

# Creating Links

## A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE AND HEART

PAGE 12

RUTH'S INSPIRING STORY OF  
FOSTERING TEN CHILDREN.

## A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY IMPACT

PAGE 21

CHAMPIONING WELL-BEING,  
GROWTH, AND COLLABORATION.

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024



# Table of Contents

MISSION, VISION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	03
A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO & CHAIRPERSON	04
CELEBRATING A YEAR OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT	06
PEOPLE AND CULTURE SNAPSHOT	08
OUT OF HOME CARE REPORT	12
OUT OF HOME CARE CLIENT PROFILE	14
OUT OF HOME CARE STAFF PROFILE	15
DISABILITY REPORT	16
DISABILITY CLIENT PROFILE	18
DISABILITY STAFF PROFILE	19
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REPORT	20
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES CLIENT PROFILE	22
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES STAFF PROFILE	23
PARTNERSHIPS	24
EXECUTIVE TEAM	26
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	27

# Vision, Mission, and Acknowledgement

## Vision

"Communities for the future"

Creating Links aspires to be a leading community service provider, strengthening and building community capacity.

## Mission

At Creating Links, we aim to develop resilient, productive, and inclusive communities and families.

We are an evolving, forward-thinking organisation that values:

- Our socially and culturally diverse community.
- Our ability to create opportunities to provide services and programs.
- Our collaboration and partnerships with various networks; and
- Our role in providing services in partnership with government.

## Acknowledgement

Creating Links acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live and work.

We acknowledge Elders past and present who have walked and managed these lands for many generations and recognise their ongoing contribution.

We are committed to approaching culture with humility, respect, and curiosity. We acknowledge the children who are our hope for a brighter future.



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# A Message from the CEO & Chairman

It is with great pleasure that we present our Annual Report for the 2023/24 financial year at Creating Links. It has been a year of growth, transformation, and significant milestones across all our service areas that have solidified our position as a trusted provider of disability, foster care, and child and family services in the community.

Our commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred care has not only expanded our reach but also strengthened the support we offer to vulnerable individuals and families. As we reflect on the past year, we are proud of the collective effort that has driven us forward, positioning us for continued success in the year ahead."

We express our gratitude to Greg Benson, who served as CEO for two years before departing in March 2024. Under Greg's leadership, Creating Links made great strides in service delivery and governance. Thank you, Greg, for your invaluable contributions.

Creating Links welcomed Diana Musa to our Executive Team – as the Executive Manager of Out of home care. Having served as Acting Executive Manager for five months, Diana has demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and a deep commitment to enhancing the lives of children and young people in care. Her unwavering passion for creating positive outcomes and her ability to drive meaningful change have already made a profound impact on our team and the families we support. We look forward to her continued leadership as she takes on this role permanently.

We also welcomed Gary Williamson to our Executive Team as the Executive Manager of Finance. Gary brings with him a wealth of experience spanning both corporate and not-for-profit sectors, where he has consistently demonstrated strong financial leadership and strategic acumen. His expertise will be instrumental in driving financial sustainability and supporting our organisation's continued growth and impact in the community.

During the CEO recruitment process, which began in March 2024, we appointed Matthew Richards and Ebony-Ann Blewitt as Acting Co-CEOs. They held these roles until Natalee O'Brien's appointment as our new CEO in September 2024.

Throughout this six-month period, Matthew and Ebony-Ann expertly managed the day-to-day operations of Creating Links, working closely with the Board to advance the organisation's goals. Their efforts included overseeing the successful NDIS Accreditation, the recruitment of a new HR Advisor and leading the restructure of our Therapeutic team within the OOH program.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Matthew and Ebony-Ann for their outstanding leadership and commitment during this important transition.



## Our People

Our success this year would not have been possible without the dedication and passion of our staff, volunteers and carers. With 120 employees, from frontline workers to administrative teams, each member of the Creating Links team has played a vital role in delivering high-quality services to those in need.

# Empowering communities with care and commitment.

We have focused on encouraging a supportive and inclusive workplace culture, continuing to invest in our employees with training and development to ensure they are well-equipped to provide exceptional care and support.

In November, we held a foster carer appreciation dinner to recognise and thank our foster carers for the amazing work they do and the impact they have on children's lives. We are immensely grateful for their tireless efforts, which truly reflect the values of Creating Links. Thank you all for your continued support and commitment.

## Impact in the Community

Creating Links' impact extends far beyond the services we provide. This year, we have made a significant difference in the lives of individuals, children, and families in our community. Our programs have supported people in overcoming challenges, building resilience, and achieving positive outcomes. The feedback from those we serve has been overwhelmingly positive, reinforcing our commitment to being a trusted partner in our community. We continue to work with other organisations, government bodies, and community groups to ensure that the most vulnerable members of our community receive the support they need.

## Our Services

Our Disability Program has continued to experience remarkable growth. This year, we were proud to achieve accreditation for the next three years, a testament to the quality and compliance of our services and employees. Our focus on person-centred support has allowed us to provide tailored services to participants, and we remain committed to expanding our reach to support even more individuals with disabilities. The dedication of our staff and the trust of our participants and their families have been key to this success. Congratulations to the team on achieving accreditation with high distinction.

This year, our Foster Care program strengthened partnerships with carers, offering comprehensive support to ensure that children in our care receive the stability and nurturing environments they deserve. Our focus on therapeutic care has allowed us to address the complex needs of children who come into our services, and we are continuously improving our programs to better serve both children and foster families. The commitment of our carers and staff ensures that children in need are provided with safe and loving homes.

This year, we've significantly expanded our work with children and families, launching new initiatives and increasing participation in existing programs. Notably, we established a new therapeutic supported playgroup and saw growth in our Parent-Child Mother Goose program, all with a strong emphasis on early intervention and prevention. Our programs are designed to empower families by equipping them with the tools they need to strengthen relationships and foster positive environments for their children. The success of our services is evident in the many inspiring stories of families overcoming challenges and building resilience. Creating Links is proud to be a trusted partner in the community, collaborating closely with families to achieve the best possible outcomes for their children.

## The Year Ahead

Looking forward, we are excited about the opportunities the next year will bring. Our focus will be on expanding our services, particularly within our disability and foster care programs, while continuing to innovate in the way we deliver child and family services whilst focusing on the upcoming recommissioning process.

# Celebrating Growth and Community Impact

We are committed to maintaining our high standards and ensuring that our services meet the evolving needs of the community. Additionally, we will continue to invest in our people, systems, and processes to ensure that Creating Links remains a leader in providing high-quality care and support.

On behalf of the Board and Executive Team, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the entire Creating Links community—our staff, volunteers, partners, and, most importantly, the individuals and families we serve. Your trust and commitment allow us to continue making a positive impact in the lives of many.



**Ebony-Ann Blewitt**  
Acting Co-CEO



**Matthew Richards**  
Acting Co-CEO



**Raad Richards**  
Chairperson

# Celebrating a Year of Collective Impact





# People & Culture Snapshot

**C**reating Links continues to prioritise a people-focused approach, ensuring our staff feel valued, engaged, and supported as they provide high-quality services to our participants, children, families and carers. This year, we introduced a range of initiatives aimed at encouraging an inclusive workplace, enhancing leadership skills, and strengthening connections with key partners.

We celebrated key events throughout the year to honour and acknowledge our diverse team. Harmony Day brought our team together to share and learn about each other's cultures through food, music, and stories, strengthening our commitment to multicultural inclusion. We marked International Women's Day with events focused on empowerment and gender equality, showcasing inspirational stories from our team members and amazing t-shirt designs and attended Canterbury-Bankstown Council's NAIDOC week events, emphasising our commitment to reconciliation.

**“I am proud of the staff culture, supportive work environment, advocacy for children and youth support”**

This year, we expanded leadership training opportunities for our team leaders, aiming to improve their skills in managing teams and delivering high-quality support.



The training modules focused on effective communication, conflict resolution, and developing a supportive work environment which empowers our leaders to create more effective, compassionate, and engaged teams. This investment aligns with our vision to ensure that every member of Creating Links is supported by a skilled and empathetic leader who prioritises the needs of both the team and our clients.

Gaining insights into our team's perspectives is vital to our ongoing growth and success. This year's staff engagement survey offered invaluable

feedback on employee satisfaction, engagement, and opportunities for improvement. The feedback gathered is guiding our strategy as we focus on further enhancing employee support, expanding professional development opportunities, and promoting a healthy work-life balance.

As we move forward, Creating Links remains dedicated to focusing on a positive, inclusive, and supportive workplace where our staff can thrive and continue to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those we serve.

**“Our purpose in the community, the partnerships we build and the abilities to strengthen family units is why I love working at Creating Links”**



“From my first day at Creating Links people have been open, kind, welcoming and supportive. There is a great team culture and some amazing people doing fantastic work that we can all learn from and be inspired by.”



**115**

EMPLOYEES

Contributing to a supportive and impactful environment



**86%**

OF EMPLOYEES

Speak additional languages other than English



**3.4%**

OF EMPLOYEES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander







# Out of Home Care Report

## Strong Network of Carers Supporting Young People in Need

Creating Links has 177 Authorised Carer Households. Of these, 155 carer households (88%) are active and providing care for children and young people.



**Diana Musa**  
Executive Manager  
Out of Home Care

I am pleased to present the 2023/24 Annual Report for OOH. This year has been marked by several significant achievements in the Permanency Support Program, underscoring our unwavering commitment to creating positive, lasting outcomes for children and families in care. Through intensive casework, family support services, and

holistic care, we successfully restored five children to their families, ensuring their safe return home. Additionally, six children were placed under permanent legal guardianship, securing stable, loving homes where they can grow with a sense of safety and belonging. One child was adopted, completing their journey to both legal and relational permanency.



1

ADOPTION



6

GUARDIANSHIPS



5

RESTORATIONS



11

ABORIGINAL  
CARERS



27

CARER  
HOUSEHOLDS  
AUTHORISED

Our carers truly form the heart of the Permanency Support Program. Their unwavering commitment to providing loving, stable homes profoundly impacts the lives of the children and young people they care for, helping them heal, grow, and secure the permanency they deserve. We are deeply thankful for their extraordinary role in shaping brighter futures for these children.

Creating Links has 177 authorised carer households, with 155 actively providing care for children and young people. This robust participation underscores the vital role our carer community plays in supporting children's needs and helping them move towards permanency. In 2024, we received 147 enquiries, with 55 households advancing to the application stage—a positive sign of community interest in supporting children in care. Of those, 27 households were authorised to provide care, further enhancing our capacity to offer stable, loving homes to children in need. Notably, 6% of our authorised carer households are Aboriginal carers, ensuring that Aboriginal children in our program remain connected to their culture, community, and traditions.

**Committed  
to creating  
lasting  
outcomes.**

This progress reflects not only our achievements in securing permanent solutions for children but also in expanding our carer base, which is essential to achieving the program's long-term goals.

A highlight of the year was the Client End of Year Event at Birrong Pools, where families, children, and staff came together to celebrate and strengthen relationships in a fun, supportive atmosphere. This gathering provided an opportunity to reflect on the year's accomplishments while creating a sense of community that enhances the care experience—one of the core goals of our program. Similarly, the Carer Appreciation Dinner was a standout moment, recognising the invaluable contributions of our foster and kinship carers. Their dedication and compassion provide safe, nurturing environments for children, and the dinner was a chance to express our deep gratitude for their ongoing commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children in care.

Engaging with the community through key events has been a cornerstone of the Permanency Support Program's efforts to support families and raise awareness about the program's objectives. Events such as NAIDOC, the Canterbury Bankstown Child & Family Expo, CBCity Families Week, CBCity's National Sorry Day, and the Matariki Festival provided valuable opportunities to connect with local communities, raise awareness of our goals, and build meaningful relationships with families, carers, and service providers. These engagements have helped us better understand the needs of the communities we serve and reinforce our commitment to a culturally responsive and inclusive approach.

**Our carers  
form the  
program's  
heart.**

One particularly significant event was our participation in National Sorry Day, where our team joined the community in acknowledging the history and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This day was especially meaningful as we continue our efforts to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care by supporting family reunification and promoting cultural permanency. Our presence at these events not only increased our visibility but also reinforced our dedication to building trust and collaboration with diverse communities, ensuring our services align with their cultural values and needs.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build on this momentum in the coming year. By continuing to engage with the community through meaningful events, we will strengthen our partnerships, grow our carer base, and remain focused on providing stable, loving, and permanent homes for the children and young people in our care.

# Foster Carer Profile



Ruth



“It’s about nurturing, supporting, and witnessing the remarkable progress children make when surrounded by love.”

**R**uth, a respite and short-term foster carer, has dedicated the past seven years to providing love, stability, and care to children and young people in need. Over the years, she has welcomed 10 children into her home, offering them warmth, guidance, and a safe place to stay. Ruth’s journey into fostering was inspired not only by her own love for children but also by her professional experiences as a case worker with the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). Witnessing firsthand the urgent need for foster carers, Ruth felt called to step forward.

“I love children, and my son was excited about the idea of having another child in our home. My work with DCJ showed me just how important foster carers are, and I knew I could help,” Ruth explains. For Ruth, being a foster carer goes beyond providing a roof over a child’s head. It’s about nurturing, supporting, and witnessing the remarkable progress children can make when surrounded by love. However, she acknowledges that progress isn’t always linear, and there are times when the results aren’t what she hoped for. “Sometimes, despite your best efforts, they don’t progress. But I still find it important that they are with a loving family, where they feel safe and supported.”

Ruth has experienced both joy and heartache in her role. Two siblings with severe behavioural issues left her feeling burned out, but many other experiences have been rewarding. “I’ve had so many fun respite weekends, full of chats and trips to the park. I’ve also been able to help long-term carers by giving them a break and helping their kids do things they usually refuse, like taking a bath or eating something healthy.”

One of Ruth’s most heartwarming success stories is with her current foster daughter. “She came to us with extreme behaviours due to unmet medical needs. By addressing those needs, showering her with love and attention, she has transformed into a sweet girl who is capable of so much more than anyone expected.”

Ruth has found her experience with Creating Links to be particularly rewarding, especially with the support she receives from her carer support worker, Yslevy. “The support from Yslevy has been a game-changer. She’s responsive and helpful, which is exactly what carers need but often lack.” Ruth also appreciated Creating Links’ diversity and the employees from many cultural backgrounds.

When asked why others should explore becoming a foster carer, Ruth offers words of wisdom: “It’s not for everyone. It’s only for people with a lot of patience and love for children. If you have those qualities, you should consider it.”

**Fostering isn’t for everyone; it’s for those with patience and a love for children.**

Ruth’s journey as a foster carer is a testament to the power of love, patience, and resilience. Her story is an inspiring reminder of the profound impact one person can have on the lives of children, providing them with a safe haven during times of need.

# Staff Profile



Param



“Creating Links isn’t just a place of work for me—it’s a place of belonging.”

Param has been an integral part of the Creating Links team for the past eight years, where she has built a remarkable career. Starting as a Family Time Contact Worker, Param’s dedication and passion for supporting vulnerable children and families saw her promoted first to Case Manager, and then to her current role as Senior Case Manager.

Reflecting on her journey, Param shares, “Working with children keeps me young. Creating Links isn’t just a place of work for me—it’s a place of belonging. Through times of personal hardship, Creating Links has supported me, and I’m proud to say this is where I want to retire.”

Throughout her time with the organisation, Param has played a pivotal role in the lives of many children and young people, ensuring they are safe, supported, and thriving in their home environments. She is a passionate advocate for their well-being, known for her deep empathy, unwavering dedication, and commitment to seeing every child succeed.

**Working with children  
keeps me young...  
I’m proud to say this is  
where I want to retire.**

Beyond her casework, Param is also recognised for her leadership within the team, where she mentors and supports her colleagues, creating a collaborative and nurturing environment. Her long-standing dedication to the children, families, and the wider community has made her a valued and respected member at Creating Links.

Her contribution is more than professional—it’s personal. The relationships she has built, the positive outcomes she has facilitated, and her ongoing commitment make her a true asset to the organisation.

# Disability Report



**Matthew Richards**  
Executive Manager  
Marketing and  
Communications

I am pleased to present the 2023/24 Annual Report for our Disability Program, a year marked by significant milestones and achievements. Our commitment to supporting people with disabilities has been stronger than ever, and this year, we focused on expanding our reach, growing our participant base, and enhancing our services.

Throughout the year, we have expanded our outreach efforts to ensure that more individuals with disabilities can access the services and support they need. By collaborating with other service providers, we have strengthened our ability to offer comprehensive, tailored support to meet the diverse needs of our participants. These partnerships have enabled us to reach new communities, enhance our service offerings, and ensure that our participants benefit from a holistic support network.



“Accredited for another three years  
—proud of our dedicated team.”





“Creating inclusive opportunities for growth and independence.”



**170**  
SUPPORTED  
PARTICIPANTS



**SKY'S THE  
LIMIT**  
DAY PROGRAMS  
LAUNCHED



**3-YEAR**  
ACCREDITATION  
SECURED

We are proud to report that we have seen a significant increase in the number of participants within our program. This growth is a testament to the trust that participants and their families place in Creating Links. Our ongoing commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment continues to attract those seeking reliable and compassionate support.

## Empowering individuals to lead fulfilling lives.

In response to the evolving needs of our participants, we have launched several new day programs designed to empower individuals with disabilities. These initiatives focus on skills development, independent living, social inclusion, and community participation, providing our participants with greater opportunities to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives.

Our programs continue to be underpinned by our values of inclusivity, respect, and empowerment, ensuring that every participant reaches their full potential.

A significant highlight of this year was our successful accreditation. We are now accredited for a further three years, a clear reflection of the dedication and quality of care we deliver. A huge thank you to the team involved, Sandy, Narelle, Sharadha, Victoria and Joe for ensuring the accreditation process was a major success. We received extremely positive feedback from both the participants and families we support. Their voices remain central to our mission, and we are proud that they have recognised our commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred services.

As we look to the future, our focus remains on building stronger partnerships, enhancing our services, and advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities. We are committed to continuous improvement, ensuring that our services evolve in line with the needs and aspirations of our participants.

## Building stronger partnerships for holistic support.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our participants, their families, our dedicated staff, and our partners for their continued support throughout this remarkable year. We look forward to building on these achievements as we move into the next chapter of our Disability Program.

# Disability Client Profile



Josianne



“Creating art brings my creativity to life.”

Josianne has been a valued participant in Creating Links’ Disability Program for over 10 years.

During this time, she has thrived in our community day programs, where her passion for art shines through. As an incredibly talented artist, Josianne loves to experiment and give everything a go, bringing her creativity to life through various mediums.

Beyond her artistic talents, Josianne is a dedicated rugby league fan, with a special love for the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs. Her enthusiasm for the game is infectious, and she enjoys sharing this passion with others.

The friendships I’ve made mean so much.

For Josianne, the social connections and sense of achievement she experiences through Creating Links programs are just as important as the activities themselves. Over the years, she has formed lifelong friendships, making her time with us even more meaningful.

We’re proud to have Josianne as part of our Creating Links community, where she continues to inspire those around her with her creativity, passion, and warmth.



# Staff Profile



Basanta



“I take pride in witnessing their progress firsthand.”



**B**asanta has been a valued member of the Creating Links Disability team for the past three years, working as a Disability Support Worker. In his role, Basanta is passionate about helping participants engage with their community, supporting them to achieve their personal goals and independence. He believes strongly in enhancing the quality of life and wellbeing of those he works with and takes pride in witnessing their progress firsthand. Whether it's helping someone learn a new skill, participate in a community event, or navigate day-to-day challenges, Basanta finds immense fulfillment in his work and the positive changes it brings to people's lives.

What makes Basanta's approach special is his genuine care for each participant, tailoring support to meet individual needs and encouraging them to step outside of their comfort zones. His patience and dedication help participants feel empowered, confident, and connected to their communities.

Outside of his professional life, Basanta is a devoted family man. He and his wife have two children, and they enjoy spending their weekends together, exploring new places, participating in outdoor activities, and sharing quality time. Family is his core priority, and he cherishes the moments they spend together.

**Helping others achieve independence brings me immense fulfillment.**

Basanta is also deeply involved in the local community, particularly through his love of soccer. He plays with a community group that raises funds for families in need, using the sport he loves to make a difference beyond his work at Creating Links. A passionate soccer fan, Basanta proudly supports Manchester United, and his favourite player is the iconic Cristiano Ronaldo, whose work ethic and dedication to the game he admires.

Through both his work and personal passions, Basanta exemplifies the values of Creating Links, combining compassion, dedication, and community spirit to make a meaningful difference every day.

# Child and Family Services Report



**Ebony-Ann Blewitt**  
Executive Manager  
Child and Family Services

It is with pleasure that I present this year's Annual Report for our Child and Family Services team, showcasing the dedication and achievements of our committed staff. Our work, in collaboration with families, communities, and professionals, continues to make a profound difference in the lives of children and families facing significant challenges. Over the past year, we have expanded our reach, strengthened our programs, and made considerable progress in creating a safer, more nurturing environment for children in need.

Our Targeted Earlier Intervention Program is designed to support vulnerable families and children by providing early assistance which prevents issues from escalating. This program remains a lifeline for families facing difficulties such as mental health challenges, domestic violence, and socio-economic hardships.



“Our work, in collaboration with families, communities, and professionals, continues to make a profound difference in the lives of children and families facing significant challenges.”



**55**  
FAMILIES

Case Management  
Clients



**882**  
INDIVIDUAL  
CLIENTS

Group Programs  
and Counselling



**40%**  
CALD  
CLIENTS



**4.9/5**  
SATISFACTION

### Key achievements this year:

- Supported over 50 families and children, helping to prevent their entry into the child protection system.
- Delivered a variety of services, including early intervention workshops, parenting programs, counselling, and one-on-one family support.
- Partnered with local schools and community groups to broaden our impact.

### Restoration Program

Our Restoration Program focuses on safely reuniting children with their families after being temporarily placed in out-of-home care. This year, we have provided comprehensive support to families to ensure successful and stable reunifications.

### Key achievements include:

- Successfully restoring 5 children to their families.
- Supporting 23 parents in their journey toward restoration.
- Providing ongoing therapeutic and practical support to families to ensure they can maintain a safe home environment.
- Collaborating with child protection services to monitor and evaluate family progress throughout the restoration process.

## Collaboration makes a profound difference in lives.

### Community Engagement and Sector Leadership

Beyond direct service delivery, we actively participate in community outreach and sector leadership initiatives. This year, we were involved in several significant events:

### Community Events:

- Our team participated in 16 community events, engaging with local families and service providers to raise awareness of our services and advocate for the needs of children and families.

### Educational Partnerships:

- We strengthened our partnerships with educational institutions, delivering presentations and workshops at TAFE and universities to educate future professionals about child protection, early intervention strategies, and trauma-informed care.

### ACWA Conference:

- We had the privilege of presenting at the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) conference, where we showcased our innovative approaches to family restoration. Our presentation was well-received, and we are now engaged in further discussions with sector leaders on potential collaborative opportunities.

### Financial Counselling Services

This year, we have seen a significant increase in demand for financial counselling, reflecting the mounting financial pressures faced by many in our community. Common issues include the rise in payday lenders, mortgage stress, financial abuse, job insecurity, and unforeseen expenses.

Our financial counsellor provided vital guidance on debt restructuring, renegotiation with lenders, and increasing financial literacy, while also advocating on behalf of clients with financial institutions to ease the stress of financial hardship.

### The Road Ahead

Despite our successes, we faced challenges, including an increasing demand for services amidst limited funding. The growing complexity of cases placed additional pressure on our resources. However, we see these challenges as opportunities for growth and continued innovation.

### Looking ahead, we aim to:

- Expand our early intervention programs to reach more families in need.
- Strengthen collaborations with government, non-government organisations, and local service providers to streamline and enhance support systems.
- Secure additional funding to scale our services and ensure long-term sustainability.

## Committed to empowering families for brighter futures.

As we move forward, our commitment remains focused on strengthening families and preventing child protection involvement through early intervention and support. We will continue advocating for systemic change, collaborating with partners, and innovating our approach to meet the evolving needs of our community.

A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated staff, partners, and supporters who have been instrumental in our success this year. Together, we will continue making a meaningful impact on the lives of children and families, creating a brighter and safer future for all.

# Client Profile



“Creating Links gave me the support, strength, and skills to lift my family.”

**C**eleste, a married mother of three daughters, first reached out to our services during a particularly challenging time when two of her daughters were facing health issues and required additional support. Feeling overwhelmed by the many responsibilities in her life, she sought help to better manage her situation.

Her first connection with Creating Links came after noticing a flyer for a parenting program at her children’s school. The program, Circle of Security, was led by a Vietnamese staff member, which gave Celeste a sense of comfort. After attending several sessions, she felt at ease enough to speak to the staff member in her native language, sharing her struggles as a parent, wife, and individual. Through these candid conversations, Celeste was placed on the waitlist for our case management support program.

When Celeste was assigned a case worker, she was pleased to find it was the same staff member she had met in the parenting program. This continuity helped her build trust and confidence, allowing her to be more open about her needs and goals. She found the support invaluable, as the staff member provided guidance on understanding her children’s developmental needs and strategies to support them effectively. The in-home support also gave Celeste a safe space to discuss personal challenges, including relationship struggles and the importance of self-care. Speaking with someone from her cultural background encouraged her to seek further support, including a counselling referral for herself.

Celeste greatly benefited from the counselling, which helped her build confidence in using English when necessary and emphasised the importance of self-care. She shared that this focus on self-care not only improved her emotional well-being but also enhanced her parenting skills. Celeste now feels more in control of her emotions and has a clearer understanding of when and how to seek support.

Additionally, Celeste became involved in our Parent-Child Mother Goose program, which has become a cherished part of her weekly routine. Her youngest daughter eagerly anticipates the sessions, and through the program, Celeste has gained a deeper understanding of how play contributes to her children’s development. The program has also bolstered her youngest child’s confidence and nurtured her middle daughter’s passion for art. This, in turn, has strengthened Celeste’s parenting skills and positively impacted the entire family.

Celeste proudly shared that, with all the encouragement and support she received, she enrolled in an aged care course and is set to complete it in December 2024. She expressed deep gratitude for having a staff member who spoke her language when she first sought help, describing this connection as a turning point. Celeste likened the staff member to a mother figure and appreciates that Creating Links employs staff from diverse backgrounds and age groups, which not only helped her practice her English but also enriched her knowledge by interacting with different people.

In a touching contribution to our annual report, Celeste’s middle daughter provided a family portrait, which was selected for publication. Her daughter was also recently recognised with an award for artistic achievement at school. Celeste attributes her daughter’s success to the parenting skills she gained through Creating Links, which have helped her daughter’s confidence and guide her artistic passion.

\*Client’s real name not used.



# Staff Profile



Edivaldo (Edgee)



“What drives me most is seeing the impact of our work—especially in promoting the wellbeing and safety of children and families.”

I have been dedicated to the community services sector for 24 years, with the past 9 years spent at Creating Links. My journey began as a Youth Worker in Granville, followed by a position as Youth Centre Coordinator in Hurstville. Since joining Creating Links, I have advanced from a Senior Client Service Officer to my current role as Team Leader of Family Services – Targeted Earlier Intervention Program.

I hold a master’s degree in Adult Education from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), complemented by various qualifications in community services, education, and evidence-based parenting programs.

Throughout my time at Creating Links, I’ve had the privilege of witnessing many colleagues grow and develop in their careers. It has been incredibly rewarding to know that my coaching, mentoring, and support have contributed to their professional growth. What drives me most is seeing the impact of our work—especially in promoting the wellbeing and safety of children and families.

In my direct work with clients, I take pride in the meaningful changes I’ve helped facilitate. From enhancing parenting capacity to improving access to education, addressing housing and mental health challenges, or connecting families to vital services, I’ve seen firsthand the long-term impact of these interventions.

Over the years, I have established strong networks with local agencies and community workers. I firmly believe that collaboration strengthens the support we can offer and broadens opportunities for community inclusion. I’ve been involved in delivering programs such as Tuning in to Teens and Drumbeat, and have participated in Youth Week, conferences, and various community events.

One of the aspects I value most about Creating Links is its commitment to promoting a healthy work-life balance. The organisation prioritises the well-being of its staff, offering flexibility and promoting teamwork, which in turn enhances productivity and supports self-care.

**Collaboration  
strengthens the support  
we can offer and  
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for community inclusion.**

Originally from Brazil, I cherish my cultural heritage, where music, dance, and humour are integral to life. I have been actively involved in the local Brazilian music scene, performing in bands and contributing to our vibrant culture in Australia. Outside of work, I also enjoy playing and coaching soccer, making kites, drawing, cooking, watching movies, and listening to music.

Above all, my family remains my greatest priority. My wife and our 10-year-old son mean the world to me, and I am devoted to their care and well-being.

# Thank You







# With Gratitude to Our Valued Partners

**W**e sincerely appreciate all our partners who have been essential in helping us fulfill our mission to serve and uplift the community. Your dedication, generosity, and teamwork have positively impacted the lives of those we support.

**Your support fuels  
our mission,  
creating lasting  
impact for families,  
children, and  
communities.**

Together, we've made a positive difference in the lives of children, young people, participants, carers, and families. Your contributions—whether financial, through volunteering, or by sharing your knowledge—have been vital to our achievements. We value your ongoing collaboration and look forward to another year of creating meaningful social impact together.

Thank you for your unwavering support, and here's to a brighter future for all.

# EXECUTIVE TEAM

Our Executive Management team drives our organisation toward strategic goals with a commitment to excellence and accountability. Focused on continuous improvement, they ensure our programs deliver meaningful outcomes for children, young people, participants, and families, responding to evolving community needs and building strong partnerships for lasting impact.



**Ebony-Ann Blewitt**  
Acting Co-CEO  
Executive Manager  
Child and Family  
Services



**Matthew Richards**  
Acting Co-CEO  
Executive Manager  
Marketing and  
Communications



**Joseph Magri**  
Executive Manager  
Policy, Risk and  
Accreditation



**Diana Musa**  
Executive Manager  
Out of Home Care



**Gary Williamson**  
Executive Manager  
Finance

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**O**ur Board of Directors bring extensive professional experience and governance expertise, steering our organisation's strategic direction with a steadfast commitment to excellence and accountability. They ensure that our mission and objectives are pursued with effectiveness, ethical integrity, and the highest standards. Their invaluable leadership drives our growth, empowering us to deliver impactful services that make a meaningful difference in the communities we serve.



**Raad Richards**  
Chairperson



**Rana Moubacher**  
Director



**Joseph Azzi**  
Director



**Chris Cahill**  
Director



**Anne Zele**  
Director

# Creating Links



[WWW.CREATINGLINKS.ORG.AU](http://WWW.CREATINGLINKS.ORG.AU)