



**CASPA**

*Inspiring people to thrive*

# 2023 Annual Report





# Acknowledgement of Country

CASPA Services Ltd. acknowledges the First Nations people upon whose stolen lands we operate.

We recognise that this land was never terra nullius – the land belonging to these people was never ceded, given up, bought, or sold.

We recognise their continuing connection to their land, language, waters, sky and culture.

We must consult with the Community and centre Indigenous values and experiences in all that we do. We pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders, past, present and emerging.

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# Chair Report

***Wherever we set foot, CASPA is renowned for the expertise and experience of its staff.***



When I sat down to write this report I realised that it was exactly 5 years ago that I joined the Board of CASPA. One month later the Board showed great courage (I believe) in appointing me as Chair.

I hadn't come from a background in children's services, but my 50 years of practice in the criminal law had convinced me that there must be far better options available to disadvantaged and traumatised children than putting them through the criminal justice system, let alone incarcerating them.

Our CEO Naarah, her team and the Board have spent considerable time and effort this year in fostering and supporting the "Raise the Age" campaign both locally and nationally and across all political spectrums. We see this campaign as crucial to the ongoing well being of the young people who fall foul of the criminal justice system.

In my first report I mentioned that my immediate task was to play a part in an OCG Audit, and we were successful in achieving a 5 year accreditation.

Five years on we have undergone a similar process, this time as a pilot site for an abridged process based on our previous excellent performance. Little did I imagine how successful CASPA would become in those 5 years. We have grown exponentially both in terms of offices and staffing. From Lismore with branches in Casino and Coffs Harbour, we have spread right down the NSW North Coast as well as the Gold Coast, Townsville and Far North Queensland, and across to Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek.

CASPA's renown is reinforced to me whenever we have to seek out new directors. We seek additional experience and expertise by word of mouth and by advertising. I never cease to be amazed by the quality of the people we have making contact with us. There must be something about our reputation in this space that makes us attractive, quite apart from the urgency of our work.

After the AGM last year we were able to appoint formidable additions to our director team. We were joined by Emily Beresford-Cane, who has an extensive background in the Northern Territory; by Cliff Weeks, an experienced director from Western Australia with a First Nations heritage; by Kate Webber, who has a background in Corporate and Risk management; and by Steve Wenzel, who brings expertise in the OOHHC space and is now based in the Northern Territory.

That briefly took our numbers up to 10. However, in February this year we had the misfortune to lose three of our directors due to personal circumstances. I would like to thank Rebecca Bell, Peter Frendin and Donna Kildea for their contributions.

At the same time, our CEO has been able, as part of our recent Strategic planning sessions, to restructure and strengthen her Management team.

**NICOLAS HARRISON**  
CHAIRMAN

# A year with many challenges and even more *resilience*



Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the **endurance, resilience, and partnerships** shown by the children, young people, families, and individuals who have accessed our services in the last year. As is always the case, their feedback and outcomes give us the opportunity to increase our efficacy, our quality, and review constantly where our pacts are being made and whether we are fulfilling our **mission** and **purpose** as an organisation.

The year was met with continued challenges and post-pandemic pressures. As has been the case for the last few years, our frontline staff wear the impacts of the pandemic hangover with staffing pressures being ever present. Our northern New South Wales branch continued to be part of the 2022 flood recovery with the impacts being felt far and wide through our workforce, carers and exceedingly through all those we support in service delivery. The flow-on effects to our community have been significantly felt in our sector through the advancement of homelessness and poverty, mental health decline and service delivery barriers arising from grief, loss and trauma.

The collaboration of the Northern Rivers Community Wellbeing Hub continued to operate from our site in Lismore this year alongside our Education team and Tuckshop. This initiative has provided service and supports at a grassroots level to many people in the flood-ravaged community and has ensured a continuity of vital services in a safe and inclusive way. It has been a great privilege to be the site from which this hub has operated this year.

## Strategic Planning

It was time this year for the Board and Executive to renew our commitment and ambitions for the next strategic plan period. The Executive and Board spent several inspirational sessions together planning the new direction, building on previously identified strategic goals, and confirming a highly aspirational new plan for the next three years. We have tasked ourselves with adapting and stretching further in terms of our innovation, our reach, and our cultural connectedness. Of highest priority is an initiative to enable the transition of service delivery for Aboriginal children, families and communities to those best placed to do this work: the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) across our beautiful country. Our renewed commitment and plans to ensure we support this overdue and best practice initiative will be driven through our strategic priorities and our finalised Reconciliation Action Plan, due for launch later this year. We have been humbled by the enduring relationships we have been able to build with Aboriginal organisations around the country and are excited to strengthen those and forge new ones that will enable the transition of service delivery and capacity-building. CASPA is deeply committed to this reform and welcomes the guidance of our Aboriginal sector experts who keep us on task and focused as we all work together to ensure this priority is met as soon as humanly possible.

## ACCO Transition Project

CASPA jumped into the ACCO transition project at the start of the financial year to begin actioning our three year plan. We are currently working alongside three ACCOs to inform carers, build relationships, and complete case management transfer processes for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children and their carers. To date we have hosted a morning tea in Lismore and our Carer Conference in Yamba, where local ACCOs were invited to partake, meet carers, share information and answer any questions. These joint events have resulted in smooth transitions between agencies. We are committed to continuing to work alongside ACCOs, creating further opportunities to build relationships with carers and overcoming any hurdles together to see that all children eligible for transfer do so by 30th June 2026.

## CSF and Recruitment & Retention Strategy

After launching our Aboriginal Services & Supports program in early 2020 we were full of excitement. We had a clear goal, a purpose and a plan, but we quickly discovered that excitement wasn't enough. Within the first year the program was established, we had only one consistent employee. Although we constantly advertised positions, we had very few applicants, and any successful applicants came and went within a matter of months. Despite our commitment and best intentions, the program was not taking off how we had imagined. We had also begun to expand our services in the Northern Territory and recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees was as important as ever...we needed to rethink our approach.

We held a workshop looking at needs as expressed by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, our values and the type of organisation we strive to be. We reflected on our RAP and the demographics of CASPA employees and decided to draft a Recruitment and Retention Strategy and a Cultural Safety Framework (CSF).

The aim of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy is to remove the barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering CASPA's workforce and to create opportunities for growth and professional development. It aims to ensure that staff feel that they are an important part of the team and that they add value.

The vision, as stated in our Cultural Safety Framework, is "to create a workplace of safety, understanding and belonging for all staff, children, young people and families." The framework comprises of three domains: Connection, Opportunity and Respect. It is by ensuring these domains are present in all our interactions that we intend to see our vision realised.

**In just over two years, we have increased our Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander (self-identified) workforce by 43%. But we acknowledge that this is a continuous journey for us where we remain committed to learning and growing as an organisation. We need to remain open to feedback and to improve our cultural safety for staff and carers.**





## Official launch of the CASPA Foundation

After much anticipation we officially launched the CASPA Foundation this year at the Crystalbrook Resort Byron Bay. It was a beautiful, well attended event. We were privileged to hear from a former young person who grew up in foster care and to hear of his journey in adulthood, his success in the Australian Army and his more recent adventures in becoming a lawyer and working for the DPP. It was a powerful message for us to hear about how the journey can be so successful when care is given and support is offered after care. It was also a reminder that we need to keep striving to create better outcomes for these deserving young people.

The CASPA Foundation will be offering much needed vital support and opportunities to care leavers in the coming years thanks to the generous and ongoing donations and fundraising that will be carried out. We are proud to be a part of such an inspirational launch and as Chair of the Foundation, I feel honoured to be able to interact with care leavers seeking to thrive in their adulthood, it will be a great privilege to watch their successes as we provide those supports to them in their time of need.

## Lawyers 4 Hope

We were thrilled this year to have launched Lawyers 4 Hope, our new innovative social enterprise. The establishment of Lawyers 4 Hope represents a bold step for us: creating a new business model for legal services that pools expertise across the country in order to meet important needs of our communities, consistent with our passion and commitment to social responsibility. This has breathed new energy into our intent, over the coming years, to measure and report hard data that in turn can tell the story of the organisation's value and overall impact.

Lawyers 4 Hope's vision goes beyond profit margins and billable hours to leveraging the power of legal expertise to effect positive change for vulnerable children, young people and families through the CASPA Foundation, providing legal advocacy and support to care leavers who would not otherwise have access to legal services to ensure they are treated with fairness and equity. Further to this, 30% of profits from Lawyers 4 Hope support the CASPA Foundation creating a sustainable funding source for the Foundation's causes.

The launch of Lawyers 4 Hope is testament to our dedication to making a meaningful impact across our communities, beyond the traditional realms of legal practice. We are currently offering discounted legal services to employees and our client base and profits are growing fast.

This is another step forward. It is through their leadership to keep increasing the village for children, young people and families to thrive within. Lawyers 4 Hope has been a dream we have turned into reality this year.

Our operations across the country continued in New South Wales, Queensland and Northern Territory over the last year with a renewed focus on measuring much more defined and refined outcomes and impacts for the service user, funder, and community. This has breathed new energy into our focus of the coming years in being able to measure and report hard data that in turn can tell the story of the organisations value and impact overall. It ignited a new passion as we embark on a journey of focusing our efforts into research and evaluation and being able to strongly evidence the outcomes achieved or not achieved in a way that will increase efficacy into the future. I wholeheartedly thank the Board of Directors for their commitment and investment into the organisation and this unfolding strategy moving forward, it is through their leadership, expertise and enablement that we will embark on this aspirational journey with an exciting future ahead for CASPA Services Ltd.

I would like to personally thank our Chair, Nick Harrison, for his continued unwavering commitment to the vibrant organisation that no doubt takes up far more of his time than he cares to disclose. His steady hand as Chair keeps us all calm and on track even on days when the pieces don't seem to fit together. I would also like to personally welcome and thank Tegan Metcalfe who has moved into the role as Executive Assistant. She has undoubtedly given me back hours in my days, nights and weekends with her ability to prioritise and efficiently manage both hers and my day, I am grateful for all she does.

As is always the case but rarely able to be celebrated in a way that justifies, I would like to thank the staff of CASPA, the frontliners, the backenders, the nightshifters, the day shifters, the leaders and everything in between. It is a privilege to work with such committed and passionate people who give so much more than their time to the organisation and those they support. The executive team and I speak so frequently of the work of our staff and I can't seem to find words to describe the admiration that is held not just at annual report time, but day in day out in this fast-paced and complex organisation.

I thank each and every single staff member and carer for the role they play. We have had a **busy but great year!**

Naarah Rodwell  
Chief Executive Officer



“We ensure that children have a place to call home where their physical, emotional, and psychological needs are met.”

## Board of Directors

Nicolas Harrison, Chair

Naarah Rodwell

Natalie Woodhead Tiernan

Ross Morgan

Cliff Weeks

Steven Wenzel

Emily Beresford-Cane

Kate Webber

## Executive Leadership

Naarah Rodwell, Chief Executive Officer

Oksana Tkachenko, Director Strategy, Stakeholder Engagement, Financial Performance and Impacts

Peter Freer, Chief Operating Officer

Angela Bontea, Executive Director General Programs

Kylee Gordon, Executive Director Therapeutic Programs

Nathan Baunach, Executive Director Northern Territory

Michael Manning, Executive Director Allied Health

Amanda Mead, In-House Legal

Tegan Metcalfe, Executive Assistant





# The Situation

Australia has the 15th highest poverty rate of the 34 wealthiest countries in the OECD. <sup>[1]</sup>

One in eight adults and **one in six children** are living in poverty in Australia. Those living in poverty often miss out on essentials such as food or a roof over their heads, increasing the likelihood of intervention by child protective services.

A whole-of-system approach is needed to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable children, adolescents, and the community.

There is a massive gap between government policy, actions and funding compared to what is needed to rebuild relationships with youth and to ensure holistic engagement and empowerment of young people in public and economic life.

*Alongside other similar organisations, **CASPA** has embarked on the journey of **bridging this gap** in society.*

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au>



# Our Approach

## OUR VISION

To be a recognised leader in Australia as an advocate for, and trusted care provider to, children and young people by constantly testing conventional approaches and creating a culture of inclusivity, diversity, and excellence to our stakeholders and communities.

## OUR PURPOSE

CASPA is on a mission to help create a world that has healthy, safe, and resilient communities, sustainable economies, equitable social justice and thriving youth.

To help achieve quality of life for disadvantaged people, we challenge traditional care models and employment opportunities to young people, with courage, respect, commitment and accountability.

## OUR VALUES



INCLUSIVITY



RESPECT



INTEGRITY



INNOVATION



COURAGE

We make impact....



### THROUGH

Innovative care

Supporting young people with complex needs and families seeking preservation and restoration services



### CREATING

Safety and protection of children

So young people and their families can build their resilience, be united and connect with their communities

### LEADING TO

Fewer children & young people entering care

Improving health, living and learning conditions for children and young people, enabling them to achieve their educational, independent living and professional goals



### RESULTING IN

Sustainable change in the quality of life of young people

Healthy, safe, active, inclusive and resilient communities





## Our Support Services

CASPA provides innovative care models to **vulnerable** children and young people. CASPA's uniqueness is in working with children who have some of the highest levels of needs and **complex childhood traumas** in Australia.

### Supported / Transition to Independent Living

The SIL and TIL programs prepare young people for the successful transition from out-of-home care to independent living.

### Permanency Support Program (PSP)

Previously known as Foster Care, this program provides tailored services to vulnerable children so that they can grow up in stable, secure and loving homes.

### Intensive Therapeutic Residential Care

For young people who require specialised intensive support to maintain stability in their care arrangements.

### NDIS

Assisting people living with a disability to increase their capacity to live the life of their choice and achieve their goals.

### Interim Care

Interim Care is a temporary placement (up to 3 months) while a permanent placement is arranged.

### Family Support Services

Based in NSW offering a range of services that can assist clients to improve their quality of life, especially in difficult times.

### After Hours Support

All CASPA locations have a dedicated After Hours team, operating 365 days a year for clinical guidance and support at the time it is needed.

### Aboriginal Services & Supports

Supporting ATSI children and families by strengthening cultural identity, connections to family, country, and community.

### Family Preservation

Family preservation services involve close work with families to build parenting capability and prevent children from going into care.

### In House Carer

This is a hybrid model of foster care and ITRC where designated "house parents" live in a home for multiple days at a time and create a home-like environment for children and young people.

### CASPA Family Support Casino

Specialises in targeted early intervention and prevention, utilising a strengths-based, person-centered, trauma-informed approach for parents, children and families.

### Education Centre

Supports complex school enrolments, holiday programs and assisting school leavers to pursue vocation and training opportunities beyond secondary education.

### Allied Health Team

Our clinicians support all programs across CASPA, undertaking a variety of clinical work based on the needs of our clients and their family systems.

### Bail Assistance Line

Provides short-term (28 days) accommodation, transport and case management services for teens transitioning out of juvenile detention, working closely with Police and Youth Justice.



# Our People

"Making a difference in a young person's life isn't just about being with them; it's about igniting a spark of hope that guides them towards a brighter future."  
- CASPA employee

652

Team  
members

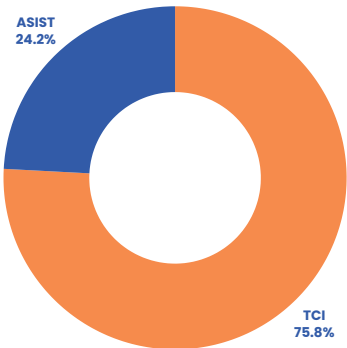
21

Student  
placements



8

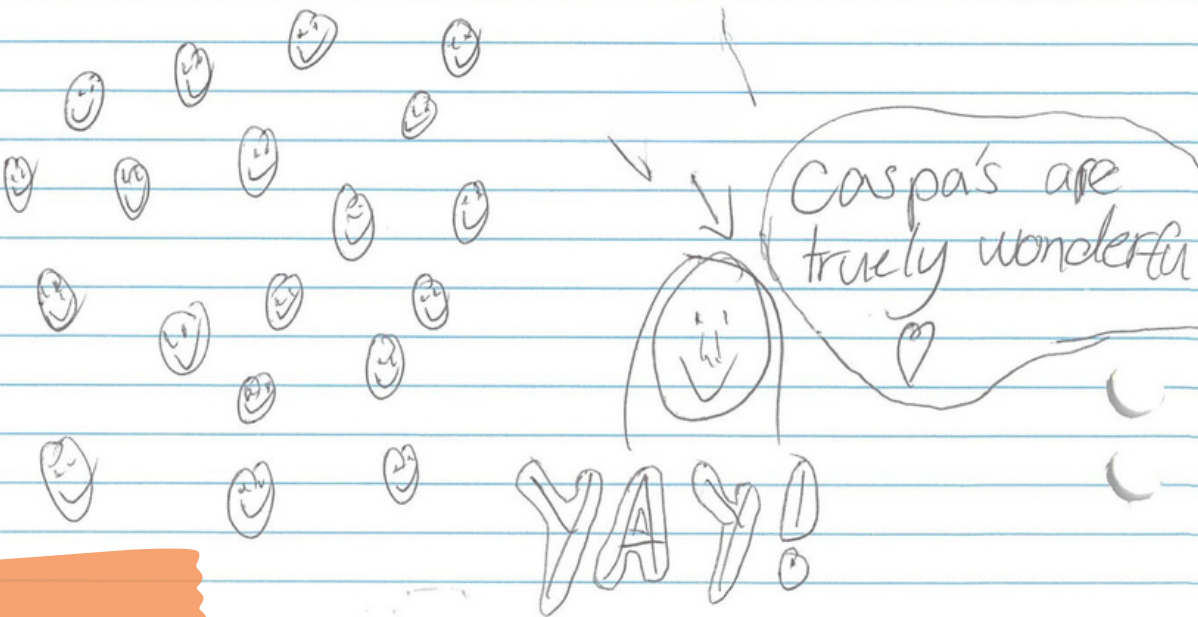
Office  
locations



## Staff Training

430 TCI Trained  
Staff (new and  
refresher) and  
137 ASIST Trained  
Staff in FY23

Caspa is a wonderful working place in Colts Harbour! My favourite caspa workers are: Jazz, Braiden, Ema, Sarah, Roz and all the others too. Caspa is a great name for a work because it's the name of a movie! Did you know that? I truly love how the caspa's have fun parties and things because they are always incredible! Do you know why I love the caspa's? Because they are so great and there very, very nice that's why!





# Our Impact

In the last four years, CASPA has more than doubled the support for children and young people in care from 117 in 2019 to 272 in 2023, through expansion into new states and territories.

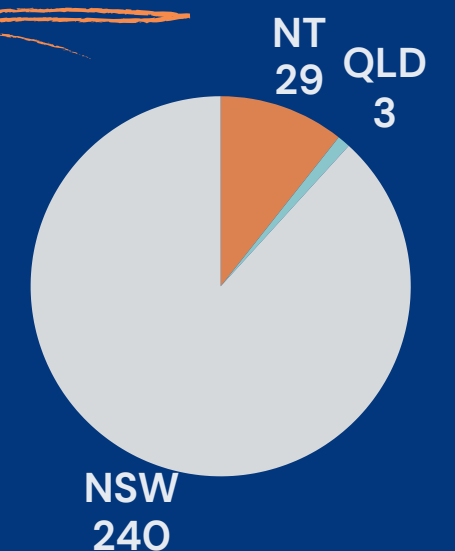


young people in CASPA's care have high or complex needs

272

Total children and young people in care

By State







## OUR IMPACT

# Permanency Support Program

Connor\* was removed from his mother's care at the tender age of 2. After experiencing multiple placement breakdowns, Connor found hope, family, and a brighter future when he entered the care of CASPA.

When Connor was placed in what was meant to be an emergency home in Coffs Harbour, nobody could have predicted that this would be the beginning of a remarkable journey. He remained in this placement for a year while CASPA explored permanency options, and, during this time, the dedicated team at CASPA saw a withdrawn child struggling with lack of interest in school and displaying behavioural concerns.

But Connor's challenges extended far beyond the classroom. He had been disconnected from his mother, eight siblings, father, and grandparents, all who resided in Sydney. His contact with his mother had been severed for seven long years, and he had only seen one sibling during that time.

CASPA, however, was determined to rewrite Connor's story. The dedicated team embarked on a mission to reunite Connor with his family, recognising the importance of the bonds of kinship. Over many months, CASPA relocated the family and began the arduous task of developing trust and rapport with the entire family network. Connor slowly started to rebuild his relationship with his mother through phone calls, Facetime sessions, and regular short visits to Sydney with his supportive caseworker.

It was during these visits that Connor's mother shared her deep feelings of guilt, remorse, and disempowerment, explaining her disconnection from her son. With the support of CASPA, she began the journey of healing and rebuilding their relationship.

Through the power of meaningful, trusting relationships, CASPA achieved a significant milestone. Connor's older brother and his wife agreed to care for him in Sydney, providing him with a loving family environment. With the support of his caseworker and foster carer, Connor slowly transitioned into his new family placement.

As time passed, Connor's world began to open up. He reconnected with his siblings, spent quality time with his mother, and CASPA discovered that his mother had made significant positive changes in her life. With the right support it became clear that Connor could return to her care permanently.

Over the next two years, CASPA worked closely with Connor, his mother, and the family, along with external stakeholders, to facilitate his transition home. Today, Connor is a confident 14-year-old boy who is excelling in school, working part-time, and enjoying the love and support of his family. Connor, who once faced a fractured future, now dreams of attending university.

Connor's impending exit from the OOHHC system in February 2024 symbolises not just a triumph for him but also for the unwavering dedication and commitment of CASPA.

\*name changed for privacy

348

total number of  
foster carers

190

babies, children  
& young people

79

kinship carers

25

in house carers

6

restored to  
families



## OUR IMPACT

# NDIS Services

Access in remote regions

*Our NDIS services expanded across both the Northern Territory and northern New South Wales this financial year.*

*We welcomed our first participants in Tennant Creek and grew our Support Coordination services across the NSW Mid North Coast.*

The CASPA Northern Territory NDIS team first ventured to Ngukurr in August 2022. Ngukurr is a remote Aboriginal community on the banks of the Roper River in southern Arnhem Land, nine hours from Darwin, with a population of 1,000 residents.

We were first introduced to Tara on the initial trip to Ngukurr.

At the time, Tara was 27 years old and living with her wonderful, supportive parents, her sister and nephew, and the local Community Health Clinic were unaware of her existence until a few days prior to our visit. It was through the Health Clinic Manager that Tara was brought to our attention. We offered to visit the family to have a discussion on NDIS supports.

After meeting with the family, the NDIS team concluded that she did in fact have an NDIS plan. However, the plan had few supports for Tara to have an improved quality of life, and there didn't appear to be good use of the supports that were in place. That day we signed up Tara to receive supports from the CASPA NDIS team through Support Coordination.

We discussed with Tara and her family that our plan would involve quality disability supports, regular communication, visits every 6 weeks, and our honesty. Life in remote communities can be challenging, frustrating and isolating, but it can also be exciting, rewarding and beautiful. Our NDIS team understands the challenges of remote life, having lived and worked in remote communities themselves.

Six weeks later, we returned to see our clients, who were surprised to see the team and couldn't believe that we were back. Our simple response was "we said we would be." It was a bittersweet moment in that we were so glad to see them again, but they were shocked to see us. It is testament to the many times they must have been let down before.

Our NDIS Support Coordinator Casey liaised with other services to provide supports and travelled to Ngukurr with an OT, Physio and Behaviour Therapist to work together to ensure that Tara and our other clients received specific supports that would improve their daily quality of life.

Most recently, our team organised for Tara to have respite with her family in Darwin. Respite provided the opportunity for her to attend many medical appointments – hydrotherapy, OT, Physio, GP and dental. Finding specialised medical support for a physically disabled person in a remote community is extremely difficult, but trying to get a dental appointment is near impossible! In Darwin, Tara was able to go shopping, have a hair appointment, attend regular community access and have a nice break away from home.

"We are proud to be providing our supports across the NT in remote communities, ensuring people are receiving quality, honest services they need to improve their lives."

Angela Bontea, Executive Director General Programs

Her family stayed with Tara throughout this time, and they could not believe the help they had received. Tara's mother said to our Support Coordinator (Casey) "no one has ever helped us like CASPA have." The respite also gave the family a break from providing 24/7 care to Tara, as the Disability Support Team were able to provide all her supports during her stay.

Since CASPA have been providing Tara's Support Coordination, all of her NDIS supports have increased, resulting in tremendous improvements to her physical and mental wellbeing and quality of life – including the tailoring of Tara's accommodation that better meets her needs and also positively impacts the family's dynamics.

There is much work to be done in the Northern Territory, especially in our Aboriginal Remote communities.

The current statistics for NDIS participants in the Northern Territory as of June 2022 are:

- 5,647 people are benefiting from the NDIS
- 2,882 people are receiving support for the very first time
- 227 initial plans were recently developed
- There are over 20,000 people living with a disability in the Northern Territory.



## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

3

NDIS  
SIL Participants

113

NDIS Support  
Coordination Clients

22

NDIS Core Support  
Participants



OUR IMPACT

# Residential Care & Semi-Independent Living

## Residential Care

CASPA is recognised as a leader in the area of specialist therapeutic residential care for children and young people who cannot live at their family home for their own safety and wellbeing.



28

Residential care homes



53

Children and young people



8

Young people in interim care placements



1

Young person in STEP placement

## Semi Independent Living Program

Our specialised program supports care leavers to build the skills they need as they transition to independence.



23

SIL homes



6

Obtained Learner Drivers Licence, another 5 are working towards Provisional Drivers Licences



24

Young People



2

Graduated Year 12



## OUR IMPACT

# Education Support

Thriving Against the Odds:  
the transformative impact of  
CASPA's Education Program

*Integral to our pursuit of supporting young people in out of home care to thrive is CASPA's Education Program. Our Education team support children and young people with their education and training to ready them for employment and life after care.*

CASPA'S Education team undertook such a journey with a remarkable young person, Sarah, who had faced formidable challenges throughout her high school years, including losing her home and all her possessions in the 2022 floods. Sarah's story is a testament to the transformative impact on educational outcomes when there is dedicated support, innovative strategies, and a collaborative care team walking alongside each student.

When Sarah entered the program she was paired with Education Support Worker Mel, who quickly became a pivotal figure in her high school journey. Through consistent tutoring sessions at the CASPA Education Centre, Sarah received support to complete her assignments, learn new strategies to self-regulate, and dream about what her future could hold.

When it came time to prepare for her HSC, Mel recognised that a tailored solution was needed. She advocated for Sarah, requesting special provisions through the Department of Education, so that Sarah could be accompanied by her care team during her exams and thus had the opportunity to show her true capabilities.



CASPA Education's commitment to holistic development extended beyond the classroom too, with Sarah being provided work experience opportunities allowing her to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. It was incredible to see the boost in her confidence, especially in unfamiliar settings with unfamiliar people!

The outcomes were tangible as Sarah went from struggling to complete her school assignments to confidently grasping new concepts and applying them in her work.

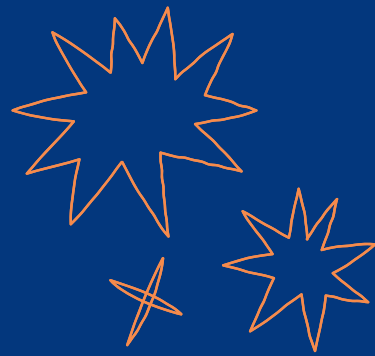
To mark Sarah's accomplishments, the CASPA Education Team continued their support beyond the usual academic to another important milestone – Sarah's high school formal. Recognising how important it is to celebrate all young people's milestones, Mel accompanied Sarah to her day of pampering and readying for the event and in true proud carer-form followed her around with a camera, capturing the special night that she'd worked so hard to get to.

Sarah's success is not an isolated case – it is just one example of the outcomes that young people living in out of home care achieve through our Education Program. Personalised support, innovative strategies and a collaborative care approach are what underpins the success of the program's participants.

As we reflect on Sarah's last year of high school and share in the excitement of what life holds for her next, we are reminded that **every young person can overcome challenges, live their dreams and thrive when they are given the support they deserve.**







Belonging is not only about being embraced by a place or a group; it's about feeling that you have a meaningful role to play, a voice that matters, and a space where your unique self is not just accepted but **celebrated** 🙌



## PROVIDING

### Employment & Education Pathways

#### *Mechanics program gets young people ready for work*

With funding via Aurizon's "Good to Give" grant, CASPA Services' Education team launched a pilot program in the Northern Territory that will work-ready young people who are preparing to leave care.

The program came to life with the support of auto mechanic, Tonic Jeche. During this financial year, two young people who are preparing to leave care joined the program.

Through the program the young people participating learn workplace and tool safety in the environment of a working mechanic's shop. They also learn vehicle maintenance and are supported to obtain their Learner's permits and driver's licences.

Our grateful thanks to Aurizon and Tonic for their support for this program and young people living in out of home care. With the success of this pilot program, we are looking forward to more young people being prepared for apprenticeships and trade training.



# Young Achievers

*At this year's Glencore McArthur Mining Regional and Rural Initiative Awards, CASPA young person, Indy,\* was recognised with a nomination for the 2023 Young Achievers Award.*

It was Indy's work on developing an app that helps other young people learn Aboriginal languages that was acknowledged with the nomination at the Awards evening, but the event was much more than the nomination for Indy and her CASPA team.

With her House Leader, Goodness, finding and receiving approval to allocate some funds from the house budget, Indy got to go shopping and find a dress for the evening. Managing to stretch the \$160 she had, Indy found a dress for the event as well as a new pair of shoes, a bag and necklace...and had some change left!

Her team were proud to see Indy actioning the life skills that they have talked about and worked on. Attending the event with Goodness as her guest, Indy proudly went on stage to receive her award.

The entire CASPA team is incredibly proud of Indy for her hard work and achievement.



“Watching Indy plan out the evening for herself and her boldness going onstage was amazing to me. She did justice to it all and she is super proud of herself and the achievement. She is kicking goals and living true to it and we want to see more of these things happen for her!”

House Leader, Goodness



## Milo's story continues

In our last annual report, we shared Milo's\* journey as he was preparing to leave out-of-home care, and, with the support of CASPA's Education team, enter a Try a Trade program to feel out where his employment interests might lie.

The Try a Trade program ticked a couple of important boxes for Milo – it met his continuing education requirement and provided him the flexibility to join CASPA's Hammers 4 Hope team, who would continue to support Milo becoming job-ready.

Under the supervision of Scott, our Hammers 4 Hope Lead, Milo gathered new skills and experience and undertook his Certificate 1 in Construction.

After hard work and dedication to his goals, we are happy to report that Milo applied for an apprenticeship with a local builder. Recruitment for the apprenticeship was competitive and Milo beat out the other candidates for the opportunity.

Without support for life after care, care leavers like Milo are at high-risk for homelessness and interaction with the justice system. With planning and continued support to achieve their education and employment goals, care leavers can be set up to thrive.

We look forward to sharing more updates on Milo's journey.

\*names changed for privacy



# Celebrating our diverse community

## Unique Experience At Laura Quinkan Dance Festival

CASPA's Aboriginal Services and Support team took seven young people on the trip of a lifetime to the Laura Quinkan Dance Festival.

Held every two years, the festival is a unique gathering of dance troupes from across Cape York and the Torres Strait, coming together and sharing history and stories through dance and cultural performances – passing on knowledge and history.

Flying into Cairns, the group took the three and a half hour drive out to Laura, which turned into five hours. Despite the extension to the journey the positives of the trip far outweighed the negatives along the way.

Aboriginal Services Manager Terri Bird said it was amazing to spend that amount of time with the kids and learn so much about them. "It was an absolute pleasure to get to know the kids and young people more closely," Terri said.

Watching the kids embrace the experience and learn from the journey was incredibly rewarding. "The teenagers, who went from being typical teens and not wanting to be seen with the rest of the group were suddenly opening up and seeking us out to sit with us and share their experiences throughout the trip," Terri recalls.

Across the three-day dance competition, dance troupes were narrating their stories as they performed, explaining what these song lines and dances mean to them. The older kids in our group were enthralled by the performances and even got up and joined in when there was a call for audience participation.

"It was great to see some of our young people dancing and doing corroboree lingo and song – you couldn't miss anything that was going on there and it was great to see the kids take it all in," said Terri.

One of CASPA's objectives as an organisation is to provide opportunities for children and young people to connect with their community. The dance festival delivered on this and more.

Throughout the five day journey the children and young people in the group were so respectful to our team and everybody else they met along the way; it was an incredible experience for them, providing valuable opportunities for personal growth, cultural immersion and unforgettable memories.

For Terri and her team it was also a very significant experience. The impact of so many cultural nations from right across Queensland coming together at this sacred place was something particularly special.

**"You could feel the strong spirituality everywhere you went. It was fantastic – what all of us learnt, saw and shared there can't be taken away."**

This trip could not have been realised without the generosity of our donors, and we offer them our heartfelt thanks.





# Advocating for change



## Raise the age

CASPA CEO Naarah Rodwell was invited to participate in a media conference by local members and candidates from the NSW Greens party advocating to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New South Wales.

Prior to the media conference, Naarah was interviewed on ABC radio on the issue and the impact it has on children as young as 10 and our wider community. During the interview Naarah shared the positive outcomes of early therapeutic interventions for at-risk children and the resulting reduction in recidivism rates of young people in other communities.



## CASPA Foundation Launch

In March we officially launched the CASPA Foundation with a cocktail event at the Crystalbrook Resort in Byron Bay.

We were joined by over 60 special guests and supporters who took in a presentation by CASPA CEO and CASPA Foundation Chair, Naarah Rodwell, and care leaver, Adam Davis. Our MC for the evening was local Byron Bay personality and Foster Carer, Lissie Turner.

CASPA Foundation is grateful to our sponsors and generous donors who helped make the event memorable.

The evening successfully positioned the CASPA Foundation and its cause to support care leavers on their journey to independence, reducing their susceptibility to poverty, homelessness and interaction with the justice system.

## Debate for your state

In the lead up to the New South Wales state election, CASPA Foundation hosted a “politics in the pub” event in Lismore, bringing together local candidates and the community to create awareness around the issue of raising the age of criminal responsibility.

The criminal age of responsibility in NSW is 10 years of age.

Supporting our event and debating the issue were candidates from The Greens, Labor, The Nationals and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers parties, and acting as moderator, CASPA Foundation Director David Heilpern, Dean of Law at Southern Cross University.

Also speaking at the event were CASPA CEO and CASPA Foundation Chair Naarah Rodwell, and CASPA Foundation Director Nicolas Harrison.

The event was well supported by our Lismore community, with standing room only in the audience as the evening’s proceedings began.



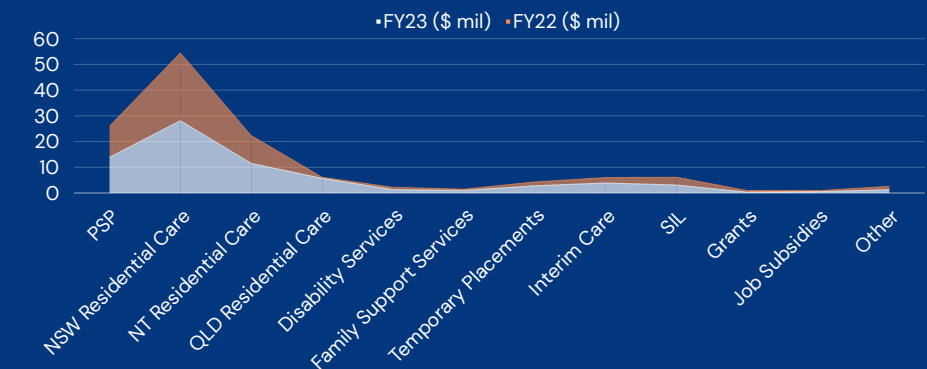
# Financial Impact

In 2023, CASPA's turnover has exceeded 73 million. Over the last 11 years, CASPA grew revenue 19 times, maintaining consistent growth of 30-40% each year. This growth is driven by CASPA's vision to scale up positive change in children's lives and strengthen their resiliencies to societal challenges.

## REVENUE GROWTH



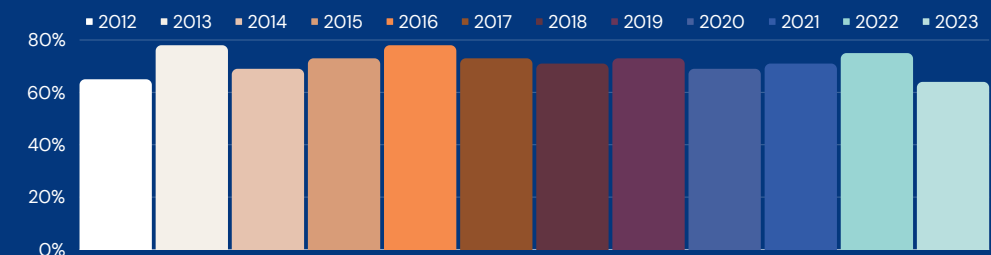
## REVENUE SHARE



## WAGES BY CATEGORY



## EMPLOYMENT COST TO REVENUE RATIO



CASPA employs significant front-line workforce, indicative of its aspiration for quality services.

CASPA's most significant expense is attributable to wages. The employment-cost-to-revenue ratio in 2023 is the lowest over the past 11 years, signifying the most efficient workforce operation ever achieved by CASPA. Efficiencies have come from streamlining job roles and responsibilities, optimising rostering and staffing, and transitioning high performing staff from casual to permanent arrangements.

## EQUITY

Our equity has **improved** from \$2.8 million (2022) to \$3 million (2023), by **9%**

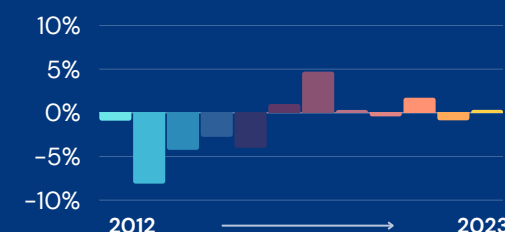
## PROFIT MARGINS

Net profit margin

Gross profit margin

Since 2012, CASPA has been working hard to grow the business and expand to new states. Any growth requires significant investments, which explains the modest net profit margin trend, varying from minus 8% to plus 5%.

In 2023, an improvement in gross profit margin was achieved, increasing value for money for our clients, from enhanced efficiencies and economies of scale. A **5.34% improvement from previous year.**



## Cash flow

CASPA's cash position at the end of June 2023 was the largest cash balance in four years.





# We'd like to thank all our supporters for their generosity



## Emergency Suitcases

The members of Rotary Club of Lismore Networking have been supporting CASPA Services throughout the year, with a steady supply of Suitcases of Hope – ready-packed suitcases and backpacks filled with essential items for children and young people entering emergency care.

The suitcases are stocked with clothing, pajamas, underwear, toiletries, and an age-appropriate item such as a soft toy or book.

Often children and young people entering care in emergency situations have very little with them. It can mean a lot to have a bag packed with items they need to make their first few nights in a new environment feel a little less daunting.

When a permanent placement is found, the child takes the suitcase and their belongings with them – a little consistency and surety as they move to their new home.

The wonderful Rotary members have also answered our calls throughout the year for urgent needs and items for newborns, from baths to car seats.

## Making Christmas BRIGHT

Last Christmas we had new donor partners join our existing supporters to make Christmas that little bit special for CASPA's kids in care.

With the generous support of all our donors, we raised \$14,000 in cash and gifts, supporting 129 children and young people and 25 families to have a brighter Christmas.

The support for our Christmas Appeal this year was significant, matching the increased need – we had double the number of children and young people, and the number of families in need quadrupled from the previous year.

We would not have been able to make this happen without the generosity of individual donors and businesses.

Our sincere gratitude and thanks to the generosity of our community supporters:

**Arise Church**

**Bebe Batch**

**Big W Lismore**

**Casino VIEW Club**

**Elevation Church**

**Good360**

**Heartland Media Group**

**Little Legends**

**One Mob Radio**

**Quilts 4 Kids**

**Rotary Club of Lismore Networking**

**Summerland Bank**

**Toy World Lismore**

**Variety**





# and so our work continues

CASPA is on a mission to provide a **better future** for the children, young people, families and people living with disabilities in our care.

As we move forward, we aim to expand our reach, innovate our services, and collaborate with communities to ensure **greater inclusivity** and **support** for those who need it most.

Our commitment remains unwavering as we strive to create lasting, positive impacts and pave the way for a more equitable and empowering **future for all**.

