



**MacKillop  
Family  
Services**



**MacKillop  
Family Services  
Strategic Plan**

2020-2027





# Founding Story

On 1 July 1997, MacKillop Family Services was formed as a new organisation by re-founding seven agencies operated by the Sisters of Mercy, the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart in Victoria. However, our legacy and inspiration is much older. From the 1850s, these three congregations, respectively founded by Catherine McAuley, Edmund Rice and Mary MacKillop, worked in Victoria to establish homes for children who were orphaned, destitute or neglected, and for families who were in need of care and support. Throughout the years, the original model of institutional care evolved into different forms of residential care, foster care, education, family support and disability services.

The purpose and character of MacKillop Family Services as a Catholic organisation, continues to draw from the lives, works and inspiration of the three founders who provide a living model for the way our staff and volunteers approach their work. Woven through this ethos is the acknowledgement and recognition of the inherent Aboriginal spirituality of this country and respect for the cultures that have lived here for thousands of generations.

Today, we continue this work within the framework of Catholic social teaching and in the spirit of the Gospel – one of radical inclusion, restoration and accompaniment. MacKillop Family Services is now a national organisation and a leading provider of services for children, young people and families across Victoria, New South Wales, ACT, Western Australia and to other organisations in every state and beyond. We offer services and programs in family support, foster care, residential care, disability services, youth support, education and training, parenting, family therapy, mental health, family violence, early childhood, and support to women and men who, as children, were in the care of our founding agencies.

## Our Purpose

MacKillop Family Services continues our founders' passionate commitment to social justice – to work for the rights of children, young people and families to be safe, to learn, feel nurtured and connected to culture. We provide high quality services to promote healing from trauma and loss, and to enable hopeful futures.

MacKillop Family Services will care compassionately, respond large-heartedly and advocate courageously.

## Our Vision

Children, young people and families are welcomed and supported by MacKillop Family Services to be empowered and thrive.

# Welcome Message



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Keane'.

**Brian Keane**  
Chair person

The MacKillop Family Services Members, Board and Executive Team are pleased to present our 2020-2027 Strategic Plan.

The plan establishes our priorities for the next seven years, as we work towards MacKillop's thirtieth birthday. Our resolve to work for the rights of all children, young people and families to be safe, to learn, and to feel nurtured and connected to culture, is stronger than ever and we are committed to achieving the goals outlined in this document.

The centrepiece of the strategy is a commitment to the highest quality service delivery, with a particular focus on early intervention and prevention. The evidence is clear about the highest risk factors that cause harm to children and we are passionate about helping families earlier. We know that when supporting children and young people to recover from harm, a trauma-informed, therapeutic response is required to facilitate healing, and we remain committed to this. As an organisation committed to a Child Safe culture we must be continually reviewing our processes and listening to the voice of children. They have told us clearly to 'help their families'. This strategic plan shows we have listened.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Miller'.

**Dr Robyn Miller**  
Chief Executive Officer

With a strong focus on outcomes measurement, program evaluation and independent research with our academic partners, we will build the evidence base about what program responses work best. We will also draw on our experience to inform future policy and advocate for the best outcomes for children, young people and families; while our newest initiative - the MacKillop Institute - will help us to achieve greater impact by sharing our knowledge and skills broadly. Our schools and specialist education programs, our disability services and our homelessness services are inclusive and growing in response to need.

None of our work would be possible without our extraordinary staff, carers and volunteers, and we will build on the outcomes of our last strategic plan to further enhance their safety and wellbeing, as well as making a significant investment in their continued learning and professional development. We have also introduced a renewed focus on sustainability, which is crucial as we respond to the global economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Never before has the broad and diverse range of generous community support for our organisation been so important.

Finally, with the recent launch of a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, we renew and strengthen our commitment to self-determination. It is important to recognise this Strategic Plan sits alongside our Reconciliation Action Plan 2020 - 2022.

We know the need for our services has never been greater, and we look forward to working with our staff, volunteers, partner organisations and other supporters to deliver on the challenging agenda set out in this document. We want all children, young people and families to be welcomed at MacKillop, to be empowered and to thrive.

# Our Values

We commit to the following five foundational values which we continue to embed in the culture of our organisation and practice:



## Justice

We believe in the right of all people to experience respect and to have access to quality services irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, marital status, disability, sexuality or age. We advocate for inclusiveness and social justice in the wider community and commit to these principles across our organisation and all services we provide. We believe in the right of all people to be treated justly and fairly.



## Hope

We commit to creating positive and hopeful relationships where people find meaning in their experiences and relationships and are able to learn, explore their strengths and create possibilities for growth and change. We seek to foster hope that assists people to find meaning.



## Collaboration

In our work with individuals, families and other organisations and groups, we commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination, partnership and empowerment.



## Compassion

Compassion is an attitude of the heart, an expression of our shared humanity and a deep desire to alleviate another's suffering. We commit to creating an attitude of openness to others and to their circumstances. We seek to foster compassion, an attitude of the heart and a response to exclusion and suffering.



## Respect

We value ourselves and other people, the earth and all creation. We seek to listen and learn from each other and build relationships with respect, being proud of what we hold in common and with understanding and tolerance of our differences. We seek to act with respect with regard to each other, the earth and all creation.

# Our Sanctuary Commitments

Our values are brought to life through our commitment to the Sanctuary Model. Sanctuary is an evidence-supported, whole-of-organisation framework that guides how we practice as an agency. Sanctuary enables a shared language, knowledge, and response to the impact of trauma and loss on all of us.

## Our seven Sanctuary Commitments are as follows:



### Non-Violence

Mean what you say and don't be mean when you say it



### Social Learning

We all learn from, and teach each other



### Social Responsibility

We all help each other... It takes a village to raise a child



### Emotional Intelligence

Look out for yours and other people's feelings



### Democracy

Everyone is heard



### Open Communication

Be honest and share information



### Growth and Change

Open to new ideas and ways of thinking



# Preamble

This plan looks towards the 30th anniversary of MacKillop Family Services in 2027.

The 7-year focus will enable us to deliver on our vision.

The high-level goals and objectives set out in this plan will direct each years' operational plan with measures, timelines and accountabilities outlined. The achievement of the activities will be regularly monitored and reported to the Board.

## Strategic Goals

- 1.** Grow high quality, inclusive services to prevent harm, to support healing and to respond where the need is great.
- 2.** Be an innovative and responsive leader by developing best practices and advocating for social justice.
- 3.** Deepen our commitment to Aboriginal self-determination, reconciliation and cultural safety.
- 4.** Ensure accountable and integrated systems that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, families, volunteers and staff.
- 5.** Strengthen organisational and financial sustainability.



# Strategic Goals

## 1. Grow high quality, inclusive services to prevent harm, to support healing and to respond where the need is great.

- Grow our Family Services - Intervene earlier with families to keep children and young people safe at home and prevent them from experiencing harm.
- Grow our Education Services - Nurture confident and resilient children, who require a specialist learning environment, through access to quality education and support.
- Grow and promote accessible services that are inclusive of all abilities and LGBTIQ identities.
- Continue to embed best practice in our out-of-home care and accommodation services and improve the transition of young people to hopeful futures.
- Continue to support former residents and service users to access their records and understand their family history.

## 3. Deepen our commitment to Aboriginal self-determination, reconciliation and cultural safety.

- Implement our Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2022 and continue to listen deeply to the Aboriginal voice.
- Proactively engage with Aboriginal Communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to build respectful partnerships and collaborate to change structural inequality.
- Continue to partner with ACCOs to action the transfer of care of Aboriginal children to Aboriginal agencies and promote self-determination.
- Aboriginal children in our care return to family, kin and community, and have active Cultural Support Plans.

## 2. Be an innovative and responsive leader by developing best practices and advocating for social justice.

- Develop a focused research and evaluation agenda and implement findings to strengthen outcomes and build the evidence base for best practice.
- Develop, evaluate and scale up innovative programs and emerging practice.
- Develop the MacKillop Family Services Institute as the external facing division of MacKillop, taking evidence supported products to a wider audience.
- Advocate on critical issues informed by the voice of children, young people and families, and collaborate with peak bodies and others on system-wide improvements.
- Embed the MacKillop ethos and commitment to Catholic Social Teaching and the Sanctuary Model across all our programs.

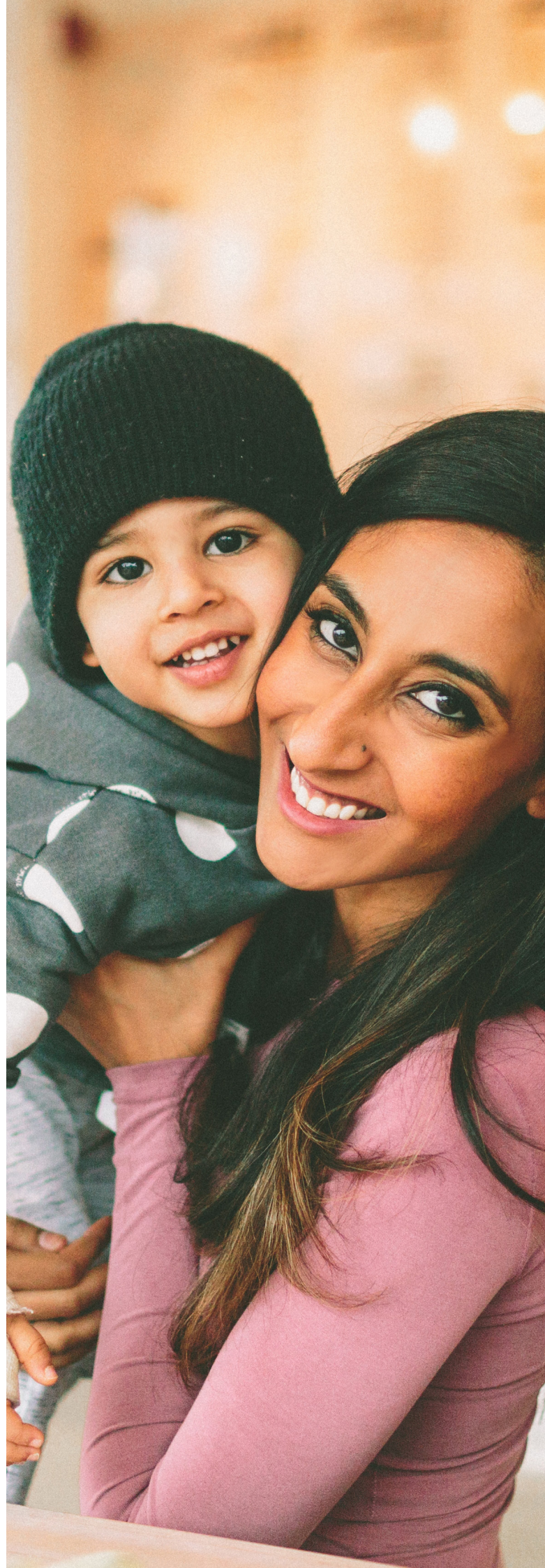
## 4. Ensure accountable and integrated systems that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, families, volunteers and staff.

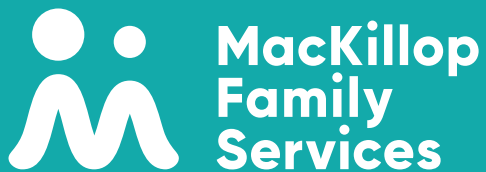
- Embed through leadership, strong governance and professional development, a visible culture of child safety.
- Drive Work, Health & Safety improvements for our volunteers and staff.
- Ensure we have robust, integrated systems in place to measure and increase the quality of our practice, the outcomes we achieve (including performance against targets), and adherence to regulatory standards.
- Attract, develop and retain the most capable and engaged workforce.
- Strengthen the culture of continuous improvement and participation, through feedback from our service users, community and workforce.



## 5. Strengthen organisational and financial sustainability

- Ensure strong governance and risk management strategies are successfully implemented.
- Prioritise stringent financial oversight and adherence to budget from all operational and support services.
- Achieve a break-even budget.
- Enhance and diversify our income streams to strengthen our financial sustainability and engage the community to encourage philanthropic support of new and existing programs.
- Develop the MacKillop Institute as a successful commercial enterprise.
- Promote environmental responsibility across our work, and connection to our ecological systems.





#### **Victoria**

237 Cecil Street  
South Melbourne VIC 3205  
(03) 9699 9177  
[enquiry@mackillop.org.au](mailto:enquiry@mackillop.org.au)

#### **New South Wales**

Level 1, 38 Prince Street  
Blacktown NSW 2148  
(02) 8881 4800  
[nsw@mackillop.org.au](mailto:nsw@mackillop.org.au)

#### **Western Australia**

147-149 Colin Street  
West Perth WA 6005  
(08) 9250 1114  
[wa@mackillop.org.au](mailto:wa@mackillop.org.au)

*MacKillop Family Services acknowledges  
the Traditional Custodians and their Elders in  
each of the Communities where we work.*

**[mackillop.org.au](http://mackillop.org.au)**