

ALTHEA PROJECTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 – 2024



Althea
PROJECTS



Supporting families for 50 years

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Althea Projects acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we walk, work and live, the Bindal and Juru peoples of the Burdekin, the Gudjal peoples of Charters Towers, the Bindal and Wulgurukaba peoples of the Townsville region and the Yirandhali peoples of Hughenden, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



"Together We Will Make It Right"

(Refreshed RAP Artwork)

By Michelle Tyhuis

2020



01

Supporting Families 1974



On behalf of the Althea Projects Board, I extend our deepest gratitude to all current and former staff members, carers, and volunteers, for their unwavering dedication. We also thank our funding bodies and the broader community for their invaluable support over the past 50 years. Reaching this milestone is a testament to the strength and resilience of our organisation, and it's one we are proud to celebrate.

This past year has been another outstanding one for Althea Projects. We have not only met but often exceeded our goals, providing vital support to those in need, enhancing our brand presence within the community, and meeting our financial targets and commitments. These achievements would not have been possible without the strong leadership of our CEO Paula La Rosa, our managers, and team leaders, as well as the commitment and passion of all our staff members.

With our well-established programs and a demonstrated ability to embrace innovative approaches to today's challenges, I am confident that Althea Projects is well-positioned to continue making a difference for another 50 years.



CEO

Report

Paula La Rosa



2024 marks a significant milestone for Althea Projects, as we proudly celebrate 50 years of service in our community.

Over the past five decades, our organisation has grown and evolved, remaining steadfast in our mission to support and strengthen individuals, families, children and young people so they experience social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing and reach their full potential.



In this our 50th year, I want to recognise and honour Joan Innes-Reid, the remarkable Townsville General Hospital social worker, who later went on to become Deputy Mayor of Townsville, who worked tirelessly with the community and all levels of government to establish our first program Wee Care. To quote Joan, "Children should not become State Wards simply because their parents are in hospital or there is a family crisis and there is no-one to look after them". I wish she knew how far Wee Care has come. I am sure she would feel pride in knowing she created the pathway for Althea Projects and all of our programs to make such a positive difference in the lives of our local children, families and individuals.

SIGNIFICANT HIGHLIGHTS

ALTHEA HOUSE

Starting up our standalone Althea House program was a significant achievement this past year. After several years offering this service on a smaller scale at Wee Care, it has been a great accomplishment to have the standalone program now operational.

This is a unique service, with our model being a hybrid of a 24/7 childcare service that is focused on the individual and developmental needs of children who have experienced trauma, with a more traditional residential service model that is aimed to care for older children.

Along with providing a safe, trauma-informed, nurturing environment, our service works closely with the Department of Child Safety, our fostering and kinship program and the broader fostering sector to find longer term family-based care options for the children as part of this model of care.

Through this service we are seeing a positive change in the trajectory of each child, which includes keeping them out of the adolescent youth residential system, which is not a suitable place for a child under 12 to be cared for.

NATIONAL REDRESS SCHEME

This year, Althea Projects is proud to announce our commitment to the National Redress Scheme. By joining the scheme, we acknowledge the harm caused by institutional child sexual abuse, and are taking active steps to provide support and healing to survivors. Our participation reflects our dedication to justice, accountability, and ensuring that those affected have access to meaningful redress, including the support they need to move forward. This is an important part of our ongoing commitment to creating safe, respectful, and supportive environments for all. Althea Projects is steadfast in our commitment to keeping children safe through robust safeguarding policies embedded across all that we do. This includes a child safety policy and procedures, regular staff training and a zero-tolerance approach to harm to children. We prioritise creating a safe, nurturing environment across all of our programs to ensure the safety and well-being of every child being our top priority.





SOUTHERN CROSS AUSTERO

In June we were proudly chosen to be the Southern Cross Austereo (SCA) charity partner through their Embrace program. SCA will provide numerous in-kind services to support promoting our work over the coming 12 months. This is an amazing opportunity and helps us leverage off all the 50th anniversary branding opportunities we have added into our work this year.

WILLOWS SHOPPING CENTRE ACTIVATION

Althea Projects joined with Willows Shopping Centre in May and June to promote our 50 years of service, with a particular focus on recruiting foster carers. BCF kindly provided daily giveaways and it was a great opportunity to be able to give back to the community. We are grateful for the support offered by Willows to showcase our services. In addition to connecting with people in our community, it was also a wonderful opportunity for staff across all programs to work together. This event also saw me work closely with CK from Triple M, doing live and recorded feeds promoting our work. It was a fun week and a great start to increasing our brand awareness. One of the best outcomes was receiving 9 new expressions of interest from locals who were keen to find out more about becoming a foster carer.

REFRESHED ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

In April our Board and Leadership Team started work on our strategic plan review. At the back of our annual report I am proud to share our refreshed organisational values, which reaffirm our commitment to excellence and inclusivity and we introduce a new Vision Statement that reflects our aspirations for the future. My thanks to Michael Connelly from CPR Consulting for leading us in this important process. I look forward to launching our new Strategic Plan in the new year.

50TH ANNIVERSARY LOGO

Throughout the year we have had a special focus on planning events recognising our 50th anniversary. A special touch has been changing our logo to include our 50th milestone. The focus of our 50th celebrations will be to hold a gala that will recognise our past, celebrate, engage the community and increase brand awareness. We are hopeful we will achieve all our goals.

I want to recognise all our Program Managers, staff and volunteers as our most vital asset in achieving our outcomes, I thank and applaud everyone's contributions at the grassroots working tirelessly with our service users, so they receive only the highest quality care and support. I would also like to acknowledge the Board for their invaluable support and leadership.

Of special note I want to recognise Lynne Josey, who retired from Althea Projects after serving 19 years at Wee Care, with most of her time being either the Program Coordinator or Program Manager. We are grateful to Lynne for offering so many years of her professional life to the organisation. The program developed and adapted over the years and we are truly grateful for Lynne's tireless commitment and contributions.

With 50 years behind us, we look with optimism to what can be achieved in the next 50 years. What we know with certainty is that our commitment to providing the highest quality services will be unwavering, we will remain creative and innovative, focused on supporting children, families and individuals in our local community.



Paula La Rosa

CEO – Althea Projects

HUMAN RESOURCES & FINANCIAL

Report

Tash Henderson
Corporate Services Manager



FINANCIAL REPORT

The organisation finished the 2024 financial year in a strong financial position once again. Revenue increased in the year with the most significant increase coming from the fee for service income generated from the commencement of the Althea House program from 31 July 2023.

We were fortunate to receive fundraising and donation income, which included generous support from the IGA Golf Day and Myer. In addition, we received grants from Townsville City Council for Christmas parties at Wee Care and Althea's Community Hub, and grants from Queensland Country Bank and Myer for expenditure at Althea House. Employment costs were the highest expenditure for the 2024 financial year, increasing significantly from the 2023 financial year, due to new staffing for Althea House.

Larger expenditure for the 2023/2024 financial year included repairs to Wee Care following property damage caused by Cyclone Kirrily in January 2024, replacement of fencing at Wee Care, legal settlement, and new laptops for new staff and replacement of older machines. Utilising grant funds from Myer, we relocated the server, replaced the CCTV system and constructed a front fence at Althea House. The grant received from Queensland Country Bank covered the costs of purchasing sensory items, outdoor play equipment and security doors. Purchases for IT costs increased as compared to the 2023 financial year, due to our commitment to maintaining strong systems for IT Security. This continues to be a focus into the 2025 financial year, as we introduce further staff training in this area.

I would like to thank the Corporate Services Team, including Brandy Bulsey and Rebecca Romeo for their hard work and dedication during the year, and acknowledge the work of outgoing Finance Officer, Christina Rich. In June, we welcomed Joy Thompson (Assistant Accountant) and Monita Gangavarapu (Administration) to the Corporate Services team. I also express my gratitude to our Treasurer, Evie Chellingworth for her time, support and commitment to assisting with the financial aspects of Althea Projects once again this year.



HUMAN RESOURCE REPORT

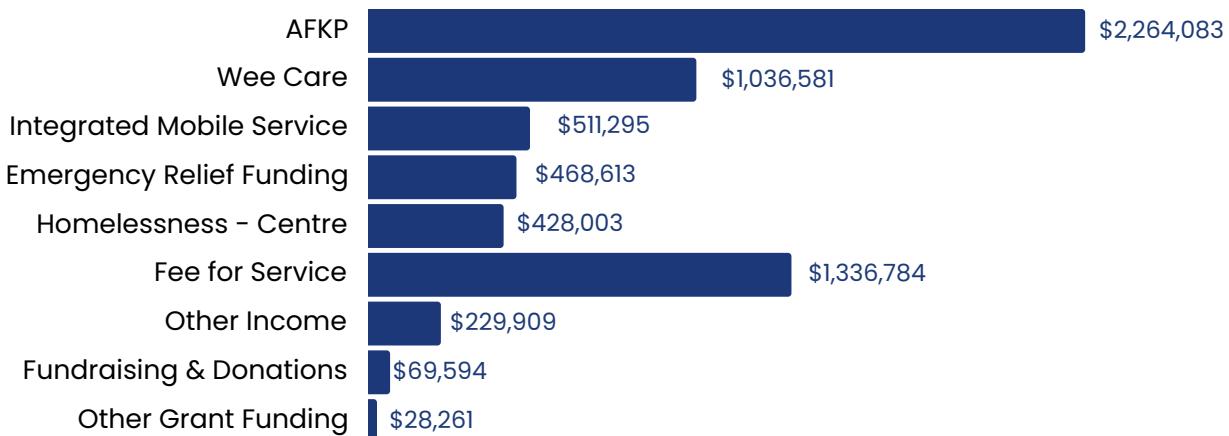
The 2024 financial year, saw an increase in our staffing compliment with the introduction of the Althea House program. At the end of June 2024, our current staffing compliment stands at 55, with 20 full time, 22 part time, and 13 casual staff.

During the 2024 financial year, we further refined our HR processes, building upon the efficiencies created from the implementation of the Employment Hero system in 2023. From June 2024, we outsourced our payroll system to an external provider to capitalise on efficiencies and further support the organisation.

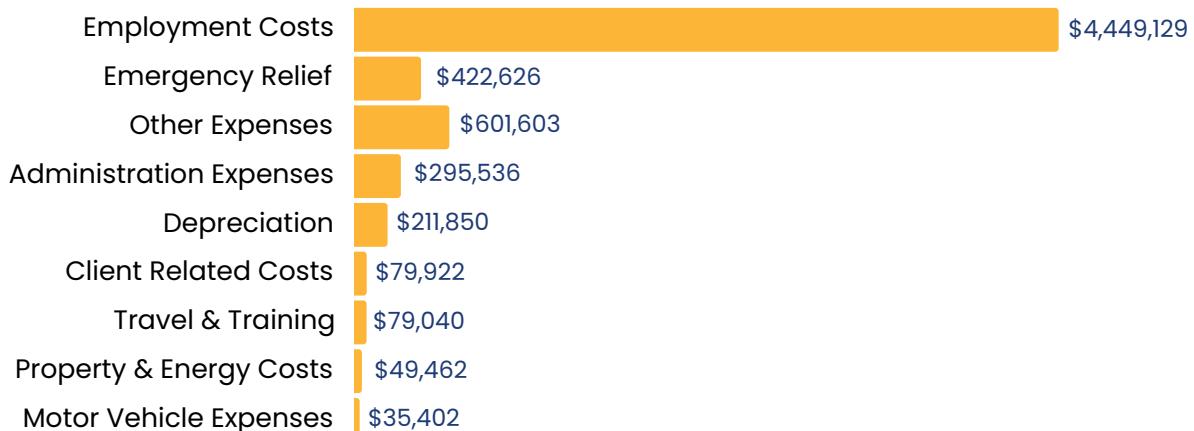
We continued to maintain a strong emphasis on the wellbeing of our employees, and introduced the People at Work survey to capture staff feedback relating to psychosocial health in the workplace. This survey will be conducted annually to provide benchmarks and focus areas for improvement and action planning. Using the information from this year's survey, we have implemented mental health first aid training to managers and supervisors, established a social club, and rolled out Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training for AFKP, Wee Care and Althea House staff.

I am excited to continue to work with the Althea team, and look forward to opportunities in the 2025 financial year.

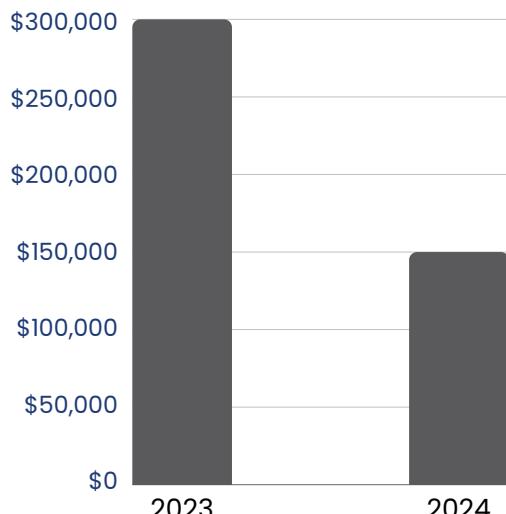
INCOME 2023 – 2024



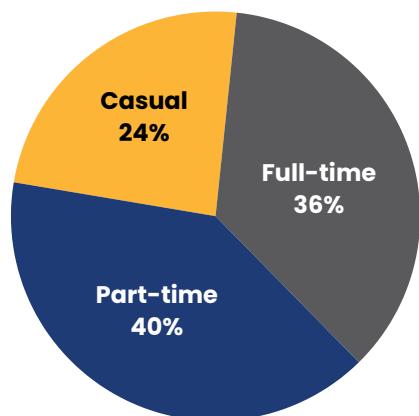
EXPENDITURE 2023 – 2024



TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME



EMPLOYMENT BY CATEGORY



GRATITUDE

& Acknowledgements

Our achievements are only possible due to the ongoing support by our funding bodies and Supporters. I would like to take the opportunity to thank our government funding partners:

- Queensland Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
- Queensland Department of Housing
- Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and Arts
- Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- Townsville City Council

KEY SUPPORTERS

Like 1974, Althea Projects relies heavily on the support from generous individuals, community services, and businesses. Although today, most of our work is funded, several programs are still not fully funded and we continue to rely on donations to enable us to deliver all the services that are needed in our community.

I want to make special mention of key supporters who have provided very important and significant financial support to us during 2023 / 2024.

Plus, a number of incredible individuals who raised money and donated to us. You are our Althea Angels who keep our local families strong, connected and protected. Every dollar donated goes back into our services and makes a significant difference to the wellbeing of individuals, children and families in our community.



- **BM Webb**
- **Bunnings**
- **Catholic Women's League Townsville**
- **Grill'd Townsville**
- **McGrath Estate Agents Townsville**
- **Mundingburra IGA Supermarket and the associated annual "IGA Charity Golf Day"**
- **MYER Townsville and the MYER Community Foundation**
- **Pickerings Auto Group**
- **Queensland Country Bank**
- **Rotary Clubs across Townsville**
- **Services Australia**
- **Willows Shopping Centre**



Grill'd Townsville



Rotary Clubs across Townsville



Catholic Women's League Townsville



Mundingburra
IGA Supermarket
"IGA Charity Golf Day"



ALTHEA'S Community Hub

Program Manager
David Morris

07



As I reflect on my first full 12 months as the Program Manager of Althea's Community Hub (ACH), I am humbled by the amazing work the team does every day in the ever-changing environment.

There have been many challenges and obstacles within the housing sector. However, the achievements also need to be celebrated as we continue to support the most vulnerable people in the Townsville community. We are proud of our accomplishments as a team, and we look forward to the coming year.

FY23-24 SNAPSHOT IN NUMBERS

- 317 individuals case-managed.
- 74 clients housed through short, medium, or long-term accommodation.
- 9,053 breakfasts and lunches for hub users.
- 864 families and individuals assisted through Emergency Relief Funding with \$84,815.25 spent on food vouchers, short-term/emergency accommodation, and bus and train tickets.
- 16,500kg of food donated from Oz Harvest, which we distribute to clients. Using Oz Harvest calculations, this equates to approximately 30,000 meals made available.



PROGRAM REVIEW

ACH continues to see a huge increase in individuals requiring assistance to secure or maintain accommodation due to Queensland's housing/rental crisis and the cost of living. With the extra resources the Queensland Government is committing to the Housing Sector, we will hopefully start seeing a shift in the housing sector in the coming years. In February 2024, the Homes for Queenslanders Plan was launched by the Queensland Government, and this will continue to strengthen the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017 – 2027. ACH was fortunate to receive an uplift payment of 20% for funding which is from the 1st of February 2024 until the 30th of June 2025 as part of this incentive. This additional funding will assist our sector in working with clients to meet their needs.



We have seen a significant increase in the number of individuals requiring Emergency Relief Funding due to increases to cost of living. Put simply, people are struggling to put food on the table. We are appreciative of the ongoing support from the Queensland Government for this funding to continue to support people in need. We pride ourselves on the relationships we have with other specialist homelessness services and agencies such as the Australian Red Cross, Yumba Meta, Murri Watch, FEAT and Anglicare MPIP Team, as we work together for the best interests of our clients.

SNAPSHOT OF ACH HIGHLIGHTS

As a team, some of our biggest highlights and celebrations have been the many events we have hosted throughout the year.



NAIDOC WEEK – ACH hosted a BBQ breakfast to celebrate NAIDOC Week thanks to a donation of \$250.00 from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Women's Alliance. We are grateful for the generosity of this community group.

IGNATIUS PARK COLLEGE Year 12 students assisted cooking a BBQ breakfast during Term 3. This has been the 13th year Ignatius Park College has been involved with Althea's Community Hub.

HOMELESSNESS WEEK was held in August. ACH hosted an Open Day and BBQ to showcase our services to the community. This allowed the staff to meet other agencies and network, connect with, and build positive working relationships within our community.

BUNNINGS BBQ – ACH hosted a BBQ at Bunnings, Fairfield Waters with staff from across all Althea Projects programs volunteering to cook and serve customers. The day was a remarkable success with a total of \$945.76 raised.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON was a massive success, with ACH being successful in securing a grant of \$1,200 through the Townsville City Council "Christmas Together in the Community". We fed 120 people, inviting all community members who are experiencing homelessness or social isolation. We were honoured to have Councillor Ann-Maree Greaney attend the event and help serve lunch alongside other community volunteers.

CHRISTMAS MARKETS – As part of our Christmas celebrations, we hosted Christmas market stalls during December for the hub users and the community. The market stall consisted of toys, clothes and miscellaneous items, which we sold for a minimal amount. We raised \$90 and all the leftover toys were donated to Wee Care.

OTHER EVENTS – It would be remiss of me to not mention the other events we have hosted and celebrated including Sports Days in partnership with the Australian Red Cross Homelessness Hub, Cultural lunches, and a Community Gardens Project with Bunnings Community Garden just to name a few.

OZHARVEST – I would like to highlight the sheer impact of the donations received from OzHarvest. We received approximately 16,000kg of food donations in the 2023-2024 financial year. This averages out to approximately 30,000 meals. Without these generous donations, we would not be able to provide lunch each day.

TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL also supports ACH with a grant each year that funds our fortnightly art class with Cassie. This opportunity to build connection through creativity is essential to improving the well-being of our hub users and is a welcome addition to the support we can provide.

RSPCA Outreach visits ACH on their community days and provides free vet clinics and checkups for individuals on a concession card with pets. This is a great service supporting furry best friends and their families.



MOREHEAD MEALS

Morehead Meals is the Althea Projects multi-level social enterprise. Morehead Meals connects our community through affordable, healthy pre-made frozen meals. Our social enterprise continues to thrive under the watchful eye of Chef Isabella. We are continuing to grow as a social enterprise and increasing our profile in the community through social media and community networking events.

Unfortunately, due to Cyclone Kirrily in January, we had to place Morehead Meals on hold for a few weeks because we lost our stock supply due to losing our power for several days. However, we were able to start again and build up our meal supply for our customers.

MOREHEAD MEALS SNAPSHOT

- 8,254 Morehead Meals cooked and delivered meals within the Townsville region
- 97 sponsored Morehead Meals
- 39 catering orders produced for business community groups

Thank You!

DONATIONS AND GRANT PARTNERS

ACH would like to say a big thank you for the ongoing generosity of donations we receive from:

- OzHarvest
- Second Bite (Coles North Ward)
- Food Diversion (Hermit Park & Townsville City Woolworths Stores)
- Townsville City Council
- Bunnings - Fairfield Waters
- Grill'd Burgers
- Banjos Bakery, Garbutt

VOLUNTEERS

Without the generosity and the valuable contribution of our wonderful volunteers, ACH would not be able to continue to offer the programs and services we do. These individuals gift their time and energy for the benefit of the community. It is an amazing gesture and very much appreciated. Rod, Drew, Margaret, and Ingrid thank you for your support throughout the year. We also want to thank all the project volunteers who contributed daily to keep the parks and hub clean and tidy. Your contributions have made such a difference to the lives of our vulnerable community.

ACH STAFF

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the tireless work that the team at ACH (Ebony, Caroline, Jo, Lee Tess, and Isabella) undertake day in and day out. Their ongoing support of me and the dedication they provide to the meet the needs of the hub users is outstanding. The work we do can be tireless and exhausting, and I appreciate the challenging work you all do every day. I look forward to working with my team in the year ahead.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge our community partners, stakeholders, schools, and the public who have continued to support and donate to ACH during the year. Without your support and generosity in assisting with events and celebrations, we would not have been able to create opportunities or witness the outcomes that have put a smile on the faces of the people we work with every day. We value your time and the partnerships we have formed with you all. You are contributing to making a difference in the lives of the individuals we work with every day.

ALTHEA

Foster & Kinship Program

Program Manager
Louise Skennerton



60,521

60,521 bed nights provided for children in need.

294 of these bed nights were placements arranged as respite for children not primarily placed with Althea Carers.

Althea Foster and Kinship Program (AFKP) continues to play a crucial role in recruiting, training and supporting foster and kinship carers.

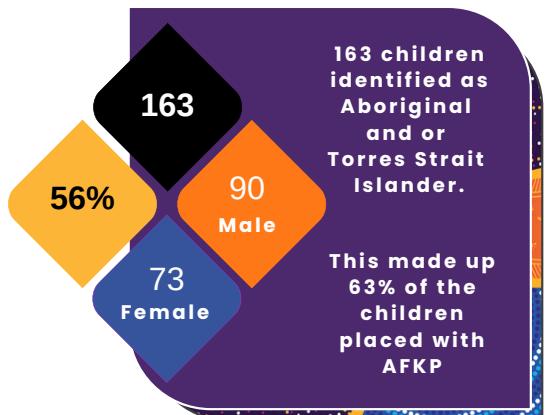
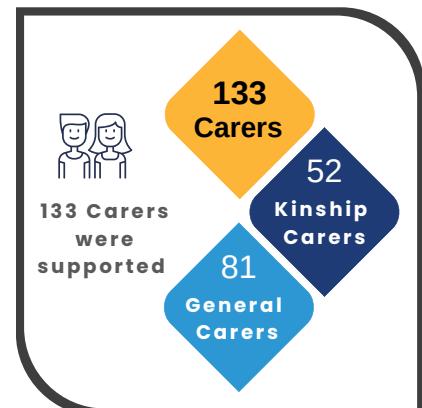
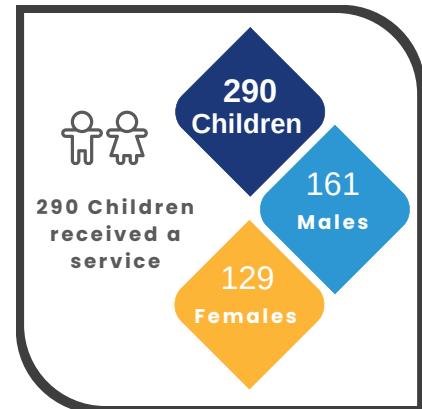
As a care team, we are highly committed to providing safe, nurturing homes for children who are unable to live with their birth families, ensuring they receive the very best care, stability and love they need to thrive.

We are committed to supporting all foster carers throughout their journey in changing the life of a child or young person in care. This support starts immediately when someone enquires about wanting to become a carer. Throughout the 23/24 year AFKP staff delivered the 'Getting Ready' training four times for individuals and couples wanting to become carers, and 'Getting Started' training once for new carers.

RECRUITMENT OF FOSTER CARERS

In May and June, we actively participated in a 4-day activation at Willows Shopping Centre to celebrate Althea Projects 50th year and to put a call out for more foster carers. BCF provided us with some great giveaways, and Willows supported us by organising Triple M to do a live broadcast at our site, as well as radio advertising to share the important message about becoming a foster carer.

It was a great opportunity to speak with the public and resulted in 9 expressions of interest to find out more about becoming a foster carer. A big thanks to BCF and Willows for their support in making this possible.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

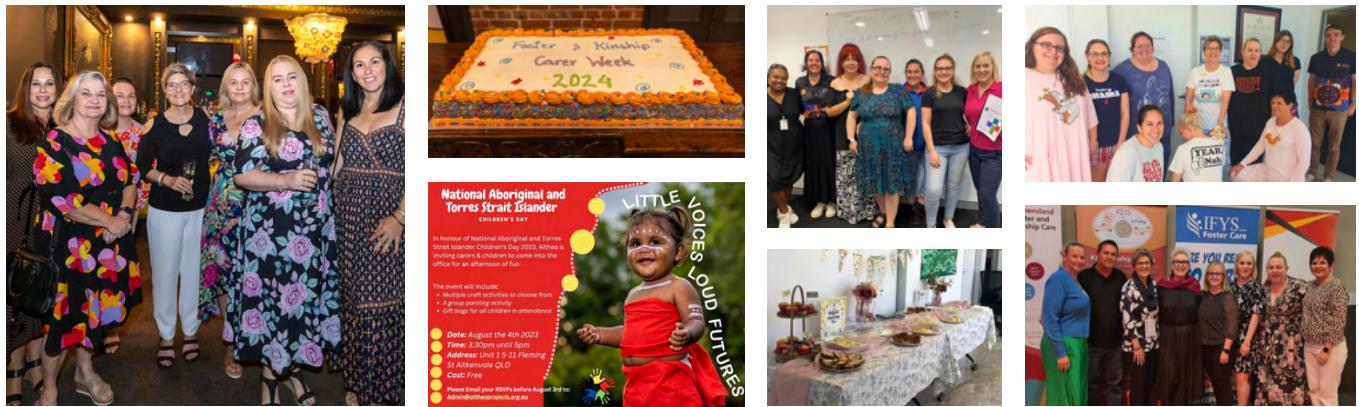
In May we sponsored two foster carers that are affiliated with Althea Projects to attend the Queensland Fostering and Kinship Conference along with five of our staff. This year's event was held on the Gold Coast and was a great professional development and networking opportunity.

The AFKP team have attended a variety of training and professional development sessions, these include Mental Health First Aid, Responding to Sexualised Behaviours, Vicarious Trauma and several Queensland Foster & Kinship Care facilitated training courses about specific aspects of the out of home care sector such as the Statement of Commitment.

HIGHLIGHT

A big achievement this past financial year has been getting two AFKP staff accredited to be able to deliver Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training (TCI-F). These staff are working collaboratively with Althea House staff to now deliver the training across the organisation to all relevant staff.

AFKP EVENTS



AFKP have organised, or been on the organising committee of several events this year.

- A formal dinner at the Brewery function room to acknowledge Foster and Kinship Care Week.
- Foster and Kinship Care Week lunch in Ayr.
- Foster and Kinship Care Week dinner in Charters Towers.
- Australia's Biggest Morning Tea with foster carers at the Fleming St office.
- An appreciation afternoon in the park for carers and children.
- A Christmas party for our carers and children at the North Shore pool.
- Brunch to fundraise for Pajama Angels Day.
- Craft and afternoon tea for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.

We know working together results in the best outcomes for children and we are committed to working as a care team. We continue to build and maintain effective working relationships with many key stakeholders, including our partners at the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, other carer support agencies and Queensland Health to name a few.

THANKS AND GRATITUDE

My thanks and gratitude to the AFKP team who do their absolute best every day to support carers to meet the standards of care for vulnerable children and are excellent at what they do. I would also like to thank Paula for being such a great Leader and CEO, and the Leadership Team for their collegial support.

Foster Carer Testimonial

“I am very grateful for the great support I have received from Ainslee and Josh, particularly through times of crisis. **”**

Carer Applicant Testimonial

“I found the pre-carer training very informative, particularly the way Anita and Mel delivered it. They didn't just read off the PowerPoint instead they discussed with the group and shared real examples to help us understand the topic. **”**

ALTHEA

House

Program Manager &
Althea House Coordinator



Althea House opened in July 2023. This has been an important first year of the development of this new standalone service for children 0 to 12 years of age within the child protection system who have been unable to be placed with a foster family.

With our unwavering mission, to provide a nurturing and safe environment for the children in our care, the Althea House staff worked closely with the Queensland Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services and other relevant stakeholders, to support each child's needs as they continue to learn and grow. The service was developed to provide a family-like environment with a structured routine that will support children with a sense of safety and belonging, while learning independent skills to help support them in everyday life. Althea House currently employs 1 permanent full-time, 4 permanent/part-time and 7 casual staff.

During the 2023–2024 financial year, Althea House has been home to 4 children from 4 different families. The children, referred through the Department of Child Safety, are supported by the Althea House Co-ordinator and Althea House staff to settle into their new home. Two children have transitioned out of Althea House during this time and subsequently one new child has moved in. The children living at Althea House are progressing toward reunification with family or placement in a long term foster care family.

While living at Althea House, the children are supported by staff to attend school, family contact visits, counselling, and specialists' appointments, as well as participating in their chosen extra-curricular activities and creative, fun excursions.

With our commitment to reconciliation and our Reconciliation Action Plan actively guiding our work, in October we were honoured to have Ashley Saltner and his team from Wulguruwaba Walkabouts perform a Smoking Ceremony at Althea House. This was important to us all as we show our respect and acknowledgement of cultural traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The smoking ceremony also provided spiritual cleansing of our new property, honouring the Wulguruwaba peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we deliver our service. Through the blessing of the ceremony, we create new beginnings and positive foundations for the work and people who access this space.



ALTHEA HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS

This has been a year of learning, and staff have demonstrated remarkable adaptability as we adjust service delivery to meet the unique needs of each child. All staff are trained and work from the Hope and Healing framework – Queensland's trauma informed framework. This supports caring for children, and young people in a way that understands and responds to their trauma-related and complex needs in a therapeutic manner. This is in addition to TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention), which is focused on supporting children to understand their emotions by connecting triggers to behaviours and emotions, whilst developing their self-care needs when feeling overwhelmed.



QUEENSLAND COUNTRY BANK GRANT

Our thanks to Queensland Country Bank for supporting us with a grant that enabled Althea House to enhance our home environment. This included installation of additional security measures to ensure we cover off on all the protective needs of the children living in the home. This has enabled us to increase the safety of the children and staff.



Additionally, this grant was utilised in the purchase of therapeutic tools that have assisted in increasing the children's sense of connection and emotional security within the home environment through the opportunity to engage in therapeutic calming and learning activities.



These resources have not only met the children's therapeutic needs but have also fostered the development of other skills, such as fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, creative play, and even math equations. Some resources purchased around these supports are therapeutic slime, various fidget devices, weighted mats, mindful stones building, sensory tubes, magnetic shape connectors, yoga cards and a large muscle memory foam mat.



The playground and climbing frame purchases have allowed the children to strengthen their gross motor skills in a safe environment supported by staff to encourage growth and development. It also encourages physical activity and time outdoors through stimulating play. The water/mess tray table, pop-up tents and small construction trucks allow the children to explore and extend their creative sides, whilst encouraging social play and discovering new interests.



Other sensory purchases were ear loops to avoid overstimulating noises in the room, sleep meditation music supports, a sleeping sensory sheet for a natural weighted effect and the sensory swing. These sensory resources allow the children to explore their different senses, build cognitive skills, and influence how they learn. The resources have helped stimulate the children's various sensory needs, assist in soothing them when they are overloaded with different needs, and help them feel more in control of their bodies and space.

MYER COMMUNITY FUND GRANT

Our thanks to Myer Community Fund for supporting our grant that allowed us to make some changes to the location of our IT and CCTV equipment and fully fence the front yard. These security measures provide greater privacy, security and safety for the children who reside in our service.

We look forward to supporting the ongoing care of the children living in Althea House and working with key stakeholders to support the children transition into family based placements.



WEE CARE

Tina Adams
(Acting Program Manager)



Townsville has faced many difficulties throughout 2023/2024 including the housing crisis and the surge in youth crime, and through this Wee Care has been able to continue to support and make a difference for many families in our local community.

Over the 2023/2024 year there has been a need for extra unfunded hours to remain open on Sundays and Mondays to provide emergency care for children in crisis situations, where there was no other responsible adult to care for the child/ren. Wee Care opened their doors for an extra 750hours in total, with emergency requests for placement coming from services including Townsville University Hospital, Queensland Police Service, and Department of Child Safety.

Cyclone Kirrily swept through Townsville on 25th January, dumping over a metre of rain. Although no flooding to the property, Wee Care lost power for several days due to power lines being ripped from the electrical connection of the building. Our thanks to all the trades that got us operational again in only a few days. Special thanks to Calvin who volunteered to cut back most of the fallen tree and Roselyn and Brad from My Lawn Ranger for working to rid us of the mess left behind. It was very hot and hard work and we appreciate all that everyone did at this time.

Emergency Relief Funding (ERF)

Our Emergency Relief program has continued to be in high demand. Along with government funding that was distributed predominantly in food vouchers, we also provided food parcels through the donations from Oz Harvest, Three Loaves Bakehouse, and The Baptist Church. This has made a huge difference in being able to support more clients when we were unable to provide a voucher. Zepher Foundation and Services Australia have continued donating school supplies including stationary, school uniforms, school shoes, school hats and swimming lesson gear for children to provide basic back to school resources.



ERF STATISTICS

Federal funded financial assistance for Families



Emergency Respite and ERF Client Testimonial

Our family had been homeless and living in our car for the past few months. Our young daughter had recently been admitted to hospital with a life-threatening condition that was exasperated by our living conditions. Wee Care enabled us to spend time with her at the hospital while our two other children were in their good hands. In the same week we were offered a house to live in which meant that our children would be attending a new school. Wee Care provided our children with school uniforms, shoes, bags, and stationery, which gave my children the confidence to attend school well prepared. We honestly cannot thank Wee Care enough!

WEE CARE *Highlights*

15

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Wee Care was able to attend community events, networking opportunities and fundraisers. These included - 2023 Mundingburra IGA Golf Day, Wee Care Children's Christmas Party, International Women's Day and celebrated NADIOC and SNAICC day with our children.

MUNDINGBURRA IGA GOLF DAY

The IGA Golf Day saw just over \$30,000 raised for Wee Care. Our thanks to Adam and Maree Westbury from Mundingburra IGA who held this year's fundraising event. The IGA Golf Day is a critically important fundraising event for us. It goes a long way to enable Wee Care to keep our doors open when the community needs us, not just when funding allows.

DONATIONS

With the current housing crisis, many families are struggling to find accommodation or be able to afford rent once they have secured a home. We have been privileged to receive donations from the wider community, both individually and as groups, and have been able to pass them forward to support many families. We are very thankful for the ongoing support from our local community.

The Nappy Collective donated cartons of nappies of a variety of sizes for our littlest people which we are very grateful for. The ladies at Patches of Bluewater worked many hours sewing and donated their beautiful patchwork quilts for the children who pass through Wee Care's doors. Major Supporters are Myer, Oz Harvest, BFitt, Services Australia, Bunnings Fairfield, Carmichael Ford, GIVIT, Zepher Foundation, Alana and Madison Foundation, Mundingburra IGA and Quota.





CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Christmas celebrations are always incredibly special at Wee Care. Thanks to the Townsville City Council Mayors Christmas Together grant, that helped cover several of the costs for the family Christmas party. The Christmas party brought the community together to celebrate 2023. Many of the families invited to participate would not have had the opportunity to attend an event such as this due to financial difficulties and social isolation. All families were able to spend time together, playing games, enjoying a meal in a picnic atmosphere, and embracing the joy of being part of a community. Families had the opportunity to form friendships with others in a safe environment.

Santa Claus aka Jaysson Adams donated his time (15 Christmases and counting) to give out presents to all the children. The presents were donated by QCWA, BFitt, Carmichael Ford, TAIHS and Townsville City Council.

Our thanks also to volunteers from Bunnings and our staff who did the face painting at the event. Families who attended, and those who could not, were gifted with food hampers, vouchers, and gifts to assist them through the holiday season. The hampers were predominately made up from donations from Carmichael Ford and Services Australia. We were also able to assist numerous families with school supplies, uniforms, and school bags.

PLAYGROUP

Wee Care's community Playgroup (Play Matters) continues to remain steady and over the last 12 months we have welcomed 31 families including many new families. Our families, from both national and international origins, and of diverse structures are joining together to bond and play with their treasured children. It has been such a lovely group of families, and we hope to continue to see our playgroup grow over the next 12 months.



CHILD SAFETY FAMILY CONTACT

Wee Care provided 2,245 hours of support to 24 families that attended supervised contacts at Wee Care this financial year. We also provide transport for these families and often facilitate family contact sessions in the community at various child-friendly locations. It is wonderful to see a child's face light up when they spend time with their family.

FIRST STEPS

Our First Steps Program is currently on hold as the program was no longer suitable to be facilitated by staff at the Wee Care premises or the Althea House premises. We are hoping that this valuable program can be up and running again, once appropriate infrastructure can be sourced.

FAMILY SUPPORT PLANS

We support families on support plans by providing regular respite for the children on a two to six weekly basis, depending on the individual needs of each family. We also support these families to access other services that would benefit them in their current circumstances, and we provide transport, when possible, to access our services, including playgroup. For the duration of this reporting period, we supported 19 families on family support plans.

STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Wee Care currently employs 2 full-time, 10 permanent part-time and 6 casual staff members. Althea Projects is committed to upskilling our staff which is something we support staff to access as much as practical to meet their planned professional development needs. Training included - Hope and Healing, CPR & First Aid, Fire Training, Food Handling and Medication Management. Added to our mandatory training which is currently being rolled out, is Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI). All staff at Wee Care will be required to attend this 4-day training.

VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to Mick Redgewell our handy man, who is always available to fix and repair any small, and sometimes large jobs that we need doing. Mick has certainly saved Wee Care thousands of dollars in labour over the past 12 months. Thank you Mick you are genuinely appreciated.

END OF AN ERA

It was with great sadness that Wee Care had to say goodbye to our manager of 19 years, Lynne Josey who retired in November 2023. Lynne is an integral part of Wee Care's history and is recognised for almost two decades of dedication to Townsville's most vulnerable.

WELCOME

Wee Care welcomed our new Program Manager Kristy Jensen. Kristy started at Wee Care in April 2024 and has been welcomed by all staff and families. Kristy brings over 16 years experience working in and managing family support, child protection, and child and family focused services.



Thank you

THANK YOU

Finally, I would like to thank all our wonderful staff for their ongoing dedication to providing a safe, caring environment for our children. With a special thanks to Bridie in Administration for all of the behind the scenes work she does to support our daily service delivery.

Our staff demonstrate unwavering dedication in fulfilling their role to provide a high-quality work environment and they all contribute to making Wee Care welcoming and bright.

Wee Care, let's keep building a better future, together!

Tina Adams, Acting Program Manager (July 2023-May 2024).



MICHELLE MAGLIS PLAQUE

To honour Michelle Maglis, a memorial plaque is mounted in the foyer on the wall at Wee Care and will keep her memory alive for generations to come.

Appreciation and thanks to Tina Adams for her outstanding leadership and dedication shown during her time as Acting Program Manager. Tina's commitment, hard work and guidance is deeply appreciated and made a significant impact on the program.

RECONCILIATION

Action Plan

Paula La Rosa, CEO



In the past 12 months, Althea Projects had made significant progress in advancing our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), deepening our commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our RAP continues to guide us to achieve our commitment to promoting reconciliation across our organisation, through the services we deliver in our community.

RAP Highlights

Commencing the renewal of a new RAP. Working closely with Reconciliation Australia, our RAP Working Group is creating our new RAP to again guide us to take all opportunities to build relationships and increase cultural understanding so that our work with and alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and families supports the goals identified by all that access our services. For us, this means that we ensure our workplace and services, and all our interactions are culturally safe, culturally welcoming and culturally respectful. Our goal is to have our new RAP finalised early 2025.

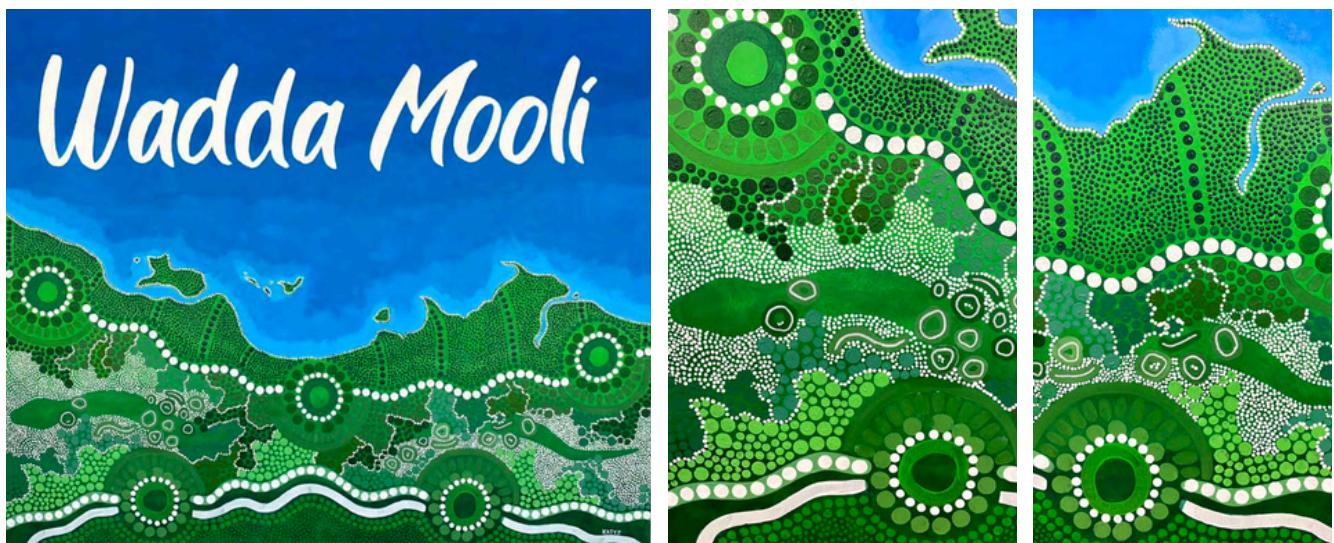
Our Reconciliation Grants continue to support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and adults. This year, through our two grant rounds, we distributed almost \$10,000, supporting more than 40 individuals, most of which are children and young people, so they could access a range of sporting and education supports. This contribution helps to alleviate the financial pressure on our families and supports them to be recognised and promote positive change and self-growth within their community.

Smoking Ceremony of Althea House

Ashley Saltner and his team from Wulgurukaba Walkabouts performed a smoking ceremony at Althea House. This was important to us all as we show our respect and acknowledgement of cultural traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The smoking ceremony also provided spiritual cleansing of our new property, honouring the Wulgurukaba peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land we deliver our service on and through the blessing of the ceremony, we create new beginnings and positive foundations for the work and people who access this space.





Wadda Mooli / Welcome Signs to our head office: Katisha Skeene (Tish), a Bindal woman, our Intake Officer and a budding artist, was commissioned this year by our CEO to provide artwork for each of our office's front entrance.

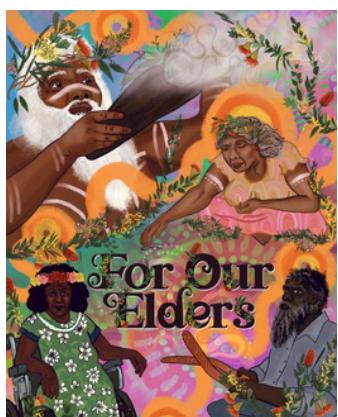
Tish has engaged with all services to work out the unique artwork for each site. We are excited that the first welcome sign is up at head office, creating a beautiful, culturally welcome space for all who visit.

CULTURAL EVENTS

This year Althea Projects and our families and staff have participated in a range of cultural events, including:

- Cultural Awareness Training – staff
- NAIDOC Week celebrations – NAIDOC Gold sponsorship and stall holder and participation in all NAIDOC events held in all communities – staff and families.
- Reconciliation Week- staff and families
- Indigenous Literacy Day – Jarjums at our Wee Care Centre
- National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Children's Day – staff and families
- Townsville Indigenous Community Network Forum – Information sharing by all Aboriginal and Torres Strait services to support all clients attached to Althea Projects.

Althea Projects will continue to play a crucial role in our reconciliation efforts to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the community on a daily basis. Providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and having our RAP to guide us is now part of our organisations DNA. As an organisation we are thriving from reconciliation practices and processes being an everyday part of our day to day operations.





VALUES, MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Supporting for 50 years

Our Values

Human Dignity and Respect

We treat everyone with tolerance, patience and goodwill and we are authentic and non-judgemental in all our engagements.

Diversity and Equity

Everyone is welcome and valued and their identity, beliefs and experiences are celebrated and shape the way we share information and insights.

Cultural Mindfulness

We acknowledge, respect and embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as our First Nations peoples of the lands in which we walk, work and live. We embed these traditions and histories into our practice frameworks and all that we do, along with all other cultures.

Accountability and Transparency

We are open and honest in our interactions, we communicate clearly and we courageously make and honour our commitments.

Success and Collaboration

We are flexible and creative, leading by example as we support and listen to each other, value teamwork and embrace diverse ideas to strengthen financial sustainability and exceptional business performance.

Mission

To support and strengthen individuals, families, children, and young people so they experience social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing and reach their full potential.

Vision

We believe that everyone deserves to feel safe, secure and supported so they can lead an independent and fulfilling life. We achieve this through our diverse programs in child protection, family support, foster and kinship care and homelessness services.

Capability Statement

Althea Projects is a leader in community service in Townsville, with fully-equipped and interconnected programs in child protection, fostering, homelessness and family support. Through these programs, we continually demonstrate our reputation for excellence, delivering compassionate, evidence-informed services, driven by best practice frameworks. As a preferred employer, we provide an inclusive, supportive work environment where every member of our team is empowered to make a meaningful impact. As a sustainable organisation, we are known for our commitment to innovation, environmental responsibility and a culture that values and celebrates every individual.

OUR IMPACT

2023 / 2024

