assistance Program

Interrelate continues to provide all employees and their families with access to free, confidential counselling and support to assist them with work or personal matters through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is provided by Converge International. This year the annual utilisation of the EAP was 12.8%, with 37 new referrals and 6 continuing referrals.

The top four primary work related issues were:



The top three personal related issues were:





HIGHLIGHTS

Say No to Bullying Poster Competition	31
2015 National Men's Health Gathering	36
Festival of Films High School Competition	37
Media Exposure	38
Service Growth	39
Reconciliation Action Plan 2016-18	40
Regional Highlights	41

SAY NO TO BULLYING POSTER COMPETITION

In 2015-16, for the third consecutive year, Interrelate held the Say No to Bullying Poster Competition for NSW primary schools. The aim of the competition is to raise awareness of the issue of bullying and to assist schools to identify and address bullying behaviours in their school communities.

This year's competition theme was Differences Make Us Special. Don't Bully and invited students to draw a picture depicting their interpretation of the theme for their chance to win a family getaway and \$1,000 for their school. In addition, the Winner and 10 Regional Finalists each received an Art Pack generously donated by our sponsor, Faber-Castell Australia.

This year's winner was Celeste Black, Year 6, from Burraneer Bay Public School, who was chosen from almost 5,000 entries received from across the state. Celeste, together with the Regional Finalists and Highly Commended recipients and their families, were invited to a special Awards Ceremony on Friday, 18 March 2016, to mark the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

Over 300 guests attended the event, which was hosted by SBS World News Presenter, Ricardo Goncalves. The NSW Treasurer, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian was a special guest and Interrelate's patron, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor of New South Wales, recorded a special video message that was played at the ceremony.

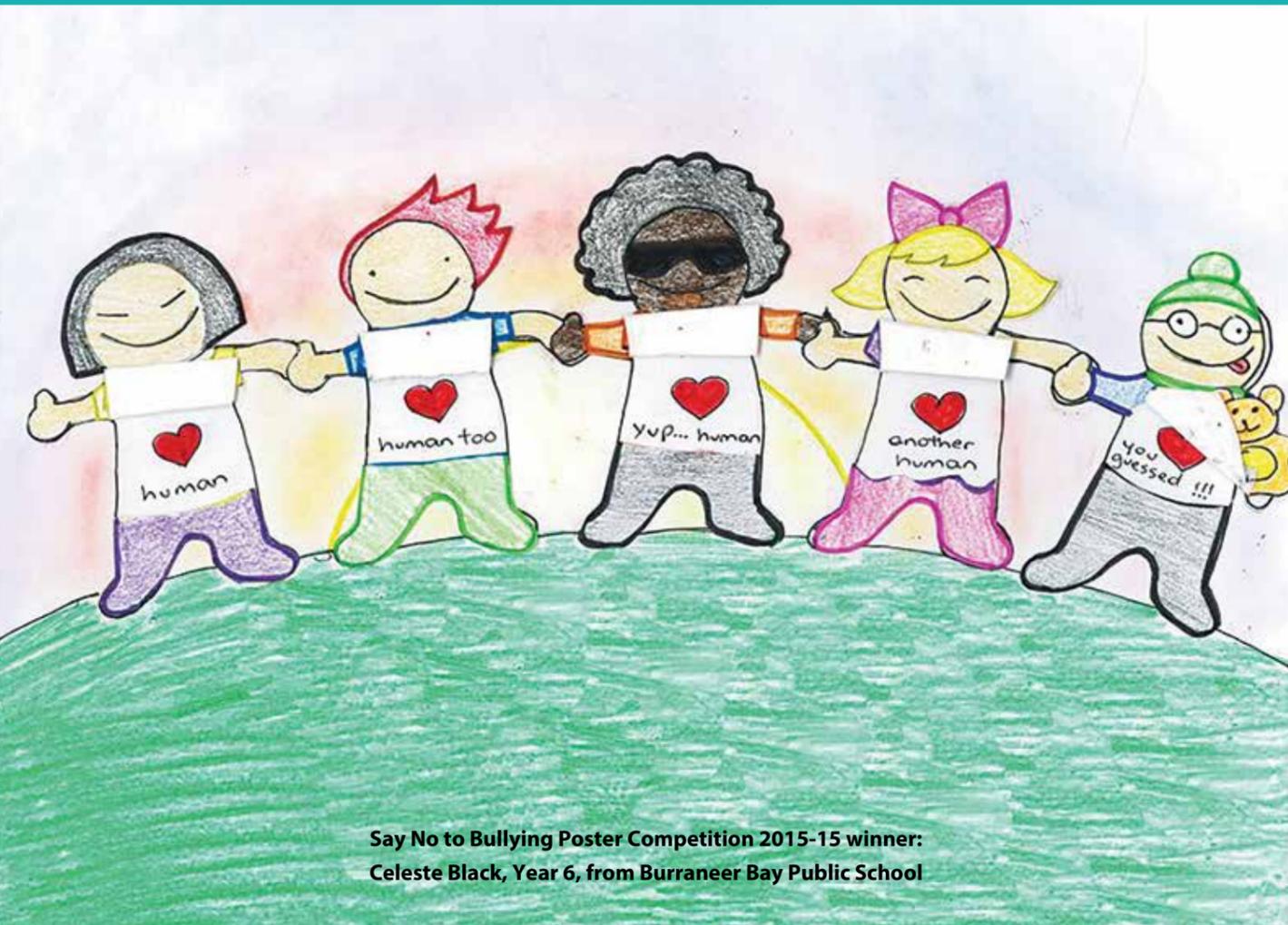
Watch a short highlights video of the Awards Ceremony: <https://youtu.be/tqoOCw7W3So>

The event also marked the official opening of the Say No to Bullying Poster Exhibition in Chatswood Library, which showcased the Winner, Finalists and Highly Commended entries for a period of three weeks. In May, the Exhibition then moved to Vinegar Hill Memorial Library in Rouse Hill, and will travel to several other libraries throughout the regions in the latter half of 2016.

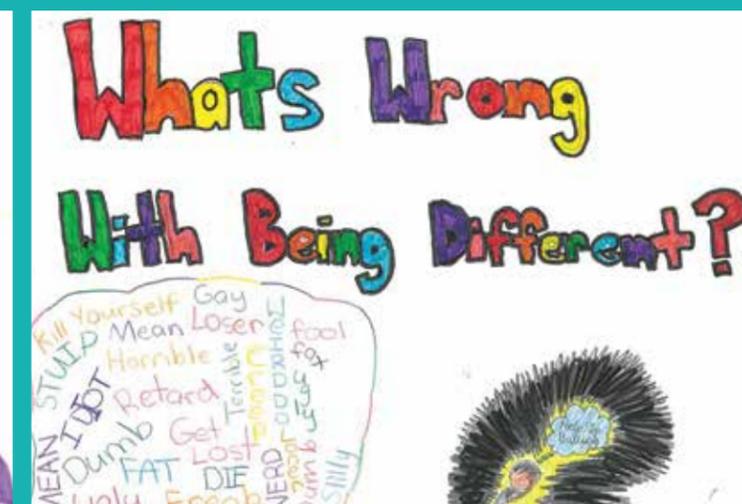
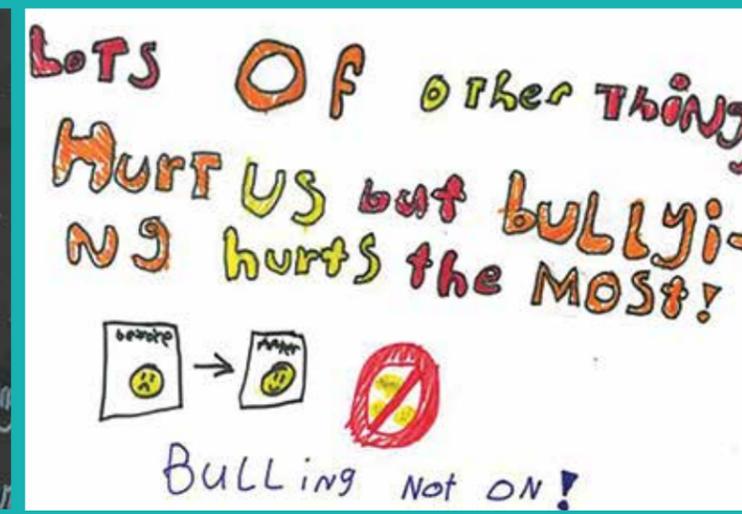
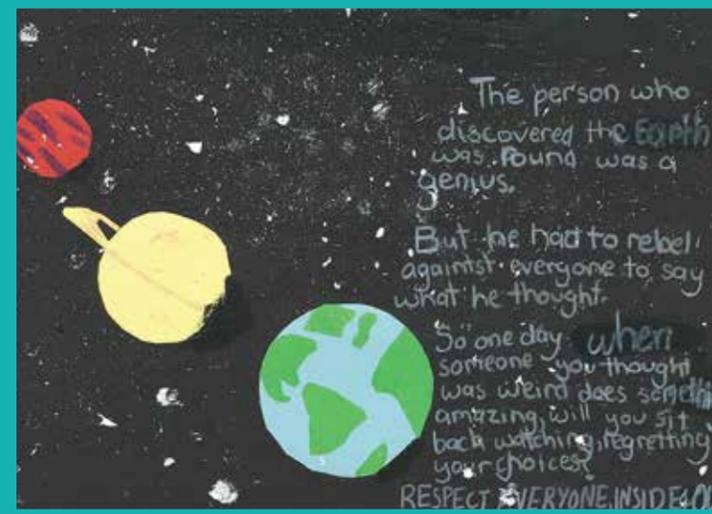
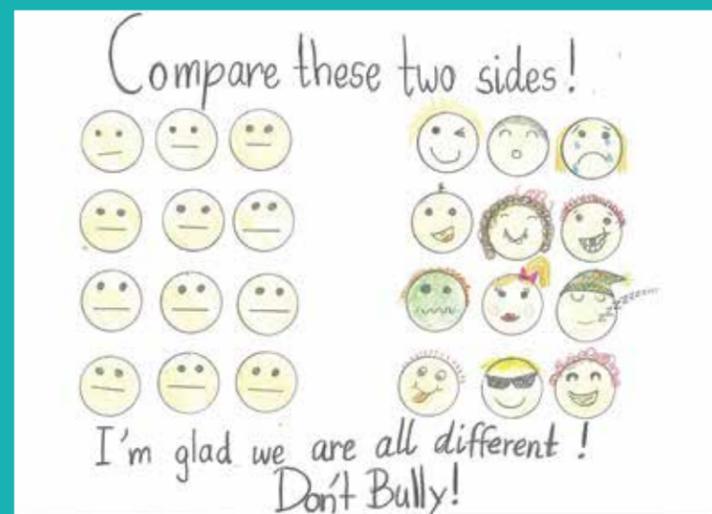
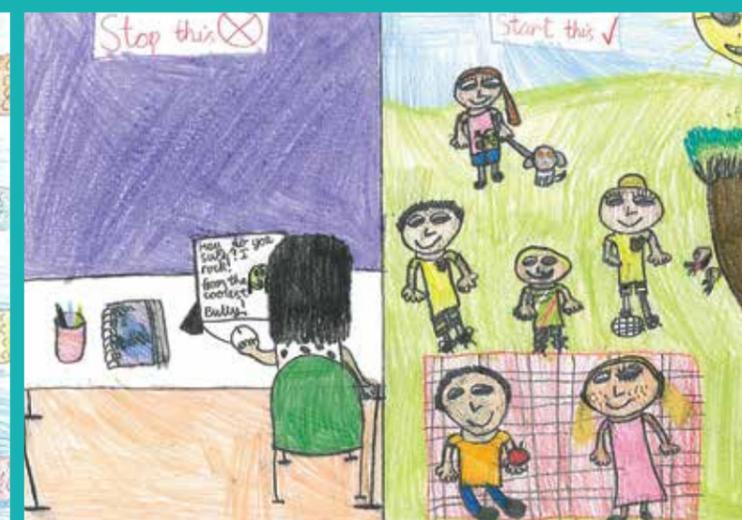
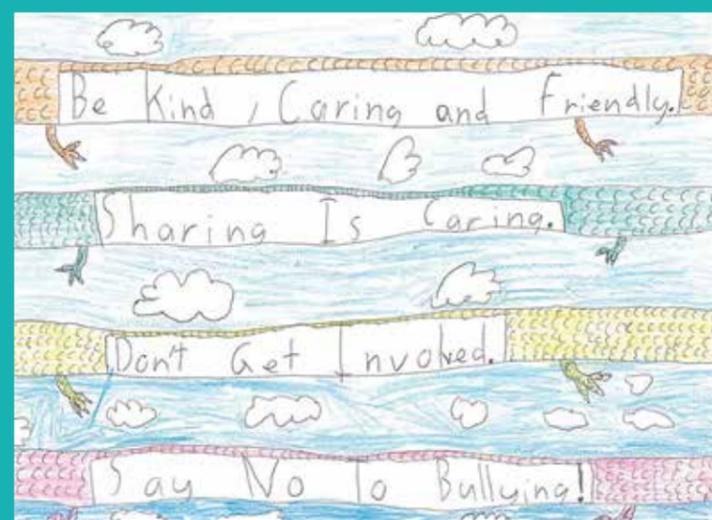
The competition resulted in a number of positive media outcomes for Interrelate, most notably an SBS World News TV interview with Patricia Ocelli and 11 print articles that were spread across the regions.

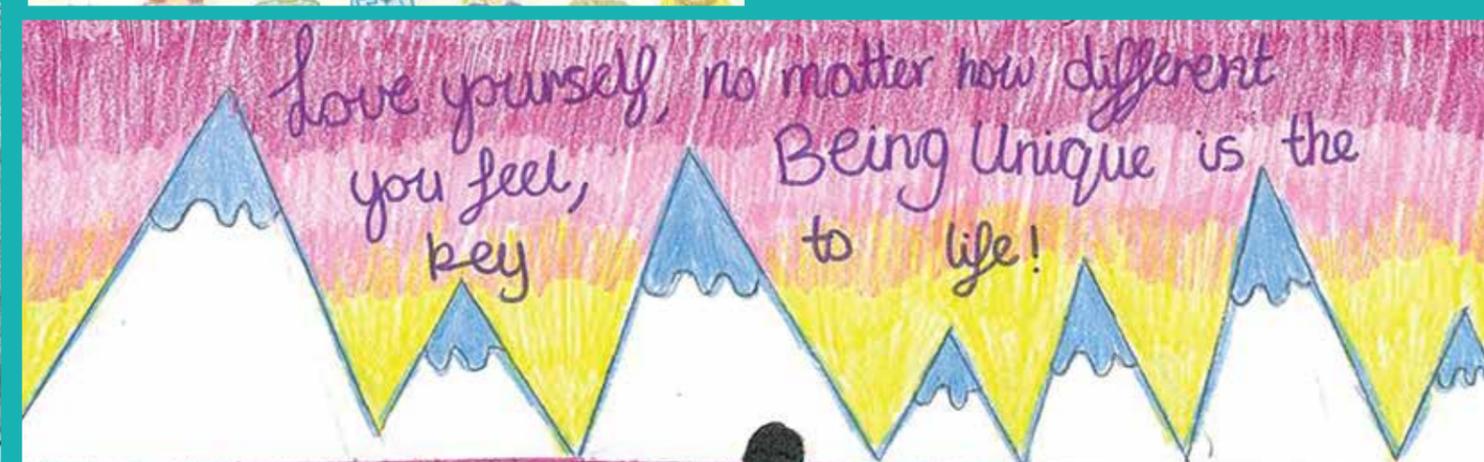
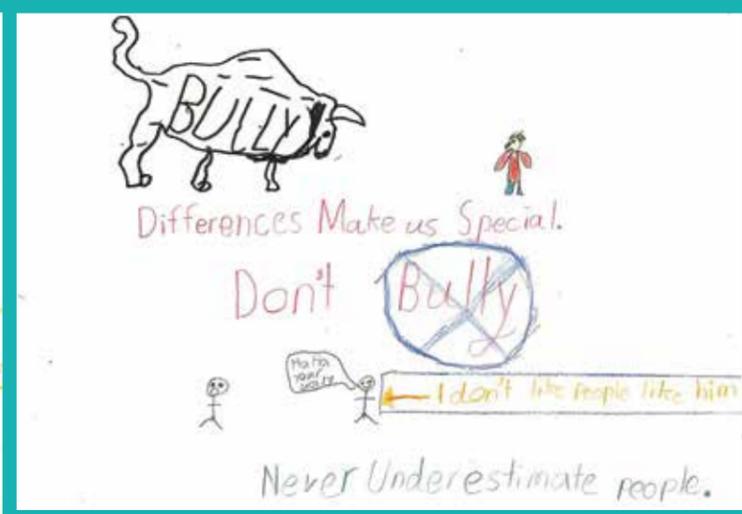
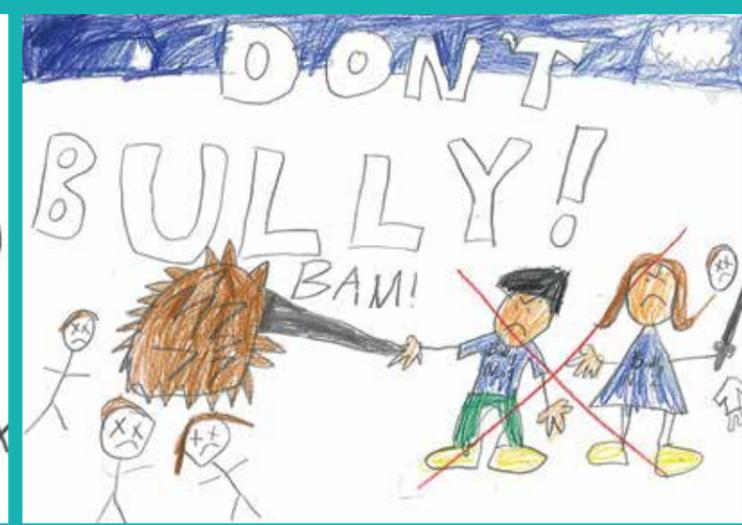
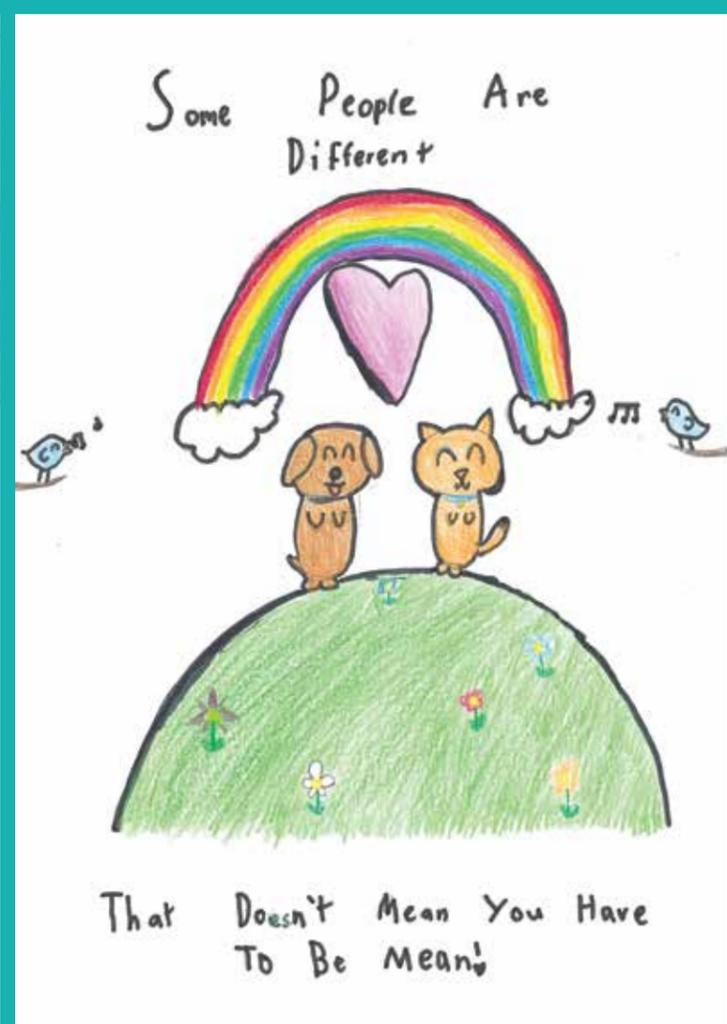
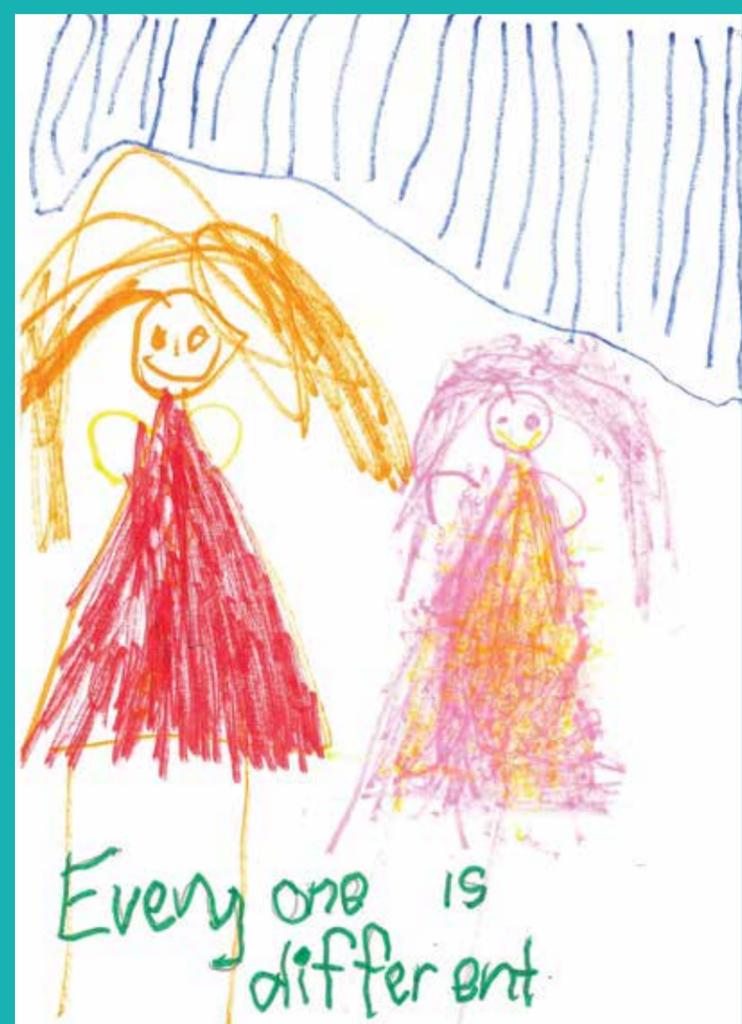
Watch the SBS World News TV interview with Patricia Ocelli: www.sbs.com.au/news/video/647193667788/National-survey-report-on-bullying-alarms-mental-h





Say No to Bullying Poster Competition 2015-15 winner:
Celeste Black, Year 6, from Burraneer Bay Public School







2015 NATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH GATHERING

In October, the Australian Men's Health Forum, in conjunction with a consortium of leading agencies including Interrelate, hosted the 2015 National Men's Health Gathering in Terrigal, on the Central Coast. Matt Stubbs, Head of Research and Service Development and Stuart McMinn, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Liaison Worker, were on the conference organising committee and worked tirelessly to make sure that the conference was a success.

The National Men's Health Gathering incorporated the 8th Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men's Health Conference and the 11th Australian Men's Health Conference. Under the theme 'Sharing the Wisdom' the gathering brought together practitioners, researchers, workers and traditional elders to share both new and traditional knowledge of what works in engaging and assisting men and boys.

The 165 delegates who attended the gathering participated in a range of activities, workshops and challenging discussions to broaden their understanding of working with men and boys to increase their health and wellbeing.

The 8th Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men's Conference was also an opportunity to showcase the strength of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal knowledge and culture that is alive and prominent in Darkinjung country (the Central Coast). A Corroboree was held on Terrigal beach, which saw 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancers from across NSW share traditional stories and dance. Over 400 people attended the event, which was sponsored by Gosford City Council.

TERRIGAL

A spotlight on health

GATHERING PROMPTS TALK

Emma Herd

TERRIGAL Beach was transformed into a spectacular stage on Tuesday night, with hundreds of spectators treated to a corroboree as part of the 2015 National Men's Health Gathering.

Sixty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancers from across the Coast and Interstate put on a display that left beachgoers of all ages mesmerised.

"People from different areas were coming up to me and asking what it was all about," event chair Matt Stubbs, of Interrelate, said.

The corroboree was one of the cultural highlights of four-day event, which winds

up today and incorporates the eighth Aboriginal Men's Health Conference and the 11th Australian Men's Health Gathering.

The event attracted 180 people who work in various sectors for the betterment of men and boys.

Mr Stubbs said it gave participants the chance to discuss ways to increase men's health and wellbeing, as well as a sense of being part of a bigger picture.

Participants heard from various speakers across the week, including Foundation Chair in Primary Health Care Professor John Macdonald, who called for funding for a national men's health program.



An Aboriginal corroboree on Terrigal Beach was part of the National Men's Health Conference.

Picture: MARK SCOTT



FESTIVAL OF FILMS HIGH SCHOOL COMPETITION

This year we entered the high school market with an invitation to all NSW High School students to enter our inaugural Festival of Films High School Competition. The competition aims to raise awareness of cyberbullying and encourage open discussion involving those who are most at risk. The competition's theme is Cyberbullying: The effects and how do we solve it? and invites students to create a storyboard of a short film based on the theme.

Eight finalists will then be chosen to create their film, which will be professionally edited by competition sponsor Filmpond. We have also partnered with Burn Bright to deliver a leadership workshop to the finalists, and with the Australian Film Television and Radio School to screen the films and host the Awards Ceremony, which will be held in August 2016.



Cyberbullying

the effect and how we solve it



MEDIA EXPOSURE

This year we obtained significant media exposure for a number of topics that saw us appear in 39 articles, 7 radio interviews, 2 television interviews and 1 web interview. We aim to be recognised as experts in our field and were pleased to provide advice and commentary on subjects including parent and child relationships, sexting, bullying, couple relationships, drought assistance, new services and funding cuts.



SERVICE GROWTH

In 2015-16, the following tenders, funding and Memorandums of Understanding were either won, continued, or signed, contributing to our service growth.

- Mental Health Association of NSW; Mental Health Month – Value your Art and Mind; Bourke.
- Newcastle City Council; Facade Improvement Scheme; Newcastle.
- The Hills Shire Council; E-Parenting Webinar.
- ETC Community Support Fund; Partners in Depression and Self Esteem-Communication programs; Lismore.
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Indigenous Advancement Strategy; Sista 2 Sista program in partnership with Ghinni Ghinni Youth and Culture Aboriginal Corporation; Taree.
- NSW Family & Community Services; FACS Family Group Conferencing Facilitation Services - Panel of Service Providers; Newcastle
- Orange Credit Union; Outdoor recreation area for the Children's Contact Service; Orange.
- Stockland Community Grants; Youth Symposium-Festival of Films Competition.
- Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner (Youth Symposium)
- The Smith Family; Raymond Terrace – Karuah Communities for Children (Funded by the Australian Government); Newcastle.



Answers to questions about bullying

EDUCATION is a key to getting Australia off the podium of being the world's Number 1 bullying nation. One useful tool available in Dubbo is a book compiled by Interrelate counsellors, called 100+ Questions Kids Have About Bullying.

The 28-page picture-style book features child friendly imagery and includes original handwritten questions by children asking, for example, "what are the sorts of bullying?" and "why do people pick on people?"

A hundred plus answers are also included along with dozens of strategies for children being bullied and useful tips for parents and carers to help them understand the experience of bullying and initiate conversations with their children about it.

"Sometimes bullies learn the behaviour from their parents which is why whole families need to practice and encourage healthy relationships. Interrelate runs a range of programs in schools and from our centres that are designed to help people develop respectful relationships, including our Bullying Awareness Program for primary schools," said Anne Heath, area manager, Interrelate.

Topics in the book include how to identify a bully and who is mostly likely to be bullied.

Four types of bullying are discussed in depth including verbal, physical, emotional and social bullying, with specific questions on each, answered in detail. For example, emotional bullying can appear in forms of put downs, mocking, insulting, spreading lies and cyberbullying.

Behaviour such as gossip and its negative impacts highlighted. "Gossip is information or stories passed from one person to another about somebody else without their permission," it reads. Helpful websites are also listed for further reading.

100+ Questions Kids Have About Bullying is available for purchase for \$10 each, at the Interrelate office on the corner of Darling and Balje Streets. Bulk orders are also available.

Interrelate has been helping with relationships since 1926 and works with 45,000 children a year in NSW. It runs a bullying awareness program in schools to teach children from a young age that bullying is never okay.

The program is based on the best available research on bullying and has been evaluated by Southern Cross University Centre for Children and Young People.

Interrelate have published a series of books including 400+ Questions Kids Have About Relationships and 500+ Questions Kids Have About Puberty.

All titles are also available for purchase online at www.interrelate.org.au.

New Family Mental Health Support Service for Coonamble



• Interrelate Executive, Board members and staff with dance group. Photo Courtesy Kevin (Sooty) Welsh.

INTERRELATE and members of the Coonamble community celebrated the official launch of Connect, a Family Mental Health Support Service, in Coonamble on Monday, 15 February.

Connect is a free service funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and supports families where children between 0-18 years of age are affected by, or at risk of, mental illness. No formal diagnosis is required. The service aims to improve the mental health outcomes for children by supporting parents and helping young people reach their full potential.

"Connect can help families to deal with challenges they are facing by connecting them with appropriate services in their community to get the support they need," said Interrelate's CEO, Patricia Ocellini.

"As a parent you may have noticed changes in your child that seem uncharacteristic - becoming socially

Pampered fellas

Blakes from the drought-stricken region of Walgett, north-western New South Wales, were treated to a day of pampering in June, with free haircuts, shaves, massages, chiropractic sessions and podiatry. The day, organised by Interrelate's Walgett outreach counsellor Maureen Regan, funded by the Federal Government's drought assistance package and supported by House with No Steps, Schizophrenia Fellowship and Catholic Community Services, was attended by 35 men. "There were all sorts there - probably a lot of blakes I wouldn't have expected," says Lew Lamb, a grafter on Douglas Park, Carinda. "There was a woman giving haircuts, and a podiatrist doing pedicures and massaging your feet - she didn't paint my toenails but I reckon she probably would have if I asked her. I did the whole bloody lot, and it was handy because it was the Friday and my brother's wedding was on the Sunday, so I went into that pretty relaxed. It was a really good thing for many men that are in the situation that we're in. Having a yarn and a day off and a free food was as good as anything. It was bloody good."



Russell Gudge receives a cut from Katrina Madras, from Studio 88 in Coonamble.

Interrelate project officer Kate Madford says although similar days are often planned for women, men need encouragement to unwind in stressful times. "We had a lot of the men on the day thanking us for organising such an event, as they would never really do anything like this for themselves," she says. "They all had smiles and left looking like new men with relaxation on their faces and a trendy new haircut." Kate says that they have been approached to organise something similar in the Lightning Ridge area.

WITH GLEN USHARA, AREA MANAGER, INTERRELATE COFFS HARBOUR



DEPRESSION IS A SERIOUS AND SURPRISINGLY COMMON CONDITION FOR MEN, WITH 1 IN 6 AUSTRALIAN MEN SUFFERING DEPRESSION AT ANY ONE TIME

Depression is not a reflection of low "strength" or "togetherness" as a man is, but is a sign that your usual positive feelings and sense of wellbeing have been overwhelmed as a result of circumstances, changes in life pressures or health-related issues. It's often very hard for men to acknowledge or recognise the signs of depression, but it's important to seek help and not ignore these feelings due to fear or stigma. Depression can be described as feeling consistently sad, miserable or down for more than two weeks and can include the loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities. Depression in men can result in the pulling back from friendships and social connections, increased dependence on alcohol or drugs, reduced concentration, a heightened sense of hopelessness and strong negative thoughts of failure, guilt or worthlessness. Other symptoms may include physical changes such as tiredness, sleep problems, appetite and bodyweight changes.

The risk factors for depression in men include relationship issues, separation or divorce, health problems, work pressure, unemployment, parenting changes, increased use of alcohol and other drugs.

When compared with women, men statistically are at significantly greater risk of depression-related suicide and are also statistically much less likely to seek help.

Some tips for getting help:

- See your GP, psychologist, or counsellor
- Access good quality information
- Share your feelings with family, mates or helpers
- Exercise most days
- Eat and sleep as well as you can
- Be kind to yourself, and don't act on all your feelings

Other sources of information:

Mental Health Access Line: 1800 011 511 (24/7 NSW Health)

Interrelate Counselling: www.interrelate.org.au or 1300 473 528

Beyond Blue: www.beyondblue.org.au or 1300 724 636

LifeLine: 13 11 14 (24/7)

Dads in Distress Support Services: 1300 853 437

Menzline: 1300 78 99 78 (24/7)

Suicide call back service: 1300 659 467

In the right headspace



Youth mental-health ambassador Maddi O'Grady-Lee.

MADDI FOCUSES ON YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

MADDI O'Grady-Lee can recall sitting in her car ahead of her first speech to high-school students about her battles with mental illness.

Miss O'Grady-Lee, 18, of Bateman Bay, was preparing to speak to 300 students at Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College, Tumbi Umbi campus last year about her own issues with anxiety and depression, when she needed to gather her thoughts.

"I sat in the car wondering if I wanted to share my story at my old school with my old teachers," she said.

"But then I thought, if I can inspire one person to seek help, it would be worth it."

A member of the Wyong Action Team and the person behind the "It's all about mental illness" program for young people, Miss O'Grady-Lee is juggling her Higher School Certificate commitments with advocating for youth mental health.

She continues her advocacy today when she addresses a Year 9 assembly at Wyong High School at an event being held by the school in partnership with Interrelate, Wyong Council and Headspace.

"I hope I can empower people to access help or continue with a treatment plan and know that things do get better," Miss O'Grady-Lee said.

Her efforts have not gone unnoticed.

She represented Australia at the Global Young Leaders Conference in the US earlier this year. Is a NSW/ACT Young Achiever of the Year, earned a Layne Beachley Award for the Stars scholarship and has secured early acceptance into Macquarie University to study psychology next year.

As if that wasn't enough, she is also in the process of raising \$68,000 to build a school in Cambodia, with a Facebook page set up to promote the project.

Details: facebook.com/dreamprojectbyabbyandmaddi



Annelien Van Der Mecht with Masti Adler creating a collage 'vision board' using images from old magazines at the Express Yourself art session last Thursday.

Group using art to enhance their lives

Interrelate is currently offering an Art Express group which aims to provide local residents with some time to reflect on their lives and also to enhance them.

Masti Adler from Interrelate is currently running a three week group art program with the group meeting on Thursdays at the Wand Oval dining room.

The public are free to join the group at any or all of the Thursday sessions.

Ms Adler said the focus of last Thursday's workshop was on creating a collage 'vision board' using images from old magazines.

She said this exercise enables the creator to relax and reflect on their life, to think about ways to enhance their life and to also enjoy the process of creating art.

This week the art group will hold a painting session with the theme of 'What's special to me?'

The third and final art group session will take place next Thursday and will also be a painting session which has a focus on movement and painting to music.

Ms Adler encourages anyone with an interest in art or who is looking of ways to enhance their life to attend.



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2016-18

The development of Interrelate's new Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2016-18 was led by Kutanya, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff reference group, and was the culmination of 18 months of collaboration and consultation with staff and communities across the organisation.

The RAP 2016-18 was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia in March 2016 and will guide our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities over the next two years.

The RAP 2016-18 outlines Interrelate's vision for reconciliation, which is for our organisation to recognise, respect and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, history, needs and celebrate their contributions and achievements. With this knowledge we aim to ensure that all our services can enhance the wellbeing, safety and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

To achieve this vision we will:

1. Foster an environment of respect and strength for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures throughout our suite of services.
2. Acknowledge the harm done and listen to the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities by past practices and social policies and seek to redress this by providing services that can empower and promote access and equity.
3. Promote and foster understanding and respectful mutual relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.
4. Be a leader in the delivery of family and relationship services in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders.
5. Increase training, employment and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and workers.
6. Work collaboratively with other services to address the barriers to achieving strong family relationships that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face.

We thank Kutanya for their hard work in making this RAP a reality and for their ongoing commitment to advancing reconciliation both within Interrelate and the broader community.

Read a full copy of the [RAP 2016-18](#).



REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Sydney North

This year we assisted 513 clients through our Sydney North centre.

It was a year of big changes as we moved our premises from Bella Vista to a more accessible location in Rouse Hill, as well as appointed an Area Manager for our region. The new location in the Rouse Hill Town Centre puts us in the hub of the community we are there to serve, with accessibility to improve further with the future completion of the North-West rail link.

We have focused on building our presence in the area, with events that have allowed us to make contact with other services and providers as well as businesses and the public. We've taken part in diverse events such as the Rouse Hill Town Centre's Feel Good February promotion with free seminars for parents, sponsored the Aboriginal dance group at the Riverstone NAIDOC day and funded a skateboarding training session at Balcombe Heights Estate skate park. We also hosted VIPs, partners and colleagues at a Welcome Brunch and our official opening.

A lot of work has gone into establishing new partnerships and Memorandum Of Understandings (MOUs) as well as building on our existing positive



Cutting the cake at our official opening

relationships. The connection with the Riverstone Community Centre is particularly strong and we continue to be involved in a range of interagencies as well as joining new ones. New MOUs have been signed with headspace at Castle Hill and Ryde Youth Hub.

Within our building we work regularly with 2Realign at community events, have set up a referral service with Relationships Australia and arranged a display of the posters from the annual anti-bullying competition in the Vinegar Hill Library. These and many more activities have been in addition to our regular client sessions and programs for groups.

Our team has grown too, meaning we can offer longer opening hours and have a better ability to understand and meet client needs. The team is becoming a cohesive, supportive unit with great complementary strengths and skills.



Packing for our big move to Rouse Hill



Sydney South

This year we assisted 2,577 clients through our Sydney South centre.

One of our major accomplishments this year has been the partnership we have entered into with Gymea Community Aid and Information Service to run a Multicultural Women’s Group to support women from diverse cultural backgrounds. This group runs weekly and the aim is to assist women to connect with other women to reduce isolation and support each other with the challenges that may arise due to living in a new country. The women are able to exchange life experiences, share information, meet new friends and also develop and strengthen their language skills. The women have been interested to learn about the Australian culture and also gain information on the many services that are available that could assist with support for their needs. The group ensures a safe, friendly and supportive environment where women are able to increase their social network, prevent isolation and reduce anxiety and depression.

The group also has the opportunity to discuss topics in regards to job interviews, grief and loss, culture diversity or just have a cuppa. The group is facilitated by skilled counsellors who at the end of each group session assist the women in a guided meditation to assist with relaxation and reduce stress.

We are also proud of the strong relationships our Aboriginal Community Development Worker Michele has built with the Aboriginal community and organisations in the region. Michele is continually involved in events that are held in the community and has supported interagency meetings, NAIDOC week celebrations, advocacy walks, Kurranulla Elder Olympics, reconciliation morning tea and 2016 Women’s Spirit Event. For the past three years Michele has attended the Health Expo, an event to assist in closing the gap which encourages people to have health checks. This event has seen an increase in more Aboriginal people having health checks for diabetes and blood pressure.

A highlight of Michele’s work is the partnership that was developed with Junaperina Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) which is Australia’s only JJC centre for females, with a capacity for 44 young women. The centre offers a range of services, programs and interventions to address individual needs and reduce reoffending. Michele has been facilitating the Aboriginal Building Connections program and a Yarning Circle at the centre on parenting.



Michele at Junaperina



Our multicultural women’s group



Newcastle and Hunter

This year we assisted 3,225 clients throughout the Newcastle and Hunter region.

Of these, the Family Relationship Centre (FRC) saw 1,210 cases. As a team we are constantly looking for ways we can refine our Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) service to best meet the needs of parents and children – including before, during and after mediation. There are many reasons why a proportion of FDR cases may always be ‘unsuitable for mediation’, however, as a group we were keen to consider how we could broaden the scope of our service with the aim of increasing the capacity of parents to engage with, and benefit from, FDR. Our FRC Manager Margaret Stewart led a project to consider how we might achieve this objective, with one of the recommendations being to establish a Family Counsellor position embedded within our FRC.

In January 2016, we flexed our staff resources to make this happen. Our Family Counsellor, Cherie Gibson, takes referrals from Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners (FDRPs) in the FRC. Generally, most cases referred to family counselling would have previously been issued a Section 60I Certificate, meaning the mediation was not proceeding. The brief counselling offered to FRC clients is targeted to the barriers to mediation identified by the FDRP. To date, the FDRPs and clients have strongly embraced this service with FDRPs also saying this extra support is getting more cases through to mediation.

To measure the effectiveness this new service model has had on client outcomes, clients have been asked to complete The Parental Empowerment and Efficacy Measure (PEEM) at Session 1 (i.e. intake) and again at either Sessions 3 or 4 (i.e. discharge). Early results are very encouraging; with average intake PEEM score being 106 compared to their discharge score being 143 out of a possible 200. Data shows that FRC clients attending brief family counselling targeted to assessed barriers or challenges to mediation are achieving, on average, a 20 point increase in their reported ‘Efficacy to Parent’ and average a 17 point increase in their reported ‘Efficacy to Connect with Others’. These early results and anecdotal reports from FDRPs and clients are a strong indicator that FRC client outcomes have improved as a direct result of flexing the service model to better meet presenting needs. Most significantly more parents feel better prepared, skilled, and confident to successfully negotiate a child-focused parenting agreement.

Another highlight for our region this year was the awarding of a 12-month contract in May to deliver a Parent Support Activity under the Commonwealth Government’s Communities for Children (CfC) program. The contract has a number of deliverables, including: (i) deliver evidence-based parenting programs (in our case we selected the program Bringing Up Great Kids); (ii) deliver Interrelate parenting group programs, one-to-one counselling and case management services to vulnerable parents and families, and (iii) deliver professional development workshops tailored to the needs of local child and families workers.

We immediately engaged with stakeholders to promote the new service and understand local service gaps. We are confident we will exceed the expectations the CfC committee have for this project, having already facilitated the first of four sector development workshops we will deliver over the life of the contract. After canvassing local stakeholders, Carmel Smith designed a ‘trauma informed care in child/family services’ workshop, which was attended by 55 professionals with demand to attend the workshop so strong we had a cancellation list in place. Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive (e.g. 100% of attendees rated the workshop as either ‘good’ or ‘excellent’).



North Coast

This year we helped 3,570 clients throughout our North Coast region.

We are particularly proud of the many events we were involved in this year that allowed us to engage with our community. This includes participating in and taking the lead on NAIDOC activities, attending the Lismore Lantern Parade, the Jingi Walla Voices Reconciliation Choir project, the Bushtucker Engagement Project with work for the dole participants, our Women's Multicultural Group and various parenting programs.

We are also extremely proud of the working relationships we have with our partners in the region. This year we collaborated with the local Positive Adolescent Sexual Health (PASH) Consortium and in partnership, we took part in a conference for 700 high school students on sexual health at Southern Cross University. In collaboration with the Murwillumbah Neighbourhood Centre, we delivered Aboriginal Building Connections seminars in the Tweed region, which were sponsored by the Tweed Shire Council.

We are a member of the Family Law Pathways Network (FLPN) and as part of this project, family violence specialist workers will now offer court support for women and information and referral for all family members who are affected by family violence at the Family Court. This includes referral of men who use violence to the accredited men's behaviour change program.

The Aboriginal FLPN presented a segment on the Indigenous experience of Domestic and Family Violence at the Domestic Violence Forums held by Legal Aid during Law Week. The FLPN also organised the Casino 'Did ya know' Day to deliver family law/family violence/child protection information sessions in partnership with Legal Aid, Aboriginal Legal Service, Family Relationship Centre, NSW Family and Community Services, Women's Domestic Violence Services, Aboriginal Medical Service, local Aboriginal Lands Council and Aboriginal family support service agency. Violence Prevention and Engagement Forums were also delivered in Lismore and Tweed Heads.

Northern Rivers FLPN is involved in a partnership with other organisations working on the Early Intervention Referral Project, to develop referral tools to guide frontline service workers in effective service responses to child protection and/or domestic and family violence presentations with an emphasis on early referral to free legal advice and domestic and family specialist service agencies. We are pleased to note that funding under the Combined Legal Service Delivery Program was achieved.



NAIDOC celebrations



Lismore lantern parade

Upper Mid North Coast

This year we helped 2,977 clients throughout the Upper Mid North Coast region.

The year had many highlights, but central to all of these was the sense of consolidation and capacity building throughout all our services and staff.

A major highlight for us was our birthday event to celebrate 40 years of continuous service in the Coffs Coast region. We were joined on the day by members of the Board, some of the Executive and Senior Managers, and a strong turn out from local community partners, agencies and staff (past and present).

We were involved in a number of successful collaborations this year including:

- Participation in meetings and forums regarding improved engagement and access for Aboriginal clients with Galambila Aboriginal Medical Service as part of their Coffs Aboriginal Mental Health Systems Improvement project
- Collaboration with Warrina and Women's Resource and Information Centre including a joint grant application to assist families affected by DV, referrals to the StepUpMate men's behaviour change program, and planned DV perpetrator awareness training through the Engage2Change program
- Active membership of IMHpact (Mid North Coast Mental Health Integrated Care Collaborative Core Coordination Group). This integrated Mental Health Care collaborative seeks to better coordinate and integrate mental health services and supports in the Mid North Coast Local Health District. Our Upper Mid North Coast and Lower Mid North Coast regions are represented as NGO providers of early intervention mental health for children, youth and their families through the Family Mental Health Support Service (FMHSS), the Royal Commission Community Based Support Service, and counselling services for individuals, families and carers.

Other collaboration highlights included working with Lifeline in offering a localised training venue and shared resources, headspace cooperation and shared resources, and active participation in local interagency activities/events to support education and support for those affected by child protection and domestic violence.

Our services continue to grow and to assist with this we expanded our team this year with nine new staff members and appointed two staff into management positions. In April we officially launched our Family Mental Health Support Service (Connect) in Coffs Harbour and Nambucca Heads, and also opened a new outreach centre in Nambucca Heads.

Our centre was given a new look this year, with repainting and rebranding of all internal walls and rooms and new signage inside and out. A graffiti project on our rear lane wall has beautified the rear part of the building and a new dedicated Children's Room has been equipped and decorated for specific work with children and families and has been appreciated greatly by children, families and staff alike.

We have continued to grow our staff and diversify our services this year, adding new positions, undertaking staff training in identified needs, reinvigorating our group programs and delivering a trauma workshop for external workers in the local area.



Some of the current staff (with previous Area Manager Norma) at the 40th Birthday event in April



Our wonderful new child-friendly session room – appreciated by all!



Lower Mid North Coast

This year we helped 2,992 clients throughout the Lower Mid North Coast region.

We were very active over the past year building relationships in our region by supporting community events. Our 'Yap n Yarn' program in Kempsey has been well received with other services joining in so that participants can access the community in a relaxed way around a BBQ and feel connected to others. Our Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Tony Clarke, ran the 'Back to Basics' programs at Chatham High School in Taree, meeting up with a small group of men and supporting them to connect and participate in their community. Tony's time has also been spent working with this school in the design stage of an outdoor classroom. One of our Royal Commission/ Family and Relationship practitioners, Vic Smith, has continued providing weekly services to Kempsey at the Kempsey gaol and in premises in Kempsey for individual and couples counselling which has been well received by the Kempsey community.

In Port Macquarie our Building Stronger Families caseworker, Shiree Sinclair, was chair of the organising committee for the local Child Protection Week Teddy Bears Picnic. The event was attended by over 450 people, providing great opportunities to connect with community members and other services. Additionally, our practitioner Vic Smith continues to operate the highly successful and well received 'Mates Group' monthly program, helping men to come together in a relaxed environment to enjoy a meal, learn about things that help them in their roles with their families and communities and connect socially.

Our Children's Contact Service Coordinator (Helen) and our Area Manager (Eloise) have diligently worked to improve service utilisation and service delivery in our Children's Contact Service through increased marketing strategies and an expansion of services to incorporate a new Contact Service co-located at our Taree office. This has allowed residents of the Manning/Great Lakes/Gloucester areas to access contact services in their local area and has been well-received.

Staff in the Lower Mid North Coast region have embraced Interrelate's new "Paperless Penelope" client database, in turn contributing to our strategic goal of greater environmental sustainability due to the reduction in maintaining paper files.

Our team is eagerly awaiting next year's move to the new premises acquired for our Port Macquarie-based services, which will mean providing services in a purpose-built building with more space for group activities.

This year our regional management team changed, namely with the appointment of our Area Manager (Eloise Neylon), our Family Relationship Centre Manager in Taree (Jody Webster) and our Relationship Services Manager in Port Macquarie (Lindsay Hobson). Additionally for the first time this year, we have established a specialist Family Violence casework service, with our staff member Kim Knight establishing the role with great credibility and skill, working collaboratively with the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, NSW Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officers, Hospital and Health staff, Family and Community Service staff and other community partners. Referrals have increased incrementally as referral agencies and individuals have benefited from this specialist intervention service.

We have also been working to strengthen community partnerships and have developed good working relationships and warm referral pathways with the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS), headspace (memorandum of understanding to deliver counselling and casework services to the families and carers of young people presenting to headspace), the Family Referral Service, Ability Links, Centacare community services including Community Options, the local Mental Health Service, Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre, Family and Community Services, Disability Advocacy, Port Macquarie Neighbourhood Centre, Skillslink and Endeavour Clubhouse.



Central West & Far West

This year we helped 3,635 clients throughout Central and Far West NSW.

It was an exciting year as we continued to grow and develop our team and work in this region. We celebrated 40 years of Interrelate's work in Dubbo in February, with many of our community partners attending the event along with two of our board members, CEO and staff from Head Office. We then launched our Family Mental Health Support Service, Connect, in three sites at Coonamble, Bourke and Cobar.



Dubbo staff and visitors celebrating together



The official launch of Connect in Coonamble



Our FRC team expanded its outreach service with our Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner, Kim Ibbott, regularly working with clients in Mudgee, Walgett, Cobar and Nyngan.

Our Children's Contact Service (CCS) centres in Dubbo and Orange continue to provide a great service to families working through the complexities of separation. We have seen a growth in the cultural diversity of families using the Orange service throughout the year and our Dubbo CCS staff have developed a playful way to introduce children to the service using the familiar story of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar".



The Very Hungry Caterpillar Story Wall

We have a full team of counsellors in the region and are looking forward to the opportunities this will create for expanded service delivery.

Two of our Orange team members, Hayley Freeman and Sally Heath, really embraced the anti-bullying poster competition and were successful in getting all of our local schools to participate with two of those schools achieving 100% participation.

Our region has begun the rollout of School Services with Hayley Freeman appointed as School Services project officer and marketing our programs to the local schools. We are confident of a great uptake of these services in the region.

Our Dubbo office recently welcomed Melissa Medway as our very first volunteer. When Melissa's short-term contract ended with us she elected to volunteer one day a week, in an events-based position based around developing a networking plan for Dubbo.

We hope that Melissa will be the first of many volunteers in our region.



“ I am very excited about the prospects for this position, by the challenge of doing something new, building new relationships and becoming actively involved in the community.

I have a real passion for building Interrelate's profile in our local community and I am very grateful for the opportunity to really focus on bringing this to life. ”

- Melissa Medway, Interrelate volunteer

Our year was encapsulated well when, in late May, we held our Regional Team Meeting in Bourke with almost the whole team in attendance to share their highlights and hopes for the coming year. We were joined by our CEO Patricia Occelli, Head of Operations Suella Wright and Ann Pitkeathly from People Culture and Performance. Logistically, getting the whole team to Bourke was a daunting task which involved organising a bus, connecting with planes for our Sydney visitors, finding enough accommodation and a room to hold our meeting.

The Orange team travelled a total of 1100 kilometres and had two very long days. We know that this is what our Far West staff do all the time and really appreciated the opportunity to have a glimpse of the lives and work of our Far West staff.

We were humbled by the opportunity to undertake cultural training led by local Barkindji man, Bruce Turnbull, which was also challenging and hope filled. In return for the training Bruce asked that we donate some plants to the garden he is growing with local Aboriginal students.



Katrina returning to donate plants to Bruce's garden

Sadly, this year we bid farewell to our drought service as the Government funding was not renewed, despite the drought being ongoing, the outcomes from the work being exceptionally good and a great campaign to mobilise public support where Interrelate obtained almost 25,000 signatures in a change.org petition delivered to the Deputy Prime Minister. We will continue to try and sustain some of the work in this region via our other services. Thank you to Kate Mudford, Maureen Reagan, Martina Adler and Lucinda Morrish for their dedication to this work.



Central Coast

This year we helped 3,241 clients throughout the Central Coast as we developed new services and expanded our existing programs.

A new Family Mental Health Support Service (FMHSS) was federally funded for the Lake Macquarie area and this resulted in our Wyong-based Connect service now stretching from Wyong to the edges of Newcastle following a successful tender. The expanded service is now operating out of Swansea High School and Biraban Public School and other outreach sites across the region.

We developed a new partnership with headspace at Gosford with Interrelate counsellors working from their premises one day a fortnight. With headspace working exclusively with young people with mental health concerns, they approached us about offering a service to support the families of their clients. We are providing family members with one or two sessions at Gosford with a view to assessing presenting issues, decreasing family anxiety around the young person engaged with headspace and providing an avenue for appropriate referral to longer term support when required.

We continue to build on our formal agreement with Northern Settlement Services that already sees us providing counselling from their premises weekly and actively participating in local projects that support our culturally and linguistically diverse community on the coast. Our Erina office also hosts the monthly multicultural interagency meeting.

Our Family Relationship Centre continues to maintain its close working relationship with other agencies and practitioners engaged in mediation and legal services across the Central Coast. Staff attend local courts and participate in the Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme, work closely with local legal services and actively support the Family Law Pathways Network.

Through our partnership with Mingaletta Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation we have seen the Didge Group that provides cultural learning and dance and didgeridoo lessons to Aboriginal children double in size over the last 12 months. The group now regularly performs at major local events such as the Australian Men's Health Gathering that was held in Terrigal Between 20 - 23 October.



Interrelate at the Student Mental Health Showcase at Erina Fair



Interrelate was part of a consortium of agencies that hosted the event, with the Gathering incorporating the 8th Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men's Health Conference and the 11th Australian Men's Conference. Matt Stubbs, Head of Research & Service Development and Stuart McMinn, our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Worker, were on the conference organising committee. Under the theme 'Sharing the Wisdom' the Gathering brought together practitioners, researchers, workers and traditional elders to share both new and traditional knowledge of what works in engaging and assisting men and boys. Delegates from the conference were also provided with an On Country experience, visiting some of the Central Coast's sacred Aboriginal sites guided by local cultural representatives.



Interrelate at the Student Mental Health Showcase at Erina Fair





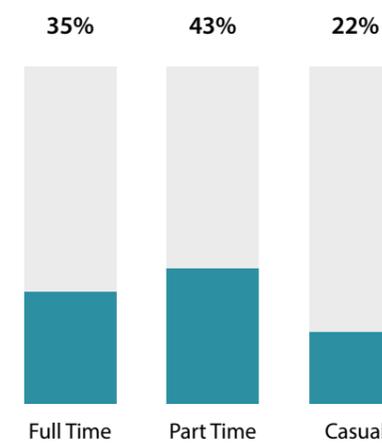
OUR PEOPLE

Interrelate aims to recruit, nurture and grow a skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce. We seek to engage our staff in the development and delivery of quality services and value the expertise and passion they bring to our organisation.

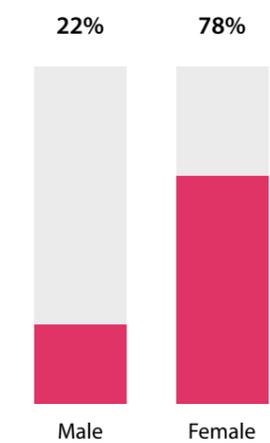
In 2015-16, Interrelate employed 380 staff members throughout NSW in both service delivery and corporate support roles.

Our staff's average length of service is 4.21 years, with our longest serving staff member reaching 26 years of service during the year. Of our staff, 78% are in permanent roles with the remaining 22% in casual positions. We value and encourage diversity and many of our staff members come from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. This year's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Staff Survey found that of the staff who participated, 8.4% identified as being diverse, with 4.6% identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

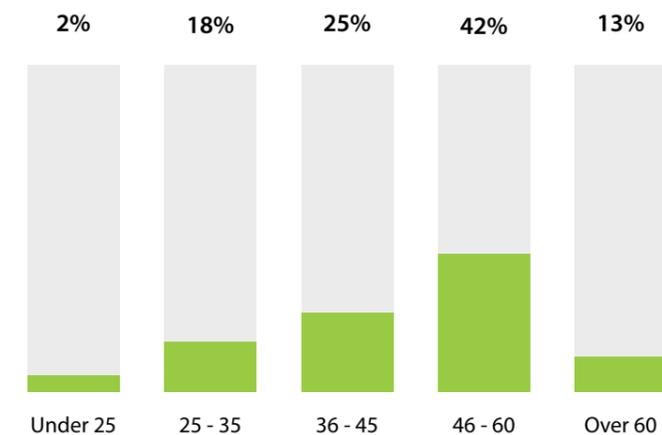
Employment Status



Gender



Age



PEOPLE & CULTURE

Our People	53
Celebrating Cultural Diversity in our Staff	56
From Strength to Strength	60
Cultural Survey	66
Staff Recognition and Awards	67
Emerging Leaders Program	73
Management Development Program	74





CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN OUR STAFF

Masti's Story

Martina (Masti) Adler grew up in Germany and lived in the United States and India before settling in Australia. In 2015-16, Masti worked as a Drought Outreach Counsellor in and around Cobar in Far West NSW where she found, to her surprise, that her cultural diversity was an asset to her work. Masti is now working in Orange.



“ When someone comes in I don't see what their race is, what their work or social background is. Yes, we have different preferences, we like to eat different things, we like to dress differently, we like to socialise with different people but our core issues with life are all very similar. ”



Masti: Cobar was a complete unknown for me really. I was concerned that people would find me too different, whether clients would trust me, being different, coming from a different place.

What was your sense of your own difference that informed that concern? Was it being German?

Masti: A little bit, in that I am not Australian born and don't talk like an Australian. Although it was more that I was so long in the Northern Rivers area with its very particular kind of culture, which is very 'new age'. So coming to Cobar, which I thought at its core would be quite conservative, with mining and farming. I was concerned that people would look at me and see someone who was too 'new age', too different.

It actually wasn't at all the case. I was really surprised. When I arrived in Cobar I was embraced by the community. There was a lot of trust placed in me very quickly, which touched me a lot.

There was actually a positive reaction to me being different. People in Cobar were happy to come to me because I was not from Cobar. I wasn't part of the gossip circle and also because they were looking for new input. Common feedback was ".the way you work is really different and it's great". So there was actually openness to me and my difference.

What qualities do you think you brought that helped you build those connections?

Masti: That I see somebody as a human being. When someone comes in I don't see what their race is, what their work or social background is. Yes, we have different preferences, we like to eat different things, we like to dress differently, we like to socialise with different people but our core issues with life are all very similar. So I feel that approach helps me tune in – to work out how to access that person, and their reality.



Jok's Story

Jok Mabior was born in Central South Sudan and came to Australia in 2005 on a Humanitarian Visa. He is now a valued staff member in Coffs Harbour. His journey reminds us that refugees have enormous courage to begin again, to work hard and to maintain hope in an unfamiliar land.



“ Hope is tethered on the past with a long rope to reach the future. I often dream about impossible things and it keeps me going... ”



Jok: “I was born in Bor in Central South Sudan. Life in my village was simple, peaceful and satisfying. All the neighbours were relatives and our first friends were our cousins. The family bond was very important. This continues today, even though we are not in one geographical location. We share what little we have and help each other out.

Life was centred on the customs and practices of our people. We would help cultivate crops, mainly sorghum. As boys, our main task was to look after livestock, starting with goats and sheep. As we grew older we graduated to calves and eventually cattle. We tied them down at night and released them in the morning for grazing and moved them looking for pasture and water. We protected them from wild animals and thieves and had to ensure they didn't get lost and destroy people's crops. Cattle are Dinka's life! We think we were the first in the world to tame cattle. They are our pride, especially the pride bulls whose horns could be twisted in a Nilotic practice that we share with the ancient Egyptians.

That life came to an end with war. I grew up during the war but in 1991 everything was destroyed. I left with my sister's family and lived in internal displaced camps in South Sudan. Eventually, I walked for many days before ending up in the famous (or infamous) Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya. During my 10 years in this camp, my goal was to get an education, even if it was the substandard. Despite the hardships, I managed to finish my education and taught in the Primary School for two years. This developed my passion for knowledge.

The further I am from home, the closer I get to my dream - education. I arrived in Brisbane in 2005 on a Humanitarian Visa sponsored by my cousin, with financial assistance from my nephew in the USA. Six months after my arrival, I enrolled in a Business Communication Degree but changed and completed a Law Degree. I also have a Masters in International Relations and I am currently pursuing a Masters of Law (International Law) and a Graduate Certificate in Domestic Violence. My passion for Alternative Dispute Resolution led me to train as a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner and I worked for Relationships Australia before getting a job with Interrelate in Coffs Harbour.

I am a positive pessimist because I think the world is not our friend until we befriend it. Looking back, the culture repertoires that I have carried with me from home are the tools I shall always have. In essence, my passion is to have a positive impact on my community. Suffice to say, for me, life is the aggregate of fulfilled, unfulfilled and future dreams. Hope is tethered on the past with a long rope to reach the future. I often dream about impossible things and it keeps me going...”



FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Interrelate strives to be an employer of choice and critical to this success is ensuring the ongoing positive engagement of our staff. In 2013-14, the Strength to Strength (S2S) Project was launched with the aim to enable an enhanced focus on organisational culture and staff engagement. Through the ongoing work of this project, staff are empowered to raise issues that are of concern to them, engage in problem solving and contribute to the continued development of the organisation.

Through S2S, 12 key areas of opportunity were identified and a work plan was developed to guide enhancement in these areas:

1. **Aboriginal engagement and services**
2. **Communication**
3. **Complaints and grievances**
4. **Culture**
5. **Information technology**
6. **Infrastructure to support growth and support delivery**
7. **Marketing and promotion**
8. **Policy review**
9. **Program improvements**
10. **Supervision**
11. **Training**
12. **Workforce planning and development**



During 2015-16, key outcomes achieved in these areas include:

Aboriginal engagement and services

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy launched and projects commenced across the regions.
- Development of the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2016-18.

Communication

- S2S Staff Reference Group continued to support staff involvement, communication and ownership of projects focused on workplace culture.
- Organisational Communication Guidelines reviewed in consultation with staff and recommendations commenced implementation.
- As a result of the January 2016 Cultural Survey, development of Project Plans commenced with a focus on cross unit communication and cooperation.
- Increased access for staff to the Executive continued, through Executives attending regional events, meetings, policy training and participating in joint projects.

Complaints and grievances

- Issues Resolution Policy reviewed in consultation with staff, the Executive and the Board. As a result, a new Workplace Complaint Management Policy was adopted in April 2016.

Culture

- Training in organisational Values and the Code of Conduct incorporated into the New Employee Induction.
- Bullying is not OK training webinar introduced to all staff.
- A Cultural Survey undertaken in January 2016 demonstrated an overall healthy workplace culture. The organisation continues to work on its areas for growth and improvement.

Information technology

- IT Champions in each region recruited and trained to provide on the job accessible assistance to staff with IT and Client Management System questions.
- IT training webinars continued to be rolled out and well utilised by staff.

Infrastructure to support growth and support delivery

- Changed major information and communications technology partner to deliver a faster, more reliable network with a 26% reduction in costs



Marketing and promotion

- Leveraged media opportunities to achieve national coverage on Sky News and SBS
- Collected almost 25,000 signatures on our petition to lobby for an extension of drought assistance funding
- Developed a proposal template for corporate sponsorship opportunities
- Updated centre signage to reflect new branding

Policy review

- A Policy Review Schedule implemented to ensure that all policies and procedures are appropriately reviewed.

Program improvements

- Service Practice Groups established to review and update Building Connections, Aboriginal Building Connections (ABC) and Building Stronger Families programs.

Supervision

- A review of the Supervision Framework introduced in 2014-15 commenced to ensure all processes and procedures are relevant and appropriate.

Training

- Learning and Development Plans introduced for each staff member as part of the Annual Review process.
- Organisational Training Plan developed, based on analysis of the individual Learning and Development Plans.
- Manager's Development Program continued to provide positive professional development opportunities and training in the critical function areas of management.
- Emerging Leaders Program introduced and trialled to provide leadership training and development for emerging talent.
- Training in the new Workplace Conflict Management Policy conducted in all regions.
- Training webinars in the areas of workplace culture, management skills, IT and service delivery introduced.
- New Employee Induction days continued, with an additional Management Induction day introduced and delivered by the CEO, Executive and Senior Management teams.

Workforce planning and development

- Workforce Development Plan 2015-18 developed in consultation with staff and the Executive.
- A review of the Quality Staffing Framework (QSF) introduced in 2014-15 commenced to ensure all processes and procedures are relevant and appropriate. Further development of the Framework will occur in 2016-17 with a focus on non-client service delivery staff.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy

Interrelate is committed to the authentic inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal) people into the life of Interrelate and we acknowledge the value Aboriginal people bring to our organisation. As part of this commitment, we were proud to officially launch our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy in July 2015. This strategy supports our commitment by dedicating resources to activities that will help close the gap in educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

Interrelate's Aboriginal staff journey with families to facilitate healing, family safety, cultural awareness and community connection. It is anticipated that this strategy will increase the number of Aboriginal workers within Interrelate and facilitate their professional development to support career progression. Through this strategy we aim to ensure that this workforce is expanded, enhanced and supported to deliver quality services in the community on behalf of Interrelate.

The strategy has four main priority areas:

1. Develop and maintain culturally supportive workplace environments
2. Attract and select quality Aboriginal applicants
3. Retention of Aboriginal staff
4. Investment in the potential of our people

The strategy has been developed to support our Reconciliation Action Plan as well as to support The Council of Australian Government's (COAG's) agenda of increasing Aboriginal employment and reducing the level of disadvantage amongst Aboriginal Australians.

Information regarding the progress of initiatives contained in this strategy is collected from a number of sources, including HR Metrics, and is reported to the Board and the Executive every six months.

Interrelate would like to acknowledge all the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who contributed to the development of this strategy and recognise those who will partner with us in the future to implement the initiatives contained within the strategy.





Workforce Development

This year, following extensive staff consultation, the Workforce Development Plan 2015-18 was developed and sets out the projects and initiatives related to our workforce that will help Interrelate realise our Vision. These projects focus on Strategic Priority 2 of the Strategic Plan 2015-18: attracting, nurturing and growing a skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce. Accordingly, there are three priority areas in the Workforce Development Plan:

- **Attracting** a skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce: Interrelate aspires to be a workplace of choice. Accomplishing this requires that we attract and retain a diverse and skilled workforce facilitated by strategic workforce planning and that our current staff enjoy being at work, that staff wellbeing is promoted and that we have a positive workplace culture.
- **Nurturing** a skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce: it is vital to the success of our organisation that staff are skilled and productive in their work. This means ensuring that we make use of workforce development programs which support and build capability and employee engagement. This development involves experiential (on the job), social (with and through others) and formal (structured and formal) learning and development and can occur at individual, team, location and organisational levels.
- **Growing** a skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce: it is important that our staff grow and develop, either in the role that they are currently in, or in others. This means focusing attention on career planning and career pathways, identifying high-potential staff and focusing on succession planning and leadership development. It is important that leadership is supported at all levels to ensure that Interrelate is a high performing and engaged organisation.

Central to each of these priority areas is ensuring that workplace diversity is celebrated and supported, that each staff member has the right skills, knowledge and abilities to excel in their role and that Interrelate makes sustainable and planned workforce decisions.

Each project in the Workforce Development Plan has outcomes, actions and measures of success. Given the dependencies contained within the Workforce Development Plan (and the Strategic Priorities 2015-18 document), timelines and accountabilities have been attached to each project. Information is collected from a number of sources, including HR Metrics, and progress against the initiatives is reported to the Board and Executive every six months.

Wellbeing Projects

Interrelate is committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all our staff. Employee wellbeing is now recognised by most organisations as an important priority in the attraction and retention of staff, for improving productivity and creativity, and for overall sustainability and social responsibility.

As part of Interrelate's commitment to employee wellbeing, in 2015-16 a review of our existing Wellbeing Program was undertaken to ensure that we were supporting our staff in the most holistic way. The review process included surveys within Interrelate and with other Not-For-Profit organisations.

The review demonstrated that within Interrelate there are a number of programs, benefits and policies already in place to support the ongoing wellbeing of employees. Both the internal and external surveys agreed that the best way for organisations to support employee wellbeing is through flexible work practices, allowing employees to better manage their time, responsibilities and personal wellbeing. Interrelate already offers a number of flexible work options, and the adoption of additional practices will be undertaken through this program. As part of the Wellbeing Program, work will also be done to raise staff awareness of the existing support available through an online platform.



Diversity Projects

Interrelate is committed to maintaining a fair, equitable and diverse workplace. As part of this commitment, a review of our diversity and inclusion was undertaken. This included a Cultural Diversity survey which took place in January 2016.

The review demonstrated that Interrelate has a strong focus on diversity with a number of initiatives already in place, with the aim to make improvements for both employees and clients. One of the key outcomes of the review was the development of the Workplace Diversity Framework. The purpose of this Framework is to provide an overarching philosophy and structure for the management of Diversity, to support the existing initiatives and enable a focused effort going forward. The Framework also includes recommended initiatives to further enhance diversity, incorporates existing policies and practices, employee feedback, competitor practice and corporate objectives.

IT Infrastructure Projects

This year we changed our major information and communications technology partner to TPG. TPG were chosen after an extensive search where they demonstrated the ability to deliver a reliable, high quality service that provides value for money.

The IT team managed the migration of 18 major links across metropolitan, regional and rural NSW. After months of planning and testing the links were transferred with minimal disruption to client service delivery and staff.

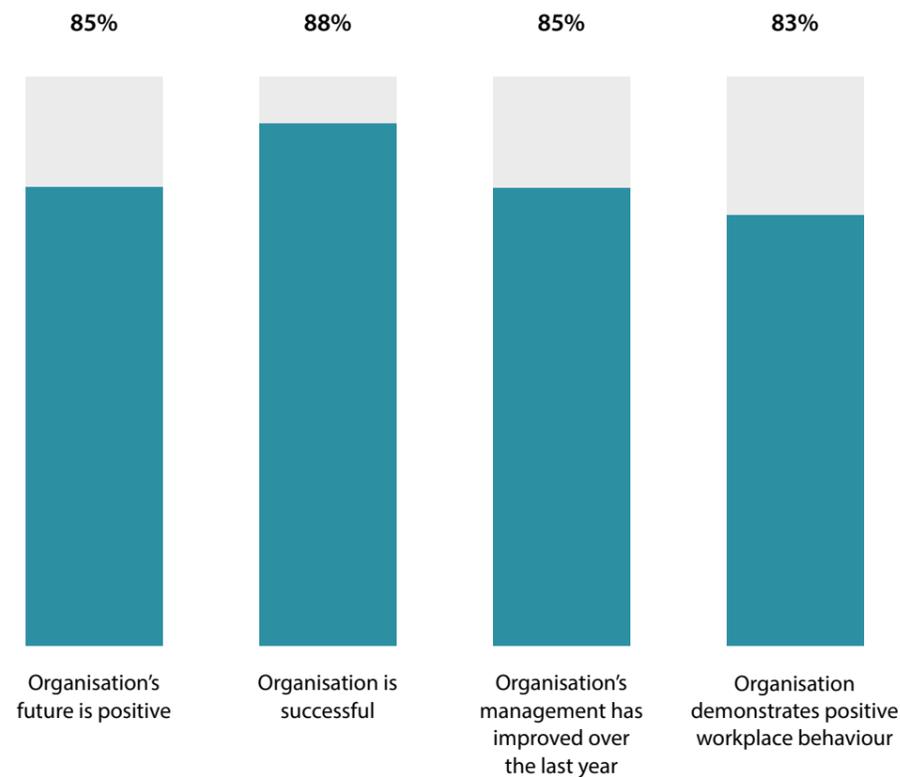
These new links are on average, nine times faster than our previous network and 26% cheaper. These savings allow Interrelate to focus on client service delivery and provide the opportunity to explore new technologies that will enhance service delivery and create operational efficiencies in the future.



CULTURAL SURVEY

In January 2016, Interrelate undertook another Cultural Survey in partnership with Macquarie University's Voice Project. This was the second survey of its kind, with the first conducted in October 2014. The survey allowed the organisation to assess multiple indicators of organisational performance across a broad range of human resources and general management practices. In addition, it created an opportunity to measure any positive effects of initiatives created under the S2S Project as an outcome of the October 2014 Survey.

The staff completion rate for the survey was 76%, demonstrating their trust in the process and providing valuable insights. The majority of the results were positive with the organisation's overarching performance rated favourably.



Achievements: Strength to Strength

The final organisational results were received from the Voice Project in March 2016. Each region and work stream have been working with their S2S representative and management to review and analyse their data, to develop comprehensive action plans for the next 12 months.



STAFF RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Interrelate's Employee Benefits and Rewards Program aims to support, recognise and reward staff for their contributions to the objectives and values of the organisation. The main components of the program are:

Appreciates Postcard Program

This informal program provides staff with the opportunity to recognise and acknowledge a co-worker for doing something 'over and beyond' their normal job. This year our staff issued 233 postcards to each other.

Employee Awards Program

Respect – Michael Davy, Senior Practitioner (Counsellor), Central Coast for his respectful practice with both clients and colleagues, and for his involvement in the S2S project, where he encouraged all employees to "have a voice" and showed a great deal of consideration and respect to the feedback he received.

“ Michael has shown over a long period of time, a great deal of respect towards clients, this is shown by the high demand for repeat bookings which are highly valued by clients. ”

Equity – Stuart McMinn, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Liaison Worker, Central Coast for his work as a passionate advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people and his commitment to the rights of all people in the community to have equitable access to services.

“ Stuart is an outstanding spokesperson for his community and has an exceptional capacity to talk about what is fair and equitable and positively influence others in relation to social justice issues. ”



Leadership – Jane Thompson Manager – Family Relationship Centre, Coffs Harbour, for her calm, decisive and strengths-based approach to leadership and support of staff during a challenging time in the region where she was the only manager for a period of time.

“ Jane was the only manager on the ground for a while due to sickness and recruitment vacancies. During this time, Jane handled all client and staff enquiries/issues with ease, common sense and unfailing good humour. ”

Accountability – Kerryn Whitehead, Client Services Officer, Central Coast, for her deep commitment to ensuring service is delivered to the highest standard, her strong work ethic and willingness to take on additional responsibilities to ensure the job gets done.

“ Kerryn deals with stressed and vulnerable clients every day and yet always greets clients warmly, listens in order to understand their needs and ensures they get the service they need. ”

Transparency – Lyn Lamont, Administration Officer, School Services for consistently supporting School Educators in an equal way and for transparency in providing the best service possible to our clients in schools.

“ Lyn is an icon of what Interrelate is about - our values... she builds and strengthens relationships with everyone while also valuing people and their worth. ”

Empowerment – Vicki Findlay, Manager – Family Relationship Centre, Lismore for her work in building the capacity of people in the community to recognise, understand and respond appropriately to the impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, children and the community.

“ Vicki is very passionate about building the capacity of people in the community to understand the impacts of domestic violence. ”



John and Irene Robson Scholarship Award

Introduced in 2015-16, the John and Irene Robson Scholarship provides financial assistance to an employee to undertake post graduate studies and/or a Research Fellowship. The \$10,000 Scholarship reflects Interrelate's commitment to continuing the professional development of our staff and supporting them to undertake further education to enhance their knowledge and skills.

The Scholarship was named after the late John Robson OBE and his late wife, Irene to honour their combined contribution to the development of counselling services in Australia and the crucial part they played in the growth and expansion of Interrelate.

Alison Rossini, Community Development Project Worker in Caringbah, was the inaugural recipient of the award to assist her to complete her Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution to fulfil her career ambition of becoming a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner.



Work Health and Safety Star Award

This award is presented throughout the year to a region or team who are shown to be championing a positive work health and safety culture within their workplace. This year, the following individuals and teams were recognised:

October - December 2015

Skye Sheehy at Norwest Head Office for:

- being very active in her role as WHS committee member showing dedication and support to the Norwest team and WHS committee members
- providing updates to the WHS induction, providing assistance to staff in terms of ergonomics and workstation set up
- being an active member who attends all WHS meetings and goes above and beyond to provide further support to the regions as part of her HR Business Partner role
- actively researching and providing useful resources and information to assist the group.

January - March 2016

Rebecca Marjoram & the Orange Team for:

- their proactive approach to the WHS Audit and following up and completion of Corrective Actions
- their positive and supportive Team Approach to WHS
- correctly identifying potential gaps and risks and proactively implementing Corrective Actions
- good knowledge amongst team of WHS Compliance

April - June 2016

Kerryn Whitehead (WHS Committee Member, Central Coast) for:

- being a proactive new WHS Committee Member
- her proactive approach to WHS and getting procedures in place
- following up and ensuring completion of Corrective Actions



“Receiving this considerable gift has already made a huge difference to my life. The week of receiving this award, I was looking at different credit cards to pay for the remainder of my Graduate Diploma. I now have the opportunity to wipe that debt.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank the Board of Directors for acknowledging my journey and supporting me to strengthen my future career prospects. Supporting families is my passion and I look forward to finishing my degree and helping many families in the future. ”

— Alison Rossini



Years of Service Awards Program

This award aims to recognise and reward employees for their continued loyalty and support for the work of Interrelate. Staff are recognised on the anniversary of their first year of employment and at every five additional years of employment with a gift of increasing value. This year the following staff celebrated anniversaries of 5 years or more:

25 Years

Ray Muddle Newcastle

10 Years

Constantine Perakis Lismore
Graeme O'Connor Executives
Jacqueline Dee Sydney South
Karen Copeland Orange
Peter Nava Henry Lismore
Robin Swalwell Dubbo
Julie Dale Sydney South
Maxwell Kitto Lismore
Sarah Deuis Sydney South
Lauren Weinert Sydney South

5 Years

Angela Gauci	Norwest HO	Michella Wherrett	Newcastle
Dannielle Stonestreet	Gosford	Nadine Fergusson	Norwest HO
Dori Ned	Coffs Harbour	Rebecca Clark	Lismore
Eleanor Haynes	Dubbo	Sonja Peters	Orange
Haley Walsh	School Services	Stephanie McKell	School Services
Hayley Freeman	Orange	Suzanne Brown	Dubbo
Iain Smith	Coffs Harbour	Therese Siebel	Sydney South
Janine Howse	Coffs Harbour	Tracey McIver	Gosford
Jeanette Sinni	Lismore	Trisha Ann Rowney	Lismore
Jessica Langtry	Sydney South	Victor Smith	Port Macquarie
Lisa Andersen	Dubbo	Vincent O'Keeffe	Newcastle
Lynette Lamont	School Services	Belinda Keech	Lismore
Maria Logan	Dubbo	Anne Curtis	Port Macquarie
Mereki M	Lismore	Robyn Heath	Gosford



EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

In 2015-16, the Emerging Leaders Program was trialled with a group of 15 of our current managers.

The Emerging Leaders Program is a six month development program which aims to help emerging leaders:

- understand what leadership is and the benefit it can bring to the workplace
- understand their own leadership style and enhance their leadership capabilities
- understand how to lead and motivate others and maximise team potential and performance

The program is delivered in a blended learning format, commencing with two days of face-to-face workshops, followed by an on-the-job workplace project. At the end of the program period, the workplace projects are presented to the Executive and management group.





MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Manager's Development Program continues to be a positive professional development opportunity for Managers of Interrelate. Meeting quarterly, the program provides training in critical function areas of management, including:

1. Extending self as a leader/manager and the understanding of role/place in the organisation and the system of which we are part.
2. System and organisation, seen from the inside out and the outside in, at both operational and strategic levels.
3. Tools, concepts needed to manage for now and the future. The future we desire to create for ourselves, our organisation, our sector and most importantly our clients.

This year, the program was attended by 40 managers across the regions.



PERFORMANCE

How We Helped	76
Progress Against our Strategic Priorities 2015-16	90



HOW WE HELPED

Aboriginal Services

This year 3049 of our clients identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

We continued to deliver culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups this year, as well as partnered and engaged with numerous communities and organisations in our regions to meet identified needs.

One of our new programs is Sista 2 Sista. Interrelate partners with Ghinni Ghinni Youth and Culture Aboriginal Corporation to deliver the program, which supports young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women between 13-25 years of age who have come to the attention of community elders, police, Juvenile Justice, government or non-government agencies in the Taree and Kempsey areas. These young women are at risk of domestic violence, crime, disengagement from education, substance abuse or poor parenting practices. Sista 2 Sista uses art therapy as a base to deliver culturally appropriate and holistic education programs that incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, traditions and customs.

Through Sista 2 Sista, women are empowered to work on processing traumatic experiences through art, while having greater access to vital services such as counselling and family support. The sessions are led by community elders and invited guest speakers from community service organisations. During the art sessions each week, topics such as wellness, parenting, anger management and drugs and alcohol are discussed. Women are also encouraged to develop skills through exhibiting and selling their artwork.

The outcomes of Sista 2 Sista include the broader community objectives of lowering the rates of child protection notifications, reducing domestic violence incidents and mental health referrals.

To celebrate the official launch of Connect, a Family Mental Health Support Service in Coonamble in Central West NSW, Interrelate, in collaboration with Milan Dhiyaan (local Wailwaan Artists) developed Yulawana Dhawuga, a cultural program to help support Coonamble's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to connect with culture.

Yulawana Dhawuga (Dancing on Country) is a six-week program where local Aboriginal children and their families are given the opportunity to gather together to learn more about local Wailwaan and Gamilaraay culture, through dance and stories.

The program ran from 15 January – 15 February 2016 and culminated in a community Corroboree, held on the banks of Eurimie Creek, where participants were given the opportunity to perform and feel proud of their cultural identity.

Program facilitators were local Wailwaan or Gamilaraay people, or had relevant cultural knowledge, and had been nominated by Wailwaan and Gamilaraay people who are part of the Native Title claim on the lands of Coonamble and surrounds. In developing this program, consultation took place with local community Elders, the Community Working Party Chairperson and the Coonamble Aboriginal Land Council Chairperson who all supported the program. Interrelate and local cultural custodians believe that the benefits of cultural development through programs like this can be far reaching and can include increased wellbeing, resilience and community cohesion for Aboriginal people.

A total of 67 people participated in the program, which included volunteer support from the community. Feedback indicates that participants experienced a deeper connection to country, culture and the community, which increased levels of wellbeing, identity and kinship. Comments received have indicated how much the community support the program and would like it to continue.



“ I want this to happen heaps, like every day... I love learning the stories... I love dancing. ”





Children's Contact Service

This year, our Children's Contact Service assisted 1985 clients. The Children's Contact Service provides supervised contact for children who need a safe, controlled setting in which to spend time with a parent or other significant family member. Separated parents in high conflict situations can also use the service as a safe place to coordinate the pick-up and drop-off of their children without having to speak to the other parent or meet face-to-face.

Case Study: Caringbah (As told by the Children's Contact Service Worker)

Working together in a case management model has seen the Caringbah team support parent and child relationships with great outcomes.

What happened?

A mother and father began their involvement with Interrelate by way of both parents working through Family Dispute Resolution at the Family Relationship Centre to organise a cooperative parenting plan which included using the Children's Contact Service (CCS). Dad worked on a post separation parenting program called Parents not Partners and made enormous milestones in how he felt about ensuring both parents were actively involved in his child's life. Mum was supported through ongoing counselling with some focus on attachment work. The CCS has supported the mother in ensuring she felt she could leave her young child in a safe, secure consistent environment where the father and child could build a positive relationship and develop rapport with each other. The CCS service has worked to support the father in developing his parenting skills by modelling interactions with his child and encouraging the father to learn through observation and then by practicing independently from staff. The father has developed skills such as, interactive play by following the lead of his child, non-verbal communication, positive attention, nappy changing, soothing and settling and listening to signs and indications in order to meet his young child's needs. The CCS workers have focused on providing the father with constructive feedback before and after contacts, this debriefing is important in commending the father for his efforts and highlighting suggestions for improvement. The CCS has facilitated a relationship which has allowed this young child to have a healthy positive attachment to their father.

Why do you think there was a significant change?

The change was assisted due to a case management model that involved many Interrelate services. The parents were supported in a variety of ways through Family Dispute Resolution, counselling, group work, and the CCS enabling them to focus on their child and the importance of a cooperative parenting relationship for the future.



Counselling

This year, our counselling services assisted 5204 clients. Counselling offers opportunities for individuals, couples and families to explore challenging aspects of their lives and relationships. This confidential process is undertaken by our highly skilled counsellors, who assist clients to work through their issues and towards solutions.

Case Study: Caringbah (As told by the Counsellor)

A man over 65 years of age self-referred to Interrelate after reading responses from the Royal Commission into sexual abuse in Institutions in the news. He attempted to call the Caringbah centre numerous times, however he felt overwhelmed and stated that it took him several months to actually book his first counselling appointment. He knew he had been feeling depressed and wondered how he could share his story with a stranger. He asked himself the question "How could someone else walk in my shoes?"

What happened?

Once the man gained the courage to book his first appointment he was able to share his story with me and I was able to walk in his shoes. Using the Emotional Focused Therapy model we could work on his primary and secondary emotions and on his beliefs and self-interior experience. In my assessment I could see his guilt, shame, suffering and pain. The man felt safe in the counselling session, he could share things that he had never done before. His sense of belonging and his self-esteem had been damaged from the abuse he had suffered when he was just a little kid. His little child was screaming for help, but he didn't know what was going on inside of him, he felt lost and confused. Walking in his shoes wasn't easy and at times I doubted myself and thought if I could really help this man heal so many wounds from his past. I had shared my doubts with my supervisor and together we discussed strategies to help my client.

After almost a year of walking in his tight shoes I can say that this is a new man, he is able to talk about his fears and has become more confident and has attended the Royal Commission and told his story, this was a great point in his counselling. I was by his side and I was so proud of him!

In our last session this man told me that he feels his little boy is healing and he knows that he has become confident to be himself, to make choices because he knows what happened to him wasn't his fault.

Why do you think there was a significant change?

This man had the courage to start his counselling process, to face his fears and express his grief and anger in a safe space. He became empowered and was able to share his feelings, to talk about his needs and heal his inner child, he has stopped feeling depressed. He knows the work is not finished yet, however now he knows that he is not alone and he can share his shoes with a counsellor and we can walk together in his journey.



Case study: Lower Mid North Coast

We are challenged by some families that present to our service due to the high level of distress and complexity they present with, but our Family and Relationship Counsellors have managed to attain some very positive outcomes over the past year with our clients. One particular example is of a middle-aged couple who presented to our service to restore their relationship. It was a long haul but our staff stayed with the couple in the places where they were 'stuck' and helped create an atmosphere of safety whereby they could explore the areas of their relationship that needed to change. The couple have now learnt how to manage their emotions, listen better, learnt how to negotiate and ultimately have been successful in reconnecting with each other in what is now, by their own definition, a rich and fulfilling relationship.

Drought Assistance

This year, our Drought Assistance program provided free mental health support to rural communities affected by drought and delivered counselling for 97 individuals and families, as well as group programs for 72 people. We also engaged extensively with the Central West communities of Cobar, Walgett and Warren to deliver community workshops and participate in events aimed at increasing mental health sustainability.

Art Therapy Program in rural NSW

“ Even though it was a blustery, cold day in Cobar, a wonderful older lady, Issy, showed up early to help me set up the hall. We warmed it up a bit with a couple of space heaters and got the groundskeeper motivated to push the plumbers to get the water running again. When the rest of the participants arrived, the space looked welcoming, there was a hot cup of tea and bikkies for everyone and we soon started the group. A few people dropped in and out during the day to check out the action.



There was a lot of teasing going on, some deep sharings and everyone got stuck into some “serious” production of art pieces. A local woman catered with delicious hot soup and sandwiches and when it was time to reflect on the finished visionboards, the variety and creativity reflected the participants’ characters and lives. I was touched by the openness and readiness of people to share about their lives, their challenges, what they love and what their wishes for their future are. ”

- Maureen Reagan, Interrelate drought counsellor



The funding for this program was provided through the Department of Social Services (DSS), Families and Children Programme, Enhanced Social and Community Support Measure (Drought Assistance Package). The program was cut following the 2016 Federal Budget in May.

Interrelate continues its commitment to supporting these communities through outreach in Walgett and linking clients to our main offices in Dubbo and Orange.

“ The counselling I have received from Interrelate has helped get my life back on track after cancer. The service has given me the tools I needed to put my life back together and given me the strength to give my son the help he needed too. I hope this service stays available locally as their help has been invaluable. ”

– Drought Assistance client, Cobar

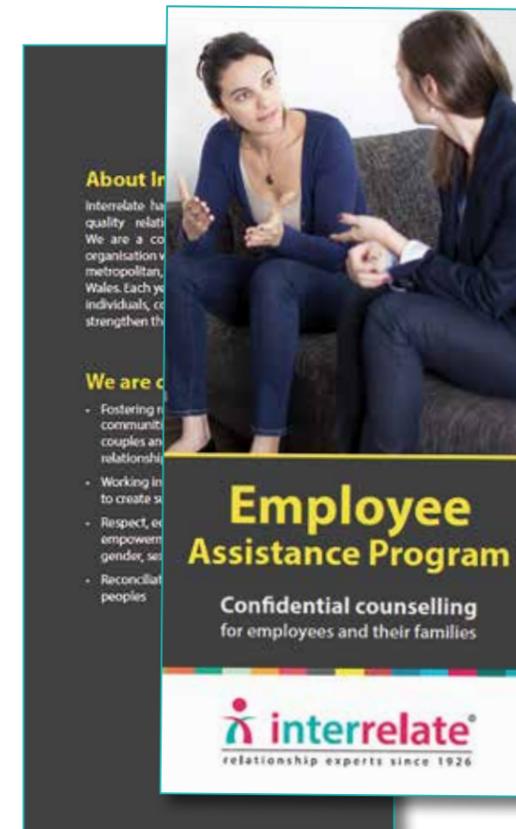
Family Dispute Resolution

In the past year, we continued to support many families undergoing the process of separation. In our centres, more than 3000 couples attended family dispute resolution, an affordable and, for many, a no cost form of mediation, at most times not involving legal action. In Family Dispute Resolution, parents seek assistance to resolve separation issues. Our qualified mediators provide information, guidance, and where appropriate, referral to other support services in a safe and confidential environment. By carefully assessing each case, families are offered the most appropriate pathway minimising conflict between the parents. Secure and stable arrangements are developed for the ongoing care and wellbeing of their children. Parents are invited to attend individual personal appointments with one of our mediators and to participate in our parenting program Building Connections. The aim is to achieve a parenting agreement containing solutions to which everyone agrees.

In 2015/16, through the dedicated work of our mediators, 709 Parenting Agreements were formulated with over 1,400 parents, with 60% of those agreements settling all issues brought to Family Dispute Resolution by the parents. If parents are not able to reach a Parenting Agreement, continuing support is available through counselling, further referrals, attendance at one of our group programs and specific initiatives for the children.. Parenting agreements, whether full or partial, have been shown to substantially minimise conflict between parents and secure stable arrangements for the ongoing care and wellbeing of their children. This is a confidential process where one or two trained mediators help parents in conflict come up with solutions that everyone can agree with.



Employee Assistance Program



As an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, other organisations engage us to provide counselling services to their staff and their families. This year we provided EAP services to 22 organisations with 96 occasions of service. Our agreement to provide EAP services to Multitask in Lismore was also extended.

“ We are very happy with the service and have no changes to suggest. I have made use of it myself and the experience was very positive.

The support shown to our staff during a difficult period at our school was impressive. Without this ongoing EAP support many staff would have struggled. ”

- EAP client, Lismore



Mental Health

This year we assisted 2166 clients through our mental health focused services, including people who attended our specialist group programs.

Of this number, 902 clients utilised our Family Mental Health Support Service, which we call Connect. Connect is a free service which provides assistance for families and children/young people where a child or young person's mental health and wellbeing are at risk. This year we operated Connect from Bourke, Cobar, Coonamble, Kempsey, Nambucca, Coffs Harbour, Wyong and Lake Macquarie. A further 1191 clients attended group programs via this service.

This year, our Personal Helpers and Mentors Service assisted 73 clients. This service is a mental health outreach program for people aged 16 years and over whose lives are severely affected by mental illness. The service supports people who are experiencing the effects of mental illness by assisting them in their recovery and in reconnecting with their local community. This year we operated the service in Ballina, Richmond Valley and Kyogle LGAs.

Group Programs

This year we delivered group programs to 6416 clients. Our groups cover a range of themes including self-esteem, communication, anger management, parenting, separation, stepfamilies, grief and loss, building resilience and strengthening relationships. The programs are delivered over single or multiple sessions.

A list of the programs we offer is available on our website at <http://www.interrelate.org.au/programs>.

Post Separation Parenting

This year we assisted 1386 clients through our Post-Separation Co-operative Parenting and Parenting Orders Program, also known as Building Stronger Families. This program is for parents and other carers of children in separated families who are having significant problems agreeing on arrangements for the children. They may be in conflict over the big questions such as who the child should live with, or how often a child should see one of their parents. Parents can participate in the program separately, so they don't have to meet.

Parents accessing this program can self-refer, be encouraged by a solicitor to attend or be ordered to attend by the court.



School Services

Interrelate's foundation was based in providing education programs on sexuality and relationships. Today, our School Services programs on puberty, sexuality, relationships and bullying continue to remain popular. This year, we delivered these programs to 38,679 students and families and presented in 560 schools. We also sold 4,150 copies of our 'Questions Kids Have' series of books, which cover topics on sexuality, puberty, relationships, having babies and bullying.

Feedback from a parent on our Family Evening Program

“ Thank you for the most wonderful seminar at Curl Curl North Public School.

Your information has come a VERY long way from when I was at school and traumatised for months after seeing a real live woman give birth when I was only 11 years old and the years when it was Taboo to talk about anything.

My children absolutely enjoyed the session and created lots of questions for me. It also built a stronger, safer and more mature relationship with them.

*Your Presenter was just perfect! Well done!!!
We all loved her!!! ”*



Trauma Assistance

This year, we increased the number of people we assisted through the Royal Commission Community Based Support Service (RCCBSS), to a total of 322 clients. We were pleased to receive an extension of our funding until June 2018, which will allow us to plan our service accordingly. As this is a free service that is providing comprehensive therapeutic support for people directly and indirectly affected by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the on-going complexities of the work, clients are remaining with the service.

In December 2015 the Inmate Engagement Strategy finished in NSW Correctional Centres, although support for inmates continues until 30th June 2018 and due to the success of the NSW rollout, Interrelate was one of the services contacted to provide support to a number of inmates within the Victoria rollout. We continue to provide ongoing phone support to inmates at Dillwynia, Port Phillip (Victoria), Long Bay, Goulburn, Dawn De Laos, Bathurst, Mannus, Tamworth and Junee Correctional Centres, while also providing face-to-face support at Parklea and Lower Mid North Coast, and wing phones remain within the correctional centres providing a direct access line to Interrelate and other services.

Networking for this service continues to occur through:

- Interrelate organising and facilitating RCCBSS NSW provider meetings
- attending Royal Commission engagement forums, in particular, being actively involved in planning to support survivors in the August Royal Commission Public Hearing into the Catholic and Anglican Diocese of Newcastle
- the team attending the Australian Childhood Foundation's Trauma Conference in Melbourne, where they attended presentations and master classes on current knowledge and practice from international and Australian experts in the field of Childhood Trauma and were able to connect with other services.

It is important to acknowledge and thank our practitioners who continue to work with RCCBSS clients as they provide great commitment and passion in their work.

Client Story: Newcastle and Hunter

In May 2015, Dave rang our 1300 RCCBSS telephone counselling service. From the outset, it was clear that Dave's life had been thrown drastically off course as a result of sexual and physical abuse he suffered at a boys' home in the early 60s. As a young man Dave tried desperately to not let the abuse define him. But, ultimately, nearly everything in his world would dissolve. Relationships were difficult so he avoided them. Maintaining employment was difficult so he lurched from job to job with long periods of unemployment. For decades the only constant in Dave's life was addiction and dependency. Then a couple of years back he was jolted by a major health scare. At the beginning Dave was super ambivalent about counselling. He would say things like "you can't help me" or "I don't need this". He was also adamant that our CSOs were not to call him to confirm appointments.

Our service simply respected Dave's wishes and deliberately paced everything we did to where he was. For the first dozen or so phone sessions the counsellor and Dave spoke about everything and anything – so long as it didn't include his past exposure to trauma. For example, the counsellor



learnt about every item on his local takeaway shops menu, where every day Dave would buy his only meal. As a rapport developed Dave allowed a debate to ensue into the nutritional value of some of his meal choices. Not to mention the very large amounts of alcohol he consumed each day. Our counselling service didn't do anything we wouldn't offer any other client – we were respectful, we were reliable, we were empathic, and we wanted to help. After a little while the sessions did start to include a conversation about his past trauma and the impact it has had on his life. Dave also sought our assistance to prepare a report, which he later presented to KnowMore (legal representation). To date Dave has received over 40 x telephone counselling sessions. Dave now expects (and looks forward to receiving) a call from our CSOs to remind him of his upcoming appointment. Dave recently told his counsellor that he had been awarded a small compensation payment and, as they had discussed in counselling, he had made plans to allocate that money to a goal, rather than alcohol. In the coming weeks Dave has made arrangements to come into our Newcastle office for the first time to meet our CSO team and counsellor. We anticipate this will be a very special occasion.

**De-identified client story – names and identifiers have been changed to protect the client's anonymity*

Client Story: Central Coast

Steve is a client with the Royal Commission Support Service on the Central Coast who was referred to us by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Since making his submission to the Commission, Steve has attended our service for over a year; initially fortnightly, and subsequently on a monthly basis. Steve experienced violence in his family home as a child and was placed in care numerous times throughout his childhood, he also experienced abuse in numerous care institutions.

As an adult Steve found it difficult to manage his emotions but was determined not to recreate the family environment he had experienced as a child. He struggled to achieve this for many years; he is married with one child and also connects positively with extended family members. Steve has sought professional support to teach him new skills and allow time to make decisions to strengthen his personal resolve and become the man he wants to be.

Since attending this service Steve has begun to process the trauma memories in sessions and focused on healthy living between sessions. To this end he exercises regularly; walking on the beach, bushwalking, cycling and swimming. He finds connecting with nature as he exercises very calming. He spends quite a lot of time connecting with his pets and is giving back as a volunteer by visiting in a local aged care facility. His family are very important to Steve.

Steve has also begun therapeutic writing, remembering the "Good news stories" from his childhood, his first major piece concentrating on a time when he was in his grandparent's care. He has also taken to painting pictures that represent his connection with nature. Steve entered a piece into Central Coast Mental Health Artwork Exhibition. With his permission Interrelate purchased his artwork when a team from the centre visited the exhibition. We now have a permanent reminder of the strength of the human soul to fight back to health, and celebrate life despite adversity.

**De-identified client story – names and identifiers have been changed to protect the client's anonymity*



Feedback and Complaints

At Interrelate, we value feedback about our clients' experiences with us and use it to help us evaluate and improve our services. All clients are provided with our Service Charter and Feedback Complaints Process at the commencement of services, which outlines the process of making a complaint as:

Talk to the person involved

If they are uncomfortable talking with this person or are not satisfied with the outcome

Talk to one of our managers

If the complaint is about a manager or they are still not satisfied with the outcome

Contact the CEO of Interrelate

If a client is still not satisfied that a complaint has been resolved, they can contact our funding bodies which are listed at www.interrelate.org.au/feedback

In 2015-16, 8 complaints were escalated to the CEO.

Research and Service Development

Are we effective in the work we do? Are we making a difference in our client's lives?

These are questions we seek to answer through the application of Client Outcome Measures (COM). This year, we developed COM to be used by practitioners and rated by clients. We piloted an initial version in the Lismore region and following the completion of a post implementation review with staff, will develop a second version to be piloted in another region next year.

Section 60(I) Certificates Research Project in collaboration with the Australian National University and the University of Canberra

This year work on this exciting research project steadily progressed. Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) clients who are not able to reach a parenting agreement are issued with a certificate for presentation to the Family Court before commencing court-based action. We know that not all clients proceed to court, which means that conflict in relation to parenting arrangements may persist, potentially leaving many families and children in unsafe circumstances.

In the Section 60(I) study, we will ask former FDR clients about their experiences and outcomes after they received their certificate. Mediators will also be asked about their processes and experiences of issuing certificates. It is hoped that this study will shed light on the longer term outcomes for families and children issued with certificates and lead to positive policy and procedural changes to improve these outcomes.

Quality Staffing Framework and Supervision Framework Reviews

The Quality Staffing Framework (QSF) for Counsellors and Mediators and the Supervision Framework introduced in 2014-15 reached 12 months post implementation. As a result, a review of the QSF and Supervision Framework was commenced to ensure all processes and procedures are relevant and appropriate. Further development of the QSF Framework will occur in 2016-17, with a focus on non-client service delivery staff.



Service Practice Groups

Continuing on from the successful implementation of Service Practice Groups (SPG) in 2014-15, this year the Research and Service Development unit supported the establishment of five new SPGs to review and improve different aspects of our service delivery and programs. These groups are made up of suitably qualified and experienced staff from across the organisation who provide expert input on behalf of their colleagues to improve the quality of our products and services.

For more about the active SPGs in 2015-16 please refer to Staff Reference Groups in the Leadership Section of About Us.



PROGRESS AGAINST OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2015-16



Our Strategic Plan articulates our purpose and vision, reinforces our commitment to reconciliation and reasserts our values, which underpin our framework for relating to our clients and each other.

This year, we continued making significant achievements against the priorities identified in our Strategic Plan 2015-2018.

Priority 1

Maintain, develop and expand community responsive services that enhance and build resilience.

Objectives

- The purposes of all services are clearly defined.
- Regional plans are developed to support service and business development opportunities within the regions, consistent with community needs.
- High-quality services are appropriately delivered.
- Quality service delivery through program review and continuous improvement is maintained.
- Interrelate's research agenda is linked to service development and business development opportunities and is consistent with client and community needs.
- Client outcomes framework is implemented and demonstrates improvements in client wellbeing.
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged clients receive enhanced access and quality of services.
- Increase the use of technology for service delivery to meet the changing needs of our clients.

Progress delivered in 2015-16

- Quality staffing framework (QSF) piloted across regions. The QSF has been developed to support staff on-boarding and to ensure quality and clinical governance of our services.
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) staff reference group established. The CALD staff reference group has been created to support Interrelate in building an effective organisation that is responsive and culturally appropriate in meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals, families and communities, by supporting the strengths that reside in those communities.
- Development of Regional Plans to inform community need and guide service growth. These will guide regional activity in line with the Strategic Plan.
- Regional briefings and training on the client outcome framework. Client outcomes framework piloted across regions. The framework aligns to the DSS SCORES framework; this is part of our work in meeting the partnership requirements by DSS.
- Access strategy milestones achieved – Reconciliation Australia endorsed the Interrelate Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.
- In the Cultural Survey 2016 results, the overall organisation rate for supervision satisfaction was 81%. This is an increase of 3% from the 2014 Cultural Survey.
- Technology development project plan established exploring the use of technology to meet the changing needs of our clients.
- Funding provided by the Department of Social Services (DSS), Families and Children Program, Enhanced Social and Community Support Measure (Drought Assistance Package) Families and Children's Activity, ceased on 30 June 2016. Under this funding, Interrelate had been providing support to the rural and drought affected communities of Cobar, Warren and Walgett in the Far West NSW since July 2014.
- Audit of existing staff qualifications to ensure that all staff meets the minimum requirements of their position is completed. A project partner is engaged to manage Recognition of Prior Learning plans.



Priority 2

Attract, nurture, and grow a skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce.

Objectives

- Organisational leadership is supported to ensure a high performing and engaged organisation.
- To be a workplace of choice.
- Workforce development programs support organisational capabilities and employee engagement.
- Workplace diversity is celebrated and supported.

Progress delivered in 2015-16

- Learning needs identified; As outlined in the Performance Management Policy, eligible employees will participate in the annual performance review process, which includes the development of an Individual Learning and Development Plan. This Plan identifies the training and professional development opportunities for the employee for the future 12 months to support them in their current role, and in developing competencies to allow for career progression within Interrelate.
- School services employment contract finalised and signed by educators.
- Establishment of the leadership capability framework.
- Establishment of the Area Manager performance review – performance against capabilities and key performance indicators.
- The emerging leaders program (ELP) was trialled in 2015-2016 with 15 of our current managers and was completed in May 2016 with a day of presentations to the management and Executive group. Nominations for the 2016-17 ELP will be sought in August 2016, with the program to commence in November 2016.
- Management Development Program conducted to support the development of leadership and management skills that will support the future of the organisation.
- Research and development of a Staff Wellbeing Program. The research identifies that Interrelate already provides a number of wellbeing opportunities to staff, and a main recommendation is to have this information available to staff in one central location, to create staff awareness as to what is available to them.
- The Workforce Development Plan developed. The plan is a key document for the organisation in ensuring our workforce continues to develop and be responsive to community needs.
- The Volunteers Program has been developed with training held throughout the organisation.
- The Workplace Diversity Plan drafted. The framework proposes a coordinated approach to supporting, attracting and retaining staff that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGBTQ.
- Cultural enhancements projects have been implemented across the organisation.
- Ongoing implementation of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy. The strategy has been developed to support our endorsed Reconciliation Action Plan as well as support the Council of Australian Government's (COAG's) agenda of increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and reducing the level of disadvantage amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.



Priority 3

Diversify our revenue streams to further deliver on our vision and enhance economic sustainability.

Objectives

- Increase fee for service revenue.
- Seek further funding opportunities.
- Increase revenue through donations.

Progress delivered in 2015-16

- Appointment of Marketing Manager.
- Cyber Safe Teens program pilot developed for the High School market.
- Received grant from Hills Shire Council to establish e-parenting webinars.
- Joined Panel of Service Providers for NSW Family and Community Services Family Group Conferencing Facilitation Services.
- Received grant from Orange Credit Union for outdoor recreation area for the Children's Contact Service in Orange.
- Received community grant from Stockland for use in Youth Symposium – Festival of Films in 2016-17
- Commenced discussion with Family Life Victoria to explore opportunities for joint services for significant mutual benefit.

Priority 4

Cultivate strong relationships with stakeholders to enhance outcomes for clients and create new business opportunities.

Objectives

- Harness internal expertise to inform service development and growth.
- Interrelate be recognised as an industry leader.
- Partnerships developed with key stakeholders to progress service development and business objectives.

Progress achieved in 2015-16

- I-Relate Campaign continued with television promotions in Orange, Dubbo, Newcastle and the Central Coast.
- Service Practice Groups have been established to involve staff in informing service delivery and best practice – Building Connections, Stronger Connections, Aboriginal Building Connections, Child Inclusive Practice, Parenting Programs – Challenge of Disciplining Children & Positive Parenting, Building Bridges, Children's Contact Service, Building Stronger Families, Mental Health.
- Staff reference groups exist to enhance the cultural service delivery and support of staff across the organisation – Strength 2 Strength, Work Health and Safety, Kutanya, CALD and Environment.
- Internal publication of the WHS Circular and Staff Newsletter – Interrelate Insights.



- Incorporated the acknowledgement of our 90th anniversary into Interrelate’s marketing plan for 2016. The 90th provides Interrelate with an opportunity to celebrate our 90th milestone with staff, clients and the greater community; increase overall awareness and raise our profile as leaders in the field of relationship support services; and promote our services and programs.
- External tendering for Intranet platform and website development.
- I-Relate Campaign continued with the Anti-bullying poster competition, presentation at the Say No to Bullying Conference – Gold Coast, hosted the 2015 (October) National Men’s Health Gathering – Terrigal NSW, National Indigenous Women’s Network Conference (Darwin – September 2015) and presented at the FRSA National Conference (Brisbane – November 2015).
- Established corporate sponsorships/partnerships with Faber Castell, Concourse Chatswood, College of Event Management, Australian Film Television and Radio School, Filmpond and Stockland.
- Established Memorandum of Understanding with Startech Solutions Pty Ltd and Kudos Knowledge.

Priority 5

Foster organisational commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

Objectives

- Organisation operates efficiently to maximise the benefit from available resources.
- To be an environmentally responsible organisation within available resources.
- Performance of Interrelate surpasses accepted industry standards.
- Agency investment plan developed to ensure future service needs are met and expansion is supported.
- Be a good corporate citizen that engages in ethical behaviour within our communities.

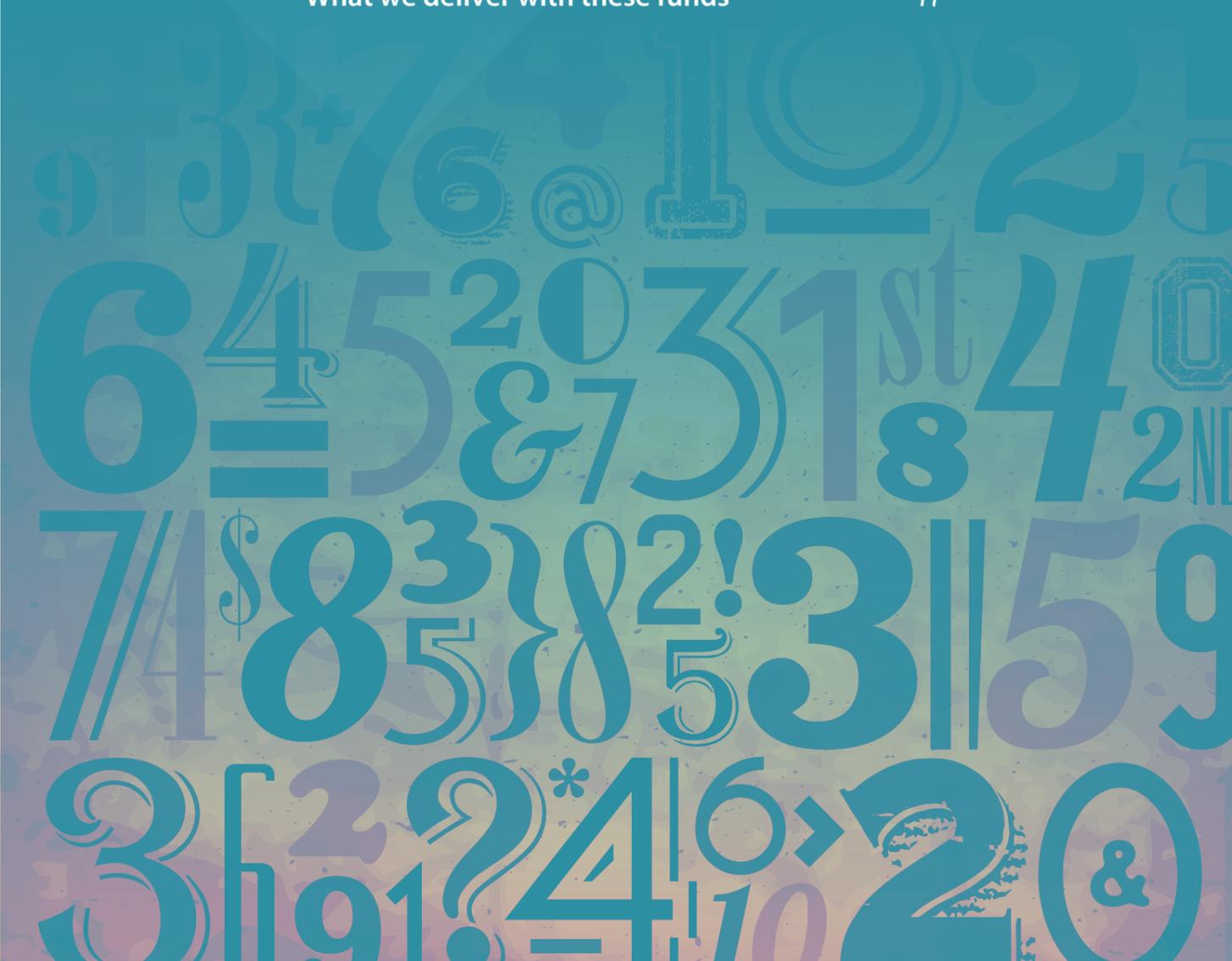
Progress achieved in 2015-16

- Penelope and IT champions appointed to regional centres.
- Staff received training to maximise the use of technology – Outlook and email, Word and Excel, the Interrelate network, Penelope (Client Management System), Windows 10, Office 2016, ConnX.
- Pilot to full transition of Paperless Penelope process in all regional centres.
- Interrelate has purchased three modules of an online system called PeopleStreme:
 1. Welcome and On-boarding, which has the ability to run some e-learning work.
 2. Performance Management, which allows the organisation to have online processes for performance reviews, probation reviews, one-on-one line support meetings.
 3. Complaints (staff and clients), which will provide systemic analysis information.
- Continued to achieve milestones of the Environmental Strategy to reflect strategic objectives. Achievements include; installing LED lights in regional centres, waste audit – new colour coded bins, celebration of Earth Hour and continuation of reviewing utility invoices.
- TQM framework on the principles of ISO via SAI Global. Training plans for implementation 2017.
- Purchase of Port Macquarie site at 1 Merrymen Way, Port Macquarie.
- Performance and Risk Framework dashboard now includes trend data.
- Transition to TPG for landline & mobiles phones, Internet, WAN.



NUMBERS

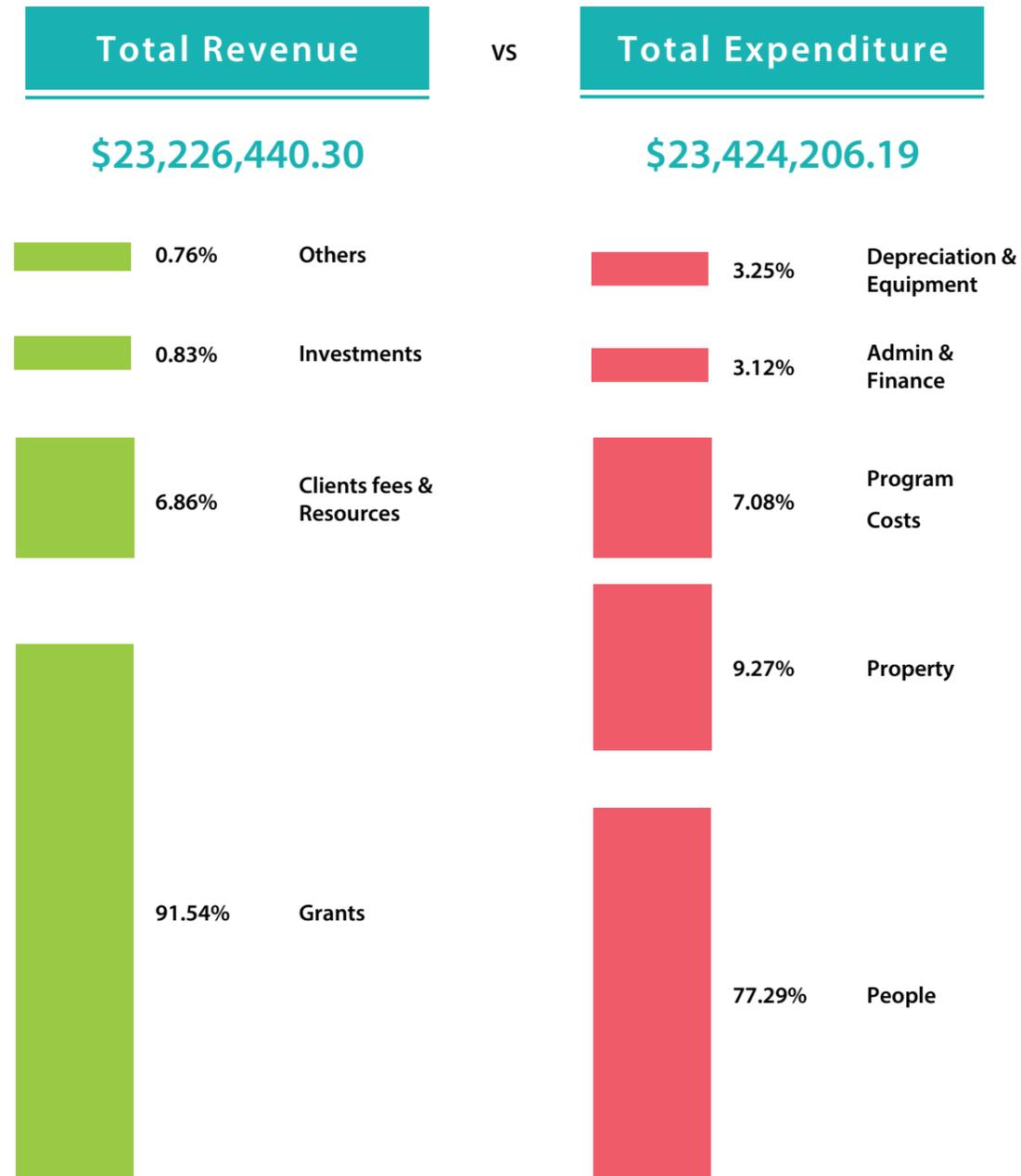
Funding and Support	96
What we deliver with these funds	97





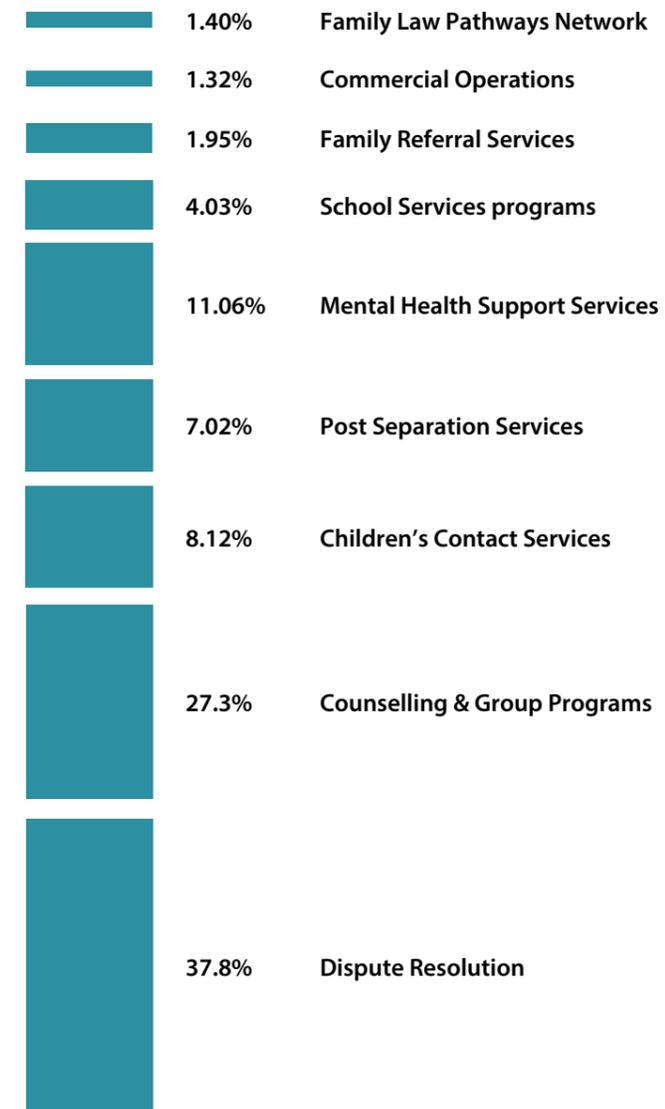
FUNDING SUPPORT

Interrelate receives funding from a variety of sources including Federal, State and local governments, fee-for-service, member contributions and gifts.



WHAT WE DELIVER WITH THESE FUNDS

Total revenue breakdown % by services



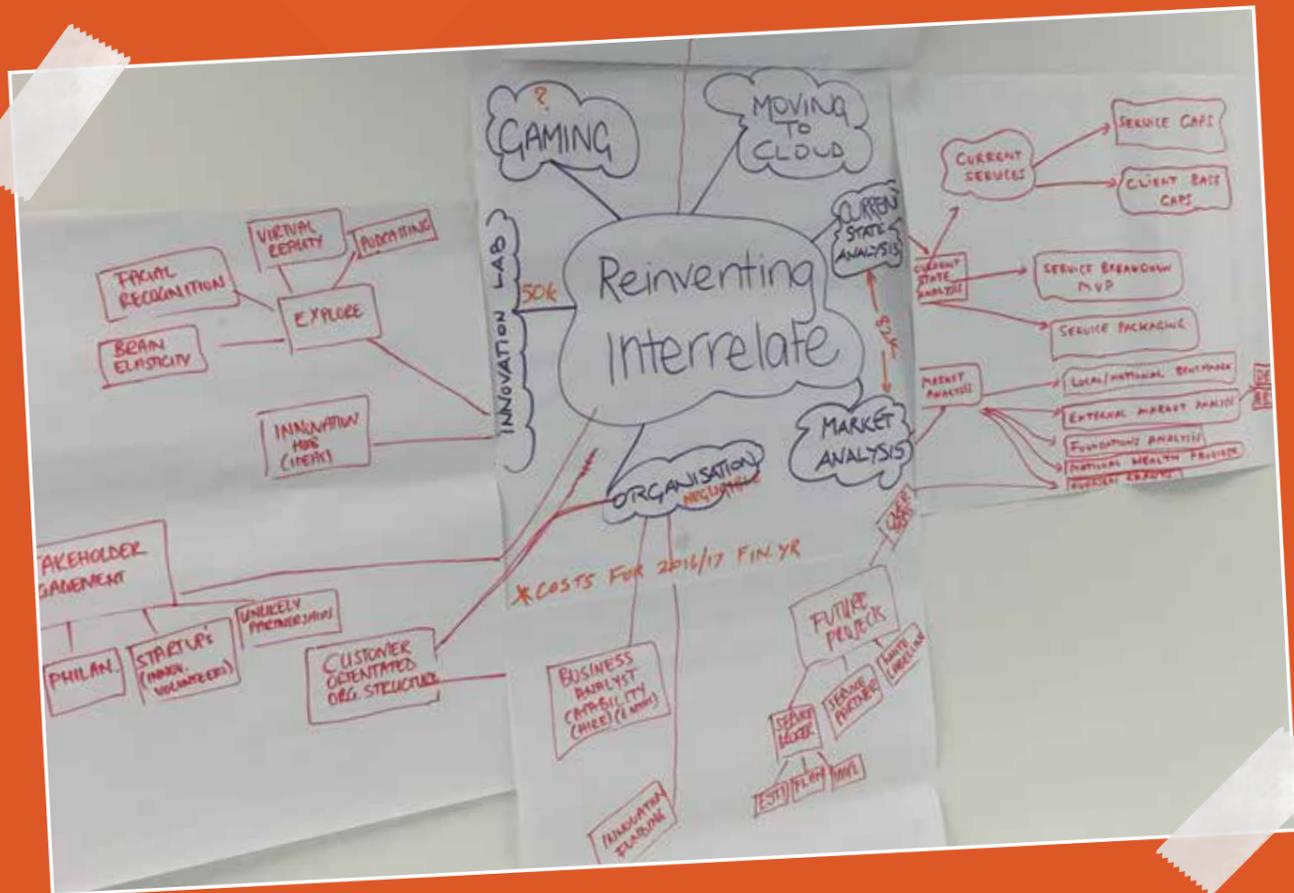
You can view Interrelate's full Audited Financial Statements on our website.



THE FUTURE

What lies ahead

99



WHAT LIES AHEAD

In November 2016 we will celebrate a very significant milestone as we reach 90 years of service to families and communities. We are proud to carry on the work of our founders, and look forward to sharing Interrelate's greatest memories with our stakeholders.

Next year will also see us grow our service footprint and embrace technology to enhance our service offerings by the delivering of the following two projects.

Family Life Victoria – A New Opportunity

Interrelate and Family Life Victoria (FLV) have continued to look for ways to grow, develop and provide excellence in service to the community. To this effect, both organisations have been exploring the significant mutual benefit of coming together again to become one stronger organisation that can extend its reach beyond our current geographical boundaries or service offerings. Discussions over 12 months have explored: benefits to our communities; benefits to the suite of services we can deliver; benefits to staff and benefits to our stakeholders. These discussions have led to the conclusion that coming together will provide significant mutual benefit.

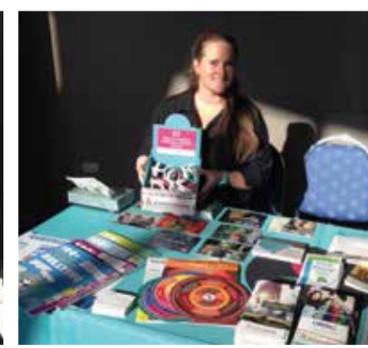
A proposal will be put to the FLV board in September to enter into a formal Heads of Agreement with the Board of Interrelate with a view to the transition of FLV to become part of Interrelate by June 30, 2017.

Embracing the Use of Technology

Technology is having a significant impact on how individuals interface with information and services currently and into the future. Interrelate will be undertaking activities that address specific areas in respect to client and staff interfaces. The Board approved the establishment of a pool of funds of \$250,000 to resource investment into technology focusing on the following deliverables:

- Education of young people and parents through technology by developing systems of support about relationships.
- Use of technology to facilitate access to programs and support.
- Coproduction and service development with consumers and potential consumers.
- Expanding engagement with social media to disseminate information.
- Using technology to assist staff engagement, quality assurance and communication with staff.

Along with our strategic plan deliverables these plans will enable Interrelate to prosper as an innovative, relevant and responsive organisation that continues to stay true to its mission of 90 years.



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