



WE CARE CONNECT

supporting vulnerable children

2019

# Annual Impact Report



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# 2015-2019 OVER 5,000 CHILDREN NOW SUPPORTED



## Our Mission:

To provide high impact support to families in need by giving high quality community donated children and maternal health and safety items.

## Our Impact

Together with others enabling all families to fully participate in our community with a full sense of belonging..

## 29,873 ITEMS OF CLOTHES RE-HOMED

## 2019 IMPACT

In 2019 we re-homed:

28,000 nappies

5,616 linen items

110 car seats

51 cots

51 safety gates

69 prams

15 double prams

2,260 children's books

285 birthday presents

Since we started in **May 2016**  
we have:

Received **1,782** requests for  
family support

Reached **5,399** vulnerable  
children

Distributed **117,031** children's  
care and safety items

Conservatively valued at  
**\$1,006,173**



# LEADERSHIP TEAM



What a year! We started from a great base and we've been sprinting ever since. We Care supported nearly as many children in 2019 as in the previous 2½ years since we started. All achieved by the amazing dedicated work by our volunteers. It has also been the first year with our new name and constitution, an active Board of Directors, and our new premises!!

We focus on the positive; making a difference to the lives of hundreds of vulnerable children, enabling wonderful people on the Central Coast to reach out to help those in need in our community in a tangible meaningful way by sharing children's clothing, linen, cots, prams and the list goes on. And wonderfully donating time volunteering with us to say "no" to poverty and injustice. A huge thank you to everyone!

Our idyllic Central Coast also has a dark side, poverty and need. Whatever the causes the bottom line is that children should not have to suffer for deficiencies in our society. We Care has no barriers, if you are a child and you are in need then enough said.

We have achieved a great milestone, gaining recognition as a specialist children's support program. And children are our focus, children in need. Every donation goes to an individual family in need as part of a total package of care, and we ensure that the support we pass on is of the highest quality.

Being poor doesn't mean you get second best.

Thank you everyone for your overwhelming support, and together we will have huge impact.

**Derryck Klarkowski Executive Officer**

**We Care supported nearly as many children in 2019 as we did in the previous 2 1/2 years**

## **Our Board of Directors**

Ariane Dixon	Director	30/07/2019
Robert Dixon	Director	30/07/2019
Laura Perceval	Director	07/06/2019
Jacqueline Klarkowski	Secretary	01/10/2018
John Davison	Chairperson	01/10/2018
Janice Smith	Director	01/10/2018
Nathan West	Treasurer	01/10/2018



# CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE

Throughout 2018, we were busy trying to come up with a new name to replace 'We Care Uniting'. Certainly a great deal has happened since then. We Care Connect Limited was officially incorporated and became a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission in early November 2018 spearheading a great deal of change and new initiatives across the organisation. Not least of these changes was to secure new premises, form a new Board of Directors and leverage its new corporate structure to seek greater access to grant funding, both from the public and private sectors.

In just a few short months, between October 2018 and January 2019, WCC was not only formed, but indeed became transformed. As well as a new Board of Directors being appointed, WCC opened a Bank Account, leased and moved into new premises, purchased shelving, took out appropriate insurances, set about refining its policies and procedures, as well as strengthening its supply chain and channels to market.

As we enter our second "formal" year of operation, We Care Connect Limited goes forward with great credentials; a sound business model, a very devoted and loyal volunteer base and a fine reputation within the local welfare community. We Care, has for some years, been seen by local politicians at all levels as a very effective and worthwhile charity, and I see this not only continuing, but showing signs of growth in the future. With this being the case WCC is well placed to secure future grant funding, to reach more needy children and to further improve it's already much appreciated services.

I wish to take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks to Derryck and Jackie, who have done a remarkable job. I would also like to thank the volunteers for their loyalty and hard work and the Board of Directors for their enthusiasm and contribution over the past 12 months. Finally, I would like to make special mention of Uniting for their financial and other in-kind support, together with Sparke Helmore Lawyers for providing their services pro bono to help the organisation become established.

John Davison

Chairperson





# LEADERSHIP TEAM

Welcome everyone.

What a year it has been at We Care Connect; overwhelming, but in just a good way. Our 20+ volunteers, and we always need more, are the most marvellous people you would wish to meet. Nothing is too difficult or out of the ordinary, they all just get in and get the job done. Without our volunteers, we wouldn't have been able to achieve everything we have achieved. The reason I am involved is because even though people said I was too old to volunteer, you are never too old to volunteer. If we don't help these mothers and their children, who will? No matter what the causes of poverty in our community, children should not have to suffer. That's what We Care Connect is all about.

**Gloria Chesterfield Volunteer**



What an amazing year.

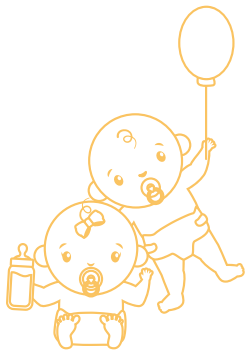
We never thought that we would come so far so fast, and now there are just not enough hours in the day to do all that we would like to do!

I am so proud of what we have achieved. The key priority has been to get the word out there, to let people know that we exist, and so we plunged into the world of those wonderful caseworkers who provide so much support to our Central Coast families. Interagency meetings, phone calls, building up Facebook, phone calls, keeping a fantastic webpage going, phone calls, meeting with sponsors, phone calls – and all the while sorting, picking up, cleaning, packing up, putting out appeals, setting up fund-raisers – it has been full on.

But now the word is out and community groups and agencies all over the coast are enabling us to help so many families through the fantastic generosity of our donors and supporters. The service has never stopped growing and it has been really hard work, but such rewarding fun!

**Annette Locchi Communications**





# LEADERSHIP TEAM

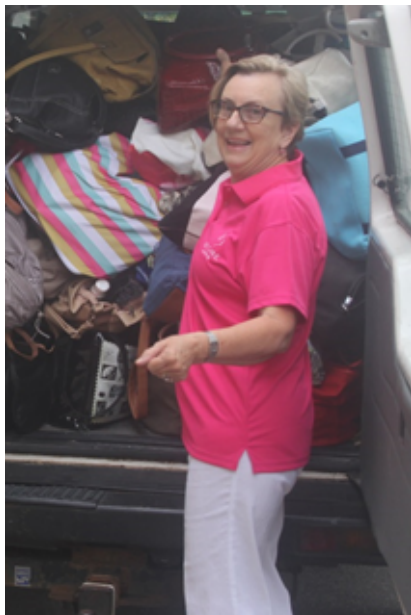
It seems a long time since our first donation day at the Toukley Green in 2016. We put the call out for community donations for prams, high chairs, cots, clothes, nappies, anything baby related. It was a great success, not only bringing in more community donations, but also expanding awareness of our program in the local area. And we have grown from there. We have a long history of community donation events and fundraising events starting with our 2016 Christmas Twilight market we had over 40 stall holders, live entertainment, Mr and Mrs Clause on Harley's and a petting zoo; it was an amazing event. Since then we've had a Feb-U-Hairy fund-raiser in conjunction with 101.3 SeaFM for the support local refuges on the Coast for vulnerable women and children; Rocktober Battle of the Bands, promoted our programs at multiple community events, and of course the amazing Bunnings BBQs!

Every year we have our May-B-Baby donor campaign with the enormous support of Emma McBride MP and David Harris MP.

Again we received a huge amount of donations, and another great opportunity to tell people about our program. One highlight this year was our second partnership event with Benevolent conducting a highly successful Superhero Sunday. As we grow our community donations are growing with us, which is what We Care is all about – working together as a community to help out those amongst us who are struggling.



## Jo Collins Events



I have been working with We Care for several years now and it is one of the most rewarding jobs I've ever had. I had reached a point where I was looking for a new challenge in my own community where I was seeing a great need and this job has been the answer for me. The co-operation, camaraderie, hard work and dedication of everyone involved and the seriousness of the task we have set ourselves owing to the huge need in the large area we now service keeps me looking forward to my time spent with We Care.

It is currently my main job to put together the orders for the older children in the age range 5 to 16 and also to keep a range of shoes available for all children. It is my pleasure to fill an order with the best clothing possible from what is available and then to pack an appropriate backpack with books and craft items. Then comes the difficult but enjoyable task of choosing toys from our wonderful range and making up the whole order in a specially made bag (we all make these in our spare time!) For an older child I will search for lego, puzzles, balls, etc. and then sift through the shoes and slippers available in hopes of having the correct size. Other members of our group make up clothing packs for younger children, linen packs, provide nappies, handbags for the mothers, gift packs for lone fathers, a food pack when necessary and, of course, the large items which include cots, high chairs, car seats, etc. I then put my share of the order with all the other items required and it's ready for the case worker. Job done and satisfaction factor very high.

## Helen Burkett Requests Coordinator

# NEEDS SNAPSHOT

- There are over 10,000 children living in poverty on the NSW Central Coast, and a further 20,000 in the adjoining Hunter region. 2016 Census data.
- The Central Coast has 10 of the most disadvantaged suburbs in Australia (in the lowest SEIFA Index of Disadvantage decile). 2016 Census data.
- The NSW Central Coast has a 30% lower average income compared to greater Sydney, and high levels of housing stress (51% of renters compared with 45% in greater Sydney) with low and decreasing supplies of social housing and rapidly increasing rental and utility costs (2016 data – source Judith Stubbs & Associates, report to the Central Coast Council, May 2018).
- 36% of people on the Central Coast have experienced times in the last 12 months when they were short of money to meet everyday needs\*.
- One parent families are more prevalent in the former Wyong Shire (14.5%)

Older data but indicative of current trends:

- There is a high incidence of families in stress with high notification levels for child abuse and domestic violence. Of the 82,087 children aged 0 to 19 years within the Region, there are over 15,000 reports of child abuse and neglect with over 4,000 children at risk of significant harm (FACS, 2015)
- Assault-domestic violence related offences, Wyong has a rate of 545.9 per 100,000 population compared to 390.1 per 100,000 for Gosford and 388.7 per 100,000 for NSW (NSW BOCSAR, 2015)

\* Central Coast Council data

## OUR RESPONSE

- Since we started in May 2016, we have supported 5,399 vulnerable children distributing 117,031 children's care and safety items free of charge to over 70 local community support groups and family support agencies.
- Everything we distributed has been donated to us by the community. The new purchase cost to beneficiaries would have been over \$1,000,000 based on equivalent purchase costs at Kmart, Aldi and similar.

## NAME CHANGE AND NEW PREMISES

- In October 2018 we incorporated as We Care Connect, an independent PBI charity with DGR status, changing our name from We Care Uniting. Over 2019 we have fully migrated to our new name with new web and social media platforms.
- And another key milestone - in January we moved from our previous cramped shared accommodation to our dedicated 200m2 warehouse premises in Wyong together with an amazing donation of 70 shelving units from a local business. And our sincere thanks to Uniting for funding to make all this possible! With such strong growth during this year we are now preparing to add an additional 60m2 floor space early next year.



# OUR PROGRAMS

Our core focus is supporting children living below the poverty line and in other vulnerable situations across the Central Coast/Hunter with clothing, nappies, bed linen and essential care and safety items & equipment. All support is given as part of a total package of care by trained case and community workers; the program distributes items free of charge on request to over 70 community support groups and welfare agencies.



**Sleep through the Night** – Everyone needs a good night's sleep, particularly the parents and carers of little ones. Our Sleep through the night program delivers families with the cots, nursery equipment and linen to safely put their child to sleep every night and day. This program supports the maintenance, distribution, management and in some instances, purchase of new nursery items to deliver our Sleep Through the Night Program.

**Fourth Trimester** – We support mums and families with the essentials they need to set up home with a newborn. Items can include smaller pieces such as baby clothes, swaddles and wraps, nappies, wipes, breast pumps, baby bottles or formula to larger one-off items such as highchairs, baby mats, change tables and nappy bags. The ability to nourish a newborn baby is a fundamental human right, we work to ensure families are well equipped to provide for their children.

**The Wheels on the Bus** - The families we help often live with significant barriers that create social isolation. We aim to keep families safe, social, mobile and connected to support services through the distribution of prams, car seats & baby carriers. We re-home capsules, reversible car seats and older children's car seats. We put great care into providing the right 'wheels on the bus', whether it's a carrier for a quick trip to the supermarket, a pram that will definitely fit on a bus or a newborn car seat to bring baby safely home from hospital.



**Happy Birthday** – Sadly we receive weekly requests from case workers when they know of a child who won't receive a birthday present this year. WCC's Happy Birthday program prepares brand new or completely unused gifts to ensure that children throughout the Central Coast will wake up on their birthday with a present to open.





# OUR PROGRAMS



**Girl Power** – Some girls dream of princesses, some of fairies, some of playing soccer or being a pop star! We Care Connect's Girl Power program provides bundles of girls clothing, books, toys and craft packs so that families can spend time playing, caring and nurturing these dreams. Too often we hear of children who aren't provided the basics, let alone beautiful dress up items, our girl power bundles include both practical and pretty pieces.

**Boys will be Boys** – We take great pleasure and care in preparing bundles of clothing and items for boys from newborn to 16. We know that boys will be boys, pants end up with holes in their knees, mud in their pockets and sand, well, everywhere! We want children to be having fun, playing superheros and riding scooters and bikes – and their clothes take a toll. Boy bundles can include four sets of shorts, pants, pyjamas, t-shirts and brand-new undies and socks, along with balls, cars, books and teddies.



**Youth Hope** – over 3,000 of the 10,000 children living in poverty on the Central Coast are aged between 12-16 years. Disadvantaged teenagers are highly susceptible to low self-esteem and social exclusion and this can be a very damaging time. In addition to providing urgently needed clothing items, this program provides the important items such as decent shoes, movie passes, headphones, backpacks and internet access.

**It takes a Village** – WCC is powered by a team of exceptional volunteers who spend time sorting, selecting and packing bundles to go off to the Central Coast's most vulnerable families. Our It takes a Village (ITAV) program ranges from everything from covering fuel for volunteers to collect and distribute items; tea, milk, coffee and biscuit expenses to keep our volunteers smiling; aprons and name badges; rent costs to house our items and operational expenses which we try our absolute hardest to keep to a minimum!



# OUR CORE VALUES

**Compassion** - The Humanitarian Imperative that when another person suffers, we experience the compassion to reach out and help.

**Community** - A community program contributing with others to build a community that cares and shares. Being a channel to enable the community to help those less fortunate in a meaningful and fulfilling way.

**Action Hands-on direct action-** Reaching out at a person-to-person level, taking personal responsibility, not passing the onus to others, doing not talking.

**Partnership** - An effective program of collective action developing and building on partnerships, with our volunteers, donors and sponsors, case workers, community groups and individuals providing their support, expertise and assistance.



## STRATEGIC PLANNING

We have identified 3 Strategic Imperatives which set our priorities and guide our focused activities for the next 3 years until the end of 2022.



### GOAL 1: Solid foundations

Continue to develop our sound business processes to ensure we can continue to grow a financially viable and sustainable social impact organisation. Rationale: Building on our solid foundations we will develop practices and operations that a critical to supporting our impact and outcomes in a responsible and sustainable manner

### GOAL 2: Improve and expand

Improve and expand our services to increase our impact in the community where needs are greatest. Rationale: By innovating and expanding our services in a planned manner we will help more people in need in more holistic ways

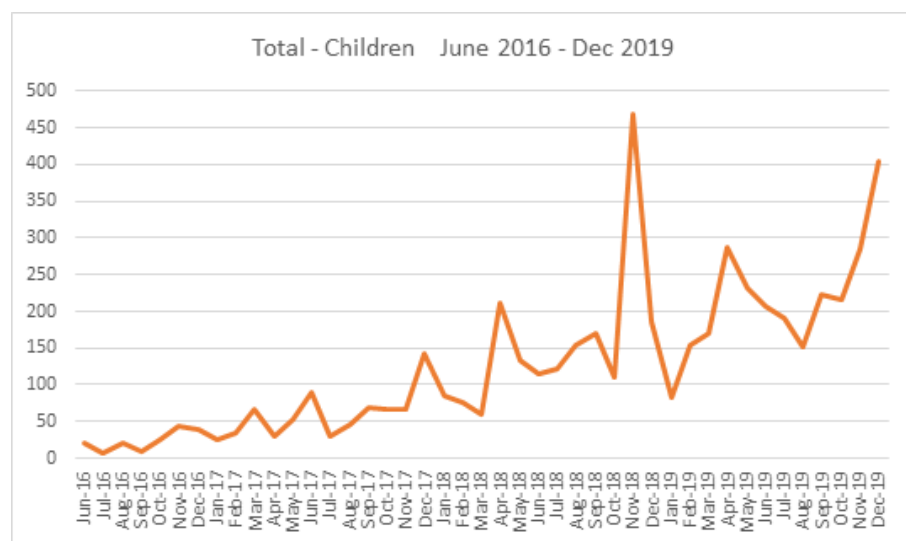
### GOAL 3: Drive societal change

Be a leader in raising community awareness of local social disadvantage and advocating to government, businesses and individuals for societal change.

Rationale: Growing community understanding of, and involvement in solutions for social disadvantage, together with strong advocacy at several levels, will compound our impact with more services and drive societal change.

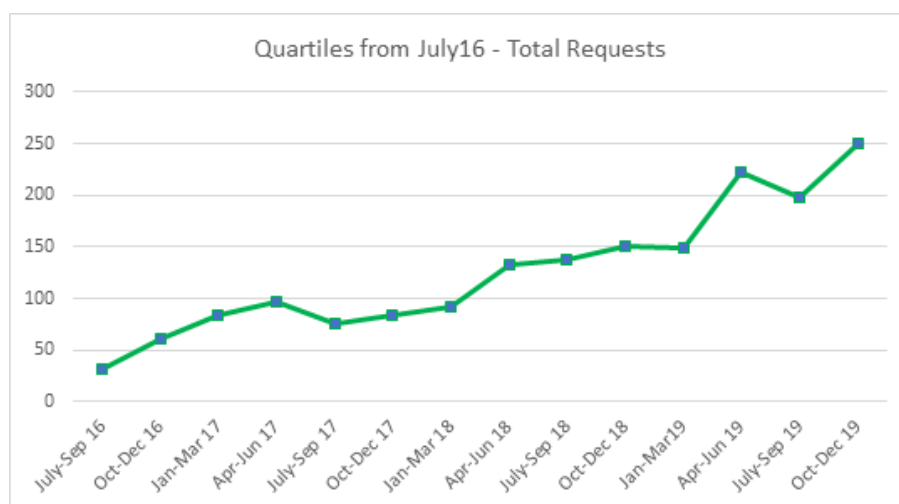


# CONTINUING TO GROW



“ Over 2,000 children supported in 2019 ”

“ We support over 200 case workers and 70 agencies ”



**We collaborate, we don't duplicate** – We Care Connect volunteers are not social workers and we don't work directly with vulnerable families, we leave that to the experts. Our role is to provide the clothing and equipment to provide the material needs for families.

**Recycle and re-home** – Babies and children grow quickly, and we help prevent safe and quality nursery items from going to landfill by accepting donations from the community. Once at the WCC Base, items are safety checked, cleaned and packed for families in need.

**What we don't re-home is as important what we do** – All items are safety checked to NSW safety standards and we take our role in child safety seriously. Clothing items that won't delight are donated to H&M's Garment Collecting initiative, so we don't consciously add more to landfill.

# THANK YOU

A huge thanks to our amazing volunteers, without you there would be We Care program possible. A huge thanks to our wonderful donors, without you there would be We Care program possible.

We focus on the positive; making a difference to the lives of hundreds of vulnerable children, enabling wonderful people on the Central Coast to reach out to help those in need in our community in a tangible meaningful way



Hi We Care and your angels

I would like to say Thank you so much for the great work you do and the relief you give to families. When I give them the packages you send me, their faces light up and they are so grateful as it takes some financial stress off them. The children get so excited when there is toy in their package and they love the clothes and cant wait to try them on.

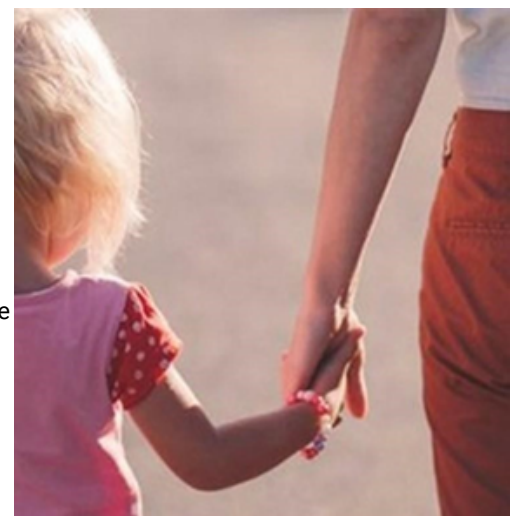
Central Coast Case Worker

## THE NEXT STEPS

With more than 30,000 children in need across the Central Coast/Hunter and there is much more to be done to reach more and more vulnerable families. The program continues to grow strongly, and we are looking to both increase our warehouse capacity on the Central Coast, and importantly work to setting up a Hunter branch in the short to medium term. We plan to introduce a collection and delivery service in 2020 with our own vehicle and volunteer drivers that will significantly increase our reach and impact.

We continue to reach more and more local vulnerable children both by increasing the number of agencies and community centres we support, and by increasing our range of programs. We are in late stage planning to expand our Young Persons support program in January 2020.

There is much more to do as demonstrated by our continued growth throughout 2019, we haven't reached the plateau yet. A further milestone this year has been our expansion into emergency support for the Department of Community & Justice Central Coast Support Unit, offering same-day response when critically needed.



Our goal for 2020 is to significantly increase our level of support across all our programs – watch this space! Above all program growth will be driven by the energy and motivation of our donors, supporters and volunteers.