



Centre for Excellence  
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.

# Strategic Plan 2015 - 2018



## Our Environment and Opportunities

It can be a fine line between keeping your head above water and suddenly finding yourself in financial stress, an unsafe relationship or unable to care for your children because of physical or mental illness.

As a community, we need to understand these pressures and prioritise supporting families under stress and facing hardship.

Too often it is seen as purely an individual responsibility, but healthy communities support each other in hard times and strive to change structural inequalities that persist.

Children and young people are exposed to more stresses than ever before, from increasing use of social and digital media and the rapid pace of change in our modern society.

Family violence and abuse remain prevalent and we must simultaneously address women's systemic inequality and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and families at risk.

Sadly, there are children experiencing serious harm and abuse at home.

These are children that need to be protected and made safe. They will need somewhere else to call home, for either a short period of time or for a longer period.

This new home must be stable, safe and connected to the important things in their lives, such as school, family and community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children must have connection to family, culture, country and community. These ties are vital and must never be jeopardised.

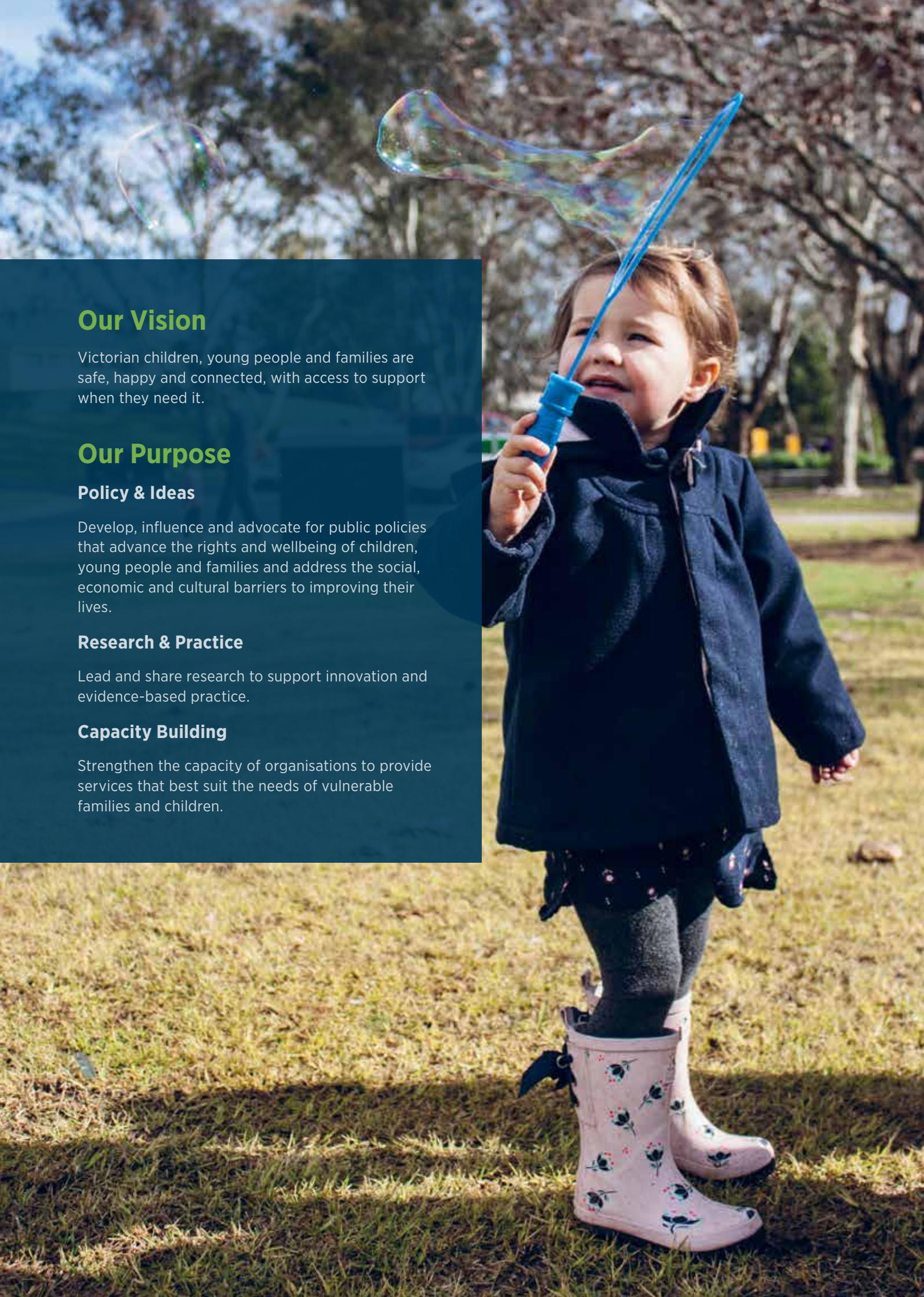
We must recognise the rights of children and young people to have a say about their own lives and what happens when their family life is disrupted.

We must also recognise every child is unique and we can't have a one size fits all approach. We must care about every individual child and have the flexibility to give them what they need, when they need it. This means a suite of well resourced, diverse and flexible care and support options, both at critical times and well before then.

Families do not exist in a vacuum. Government, community service organisations and the wider community together must commit to not only keeping children safe, but making sure they have a wonderful childhood, full access to education and can pursue their dreams.

There is a wealth of evidence-based research to guide us. We have more information than ever before about what works and how we can support families, protect and empower children and breakdown economic, social and cultural barriers to end disadvantage and inequality in our communities.

Working together, we have a great opportunity to create a community where Victorian children, young people and families are safe, happy and connected, with access to support when they need it.



## Our Vision

Victorian children, young people and families are safe, happy and connected, with access to support when they need it.

## Our Purpose

### Policy & Ideas

Develop, influence and advocate for public policies that advance the rights and wellbeing of children, young people and families and address the social, economic and cultural barriers to improving their lives.

### Research & Practice

Lead and share research to support innovation and evidence-based practice.

### Capacity Building

Strengthen the capacity of organisations to provide services that best suit the needs of vulnerable families and children.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## PRIORITY 1:

**Advocate for change that improves the lives of children, young people and families.**

### Objectives

- 1.1. Develop a policy platform that is centered on the Rights of the Child and articulates clear, evidence-based policy solutions for advancing the rights and wellbeing of all children, young people and families.
- 1.2. Influence government to undertake major change and develop effective policy solutions that address multiple complex needs in an integrated and sustained way.
- 1.3. Advocate for secure and sustainable funding to ensure the sector can effectively support children, young people and families when they need it and at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.4. Actively promote and support the inclusion of young people, parents and carers in public policy debates.
- 1.5. Increase public awareness and understanding of the causal factors of disadvantage and the social action needed to promote the safety, wellbeing and life opportunities of children, young people and their families.
- 1.6. Build a strong public and media profile as a leading advocate and expert.

### We will achieve this by:

- » Developing evidence-based policy solutions;
- » Maintaining strong relationships with government and key decision-makers;
- » Collaborating with our member agencies at the forefront of supporting vulnerable children and families;
- » Maintaining consistent and effective communications to inform and engage the public and the media.

## PRIORITY 2:

**Lead and support the development of innovative, evidence-based policies, programs and practice.**

### Objectives

- 2.1. Lead sector-wide responses to external inquiries, reviews and investigations in child and family services.
- 2.2. Build a nationally recognised and authoritative knowledge hub to inform best practice in child and family services.
- 2.3. Lead collaboration with service agencies, tertiary institutions, practitioners and researchers to develop a strong evidence-base for change.
- 2.4. Strengthen the integration of our research and policy agenda with our learning and development services and communication activities.

### We will achieve this by:

- » Analysing and disseminating research across the sector and producing high quality research publications;
- » Providing a varied program of research activities, including an annual research symposium;
- » Collaborating with our member agencies in research activities aimed at improving outcomes for vulnerable children and families;
- » Working closely with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to identify better practice to support Aboriginal families;
- » Maintaining and growing strong partnerships with tertiary institutions and our member service agencies through a robust and innovative Sector Research Partnership.

## **PRIORITY 3:**

**Strengthen and build the capacity of member and sector agencies delivering services to children, young people and families.**

### **Objectives**

- 3.1. Develop and deliver learning and development resources, training and customised support to member agencies and the broader sector.
- 3.2. Strengthen support for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to assume a leading role in service provision for Aboriginal children and families.
- 3.3. Facilitate forums and networks to provide members with opportunities to share knowledge and information.
- 3.4. Understand the challenges impacting our members' capacity to meet their goals and tailor responses and support to address these challenges.
- 3.5. Build effective mechanisms for inclusive and regular engagement and consultation with our members.

### **We will achieve this by:**

- » An annual learning and development program that meets the needs of the sector;
- » Implementing the Beyond Good Intentions Statement and developing our Reconciliation Action Plan;
- » Facilitating sector network forums across key practice areas;
- » Pro-actively engaging with members to understand their needs and challenges.

## **PRIORITY 4:**

**Continue to build a proactive, responsive and sustainable Centre.**

### **Objectives**

- 4.1. Engaged, informed and supported members.
- 4.2. Increased diversity and expansion of our membership.
- 4.3. Strong board, governance and organisational infrastructure.
- 4.4. Skilled, committed and supported staff team.
- 4.5. Diverse and sustainable revenue sources and partnerships.

### **We will achieve this by:**

- » Pro-actively engaging, supporting and collaborating with our members;
- » Developing effective processes in relation to board succession, performance and accountability;
- » Providing Centre staff with the appropriate knowledge, experience and skills to enable them to meet strategic and operational objectives;
- » Ensuring robust financial management and stewardship of resources;
- » Implementing technological solutions that support cost reductions and efficiency gains;
- » Developing a long term financial strategy for organisational sustainability.

## Our Leadership

For over 100 years we have advocated to advance the rights and wellbeing of children, young people and families experiencing economic, social and cultural disadvantage.

We strive to raise public awareness and understanding of the causal factors of disadvantage and the social action needed to support life opportunities for children, young people and their families.

We advocate for the rights of children and young people to be heard, to be safe, to access education and to remain connected to family, community and culture.

We represent over 100 community service organisations throughout Victoria working across the continuum of child and family services, from prevention and early intervention to the provision of out of home care.

Our member agencies are at the forefront of supporting vulnerable children, young people and families and we support their capacity to meet their goals.

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