

# Althea PROJECTS



## ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

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## Chairperson's Report



I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land we are on, the Wulguruksaba and Bindal people. I also wish to pay my respects to past and present elders.

I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the amazing achievements of Althea Projects since our last AGM. One of the greatest achievements is that I can talk about Althea Projects and feel confident that this means something significant to our key stakeholders and our community. The process of combining Wee Care Residential and Shared Family Care under the umbrella of Althea Projects is now complete and this last 12 months has seen a significant amount of work undertaken by staff to ensure this process has been successful in mind, body and spirit. While the work involved in the practical tasks of developing and branding the new umbrella organisation cannot be underestimated or de-valued, the efforts of all our wonderful staff and management in engaging with the 'essence' of Althea Projects and committing to the mission and values of this new umbrella organisation has been inspiring. We are in the beginning stages of taking this 'essence' into our community with great success.

As is customary I want to take this opportunity to thank the various people involved. The women who share the responsibilities of the management group have dedicated a great deal of time and energy to the work of this organisation over the last twelve months. The management group all contribute diverse skills and abilities and yet together share a real commitment to ensuring the success of Althea Projects. On behalf of the organisation and personally I want to express my appreciation for their collaboration, hard work and support in the last 12 months.

I know that all the management committee acknowledge the amazing work done by all the staff in all areas of the organisation over the last 12 months. The journey in creating a cohesive organisation is not easy and the staff of Althea Projects have generally engaged in these change processes with enthusiasm and commitment to the vision and values of the organisation. As we reflect on the work of Althea Projects during this AGM, the wonderful work of all the staff will be evident but behind each of those very visible examples and achievements lies many, many actions and practices that are not as visible but equally as valuable – for all of these I, on behalf of the management group, offer my heartfelt thanks to all the staff of Althea.

Finally an organisation does not traverse the hazardous path of organisational change without remarkable leadership and that is certainly the case for Althea Projects. Mandy Thompson took the role of CEO around 18 months ago and has guided us all through an extremely challenging and complex process. There have been many occasions when we, staff and management, have thought the task was achieved, only to discover some other aspect of the process still undone and requiring creative regeneration. In all instances this creativity and rejuvenation has been provided by Mandy with her boundless energy, her determination to achieve our goals and her unwavering commitment to the children and families who benefit. The current achievements of Althea simply would not have been possible without her and we look forward to future successes under her guidance.

Thank you again to all of these people and the many others that support Althea Projects.

## Debra Miles, Chairperson Management Committee



During the 2014/15 year Althea Projects has seen a focus on re-connecting with the Townsville community under the new name. This has been an important time for our organisation to ensure that the Townsville community continues to understand how important they are to the longevity of Althea Projects.

Much of the external work in the first half of the financial year was ensuring the new name became associated with our historical roots under the former name of Wee Care Family Inc.

This financial year saw both Wee Care Family Support and Shared Family Care programs re-funded for a further three years. We value the strong partnership we have with the Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

The year saw changes to the operating hours of Wee Care, dropping two nights per week of respite care availability. This decision was required as a result of financial impacts from when the final provisions of the transfer to the Modern Award expired. The organisation has been working hard since this time to develop philanthropic and other fundraising partnerships with the local business community to raise funds to enable us to reopen for respite seven nights per week. Crisis response remains unchanged at 24/7.

The year also saw Althea successful in a competitive tendering process for the delivery of Emergency Relief Funds to families in need across the city. In partnership with FEAT, the Women's Centre, Sera's Women's Shelter and the Upper Ross ERF Collective, we have secured two years of funding from the Australian Department of Social Services.

November 2014 also saw the signing of an MOU with Child Safety to deliver a trial service supporting mothers and their newborn babies. Known as First Steps, this trial allows a mother and her baby to be accommodated at Wee Care whilst Child Safety undertake an assessment. This co-designed program is significant for many reasons, least of which is that without the trial these babies would be placed directly into foster care whilst the assessment takes place. The trial will continue into 2016 as we deliver and evaluate the support provided to these families.

March and April 2015 saw Shared Family Care successful in our mid-cycle external Human Services Quality Framework and departmental Licensing Audits. As a Licensed Care Service under the Child Protection Act, we were thrilled with these results as it gives comfort that our checks and balances are in place to ensure the highest possible standards of care for children needing statutory protection.

An opportunity to move into a community hub also presented itself early in 2015. This has seen the corporate and Shared Family Care parts of Althea move into the Housing Connections building at 296 Ross River Rd, Aitkenvale. This strategic move will allow Althea to build

stronger partnerships with other service providers and increase our reach and ability to deliver integrated supports to the families we work with.

It is with excitement Althea projects can confirm that we are now well underway into the development of our own Reconciliation Action Plan. It is envisioned that our RAP will be completed and endorsed by Reconciliation Australia early in the New year.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every staff member and volunteer involved with Althea for your commitment to what has been a challenging and changing environment. Implementing strategic and transformational change is difficult stuff and cannot be done in isolation. It truly is a team process.

2015/16 sees us embedding firmly our organisational values within our teams. We are also transitioning Wee Care Family Support to the Queensland Government Human Services Quality Framework. This will see our whole organisation externally audited in 2016 for the first time. I am honoured to be part of an organisation that is committed to quality improvement and is striving to delivering best practice to families and children who most need it.

**Mandy Thomson, CEO  
Althea Projects Inc**

## Shared Family Care Report



Shared Family Care Program has had an exciting year with our move in August to the new premises at 296 Ross River Road, Aitkenvale. Our new offices provide greater accessibility for our foster carers and greater exposure to the general public.

The Shared Family Care Program has enjoyed staff retention and stability over the past 12 months and it is worth mentioning that in the most recent Human Service Quality Framework external audit, nil operational non-compliances were recorded for the program. This is a huge achievement in such a highly regulated service, and this is indicative of the commitment and dedication demonstrated by the staff of Shared Family Care and Althea Projects Corporate Team. Shared Family Care remains the largest funded organisation for the provision of foster carer support services in the Townsville Regional area.

Shared Family Care Program has experienced a very productive year over the past 12 months with a huge emphasis on recruitment of new foster carers. This has seen the program undertake some new advertising initiatives which have never before been done, such as advertising in two local movie cinemas with screenings up to 420 times per week, undertaking radio advertising, and sponsorship of team member Chevannah Paavast from the Townsville Fire WNBL team. Recruitment activities are being consistently undertaken by staff within the greater community to ensure our vision and purpose are visible to our community. Shared Family Care are always in desperate need of new foster carers and visibility in the community is very important in achieving this.

Shared Family Care has continued to support the 120 Foster and Kinship Carers, by completing 3021 hours of home visits within the carers homes, to provide support to both the carers and children in their care. Shared Family Care has also provided 42,489 placements (bed nights) for children in care.

**Sharon Thorburn, Program Manager  
Shared Family Care**



## Wee Care Report



The following report gives an overview of the work Wee Care Residential has provided within our local community over the last twelve months.

I believe we have continued to make a difference to Townsville families and as Wee Care's Manager I am proud that this program of Althea Projects remains to be well respected and an important part of the community sector. The commitment, abilities and loyalty of our Staff, Leadership and Management team makes Althea an exciting and rewarding place to work and it continues to be an honour to work in an organisation such as Althea Projects. My day to day experience is always positive and rewarding.

We have witnessed various changes over this past twelve months without too much disruption to the families and children we support. One of our major achievements has been the introduction of the First Steps trial program. We have successfully seen two Mums and Bubs come through the program and as I write this we have another young Mum and baby starting with the program.

The children who utilise Wee Care are elated with our two new chickens, Daisy and Dora, who kindly deliver lovely fresh eggs daily.

The Residential program provided child care/respite to 427 Children and this amounted to 1192 individual placements over the last twelve months.

Playgroup continues to be strong and is held on Thursday mornings from 9.30 -11.30 with an average of 5-8 parents/ carers and 8-14 children attending each session.

The staff have worked very hard and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their energy and effort. You are a great team and how you all conduct yourselves makes me proud to be your Manager. Staff participated in a survey in March and it showed that Staff are satisfied in their work environment and enjoy the work that they do. It also showed that our staff understood how the work that they do influences and inspires children's and families' lives. This year we saw Madge Franklin and Elise Christensen retire after many years of service. Staff have continued to up skill their Professional development through further studies and RPL.

Wee Care has two very dedicated volunteers who give up their own personal time to support us. Jessamy Cooper, who visits Thursday afternoons after school and helps out with the children and Beatrice Melvin who works in Reception on Friday mornings. Thank you to both of you for all that you do, it is greatly appreciated.

Finally, it is also very important to thank all of our supporters as without them it would not be possible to continue to provide this program. Wee Care receives generous donations of Bread, Milk, Fruit & Vegetables, Children's Clothing and Toys. I would like to personally thank the following organisations: Second Bite, South Side Milk Supplies, Rollin Dough Bakery-Hermit Park, Food Relief NQ, Sun City Trees, Families of Townsville.

**Lynne Josey, Program Manager  
Wee Care**

## Emergency Relief Report

This last financial year \$45,480 was expended in vouchers, school supplies such as school shoes, uniforms, hats, bags. Food Boxes continue to be an essential supply and these are purchased from Food Relief. ERF was distributed on 1696 occasions over this period. We also have the capacity to now distribute ERF from two locations depending on the clients transport requirements.

## Financial Report

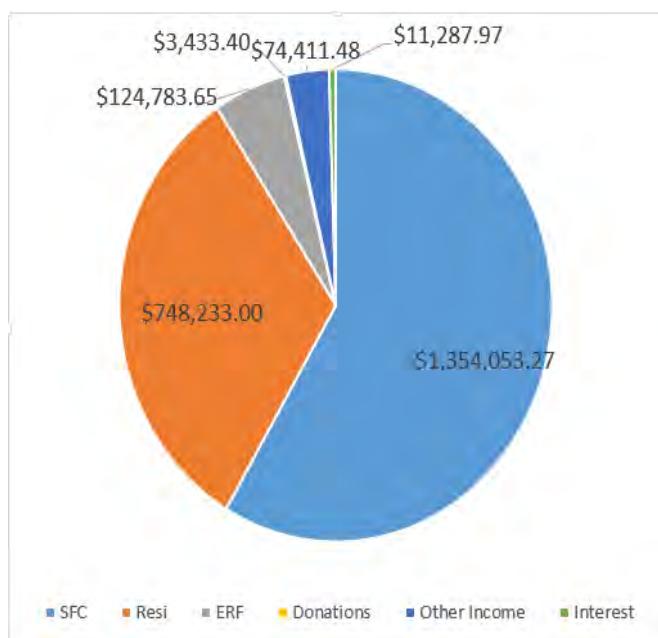
Althea's fiscal position remains strong after the 2014/2015 period. The Queensland Government continues to support our two major programs Shared Family Care and Wee Care Residential, and the Australian Government through ERF with grants and other income totalling **\$2.32 million** for this financial year.

Althea Projects also has seen a new trial program - First Steps commence at Wee Care. This has seen an additional \$35 187 income from this trial.

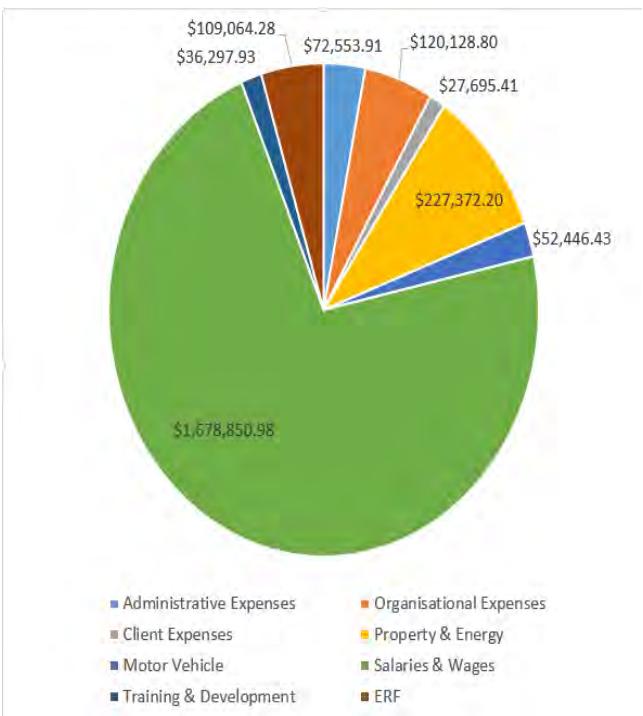
This financial year saw Moore Stephens Queensland accept the role of Althea's accountant/auditors. The team have assisted with the highly complex transition to an integrated financial records and reporting system. They have also completed this year's annual auditing as required. Thank you to Letitia, Cynthia and Tom whom have been of great assistance.

**Carolyn Adams, Finance & HR Manager  
Althea Projects Inc**

## Income 2014/2015



## Expenses 2014/2015



## Partnerships and Supporters



Althea Projects can't exist without the continual support of the Townsville community - so thank you to our members, volunteers, supporters and partners.

### Anonymous Donors

Aboriginal Women's Shelter - Flora House  
Adspeak Marketing  
Australian Government - Dept of Social Services  
Backpacks 4 Aussie Kids Inc  
B-Fitt

Brothers League's Club

Café Bambini

Centacare Townsville

Child and Mental Health Services

Churches of Christ Pathways Fostering Service

Coast 2 Country Housing Company

Cocoa Late Café

CWA Country Women's Association

Danielle Josey

Drug Arm Australasia

Drop-In Centre

Families of Townsville

Family Emergency Accommodation Townsville

Food Relief NQ

Food Rescue

Fortel Communication Pty Ltd

Foster Care Queensland

Francesca Church

Life Without Barriers

Lions Club City of Townsville

Lotsa Printing Pty Ltd

Maria House - Women's Shelter - Ozcare

Mayors Christmas Tree Appeal

Moore Stephens Queensland Limited

Nth Qld Domestic Violence Resource Service

Outcome Results

Pyjama Foundation

Qld Dept of Communities, Child Safety and Disability

Services

Qld Youth Services

Red Cross

Relationships Australia

Rollin Dough Bakery

Ron Keeler

Rotary Club of Townsville Sunrise Inc

Second Bite

Second to None Nutrition

Sera's Women's Shelter

Southside Milk Supplies

Sportscene Super Warehouse

Spotless Cafes at Townsville Airport

Sun City Trees

TATSICHS Recognised Entity

TAIHS Foster & Kinship Services

TM & VM Thomson Builders

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

The Townsville Hospital

Townsville Tidy Bags

Undees for Kids

VARIETY—The Children's Charity

Zambrero Stores

Cannon Park

Willows Shopping Centre

Castletown

Thuringowa

Domain Central

Flinders Street

Stockland Centre - Aitkenvale

## Management Committee

Chair  
External Secretariat  
Treasurer  
Vice Chair  
Members

Debra Miles  
Noemi Mintern  
Mary-Anne Hamilton  
Liana Schnierer  
Virginia Hall  
Rangimarie Day  
Jo-Anne Bentley-Davey  
Anne Campbell

## Staff

Corporate Team  
Mandy Thompson  
Lynne Josey  
Sharon Thorburn  
Teresa Smith  
Carolyn Adams  
Jan Leese  
Francesca Church  
Jackie O'Connor

CEO  
Program Manager  
Program Manager  
Quality Manager  
Finance & HR Manager  
Executive Assistant  
Fund Raising  
Cleaner

Shared Family Care Team  
Jemma Stewart

Aboriginal & Torres Strait  
Islander Family Case Worker  
Senior Practitioner  
Senior Practitioner  
Family Case Worker  
Family Case Worker  
Family Case Worker  
Administration

## Wee Care Team

Kylie Norris  
Barbara Lippit  
Rhonda Hood  
Llian Flynn  
Suzy Clayden  
Margaret Forrest  
Ann-Marie Dawson  
Elysia Dickenson  
Saku Mooka  
Lindsey Jamesion  
Emma Weston  
Trent O'Donnell  
Beatrice Melvin  
Lavinia Robinson  
David Ede  
Jessamy Cooper

Direct Care Worker  
Direct Care Worker  
Direct Care Worker  
Direct Care Worker/Admin  
Direct Care Worker  
Volunteer  
Volunteer  
Volunteer  
Volunteer



