

Statewide Children's
Resource Program

2025 - 2026

Yearly Report

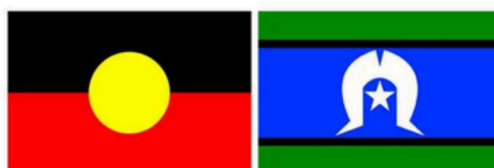
Prepared by

The Statewide Children's Resource Program Coordinators

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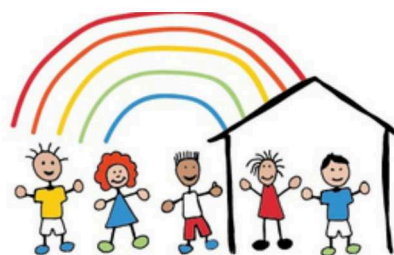
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The Statewide Children's Resource Program would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands & waters we live, work and play on. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present and acknowledge that these lands were never ceded. We acknowledge the First People of this country as the first nurturers of infants, children and young people on Country



Statewide Children's Resource Program Overview

The work of the Statewide Children's Resource Program (SCRCP) is primarily to encourage capacity building and develop best practice in responses to children. This aims to ensure that children receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing. The SCRCP advocates on behalf of children and young people in the homelessness and family violence sectors.



Statewide Children's
Resource Program

The Statewide Children's Resource Program supports the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) to engage with children to address the impacts of homelessness and family violence.

Mission

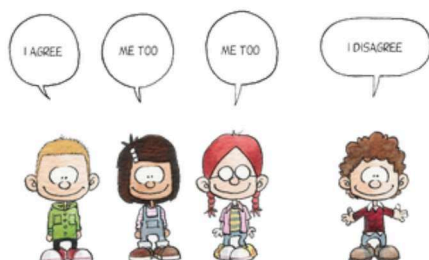
The SCRCP advocates on behalf of children and young people in the homelessness and family violence sectors. We uphold the rights of children as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Purpose

Statewide Children's Resource Program Coordinators aim to improve sector response and service delivery for children in the homelessness and family violence sector.

"We don't need to give children a voice. Children already have a voice, we need people to listen" -
Conor

**"I have the right
to be listened to
and be heard"**



You should have a say in decisions that affect you

ARTICLE 12 UNCRC

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children

Within Indigenous communities, family violence needs to be understood in the context of a history of colonisation, dispossession of land, ongoing forced child removal, racism and discrimination, and the resulting intergenerational trauma that has arisen from this history.

Responses to Indigenous children need to be culturally sensitive, trauma and community informed.

We support the right of First Nation's people and communities to be self-determining. We commit to ensuring our decision-making respects First Nation's expertise, culture, leadership and recognises the intergenerational impact of colonisation. First Nation's people hold the lore, language, wisdom and solutions for their communities and have the greatest understanding of diversity within and across communities.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait people as the first nurturers of infants, children and young people on Country.

Children from Culturally Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds & Children seeking asylum

The effects of family violence on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse children and children seeking asylum can be compounded by many factors including: cultural and language barriers, discrimination, racism, isolation from peers, and a history of trauma arising from having witnessed conflict in their homeland or from their journey to Australia.

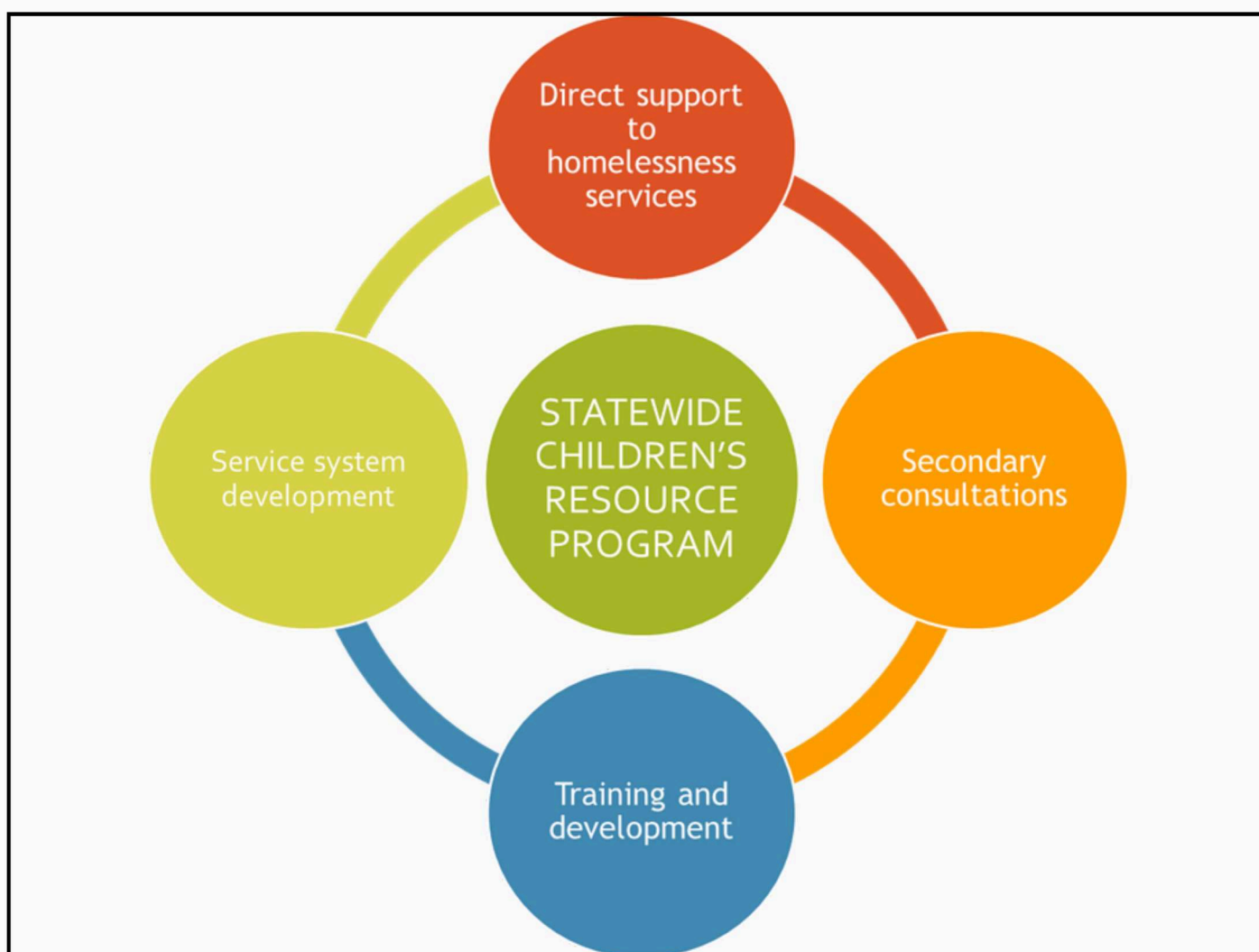
Culturally and linguistically diverse communities are made up of individuals of diverse ethnic origins, languages, faiths and cultural practices. Their needs are diverse and the responses required from services need to be tailored to the individual.

Experiences of exclusion, war, persecution and varying styles of authority can impact the capacity of members of different communities to access services. It is the responsibility of services to understand these barriers and challenges and to work in a culturally sensitive way.



Who We Are?

There are nine SCRP Coordinator positions across the state that are responsible for supporting all Supported Homelessness Services (SHS) and family violence agencies, covering all areas of Victoria. Each of the positions are auspiced by one agency on behalf of the region covered by that position. Whilst the programs are responsive locally, each regional program shares the same statewide aims and core functions, endorsed by Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). Below is a diagram illustrating these core functions.





Focusing on amplifying children’s voices, we put Article 12 of the Conventions on the Rights of the Child into practice. We believe children’s voices should be heard and they have the right to meaningful, developmentally appropriate input into decisions that affect them

A key action during the 25/26 financial year in acheiving this goal has been through educating the community./ sector through training delivery and resources, raising awarenss (particulary during events as homelessness week, youth homelessness matters day, NAIDOC Week, childrens Week, sixteen days of activism), and strengthening understanding of childrens’ rights.

AROUND THE SECTOR

Workforce Development and Innovation

Changing trajectories: strengthening child-inclusive practice

Brittany Williams, Trainer Practitioner,
Council to Homeless Persons
and Clare MacKenzie, Coordinator
North West Homeless Children's Resource Program,
Merri Outreach Support Service

Preventing and resolving child and youth homelessness is central to avoiding lifelong housing insecurity and persistent homelessness. The trauma of instability, exposure to violence, disrupted attachment and chronic stress can shape a child's wellbeing, physical and mental health, future relationships, education, and career opportunities long after a crisis has ended.

What the data tells us

Experiencing homelessness in childhood or adolescence is a key predictor of adult homelessness. Research commissioned in 2013 by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute shows that nearly one in three people experiencing homelessness first became homeless before the age of 18 – and 84 per cent of those who experienced homelessness before age 12 went on to experience it again later in life.¹

This is alarming given that nearly a quarter of people experiencing homelessness in Australia are aged

between 12 and 24 years, and young people presenting to services alone represent the fourth largest client group – around 1 in 7 specialist homelessness services (SHS) clients.²

Statewide Children's Resource Program

The rights, needs, and vulnerabilities of children are sometimes not specifically prioritised in mainstream homelessness service provision, and structural and systemic barriers can limit the ability of homelessness services to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

A valuable resource is the Statewide Children's Resource Program (SCRCP), which is funded in each region by the Department of Family, Fairness and Housing to reduce the impact of homelessness and housing instability on children. Its core purpose is to support the SHS and other non-government organisations in capacity building and developing best

practice responses for infants, children, and young people.

The work of the SCRCP includes:

- training
- secondary consultation
- resource development
- networking and advocacy
- Homeless Children's Brokerage Program.

The provision of brokerage plays a particularly crucial role in enabling vulnerable children's continued participation in education with



Training & Education

The SCRP understand that the key to effective intervention lies in the knowledge and expertise of practitioners working directly with children and their families. The SCRP has placed a significant emphasis on delivering accessible training programs to practitioners in the field.

The SCRP have developed three e-learns. These training opportunities cover a range of topics, including how to navigate the Homeless Children's Brokerage Program application process, brain development, and trauma-informed practice through children's case management. These e-learns can be found on the Council to Homeless Persons Learning Hub and the Centre for Excellence learning platform or via our [website training page](#). As of 2025 we have relaunched in person training with CHP

This financial year, the Statewide Children's Resource Program have expanded their training program to several TAFEs across Victoria. We now have partnerships with Swinburne TAFE, Gippsland TAFE, Kangan TAFE and Wodonga TAFE.

We continue to run practical workshops at the regional level to increase practitioner's confidence in working with children.

The release of the Child and Young Person's Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management Tools in 2026, we have started to encourage agencies and practitioners to engage in building their capacity and confidence in engaging with infants, children, young people and their caregivers in ways that are safe, strength based and time efficient. We have a range of resources and tools to support agencies and practitioners to engage with this.

"Firstly, thank you so much for your training at XXXXX- I really loved it, and I hope you saw that in my feedback. My background is in Clinical Education, and I thought your workshop was so fresh and different - I loved it as a different mode of learning. I have heard nothing but positive feedback from the team."
Agency Manager

"Thank you for opening my eyes to some safe ways of engaging with children and their parent to see how they understand the world and what has happened to them. The resources are great and give me so many ways of engaging with out trying to do therapy."
Agency practitioner

www.statewidechildrensresourceprogram.com.au/training

The Homeless Children's Brokerage Program

The Homeless Children's Brokerage Program (HCBP) provides brokerage for accompanying children accessing SHS services and is approximately \$400 per child, per financial year. The brokerage program is child-specific and aims to encourage practitioners to view children as clients in their own right and respond to their individual needs.

The HCBP was established to enhance opportunities for children experiencing homelessness and family violence. The three main aims are to:

- Engage and maintain children in their education (including early education services such as childcare and kindergarten),
- Reduce social isolation by enhancing access to a range of specialist support, and social and recreational opportunities within their community, and
- Provide social and emotional growth opportunities for children and provide opportunities to increase relational bonds between parents/carers and their children.

For any HCB enquiries please contact your local Children's Resource Coordinator:

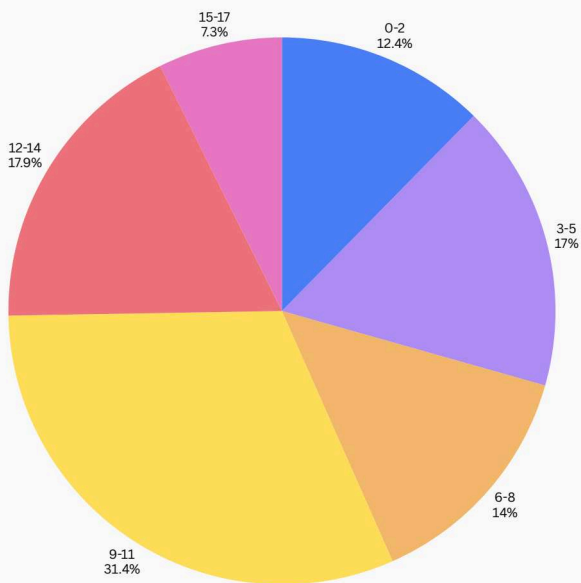
"I applied for this funding a few times over the past year. It provided important support for children transitioning to new schools by helping them access the correct uniforms. This helped them feel included and settled, while also reducing stress for both the mother and child during a time of financial instability following their departure from family violence situations."

Agency practitioner

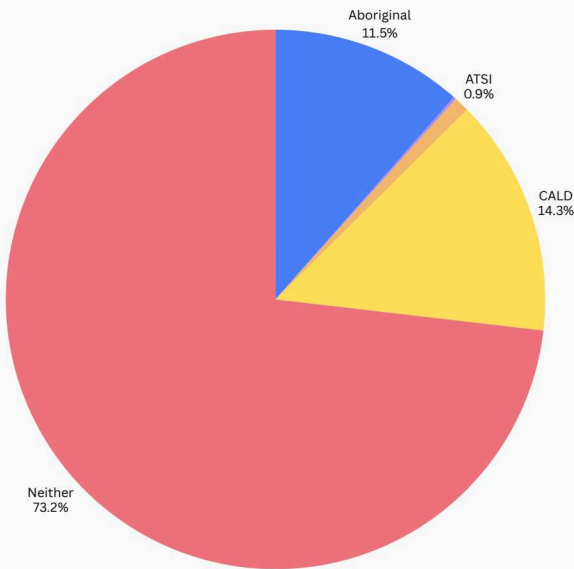


In the 2025- 2026 financial year the SCRP provided support to 652 vulnerable children. The majority of clients accessing the brokerage program throughout the state didn't identify as culturally and linguistically diverse or First Nations. We know, unfortunately, that due to the ongoing impacts of colonisation including racism, discrimination and intergenerational trauma, that First Nations people are over represented in Homelessness and Family violence services. However, these clients are not over represented in service provision. The 11.5% statistic is consistent with trends from the last few Brokerage reports. Culturally and linguistic diverse representation has slightly increased since the last brokerage report, however, we do believe that it could still be largely underreported due to complications and inconsistencies with SHIP usage and data collection. Primary school aged children continue to be the largest demographic supported by the HCBP. Most of these applications are also associated with educational costs, significantly uniform and school materials. Young people, from 15 years and upwards are the least represented in brokerage applications. We are excited to see a larger percentage of infants being supported with the HCBP. Infants are the most vulnerable of all people, and often their individual needs are not prioritised particularly within the context of experiencing homelessness and family violence. We are thrilled to be able to support infants in this incredibly important stage of life.

Age of children accessing brokerage



Demographic data



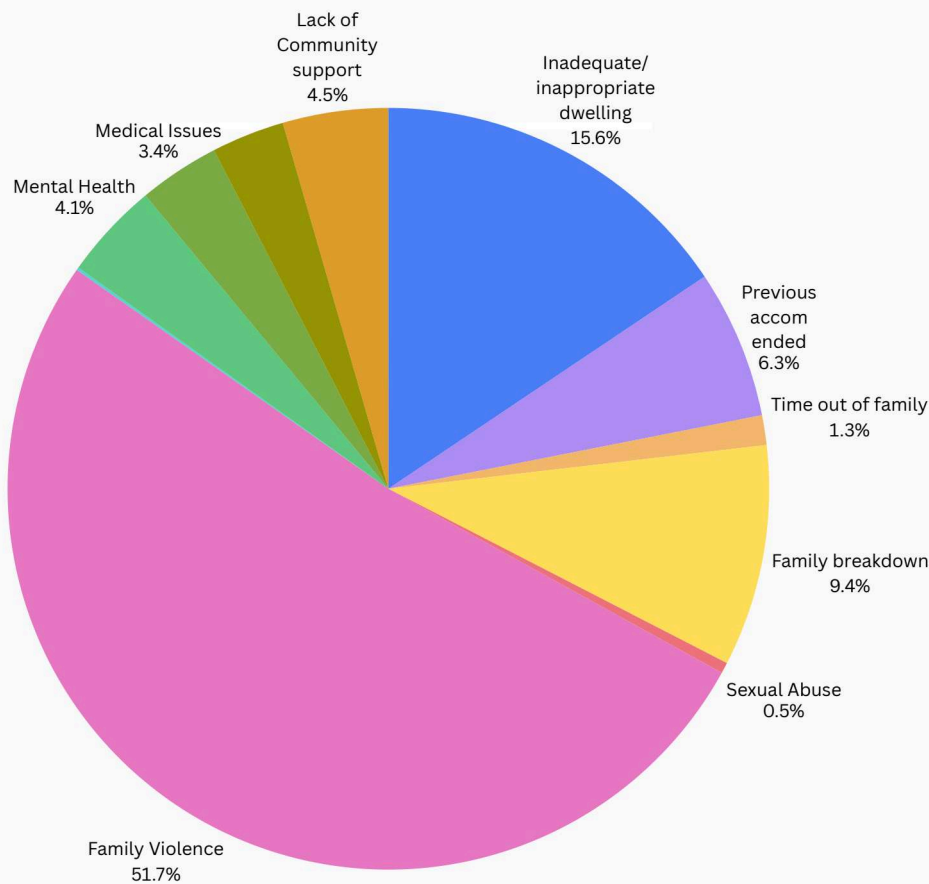
Trans and gender diverse children make up less than 1% of all applicants. This is less than reported in previous years. Of course, trans and gender diverse people only make up a small amount of the entire Australian population, but the small amount of applicants is not even representative of that minority population. We believe that this could be reflective of the restrictive data collecting tools available to the SHS sector.

Trends & Demographics Summary

Family violence is the overwhelming main reason for applicants to access brokerage. This is consistent with the understanding that family violence is the largest driver of homelessness for women and children. However, despite being the main reason identified by practitioners, 51.7% is not reflective of the wider needs of the population and definitely not representative of the significant impact that family violence is having on children experiencing homelessness.

The types of brokerage that is typically requested by applicants are requests for Educational related expenses, assistance with costs for sports and recreation and developmental needs. Whilst the kind of requests largely depend on the region that is applying, this has always been a consistent theme brokerage regardless of region. We see some trends depending on the nature of available services. We have introduced a feedback tool for the brokerage which will gives us a bigger insight into what support would have been available if the brokerage fund didn't exist.

Main presenting reason for brokerage

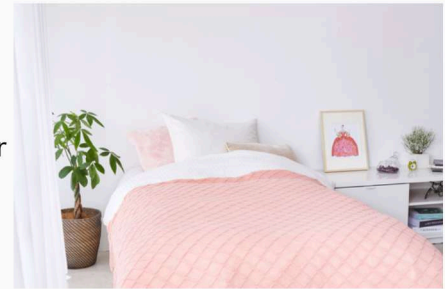


Case Studies

Below are four case study examples showcasing the use of the Homelessness Children's Brokerage from agencies across the State. *All names and identifying specifics have been changed.

Angie* 8 wanted her own bed and linen to make her room look like her own.

With no emergency relief providing beds in our region, brokerage was able to provide a bed and to purchase the linen that Angie wanted. Her mother reported that the Angie now loves sleeping in her own pink bed.



Twin boys Adem* and Hammad*, 7yrs, were about to have a new sibling and needed bunk beds. We don't have any emergency relief that provides beds, so brokerage was able to provide bunks and bedding for the boys. Their mother says the boys love lying, talking and reading books in their bunks.

Julia* 17yrs, had passed her Learner's Permit and had no adults who were able to support her to learn correctly. She was hoping to be able to have some lessons to sit her driving test. Julia saved for and purchased a car but needed support with lessons.

Julia was provided with a series of driving lessons and was able to pass her driving test.



Laylah*, 6yrs old, required some Occupational Therapy for an issue caused by her cerebral palsy. Brokerage was able to support some sessions and a piece of equipment to support Laylah and maximise her mobility.

Laylah was very happy to have greater participation with her friends.

Thank You!

Brokerage is a valuable resource for the SHS Homelessness and Family Violence sectors in the all the regions. It has been demonstrated that the quality of brokerage applications is contingent on the quality of relationships that the coordinators have developed in the region. Brokerage applications are the result of the secondary consultation, agency visits and discussions between the SCRPs and practitioners.

The SCRPs are committed to working towards a client focused service system in which children's unique vulnerabilities and dreams are supported. We are excited to continue this work alongside the talented and resourceful agencies of the Statewide service system. Your commitment to supporting children in this under-resourced, underfunded and underrecognised sector is commendable. This work could not happen without you.

We are all thankful for the support of our Auspice agencies, enabling us to do the work we do as a united team and as individuals able to respond to the unique needs of each of our regions.



Contact Us

www.statewidechildrensresourceprogram.com.au



"Children are our greatest treasure. They are
our future." — Nelson Mandela