



# FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARERS ASSOCIATION TASMANIA NEWSLETTER.

## CEO REPORT

It has been another enormous year, and FKAT continues to meet our key performance indicators for support, advocacy and training set by the Government and expectations of carers. I believe that FKAT performed exceptionally well again this year measured against our funding grants key performance criteria and feedback provided through surveys, written and verbal throughout the year by carers, stakeholders and board members.

This year we welcomed Maree Smith as a new member to the Board representing carers in the Southern Region. Thank you for your contribution this year Maree with assisting to run the Claremont Office and to all of your dedication for willing to assist with the National Foster and Kinship Association Conference in Hobart this year. A major shout out to all of our Board members that have continued to support carers throughout the State of Tasmania and have worked incredibly hard over the National Conference to make it the success it was and for that I am forever grateful. I would like to thank the Board for their continued commitment to the Vision, Mission and values of FKAT. I would like to thank Rosalie Martin for MC'ing the Conference, our Keynote speakers and presenters, and our amazing sponsors to put on a world class conference in Hobart.

I would also like to thank Carol Robertson Scholes for continuing to volunteer her time to FKAT as Public Officer and book-keeper over the past 12 months. The last thank you goes to Dr Julian Watchorn for all of his work and leadership that he undertakes with our carers in the informal kin space as well as his ongoing work with foster and kinship carers.

There has many rewarding moments for FKAT this year, which I will outline briefly below under key moments.

Key moments for FKAT include:

(1) The National and International Conference in September 2023 which had over 470 attendees at the Conference and close to 400 at the conference dinner. The Conference was filled with high calibre presentations and the dedication by our Board was noteworthy. I would like to thank Jen for her hard work in co-ordinating the Silent Auction, Anita Jones for her dedication that she showed prior to the conference with assistance with child-care arrangements and the trade tables and for the entire board that worked tirelessly over the course of the conference in my absence.

We received glowing feedback from Attendees from across the Nation.

(2) FKAT continues to be a member National Collective of Foster and Kin Carers Associations in Australia with the aim of raising issues that we face at a state level on the national platform which include: NT, SA, QLD, WA and ACT. I represent FKAT on an ongoing monthly basis.

(3) FKAT was successful in obtaining another informal kin training grant for two years.

(4) FKAT's involvement with the Carer Engagement Strategy with the Tasmanian Government.

(5) My continued involvement in the Sector Implementation Advisory Panel

(6) We unofficially opened our new Office in Boyd Court, Claremont.

(7) I continue to meet with Senior Executives and the Minister's Office in relation to the ongoing concerns and issues held by many carers. FKAT continues to be a key driver of positive change for Tasmanian carers which I am privileged to be involved as an Advisory Member to the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework Advisory Panel and Advisory Member for the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 Review.

FKAT held a successful AGM online on the 31st of October, 2023 and the board vacancies will be finalised at the Special General Meeting on the 2nd of December at the new Claremont office.

On a final note, Alana Mason leaves our Board at the AGM after a term of hard work for FKAT in her role as a Southern Region Board member and overall support for carers State-wide at many events over her term and all her hard work with the Carer Connect Meetings at the Claremont Office. On behalf of the carers community and the current Board a heartfelt thanks for your contribution over this timeframe. I hope that Alana continues to remain committed to FKAT and the FKAT team look forward to working with Alana doing FAST training over the next 12 months when it is next offered and her continued involvement with the carer connect meetings in Claremont with Maree.

Looking forward to celebrating Christmas with you all.

Kim





Hi Carers,

We have had one of our busiest years for FKAT yet, and have the Christmas break fast approaching.

This year we have achieved some massive goals, but before reporting that, I would like to pass on some sincere thanks, firstly to CEO Dr Kim Backhouse. Kim has faced with absolute success her biggest challenges yet, not only working closely with stakeholders and Networking with Ministers, both State and Federal, she also liaised with many NGO's Statewide and Nationally. She has been kept very busy with Care Concerns, Administration, and the biggest task yet, taking on a National Conference in Tasmania. Kim's work has been endless, she has put her everything into bringing us through 2023 with complete success. Thank you, Kim, for absolutely everything that you have done to make FKAT Tasmania the strongest and most effective we have ever been.

I'd also like to acknowledge Dr Julian Watchorn for his support and clinical expertise through his consulting role for FKAT and providing this support Statewide to reach as many carers and kin as possible.

Carol Scholes-Robertson has again maintained our finances over the last year, and I would like to thank her for keeping our FKAT finances up to date and arranging auditing, wages where appropriate and providing updates on our financials throughout the year, especially with this year being one of our biggest and most challenging.

This leads me to our activities this year. Although training has been in accordance with our targets and KPI's, we had a slower start to the year as our focus went to providing some great sessions at our National Conference in Tasmania. As part of our commitment to carers and kin we managed to host the 3-day National Conference in September 2023 at Wrest Point free of charge to attend for Tasmanian Carers/Kin, this was thanks to having great sponsors including the State Government who wanted to see as many Tasmanian carers as possible attend the event.

Our first registration evening way exceeded our expectations as we estimated approx. 120 attendees, we were beyond surprised with an attendance of close to 300 who then turned up for the cocktail party. It was the best beginning to a great conference. FKAT Conference was opened by The Honourable Minister Roger Jaensch and Keynote opening by Anne Holland's, National Children's Commissioner.

Over the next 2 days we offered many varied sessions, which were met with enthusiasm and positivity. Our final day closing the conference and moving onto our formal dinner was a perfect end to a few days of making new friends, networking and gaining great information to take out into our homes, workplaces and the community as a whole.

Again, it is with immeasurable thanks to Kim, Anita Jones (Admin) and our fantastic Board Members and extra helpers that everything went to plan and was an outstanding success.

We have recently had our Southern Halloween Party shared with CREATE and supported by several NGO's. Attendance was around 150 and was a great night enjoyed by all.

We now move into our AGM 2023.

Lastly, we have a couple of final events planned before Christmas. In the South an FKAT/CREATE Bonorong Park Children's Christmas Party and around the State our carer/kin Christmas lunches. A fun way to wrap up the year, make new friends and create support groups within our circles.

Thank you to everyone who has supported not only myself but our FKAT Team throughout the year, we aim to give as much time as possible to our carer community and move from strength to strength in 2024.

I look forward to meeting more carers/kin over the next 12 months and hope to get up North and the North/West more.

Jen





## ***National Foster Care Conference Report Hobart Tasmania, 2023***

After months of planning and hard work FKAT were set to welcome everyone to our beautiful island for two days of learning and celebration at the National Foster Care Conference in Hobart. The conference was scheduled to open for registration and a meet and greet Cocktail party on Thursday 21st September and conclude with our Gala dinner on the 23rd of September.

The FKAT board arrived at the Wrest Point Casino in Hobart ready to go, on the afternoon of Thursday 21st September. We were accompanied by members of many non-government organisations including Glenhaven, Baptcare and Kennerley, who all pitched in to help fill over 400 delegate bags with goodies galore including nail polish, Tasmanian truffles and fudge, drink bottle, notebook, pens, stress ball, mints, and more. This was a mammoth task, and we were very grateful to our key stakeholder friends for their help on the day.

Trade table hosts from all around the country started filing in with their merchandise and setting up their stalls in the Exhibition Foyer, which provided the entry point to the main Plenary Hall where our main speakers would take the stage over the following days. There was a line up out the doors when registration opened, and anticipation was in the air.

### ***Cocktail Party Thursday 21st, September, 2023***

In unprecedented numbers and record breaking for the National conferences, 300 carers and staff came along to the cocktail party event where nibbles and champagne was enjoyed by all. Everyone was sharing stories and coming together in their teams to enjoy the first event of the conference. We also celebrated Foster Care Week 2023 in style sipping our drinks and toasting the year that was. Rosie Martin our delightful MC and Maggie Philips welcomed everyone to our beautiful State and set the tone for what we would be sharing together the following two days.

### ***Friday 22nd, September, 2023 Conference Day 1***

Friday morning came around quickly with the board busy behind the scenes making sure that delegates and speakers were cared for and enjoying their experience. Carers had a special treat when Mia Ainslie took to the stage with a moving contemporary ballet piece to “build a home”. The Honorable Minister Roger Jaensch opened our National Conference with a moving message to carers and staff regarding the commitment to look after the wellbeing of Tasmania’s children and thanked carers for the role they play daily in their children’s lives. Minister Jaensch was followed by several high caliber speakers covering our four main conference streams of Mental health, Well-being, Self-care and Trauma. Highlights from Friday morning included hearing from Anne Hollands, National Children’s Commissioner and some amazing co-current streams including a highly sought after session, Autism is my Superpower by Chris Smith.

Rooms to all of our incredible speakers were so full we had to do some quick thinking on our feet and change the room set ups to accommodate the large numbers of carers who wished to attend the sessions. It was a fantastic problem to have! Carers enjoyed a yummy morning tea and lunch on the Friday and were well engaged with the 19 trade tables present in the Exhibition Foyer. The Conference had an uplifting and alive atmosphere with several VIP guests and carers commenting that it was a “great vibe” and felt “wonderful to be part of something so special in Tasmania”.

During afternoon tea break, Conference delegates were lucky enough to meet the Honorable Minister for Families and Social Services Australia, Amanda Rishworth. She spent time listening to carers, staff, young people and the board about issues that are dear to carers hearts and took a special interest in kinship carers.

Friday at 5pm we heard from Madeline West, an activist for children’s voices who is passionate about protecting our young people from the dangers of social media and grooming behaviour of predators both in real life and online. Her own personal story was moving and allowed her to speak from a place of pain and truth which struck a chord with many carers and challenged us all to be more aware of our children’s social media presence from a very young age. We all said goodbye for the day and carers from interstate got to have some free time to explore the beauty of Hobart and its surrounds. Carers made plans with each other to catch up for dinner and some to dance the evening away at the onsite Casino bars.



## *Saturday 23rd, September 2023*

### *Conference Day 2*

Saturday morning, we started bright and early at 8am with around 25 carers taking up the opportunity to not just enjoy a yoga session but to learn some valuable skills helping the children and young people in our care reconnect to their bodies and heal from the traumas they have suffered. Carers also learned how to regulate, rest and rejuvenate when the caring role gets heavy. Saturday morning, we opened up our workshops and Carers had the opportunity to learn everything from the epidemic of vaping and how to help the young people in our care manage the widespread addiction, to the Therapeutic Life Story work that left many carers emotional with tears in their eyes because they had been deeply impacted by some of the lived experience stories of other carers and children with a care experience. All workshops were well attended with a delegate favourite being Lionel Waters who was very popular, and many interstate carers wanted to hear about the Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) based training and implementation happening with Tasmania.

As the conference came to an official close, we had the privilege to hear from Helen Francis from Emerging Minds, National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health who spoke about the enormous body of work that her Centre are doing in the field of children's mental health and well-being. The session was very eye opening regarding how children and young people view their own needs and what they said they needed to have a happy and safe life. Helen shared the willingness of the aboriginal communities that they work with who wish to ensure that their children and young people's voices are heard in this space, and she shared a powerful video of what aboriginal children said they needed to feel connected and belong in their families and communities. With an auditorium that was still 3/4 full at the very end of the conference, FKAT team thanked all of the people who helped make the conference a huge success and the carers local and those who had travelled for coming along and being part of something very special. Loud claps of lingering applause continued for what had been a wonderful and fulfilling 2 days together, but the fun was not set to end there!!

#### Gala Dinner

September 23rd, 2023

Saturday evening FKAT welcomed 400 carers to our Gala Dinner. Carers came dressed to impress and took great excitement in being able to get glammed up and go and enjoy a night full of entertainment. Our incredible MC for the entire conference, Rosie Martin proudly welcomed everyone to the dinner and introduced Dancers from the local area opened the evening with several amazing performances that have been seen all around the world. What a treat that was to witness the amazing talent of local youth who have such promising futures. The army band was a big hit and they got everyone up on the dance floor dancing to the popular hits that they were performing.

Blinky Bill, or should I say Robyn Moore delivered a motivational speech to carers about life in general and used examples from her own past to encourage carers that even when life is full of ups and downs, the best thing you can do is keep going. That just because you started out in not-so-great circumstances, doesn't mean that is how you finish in life, she inspired the audience to think outside the boxes of normal and what's always done and get creative with building the lives that they want despite their circumstances. Everyone in the room was moved by her stories from the Make-a-wish foundation and some of the amazing children she has gotten to put smiles on their faces and will never forget the privilege it is to do that. She encouraged everyone to smile, laugh more and not take themselves too serious everyday day.

The 400-crowd enjoyed delicious food and beverages throughout the night with the casino providing a range of scrumptious entrees, mains and desserts. Of course, the champagne was flowing.

After dinner service, The Army Band took to the stage again and this time got the audience even more excited to be up on the floor dancing. My personal favourite song came on and I made sure to take my heels off and get up dancing to "Footloose" with my girls. It was wonderful to see carers letting their hair down and having so much fun dancing the night away with friends and colleagues, all coming together to celebrate.

Maggie and Jen thanked everyone for an amazing two days and spoke about some of the highlights for them and Rosie tied up the evening by thanking the band and other entertainment and it was with full hearts and fantastic memories of the National Foster Care Conference 2023 that we bid everyone goodnight and wished them success in their caring journeys wherever they lead next. Please note that recorded sessions will be available online April 2024.

Anita Jones and Maggie Philips



**Dr Julian Watchorn  
will be conducting  
training across the  
State this November**

**RSVP to Kim at  
ceo@fcatas.org.au**



## South

**Monday 27th November,  
2023**

**14 Boyd Court, Claremont.**

**Dealing with Emotional and  
Behavioural difficulties.**

**10:00am-11:30am**

## North West

**Thursday 23rd November,  
2023**

**Paranaple Centre,  
137 Rooke St, Devonport.**

**Dealing with Emotional and  
Behavioural difficulties.**

**10:00am-11:30am**

## North

**Friday 24th November, 2023  
Tailrace Centre, Riverside.**

**Dealing with Emotional and  
Behavioural difficulties.**

**10:00am-11:30am**

## Training Outline

- Domains of impact
- 6 core components of healing
  - Some simple strategies
- The 24 Ss for raising your child
  - Case study



## NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT

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**Claire Lovell, Executive Director,  
Department of Education, Children and  
Young People.**



**Tell your story of becoming a Foster Carer...**

The Department for Education, Children and Young People is developing a web portal to share experiences of what it is like to be a Foster Carer, as part of a new Foster Care Recruitment campaign. We would like to thank you for your role as a Foster Carer and would love to share your story!

Questions as prompts, up to 800 words

- What inspired you to become a foster carer?
  - Describe how you became a foster carer
- What is rewarding/what are the good parts?
- What is challenging/what are the hard parts?
  - What was unexpected?
- Describe your experience of being part of the foster care community
- Describe your experience of support and/or training you have received?
  - How has your life changed?
- What advice would you give someone thinking about becoming a foster carer?
- Are there any special moments you would like to share? (please describe)

**Details:** You only need to supply your first name(s) and no identifiable information will be included.

**Photos:** It would be fantastic to include your photo to accompany your story if you are happy to do this. Please send in a photo of yourself, or if you would prefer, we can arrange for a photo to be taken. (Please do not include photos of children).

**Videos:** If you would be happy to tell your story on video, thank you! Please provide your details and we will be in contact.

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### **Claire Grey, Project Manager - Strategic Improvement After Hours Service consultation with Carers.**

Claire Grey, Project Manager - Strategic Improvement is working with FKAT representatives to hear the voices of carers through Statewide consultations. It will be very good to hear the view of carers in relation to the existing after hours service which we all appreciate has had challenges over the last decade.

Our carers are key partners in providing care for our children and young people, and as such we would greatly value carers involvement.

**Session times below:**

**Southern**

Karen Harris as the lead for the session; Friday 10/11, for a 10am start. This will be in Claremont. Please provide us with the address.

**Northern**

North with Claire as the lead for the session; Friday 17/11, for 10am start. This will be in the Launceston Library meeting room at Civic Square.

**North-West**

North-West with Claire on Wednesday 15/11, for a 10am start. Department of Education Children and Young People, meeting room 2, 23 Steele st, Devonport..  
To register please email [ceo@fcatas.org.au](mailto:ceo@fcatas.org.au).

# Important information

## First Aide Courses

"First Aide will be running again next year! Please keep an eye for a flyer with date in April 2024 - Post school holidays.

Training will be offered in each region and be a full 1 day training with a registered provider.

Please email Kim to register your interest!

## Update your details and win!

If you have recently moved, please fill out the "update your details" form enclosed with this newsletter.

Please send the form to Kim by 28th November to go in the draw to win 1 nights accommodation at Wrest-Point casino. Prize drawn on 2nd December at the Special General Meeting.

## Updating the FKAT Carer Handbook in 2024

Next year FKAT will be doing an update of our existing Carer Handbook.

We would love to hear from you regarding what content should be included! Please email suggestions to Kim at [ceo@fcatas.org.au](mailto:ceo@fcatas.org.au) by 10th march 2024.

## AGM Special General Meeting

AGM Special General Meeting will be held on the 2nd December, 2023 in the Claremont office.

Board vacancies will be finalised at this special meeting.



### FKAT Holiday Hours



#### **Southern Office**

The FKAT Claremont office will be closed over the summer holidays. Any FAST support please contact Dr Julian Watchorn via email at [julian@psych.co](mailto:julian@psych.co) He will return your call within 24 hours. Additional normal fast support will be available by Trish on 0419 564 665.

#### **Penguin Office**

Penguin will be closed over the Christmas break, however the Deputy Chair of the board Maggie Philips is available for FAST support over this period and can be contacted on 0400 876 907.

#### **North**

Fast support is available via Anita on 045 309 775 during the summer holidays and Anita will return your call within 24 hours. Please note that Dr Watchorn is also available to be contacted in Anita's absence.

#### **Dr Watchorn**

Dr Watchorn is available for urgent FAST support over the summer holidays. He will be attending the Hobart office the first Friday of every month starting on the 1st of December 2023. This will continue in 2024 (except the January break). He will be available for informal Kinship carers, kinship carers and foster carers for support and advocacy around Care concerns and other related matters.

We wish you all a safe and Happy Christmas and holidays.



# working together

SUPPORTING EARLY LEARNING



## Frequently Asked Questions

**I'm worried my child will find it hard to separate from me. Can Working Together help with this?**  
Yes, it's common for children and parents to feel nervous about this. Working Together's Engagement Workers and educators can support you and your child through these separation concerns.

**My child isn't toilet trained yet, can they still take part?**  
Yes, many children at this age aren't yet toilet trained and educators are experienced in supporting this. When your child is ready, the early childhood service will also work with you and your child to support toilet training.

**When would my child start their placement?**  
Eligible children can start in Working Together in February of their year before Kindergarten.

**Are there set days my child would have to attend?**  
Working Together does its best to support a placement on days that best suit you and your family, but this is also based on availability at the service. You are encouraged to discuss your needs with Working Together.

**I'd like to take part, but I don't have transport. Can Working Together help with this?**  
Yes, Working Together can support you with access to transport where needed to get your child to and from the service.

**My child has some developmental delays, and I am worried about whether they can participate. Can Working Together help with this?**  
Working Together will talk with you about your child's strengths, interests, and developmental support needs. Working Together will also work with you to identify what supports and strategies you feel will work best for your child to support their participation.

## Useful contacts

- + Tas emergency services - 000
- + Find Help - [www.findhelptas.org.au](http://www.findhelptas.org.au)
- + Housing Connect - 1800 800 588
- + Lifeline - 13 11 14
- + Family Violence counselling - 1800 608 122
- + Advice & Referral Line - 1800 000 123
- + Parent Line - 1300 808 178
- + CHaPS - 1300 064 544
- + Interpreter services - 13 14 50
- + Connected Beginnings - supporting Aboriginal children and their families - [www.connectedbeginninglutruwita.com/](http://www.connectedbeginninglutruwita.com/)

*"They've come up with goals with me, more than I had myself, and they've helped me accomplish those goals. They've been amazing. Getting on top of everything, sorting things out in our life with Centrelink and everything. They have more belief in me than I have in myself and have made things a lot easier."*

Working Together Parent



## I'm interested - Where can I learn more?

- + Visit our website at [www.decyp.tas.gov.au/working-together/](http://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/working-together/)
- + Check out our Facebook page at 'Working Together - Supporting Early Learning - Tasmania'
- + Email us at [wt@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:wt@education.tas.gov.au)
- + Call or text us at 0457 050 478

### Ready to apply?



Scan this QR code with your phone's camera to head straight to our website and click on the "Apply Now" button.

### I support a family that would benefit from Working Together - can I refer them?

Yes - With the parent or carer's consent, Working Together accepts referrals from any service currently supporting a family. You can refer a child on our website by clicking on the "Apply Now" button.

### Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners and continuing custodians of this land, and pay respect to elders past and present, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hope of First Nations people in lutruwita/Tasmania.

### Inclusion Statement

We are committed to enabling all learners to access, participate and engage in education and achieve quality outcomes through culturally responsive and inclusive experiences where all learners' needs and differences are recognised and respected.

working together  
SUPPORTING EARLY LEARNING



Department for Education, Children and Young People



## Working Together - Free education and care in 2024

Would you like your child to have the opportunity to make friends, play, learn and build confidence?

Working Together:

- Is free
- Offers 2 - 3 days of early learning per week for children
- Is available to children in their year before Kindergarten
- Provides support to families to participate in the program
- Is delivered through Tasmanian Early Childhood Education and Care services (also known as childcare centres) in the following locations:
  - » North West - Burnie, Ulverstone, Devonport and Smithton
  - » North - Launceston, Legana, George Town, Cressy, Perth and Scottsdale
  - » Midlands - Bagdad, Campbell Town and Oatlands
  - » East - St Marys, Bicheno, Swansea and Triabunna
  - » South - Brighton, Bagdad, Glenorchy and Kingborough

### How can I take part?

Registrations are now open for 2024, with limited places available.

Learn more about Working Together and the eligibility criteria for children's access at <https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/working-together/> or contact:

- Email: [wt@decyp.tas.gov.au](mailto:wt@decyp.tas.gov.au)
- Phone: 0457 050 478

## CHRISTMAS LUNCHESES





**create**  
FOUNDATION

FOSTER AND  
KINSHIP CARERS  
ASSOCIATION  
TASMANIA



FRIDAY  
**8th**  
DECEMBER 2023  
4.30pm-6.30pm

BBQ  
COOKED  
BY RAPID  
RELIEF

JOIN US FOR A

# CHRISTMAS PARTY AT BONORONG



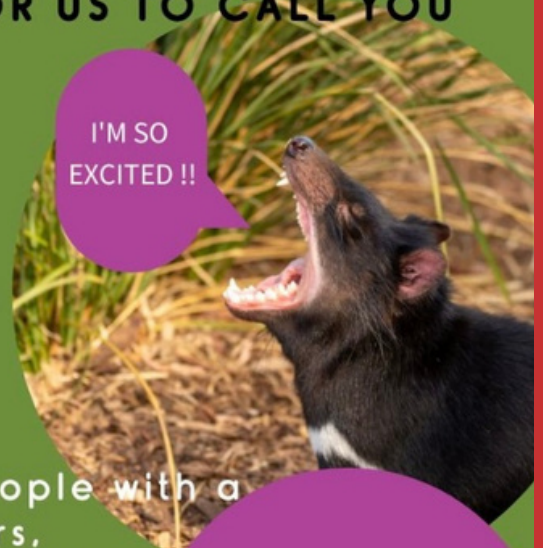
593 BRIGGS RD, BRIGHTON

RSVP IS ESSENTIAL PLEASE CALL OR TEXT 0491 389 543  
AND ENSURE TO LEAVE A NUMBER FOR US TO CALL YOU  
BACK

Santa's  
coming for a  
visit!



I'M SO  
EXCITED !!



A free event for children & young people with a  
care experience, their carers,  
and other children in the household.

Children & young people under 18  
must be accompanied by an adult

Please note, the venue  
won't be available until  
strictly 4.30pm



CREATE Foundation acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land  
and pay our respects to Elders past, present & future leaders.