

ANNUAL REPORT

2014-15



Interrelate and its membership acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians of the Australian land on which it provides its services; celebrates their ongoing culture and contribution to society; and respects their elders, both past and present.



Kutanya is proudly working together to strengthen and advance reconciliation both within Interrelate and the broader community.



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Interrelate is pleased to acknowledge our Patron, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of New South Wales, who granted Interrelate his Vice-Regal Patronage on 2 October 2014.

Interrelate would also like to thank and acknowledge outgoing Patron, Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO, former Governor of New South Wales, for her continuous support and contribution to Interrelate during her years of Patronage.



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Who we are

Since 1926, Interrelate has specialised in supporting parents and children to strengthen family relationships. We provide affordable services including family dispute resolution, case management, counselling, services for carers, children's contact services, specialised mental health support and relationship education to the largest relationship services client group in NSW.

This year Interrelate assisted more than 62,000 people through our network of centres and school based programs to strengthen their relationships. Our working relationship with over 600 schools enabled us to deliver our education programs to 40,800 children and families.

Purpose, Vision and Values

Our purpose

To enable people to work through life's challenges and strengthen their relationships.

Our vision

To lead the way in providing responsive, cutting-edge, transformative relationship services with and for our diverse communities.

Interrelate provides a range of quality services, relevant to community needs, which aim to empower people to live and relate more effectively. We are committed to responding to the vulnerabilities of families and children in their communities and to building stronger relationships. Interrelate's work is underpinned by the principles of strengthening family relationships; fostering more resilience within families and communities; and working in the best interests of children to create supportive family environments

Our values

The **RELATE** values that guide all that we do at Interrelate are:

Respect - Foster an environment of respect and a strength-based culture in all contact with clients and each other.

Equity - Provide people with equitable access to services and information, acknowledging the diversity, needs, rights and worth of all people.

Leadership - Be recognised as a leader in providing quality relationship services in a way that maximises outcomes for a diverse range of target groups.

Accountability - Commit to sound ethical principles and standards of practice and operate within an outcome-based framework that recognises shared responsibility and accountability.

Transparency - Serve the needs of staff and clients in a fair, ethical and impartial manner and providing consistent and transparent practices and procedures.

Empowerment - Offer services that focus on empowering people to build capability and resilience.



Our Service Charter

Interrelate promises to:

- provide you with a safe environment
- protect your privacy
- recognise diversity and provide equal service opportunities among all communities, families, couples and individuals regardless of gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, race, ethnicity or disability
- have highly skilled staff to help you
- provide you with up-to-date information
- refer you to other services as appropriate and help you contact them
- listen to any complaints and feedback you might have

Confidentiality

Anything you tell our staff is confidential. We will only disclose personal information if you give us permission or if required or authorised to by law, for example, to protect children or others from harm.

Where We Are

Interrelate has 10 major regional locations across NSW with 27 outreach locations into the broader community.





Chairperson's , Message

It is a privilege to present this report to our members on the 2014-15 financial year on behalf of your Board.

In 2014 Interrelate set the foundations with a new organisational structure and a strengthened Executive. In 2015 we built on this foundation with a refreshed Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan focuses the organisation's leadership on: Our Services, Staff, Funding, Relationships and Responsibilities.

Our services continue to grow. The early intervention Family Mental Health Support Service (Connect) started in Wyong in 2014 and has now expanded to Bourke, Cobar and Coonamble in the Far West; and to Kempsey, Nambucca and Coffs Harbour in the state's north. Connect assists when the mental health and wellbeing of young people are at risk.

Our plans are to nurture staff and to support them with quality systems and leadership development. Staff Reference Groups continue to provide expertise and promote the free flow of ideas and communication. The Board thanks all staff, for enabling clients to strengthen their relationships and work through life's challenges.

Our plans include both the growth of existing and new sources of funding. We plan to grow the Schools Services programs and to increase the number of students that Interrelate reaches. The 2015 School Services Anti-Bullying Poster Competition attracted entries from over 5000 children and it led to our CEO being interviewed on national television and drew praise from His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AS DSC (Ret'd) Governor of New South Wales. More importantly, it started conversations in schools all over NSW, about how adults can better support children and create bullying-free school environments.

Our relationships include many community partners for our service delivery. Strong community relationships are essential for Interrelate to be effective.

Our responsibility is to achieve the most that we can towards Interrelate's purpose, with the available resources and in a way that is respectful of environmental impacts.

Our CEO, Patricia Ocelli, continues to set a relentless pace for herself, the Executive and the whole leadership team in pursuit of the Strategic Plan. On behalf of the Board, I



“ Our plans are to nurture staff and to support them with quality systems and leadership development. ”

thank Patricia for her leadership and for the way she and her Executive Team uphold the organisation's values.

I pay tribute and express my special thanks, on behalf of the Board, to our recently retired colleagues, Graham Seton and Faye Reid.

Graham stepped down at the end of January 2015. With his late wife, Anne, Graham contributed to our leadership for over 40 years. Graham was incisive in boardroom discussions. In recent years, Graham expressed his passion for reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In November 2014, at Graham's final AGM as a Director, Interrelate acknowledged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional custodianship of the Australian land on which it operates in our Constitution. It was fitting that the Board chose Mr Paul Newman, a Traditional Owner from Condobolin, on Wiradjuri nation country, for the casual vacancy position on the Board that was created by Graham's retirement.

Faye stepped down at the end of July 2015. It was Faye who came up with the name of Interrelate and her life and values epitomise what Interrelate stands for. Both Faye and her

husband, Laurie, have contributed significantly to the organisation in service and leadership roles over many decades. Faye's contributions over eleven years on the Board were always well considered, wise and full of humility. Faye is ever mindful of the welfare of staff and the importance of education and training. At Faye's final Board meeting, the Board approved the John and Irene Robson Scholarship for 2016.

I thank all of my Board colleagues for their diligence in the governance of this great organisation.

Alan Gibson

Chairperson, Interrelate



CEO, Message

This 2014-15 financial year marked Interrelate's 89th year of exemplary service to communities across the state. Interrelate supported over 61,000 individuals across its many services. The quality of our services were reinforced through our client satisfaction survey results of the Family Support Programs with 89% of men and 90% of women agreeing or strongly agreeing to having new skills and knowledge to use in their relationships as a result of interacting with Interrelate. A testament to the quality and respect that is displayed by our staff to clients was reflected in the result that 99% of clients agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I feel I was treated with respect'. I commend you to read our client stories and regional highlights which demonstrate the many outstanding outcomes achieved through the service delivered by our dedicated staff.

As well as maintaining quality service provision, this year has been an extremely productive year. Service growth, the refinement of our organisational systems, continuous improvement of our services, investment in our staff through staff development, training and engagement have been some of the many outcomes.

Interrelate achieved a 3.9% increase in revenue, with 11% of the reduction to our administrative office expenses being attributed to efficiencies. Interrelate's financial position has strengthened over the past year, with a 7% increase in our net asset position. This was driven by growth in our property investments in Newcastle, Lismore, Port Macquarie and Dubbo. With equity of \$8.1 million and no debt, Interrelate is in a very strong position to invest in the growth priorities in our Strategic Plan.

Our investment in the School Services Business Plan has seen a growth of 14.7% in participants in our education programs and a 7% increase in revenue. There was also growth in fee for service income (Employee Assistance Program and Supervision) of 15% for the year.

The Annual Report highlights many significant achievements including the bedding down of new services such as the Family Mental Health Support Service in Wyong, now extended to Bourke, Cobar, Coonamble, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey and Nambucca; the delivery of the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program in Lismore now at full capacity; the extension of the Royal Commission Community Based Support Services into each of our service



“ I would like to thank our staff for their generosity in sharing their expertise and the many community partners who contribute to the support of Interrelate clients through joint service delivery, collaboration or contribution to service development through research and service innovation. ”

Centres and supporting inmate communities; and the establishment of the Drought Counselling Service into Cobar, Walgett and Warren.

Interrelate's positive engagement with the Department of Social Services and the Attorney-General's Department has resulted in the granting of five-year Funding Agreements for the Family and Relationship Services and Family Law Services in addition to the granting of an extension of four years to the Family Law Pathway Networks we support.

The Department of Social Services also provided a further two-year commitment to the funding of the Specialist Family Violence Services in Lismore, the Mid North Coast and Caringbah. This funding will focus on case management, training and support to families and individuals experiencing domestic violence.

This year, Interrelate invested in protecting its intellectual property through auditing and developing systems to safeguard, trademark and provide public recognition of the moral rights of staff to product development. This strategy will aid to secure the future of the organisational investment.

Staff have been major contributors to the investment in Interrelate's future. Staff Reference Groups focused on Aboriginal service delivery, Work Health and Safety, organisational culture and Environmental Sustainability. Staff Service Practice Groups reviewed and strengthened products, services and practices including the Parents Not Partners, Bullying Awareness and Moving into the Teen Years Programs, the Case Notes Procedural Guide, Counselling Models and the Quality Staffing Framework. I would like to thank our staff for their generosity in sharing their expertise and the many community partners who contribute to the support of Interrelate clients through joint service delivery, collaboration or contribution to service development through research and service innovation.

Whilst the year was marked with significant achievements, this year was also a year of making tough decisions. In February, the Board endorsed a resolution to cease the operation of Interrelate's Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The RTO was first registered in 2011 and for a period of two years it lay dormant. In 2013 and 2014 Interrelate invested in the RTO, however following significant investment



“ I would like to thank and acknowledge our staff, who contribute to the organisation in many different ways including direct service delivery, management or corporate services for each day they contribute to the success of Interrelate with warmth, passion and commitment ”

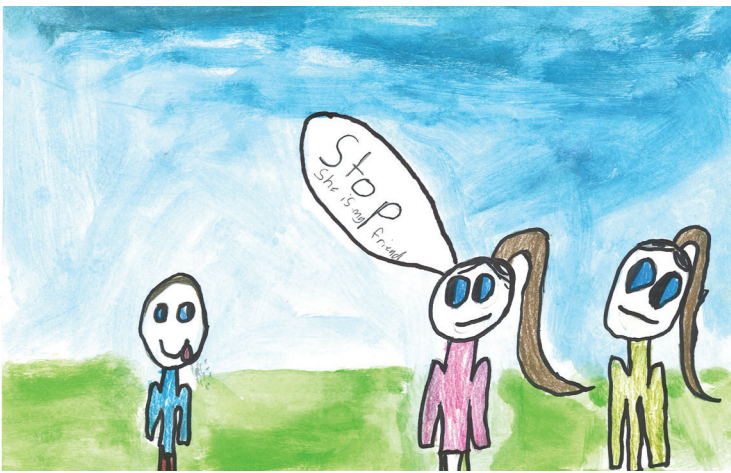
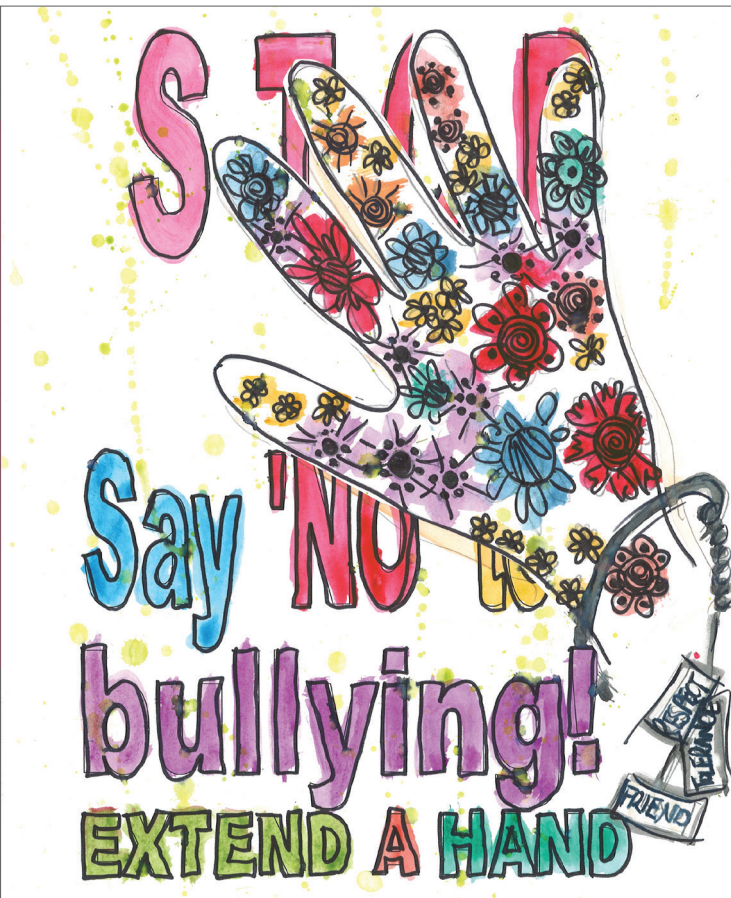
and strategies, Interrelate was not able to overcome the significant levels of financial and human resource investment required to make the RTO viable and compliant.

Next year presents new and exciting opportunities for interrelate with a Strategic Plan that will lead our work for a further three years. The Strategic Plan focusses on five key areas; Our Services; Our People; Our Income; Our Partnerships and Our Social Corporate Responsibility and presents a clear foundation for our continued growth and development.

I would like to thank and acknowledge our staff, who contribute to the organisation in many different ways including direct service delivery, management or corporate services for each day they contribute to the success of Interrelate with warmth, passion and commitment and to the Board, who hold the stewardship of Interrelate in the best interest of the communities we serve.

Patricia Occelli

CEO, Interrelate





Our Board



Alan Gibson

Finance expertise

Appointed 2008



Colin Adams

Finance/asset
management expertise

Appointed 2003



Breda Diamond

Human resources/general
management expertise

Appointed 2007



Paul Lewis

Legal expertise

Appointed 2007



Paul Newman

Mediation/
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Engagement

Appointed 2015



Nur Oyman

Information technology/
general management
expertise

Appointed 2015



Board Directors



Doug Sotheren

Clinical expertise

Appointed 2007



Lisa Sweeney

Marketing/media expertise

Appointed 2009



Hon. Graham West

Youth/management
expertise

Appointed 2011

“ The Board thanks all staff, for enabling clients to strengthen their relationships and work through life’s challenges. ”



Outgoing Bo

In 2014-15, Interrelate said goodbye to two long-serving Board Directors, Graham Seton and Faye Reid.

After 40 years of service, Graham Seton retired at the end of January. Graham's professional career involved architectural practice, project and property management and general administration. Both he and his late wife Anne took a keen interest in Interrelate since 1974, when he joined the organisation's NSW Council. In Graham's early years with Interrelate, he served as State Chairman for five years and then Federal President of the Family Life Movement. Over his many years of service, Graham provided extensive experience, knowledge and valuable insights to the organisation.

Upon his retirement Graham said, "The thing that really struck me, was that after 40 years I still find this organisation has all that compassion and concern for people."

After 35 years of service, Faye Reid retired at the end of the year. Faye started her career with Interrelate as a Sexuality Educator and then held various clinical, supervisory and management roles, including Regional Management positions. Over a period of 16 years, Faye developed and provided various training courses and was Chairperson of the Training and Accreditation Committee. After 25 years as a staff member, Faye was appointed to the Board in 2004, where she continued to share her extensive knowledge and expertise.

At her last Board meeting Faye said, "I would like to acknowledge the staff of Interrelate who, from the organisation's inception, have been dedicated, competent and visionary. It has been my privilege to be part of the staff over many years and to have personally benefitted, as well as seeing evidence of the positive change in people's lives facilitated by Interrelate staff. I have had the rare privilege as a clinician to hear people's stories and be trusted to assist them in their lives."





ard Directors

“ As one gets older, it is characteristic to reflect a great deal. In doing this, I put on my group leaders hat and think of Tuckman’s model of group development which talks about four stages....forming, storming, norming and performing. The four stages can be considered for any group working together and has meaning for me personally at this stage of retirement. The reason being, Tuckman added a fifth stage, mourning, when a person leaves the group which has been a cohesive space in which to work, speak and be heard ”
- Faye Reid

We extend tremendous thanks to both Graham and Faye for their unique contributions to Interrelate and wish them both well in their retirement.

Faye Reid



Graham Seton





Governance and Accountability

Interrelate is a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Board of Directors is the governing body of Interrelate and is supported by the CEO and Executive Team. The Board has broad powers to make decisions and exercise the powers and functions of the organisation within the constraints of Interrelate's Constitution and the Corporations Act 2001.

The Board's task on behalf of its members is to ensure that Interrelate achieves its Vision, Mission and Objectives, and in doing so, avoids adverse and unacceptable outcomes. The Board focuses on ensuring the values of Interrelate are respected, along with ensuring that Interrelate members are represented in determining appropriate organisational performance. To achieve this, the Board maintains a clear link between Interrelate and its Members whilst monitoring Board-level policies which provide direction and boundaries for both the functions of the Board and the CEO.

The Board's focus

- operates in accordance with Interrelate's Constitution
- gives attention to the systems and processes that ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of the organisation
- operates efficiently and effectively, with a shared understanding of the governance role of the Board and the specific responsibilities of the CEO and the Executive Team

Board Committees

Interrelate has three Board Committees which assist the Board to carry out its role. In 2014-15 the following committees were active:

Finance, Audit and Asset Management Committee

The Finance Audit and Asset Management Committee worked with the Executive in reviewing the organisation's Asset Management Plan. While acknowledging that our most important asset is our people, a strong balance sheet and fit for purpose workplaces, enhance Interrelate's overall sustainability into the future.



People, Culture and Performance Committee

The People, Culture and Performance Committee worked with the Executive to implement policies and procedures to enhance and support the organisations values and positive workplace culture. This has included trialling a new Issues Resolution Policy, now under further refinement, reviewing the Performance Framework and the Voice Cultural Survey and continuing to share ideas and insights to support our staff.

Governance and Engagement Committee

The Governance and Engagement Committee worked with the Executive to review reporting frameworks and compliance with quality service delivery and to further evaluate engagement with key stakeholders including clients, funders and communities. The Committee supported the review of the Governance Manual, Board Induction and the process for engagement with our research partners, including refining our research priorities.

Our Leadership Structure

The Board of Directors is responsible for governance and is supported by the CEO and Executive Team. There are four business units to support our work:

- Corporate Services & Business Development
- Operations
- People, Culture & Performance
- Research & Service Development





Our Executive Team



Patricia Occelli

Chief Executive Officer

Over 28 years of experience in design, delivery and leadership in the human service industry in the government and non-government sectors.



Melanie Bale

Head of People, Culture & Performance

Over 21 years of experience in youth work, community planning and development, and human resource management in the government, non-government and private sectors.



Graeme O'Connor

Head of Corporate Services & Business Development

Over 22 years of experience in financial and business management across both the private and non-government sectors.



Matthew Stubbs

Head of Research & Service Development

Psychologist with over 21 years of experience as a counsellor, educator, writer and manager in diverse fields including family relationship services, mental health, youth, alcohol and other drugs and homelessness.



Suella Wright

Head of Operations, Regional Services

Over 26 years of experience in delivery and leadership in health and social care services in the government and non-government sectors.



Sharon Grocott

Head of Operations, Sydney & Statewide Services

Over 27 years of experience in the community sector with a focus on young people, families and people with disabilities. This includes senior management roles and experience in building sustainable cross sector partnerships.



Staff Reference Groups

As Interrelate values the contribution and expertise of our staff, a number of Staff Reference Groups have been established to improve operations and maintain quality service delivery.

Environmental Committee

In 2014-15, the Environmental Committee was established with staff representatives from each main office and region. The Environmental Committee meets on a monthly basis via teleconference and aims to minimise our environmental footprint by working with staff and stakeholders to ensure that we have a sustainable future. Refer to the Corporate Social Responsibility section for 2014-15 outcomes.

Kutanya

Kutanya, which means “all” or “together” in the Barkindji language, is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reference group. Kutanya consists of the CEO, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff, reflecting that at the very heart of this reference group is the hope of reconciliation. Kutanya aims to support the delivery of quality services to Indigenous communities while also providing support to our Indigenous staff. Kutanya proudly works to strengthen and advance reconciliation both within Interrelate and the broader community.

In 2014-15, the group introduced the Kutanya badge, given to all new employees to represent our commitment to reconciliation, and developed the Kutanya video, which highlights some of the great work being undertaken in Indigenous communities in our regions. They also undertook the important work of developing the Reconciliation Action Plan for 2015-17 and consulted on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy, both due to be launched next year. In addition, they provided advice to the Board on the recruitment of an Indigenous Director to the Board and consulted on regional specific programs or projects.



Kutanya is proudly working together to strengthen and advance reconciliation both within Interrelate and the broader community. Please accept this gift for you to wear on our ongoing journey towards reconciliation.

 **interrelate**
relationship experts since 1926

Watch the Kutanya video at <https://youtu.be/RK6AgbQQWkw>



Strength to Strength

The Strength to Strength (S2S) Reference Group is a consultative group who support the development and implementation of projects under the S2S initiative. This initiative focuses on workplace culture, ensuring workplace behaviour, practices and communication are appropriate and reflective. The group identifies areas in which program, process and/ or policy development may be needed. The objectives of the group are to:

- operate as a mechanism for the review and development of projects within the scope of the S2S
- bring together expertise and diverse organisational knowledge
- be an equitable forum where staff have the opportunity to be involved in discussions about S2S products, engagement and deliverables
- complement other elements of Interrelate's broader consultation framework
- be a means of identifying innovative ideas that can enhance the strengthening of staff relationships across the organisation.

Refer to Strength to Strength in the People & Culture section for 2014-15 outcomes.

Service Practice Groups

This year, the first Service Practice Groups (SPG) were established with the aim to review and improve different aspects of service delivery. These groups are made up of suitably qualified and experienced representatives from across the organisation. These representatives provide expert input on behalf of their colleagues to improve the quality of our products and services.

The first SPG reviewed one of our flagship post separation parenting group programs, Parents Not Partners (PnP). This program is for parents involved in high levels of conflict during separation and requires a high level of skill to facilitate and manage. The SPG worked diligently to develop a new look program which uses cutting edge research, such as neurodevelopment, to help parents better understand the genesis of conflict, its effects on children and relationships, as well as the potential solutions to the cycles they find themselves in. A review of our other flagship program Building Connections began and will continue into next year. School Services SPGs reviewed the Bullying Awareness and Moving into the Teens Years school programs. In 2015-16 these groups will continue to review selected programs to ensure that they remain innovative, responsive and relevant to our diverse communities.



Work Health & Safety (WHS) Consultative Committee

The WHS Consultative Committee encourages a proactive and co-operative approach to WHS between management and staff. The Committee, elected by employees, meets once a quarter via teleconference to discuss issues relating to WHS. They provide advice on these issues to management and also assist in developing and implementing WHS policies and procedures. The Committee acts on any concerns raised by staff and investigates risks to health and safety.

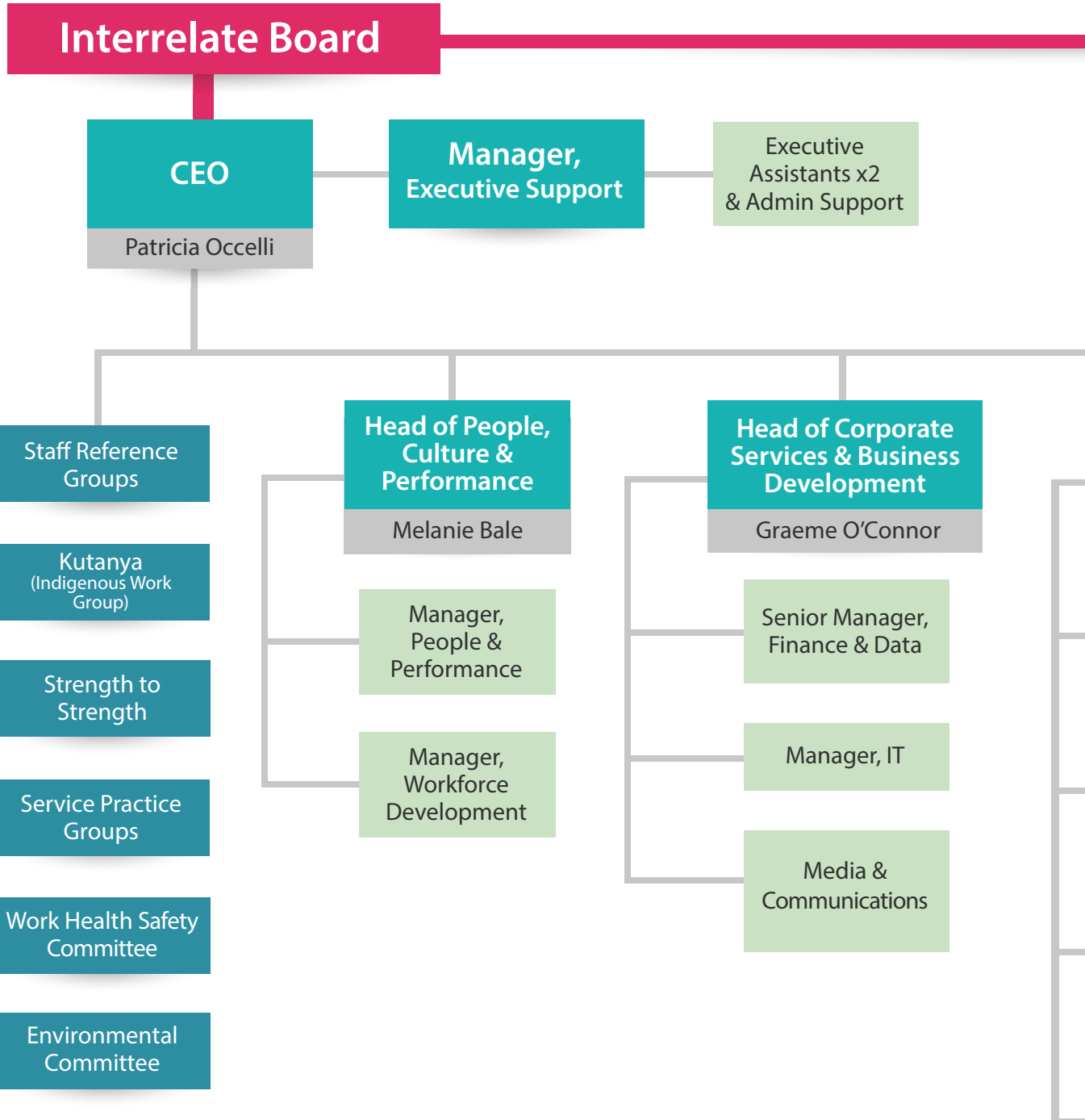
The Committee members personally induct all new staff in their regions in WHS. They conduct proactive audits of all permanent and regular outreach sites annually, to identify and control risks. This year, the Audit tool was reviewed and enhanced to better suit the needs of the organisation. The Committee members are active in vehicle checks and reports, incident reports, corrective actions and first aid supply monitoring. They also coordinate the Emergency Wardens and First Aid Officers and monitor or organise fire equipment and evacuation/lockdown drills. This year, Evacuation Plans were updated and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans were introduced.



“ The WHS Consultative Committee encourages a proactive and co-operative approach to WHS between management and staff ”



Organisatio





onal Chart

Board Committees

Finance,
Audit & Asset
Management
Committee

Governance &
Engagement
Committee

People, Culture
& Performance
Committee

Head of Research
& Service
Development

Matthew Stubbs

Senior Manager,
FDR

Senior Manager,
Research &
Evaluation

Senior Manager,
Relationship &
Specialist Support

Senior Manager,
High Intervention
& Mental Health
Services

Head of
Operations
Regional Services

Suella Wright

Area Manager,
Lower Mid-North
Coast

Area Manager,
Upper Mid-North
Coast

Area Manager,
Newcastle

Area Manager,
Central Coast

Area Manager,
Central & Far West

Area Manager,
North Coast

Head of Operations
Sydney & Statewide
Services

Sharon Grocott

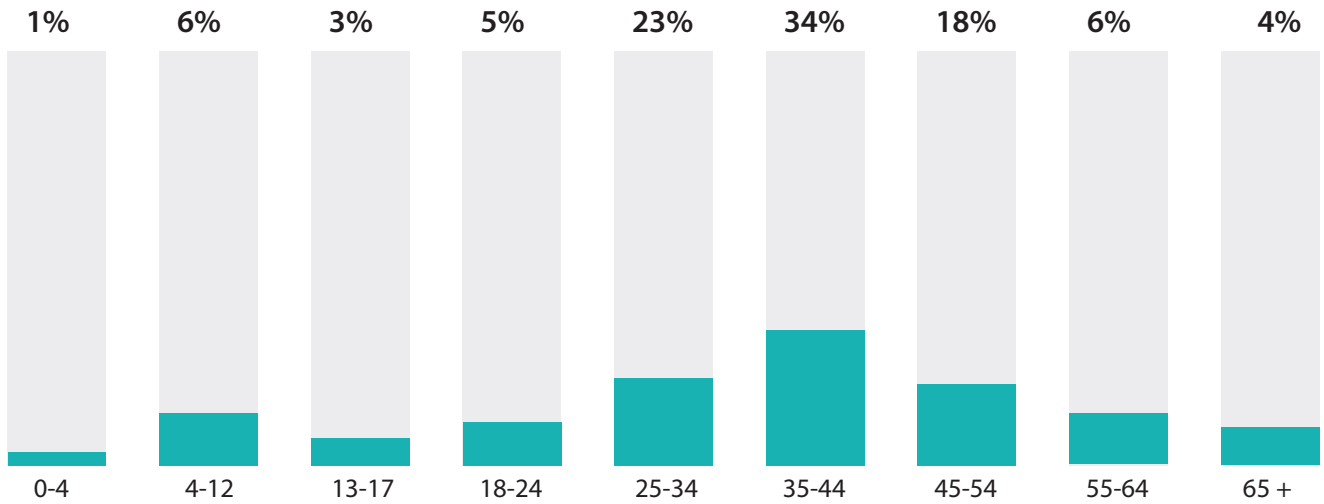
Area Manager,
Greater Sydney

Royal
Commission
Community
Based Support
Services

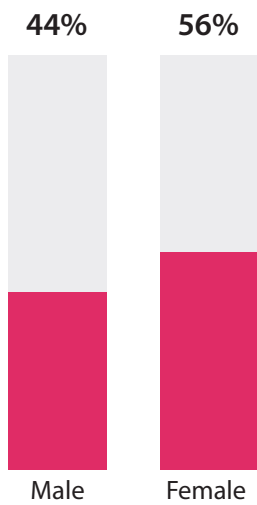


Who We Help

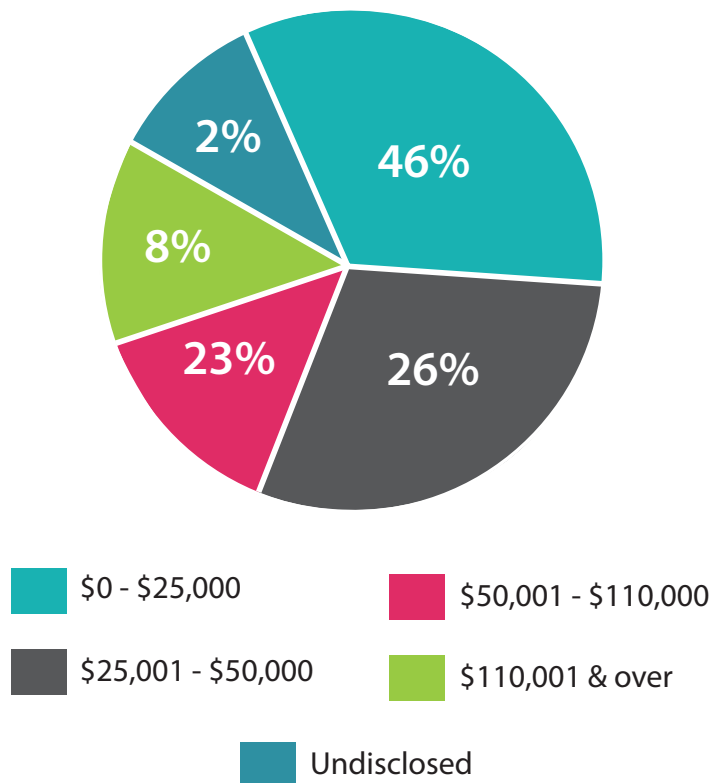
Age



Gender

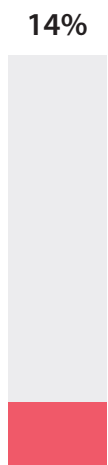


Income

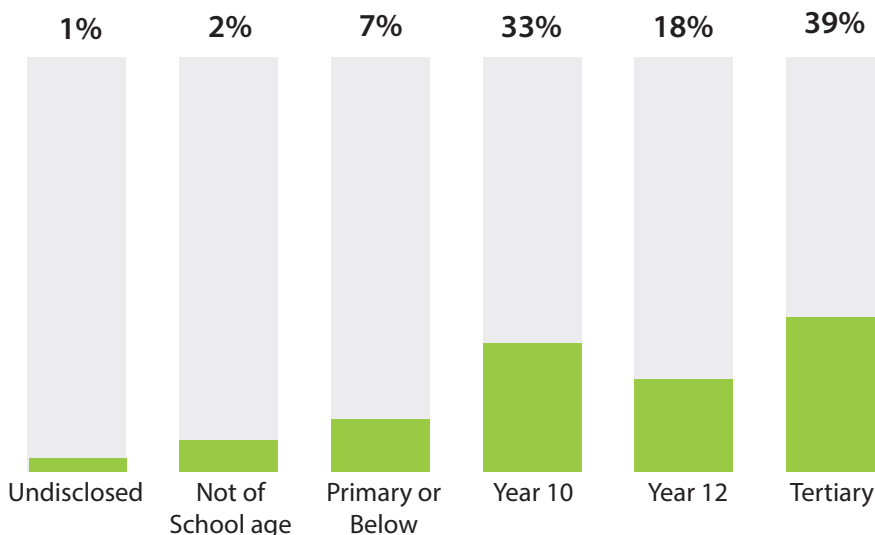




Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander



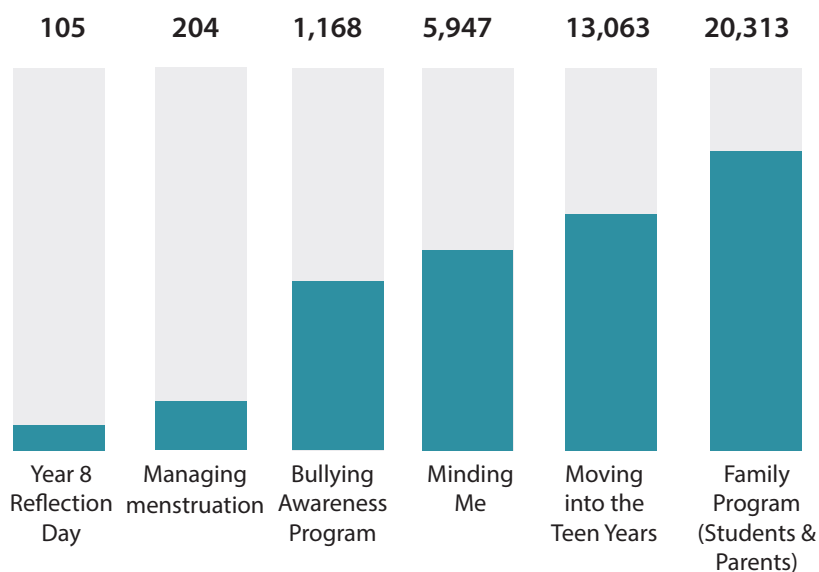
Education



Top 10 Presenting Issues

Communication Issues	83%
Conflict	77%
Post-separation Parenting	73%
Relationships	70%
Stress	59%
Depression & Anxiety	58%
Grief/Loss	49%
Anger	48%
Parenting Plan	48%
Relationship Breakdown	47%

School Services - Number of Students by Program





Partners and Stakeholders

Interrelate works closely with many organisations and partners to provide the best possible services to our clients. We appreciate and acknowledge the contribution that our stakeholders provide to our service delivery.

This year we established or continued financial relationships with:

Department of Social Services

Attorneys-General Department

NSW Health

Aboriginal Benefits Foundation Limited

BaptistCare NSW and ACT

Cancer Institute NSW

Carers NSW Ltd

CRANES Community Support Programs Limited

Family Support Network Inc Lismore

Family Support Newcastle INC

Killarney Vale Melanoma & Skin Cancer Clinic (Employee Assistance Program)

Lismore City Council

Lismore Land Council

Mid Coast Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Inc

Multitask (Employee Assistance Program)

Northern New South Wales Local Health District (Employee Assistance Program)



Northern Rivers Social Development Council INC

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Sutherland Shire Club Grants / Miranda RSL

Tweed Shire Council

University of Canberra

YWCA New South Wales

YWCA NSW Northern Rivers

“ Interrelate and BaptistCare have long enjoyed a strong working partnership on the Central Coast. The teams work tirelessly in the interests of optimum outcomes for clients through excellent communication, mutual respect and professionalism. I look excitedly forward to building on and further developing the ways in which BaptistCare and Interrelate can collaborate in service of the Central Coast community. ”

Cathy Zervos, BaptistCare Centre Manager, Central Coast.



Corporate Social Responsibility

Interrelate recognises that Corporate Social Responsibility is key for any organisation seeking long term sustainability. We acknowledge that economic security is just one part of the journey and that we must also consider the social and environmental impacts of what we do. Our aim is to not only be a good corporate citizen, who engages and encourages ethical behaviours within communities but to be a leader in the sector.

Environmental Sustainability

Interrelate acknowledges the importance of protecting the environment. We aim to minimise our environmental footprint by working with staff and stakeholders, in compliance with legal and other requirements, to ensure that we are sustainable now and into the future.

In 2014-15, we established the Environmental Committee with staff representatives from each main office and region. Over the year, the Committee has been proactive in:

- reviewing and updating the organisations Environmental Policy to better reflect the 2015-18 Strategic Plan
- developing an Environmental Strategy with priorities for delivery
- arranging the completion of energy audits in all our main offices
- supporting locally led initiatives to reduce, reuse or recycle our waste.

Energy Audits

In March, Interrelate signed a Commitment to Act with CitySwitch. CitySwitch is a federally funded program that assists organisations at no cost, to undertake energy audits and introduce more efficient and sustainable work practices.

CitySwitch reviewed all of our owned and tenanted main offices across NSW and provided an action plan for each site, giving us valuable feedback on how to improve efficiencies and reduce our carbon impact. These action plans are now being implemented in each office and resulted in some locally led initiatives.

The audits highlighted that our energy efficiency could be significantly improved if our current lighting was replaced with newer LED technology. The result in energy savings would also reduce costs. Estimates were obtained for the replacement works and these are now being considered in the Capital Works Program for 2015-16.



Locally Led Initiatives

Our staff have played an important role in initiating locally based projects to improve our overall environmental footprint. These have included:

- Bella Vista/Head Office installed a can crusher and now recycles all aluminium cans to a local disability organisation, who use the recycled materials for their social enterprise. Generic use bins were replaced with mixed-use recycle bins to reduce waste to landfill. All photocopying paper across the organisation was changed to 50% recycled.
- Caringbah worked with their landlord to replace their single flush toilets with dual flush to save water. They also introduced battery recycling to reduce waste.
- Coffs Harbour moved from using plastic cups and plates to crockery, to reduce waste to landfill.
- Erina installed personal paper recycling bins to reduce waste.
- Lismore created a worm farm outside their building for all compost scraps to reduce food waste to landfill.
- Newcastle installed timers on their water boilers to only run during business hours, reducing energy consumption. They use eco settings on their dishwasher to save water and energy.
- Port Macquarie introduced recycled toilet paper and hand towels to reduce their carbon impact. They use composting liners in their bins for all kitchen waste as an environmentally friendly alternative.

In 2015-16, the Environmental Committee will continue to implement the Environmental Strategy, introduce organisation-wide initiatives and support locally led projects that will reduce our carbon footprint and improve the sustainability of the organisation.



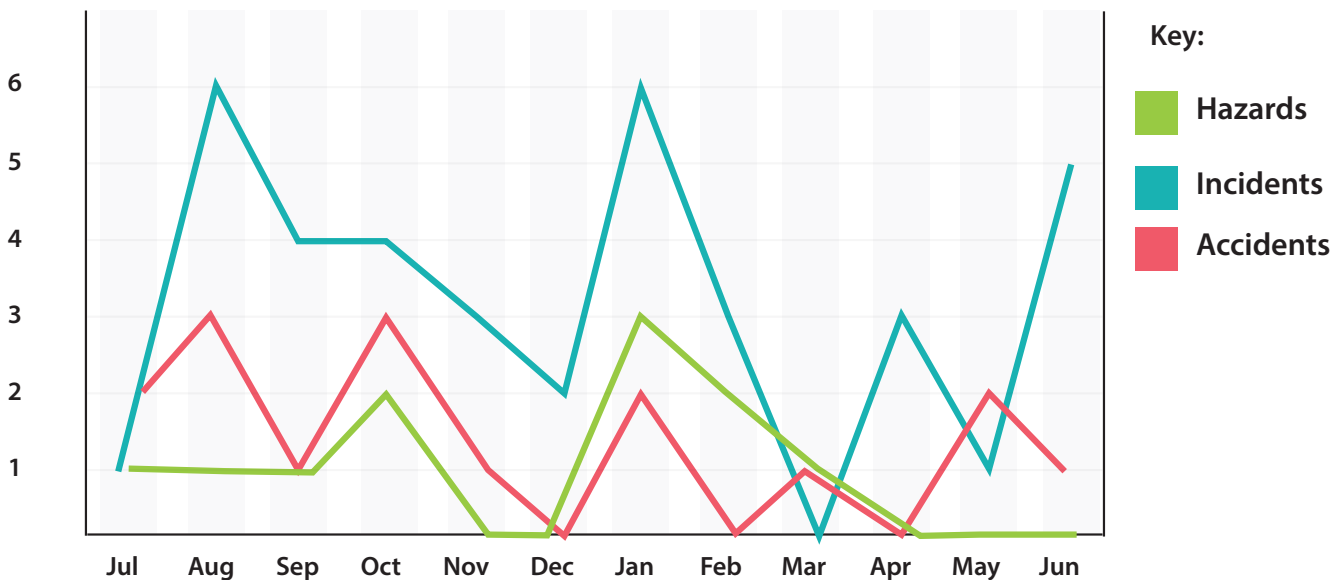


Work Health & Safety

Interrelate is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for both staff and clients. All services and regions must comply with the Work, Health & Safety (WHS) Policy and are supported in WHS matters by their representative on WHS Consultative Committee and by management. The needs of remote workers, travel distances, vehicle usage, client aggression and staff emotional wellbeing are the main challenges for WHS.

This year, the coordination of Return to Work processes was revised to include non-compensable incidents and proactive consultation with medical providers. Workers Compensation Claims management was improved, with quarterly case conference reviews and reimbursement monitoring. The introduction of the Supervision and Support Framework and review of policies strengthened the support structures in place for high risk counsellors and case workers. The Employee Assistance Program was reviewed to enhance the support offered to staff and encourage positive access and outcomes. Incident reporting was reviewed and simplified with the introduction of online reporting to be introduced from October 2015.

Hazards , Incidents & Accidents



Hazard: A Hazard is defined as an object, situation or any other source of danger with the potential to cause harm to people, equipment or property, or that could create an unsafe working environment.

Incident: An Incident is defined as an event which has the potential to cause injury or illness to a person or damage to equipment or property.

Accident: An Accident is defined as any event which results in an injury or illness to a person or damage to equipment or property.



People & Culture

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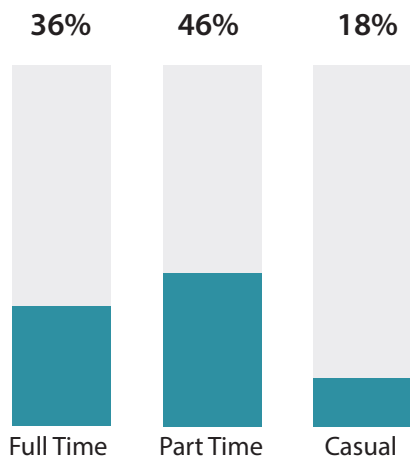
Our People

Interrelate aims to recruit, nurture and grow a skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce. We seek to engage our staff in the development and delivery of quality services and value the expertise and passion they bring to our organisation.

In 2014-15, Interrelate employed 328 staff members throughout NSW in both service delivery and corporate support roles.

Our staff's average length of service is 4.24 years, with our longest serving staff member reaching 26 years of service this year. Of our staff, 82% are in permanent roles with the remaining 18% in casual positions. We value and encourage diversity and many of our staff members come from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. In the Voice Cultural Survey, 14% of staff who participated identified as being culturally or linguistically diverse, with 4.67% identifying as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

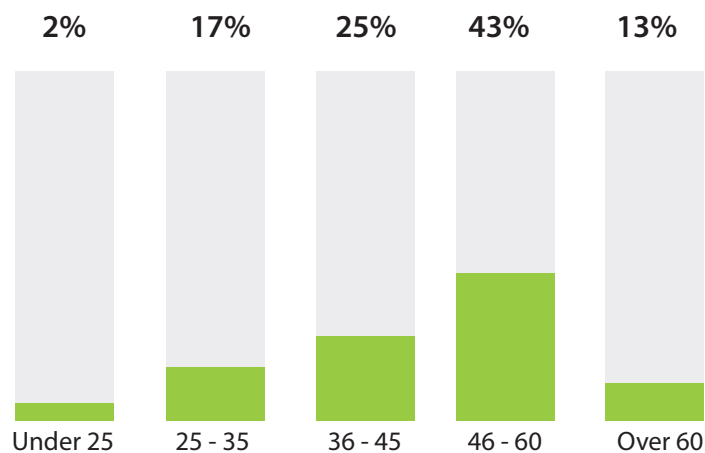
Employee statistics



Gender



Age





From Strength to Strength

Interrelate strives to be an employer of choice and critical to this success is ensuring the ongoing positive engagement of our staff. In 2013-14, the Strength to Strength (S2S) Project was launched with the aim to enable an enhanced focus on organisational culture and staff engagement. Through the ongoing work of this project, staff are empowered to raise issues that are of concern to them, engage in problem solving and contribute to the continued development of the organisation.

As part of this project, the S2S Staff Reference Group was established with a representative from each region and work group to support the development and implementation of projects under the initiative. The role of the Reference Group is to drive projects within the regions and help facilitate communication between the regions, management and staff.

Through the S2S Project and following significant staff consultation, 12 key areas of opportunity were identified and a work plan was developed to guide enhancement in these areas:

1. Aboriginal engagement and services
2. Communication
3. Complaints and grievances
4. Culture
5. Information technology
6. Infrastructure to support growth and support delivery
7. Marketing and promotion
8. Policy review
9. Program improvements
10. Supervision
11. Training
12. Workforce planning and development



During 2014-15, significant progress was made against this work plan. Key outcomes achieved include:

Aboriginal engagement and services

- Development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.

Communication

- Use of Staff Reference Groups to support staff involvement, consultation and ownership of the S2S project.
- Review of communication channels for management and staff.
- Review and development of communication and sharing mechanisms across regions to improve practice.
- Increased access for staff to the Executive, through regional visits and joint projects.

Complaints and grievances

- Review of complaints and grievance process and policy, to ensure appropriate grievance and complaint management for all areas including Board, CEO, Executive, management and staff.

Culture

- Staff engagement and consultation in defining and describing appropriate workplace behaviours.
- Values and code of conduct training provided to all staff.
- Training to all staff on bullying harassment and discrimination.
- Training on how to build and maximise positive workplace relationships for all staff.

Information technology

- Regional champions to support local staff in IT and our client management system were recruited and trained to ensure improved access to training and support in these areas.
- A series of training webinars for all staff were launched to improve skill and confidence in use of IT. The webinar content was developed based on staff surveys.



Infrastructure to support growth and support delivery

- An Asset Management Plan was developed and endorsed by the Board to ensure that all assets owned by Interrelate are sufficient in meeting the future needs and objectives of the organisation.
- New data network specifications developed and proposals sought in order to meet future growth and service delivery priorities relating to technology.

Marketing and promotion

- Development of new brand and marketing materials.

Policy review

- Review of over 30 policies and processes.
- Review of delegations to achieve control at appropriate levels.

Program improvements

- Establishment of Service Practice Groups across agency with regional representation to inform practice.

Supervision

- Review of the clinical Supervision and Support Framework.

Training

- Review of training programs; now includes training needs analysis and organisational training plan.
- Implementation of a Manager's Development Program.
- Provision of information and further training in regard to policies and procedures related to workplace practices and behaviours.
- Development and implementation of organisational induction days for new staff.

Workforce planning and development

- Interrelate's accreditation process was reviewed and the Staff Excellence Framework launched.



S2S will continue into 2015-16 supported by the S2S Staff Reference Group. Employees will continue to be encouraged to provide comments and suggestions on the ongoing development and continuous enhancement of workplace culture at Interrelate.



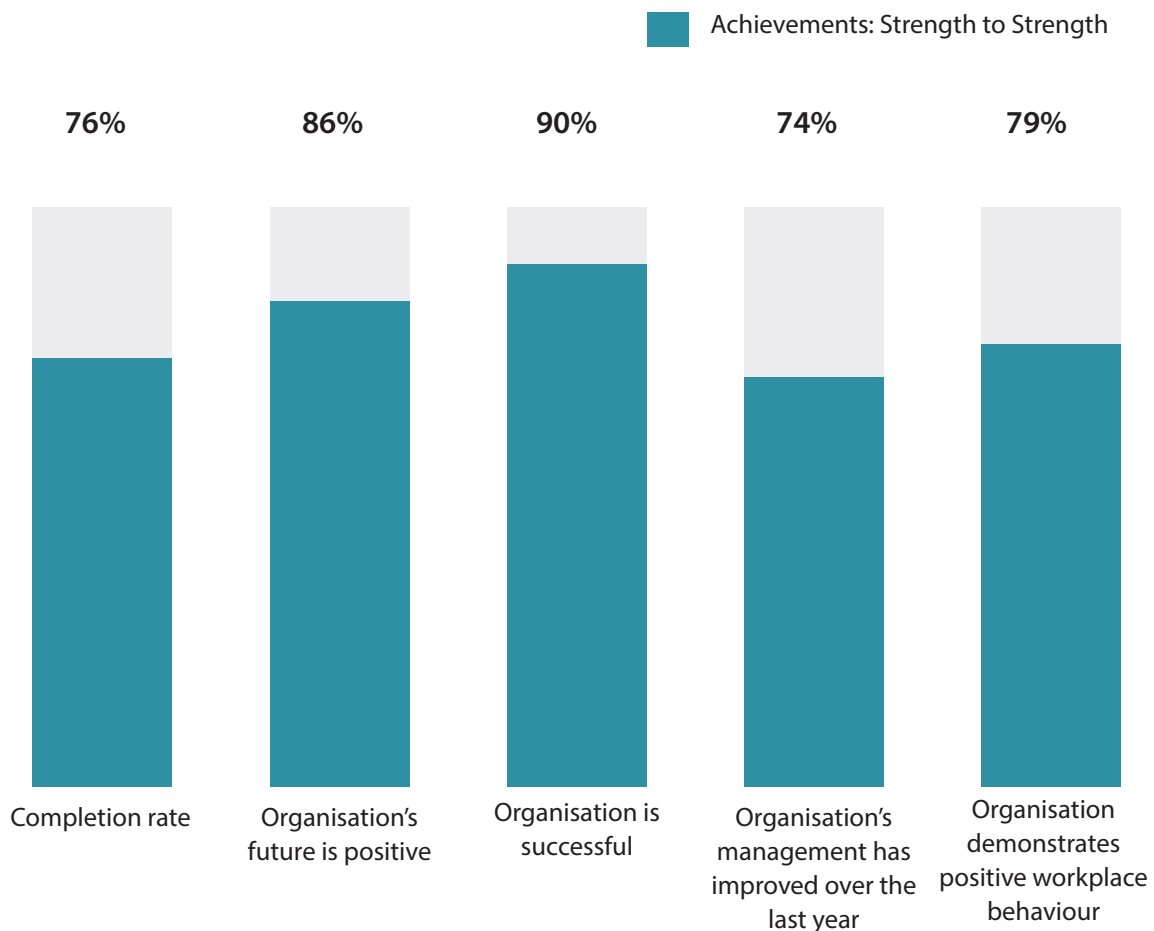


Cultural Survey

In October, Interrelate undertook a Cultural Survey in partnership with Macquarie University's Voice Project. This survey allowed the organisation to assess multiple indicators of organisational performance across a broad range of human resources and general management practices. In addition, the survey created an opportunity to measure the effects of the S2S Project.

Through our partnership with the Voice Project, Interrelate was able to compare organisational performance between various regions within Interrelate, against 64 other Community Services organisations and against 2700 organisations broadly representing the Australian economy.

The staff completion rate for the survey was 76%, demonstrating their trust in the process and providing valuable insights. The majority of the results were positive with more than half the staff rating all practice areas favourably.





The survey used statistically derived measures of importance to determine possible priorities for intervention. The areas identified as the highest priorities for the organisation were:

- **Integrity and Alignment** - evaluating and clearly articulating decisions, processes and behaviours in terms of our values and strategy.
- **Involvement** - facilitating the involvement of staff in continuous improvement, providing a safe environment for staff to provide feedback and reporting back to staff about decisions or actions taken.
- **Workplace Behaviour** - continuing to encourage positive workplace behaviour and preventing and discouraging bullying and abusive behaviours.
- **Cross-unit Cooperation** - increasing communication and collaboration between our regions.
- **Career Opportunities** - providing opportunities equally to staff to help them develop their careers.

Following the outcomes of the survey, an organisational plan was developed in response to the identified priority areas. All regions were presented with their regional outcomes and regional based plans were created in response. Progress against these plans is regularly reported to the S2S Staff Reference Group and communicated to staff.

Staff Conference

In November, Interrelate held a Staff Conference in Sydney. The aims of the conference were to:

- bring together staff from across the regions and from different levels of the organisation to learn about Interrelate and each other, and to meet, connect and network
- inform and challenge thinking and practice
- enhance the general knowledge, skills and experiences each person brings to their role.

The conference was also an opportunity to inform and consult with staff in relation to various organisational projects and to reflect on the achievements over the past year.

Through staff feedback we know that there were three clear program highlights. The very personal presentation 'A Different Kind of Normal' by Fay Jackson, the presentation by Interrelate's Staff Reference Group Kutanya and the launch of Interrelate's new brand, which included the introduction of the 'I relate' campaign, the newly created television advertisement and the creation of a flash mob video as a staff bonding activity.

The conference was a valuable way for staff to learn about the organisation and the issues facing our clients. Feedback indicated that staff left the conference feeling more connected to each other and the organisation, having gained knowledge and skills they could apply to their own work.



Engaging
Team
Well-organised
Networking
Inspiring
Tiring Energy
Enjoyable
Exhausting
Interesting Exciting
Informative
Fun Connection
Busy

Watch our television advertisement at https://youtu.be/YBy_eoGGTbE

Watch our flash mob video created by staff at <https://youtu.be/FnNxw7t2wml>



“ Fay Jackson was absolutely inspiring and very informative in helping us to develop a realistic understanding of mental health and how best to work with clients. ”



Staff Recognition and Awards

Interrelate's Employee Benefits and Rewards Program aims to support, recognise and reward staff for their contributions to the objectives and values of the organisation. The main components of the program are:

Appreciates Postcard Program

This informal program provides staff with the opportunity to recognise and acknowledge a co-worker for doing something 'over and beyond' their normal job. This year our staff issued 299 postcards to each other.

Employee Awards Program

This peer-nominated annual award aims to recognise and celebrate the outstanding efforts of staff in advocating the **RELATE** values. Nominations are considered by a panel who select a winner for each value category. This year the following staff were recognised at the conference:

Respect - Tony Clark, Indigenous Advisor & Community Development Worker Port Macquarie/Taree, for his work in developing programs to support Aboriginal young people in the Lower Mid North Coast Region to develop respect in their own lives.

Equity - Kate Mudford, Rural Support Worker Central West, for championing the Drought Assistance Program and accessibility for clients who are isolated geographically and have very limited access to services.

Leadership - Fran Phipps, Media & Communications Officer, for consistently taking responsibility for driving projects that build the image, profile and reputation of the organisation, including the re-branding process.

Accountability - Simone Jackson, Senior Manager Finance & Data, for ensuring that our accounting practices and procedures work effectively and are in accordance with acceptable accounting principles.

Transparency - Anne Heath, Area Manager Central and Far West, for her daily demonstration of transparency within her own team and the organisation as a whole.

Empowerment - Deborah Atkinson, Senior Counsellor Sydney North, for her consistent work in support of Interrelate's Registered Training Organisation and Ray Muddle, Senior Practitioner Newcastle, for his dedication to the needs of his clients.



Tony Clark

“ The young people will learn respect for the land, respect for self, respect for their family, their peers, the community, elders and importantly their heritage. ”

- Tony Clark



Kate Mudford



Fran Phipps



Simone Jackson



Anne Heath



Ray Muddle



Deborah Atkinson

“ Whilst Fran does not have a formal management role, her leadership within her team has been respectful of her peers and empowering for the team. ”

- Graeme O' Connor



Work Health & Safety Star Award

This award is presented each quarter to a region or team who are shown to be championing a positive work health and safety culture within their workplace. This year, the following teams were recognised:

Quarter 1

Dubbo office for:

- no reported Hazards, Incidents or Accidents since May 2014
- the WHS Committee member being productive and efficient in inducting all new staff and providing valuable feedback for improvements to the WHS Induction

Quarter 2

Orange office for:

- appropriate reporting of all Hazards, Incidents and Accidents
- identifying hazards as a priority
- implementing corrective actions promptly after Hazards, Incidents or Accidents are identified.

Quarter 3

Coffs Harbour office for:

- a dedicated WHS Committee member who actively consults with People, Culture & Performance to ensure policies and procedures are followed
- implementing corrective actions diligently and following up
- making WHS a regular agenda item at team meetings and discussing incidents and corrective actions
- consultation with Area Manager and Line Managers in WHS matters.

Quarter 4

Lismore office for:

- returning all Outreach audits within time frames (considering a high volume)
- inducting all new staff within their first week of employment
- discussing WHS matters at team meetings
- responding to PC&P requests in a timely manner
- being proactive in regards to signage to promote WHS and coming up with innovative ideas to promote this within all regions.



Years of Service Awards Program

This award aims to recognise and reward employees for their continued loyalty and support for the work of Interrelate. Staff are recognised on the anniversary of their first year of employment and at every five additional years of employment with a gift of increasing value. This year the following staff celebrated anniversaries of 5 years or more:

25 years

Judith Rodrom	Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner	Lismore
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10 years

Deborah Atkinson	Senior Practitioner	Greater Sydney
Jan Welling	Client Services Officer	Upper Mid North Coast
Jenny Dawson	Project Worker	Greater Sydney
John Reynolds	Case Manager	Upper Mid North Coast
Lisa Moloney	Manager	Central Coast
Sylvia Georgi	Multi Skilled Practitioner	Coffs Harbour

5 years

Ann Dobson	Senior Educator	School Services
Anne Campbell	Contact Worker, Children's Contact Service	Lower-Mid North Coast
Annette Rochow	Client Services Officer	Newcastle
Apina Rodger	Accounts Assistant	Head Office
Chris Sherrah	Senior Practitioner	Central Coast
Don Jackson	Case Manager	North Coast
Helen Treglown	Coordinator, Children's Contact Service	Lower-Mid North Coast
Jan Gillings	Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner	Newcastle
Jody Webster	Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner	Lower-Mid North Coast
Kate Chase	Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner	North Coast
Lisa Foy	Client Services Officer	Greater Sydney
Lou Nacorda	Accountant	Head Office
Maha Elbatoory	Senior Educator	School Services



5 years

Mark Hinder	Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner	Central Coast
Mary Cruse	Contact Worker, Children's Contact Service	North Coast
Matt Stubbs	Head of Research & Service Development	Head Office
Melanie Bale	Head of People, Culture & Performance	Head Office
Merran Montgomery	Manager, Family Relationship Centre	Central & Far West
Rebecca Dale	Client Services Officer	Greater Sydney
Sue Waterhouse	Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner	Central Coast
Tondi Gilfillan	Counsellor	North Coast

Management Development Program

Both Strength to Strength and the Cultural Survey highlighted that a key focus area for our staff was a desire for more training and career development. As a result, this year Interrelate's managers participated in a ten module Management Development Program. The program objects were to focus on leadership and management development in three ways:

1. Extending self as a leader/manager and the understanding of role/place in the organisation and the system of which we are part
2. System and organisation, seen from the inside out and the outside in, at both operational and strategic levels
3. Tools, concepts needed to manage for now and the future. The future we desire to create for ourselves, our organisation, our sector and most importantly our clients

The program was attended by all 40 managers across the regions and a commitment was made to continue to run this program on a bi-monthly basis, to allow the management team to continue to develop their skills and knowledge in critical management areas.



Lucinda's Experience

Lucinda Morrish, Manager Relationship Services Dubbo, shared her experiences of the program.

What was the major highlight of the program?

The highlights for me were the Governance presentation, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test and Meg Wheatley's 'Becoming Warriors of the Human Spirit' perseverance entails strong connections and unity of values and practices. It was a great reflective process in terms of self, role, team, organisation and the system as a whole, both inside out and outside in.

What did you gain personally from the program?

Reassurance that the space I come from is a committed Interrelate employee who supports the culture and vision of Interrelate.

Which part of the program has helped you the most in your role?

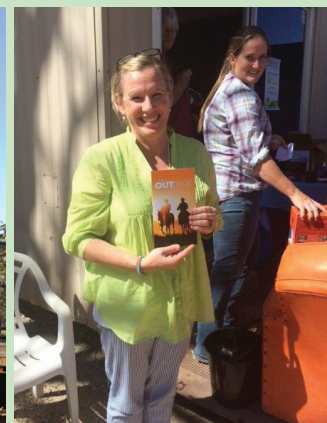
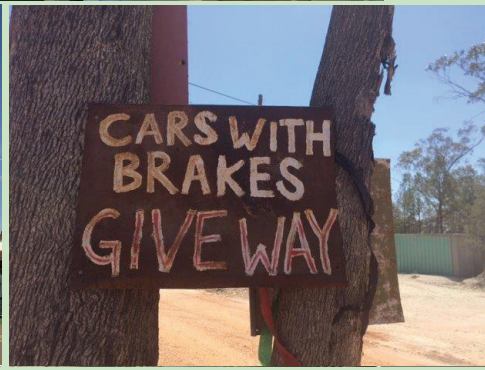
Overall the program created the opportunity for all managers to connect. It enabled me to conceptualise more clearly the future focus of service delivery and the need for structures to support growth and best practice.



Lucinda Morrish

Manager Relationship Services Dubbo







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How We Helped

Children's Contact Services

This year, our Children's Contact Services assisted 1,752 clients. Children's Contact Services provide supervised contact for children who need a safe, controlled setting in which to spend time with a parent or significant family member. Separated parents in high conflict situations can also use the service as a safe place to co-ordinate the pick-up and drop-off of their children without having to meet.



A Young Father's Story

A young first time father approached the Orange Children's Contact Service (CCS) for assistance in establishing a relationship with his infant son. He and the mother had a very brief relationship and did not really know each other. The mother was reluctant to leave the baby in the care of the father and consequently he had only seen his son in the home of the mother's parents, where he felt constrained from interacting with the baby. The father told the Orange CCS staff that he very much wanted to have a relationship with his son but felt that he did not have many parenting skills.

The CCS Coordinator worked with both parents and they came to an agreement whereby the mother would initially stay in the Contact Centre while the supervised contact occurred. The staff used a 'Building Connections through Play' approach to build the father's confidence in his parenting and ability to engage with the baby. Once the mother saw that the baby was safe and engaging with the father she opted to remove herself from the supervised contacts.

The couple was referred to mediation and quite quickly reached a parenting agreement. The father was also referred to parenting groups being run at the Orange Centre. Team work, case management and a willingness to be flexible with this family saw a very positive outcome for both parents and the baby. The parents have now established a cordial relationship that will allow them both to positively parent their child now and into the future without needing the ongoing intervention of Interrelate.



Counselling

This year, our Counselling Services assisted 4,939 clients. Our Counselling Services, which include our Caring for Carers Program, offers opportunities for individuals, couples and families to explore challenging aspects of their lives and relationships. This confidential process is undertaken by our highly skilled counsellors who assist clients to work through their issues and towards solutions.

Genevieve's Story

“Before using Interrelate, as a part of my job, I used to counsel people myself. It was quite hard to recognise that I needed some support.”

“I have unique obstacles in my life which the everyday person can't fully comprehend and it was a relief for me to find an environment where I feel safe enough to share my thoughts and feelings without the fear of ridicule. After my sessions I feel my brain is a bit less scrambled and I have more energy to tackle the issues which may pop up on my path.”

- Genevieve Buckingham



Julie Druce, Counsellor and Manager, Relationship Services, worked with Genevieve through the Bella Vista centre.

“As a counsellor I feel privileged to have been included in this space with Genevieve. I have been rewarded in seeing her grow, develop self-confidence and empowerment as she has worked towards goals and outcomes in the face of very unique obstacles. Being part of this journey with Genevieve, sharing her warm bright smile and engaging sense of humour, has given me a deeper experience as a counsellor. Genevieve brings a positive energy to the Bella Vista centre which has enhanced the therapeutic relationship, both within the counselling space and with the Client Service Officers, which has had positive benefits for Genevieve and the whole team.”

- Julie Druce



Genevieve Buckingham and Julie Druce



One Man's Journey

Initially this client requested an appointment for himself due to problems in his relationship. His partner had given him an ultimatum; seek help or the relationship would end. The client indicated at his first session that he was about to lose his business and that he was facing bankruptcy. He had history of depression and had been diagnosed as a diabetic as a child. His father had left when he was 10 years old and he had cared for his diabetic mother up until her death when he was 14 years old. He then went to live with his grandparents. His father had been physically and emotionally abusive and then had rejected him.

Throughout his counselling sessions it became apparent that early childhood trauma and grief affected his current relationship. The counselling journey involved supporting him to be able to nurture himself and attend to his own needs. He had never done this in his life, nor had he learned how to start the process. He was unable to have children, so he and his partner mentored the teenagers of family and friends, with them living with the couple at times. He connected to nurturing himself through the lens of what the adolescents needed from him to thrive.

The client initially came into the centre in a black trench coat and could not engage with the staff. In time, he was able to show the Client Service Officer's photos of his animals and engaged in conversations. On his last visit he stated his relationship was better and there were less arguments and resentment. He said he was working from home after his business had folded and that he had been camping on the weekend and felt better about his life and had hope again.

His last comment was:

“I wouldn't have come here if I had to pay, I was broke and embarrassed. You guys saved my life. I did have a plan; I even knew the tree that I was going to ride my bike into.”



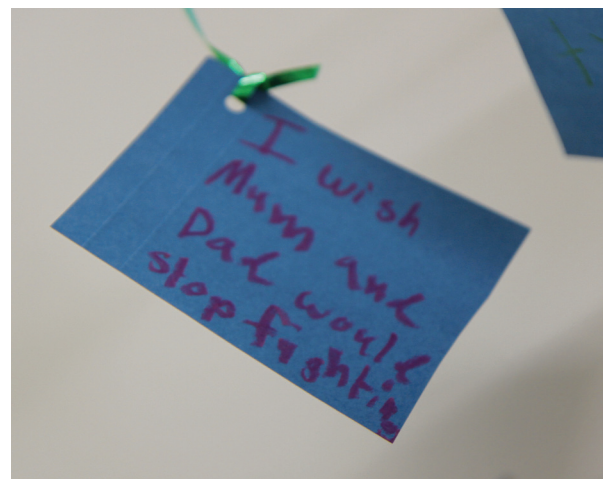
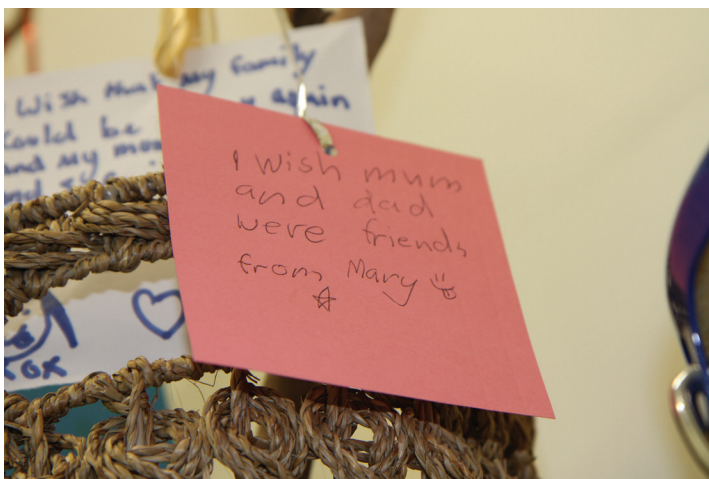
Drought Assistance

This year, our Drought Assistance Program assisted 31 clients and reached a further 519 people, through our workshops and events, in the Central West communities of Cobar, Walgett and Warren. This Program offers free support to help rural communities affected by drought to regenerate resilience and increase mental health sustainability. Our services include counselling for individuals and families, in addition to educational and community workshops and programs.



Family Dispute Resolution

This year, we assisted 5,542 clients through our Family Relationship Centres and Dispute Resolution Services. These services aim to assist separated parents in reaching parenting agreements through the process of mediation. This is an affordable form of mediation that does not involve legal action. Through these services 307 written agreements and 234 Parenting Plans were agreed in 2014-15. Parenting agreements, whether full or partial, have been shown to substantially minimise conflict between parents and secure stable arrangements for the ongoing care and wellbeing of their children. This is a confidential process where one or two trained mediators help parents in conflict come up with solutions that everyone can agree with.





One Family's Journey

Parents in Lismore made contact through the Family Referral Service. They had three children aged nine, seven and four. At the time of engaging services, the couple had been separated for six months.

The mother had a history of mental health issues and there had been emotional and physical violence in the relationship. Safety plans were developed for the mother and children, who resided with her. The mother was referred to the Personal Helpers and Mentors Service (PHaMs) who subsequently referred her to the Family Relationship Centre (FRC).

Both parents engaged in Family Dispute Resolution at the FRC, which was lawyer assisted. A PHaMs case-worker assisted the mother during the mediation process and an interim Parenting Plan was developed. As part of the Parenting Plan, supervised contact was agreed and this was facilitated by the Children's Contact Service.

Both parents were referred to the Post-Separation Co-operative Parenting Program, which included group attendance and individual interviews. The parents agreed to meet with a counsellor and for their children to be seen by a Child Consultant. Both parents were encouraged to adopt a focus on their children and were provided with feedback from their children's sessions with the Child Consultant.

Other referrals for the children continue to be under consideration and the parents will return to the FRC to update their Parenting Plan in the near future.

Employee Assistance Program

This year, Interrelate was engaged as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider by 19 organisations and provided 97 occasions of support to these organisation's staff and/or family members.

Interrelate provides the EAP to other non-profit organisations such as local councils, hospitals, churches, disability organisations and employment services. The EAP is a work-based intervention program designed to enhance the emotional, mental and psychological wellbeing of staff and their immediate family members. Employers recognise that when their staff experience work-related or personal problems, it can affect their work performance as well as their quality of life and wellbeing. The aim of the EAP is to provide proactive interventions, identification and/or resolution of work related and personal issues, that may adversely affect an individual's performance and wellbeing.



Group Programs

This year, we delivered group programs to 5,652 clients. Our group programs cover a range of themes including self-esteem, communication, anger management, parenting, separation, stepfamilies, grief and loss, building resilience and strengthening relationships. These programs are delivered over single or multiple sessions.

Dennis and Jane's Story

Dennis and Jane had their three young children removed from their care, were homeless and had accrued significant debts. The couple were initially referred to Interrelate Lismore by their Case Worker for assistance with their parenting skills, as both parents were highly motivated to make the changes necessary to re-gain custody of their children.

Both Dennis and Jane attended the Circle of Security and the My Kids and Me Parenting Programs. During the My Kids and Me Program, Dennis and Jane were referred to a Financial Counsellor to assist them with their debts. Registering their attendance at the My Kids and Me Program as a Work Development Order enabled Dennis and Jane to pay off some of their fines. In addition, they were referred to North Coast Housing for assistance with their housing situation.

Both Dennis and Jane achieved positive outcomes through the programs. There was a significant change in Jane's confidence. By the end of the second program Jane was actively participating and sharing. Dennis noted that he felt more control over his anger and was no longer reacting with temper outbursts.

In the last week of the My Kids and Me Program, Dennis and Jane reported that they had found a house to rent and were excited to be moving in. They also reported that they had an easier relationship with their Family and Community Services Case Worker and a better understanding of the importance of that relationship. Dennis and Jane commented that they felt respected during both parenting programs and had learnt a lot of skills. Dennis and Jane hoped that the positive changes they had made would assist them in regaining custody of their children in the future.



A Carer Support Group's Journey

Interrelate Newcastle facilitated a Carer Support Seminar in East Maitland. The structure of the group provided a relaxed and open way of facilitation so that the carers were able to engage quickly and build rapport. The participants shared many similar stories about grief and loss, shattered dreams, exhaustion, limited self-care, stress, anxiety and limited quality of life. Many were overwhelmed with their role and the lack of recognition for what they do. The support within the group situation allowed for the participants to explore ways to reduce social isolation, support self-care, minimise guilt, be validated and draw strength from each other.

As a result of these conversations and connections, the group has continued as an ongoing support group, facilitated by Living Care. In evaluations, participants described the group session conducted by Interrelate as “insightful”, “uplifting”, “positive”, “refreshing” and “valuable”.

Mental Health

This year, our specialised mental health services assisted 514 clients through the Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) Program and Family Mental Health Support Service (FMHSS).

Personal Helpers and Mentors Program

Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) is a mental health outreach program for people over 16 years of age, whose lives are severely affected by mental illness. Interrelate operates this service in Ballina, Casino and Kyogle. The PHaMs service supports clients experiencing the effects of mental illness by assisting them in their own recovery and in reconnecting with their local community.

Shane's Story

Shane experiences acute agoraphobia and panic attacks which resulted in him not being able to walk beyond his letterbox for over 12 months. Shane's PHaMs Caseworker was able to build a strong rapport and trusting relationship with him over a number of months. As a result, they were able to implement a plan of graduated exposure, with Shane now able to walk to the end of his street. Shane's next goal is to walk to the shops to buy a milkshake and longer term, to be able to return to participating and contributing to his community.



A Mother's Story

A mother of three children aged three, four and five and her husband had separated and he took care of the children. The parents attended the Family Relationship Centre (FRC) for mediation and were referred to the PHaMs to support the mother with her struggles with her mental health, drug and alcohol abuse. The family was accessing the Family Law System at that time.

The mother had a very long history of 'being made to' engage with services and had previously only engaged with services when it was absolutely necessary. Through the holistic and integrated response from Interrelate staff, the caseworker noted that the mother's experience of support and respect had a significant impact on her.

The PHaMs Program provided holistic support that enabled the family to access the Parenting Orders Program, Children's Contact Services, counselling and parenting group support. The PHaMs staff worked with the mother on her issues around housing and emotional health, which created more stability for her and therefore for the children. In early 2015, the mother was awarded unsupervised contact with her children twice a week.

The mother told her caseworker that she felt respected and believed by the Family Relationship Centre, Children's Contact Services and the Parenting Orders Program, which was a very new experience for her. The mother stated that because she was respected and believed, she felt she had permission to ask questions from the lawyers and professionals working with her. The PHaMs caseworker noted the steady increase in the mother's confidence and assertiveness in dealing with the legal system and other professionals. The mother spoke warmly about the counselling and group work support she accessed through Interrelate. The mother stated that she now knows it's normal to feel fear and anger and that she's ok and can change.



Family Mental Health Support Service

The Family Mental Health Support Service (FMHSS), also known as Connect, provides support to families where children or young people are affected by, or at risk of, mental illness. No formal diagnosis is required. This service support parents or carers to reduce stress and enable children and young people to reach their full potential. The service works with children, youth and families to build on what is already working, while helping to find solutions for areas of concern. The service commenced in Wyong in 2013-14 and this year, we were successful in securing funding for additional services in Bourke, Cobar, Coonamble, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey and Nambucca.

A Family's Story

Connect Wyong is providing long-term support to grandparents caring for their three grandchildren aged five, seven and ten who were removed from their parents care. The children have a history of long-term trauma including abuse, neglect, homelessness, exposure to domestic violence and parental drug use. When first accessing the service, the children were behaving aggressively at school and all were several years behind academically. There was no funding for educational support due to the lack of formal assessments and diagnoses. The grandparents were socially isolated, receiving no financial support and were at risk of homelessness. The parents were also coming in and out of the children's lives and engaging in behaviours that created significant risk and re-traumatisation.

Change and stability for this family is being achieved through the flexible and comprehensive service response that the FMHSS programs provide. In this case, it involved the provision of family case management and co-case management with Family and Community Services. This included home and school visitation, trauma informed parenting education, behavioural support strategies for teachers, mentoring for the children in sports and social skills, referrals for paediatric supports, health assessments and psychological supports for the children, counselling support for the grandparents and referral to housing support services.

Currently, formal placement of the children into their grandparents care is proceeding in the courts. Now that appropriate educational support is in place, all three children are developing to age appropriate educational levels and the children are engaged in sustainable extra-curricular school activities, while the grandparents are involved in a local sporting club committee.



A Young Person's Story

A 17 year old boy had disengaged from school and subsequently missed assessment for specialised after school support. The family received short-term support from Wyong and were referred to clinical services. The young person was assisted to access Ageing, Disability and Home Care funding, which resulted in him being awarded a two-year package for the Post School Transition to Work Program. His mother commented:

“You helped my son get up and do something for himself which he has always struggled with due to his anxiety. Now he has friends and is going to a course five days a week.”

Post Separation Parenting

This year, we assisted 1,220 clients through our Post-Separation Co-operative Parenting and Parenting Orders Program, also known as Building Stronger Families. This program is for parents and other carers of children in separated families who are having significant problems agreeing on arrangements for the children. They may be in conflict over the big questions such as who the child should live with, or how often a child should see one of their parents. Parents can participate in the program separately, so they don't have to meet.

Parents accessing this program can self-refer, be encouraged by a solicitor to attend or be ordered to attend by the court.

School Services

Interrelate's foundation was based in providing education programs on sexuality and relationships. Today, our School Services programs on puberty, sexuality, relationships and bullying continue to remain popular. This year, we delivered these programs to 40,800 students and families. We also sold 6,073 copies of our 'Questions Kids Have' series of books, which cover topics on sexuality, puberty, relationships, having babies and bullying.



Branxton Public School

Branxton Public School has used the services of Interrelate over many years. In this time Interrelate has provided comprehensive and well planned programs covering sexuality, gender identity, bullying awareness and respectful relationships.

Interrelate has also offered us very worthwhile night-time programs for our Years 3-6 students and their families. We have had feedback that this program has facilitated valuable family discussion. It has made the task of developing children's understanding in relation to the physical, emotional, social and intellectual changes associated with puberty more comfortable to approach for parents.

Each year, we have invited Interrelate to implement a four session program for our Year 6 students covering the transition from child to adolescent. This program, delivered by an extremely respectful and skilful educator, is highly valued by our students, staff and parents. The content of the program is pertinent to the needs of our young people as it covers such topics as the process of human reproduction and enhances students' skills in relation to taking responsibility, taking care of themselves and respecting others. Through the thoughtful, sensitive, engaging and age appropriate delivery of these lessons, our students have responded positively. They have stated that they have enjoyed their participation and "lots of our questions have been answered". We have been suitably impressed with all programs offered by Interrelate and are considering introducing more to cater for other age groups in our school. We appreciate and value the services provided to us by Interrelate, and highly recommend the service to any school or community group.





Janet Nolan's Story

Janet Nolan has been a School Services Educator for more than 16 years. She started with Interrelate in the mid-nineties and after a short break, has been back working since 2003. In her time, Janet has visited hundreds of schools and educated thousands of children.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Firstly working with the kids! They are fantastic, engaging, excited, fun, curious and they make me laugh. It's a huge joy. People ask me if it gets boring doing the same thing for so many years but every day is different and every classroom is different.

Secondly, the team we have in School Services is sensational. We're cohesive, supportive and get on incredibly well. We're like a bunch of sisters, most of the time we get on so well that it makes it a really wonderful place to work.

Lastly, I think one of the things that all of us feel is what a privilege it is to be a positive influence for children at such an important and impressionable time in their lives. I feel that we are really helping to shape these young people and that is a huge responsibility but also a fabulous privilege.

How has the program changed in 16 years?

Well a penis is still a penis! What I mean is the actual content, the basic information has not changed that much but the way we present the information has changed hugely. When I first started we had over-head projectors and we had to colour the slides in ourselves. So the technological advances of PowerPoint have made a huge difference. Although, while all these advances are great, it is also important to keep things simple as our audience are children and we don't want to be too confronting with what we show them.

One of the biggest changes I have noticed over the years is that children's awareness today is phenomenal but their knowledge is limited. Children are exposed to so much information on television and on the internet that is way beyond their level of understanding. It's more important than ever for us to bring them back to basics and give them the knowledge and an accurate frame of reference to put what they may be exposed to into context. It helps them to make sense of their world and the wider world.

What do you see as the greatest benefit of our programs?

The beauty of our programs is that whilst they are structured so that everyone delivers the same content, we do have the flexibility to add our own personal touches and to adapt things depending on the audience's level of interest or engagement.



We get lots of feedback from teachers and parents about the positive benefits of our programs but what is more revealing, is that every now and then, I will get a child who will make me a personal card or message. One of the most touching I ever received was from a girl who wrote “Thank you for sharing this with me. It’s been great to talk about it with my Mum and we are now closer than ever.” When I received that I thought, if I never help another child, I will be happy with just this one.

For me, the greatest benefit is that children feel more comfortable with these topics and that they recognise that it is ok to talk about it. It can also help strengthen the parent-child relationship. Parents sometimes come into our sessions with the idea that we are going to do all the work when it comes to sharing this knowledge with their kids. It is about helping parents realise that what we are is the ice-breaker and that talking with their kids about these topics, sharing their own life stories and experiences can help create a very special connection and help improve their relationship with their kids

“Janet was very entertaining and engaging. She answered the student’s questions openly and honestly.”

- Hobartville Public School





Trauma Assistance

This year, we assisted 285 clients through the Royal Commission Community Based Support Service (RCCBSS). This is a free service that provides comprehensive therapeutic support for people directly and indirectly affected by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

In February, as part of this service the Royal Commission introduced the Inmate Engagement Strategy which resulted in our practitioners providing ongoing phone support to inmates from Dillwynia, Port Phillip (Victoria), Mid North Coast, Long Bay Medical Unit, Goulburn, Dawn De Laos, Bathurst and Junee Correctional Centres, while also providing face-to-face support at Parklea Correctional Centre.

Zoie's Journey

Zoie was referred to the RCCBSS in Caringbah by a Mental Health worker at St George Hospital. Zoie has a Bi-polar type 2 diagnosis and has struggled with food addiction for many years. Zoie lives with her partner Tony, who she described as having rescued her from the brink of collapse when she was 22 years old. Zoie has been unemployed for many years but dreams of returning to work in floristry. Zoie was tentative about counselling as previous attempts to work through her trauma history with a health professional had led to a psychosis. Senior Practitioner, Jacqueline Dee, worked with Zoie to develop a relationship built on trust.

"Zoie wanted to tell her story. I began assisting Zoie with her written submission for the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in July 2014 and we completed this document in April 2015. Zoie was placed on a waiting list for a Private Session with the Royal Commission in October 2014. Much of the work we focused on was on trauma response and recovery psycho-education, managing dissociation and dysregulation, gaining independence and deeper understanding."

"On 28 July 2015, I accompanied Zoie as a support person to her Private Session with the Royal Commission. Zoie describes the formal acknowledgement by Commissioner, Andrew Murray, of her story as a pivotal point in her journey towards recovery. As a support person, I found the entire process carefully considered and deeply respectful."

"Zoie's mental health remains stable and she is continuing to improve her skills in managing the psychosomatic impacts of her trauma history. Zoie will begin work experience at a local Florist next week and will continue to attend our support service."



“I recently described Zoie’s presentation at that first session as a woman trapped inside the armour of her traumas. Zoie’s abuse history is extensive and began with childhood neglect and repeated sexual assault from age four to young adulthood. There were times, when carrying the weight of Zoie’s story, that I too needed professional support, unprecedented. ”

- Jacqueline Dee





Emily's Story

Emily, who is 91 years old, was referred to the Royal Commission Community Based Support Service in Dubbo for support with stress related to issues dating back to her early childhood and time in Parramatta Girls Home.

Emily was raised in the circus until she was nine years old when she was removed and placed into the child welfare system. This was very traumatic for her. Emily was placed in two different foster homes until the age of 12, when she was sent to Parramatta Girls Home. At the age of 16 she was removed from Parramatta Girls home and committed to a psychiatric hospital for "mucking up". Eventually she was allowed to work around the hospital, helping to feed people and making beds but she was under strict control and not allowed to leave the hospital for some years. One of the psychiatrists took her in and Emily worked in the hospital for a while on a kind of traineeship. After a few months she was sent to a half-way house before she was finally freed and allowed to go out on her own.

Despite having had a difficult early life, Emily is a very bubbly, caring and kind person who is always wanting to help others. Emily has lived a life roaming around different country towns in NSW and QLD. She had a caravan and moved from town to town camping near creeks and rivers or at showgrounds. Emily still lives independently and looks after her chickens, three dogs and a goat. Emily has been attending her appointments on a regular basis and enjoys the opportunity to talk about her past, as well as her current difficulties.



Emily and Di Frost, FMHSS Manager, Dubbo

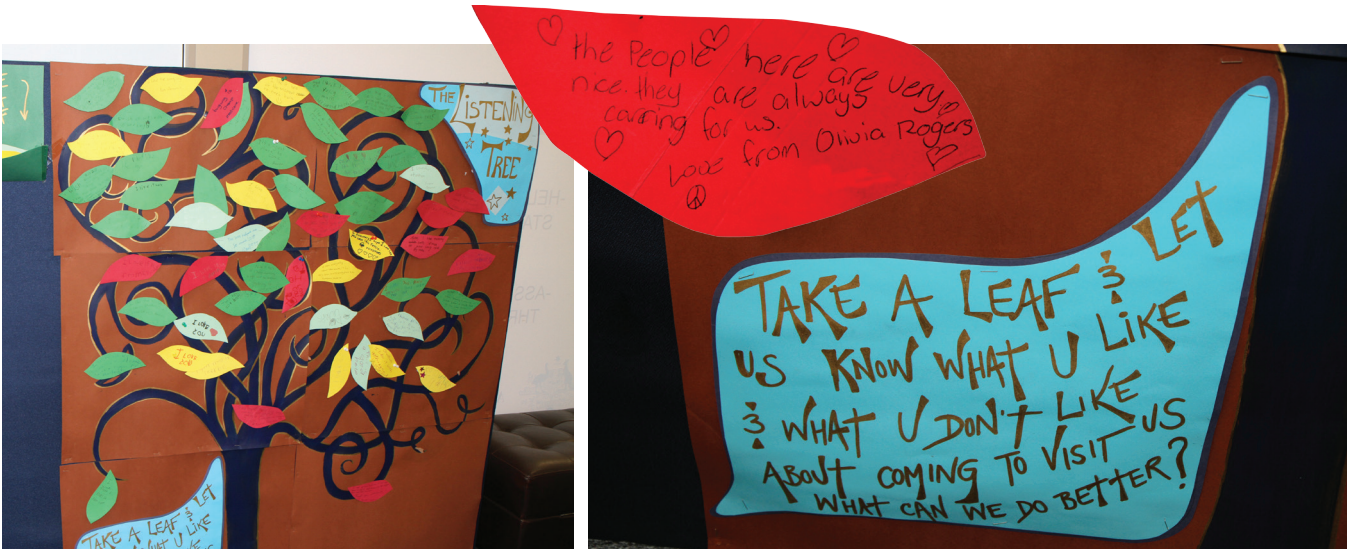


Client Satisfaction Survey Results

Interrelate conducts an annual Client Satisfaction Survey for 12 Family Support Programs funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS). The survey measures our service performance against explicit short and long-term objectives relating to client outcomes and their experience of the service they received. Over a four-week period, clients were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with four immediate and two intermediate outcomes statements. The results of the survey are as follows:

Immediate Outcomes:	Agreed or Strongly Agreed
I have new skills and knowledge to use in my relationships	90%
I feel I was treated with respect	99%
I am more confident about finding and going to family services	94%
I feel I am better able to cope or deal with my issues	91%
Intermediate Outcomes:	
Attending this service makes my life better	84%
I am able to get support when I need it	78%

A very pleasing result was that 99% of clients agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I feel I was treated with respect', which is a testament to the quality service and respect provided by our staff to our clients.





Feedback and Complaints

At Interrelate, we value feedback about the quality of our services and use it to help us evaluate and improve our services. All clients are provided with our Service Charter and Feedback Complaints Process at the commencement of services.

Our Feedback and Complaints Process is:

Talk to the person involved

If they are uncomfortable talking with this person or are not satisfied with the outcome

Talk to one of our managers

If the complaint is about a manager or they are still not satisfied with the outcome

Write to the CEO of Interrelate

If they are still not satisfied a complaint has been resolved, they can contact our funding bodies which are listed at www.interrelate.org.au/feedback

In 2014-15 there were six complaints escalated to the CEO and one complaint escalated to the Department of Social Services. All complaints reached a satisfactory resolution for the client.

Research & Service Development

During 2014-15, one of the key Research & Service Development goals was to assist in refining and improving a number of service development related areas. We believe that the quality of our staff directly relates to the level of service that we deliver. As a result, the first initiatives undertaken focused on supporting and developing our staff in the vitally important work they undertake.

The initial focus was the development of Interrelate's Supervision and Support Framework. The framework articulates the scope and attendance of staff at different types of supervision and support sessions, and provides a number of documents to support the management of supervision processes. This framework is a comprehensive guide which clarifies the functions of supervision and support and the role of supervisors. It emphasises that supervision and support and performance management, are distinct and separate functions.



The largest project to be completed this year was the development and implementation of the new Quality Staffing Framework (QSF) for Counsellors and Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners. In consultation with staff, we examined the processes and supports needed for new staff to:

- develop a sound understanding of our practices
- refine the skills needed to secure permanent roles
- develop as practitioners
- enable their progression into senior and supervisory roles.

This framework is now being utilised across the regions, providing a sound skills and professional development structure for new and current employees. In 2015-16, we will start to develop QSFs for other job roles across the organisation.

The Case Notes Procedural Guide and Template was implemented across the organisation. To complement this work, a number of guided PowerPoint presentations were developed to assist staff in meeting the requirement to produce well-constructed case notes. As we move to electronic records, the Case Notes Template will facilitate easy adaptation to a paperless system.

In addition to these projects, planning also commenced for a major research initiative that will look at the issuance of Section 60I certificates within the Family Dispute Resolution process. There is little direction or guidance in the legislation as to the issuance of Section 60I certificates in mediation and even less is known about the outcomes for families and children after such a certificate is issued. In the coming 12 months, Interrelate will lead the research project 'Section 60I certificates: When, why and what are the outcomes for families' together with representatives from the University of Canberra and the Australian National University. Our hope is that this research will inform and improve our practice to better assist and support clients accessing Family Dispute Resolution services.

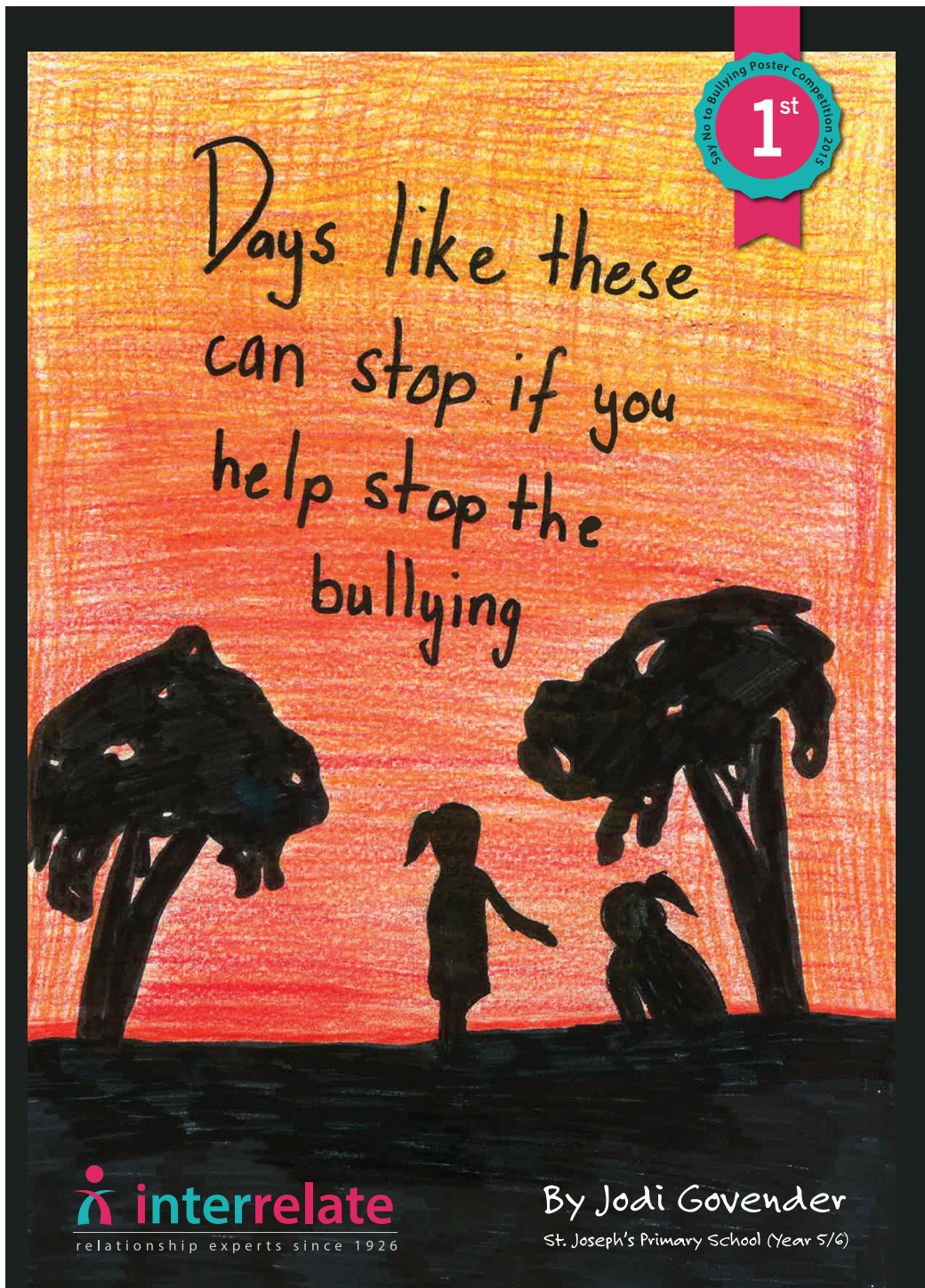


Highlights

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Anti-bullying Poster Competition



For the second consecutive year Interrelate ran an Anti-bullying Poster Competition for NSW primary schools. The aim of the competition is to raise awareness of the issue of bullying and to assist schools to identify and address bullying behaviours in their own school communities.



A NATION OF BULLIES
Australia ranked number 1 for online bullying





This year, students were asked to illustrate how they would help a friend if they were being bullied, with 5,127 students entering the competition from 175 schools across NSW. Jodi Govender, from St Joseph's Primary School in Charlestown, was chosen as the winner while Dante Di'cola, from St Catherine of Siena Primary School, was named runner-up.

Interrelate hosted the Anti-bullying Poster Competition Award Ceremony at the Power House Museum. The special guest speaker was Julie Weber, who published a book about bullying at the age of 14 and is now an anti-bullying campaigner. Over 300 people attended the event, with distinguished guests including His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of New South Wales, The Honourable Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services and Senator for New South Wales, officially representing the Honourable Mr Tony Abbott MP, Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Alan Gibson, Chair of Interrelate Board and other esteemed Board Directors. Other guests included representatives from Association of Independent Schools of NSW, Board of Studies, Department of Human Services, Department of Social Services, YWCA, Campbell Page and NSW Parents' Council.

The competition itself resulted in a number of positive outcomes. The organisation's profile grew through increased social media traffic and media exposure in print, radio and television. Most notable coverage included interviews with Patricia Ocelli on 2GB with Alan Jones and ABC state-wide drive with Fiona Wylie, in addition to a television appearance by Patricia Ocelli and Julia Weber on Channel 7 Weekend Sunrise. Other outcomes included increased School Services enquiries and positive feedback from the education sectors, parents and teachers.

At the event, a Crowdfunding appeal was launched to deliver the Bullying Awareness Program to students in need free-of-charge. The campaign raised \$2167, which will allow us to deliver the program to 145 students in 2015-16.



Service Growth

Interrelate was successful in a number of large and small tenders during the year. Most notably was the funding to open additional Family Mental Health Support Services in the Far West and Upper Mid North Coast, in addition to the funding continuation for the Drought Assistance Program in the Far West. The successful tenders or contract extensions were:

- Attorney-General's Department; Family Law Pathways Network - extended to 2019
- Department of Social Services; Family Mental Health Support Services; Bourke - Cobar - Coonamble, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey and Nambucca
- Department of Social Services; Panel Member to support organisations funded under the Families and Children Activity
- Department of Social Services; Enhanced Social and Community Support Measure, Drought Assistance Program - Cobar, Walgett and Warren
- Department of Social Services; Families and Relationships Services, Specialised Family Violence - Caringbah - Port Macquarie - Lismore
- Aboriginal Benefits Foundation Limited; Reconciliation Choir - Lismore
- Cancer Institute NSW; Safe play areas for families, Provision of shade sail - Lismore
- Tweed Shire Council; Family Law Information for Aboriginal People - Tweed Region
- Lismore Land Council; NAIDOC Week - Lismore
- Lismore City Council; Bundjalung Bush Tucker Garden - Reconciliation and Closing the Gap Initiates - Lismore
- Lismore City Council; Bundjalung NAIDOC Events - Lismore
- Sutherland Shire Council ClubGrants, Miranda RSL; Healthy Minds & Wellbeing Month 2015 - Sutherland Shire Supporting Young Minds Project; Healthy Minds & Wellbeing Expo - Sutherland

Guide to Surviving Christmas

This year Interrelate developed a free Guide to Surviving Christmas, to assist families to enjoy the holiday season with minimal stress and angst. The guide featured useful tips for surviving Christmas across six topics:

1. Dealing with grief and loss

4. Managing kids' expectations

2. Separated or blended families

5. Managing family conflict

3. Managing family expectations

6. Looking after yourself



The guide was launched at the Staff Conference in November, where staff handed out the guides to the public across the city. The guides were distributed in each region and in addition, 10,000 guides were donated to the Salvation Army to include in their Christmas hampers.

The guide was well received and a number of positive media stories were achieved across radio and print.



Policy Review

As part of the Strength to Strength project and in consultation with staff, numerous policies were reviewed and re-launched including the:

- Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Free Workplace Policy
- Client Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Client Records Management Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Cyber Safety Policy
- Delegations Policy and Schedule
- Employee Exit Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Home Visiting Policy
- Issues Resolution Policy
- Motor Vehicle Management Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Quotes and Tenders Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Training and Professional Development Policy
- Travel Expenses Policy



New Brand

After extensive staff consultation, a new brand was developed to better reflect Interrelate's history, values and objectives. The new brand was developed internally and was officially launched at the Staff Conference in November, to overwhelming support. Over the remainder of the year, the new brand was rolled out in staged process across printed and digital media, with rebranded signage to follow in 2015-16, once trademark of the logo has been approved.



Symbolism

The letters 'l' and 'r' of the new brand are discreetly and deliberately intertwined together to create a human figure or two human figures embracing. The first letter 'l' and the word 'relate' have been deliberately colour coded to emphasise the 'l relate' concept, creating a subconscious connection between the target audience and Interrelate. The 'l relate' concept will be used across our marketing to normalise the issues people face, letting them know that they are not alone and making them feel comfortable in approaching our organisation because we can relate to what they are experiencing.

Message

The letter 'l' not only symbolically represents the 'l' in Interrelate but also 'l' for improvement. The letter 'r' completing the human form represents relationship. The message is reflective of the well-known quote "Improvement begins with l" (the individual). This holds true for relationships in any situation.



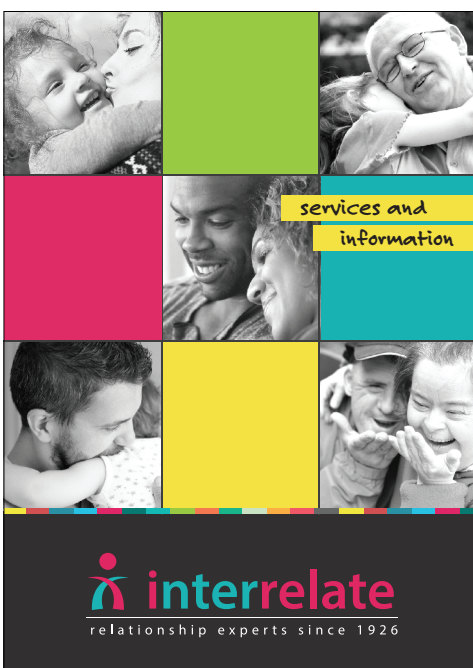
Colours

Cerise (a deep to vivid reddish pink) signifies energy, a pioneering spirit and leadership qualities, promoting ambition and determination.

Sea green is the colour of balance and harmony. It is an emotionally positive colour, giving us the ability to love and nurture ourselves and others unconditionally. The qualities represented by these colours are what we aspire to as an organisation and for our clients

Tagline

‘Relationship experts since 1926’ tells our story in four words. It recognises our history and that we have been specialising in relationships for a long time. The word expert is a strong word but appropriate for two reasons; we have built up a great deal of knowledge and expertise in 89 years and it reflects the skills and depth of experience of our staff.

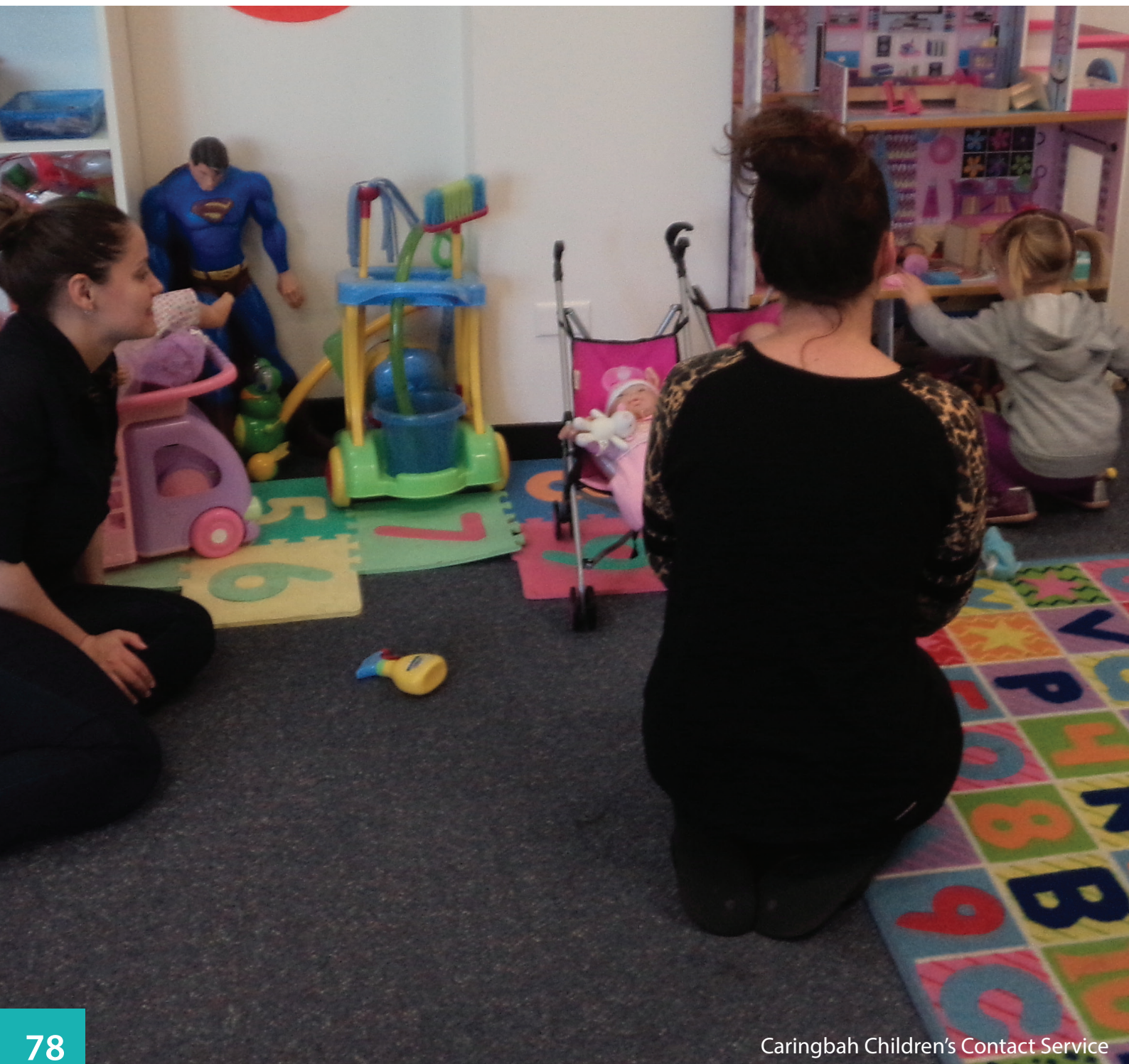




Regional Highlights

Greater Sydney

Over the past 12 months, the Caringbah Children's Contact Service (CCS) continued to offer extended hours and days of service, to meet the needs of families and reduce waiting lists.





A strong focus has been on supporting more parents, where appropriate, to move towards self-management. We use a staged approach, in conjunction with legal practitioners, to enable them to gain a better understanding of the possibilities and the limitations of the services and support offered through CCS. The strategies used have included the implementation of off-site visits, where a child and parent are accompanied by a CCS worker to places such as the library, coffee shop or park for the contact visit. This strategy has seen positive outcomes, with parents developing a more trusting cooperative parenting relationship. The staged approach has also included interval visits, where contact is held at the centre with a CCS worker periodically checking in, with the interval period being extended over time. The implementation of these strategies has seen families who may have been with the service for an extended period transition to other arrangements or self-management in shorter time frames, allowing the service to take on additional families in need of the service.

We continued our strong partnership with Macquarie Legal Centre (MLC) by providing Clinical Supervision for the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Central West Contact Service and the Western Sydney Tenancy Support Service. All staff in these services work with clients experiencing disadvantage, trauma and high conflict. Interrelate provides Clinical Supervision and support to these staff to enhance their service delivery skills and allow them to debrief and reflect on their practice, within the context of the specific roles they undertake.

Two new counsellors were recruited, one in Caringbah to meet continued demand and one in Sydney North, to further support expansion and growth. The employment of the counsellor in Caringbah has increased the cultural diversity and cultural richness of the team and is leading to increased linkages and collaboration with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse services in the area. Work has commenced with Gymea Community and Information Aid to formulate a Multicultural Women's Program to connect and to reduce isolation.

The recruitment of the Sydney North Counsellor has enhanced community development and strengthened relationships, especially with health services. This will assist with partnerships when the relocation of Sydney North to Rouse Hill occurs in 2015-16. Rouse Hill has been identified as an area of need in the Hills region and we will be in a strong position to support the local community with expert staff and service delivery.



Newcastle

Earlier this year, due to the consolidation of our reception areas, an opportunity arose for a small Disability Employment Service, Break Thru, to relocate their service in the vacated space. In addition to utilising the vacant space, the partnership has offered Break Thru the opportunity to refer their clients to our counselling services. To date, we have also delivered a six-week Self-Esteem and Communication course exclusively for Break Thru clients. Commenting on the partnership, Break Thru Area Manager, Jillian McColl said;

“It’s really exciting to work with an organisation like Interrelate. Our clients often present with complex barriers preventing them from gaining employment, including family and relationship breakdown. Knowing we can refer our clients to counselling, which then happens to be in the same building, is very convenient.”

Another key highlight this year has been the development of a partnership with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base in Williamtown, to support their Defence Force personnel. In the Hunter Region, there are over 60 families living apart as a result of one party working at the Base, while their partner and/or family reside in another location. When posted out-of-area, the Australian Defence Force funds 12 weekly family reunifications only. This can place significant stress and strain on many of the relationships within families.

Following a staff survey completed by Williamtown RAAF, where staff were asked about the types of relationship education and support they wanted from Interrelate, the results indicated four key themes:

1. Communication – especially managing conflict
2. Children – connecting and communicating with children
3. Connecting with your partner – sustaining healthy relationships
4. Living apart – impact on children and the couple’s relationship



Project Officer, Cherie Gibson used this information to design and deliver a suite of four group-based seminars, utilising existing Interrelate resources, tailored to the identified themes and a Defence Force audience. At the conclusion of each session, all participants were asked to rate (out of 5) their confidence in implementing the learnings from the respective session. Participants indicated a very high level of confidence, with average score of 4.6.

The Newcastle office has also seen Defence Force personnel self-refer for counselling as a result of this work. Interrelate and the Defence Community Organisation will explore future opportunities to continue to support Defence Force personnel and their families.

“Living apart from your partner and/or children is challenging and we are very appreciative to Interrelate for the programs delivered so far.”

- Pia, from the Defence Community Organisation



From left: Staff with their hard hats during the damaging storms to hit Newcastle in April; Newcastle Team.

The Newcastle region assisted 2,507 people this year.



North Coast

A key highlight was our involvement in the regional Far North Coast social planning committee along with other key stakeholders across the region and government. As a group, we reviewed the social plan and identified regional needs. We agreed to work on three key areas; improving outcomes for children, reducing domestic violence and reducing homelessness. To achieve this we are using a Results Based Accountability Framework for implementation planning. This process will enable us as a service sector to work together to improve outcomes for children and families across the region in ways that are measurable. Across the region the outcomes we are working towards in relation to children include:

- Children and young people are happy and safe – born healthy, enjoy being at school, have social opportunities and skills
- Children are ready for school
- Young people are finishing school with good social, literacy, numeracy skills and progress to further education and/or work
- Families are supported to provide children the best possible start in life

Interrelate had the pleasure of auspicing the 2015 NAIDOC weekly schedule of events in the Far North Coast. Tracey Mickley from the Family Referral Service organised six events between 6-11 July in collaboration with Aboriginal workers and other agencies in our region. This week of activities was led by an Aboriginal Steering Committee and all funding was achieved through grant applications and donations. Mereki, our Aboriginal Community Development worker, provided children's activities and the entire Interrelate team supported the events. These included:

- Jar Jum Preschool Flag Raising Ceremony & Morning Tea - Over 40 people attended and we were able to highlight that children are the next generation and created a family centred celebration.
- Police Citizen Youth Club Vacation Care Cultural Sharing & Blue Light Disco - This event provided a safe and culturally enriching activities for young people.
- Young NAIDOC Workshops and Parade - Workshops at Nglalingah Land Council/ Parade at Lismore Workers Club - Young NAIDOC Participants took part in workshops and activities held at the Land Council focusing on Dream, Believe, Achieve and Connecting with local elders and community members.

The North Coast region assisted 2,784 people this year.



- Workers Trivia Night - A Trivia Night for community organisations, services and businesses was held at Lismore Bowling Club. This was well attended.
- NAIDOC Sports Day – Bundjalarms Netball Tournament.
- Lismore NAIDOC Ball - Over 100 people attended this celebration of culture.

Letter of thanks to Tracey Mickley:

Dear Tracey,

On behalf of the Ngalingah Mijung Dubais program and the YWCA, I would like to sincerely thank you for the time taken to participate in our program this week with our women.

Sharing your personal journey and sharing vital information about the Family Referral Service with our participants has been invaluable for the empowerment and progress of our Aboriginal women.

We appreciate your efforts and acknowledge the kind support of the Family Referral Service team in working with us throughout the duration of this program to contribute to the positive employment, training and future pathways of our participants.

With essential access to services, strong connections to supportive networks and positive community relationships and friendships, our women will have the opportunity to create change within the Lismore and neighbouring communities.

Thank you Tracey, we look forward to having you join Ngalingah Mijung Dubais again soon.



From left to right: Children's art during NAIDOC week; Mereki, Tracey and Jenny; The North Coast Team.



Central Coast

This year, our work on the Central Coast within the Aboriginal Community, in partnership with Mingaletta Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Corporation, has continued to strengthen and develop through the efforts of Stuart McMinn, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Liaison Worker. The Mingaletta Didge Group, a group for Aboriginal young people focusing on culture, continued its growth activities. The group is now working towards incorporation to provide a sustainable long term base for its work.

Stuart also assisted in establishing a Men's Depression Group which quickly and successfully engaged Aboriginal men. A positive and highly productive On Country Day was conducted for all Central Coast staff to assist our staff to work effectively with Aboriginal communities and clients.

Throughout the year, we maintained and developed collaborative working relationships with other agencies working in the area of family violence. This collaborative approach to service delivery is essential, as a significant proportion of clients using the Family Dispute Resolution services experience family violence. We were active members of the Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee and participated in many local Family Violence awareness events. Four staff members attend local courts on a regular basis and support the Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme. These staff are also members of the organising committee for the Family Law Pathways Network. Work has commenced to design and establish an Integrated Family Dispute Resolution Program in partnership with BaptistCare, a specialist provider of family violence services.



The Central Coast region assisted 3,516 people this year.

From left: Central Coast staff On Country Day and the Mingaletta Didge Group



Upper Mid North Coast

A major highlight of the year was the establishment, recruitment and development of the Mid North Coast Family Mental Health Support Service, also known as Connect. In May, we were thrilled to begin operating the Connect Service for the combined regions of Coffs Harbour and Kempsey-Nambucca. Covering the areas from Red Rock in the North, Crescent Head in the South and to Lower Creek and Ebor in the West, the Connect service operates from our Coffs Harbour office and includes outlet locations around the Kempsey/Macleay Valley, Dorrigo Plateau, Nambucca and Bellingen Shires and surrounding townships. This free early-intervention service provides assistance for families where a child or young person's mental health and wellbeing are at risk. No formal diagnosis is required. The Connect service team assist by connecting children/young people with appropriate assistance through home visits, school liaison, assistance to access services, short-term support and long-term family action plan-based support (6-12 months). The flexibility and access to support that this service offers will provide a very real support for children and young people affected by or at risk of mental illness. The new team have been received enthusiastically by families, schools, referral agencies and also by internal staff referring clients to receive additional support for children and young people impacted by family separation and associated stressors.

This year, the office in Coffs Harbour went through a site upgrade to enhance our service delivery. The redistribution of rooms and the introduction of an amalgamated practitioner workstation have enabled a centralised single reception area, a mid-building waiting area, an additional desk and phone area and two additional client rooms. This has resulted in total of 12 client rooms, two group rooms and the Children's Contact Centre Play room.



The Connect Team

Front: Judy Mills, Darlene Daley

Back: Emily Howell, Beck Hammill, Katherine Miller



New layout of Coffs Harbour Office

The Upper Mid North Coast region assisted 2,591 this year.



Central and Far West

This year our work in the Central and Far West expanded to include the Drought Assistance Program and the Family Mental Health Support Service (Connect). As well as offering outreach to Walgett, Cobar and Mudgee we now have services established in Coonamble, Cobar and Bourke. While the establishment of these services was not without its challenges, distance and recruitment being the main, the service delivery has gone extremely well, due to the efforts of our dedicated staff and the support of the entire region.

The Drought Assistance Program is now well established among farming families and drought affected communities and the feedback we receive has been extremely positive. As well as providing counselling and outreach, the service has hosted and worked in collaboration with other services to provide events. Highlights have been the Pamper Days, including a pamper day for men at Carinda and Yarning About Bullying at Carinda Primary School.

We have been fortunate in recruiting a strong manager for the Connect services locally based in Bourke. Services commenced with a number of individual clients and Yarning with Yarn, at St Ignatius Parish School. A Community Development worker is employed two days a week at Cobar and our Child and family workers will be located in Cobar and Coonamble. The development of these services has strengthened our profile and our existing outreach services in the Far West region. The services have been working together in Walgett to deliver programs and to introduce the Aboriginal Building Connections program.

Over the past twelve months our Children's Contact Service (CCS) in Orange has seen a steady increase in the number of Aboriginal Families using the service. The staff in Orange have worked to ensure that the CCS is a welcoming and supportive environment for Aboriginal Families. We have one Aboriginal staff member who, where possible, is present at initial visits. Feedback from these clients has been very positive and highlighted the degree of comfort they feel in the service and the trust they have in our staff.



From left to right: Yarning Carinda Primary School; Di frost at a conference in Bourke; Welcome to Bourke; Kate Mudford in Lightning Ridge; Millener's course in Collarenebri; The men's Pamper Day team.



The Central and Far West region assisted 3,884 people this year.



Lower Mid North Coast

Highlights this year included the Port Macquarie team celebrating NAIDOC week with a range of activities. Staff demonstrated their support by wearing T-Shirts for the week which portrayed the Aboriginal flag. A team discussion was held to explore the concept of white privilege, during which questions helped us reflect on the unspoken advantages that people had when they were able to blend in with the dominant culture. This led to discussions around how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were often denied those same privileges. The team participated in the local NAIDOC Community Day, helping children with art projects which included decorating flags, painting clapping sticks and body art.

The Lower Mid North Coast region has expanded its Children's Contact Services and now offers an outreach service from our Taree site. This has enabled families from the area to have their visits closer to home and expanded the availability of times when they can meet. Reduced travel times also mean that families can now meet after school and not just at weekends. A partnership with the local TAFE has seen the introduction of student placements supporting our regular staff. This has given local students an opportunity to experience the work that Interrelate does first hand adding to our pool of potential new recruits.

The Lower Mid North Coast Family Law Pathway Network hosted a successful networking event with the local Family Court Circuit Judge Myers at our Port Macquarie site. Judge Myers and a range of local solicitors and other professionals met and viewed first hand where children's contact visits took place. This has led to an enhanced relationship with the Judge and has helped clients and staff with more informed decisions when supervised contact and court ordered attendance at groups take place.



From left to right: Port Macquarie Team Celebrating NAIDOC week; Judge Myers visits Port Macquarie.

The Lower Mid North Coast region assisted 2,084 people this year.



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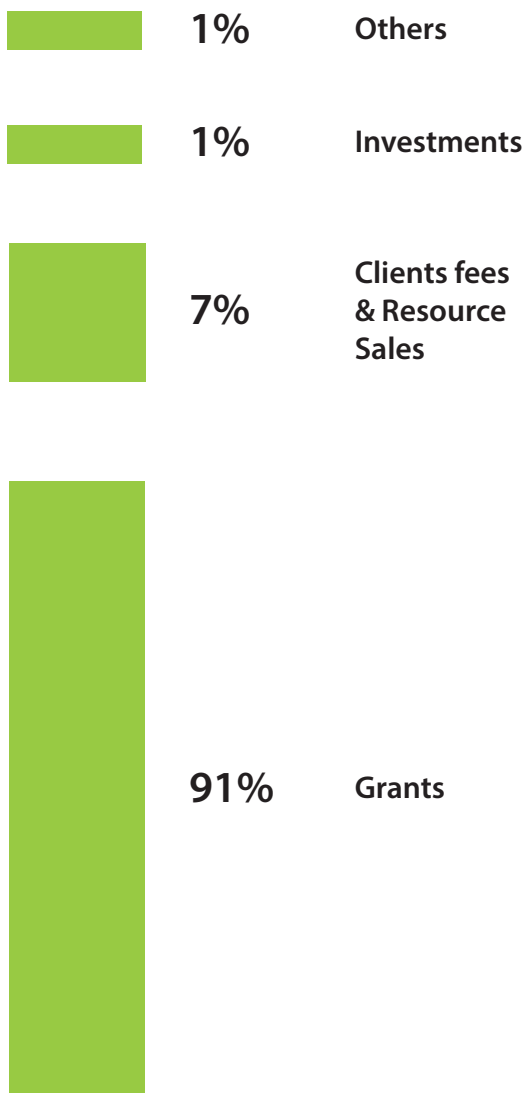


Funding and Support

Interrelate receives funding from a variety of sources including Federal, State and local governments, fee-for-service, member contributions, bequests and gifts.

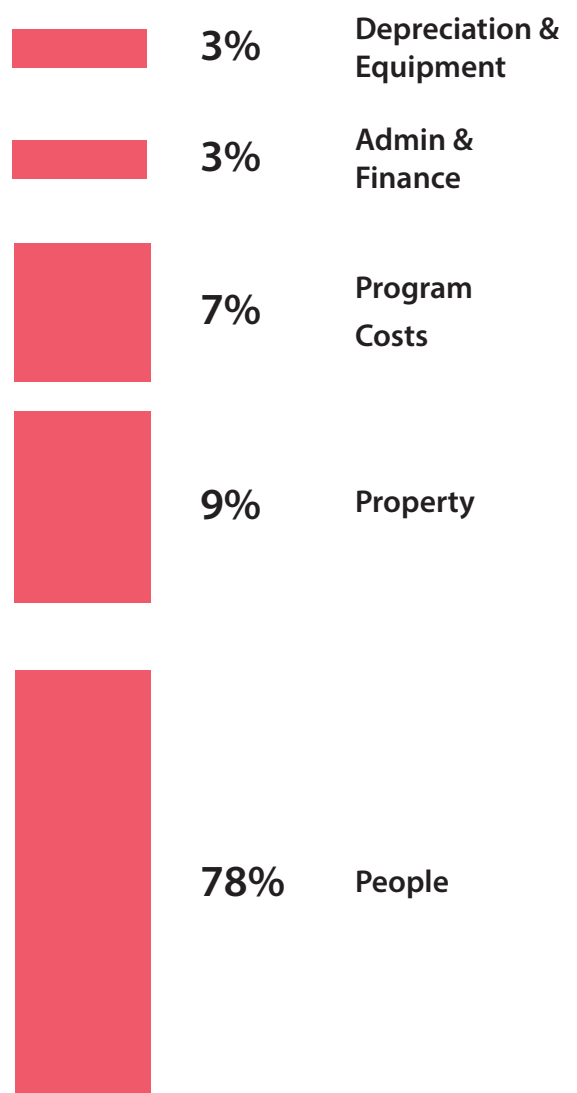
Total Revenue

\$21,614,590



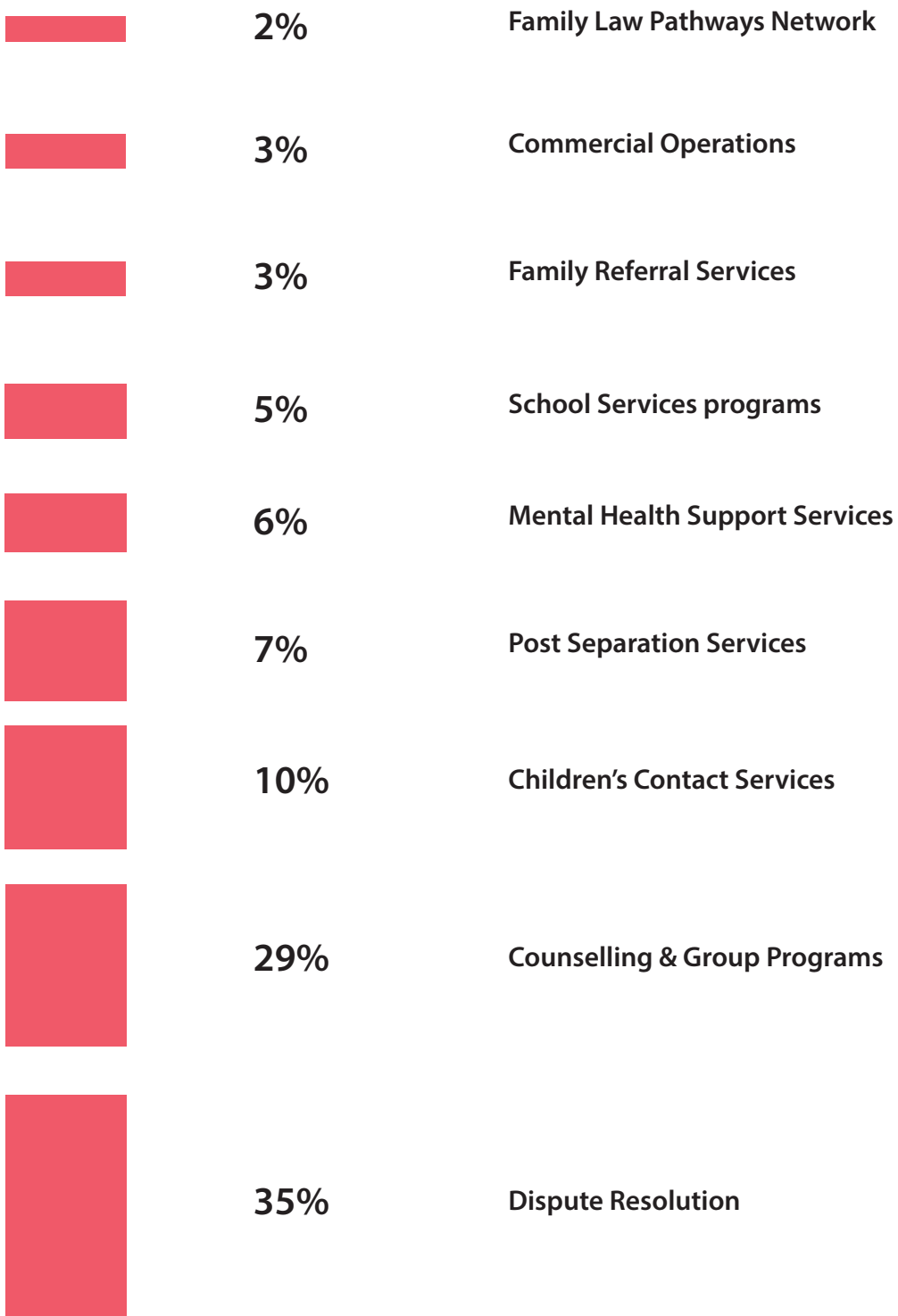
Total Expenditure

\$21,700,189





What we deliver with these funds





The future

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The Strategic Plan

Interrelate's Strategic Plan cycle ended in December 2014. The Executive and Board developed the new Strategic Plan for the next three years through the following consultation:

- Draft plan presented to the staff during the Staff Conference and on the staff online discussion portal
- A high level draft plan was sent to 89 community partners for consultation
- The plan was posted on Facebook for comment
- A meeting was undertaken with the Department of Social Services in January 2015 to seek feedback on the draft plan

The Strategic Plan 2015-18 articulates our purpose and vision, reinforces our commitment to reconciliation and reasserts our values, which underpin our framework for relating to our clients and each other. The Strategic Plan focusses on five key areas:



To view the full Strategic Plan please go to
<http://www.interrelate.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Strategic-Plan-2015-18.pdf>



Strategic Priorities for 2015-18

Five strategic priorities have been identified through the development of the new Strategic Plan 2015-18. These priorities will lead our work over the next financial year. This year we achieved significant milestones against these strategic deliverables.

Priority 1

Maintain, develop and expand community responsive services that enhance and build resilience

- The purposes of all services are clearly defined.
- Regional plans are developed to support service and business development opportunities within the regions, consistent with community needs.
- High-quality services are appropriately delivered.
- Quality service delivery through program review and continuous improvement is maintained.
- Interrelate's research agenda is linked to service development and business development opportunities and is consistent with client and community needs.
- Client outcomes framework is implemented and demonstrates improvements in client wellbeing. Vulnerable and disadvantaged clients' receive enhanced access and quality of services.
- Increase the use of technology for service delivery to meet the changing needs of our clients.

Delivered in 2014-15:

- Development of Regional Plans to inform community need and guide service growth. These will guide regional activity in line with the Strategic Plan.
- Reviews completed of the Parents Not Partners, Bullying Awareness and Moving Into the Teens Years programs to ensure the continued currency and quality of programs.
- Implementation of the Case Notes Procedural Guide and Counselling Models to support consistency, continuous improvement and quality delivery of services.
- Development of a proposed Research Agenda which was presented to potential partners who could provide support.



- Planning commenced for a major research project 'Section 60I certificates: When, why and what are the outcomes for families' together with the University of Canberra and the Australian National University.

Priority 2

Attract, nurture, and grow a skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce

- Organisational leadership is supported to ensure a high performing and engaged organisation. To be a workplace of choice.
- Workforce development programs support organisational capabilities and employee engagement. Workplace diversity is celebrated and supported.

Delivered in 2014-15:

- Development of the Quality Staffing Framework to support staff to develop skills and to be supported through mentoring, supervision and professional development to ensure the delivery of quality services.
- Audit of existing staff qualifications to ensure that all staff meet the minimum requirements of their positions. Research commenced into opportunities for qualifications and training for relevant staff.
- Management Development Program introduced to support the development of leadership and management skills that will support the future of the organisation.
- Staff Cultural Survey undertaken in partnership with Macquarie University's Voice Project. Survey results informed organisational and regional plans to improve on the areas for development.
- Development of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2015-17, to support the Council of Australian Government's agenda of increasing Indigenous employment and reducing levels of disadvantage amongst Indigenous Australians. Both the Employment Strategy and RAP will be launched in 2015-16.



Priority 3

Diversify our revenue streams to further deliver on our vision and enhance economic sustainability

- Increase fee for service revenue.
- Seek further funding opportunities.
- Increase revenue through donations.

Delivered in 2014-15:

- Review of School Services fee schedule to address the capacity of the programs to be fully self-funded.
- Successful tenders in the Central West, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey and Nambucca to provide a Family Mental Health Support Services.
- A Crowdfunding appeal was launched in conjunction with Anti-Bullying Poster competition which raised \$2167 to enable delivery of the Bullying Awareness Program free-of-charge to 145 students in need.

Priority 4

Cultivate strong relationships with stakeholders to enhance outcomes for clients and create new business opportunities

- Harness internal expertise to inform service development and growth. Interrelate be recognised as an industry leader.
- Partnerships developed with key stakeholders to progress service development and business objectives.

Delivered in 2014-15:

- Environmental Committee and Service Practice Groups established, in addition to previously established Staff Reference Groups, to harness internal expertise.
- New partnerships formed or continued with a number of organisations (see Partnership and Stakeholders section).



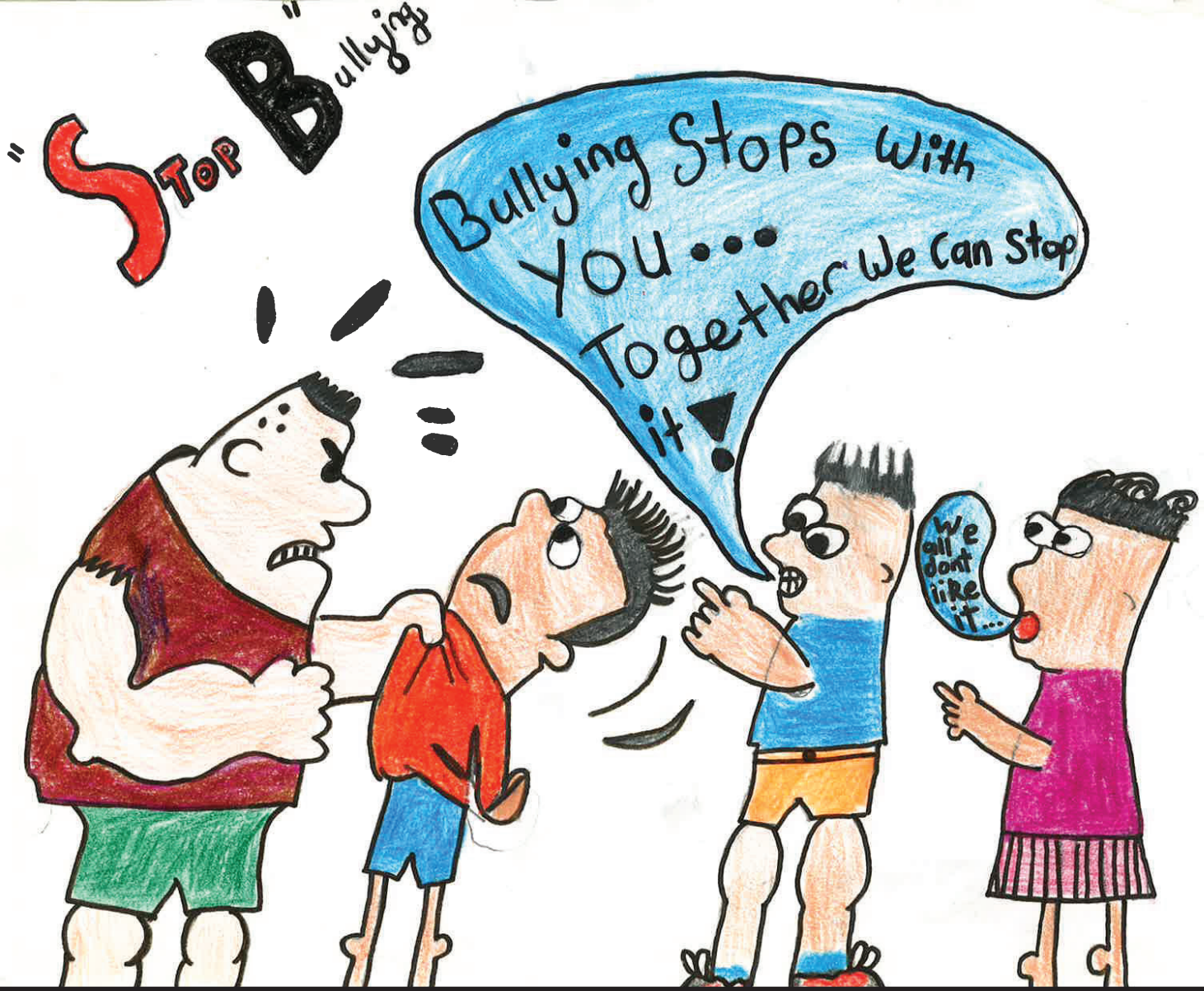
Priority 5

Foster organisational commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility

- Organisation operates efficiently to maximise the benefit from available resources.
- To be an environmentally responsible organisation within available resources.
- Performance of Interrelate surpasses accepted industry standards.
- Agency investment plan developed to ensure future service needs are met and expansion is supported.
- Be a good corporate citizen that engages in ethical behaviour within our communities.

Delivered in 2014-15:

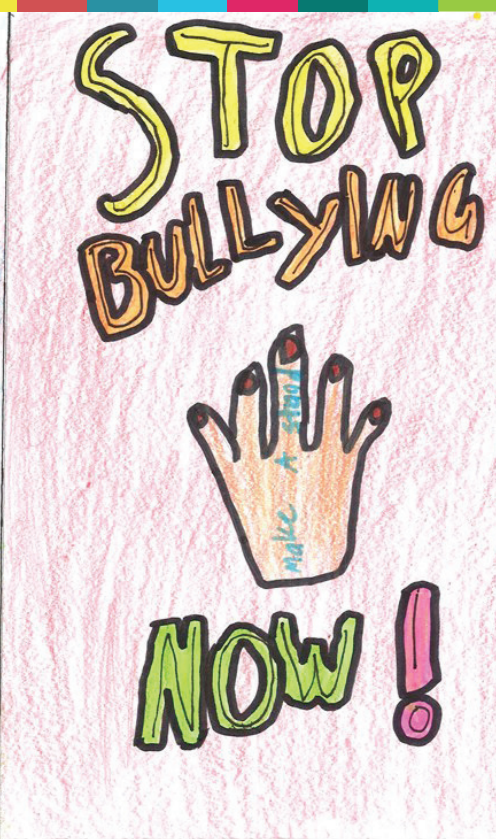
- Asset Management Plan reviewed to effectively utilise Interrelate's property and other assets to enable and support the long-term provision of services.
- Commitment to Act signed with federally funded program CitySwitch. Audits undertaken to identify efficiencies and reduce carbon impacts.
- Development of the Environmental Strategy to reflect strategic objectives.



Runner up

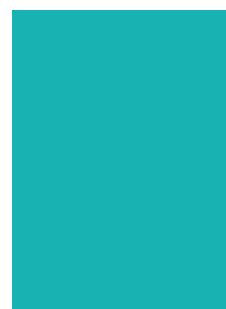
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