



**Anglicare**  
Victoria

# ANGLICARE VICTORIA STRATEGIC AGENDA

**2020-2024**

# WELCOME TO AV'S STRATEGIC AGENDA

Anglicare Victoria's Strategic Agenda describes our shared goals and directions for the next four years: 2020-2024.



# AV is committed to making real, lasting and positive impact. That takes planning.

We are proud of what we have achieved over the last four years. We have continued to support families across the state through our child, youth and family services, never losing sight of the fact that every child has a right to a safe and happy childhood.

We have strengthened our service profile and demonstrated to our clients and the community at large that we are a diverse, inclusive organisation founded on respect. Through innovative new models, a greater focus on results and ongoing roll-out of evidence-informed programs we have shown that our sector can deliver better outcomes than many thought possible four years ago.

AV is excited to continue that journey, as outlined in this Strategic Agenda. Every day our clients achieve amazing things for themselves, for each other, and their community. It is our privilege to support them in that work by focussed, coordinated and assertive effort across the organisation to transform, grow, strengthen and excel.

**Paul McDonald**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Stephen Newton, AO**  
Board Chair

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

# ABOUT AV

Anglicare Victoria (AV) works to transform the futures of children and young people and young adults, parents, families and carers. We offer a comprehensive network of high quality services that aim to improve lives. As Victoria's leading child and family welfare organisation, we are single-minded in our mission to create positive change for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community.

In any given year we provide residential, foster or kinship care for over a thousand Victorian children. This is a vital service and at the heart of what we do. We provide care for any child or young person removed from their family home, keeping children safe and protected in a loving environment, meeting their everyday needs listening and

providing long term support as they change and grow.

At the same time, we help over 10,000 families a year to stay safe and together through a range of family preservation programs such as Rapid Response and Cradle to Kinder. We empower families to build better futures through supporting parents to build their skills and offering financial counselling, alcohol and drug and mental health support. We are also a major provider of men's behaviour change and other programs targeting family violence.

Supported by a dedicated team of over 1,650 staff and a further 2,300 volunteers working out of 89 AV locations across Victoria, we are committed to a transformational agenda that aims to improve

outcomes by committing to continuous improvement and rigorously monitoring our own outcomes and performance, including developing a comprehensive outcomes framework for our out-of-home care clients.

We are always seeking new and innovative ways to deliver better care, guided by our clients' feedback and ideas. Over the last four years, we have established our own home-grown, evidence-based Rapid Response program in six locations across the state, along with implementing international evidence-based programs such as Functional Family Therapy, Safe Care and Caring Dads

We have established the first ever ParentZone Hub, which brings parenting support into local schools where it is easily

accessible and incorporated Parents Building Solutions that puts client-driven co-design at the heart of service delivery.

We have introduced an Electronic Case Management System and integrated telephony and communication systems across the agency, and worked in partnership with government and VincentCare to develop one of Victoria's first social impact bonds, that is delivering better outcomes for young people leaving care.

At Anglicare Victoria, building on our proven track record, we have consolidated our position as a leading provider in our field, driven by our three guiding pillars:

**Protect, Prevent, Empower.**





# WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

AV is committed to delivering real and tangible results. Every baby, child and young person deserves the best care, and AV helps parents and families provide that care.

The range of expert supports we provide helps families to work together to build safe and happy home environments, and when we are caring for a child outside the family home we will nurture and support every child and young person to be the best they can be. Our job is to see children, young people and their families thrive and grow, working together to fulfil their goals.

The success areas described here show how we put our guiding pillars – protect, prevent, empower – into practice in the work we do every day. These areas for success are a touchstone for staff across AV, reminding us of the importance of our work and of the aims we share.



## PREVENT



## PROTECT



## EMPOWER

Families back in control,  
staying and growing together

Safe places: Children and young  
people in safe and stable homes

Early action: Stepping up  
to prevent harm

Fast response: Active support  
from crisis to recovery

Strong young people: Supporting young  
people as they develop and grow

Leadership: Working for an effective, fair  
and compassionate service system

# SNAPSHOT

## AV'S STRATEGIC AGENDA 2020-2024



### GROW

Respond to need

Meet demand

Join forces



### SUSTAIN

Develop our people

Invest in our future

Create great workplaces



## EXCEL

Improve outcomes

Embed evidence

Work smarter



## TRANSFORM

Innovate

Integrate

Advocate



# GROW

There continues to be significant unmet demand for the services and support that AV provides. The growth in child protection reports will drive further demand for out-of-home care. In order to reduce this demand, we seek to boost the support for parents and families, through specific approaches that will help them stay together, stay strong and stay safe.

AV has been growing steadily over the past ten years, and this is reflected in increasing client numbers, as well as in the range of services we offer for families, children and young people.

We want to continue that growth so that we can provide more services to the community and respond to the calls for support we hear from people across Victoria.

We are eager to contribute our specialist expertise to support children, families and young

people involved in the youth justice, child protection, education and employment, health and other systems. We will continue to build partnerships with other experts, providers and communities to ensure that together we are achieving the best possible outcomes. Throughout, we will actively seek the input of our clients so that their voices guide our actions and goals.

We want to expand services so that each family we work with can be offered a broad spectrum of services they need, in an integrated approach that is family-led and able to adapt to a child, family or young person's changing needs over time.

Growth means more responsive and accessible services for more people and more professional opportunities for staff. And that means better outcomes for everyone.

## RESPOND TO NEED

Expand availability  
Wrap-around support  
Place-based responses

## MEET DEMAND

Fast easy access  
Welcoming inclusive care  
Strong community profile

## JOIN FORCES

Peers and experts  
Parishes & dioceses  
Funders and donors

In 2017 staff in St Luke's, Bendigo developed and implemented Rapid Response, drawing on the best available international evidence and adapting it for the Victorian context.

Prompted by the increasing numbers of children being taken into care, AV saw that we needed to find a way to help struggling families solve problems and change behaviours so that their homes became safe and secure places to raise their children and the family can stay together.

With the support of Victoria's Department of Health and Human Services, Rapid Response is now available in a number of locations across the state. It is showing promising results, with over 90% of children remaining safely in their homes three months after exiting the program.

# FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY

## Youth Justice - Case Study

***AV's Functional Family Therapy - Youth Justice (FFT-YJ) program works with young people involved in the youth justice system and their families to prevent re-offending. Qualified staff help the family to work together and build on each family's strengths so that they can support each other to get through the hard times.***

Joseph became involved with youth justice services after being charged with a number of serious offences including assault, with most of the incidents happening while he was out drinking with friends. When Joseph was referred to FFT in July 2019, there was a risk he would be deported to his country of birth – even though he'd moved to Australia with his family when he was only six.

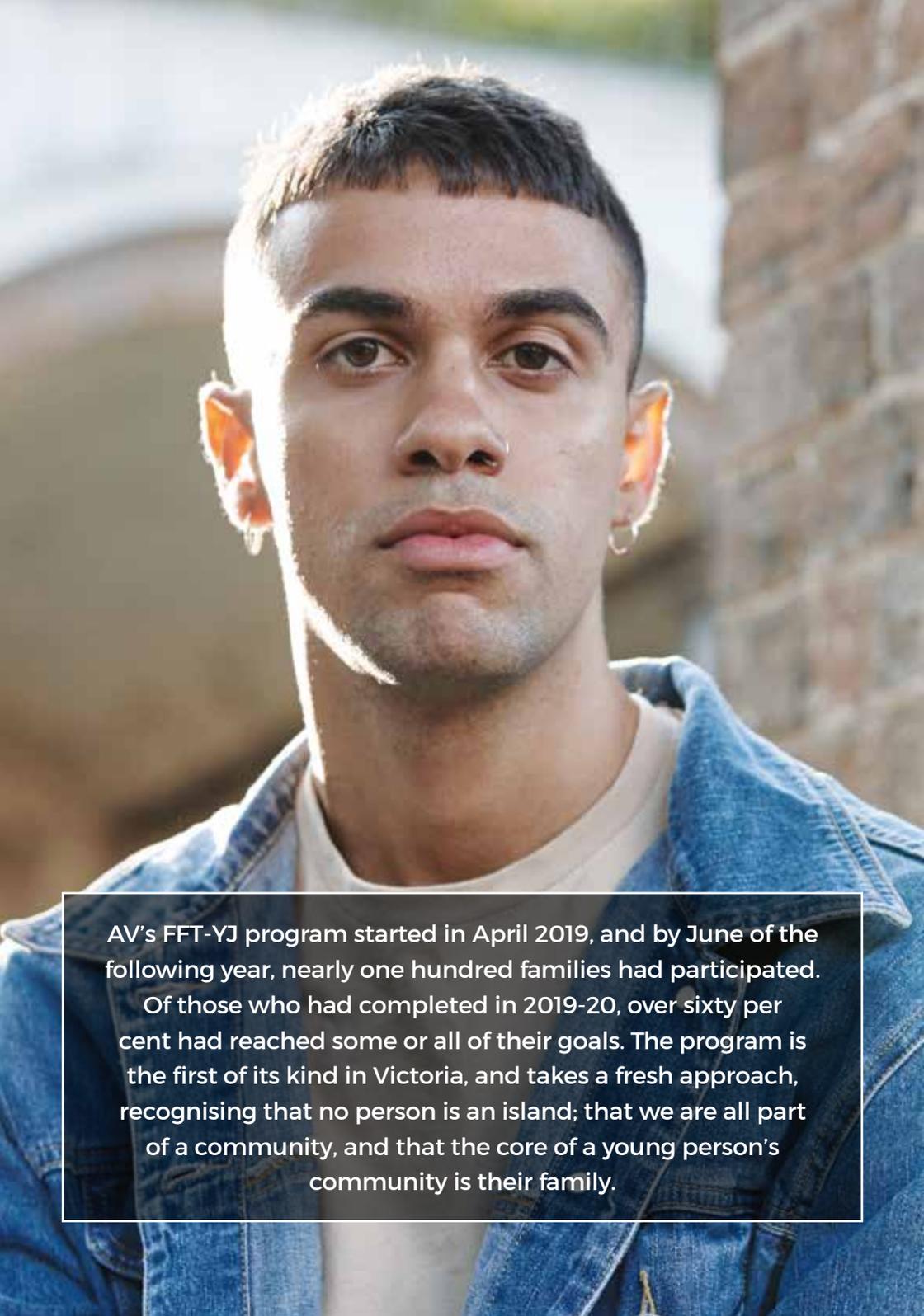
The FTT worker, Jonno, put in a lot of time to get Joseph and the family to come together. Jonno was able to talk to Joseph's Dad in his first language about the shame he was feeling, and eventually the family agreed to get together and participate in the program.

Extended family were keen to attend, but with up to fifteen people in the room at the same time, things were tense to begin with. Joseph doubted that his parents would be open to changing their views, but after a difficult start Joseph's parents started to talk about their experiences of migrating, the

challenges of parenting in Australia, their hopes and aspirations for their children, as well as the shame they felt over Joseph's offending and alcohol and drug use. Joseph and his siblings spoke about their struggle to hold on to their family heritage while growing up in Australia.

Over time, and with Jonno's support, both Joseph and his family learned a range of techniques and tools to help with shared communication and decision making. The family made a number of changes. They are communicating more, there is less conflict in the home, and Joseph is staying home more often. He's also keeping up with his appointments with other services, including an education and employment support service, has cut back on his substance use and has casual work.

Joseph hasn't reoffended since becoming involved in FFT-YJ, and is no longer involved in the youth justice system.



AV's FFT-YJ program started in April 2019, and by June of the following year, nearly one hundred families had participated.

Of those who had completed in 2019-20, over sixty per cent had reached some or all of their goals. The program is the first of its kind in Victoria, and takes a fresh approach, recognising that no person is an island; that we are all part of a community, and that the core of a young person's community is their family.



# SUSTAIN

Long term sustainability is an important focus for AV as we continue to grow and develop.

Sustainability means keeping our organisation strong. It allows us to offer our clients continuity of service and the confidence that comes with knowing we will be there, ready to help if they call.

We will continue to foster strong relationships with a range of funding bodies including government, philanthropy and business, as well as the broader community, to ensure we are working together for vulnerable children, youth and families.

Another key element of strengthening AV's sustainability is investing in and supporting our people.

We want every staff member in the AV team to grow and develop with us, by offering opportunities to build rewarding long-term careers.

At the same time, we will continue to invest in the capital, equipment, technology and infrastructure and makes us more efficient and which supports good service delivery.

We will also work to safeguard the interests of the next generation by measuring and reducing our carbon footprint. Environmental sustainability will be a key consideration in all our management decisions and work practices, including purchasing, property and maintenance, and everyday work practices.

## DEVELOP OUR PEOPLE

Strong, adaptable  
workforce

Long-term AV  
careers

Evidence-informed  
practice

## INVEST IN OUR FUTURE

Diversified income

Efficient delivery

Robust monitoring

## CREATE GREAT WORKPLACES

State-of-the  
art facilities

Safe, healthy and  
green workplaces

Welcoming  
environments

Part of providing a great service for the children, young people, parents and families we work with is ensuring that we can offer the security of knowing that we will always be there for them.

Ensuring that we have a strong and reliable funding stream is an important part of being able to offer clients continuity and the best possible care, and provide growth and job security for our staff.

Over the next four years, AV will continue to explore contemporary innovative funding models that

can provide new pathways for partners and supporters, building on our experience of establishing COMPASS, one of Victoria's first social impact bonds, through which a range of supporters invested in better outcomes for young people leaving care.

We will also work with government, philanthropy and the business community to identify those areas where our expertise, experience and agility can add value and deliver better outcomes for the community as a whole.

# COMPASS

## A Case Study in Impact Investing



**COMPASS is an innovative program that supports young people who have grown up in care to make a positive start to their adult lives.**

**COMPASS provides a comprehensive package of housing and tailored case management support, working with each young person for two years. COMPASS is one of Victoria's first social impact bonds, an outcomes-based partnership between Anglicare Victoria, VincentCare, the Victorian Government and private investors.**

When Rachel was first referred to COMPASS, she knew she would be leaving out-of-home care in six months, and was living independently as part of the 'lead tenant' program.

Rachel's initial engagement with her COMPASS Key Worker was very positive, but when her out-of-home care placement was disrupted, planning her next steps with COMPASS became difficult. Her COMPASS Key Worker worked closely with the care team, developing a comprehensive understanding of Rachel's unique strengths, interests and needs. Forging this strong relationship was crucial for Rachel's decision to sign up for COMPASS.

Initially, COMPASS focussed on supporting Rachel's existing plans. Rachel was enrolled in TAFE, had a part time job and drove her own car. As a highly independent person with many strengths, at first she only required minimal support and guidance from her Key Worker, and

was living in a kinship arrangement so didn't need additional housing support. Later, her circumstances changed.

COMPASS is designed to be both tailored and flexible, so was able to step in and provide additional support. This included providing a safe, secure housing option when she needed it the most. When Rachel was affected by family violence, her COMPASS Key Worker provided intensive personal support as well as supporting her through the process of making a police report. COMPASS also connected her with specialist family violence services and made sure the ongoing support she needed was coordinated and holistic.

Throughout her two years with the program, COMPASS will continue to support Rachel as her needs change, so that she has the stability and safety she needs to keep working on her goals and make a positive start to her adult life.





## EXCEL

AV strives to deliver the best possible outcomes for its diverse client group.

Grounded in a commitment to continuously improve across all of our services, we want to ensure that everything we do is client-focussed and informed by the client voice, latest research, evidence and experience from across the world. At the same time we will pro-actively manage and minimise risk. We will strive to continuously improve what we do by focussing on data and evidence.

We will provide the sustained care and support that all children and young people and families need, drawing on the best evidence including input and feedback from our clients.

AV helps children, youth and families build safe, caring homes even when grappling with complex challenges like trauma, family violence, alcohol and other drug misuse, mental illness,

and the impacts of poverty and intergenerational disadvantage.

But we aim to do more than protect children and prevent harm. We want to see the people we work with live full, happy and productive lives and achieve their goals. We understand that every person has a unique story to tell, and a unique perspective to offer. We are committed to providing inclusive services that are supportive and accessible to all our clients. We work toward everyone being empowered to take positive, independent steps towards their dreams.

These commitments extend to every level of the organisation. Our Board, our management team, our practitioners and our office staff all have a role to play, pursuing excellence. Most importantly of all, we will draw on the wisdom and advice of the community of people who use and support our services and celebrate what, together, we can achieve.

We see ourselves not only as a leading agency, but also as an agent of change in the interests of the people we work with. We will never stop finding a way to do better.

## IMPROVE OUTCOMES

Continuous  
improvement  
Safety  
Transparency

## EMBED EVIDENCE

Better outcomes  
Strong evidence  
Evaluation and review

## WORK SMARTER

User-friendly IT  
Data and analytics  
State-of-the-art systems

Over the next four years, AV's service reform agenda will be supported by a program of work aimed at ensuring that our capability as an organisation supports our ambition as a service provider.

This will be supported by a systematic review of the systems and processes that underpin our operations, never losing sight of

the fact that the number one priority is to make sure that our people have the time, space and support to focus on their first priority: improving outcomes for the children, young people and families with whom we work.



# RAPID RESPONSE



## Case Study

***Rapid Response works with at-risk families identified by child protection services. Informed by a number of international evidence-based models, Rapid Response works intensively with families, in their own home, over a four-week period. It's proven to stop young people being placed in out-of-home care and keep families together.***

Sue and Paul were worried. Their six year old son, Benny, was on the way home from the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service where he had been staying as an inpatient.

Benny had been showing frequent significant challenging and aggressive behaviours and Sue and Paul were worried about the safety of their youngest child, David, who was only one year old.

Child protection services were also concerned about family safety and were considering making a Protection Application to the court to separate them. Instead, they referred the family to Rapid Response, so that AV could support the family to make the home safe.

Although Sue and Paul had reservations about taking part in such an intensive program they agreed.

AV's Rapid Response team worked with the family for four weeks developing a safety-focused plan alongside the child protection

team, and providing in-home support to address the crisis. The team helped the family to develop their parenting skills, as well as connecting them to longer term support services.

Sue and Paul reported that Benny's aggression had decreased significantly. They were feeling confident that they could manage and were less anxious and more hopeful about the future. Paul said the outcome was beyond his expectations, and though there might be more problems, he would seek support if he needed to in the future.

Paul and Sue are now working to transition Benny back to school, and child protection services are no longer considering separating the family.

Rapid Response has grown quickly, and was available in four metropolitan and two regional areas in 2020. Our data is showing very positive results for the nearly 370 families who have taken part, with over 90% remaining with their parents at completion.

# FOSTER CARE

## Case Study

***Foster care is a way of offering children a safe, secure and nurturing place to stay while their family is unable to care for them. As one of Victoria's largest foster care providers, AV placements range from emergency care right through to respite and longer-term care. AV's program is dedicated to offering a supportive environment for both children and carers alike, providing training, comprehensive ongoing support, and reimbursement for any out-of-pocket care.***

Jenny and Tony met and got married in their early forties, but always thought they would have liked to have children. An episode of Home & Away prompted them to have a discussion about foster caring and whether it was something they could do.

Jenny and Tony got the ball rolling with their accreditation after seeing an advertisement for carers willing to provide a forever home to four siblings aged 10, 12, 15 and 16.

The pair was a suitable fit, and went from having no kids to four kids in the space of three months. The family soon moved to a larger home, so each child could have their own bedroom.

Jenny said: "Family is incredibly important to Tony and I, we both come from big families. In my own family, my mother had four foster brothers and sisters who were all

adopted. Our extended family has completely embraced the kids since they moved in with us, they're completely part of the family. We've been incredibly lucky.

"Fostering has been an amazing journey, you don't always know what the next day is going to bring. There are some really tough times but these get outweighed by the fun times and when you can see you are making a difference to their lives. In November I made the decision to give up work, it was tough, but in the best interest of the kids – they have responded well with routines, it helps them to know what's ahead of them.

"Our Anglicare Victoria case manager is just incredible and we've developed a fantastic network of support. We've learnt to accept help when it's offered – as it will be needed!"



In 2019, AV was delighted to achieve our Rainbow Tick Accreditation. Recognised nationally, Rainbow Tick accredited organisations are committed to safe and inclusive practice and service delivery for all people, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex.

Diversity offers an increased breadth of perspectives and depth of understanding, further enabling the provision of high-quality inclusive services to our communities. We support the right of equality, fairness and decency for all Victorians.

This achievement has been a team effort across the whole of AV, led by the members of our AV PRIDE Working Group.



# TRANSFORM

Our community continues to face complex challenges, whilst further challenges will emerge over time. Some issues, such as client change are intergenerational. For some, their issues are immediate and demanding, for others their issues are intergenerational, and for some it relates to a lack of social or economic opportunity.

As a result, child protection reports in Victoria are growing and more and more babies, children and young people are being taken into care. Aboriginal families continue to be grossly over-represented in both the child protection, justice and youth justice systems.

Many families are dealing with a number of interconnected issues at once and so we need to work effectively across programs and in different settings. Outcomes need to improve, and require an ongoing commitment to innovation and reform.

We will bring the most effective child and family programs from around the world here to improve

our own practice and deliver the best outcomes for children, young people and families. We will continue to develop, trial and test, home-grown solutions to local problems, drawing on the best available data and evidence to provide family-led, integrated solutions.

This will be supported by smart use of emerging technologies and techniques to ensure we are providing the best possible support and guided by the most valuable resource we have - the voices and experiences of our clients.

Based on robust research and evidence and underpinned by our commitment to social justice, we will continue to work toward with our colleagues across the sector and the community to implement a progressive reform agenda that tackles disadvantages and recognises all people's equal rights to respect, opportunity and participation.

Together, we can transform our services and systems, and through that, what outcomes our clients can achieve.

## INNOVATE

Solutions focussed  
Evidence-informed  
Driving change

## INTEGRATE

Embedding  
prevention  
Family-led  
Agile and flexible

## ADVOCATE

Amplify clients' voices  
Build sector capacity  
Deliver change

A key priority for AV over the next four years will be delivering a truly integrated approach to the support we provide for families.

Our objective is to deliver a wrap-around, family-led service that is able to provide tailored responses that reflect each family's needs and aspirations.

By thinking creatively across traditional program and funding boundaries and roles, Anglicare Victoria will be better able to respond in a more agile and flexible way to the needs of a child, family, young person or adult as they change over time.

This approach has the potential to transform not only the way we work with our families, but has far-reaching implications for how the sector as a whole thinks about supporting families.

For that reason, we will work closely with government and other funders and partners across the sector throughout this process, so that the way we work, the way we are funded and, most importantly, the way we respond to and collaborate with children, young people and families delivers the outcomes they want and is informed by their input and advice.

# HOMESTRETCH



## Case Study

***HomeStretch is an Australia-wide campaign advocating for young people in out-of-home care to have the option of staying in care until they are 21 years old. International studies have shown that extending care can dramatically improve outcomes for this vulnerable cohort. Currently in Victoria, care is withdrawn on or before a child's eighteenth birthday. Many become homeless, involved with the criminal justice system, unemployed or a new parent within the first 12 months after care is ended.***

Supporting the HomeStretch campaign has been a key part of AV's advocacy over the past five years. With the support of the AV Board, our Chief Executive Officer has chaired the national campaign, supported by a Project Coordinator based at AV's Collingwood office and funded with generous grants from our philanthropic partners.

From humble beginnings at AV, the campaign now has garnered wide support from individuals and organisations across the country. It has made remarkable progress and is bringing about significant shifts in the national child protection policy landscape, with Victoria, ACT, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania now committed to either extending care or trialling extended care arrangements.

The international evidence tells us that this, in turn, will lead directly to better outcomes and healthier, happier futures for young people in care.

AV wants to provide the best possible care, and wants the young people we work with to have the best possible chance in life. That is why advocacy will continue to be a key part of our work over the next four years.





Cultural Advisors: Uncle Ian and Auntie Kellie

# AV'S CULTURAL ADVISORS

Anglicare Victoria acknowledges Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work. We commit to working respectfully to honour the ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to this country of our Aboriginal staff and the Aboriginal children, families and young people that we work with.

AV's work will be strengthened over the next four years by the appointment of Uncle Ian Goolagong and Auntie Kellie Hunter as our in-house Cultural Advisors.

Uncle Ian and Auntie Kellie play a key role in facilitating the Buldau Yioohgen Program, AV's indigenous leadership academy. Buldau Yiooghen ("Big Dreams" in Woi-Wurrung language) brings together community, cultural and sporting groups to support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as they strive towards their educational, employment and leadership goals.

The young people who take part in the program return to their local communities and the networks to take part in work experience with one of the academy partners.

As well, Uncle Ian and Auntie Kellie are supporting our growing cohort of Aboriginal staff and stepping in to provide one-on-one support to children families and young people when and where it's needed, helping to make the vital connection to culture and community.

Over the next four years, these Cultural Advisor roles will not only strengthen our service delivery, but will help us culturally grow and learn as an organisation, deepening our understanding of the cultural and historical context in which we live and work every day.

# HOME GROWN

## AV's Anglican foundations

The Anglican community has a long tradition of supporting the Victorian community, providing a range of services for vulnerable children, families and young people.

Anglicare Victoria was formed in 1997 when three organisations, the Anglican Mission to the Streets and Lanes, St John's Homes for Boys and Girls, and the Mission of St James and St John were joined under a new Act of Parliament. The Act created a new body with a strength and reach for greater than they could achieve separate agencies.

That same commitment to improve and strengthen what we do led to the merger with St Luke's Anglicare in 2014, a key provider in the Bendigo, Loddon and the Mallee.

By 2020 AV had grown to a team of over 1,700 staff and a further 2,300 volunteers working out of 89 AV locations across Victoria.

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### **An important part of our partnership with the Anglican community is our work with parishes and diocese across Victoria.**

2020 sees this relationship entering a new phase, with the metropolitan Homelessness Services established through the parishes transitioning into Anglicare Victoria's network of services and the establishment of formal partnership agreements with each Diocese.

With AV's support, the Diocesan and Parish Partnership Program has renewed contracts to deliver Prison Chaplaincy and grown the 'Get Out for Good' pre- and post-release program and extended it to all Victorian prisons.





**THANK  
YOU**

# AV'S STRATEGIC PLANNING

A number of people have contributed to the development of this strategic plan.

The plan's development has been overseen by the Board's Chair, Stephen Newton AO, supported by the Strategy Working Group and with the support and contribution of the full Board.

A commissioned environmental scan, (undertaken by the Cube Group) provided important research to inform the plan. We also extend our thanks to our peers and colleagues across the sector who kindly contributed their feedback to this process.

The team at AV have managed and guided the development including the AV Executive Group, regional leadership teams and our senior management group. All have contributed critical insights, reflections and suggestions.

Last but not least, we are grateful for the daily feedback all our staff, volunteers and clients provide, supported by the organisation-wide staff survey completed in 2019.

We are proud of our people, who brought the same thoughtful, attentive dedication to the planning process that they bring every day to their work with clients and colleagues.

Contact us if you need this information in an accessible format such as large print, please **telephone 1800 809 722** or email **[Info@anglicarevic.org.au](mailto:Info@anglicarevic.org.au)**

**Anglicare Victoria's Annual report is available on our website:**  
**[www.anglicarevic.org.au](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au)**

\*Information included in this booklet was correct at time of publication.

\*Names in stories have been changed in the interest of protection and privacy.

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