



Annual Report 2020-2021

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STATEMENTS

CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

Cafs remains a dedicated and committed child safe, child friendly and child empowering organisation. We recognise, respect and promote children's rights within Cafs and the broader community. Every person in our organisation, including board members, carers, and volunteers, is required to hold children's rights, interests, and safety as paramount in their lives and work.

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

Cafs acknowledges our past. In the spirit of reconciliation, we extend our deepest respect to Australia's First Nations Peoples. Their histories, their stories, their resilience. Their connection to culture and land. The wisdom of their Elders past, present and emerging. Always was, always will be.

CARE RELATIONSHIP PRINCIPLES

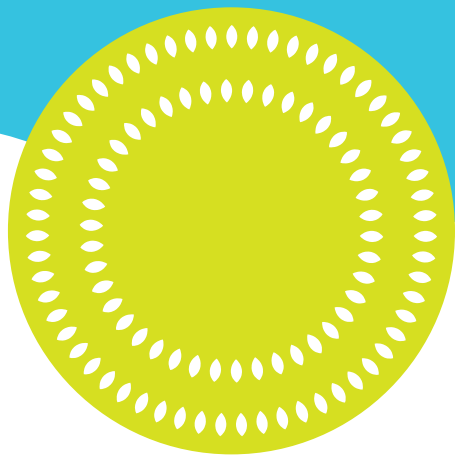
Cafs implements the guiding principles of The Carer Recognition Act 2012 to ensure that we provide the highest levels of support to our carers in Foster Care, Kinship Care and Permanent Care arrangements.

Our processes ensure Cafs people and carers understand the Care Relationship Principles, which include:

- All carers receive a copy of the Department of Health and Human Services Carer Recognition Act 2012 Fact Sheet.
- Awareness sessions are conducted for Cafs people during team meetings.
- The Home Based Care team continues to develop support principles in alignment with the Care Relationships Principles.
- Cafs regularly evaluates the support and assistance provided to people in care relationships.

COVER ART

The artwork on the front page of the Annual Report 2020-2021 is by Ballarat artist Travis Price. Travis uses bright colours to symbolise the Cafs offices across the region and our organisation's relationships with local families, people, and our community. Explore a little deeper, and within the artwork, you will discover Cafs' diversity and inclusion values - people of all abilities, religious preference and ethnicity.



ABOUT CAFS

Cafs (Child and Family Services Ballarat) is an independent community service organisation. Our head office is located in Ballarat, and we are proudly governed by the community we support. For over 156 years, the heart of our service has been the wellbeing of children, young people and their families. Our commitment to the local community stands strong, and we extend our programs to include everyone that needs assistance across the Grampians and Central Highlands region.

Cafs is committed to making a difference in our community by creating lasting change in the lives of children, young people and families, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTQIA+, people of all abilities, people of a different race, ethnicity or cultural background and people of all religions.



156 years, the heart of our service has been the wellbeing of children, young people and their families.

OUR VISION

Wellbeing, respect and safety for all children and families.

OUR MISSION

To deliver quality services with positive outcomes for the communities we serve.

OUR VALUES

RESPECT

We treat all people, including ourselves, with dignity. We have genuine compassion for our colleagues and the individuals, families and communities we serve.

INTEGRITY

We act ethically and do what is right – even if it's uncomfortable.

COLLABORATION

We embrace collaboration. We celebrate inclusiveness and work together with the individuals and families we serve to make a difference in their lives.

KINDNESS

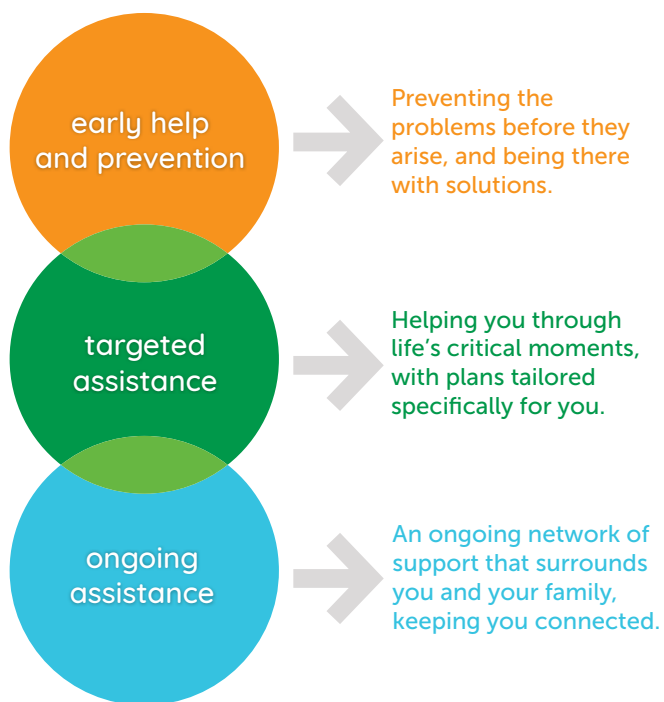
We genuinely care about people and actively look for ways to offer a helping hand to those in need.

INNOVATION

We encourage and explore different ways of working and fresh ideas to improve our practice and outcomes for those we serve.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN 2019-2022

KEY SERVICE AREAS



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We value and support our people, empowering them to make decisions, be creative, innovative and take initiative.

~

We are culturally inclusive, celebrating and welcoming diversity.

~

We include the voice of the client in all that we do.

~

We are committed to reducing vulnerability and supporting people who are at risk.

~

We are committed to reconciliation and seeking redress.

~

We work together to deliver connected, coordinated and holistic services for clients.

~

We are responsive, flexible and adapt to changing community needs.

~

We seek opportunities to work in partnership with our community and the sector.

CAFS GOALS



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS UPDATE 2020-2021

FAMILY PRESERVATION

In partnership with Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC), Cafs successfully tendered the Victorian and Aboriginal Family Preservation & Reunification Response to deliver the Keeping Families Together program to the Central Highlands region. This client-driven program delivers intensive support aimed at reunifying families in our community and preventing infants, children and young people from being placed in out of home care.

FAMILY JOURNEY

Cafs has begun implementing Family Journey, a new client management system developed specifically for Australia's child and family welfare sector. Family Journey meets the complex needs of data capture, reporting, and operations management and will enhance Cafs client service delivery by centralising client information into an easily accessible system. A true game-changer for Cafs, this innovative system will manage intake, referrals, case management, track client outcomes, and report on real-time analytics whilst integrating with existing systems required by Cafs funders. Full implementation is expected to be complete by the end of 2021-2022 financial year.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Cafs have engaged Social Ventures Australia (SVA) to assist in developing an outcome measurement framework. Demonstrating the impact of our programs is essential to the service we provide to the community. As an organisation, it is imperative that we incorporate outcome measurements metrics along with helpful output focused measurements.

With the assistance of SVA, Cafs has established a logic model and an outcomes framework. The next phase will continue into the 2021-2022 financial year. It will focus on collecting and analysing client data and refining our processes to ensure we effectively measure these outcomes.

THREAD TOGETHER

Thread Together is a not for profit organisation established in 2012 with the mission to drive social and environmental change by providing people in need with new clothing. Cafs has partnered with Thread Together this year to open the organisation's first Victorian hub in Ballarat. With over 600 fashion partners, the organisation reduces landfill by redistributing excess clothing stock to those in need through purpose-designed clothing hubs.

Cafs believes in the value of investing in organisations that are supporting vulnerable communities through sustainable actions. Thread Together is a natural extension of the community services Cafs delivers and immensely benefits our clients. We believe this service can restore dignity and hope for men, women and children who are experiencing a difficult time by providing them with a wardrobe of new clothes at no cost.

Cafs employs one full-time and one part-time staff member and relies on dedicated volunteers to deliver this much needed service. Cafs seeks community sponsorship and donations to continue this service into the future.

LUDBROOK HOUSE GROUND FLOOR DEVELOPMENT

The ground floor redevelopment of Ludbrook House commenced in late 2020 and opened in February 2021. The ground floor now includes a new reception area, inclusive waiting area, additional meeting and counselling rooms and a dedicated workspace for Cafs' employees. Intentionally designed as two inspiring spaces, the first provides Cafs employees with a safer, more contemporary and inclusive work environment. The second creates a welcoming space to ensure Cafs visitors feel safe and protected.



INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Cafs celebrates diversity. As a recognised and impactful leader of inclusion and diversity, Cafs is committed to providing a culturally safe and mentally healthy workplace and service provision inclusive of everyone.

Cafs recognises our responsibility to ensure that people and families from diverse backgrounds feel culturally safe and supported when they engage with our organisation. We have invested time and resources to build the capacity of our people to ensure Cafs is a provider of choice for all families across the Central Highlands.

ACCREDITATIONS ACHIEVED IN 2020-2021

- Rainbow Tick, mid-cycle review completed.
- Communities of Respect and Equality.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency, received Employer of Choice for Gender Equality.

RE-ACCREDITATIONS IN PROCESS

- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, Cafs second RAP.
- White Ribbon.
- Diversity Council of Australia, Inclusive Employer Status.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Hidden disability sunflower initiative
- Switchboard - peer-driven support services for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQ+) people, their families, allies and communities.
- LGBTIQ+ Health
- Australian Human Resource Institute.
- Diversity Council of Australia.

CULTURAL EVENTS CELEBRATED IN 2020-2021

- Captain Moonlite Rides Again, visual stories of celebrating Ballarat Pride.
- International Women's Day, celebrating at BADAC with local Aboriginal women.
- Chill-Out Festival, Captain Moonlite Rides Again.
- Cultural Diversity Week, celebrating Colombian culture through sharing empanadas.
- Harmony Festival.
- National Transgender Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Remembrance.
- Keynote address and sponsor at A Place at the Table, a long lunch for Ballarat LGBTIQ+ queer community to connect with leaders and service organisations to mark IDAHOBIT 2021.
- International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), keynote speaker at flag raising with the City of Ballarat.
- Reconciliation Week, artworks commissioned for Parents Place, and the new innovate RAP.
- Refugee Week was celebrated remotely with talks, resources and online events.
- Non-Binary People's Week.
- NAIDOC Week, flag raising at Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative and Nova Peris OAM OLY NAIDOC leadership address, fundraising for the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation.
- Wear it Purple Day, an annual LGBTIQ+ awareness day especially for young people based in Australia



INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ACTION GROUPS

This year, Cafs continued to implement a flexible approach to our Inclusion and Diversity Action Groups. The groups are responsible for providing subject-matter expertise on assigned actions, setting key performance indicators (KPIs), understanding issues, risk and opportunities while working within their action plans set. These Action Groups also engage and communicate with their colleagues on shared areas of responsibility, issues and risk.

The Action Groups have engaged extensively with diverse community members to implement meaningful changes in the organisation, including:

- Developing an Inclusive Services Directory.
- Updating procedures for Language Loop translation services, reflecting the need to engage clients in their first language.
- Establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local vendor list to make our investment count with the local community.
- Creating deeper relationships with Ballarat Multicultural Regional Council.
- Demonstrating leadership by supporting other organisations engaging with the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Services Innovation Communities of Practice – NDIS service users.
- Became member of The Ballarat Mental Health Network.

Action groups 2020-2021

- Reconciliation Action Group
- Rainbow Action Group
- Gender Equity Action Group
- Access-Ability Action Group
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Action Group

CHILD SAFEGUARDING

As a child safe organisation, Cafs is committed to providing an environment where children and young people feel safe, and their voices are heard when decisions are being made about their lives. Particular attention is given to the safety of children with a disability and the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Over the last year, Cafs has implemented significant enhancements in the child safeguarding space, including:

- Updating the Child Safety Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Developing a Child Safety Framework.
- Streamlining the child safety investigation process, including the development of a Child Safety Investigation Practice Guide.
- Strengthening the Child Safety governance committees and reporting procedures.
- Restructuring and expanding the Child Safeguarding Team by incorporating into the Quality and Compliance Team and adding new key roles and skilled team members.
- Reviewing the Child Safeguarding Learning Pathway
- Re-implementing Cafs Child Safety Officers, who:
 - o Champion safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
 - o Role model child safety practices.
 - o Encourage reporting of abuse, harm, maltreatment and neglect.
 - o Provide support, advice and guidance.
 - o Implement child safety initiatives.
 - o Stay abreast of child safety legislation and policy.



ENDING FAMILY VIOLENCE

Cafs remains committed to eliminating family violence and promoting and supporting the safety of families experiencing family violence.

We acknowledge that people who experience higher rates of family violence include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, women and children from both culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for children with a disability, LGBTQIA+ children and children from LGBTQIA+ families and promoting gender equality as a critical part of family violence prevention.

We believe that all people experiencing family violence should be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. Everyone has the right to live free from family violence and share an understanding that a whole community response is required for individuals and families to live safely.

Cafs believes that the responsibility for family violence always rests with the person using violence and has an unwavering commitment to building inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable programs.

FROM STRUGGLE TO SUCCESS

This is a de-identified family violence testimonial.

"Five years ago I was at a low point in my life. I was addicted to ice and I had been issued with an Intervention Violence Order by the Court.

My partner had sought support from Family Services Counselling and I was ordered to undertake the Men's Behaviour Counselling program through Cafs.

My addiction meant that I failed to attend several appointments and, as a result, the case was sent back to court for review.

In total my case was returned to court three times before I was drug-free and able to commit fully to the program.

I finally started with the group in 2019 and was able to persevere through the lockdowns and complete the entire program earlier this year.

I can now say that I have learned the skills I need to be a better partner and a better father to my children.

I would like to thank the police, the court and the Men's Behaviour Counselling Program for not giving up on me and providing me with the opportunity to make a positive life change – not just for me, but my whole family."



CAFS' PEOPLE

People are the essence of Cafs – our organisation wouldn't be what it is without our staff members' unique abilities, experience, commitment, and collaboration.

At Cafs, we actively celebrate inclusion and diversity. We believe the differences our people and clients bring to our organisation add to our strength. We strive to create workplaces that reflect the communities we serve and where people feel empowered to bring their full, authentic selves to work. We nurture a culture of equality for all and ensure we are a powerful platform and community leader for social change.

We embrace a values-based culture underpinned by statements that support and nurture our employees, such as:

- Our people are meaningfully engaged in our future, the changing service and business needs, and in their work.
- Our people are supported to do their best work and are recognised for their achievements.
- People's unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives are respected, valued and celebrated.
- Opportunity exists for all people to develop, grow and positively contribute to Cafs' work.

CAFS WORKER SAFETY AND WELLBEING

We are proud of our team's adaptability in the face of constantly changing COVID-19 restrictions. During the last twelve months, Cafs have implemented improvements to Occupational Health and Safety, including:

- Pulse Surveys focused on the wellbeing and connectedness of our people
- Appointing a dedicated Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Lead.
- Engaging Converge International, a new employee assistance program provider.
- Participating in several targeted projects run by Worksafe Victoria and the Centre of Excellence Child and Family Welfare.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We empower our people to embrace knowledge and new skills, enabling them to have a positive, life-changing impact on the people they serve.

Cafs Learning and Development (L&D) Strategic Plan 2020-2022 was endorsed by management in August 2020. Aligned with key Cafs Strategic Business goals, the plan identifies five key L&D initiatives, including:

- Establishing a Cafs Learning Hub for access to quality professional development. The online library now includes over 78,000 self-paced learning resources.
- Customised learning pathways for specific workforce groups. The framework includes four stages and is co-designed with our people to enhance engagement.
- Implement a Best Practice 70:20:10 L&D model approach.
- Empower our Cafs leaders through development opportunities, including the Managers Development Program, the Team Leaders Development Program and Emerging Leaders Program which will commence late in 2021 and 2022.
- Evaluate and review professional learning opportunities to ensure strong governance.

KEY ELEMENTS OF CAFS EMPLOYEE COMPLIANCE, THE EMERGING LEADER PROGRAM

- Mandatory police, WWCC, right to work in Australia, and driver licence checks for all Cafs people.
- Completion of Cafs Code of Conduct and Cafs Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Victorian disqualified carer check and register for out of home care employees, contractors and carers.
- Validation of qualifications and CPD for legislatively mandated role requirements.



Headline results from the inaugural Culture and Engagement survey:



70% response rate with a high engagement index score of 73.9%.



72% of Cafs people are happy at work 80% or more of the time.



65% indicated that Cafs was a truly great place to work.



76% of Cafs people report a positive relationship with their manager.



91% of Cafs people agree that their manager treats people with dignity and respect.



88% of Cafs people stated that Cafs is a values-based organisation.

The four most common words used to describe Cafs culture were

inclusive,
supportive,
welcoming
and friendly.

Our People Fast Facts

Years of service:

Full-time - 3.7 years

Part-time - 4.6 years

Casual - 1.7 years

Staff who identify as



Aboriginal or
Torres Strait
Islander

1.2%

living with a
disability including
mental illness

6%

culturally and
linguistically
diverse

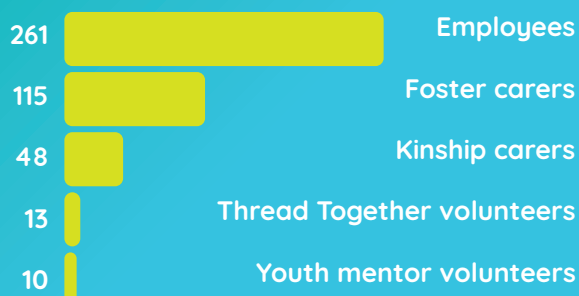
6.5%



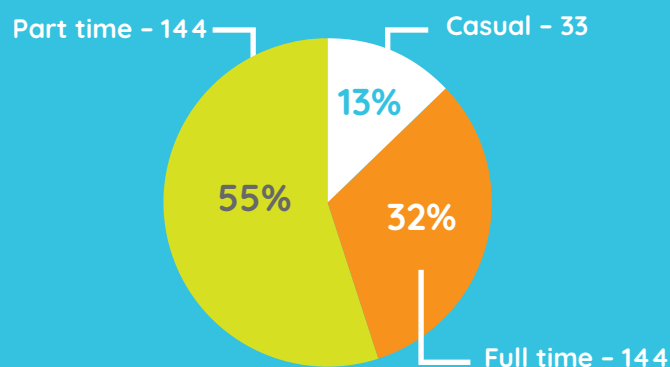
LGBTQIA+
10%

Total number of Cafs people: 447

Break-down:



Our people by employment status:



CORPORATE SUPPORT

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The recent capacity and capability review of the Marketing and Communications Team created an opportunity to review structure and reposition the team for success and future growth. In April 2021, we successfully launched a new website. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Cafs brand over the last financial year. Now more than ever, Cafs is committed to ensuring Cafs people and the community understand the brand, and thus Cafs values.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICT Team worked quickly and collaboratively to ensure that, where possible, staff could work remotely. This included the large-scale procurement, implementation and coordination of ICT equipment. During 2019-2020, significant work was completed on the ICT Strategy Plan 2020-2023, with the Board signing off on the document in June 2020.

FINANCE

The Finance Team continued to provide timely and accurate information to ensure informed decisions about the effective use of resources. A review of reporting to the Board improved the scope and quality of information supplied.

FACILITIES

During the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, the Facilities Team ensured safe facilities were provided for all Cafs team members and clients, including the provision of adequate personal protective equipment. The successful implementation of the Cafs Motor Vehicle Renewal strategy has been a key achievement.



CEO AND PRESIDENT REPORTS



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

What an exciting and innovative year it has been for Cafs. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, much has been achieved.

We opened the door to Cafs Thread Together hub in April 2021, the first one in Victoria providing vulnerable people with new clothes that previously went to landfill.

We were successful in a highly competitive tender bid to deliver the Family Preservation Program and are now pioneering the Keeping Families Together program.

As a proud LGBTIQ+ ally, celebrating diversity continues to be of the utmost importance to Cafs. Captain Moonlite Rides Again, a projection art project celebrated Ballarat pride and the LGBTIQ+ community and aimed to facilitate inclusive conversations and positive behaviour change across the wider community.

We upheld our commitment to shining a light on our past by appointing a qualified archivist, Heritage and History Records Lead, to help former residents and their families access their records - this can provide healing and comfort.

Proudly we have been able to remain open to our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The last twelve months have meant that our values have driven our decision-making now more than ever. The addition of kindness to our existing values has given us greater purpose.

Investment in improving our ICT systems has enhanced how we engage with our clients and continues to lift the quality of our services.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated Board, skilled Executive Leadership team and our Cafs team members who work tirelessly to support our clients.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Sturgess'.

Wendy Sturgess **Chief Executive Officer**



PRESIDENT REPORT

Cafs Annual Report 2020-2021. I present this report to the communities we serve, our stakeholders – including fundraisers & donors and Cafs team members as we continue this important work on their behalf.

This last financial year has again been one of continuing uncertainty with the COVID-19 pandemic increasingly putting pressure on our community and Cafs people. Proudly, our teams have continued to adapt and flourish to ensure people are well supported.

The Board is pleased to report the establishment of the Consumer Advisory Board Sub-Committee. We thank the community members who are providing feedback on a range of areas – Cafs acknowledges your efforts.

I take this opportunity to thank Joanne Gell and Richard Oakley for their time served as part of the Cafs Board. Appointed this financial year, I'd like to welcome Roslyn Fahey, Karen Heap and Michael Tilbury. To all Cafs Board members, I'd like to acknowledge and thank you for your dedicated service, particularly the Chairs of the Board Sub-Committees who gave so freely of their time, commitment and experience.

I wish to extend the thanks of the Board to Wendy Sturgess and her Executive Team for their agility and adaptability in providing support to the extended Cafs team and our communities. We have continued to invest in the resource of Cafs to continuously improve the services the organisation is able to provide.

For what has been another challenging year, I am delighted by the achievements and major developments Cafs has been able to implement. Good governance remains a key priority and focus for the Cafs Board, and we look forward to the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gayle Boschert'.

Gayle Boschert **President**
Cafs Board of Governance

CAFS BOARD OF GOVERNANCE

**Gayle Boschert – President**

Chair Remuneration Board
Sub-Committee
BSc, Grad Diploma of Nutrition and Diet, MBA
Re-appointed – 2020
Profession – Project Manager

**Charles Kemp – Vice President**

Chair Consumer Advisory Board
Sub-Committee
BCom, Med, GAICD, M.A.C.E
Year appointed – 2016
Profession – Educator / Director

**Craig Roberts – Treasurer**

Chair Finance and Resource Board
Sub-Committee
BCom, CPA
Year appointed – 2014
Profession – Finance Manager

**John White**

Chair Audit and Risk Board
Sub-Committee
BBus (Land Economy), Grad Dip.
(APP. FIN INV.)
Year appointed – 2016
Profession – Real Estate Investment

**Jen Pollard**

Chair Quality, Safety, People and Culture Board Sub-Committee
BEd
Year appointed – 2013
Profession – Community Development and Services Sector

**Peter Ludbrook**

Licensed Estate Agent
Re-appointed – 2020
Profession – Real Estate Agent

**David Matthey**

BBus, FCPA, AGIA
Re-appointed – 2020
Profession – Financial Controller

**Jayne Ferguson**

BA Psychology and Sociology,
Grad Dip (Counselling and Human Services), Certificate in Business Excellence
Year appointed – 2020
Profession – Manager and Clinician

**Michael Tilbury**

L.L.B (University of London)
B.C.L (Oxford University)
Barrister of the Supreme Court of NSW
Year Appointed – 2020
Retired

**Roslyn Fahey**

Bachelor of Social Science
Year appointed – 2020
Retired

**Karen Heap**

CEO BADAC (Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative)
Year appointed – 2020

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Cafs remains committed to informing our communities and stakeholders about performance and achievements over the past financial year.

Our three key service areas

EARLY HELP
AND
PREVENTION

TARGETED
SUPPORT

ONGOING
ASSISTANCE

KEY SERVICE AREA 1 – EARLY HELP AND PREVENTION

Preventing the problems before they arise and being there with solutions.

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

The Client Engagement Team is the single point of entry for individuals – and community sector organisations – who contact Cafs for advice, support or program and service referrals. This year, the team provided information and referrals to 5,189 clients, with 1,500 referrals made internally.

These referrals included financial counselling and housing assistance from Victoria Police for family violence issues and other services Cafs provides.

THE ORANGE DOOR

In October 2020, the Child FIRST program transitioned into Family Safety Victoria - The Orange Door, a statewide integrated service bringing together specialist workers from family violence, child and family, Aboriginal and men's services to provide a coordinated support network.

Cafs is an active partner in this new response to family violence, servicing The Orange Door in the Central Highlands region as the provider of men's practitioner support services, ensuring a focus on engaging men who perpetrate violence.

This financial year saw an access point established in Moorabool and continued service to all previous access points in the Central Highlands. From the opening date to 30 June 2021, Child Wellbeing worked with 2,686 cases, while Men's Services worked with 1,748 cases.

ACCESS TO EARLY LEARNING

The Access to Early Learning (AEL) program continued with modifications made to adhere to COVID-19 regulations. The program helps the family and the kindergarten prepare a young child for their first year of school. The program also facilitates regular network meetings and professional development for early years staff.

During COVID-19 lockdowns, the team were not able to attend home or kindergarten visits. As an alternative, they continued to provide families with activities and resources to promote learning and play in the home. The program reached the service target of providing support to 16 preschool-aged children and their families.

DAY STAY

Cafs Day Stay delivers one-on-one support for families experiencing difficulty establishing routines when a new baby arrives. Our highly trained Day Stay team helps parents understand the needs of their babies while building parenting confidence. The program has been adapted for COVID-19 restrictions to ensure parents can access assistance. This financial year Day Stay provided support to 31 parents.

2,686 Cases worked by the Child Wellbeing team

1,500 Referrals made internally

31 Parents supported through the Cafs Day Stay team



KEY SERVICE AREA 2 – TARGETED SUPPORT

Helping you through life's critical moments with plans tailored specifically for you.

FAMILY SERVICES

Family Services provides a comprehensive range of services promoting safety, stability and healthy development for vulnerable children and their families from pre-birth up to 17 years old. The service has been reviewed and restructured to align with the specialist staff model and implement flexible, wrap-around services for vulnerable families and children.

Family Services has supported over 500 families and more than 800 children during this financial year, including 127 children under 12 months of age.

CO-LOCATION PRIMARY SCHOOL PROJECT

The Co-location Primary School project launched in Term 3 2020 to ensure family services were accessible to vulnerable families where Cafs did not have a physical location. Inspired by the Reach-In project, the program was developed in response to the increased demand for family support services since the opening of The Orange Door.


This project was delivered to three primary schools in the Central Highlands region, focusing on supporting families within the safety of the school community. The program seeks to grow parenting confidence and skills while offering access to other specialised services. This enables schools and families to better navigate the support system and fast track referrals, leading to earlier interventions and better outcomes.

FAMILY PRESERVATION

The Victorian and Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response, also known at Cafs as Keeping Families Together, is an evidence-based, outcome-focused intensive child and family support model to promote strong families. In partnership with Child Protection, the response provides sustainable support to children and families, aiming to keep children at home and out of care services. Where children are already in care services, the response seeks to reunite children with their families safely.

After a highly competitive tender process, Cafs was successful in our bid to pioneer this initiative, therefore consolidating our current support. As a result, Cafs has grown deeper connections with our community, strengthened our partnership with BADAC and our commitment to Aboriginal children and families.

Cafs met the 2020-2021 target to assist 28 families, ensuring the program will continue for another three years. Looking forward to the next financial year, Keeping Families Together will work to provide support to 46 families, with BADAC supporting a further six Aboriginal families. The Keeping Families Together team has grown from four to eight members, ensuring we can successfully deliver increased support and continue empowering families by keeping them together.



"I have had the best support and guidance around every aspect of my financial situation. Honestly, I can't thank Cafs enough! Financial counselling has saved me and my family!"

– Cafs Financial Counselling Client.

DAD'S TOOL KIT

Dad's Tool Kit is a parenting program for men who want to improve their relationship with their children and work on being the best parent they can be. This year 42 dads completed the program, which was made available online to increase the opportunity for fathers to engage and seek support in this highly sought after group. Following participant feedback, the group session was extended from eight weeks to ten weeks.

GAMBLER'S HELP AND FINANCIAL COUNSELLING

Gambler's Help provides confidential support to address the cumulative harm of problem gambling in a caring, non-judgmental environment. The team offers individual counselling and holds education sessions in schools, sporting venues and community organisations. Venue support includes training for people working in venues with electronic gaming machines.

The Financial Counselling Team provides financial and paralegal support for people with unresolved debt.

During this financial year, the Gambler's Help and Financial Counselling teams helped 908 clients. 716 clients received financial counselling, of which 192 were justice clients. Gambler's Help supported 192 clients.

FAMILY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The Family Violence Intervention Program provides Men's Behaviour Change Programs and case management for men who perpetrate family violence, as well as support for affected family members.

This year, Cafs initiated the Intensive Counselling Case Management (ICCM) pilot with the Victorian Magistrates Court. The Men's Behaviour Change program continued to provide group and individual support, receiving 228 referrals, 145 from court ordered mandates and 83 from voluntary clients.

BALLARAT CHILDREN'S CONTACT SERVICE

The Ballarat Children's Contact Service (BCCS) provides a safe and nurturing environment for children to maintain contact with a parent or carer who no longer lives with them. Supervised visits and changeovers take place in our safe, secure and family-friendly centre. BCCS helps families where significant conflict or stress during or following separation impacts a parent's ability to have regular, safe and healthy contact with their children while ensuring the safety of women and children impacted by family violence. This year the uptake of this service increased by approximately 30%.

POST SEPARATION CO-OPERATIVE PARENTING PROGRAM

The Post Separation Co-operative Parenting Program (PSCPP) supports separated parents where conflict affects their parenting. The program aims to help parents understand how ongoing conflict impacts children, break the parent conflict cycle and improve communication between parents.

This year PSCPP was successfully redeveloped as an online group work program providing better access to parents in remote areas and has been expanded to include the Circle of Security and Tuning into Kids programs.

28 Families assisted through the Keeping Families Together program

1,800 Clients assisted through Cafs Housing Support Team

500 Families supported through Family Services

STEP UP

Step Up is an early intervention program designed to reduce and prevent adolescent family violence and increase safety for all family members. The program works therapeutically within a family-focused framework to support young people displaying violent or aggressive behaviour towards their family. Often these young people have been victims of family violence and require guidance on responding to conflict or distress. For parents, seeking help from Step Up is the last resort and referrals are often sent after a crisis call to the Victorian Police.

As a child-centred, family-focused program, Step Up is proven to create real change in the way families communicate and resolve conflict. Both the child and their family are engaged in developing a case plan. Step Up also offers group sessions where young people and their parents meet over six to eight weeks to listen and learn from each other about what contributes to violence in their family. This year Step Up received 85 referrals and provided those young people and their families with support.

HOUSING SUPPORT

Cafs specialises in the prevention of homelessness. Families need the foundation of secure housing to provide a safe and nurturing home for their children.

This year the Housing Support Team assisted almost 1,800 clients across a wide range of Cafs programs, including:

- Case Management for Men Program
- Men's Emergency Accommodation Program
- Opening Doors
- Crisis Support
- Daylesford Family Support
- Supported Homelessness Service
- Creating Connections
- Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Program
- Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk
- Tenancy Plus
- Youth Transitional Housing

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS COUNSELLING

The Federal Government funds Family Relationship Counselling. The program is designed to strengthen family relationships, prevent breakdown and ensure the wellbeing of children and families through counselling services.

Throughout this financial year, the program underwent a renewal process to strengthen its commitment to offering relationship counselling to people in Ballarat, Hepburn and Moorabool areas.



KEY SERVICE AREA 3 – ONGOING ASSISTANCE

An ongoing network of support that surrounds you and your family, keeping you connected.

YOUTH CARE

Cafs facilitate Youth Care residential homes in Ballarat. We aim to provide safe, home-like care for young people up to the age of 18 who are subject to protection orders from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

Each Cafs Youth Care home is run by a qualified team who provide the young residents' care. Often, the young people require wrap-around support due to trauma history and behaviours that could potentially put them at risk of further harm. Our Youth Care Team supports the social and emotional needs of these children by working with them to combat substance use, poor self-image, self-harming behaviour, mental and physical health issues and learning difficulties. The Youth Care program aims to ready these young people as they prepare to return to their parents or other types of care, such as foster or kinship care.

This year, Cafs moved from a four-bed unit model to a two-bed model to increase the stability of placements. The Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), a trauma-informed, therapeutic practice model, is being rolled out across Youth Care Homes. Cafs may have up to 12 young people residing in our Youth Care homes at any one time.

YOUTH SERVICES

TARGETED CARE PACKAGES

Targeted Care Packages (TCPs) provide individual support for young people leaving Youth Care residential homes to live with their family, live independently or live with a Foster Care family. The primary cohort is young people currently residing in and at risk of entering Youth Care, focusing on children under the age of 12, those with a disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Each child's needs are assessed, and carers will receive tailored support, with the child's best interests at the centre of all decision making.

The package supports young people living at home with parents, with kith or kin, with a registered carer, and those who are independent or semi-independent or in other care arrangements.

TCPs play a critical role in enabling children and young people to transition from residential care into alternative living arrangements that better meet their needs. Case management functions consistent with the child or young person's case plan, and a cultural support plan enabling services to target the individual needs of children and their Foster or Kinship Carers is pivotal to supporting the implementation of the TCP. In some cases, the packages will enable children to return home.



BETTER FUTURES

Better Futures provides flexible and tailored assistance to young people leaving Kinship, Foster or Youth Care and aims to give them an active voice about transitioning to adulthood. The program supports a range of areas, including independent living skills, access to housing, health and well-being, community and cultural connections, education, and employment. Better Futures provides casework and funding support based on individual needs to help them achieve their independence goals.

The Better Futures program will be extended to young people on permanent care orders between nine months and 15 years. Engaging young care leavers from an early age gives them a greater voice about their future. Assistance from a Better Futures team member helps them navigate life after leaving care.


Thanks to the Victorian State Government extension of funding this financial year, Cafs introduced Home Stretch. All young people on permanent care orders will be eligible for Better Futures support and accommodation until the age of 21. The Home Stretch program provides an accommodation allowance to support young people and carers continue Kinship Care, Foster Care and now permanent care living arrangements and helps young people leaving residential care or those that can't remain in home-based care secure alternative living arrangements.

KINSHIP CARE

Kinship Care is where family or close family friends care for a child or young person when they can no longer be cared for at home. Kinship Care is always explored over other placement options. Providing a safe, nurturing home with a familiar face offers a less traumatic experience for children as trust, and a shared understanding of family history and culture is already established. Kinship Carers are usually a grandparent, an aunt, uncle, sibling or a close family friend. Cafs provide support to the carers and the children.

During the last year, Cafs supported 151 children and their families. Cafs performed the initial carer assessment and then provided recommendations to Child Protection.

Cafs supports informal kinship arrangements that do not involve Child Protection intervention. Kinship Carers can also attend monthly support groups in Ballarat, Daylesford, Bacchus Marsh and Ararat, pending COVID-19 restrictions.



“Cafs case managers and practitioners are just beautiful. They’ve always got your back. Especially during COVID, they’re always phoning to ask - are you ok? Do you need anything? They’re wonderful people.”

– Lee Van Leeuwen,
Cafs Foster Carer.

FOSTER CARE

Foster Carers provide a safe, warm and loving home for children who can no longer live with their parents. They build relationships with, and nurture and care for foster children, helping them with their practical and emotional needs by creating an environment where they can begin to heal from their trauma. Foster Carers are regular, everyday people from the community, however, they are also lifesavers. By volunteering their time, and their homes, every one of them makes a life-changing difference to these children's lives. At Cafs, we recognise that our carers are an integral part of the Cafs team. We support our carers by ensuring they have access to a 24-hour phone support, in-person face to face contact with the Cafs team, and regular opportunities to meet with other carers and foster children.

The accreditation process to become a Foster Carer typically takes six months, involving formal training and an assessment. This financial year 11 new Foster Carers were recruited and accredited with Cafs. Almost 80 children were cared for in either ongoing or emergency placements. We are always seeking new Foster Carers, and as an inclusive and collaborative organisation, we welcome carers from all backgrounds, cultures and experiences.



“We’ve been fortunate to have really excellent Caseworkers. When we have a request, it’s responded to promptly. They are very supportive, and we’ve felt involved in the process.”

– Alec and Shirley,
Cafs Foster Carers.

151
children and their families
supported through the
Kinship Care program

80
children were cared for
through Cafs’ Foster Carers



SPOTLIGHT

HERITAGE SERVICES

Cafs has a long history, beginning in 1866 when the first children entered the Ballarat Orphan Asylum. Since then, thousands of families lives have become part of the stories of this organisation, at the Ballarat Orphanage, the Ballarat Children's Home, and in many other programs delivered over the past 156 years.

Cafs looks after a vast collection of records of children and families. This is one of our most important responsibilities. For many people, these records form the basis of their identity and have a lifelong significance.

In 2021, understanding the fundamental importance of these records to former residents, clients and their families and that these histories belong to children, young people, and families, Cafs appointed a History and Records Lead to guide our work in this area. As an organisation, we work with former residents, clients and their families to preserve and provide access to their collections, redress for individuals, and historical justice within the communities we are part of.

Addressing historical justice starts with acknowledging all aspects of our past with honesty.

AN APOLOGY

Cafs worked with former residents, Cafs leadership and team members, consultants and historians to rewrite an apology to the children and families who have been in our Care in the past. Our apology recognises the truth of the organisation's failings and the lifelong impact this has had on the lives of children and families. The apology represents a commitment to face all aspects of Cafs history and do better for families and children now and in the future.

Cafs is committed to building on past efforts and directing our energy into strengthening individuals' access to records, shared participation in creating records, and control of access by former residents and clients to their own histories.

THE APOLOGY

The Agency, now called Cafs (Child and Family Services Ballarat), has Cared for children since 1866. It managed the "Ballarat District Orphan Asylum" (1866-1909), the "Ballarat Orphanage" (1909 – 1968) and the "Ballarat Children's Home" (1968 – 1983), providing institutional accommodation for children.

We are sorry.

For the abuse and cruelty that many children endured and the needless pain and suffering that was inflicted. For failing in our duty of care. For failing to keep them safe. For failing to implement policies and processes to protect them from abuse and harm. For enabling and protecting the perpetrators of abuse.

When children told us what happened, we didn't listen to them. When the adults they became told us what happened, we ignored them for years. For many, justice was neither pursued nor achieved.

We took labour from children and robbed them of opportunities to prosper later in life. Many children never received the education they deserved, nor got to make choices about their own lives. Many did not receive the

medical care they needed, causing long term damage later in life.

We are sorry to families for keeping them apart, to the mothers and fathers who could not visit their children and the brothers and sisters who were separated from each other.

We were active participants in policies and practices that led to the Stolen Generations and the devastation of Aboriginal families and communities.

We were part of the systems and structures that caused physical, psychological and social harm to children from all over Victoria, Australia and the world.

We acknowledge that trust has been betrayed and irreparable harm caused. We do not seek forgiveness; we now seek truth and justice.

We commit to shine a light on our past and to help former residents and their families keep finding and telling their own stories. We face our past so we can do better for families and children now and in the future.

CAFS THREAD TOGETHER CLOTHING HUB

Thread Together was launched in 2012 by Andie Halas, a former shareholder of Seafolly. Andy noticed that a huge amount of unsold stock would end up in landfill at the end of each season. Recognising the opportunity be a part of this exciting initiative, Cafs launched Victoria's first Thread Together clothing hub in Ballarat in April 2021. Soon after, a Thread Together store opened in Melbourne.

The clothing hub provides those most vulnerable in the local community with brand-new clothing and accessories at no cost. Anyone can access this clothing hub, they need to provide a referral from their case manager, or they can self-refer by contacting Cafs Client Engagement Team.

Since the Cafs Thread Together launch, the hub has helped dress close to 100 individuals and has also given away over 1000 items of clothing and accessories. Customers come from all over the region and from various sectors within the community, including homelessness, children and youth services and mental health support.

Cafs Thread Together is set to continue its mission to empower those who need it most through the rest of 2021 and into the following year. We believe everyone in our community should have good quality, new clothing and shop with dignity and choice.

THREAD TOGETHER

CLOTHING COMMUNITIES

Since the launch of the Cafs Thread Together hub in 2021, this hub has already helped dress close to

100 individuals

and has also given away over

1,000 items

of clothing and accessories.



FINANCIAL REPORT



TREASURER'S REPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have significant ramifications on how Cafs has operated in 2020/21. It is pleasing to report that Cafs financial sustainability has been strengthened in such an unusual environment, reporting an operating surplus of \$3,015,696 for the financial year.

Cafs continues to refine its operating model structure to ensure prudent use of revenue in support of our mission and ongoing financial sustainability.

Total revenue in 2020/21 was \$35,178,606, which represented an increase of 27% from the 2019/20 financial year. The increased income was as a result of higher Government funding from both State and Federal Governments. The 25% increase in State Government funding has led to the provision of more services. Federal Government funding increased as a result of the JobKeeper payment scheme.

Total expenditure in 2020/21 was \$32,162,910, representing an increase of 26% from the 2019/20 financial year. As highlighted above, increased funding has led to increased programs and hence additional expenditure.

The surplus generated in 2020/21 enabled Cafs to undertake significant capital investment in the organisation, including:

- Ground floor redevelopment at 115 Lydiard Street North, Ballarat (total project cost \$2,073,451).
- Implementation of the three-year ICT Strategic Plan (total spent in 2020/21 was \$851,496, which included a Client Management System). As a result of COVID-19, we have changed how we operate and are more reliant on technology than ever before.
- Motor Vehicle Refresh program (\$476,820 spent in 2020/21).

Cafs has a strong balance sheet and a well-managed investment portfolio. Rigorous corporate governance and stewardship of our resources have led to the net assets of Cafs increasing over the financial year by \$4,392,507 to \$19,738,526 as of 30 June 2021. This strong financial position will enable Cafs to continue to deliver services to children, young people, families and individuals for many more years to come.

I would like to recognise and personally thank my fellow board members of the Finance & Resources Board Sub-Committee, and the Audit & Risk Board Sub-Committee, for giving of their time and sharing their skills and expertise to ensure a high standard of corporate governance is in place at Cafs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Roberts'.

Craig Roberts
Treasurer and Chair Finance and
Resource Board Sub-Committee

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOME STATEMENT

For the year ended 30 June 2021	2021	2020
REVENUES	\$	\$
Government Revenue	34,413,556	26,658,837
Other revenue	765,050	1,070,882
TOTAL REVENUES	35,178,606	27,729,719
EXPENSES		
Employee Benefits	23,520,846	18,518,458
Depreciation	652,807	586,142
Finance Costs	82,419	96,801
Other Expenses	7,906,838	6,231,578
TOTAL EXPENSES	32,162,910	25,432,979
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	3,015,696	2,296,740
Net loss on revaluation of land and buildings	-	(102,468)
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	3,015,696	2,194,272

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2021	2021	2020
ASSETS	\$	\$
Property, plant and equipment	15,658,427	12,684,787
Other assets	12,439,987	10,792,583
TOTAL ASSETS	28,098,414	23,477,370
LIABILITIES		
Payables	4,323,171	3,152,366
Provisions	4,036,717	4,978,985
TOTAL LIABILITIES	8,359,888	8,131,351
NET ASSETS	19,738,526	15,346,019
EQUITY		
Retained Surpluses	18,035,847	15,020,151
Reserves	1,702,679	325,868
TOTAL EQUITY	19,738,526	15,346,019

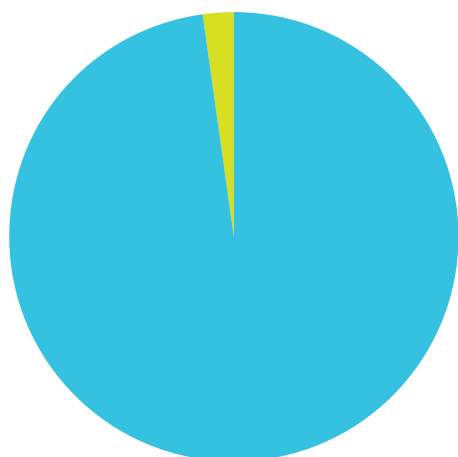
Please Note: The Summary Statements have been derived from and are consistent with the audited Financial Statements which are available at www.cafs.org.au

FINANCIALS

CAFS REVENUE GROWTH - 5 YEARS (\$'000s)

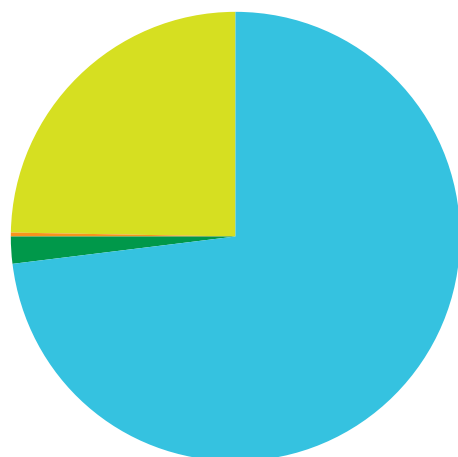


2020/21 SOURCES OF REVENUE (\$'000s)



Government	97.8%	34,414
Other	2.2%	765
Total	100%	35,179

2020/2021 EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY (\$'000s)



Employee benefits	73.1%	23,521
Depreciation	2.0%	653
Finance costs	0.3%	82
Other expenses	24.6%	7,907
Total	100%	32,163

Net assets (\$'000s)

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Assets	20,107	20,628	21,434	23,477	28,099
Liabilities	6,559	7,087	7,716	8,131	8,360
Net assets	13,548	13,541	13,718	15,346	19,739

THANK YOU AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Cafs wishes to extend our most sincere appreciation to our many donors and supporters - the organisations, local businesses, individuals and State and Federal Governments who have made the commitment to make a difference in the lives of the children and families in our region. The support Cafs has received strengthens our work in building a strong and resilient community. We thank you.

SPECIAL THANKS

Visit cafs.org.au for a complete list of our wonderful supporters.

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

Attorney General's Department, Victorian Government

City of Ballarat

Department of Education and Early Childhood Education

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Department of Justice and Community Safety,
Victorian Government

Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victorian Government

Department of Social Services

Family Safety Victoria

Magistrates Court Victoria

Moorabool Shire Council

Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation



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Cafs Bacchus Marsh

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Cafs Ararat

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t: 03 5352 2910

Cafs Early Childhood Parenting Centre

515 Chisholm Street, Ballarat 3350

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Cafs website

Cafs acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



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