



WESTERN SYDNEY AND THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Year in Review 2024-2025



Care when you need it most

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Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains

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the Diocese of Parramatta.

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Acknowledgment of Country

Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains recognises and
acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters across Australia on
which we live, and their connection to land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
including Elders past, present and emerging; and recognise their continuing gift
of culture to the life and spirit of this Country.



Message from Bishop Vincent



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

This year, as we celebrate the Jubilee of Hope in
the Catholic Church, we are reminded that hope
is not about being inactive – it is instead a gift that
inspires action, compassion and love for others.

In Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains,
where many of our neighbours face challenges
alone – from family and domestic violence to the
daily cost of living and housing – the gift of hope
remains a beacon of light that gently guides us.

Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue
Mountains is that light in our community,
providing hope and care to those who need
it most.

Catholic Care's team demonstrates radical love
by supporting the vulnerable, isolated, and
marginalised, as well as those in urgent need of
care. Their work goes beyond providing support –
it is a living witness to God's love.

The 'Jubilee of Hope' called by the late Pope
Francis invites each of us to be instruments of
God's love. Through the work of Catholic Care,
many individuals, couples and families, have
experienced this hope – a reminder that faith and
care in action can transform the lives of others.

*Our Diocesan Pastoral Plan for a Synodal Church
2024–2028* provides a gentle framework to
guide our shared journey of faith, encouraging
prayer, listening, dialogue, and service in building

communities of hope. Catholic Care's work is a living
expression of this vision, as staff and volunteers
embody these principles in every encounter.

Soon we will celebrate Christmas. The birth of
Jesus at the stable means that God is close to the
neglected and forgotten. Only by caring for one
another, for the afflicted and for all creation, can
we harness the energy of love and embody the
incarnate God. Hence, let us commit ourselves to
being signs of hope and agents of healing. Wherever
people groan, wherever creation groans, there the
community of the Gospel is meant to be with our
ministry of solidarity, liberation and empowerment.
Let the Emmanuel inspire and galvanise us as we
work for the realisation of the kingdom of peace,
justice and freedom of God's suffering people
and planet.

I am grateful to all who walk in love and service,
bringing care and hope to every corner of our
Diocese. May this Jubilee continue to inspire us
to share Christ's light with all, especially those on
the margins.

In Christ's peace,

MOST REVEREND VINCENT LONG VAN NGUYEN OFM CONV
Bishop of Parramatta

Who we are

Catholic Care is the social welfare agency of the Diocese of Parramatta.

Catholic Care was established in Sydney 85 years ago as the Catholic Bureau, and for nearly 40 years, it has existed to do Christ's work in the community through the support of its dedicated staff, partners and volunteers.

Through the Church, Catholic Care aims to make a positive difference in the lives of people who need support, helping them to find joy and purpose in life.

Catholic Care supports the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community.

Regardless of background, gender, age or faith, anyone who needs it can turn to Catholic Care for support and professional care.



HOW WE'RE SUPPORTING SYDNEY'S WEST

Economic impact

Contributed
\$16.5 million
to the local
economy

Created
\$7.7 million
in flow-on economic
benefits

Generated over
\$415,000
in volunteer
value

*Figures correct at time of publishing.

A service for every need

Catholic Care's services include:

- **Family services**
- **Support for women, including housing**
- **Early childhood education and care**
- **Education and training**
- **Community engagement and refugee support**
- **First Nations support**
- **Chaplaincy support in prisons and hospitals**

Catholic Care operates across various locations in Western Sydney, with community centres offering personalised, compassionate and professional care at its community centres in Emerton, Orchard Hills and Springwood.

Community benefits

300+
clients supported through
counselling services

75
local jobs supported
indirectly

~1,700
counselling sessions
delivered

15
chaplains supporting 20+
multicultural communities,
9 hospitals and
6 correctional centres

7,300+
community engagement
sessions delivered

170
clients supported
through refugee and
migrant programs

13
refugee and migrant
programs delivered

12
service locations

360+
children attending Family
Day Care across around
50 locations

330+
suppliers

140+
staff and volunteers

3
community drop-in centres

Our community at a glance

A growing and diverse region

Catholic Care serves one of Australia's most culturally rich and fastest growing regions, spanning more than **4,200 square kilometres** across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

Home to **over 1.3 million people**, this vibrant community reflects the world's diversity – with **more than 44 per cent of residents speaking a language other than English at home**. From Chinese, Arabic and Filipino to Korean, Oceanic and Papuan languages, Spanish and Malayalam, this cultural richness shapes the way Catholic Care delivers compassionate, inclusive and client-focused care.

Major developments such as the Western Sydney International Airport, the Western Sydney Aerotropolis, and extensive transport and housing infrastructure projects are transforming the region.

These changes bring new opportunities, but also new pressures on families, communities and local services.

Through times of growth and challenge, Catholic Care's mission remains – to be present where care is needed most, walking alongside all people with respect, dignity and hope.

Catholics make up the largest faith group in the area (**24.7 per cent**). Guided by Catholic social teaching, Catholic Care serves everybody – regardless of culture, faith or circumstance. This is because Catholic Care's mission is grounded in upholding the dignity of every person and responding with compassion where it is needed most.





Message from the Episcopal Vicar of Social Welfare

Hello Everyone!

It is with a sense of gratitude and joy that we present to you our Annual Report 2024-2025 for Catholic Care.

This report reflects all the efforts that that go into trying to make a difference in the life of many of those who come to Catholic Care trying to find some help, support, companionship and a listening ear and we try to do this based on the certainty that the words of Jesus give to each of us: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Mt 25:40).

The reality is that many amongst us experience challenges such as housing, mental health, the increase in the cost of living and so on. Some others carry their wounds inside and they turn to our counselling services for support. What this report tries to present are the efforts of trying to respond to the needs of many as we try to carry out the mission of Christ to become beacons of light, hope and love for those whose hope is running thin.

On 4 October 2025 Pope Leo issued his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi te*. This exhortation is all about God’s love for the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our society. Of the many great parts of this document, I would like to quote number 120, almost at the end, where Pope Leo says:

“Christian love breaks down every barrier, brings close those who were distant, unites strangers, and reconciles enemies. It spans chasms that are humanly impossible to bridge and it penetrates to the most hidden crevices of society. By its very nature, Christian love is prophetic: it works miracles and knows no limits. It makes what was apparently impossible happen. Love is above all a way of looking at life and a way of living it. A Church that sets no limits to love, that knows no enemies to fight but only men and women to love, is the Church that the world needs today.” (DT 120)

It is in the spirit of this Christian love, that we present this report, giving thanks to God for all those who allow us to translate this love into concrete actions of support and dedication. Through your generosity, prayers, professional skills and, more importantly, your ongoing support, you help us to make this love a reality for those we serve and those who are also our companions in the journey of life.

VERY REV LUIS FERNANDO MONTANO RODRIGUEZ VG
Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare, Diocese of Parramatta
Catholic Care Advisory Board member



Making an impact

ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ✓ Co-hosted **Refugee Week 2024** with Diocese of Parramatta and other mission partners.
- ✓ Supported **NAIDOC Week** events.
- ✓ Celebrated **Early Childhood Educator Elena Shemet** as Regional Educator Winner for North-West and Hills District.
- ✓ Raised **\$20,000+** for Houses to Homes at the Diocesan Golf Day 2024.
- ✓ Advocated for Western Sydney at the **2025 Hope in Action Conference by Catholic Social Services Australia**
- ✓ Advocated for our clients to state and federal ministers at the **2024 Sydney Alliance Convention**.
- ✓ Advocated for domestic violence survivors at the **Engaging Men and Boys to End the Cycle of Violence Conference** in March 2025.
- ✓ Participated in the **2024 Parramatta Street Feast**, providing support services to people experiencing financial hardship and homelessness.

CELEBRATIONS & MILESTONES

- ✓ **45 years** of Family Day Care celebrated in November 2024.
- Hosted a Homelessness Week tour & morning tea to showcase the Houses to Homes program (Aug 2024).
- ✓ Unveiled a **memorial garden** for Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month (Oct 2024).
- Distributed **400+ Christmas hampers** to the needy in partnership with St Bernadette's Parish Castle Hill and Vinnies NSW.
- ✓ Piloted an intergenerational excursion with children from Family Day Care and residents at **Summit Care aged care** in Baulkham Hills.
- ✓ The **Bishop's Christmas Appeal 2024** raised over **\$255,000+** for young mothers facing homelessness.
- ✓ We had a total of **33 Aged Care Volunteers linked with recipients across 9 aged care facilities in Western Sydney**, for our Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme program.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Fast-tracked housing for two families via Community Housing Limited

Secured housing for women aged 55 and over via the Older Women's Network in Springwood.

Provided family-centred counselling services with San Miguel Family Centre in North Richmond.

A collaboration with Alula Products now provides affordable baby formula to families in need.

Catholic Care partnered with local training providers, including Nirimba TAFE and Bedford College to showcase Family Day Care as a career pathway for students.

Secured the Digital Sisters Grant, which funded digital literacy initiatives for women and families.

Looking ahead



There are many more achievements to celebrate in FY2025-26

- ✓ **Welcoming newcomers:** Migrants find refuge and community at Holy Spirit Parish St Clair, supported by Catholic Care, as part of the Australian Government's settlement and integration pilot program (CRISP).
- ✓ **Learning and growth:** Mamre House and Farm in Orchard Hills provided a safe and welcoming learning space with a new course for disengaged learners or school refusers.
- ✓ **Three decades of care:** 30 years of Kairos Prison Ministry has supported inmates and their families in local prisons.
- ✓ **Spiritual renewal:** Chaplains across three Catholic dioceses gathered for their first spirituality day, reflecting on the value of their ministry.
- ✓ **Honouring little lives:** Catholic Care's second memorial service in October 2025 remembered babies and young children who have passed away, providing comfort and support to parents and carers.
- ✓ **Celebrating excellence:** Two educators were recognised in the prestigious 2025 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards.
- ✓ **Deadly celebrations:** The annual NAIDOC Week event was held in a new location in Mt Druitt for the first time in July 2025, bringing hundreds of people together to recognise and celebrate the contributions of First Nations peoples.
- ✓ **Homelessness awareness:** The 'Wrapped in Love' Homelessness Week memorial service prayed for those forgotten people who have died while living on the streets.
- ✓ **Refugee solidarity:** Refugee Week 2025 promoted unity and awareness.
- ✓ **Sleeping in solidarity:** Locals were invited to participate in a Vinnies sleepout to raise funds and awareness for those experiencing homelessness.
- ✓ **Caring for those in need:** Assistance provided for people experiencing homelessness and poverty during Homelessness Week.
- ✓ **Season of giving:** The Bishop's Christmas Appeal 2025 is raising vital funds for Catholic Care's counselling services, supporting people experiencing grief and loss.

Read the latest news in Catholic Outlook:
catholicoutlook.org



Message from the Executive Director



As we reflect on another year at Catholic Care, I am inspired by the team's dedication, compassion, and collaborative spirit, evident in every program, initiative and interaction across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

As the social welfare arm of the Diocese of Parramatta, Catholic Care's mission calls us to continue Jesus' ministry in this expansive, diverse, and growing region, showing His compassion to all.

Guided by this, we remain committed to supporting the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised members of our community, providing care regardless of beliefs, religion, gender, ethnicity, age or socio-economic circumstances. Our aim is simple and grounded in Christ's love: to offer care when it is needed most.

In the second year of our bold three-year strategy, we have delivered tangible outcomes for our community. We strengthened our family and relationships counselling services, ensuring more individuals and families receive the support they need to live meaningful and dignified lives.

At the same time, we expanded our advocacy and practical support for people experiencing homelessness through initiatives such as the Parramatta Street Feast, the Homelessness Memorial Service, and targeted networking events and partnerships, including through our membership with Homelessness NSW – working with other service providers to develop real solutions.

We also worked closely with agencies and parishes to support refugee families integrating and settling in our neighbourhoods, advocating at local refugee support events and providing opportunities for community connection. This area of our work continues to grow.

Our new partnerships continue to shape the care we provide, such as new housing partnerships with Older Women's Network, Diamond Women and Community Housing Limited.

Our commitment to raising awareness and preventing domestic and family violence remains strong, including participation in conferences focused on engaging men and boys to end the cycle of violence. Across all programs, partnerships are central – connecting with parishes, community agencies, local councils, the NSW Government, volunteers, not-for-profits, and national networks – our partners in mission working together to amplify care.

At Catholic Care, our work is guided by our values of gratitude and love, availability, trust, advocacy, and perseverance. In close collaboration with our Advisory Board, partners and stakeholders, these values shape how we build stronger communities and walk alongside those we serve. Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Helen Emmerson

HELEN EMMERSON
Executive Director
Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains

Strategy update

Catholic Care is now in the second year of its three-year strategy to deliver high-quality services and support for vulnerable individuals, and communities in Sydney's west.

Our Mission

We are called to continue Jesus' ministry in the Western Sydney and Blue Mountains community, by showing His compassion to all.

Inspired by His message, we offer special care for the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised members of our community, regardless of their beliefs, religion, gender, ethnicity, age or socio-economic circumstances.

We connect people and families to enable them to be supported and live a meaningful life with dignity, purpose and peace.

Our Values

- | GRATITUDE AND LOVE
- | AVAILABILITY
- | TRUST
- | ADVOCACY AND PERSEVERANCE

Our Progress

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA	KPI/MEASURE	YEAR 1 PROGRESS	FUTURE TARGET/NOTES
Sustain and stabilise programs	Assess KPIs across client impact, compliance, and grant requirements (where applicable)	Ongoing	Ongoing monitoring and reporting
	Develop transition plans for redundant/de-prioritised programs	Completed	Reviewed plans annually
Expand impact and build on strengths	Identify 2-3 unmet needs in the community	Completed	Research and community consultation complete. Services will focus on women's support, housing and homelessness, and employment support.
	Develop growth plans and business cases to support expansion	Ongoing	Target completion 2026
Build a motivated, stable, skilled workforce	Develop and implement a comprehensive resourcing plan	Completed	Review annually
	Complete and embed processes for professional performance and development	Completed	Review annually
Be fully compliant and financially sustainable	Refine compliance and governance processes; review obligations re: grants, government relations, internal policies	Ongoing	Ongoing review
	Set clear financial goals and targets	Completed	Annual review and adjustment

Our Priorities

Guided by our five pillars (5 Ps): Participants, Programs, People, Positioning, and Performance – we’re gaining strong momentum as we bring our strategy to life.



Download Catholic Care’s Strategy 2024-2027 to learn more.

FOCUS AREA	KPI/MEASURE	YEAR 1 PROGRESS	FUTURE TARGET/NOTES
Participants	Engage with clients and consumers	Ongoing	Ongoing engagement activities, enhanced face-to-face engagement opportunities
	Sharpen focus on families at risk, child education, mental health and wellbeing	Ongoing	Targeted programs in development, including HIPPY parenting program, counselling services, and supporting at-risk families
	Assess client satisfaction/outcomes	Pending	Surveys and feedback processes
Programs	Deliver focused and engaging programs	Ongoing	Program schedules and participation tracking, responsive to client feedback
	Deliver measurable benefits to targeted client groups	Pending	Outcome metrics to be defined
	Target programs to reach more people sustainably	Ongoing	Expansion planning underway
	Undertake market research to identify opportunities and develop plans	Completed	Market analysis and planning complete
People	Strengthen leadership and teams; build capacity, resourcing, capabilities	Ongoing	Staff and volunteer development plans, staff anchor days to provide network opportunities
	Engage staff, partners, stakeholders, and volunteers	Ongoing	Engagement initiatives, events and workshops
	Involve staff in delivery of strategic directions to improve accountability	Pending	Participation tracking
	Assess skills to identify training/development needs	Pending	Skills audit and training schedule
	Engage with Diocesan staff to support initiatives	Ongoing	Collaborative projects underway, including with the Diocese’s Mission Enhancement Team and Comms Team
Positioning	Build public brand presence and reputation	Pending	Marketing and communications plan, social calendar, Catholic Outlook stories and media pitches, as well as enhanced external signage and website SEO
	Be a recognised leader and trusted provider of social services	Ongoing	Media and stakeholder recognition, accreditations and advocacy leadership
	Be a trusted partner with government, private, and not-for-profit organisations	Ongoing	Partnership agreements / collaborations
	Deliver measurable and reportable impact in the Diocese	Ongoing	Annual reporting framework, funding applications
	Refine governance and compliance processes to meet deadlines	Ongoing	Policy reviews and audits
Performance	Achieve financial targets for each year	Pending	Budget tracking and financial reporting
	Review and enhance organisational systems and processes for effective case management	Ongoing	System improvements and monitoring, adjustments as needed



Our services

Family services

Supporting families to grow and thrive in Sydney's west

We know families are the heart of our communities, and when families thrive, everyone benefits. Strong families foster healthy relationships, promote emotional wellbeing, and contribute to a resilient, connected community.

In FY24-25, Catholic Care supported more than 510 clients across all family services programs in the Blacktown and Penrith local government areas, including Intensive Family Support. Over the year, the Family Services team delivered more than 870 home visits and service occasions, working closely with families to strengthen connections, overcome challenges, and build resilience.

This year, programs were designed to meet the diverse needs of families at every stage of life and included Keeping Kids in Mind, a post-separation parenting course; Tuning into Teens, a six-session program helping parents nurture their teen's emotional intelligence; First Teacher, supporting parents and carers to foster early learning and loving bonds with young children; Fusion Families Partnership, a Blacktown-based course focused on building thriving family units; and Circle of Security Parenting, delivered in collaboration with our counselling team.

Catholic Care's family services are inclusive and culturally responsive, with 90 per cent of staff in this field from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, reflecting the communities we serve. Catholic Care is strongly committed to child safeguarding, ensuring every child in our care feels safe, valued and supported.

This year, our work was strengthened by partnerships with Salvation Army Rouse Hill, Share the Dignity, Dignity Hampers and Food, and Oz Harvest. Key achievements in FY24-25 included establishing a strong working relationship with Blacktown area 'Youth Action Meetings' alongside NSW Police,

Blacktown Area Command, and maintaining a dedicated team of seven staff members – most from CALD backgrounds – ensuring personalised, professional support for all families.

Through these efforts, Catholic Care continues to empower families to flourish, fostering connected, resilient communities where every family member can reach their full potential.

At a glance

- Total clients supported: 510+**
 - Blacktown: 77%
 - Penrith: 21%
 - Intensive Family Support – NSW Government-referred (Blacktown): 2%
- Total sessions: 870+**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients supported:**
 - Blacktown & Penrith Family Support: 9.2%
 - Intensive Family Support – NSW Government-referred (Blacktown): 40%
- Cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients supported:**
 - Blacktown & Penrith Family Support: 19%
 - Intensive Family Support – NSW Government-referred (Blacktown): 30%
- Team members: 7** (90% from CALD backgrounds)

Supporting a young mother to build a safe and stable home

A young mother was referred to Catholic Care by her local health district. She had a history of drug use, complex trauma, mental health challenges, and past experiences of child abuse. After spending the first weeks of her baby's life in a refuge, she had finally moved into her own home with her 10-week-old daughter.

"Our first home visit was tough," recalled Abby Wells, Family Services Coordinator.

"She was wary and defensive, and understandably so – she'd had negative experiences with services before," Abby said.

“Our goal was to make her feel safe, heard, and not judged.”

Through ongoing conversations and consistent support, Abby introduced Catholic Care's Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) program, with a clear focus on her baby's safety and wellbeing.

"At first, she was adamant about co-sleeping on a mattress on the floor," Abby explained. "But with gentle guidance and practical advice about safe sleeping, she agreed to try a portable bassinet we provided. She could move it around the house and still feel in control."

Since then, the mother has engaged consistently with her caseworker, discussing goals and accessing services such as paediatric appointments and domestic and family violence counselling.

"It's inspiring to see her commitment," Abby said.

"She's working hard to build a safe and stable life for herself and her daughter."

This case is one of many that highlights how relationship-based, trauma-informed care can make a real difference. Through listening, hands-on support, and empowering parents to make safe choices, Catholic Care is helping families overcome early challenges – laying the groundwork for a stronger, more secure future.



Keeping families together

For Shireen, an Intensive Family Preservation Case Manager based in Blacktown, her work is all about walking alongside families facing significant challenges.

"The key objective of my role is to work with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, which refers families to our program to address child protection concerns," Shireen explained. "Those risks can include allegations of domestic violence, drug use, medical or educational neglect, or other safety issues."

Shireen said the goal is always to keep families together wherever possible. "We focus on the referral reasons, build rapport, and work one-on-one with families to address concerns in the hope of reducing the number of children entering care," she said.

She shared that the most rewarding part of her role is working with families in their homes and developing genuine relationships built on trust.

"Having that one-on-one connection is really important."

"It helps families understand that Catholic Care's purpose isn't to divide families, but to support them to stay together safely."

Housing and support

Supporting women through trauma, loss and housing insecurity

Domestic and family violence remains a significant challenge in NSW, with women disproportionately affected. Catholic Care is committed to helping local women – whether pregnant or with children – rebuild their lives after experiencing domestic or family violence, financial hardship, grief, or other serious trauma.

At the heart of this support is Catholic Care's nationally accredited Houses to Homes program, which provides holistic assistance and affordable housing across Blacktown and Parramatta for up to two years. The program supports young mothers aged 16 to 25 who are homeless or at immediate risk of homelessness due to financial hardship, family breakdown, or domestic violence. Alongside safe accommodation, participants receive practical guidance, life skills development, and pastoral care to help them regain stability and independence.

In FY24-25, Houses to Homes strengthened its wrap-around care through several new initiatives and partnerships. A collaboration with Alula Products now provides affordable baby formula to families in need, while the appointment of a Child and Family Health Nurse enables fortnightly visits to support parents and monitor infant wellbeing. A formal partnership with Community Housing Limited has also been established, expanding access to transitional housing for clients working towards long-term stability.

These initiatives build on existing partnerships with Drive for Life, OzHarvest, Evolve Housing, and Community Housing Limited, and are supported by the generosity of major donors Patrick and Nicole Tuttle. Together, they enable Catholic Care to offer holistic, practical, and compassionate assistance that addresses both immediate and long-term needs.

Catholic Care also continues its partnership with the Older Women's Network (OWN) Blue Mountains through the Homes for Older Women (HOW) program, delivered at its Springwood community drop-in centre. HOW supports women aged 55 and over who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by connecting them with compassionate homeowners offering affordable accommodation. The program provides practical assistance, community connection, and wrap-around support, helping older women find safety, stability, and renewed hope in a challenging housing market.

Through these programs, Catholic Care continues to accompany women through some of life's most difficult challenges, helping them rebuild with dignity, confidence, and hope for the future.



Giving hope to women seeking shelter

Catholic Care is helping older women find safe, affordable housing through a new partnership with the Older Women's Network Blue Mountains.

Since joining Catholic Care six months ago, community engagement coordinator Lisa Malcher has facilitated the launch of the Homes for Older Women (HOW) program at the Springwood community drop-in centre. HOW connects women aged 55 and over, who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of it, with compassionate homeowners offering a vacant granny flat, house, apartment, or bedroom at an affordable price.

Since its inception in May last year, the HOW program has housed 40 women. With the new Springwood location, more older women are accessing support and practical pathways to secure housing.

"Catholic Care's wrap-around services complement this program perfectly," Lisa said.

"I can see our Springwood centre becoming a safe haven for vulnerable women."

One client, Lu*, had been living in an "extremely stressful situation" while managing severe chronic fatigue syndrome. Finding rental accommodation alone at her age felt overwhelming.

Through HOW, Lu now lives in a safe, affordable granny flat in the Lower Blue Mountains.

"The support I received has improved my mental health and even eased my fatigue," she said.

"My landlords are kind and thoughtful, and I'm finally able to focus on regaining my health and my life."

Bronwen Johnston, Chair of the Older Women's Network Blue Mountains, described the partnership as a natural fit.

"Having HOW based at Catholic Care allows us to more easily connect women to services, activities, and community."

Program Manager Julie Nance added, "Being on-site means we can offer wrap-around support – from counselling and technology help to community activities and just a friendly chat."

The partnership strengthens Catholic Care's commitment to women's housing, complementing existing programs such as the nationally accredited Houses to Homes, which supports young pregnant women and mothers, and partnerships with local housing providers to improve access to secure accommodation.

**Name changed for privacy*

At a glance

- **Total clients supported:** 112
- **Programs and sessions delivered:**
 - Social outings: 12
- **Circle of Security Parenting:** 4 clients completed an 8-week program
- **Cooking classes:** 5 in-house classes for life skills development
- **H2H wellness program:** 27 sessions delivered focusing on health, wellbeing, and acupuncture
- **Child and Family Health Nurse:** attended on 12 occasions to provide milestone checks and parenting advice
- **Education:** 5 clients successfully completed First Aid training
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients supported:** 35
- **Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients supported:** 8
- **Team members:** 5



Child education and early learning

Supporting children to learn, grow and thrive

This year, Catholic Care renewed its commitment to families and children through a focus on safety, care, and excellence in early learning. Our Statement of Commitment to Childcare and Early Learning reflects our mission to create environments where every child is known, valued, and safe-places where they can grow in confidence and curiosity, supported by dedicated educators and proven outcomes.

Safety remains central to every family's decision to place a child in care. In FY24-25, all educators completed child protection training, and 10 progressed from Certificate III to Diploma qualifications at Macquarie Community College.

Catholic Care also partnered with local training providers, including Nirimba TAFE and Bedford College, to showcase Family Day Care as a career pathway for students. In June 2025, a new governance initiative introduced by Catholic Care required all household members aged 16+ residing with any educator to complete a national criminal history check, reinforcing our commitment to child safety.

Educator excellence was recognised throughout the year. Early Childhood Educator Elena Shemet was named Regional Educator Winner for North-West and Hills District in the 2024 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards.

A new referral benefits program also supports educator growth and encourages careers in home-based care, meeting the increasing demand across

Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. At Mamre House and Farm, Orchard Hills, Catholic Care runs a weekly supported playgroup in partnership with Playgroups NSW and Mamre Creche for clients undertaking courses. In FY24-25, new immunisation policies were introduced, staff were upskilled in the PEEP Supported Playgroup Framework, and the Creche received a makeover with new books and play resources.

These initiatives reflect Catholic Care's ongoing mission to provide trusted, compassionate, and responsive care-building a foundation of confidence, curiosity, and belonging for the children and families we serve.

At a glance

FAMILY DAY CARE	
6 Team Members	All 49 Educators upskilled in child protection training
MAMRE CRECHE	
50 Families supported	16 Cultural and linguistically diverse families
2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families	2 Team Members



Educator excellence celebrated at Baulkham Hills Family Day Care

Early Childhood Educator Elena Shemet, has been named Regional Educator Winner for the North West and Hills District in the 2024 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards. The awards, hosted by Family Day Care Australia, recognise educators who demonstrate outstanding dedication and impact in early childhood education.

Elena described the recognition as “amazing” and thanked the families and colleagues who supported her nomination. Coordinator Emma Low praised her creativity, enthusiasm, and commitment to quality care, saying, “Her dedication reflects our core values and our mission to inspire and support children in every home-based environment.”

Established for 45 years across around 50 locations, Baulkham Hills Family Day Care offers personalised care for children aged six weeks to 13 years. Executive Director Helen Emmerson said Elena's award reflects the dedication of staff across all Catholic Care child services, including Mamre House Creche and HIPPY in Emerton, highlighting the organisation's ongoing commitment to compassionate, high-quality early learning.

Mamre Creche gets new look, attracts new families

Mamre Creche in Orchard Hills has undergone a stunning transformation, becoming a welcoming, engaging childcare hub for local families. Catholic Care educators Josephine and Carmen, who have been at the creche since 2008 and 2009 respectively, provide nurturing, educational environments that support both children and their parents.

Carmen highlighted the variety of programs attracting families, from English and art classes to cupcake decorating, alongside the popular Thursday playgroup.

“We encourage parents to connect while their children enjoy sand play, trampolines, music, story time, and gross motor games,” she said.

Josephine noted the creche reflects the region's cultural diversity, welcoming families from Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Afghanistan. Activities follow the children's interests, prioritising play-based learning aligned with the NSW Early Years Learning Framework.

Beyond childcare, the team links families to broader Catholic Care services. With growing enrolments, the creche is seeking volunteers to support its vibrant, inclusive community.



HIPPY: Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters

Supporting families with early learning

In FY24-25, Catholic Care supported 50 families through the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), a home-based early learning program that helps parents build foundational skills with their children while fostering a love of learning.

demonstrating Catholic Care’s commitment to accessible, high-quality programs across the community.

HIPPY also provides pathways for parents to become tutors, offering 1:1 support to other families and building confidence in guiding their children’s learning. This approach strengthens community connections while promoting shared learning and parental engagement.

Through HIPPY, families are supported not only in early learning but also in building relationships, confidence, and networks that benefit both children and parents. The program exemplifies Catholic Care’s holistic approach to family support, recognising that early intervention and parent involvement are key to long-term wellbeing and educational outcomes for children.

Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is a two-year early learning and parenting program for children aged between 3 and 4 years.

It is largely delivered in and around Mt Druitt and Emerton by a peer workforce of home tutors who are mothers who have previously completed the two-year program themselves.

The program reached a diverse group of families, including 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and 30 families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, reflecting Catholic Care’s commitment to inclusive, culturally responsive support.

HIPPY empowers parents to take an active role in their child’s development. This year, 20 parents successfully completed First Aid for Babies and Children, gaining practical skills and confidence to care for their children safely and effectively. Families engaged in a wide range of learning activities at home, including reading, creative play, and hands-on projects designed to nurture curiosity and development while strengthening parent-child bonds.

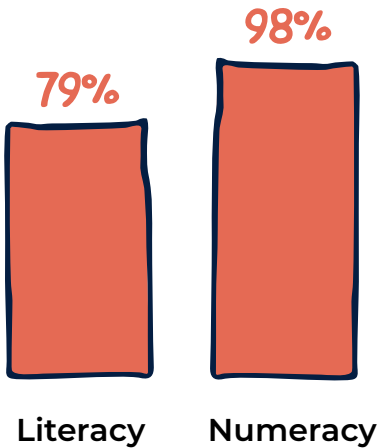
The program is delivered in partnership with local early learning providers, including Ngroo Preschool, Presbyterian Preschool Tregear, and Angel Long Day Preschool Emerton,

At a glance



Why HIPPY matters

Percentage of children performing above 50% after HIPPY



Source: Reasearch report, 'Summary of the impact of HIPPY on children', Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2020.

90%
of parents believe HIPPY improves their children's school readiness

93%
of parents report overwhelming enjoyment of HIPPY by their children

400+
yearly tutor positions (40% Indigenous and 98% held by women) provide paid employment and improve tutor's confidence to secure local jobs after HIPPY.

HIPPY in Emerton supports early learning

For more than a decade, HIPPY at Catholic Care Emerton has been helping families build strong foundations for learning and development. Launched locally in 2014, the two-year program supports children from age three, guiding parents to nurture their child’s development, social skills, and confidence while strengthening the parent-child bond through shared educational activities.

“HIPPY is unique because it equips parents as their child’s first teacher,” said Linda McDonald, HIPPY coordinator. Parents receive structured activity books and resources to engage in interactive learning at home. From reading and watching educational videos together, to crafting, playing games like “keepy-uppy” with balloons, and preparing family picnics, HIPPY fosters both learning and connection.

One parent shared, “We loved the books to read together...we also loved discussing different animals and where they live. Everywhere learning is important in HIPPY.”

Partnerships with local preschools and community organisations boost enrolments and provide access to courses such as First Aid for Babies and Children. Local tutors support families, sharing knowledge and helping parents feel confident in guiding their children's learning.

Parents report that HIPPY strengthens family bonds, sparks creativity, and prepares children for school. With its evidence-based curriculum and community-driven approach, HIPPY continues to make a lasting impact on families in Emerton and across Mount Druitt.

Counselling support

Someone to talk to when it's needed most

Life's pressures can affect anyone, and sometimes all that's needed is a listening ear. Catholic Care provides low-cost, confidential counselling for individuals, couples, and families, offering practical guidance and emotional support to help people navigate challenging times and build resilience. Services are available in person, online and over the phone, across Blacktown, Emerton, Parramatta, Penrith, and Springwood.

In 2025, Project Elizabeth moved into Catholic Care's counselling portfolio. It assists women who are expecting, have experienced a loss, had a termination, or need help caring for a child up to three years old by providing trauma counselling, pregnancy and parenting guidance and practical support to young women and their families. The program expanded through a new partnership with San Miguel Family Centre in North Richmond, which offers stable housing, child development support, playgroups, expressive therapy, counselling, and guidance to address issues contributing to homelessness.

October 2024 saw the inaugural Pregnancy and Infant Loss Memorial Service at Mamre House and Farm in Orchard Hills, held in partnership with White Lady Funerals. The reflective service allowed families to honour children lost through miscarriage, stillbirth, accident, natural causes, or SIDS, by lighting candles, planting trees, or laying stones in the memorial garden.

In early 2025, all Catholic Care counsellors completed sandplay therapy training to strengthen trauma-informed practice. Programs delivered by our counselling services included Circle of Security and Keeping Kids in Mind, with over 20 participants. The team also partnered with the wellbeing team from Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese to support ongoing professional development.

Through these initiatives, Catholic Care continues to strengthen community wellbeing, providing compassionate support and walking alongside individuals and families as they make meaningful changes in their lives.



Fostering healthy relationships

Lee is a Catholic Care counsellor who has been providing family and relationship and family law counselling for around three years. She is among many counsellors offering financial counselling, grief and loss support, and general counselling.

“Our role is basically to work together in people's journey, especially when they are facing challenges in their lives.”

“I always want to be there for people, especially those going through challenging times at work, within their families, or in their relationships,” Lee said. She added that clients can access counselling in different ways, including through individual, couple and family sessions.

“I really love witnessing even small, but meaningful changes – changes they want to make in their lives,” Lee said.

“It's a privilege to support them and provide tools and techniques to help them navigate life.”

Community engagement and refugee support

Building stronger, more resilient communities

In FY24-25, Catholic Care supported 170 clients through its community and refugee programs, with 135 participants from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Across 13 activities and events, the focus remained on helping people feel welcome, connected and empowered to thrive in their new communities.

At Mamre House and Farm in Orchard Hills, clients engaged in English and sewing classes, participated in Oz Harvest, joined the inaugural Pregnancy and Infant Loss Memorial Service, and connected through two weekly seniors' social groups. Springwood offered a shared reading group, a men's social support group, weekly digital tech help, and festive events such as the 2024 Christmas Elf Hunt.

Catholic Care also delivered refugee-focused programs, including volunteer information sessions, a refugee welcome dinner and picnic, Refugee Week events, Christmas cupcake decorating, fitness and health classes, walking groups, makeup and art classes, table talk sessions, a refugee lunch, the First Teacher program, and a digital safety event.

Partnerships were central to these efforts. Collaborations with Parramatta Mission, Nepean Community College, Starretts, MECA, NMA, Nepean Multicultural Health, Penrith City Council, Good Things Foundation, Diamond Women, Dress for Success, White Lady Funerals, Mobile Eyes and Homes for Older Women expanded program reach and strengthened community support networks.

Highlights this year included securing the Digital Sisters Grant, which funded digital literacy initiatives for women and families, the Springwood Festival that raised Catholic Care's profile in the mountains, the introduction of counselling services at Springwood, bringing Homes for Older Women into the Springwood office as part of its transition

to a women's hub, and delivering the Disengaged Students Education Course with Nepean Community College.

Each community centre played a vital role in this mission. The Aboriginal and Multicultural Centre in Emerton offered counselling, family support, wellbeing programs and First Nations gatherings. Mamre House and Farm provided education, training and employment pathways in a supportive, peaceful rural setting. Springwood continued to provide counselling, housing assistance and community activities, including popular fitness and gardening programs that foster health, wellbeing and connection.

Through these initiatives, Catholic Care continues to build inclusion, resilience and belonging, helping people of all ages, backgrounds and faiths to flourish within welcoming and empowered communities.

At a glance

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

7
Team
Members

Total clients
supported

416+

Emerton: 150
Orchard Hills: 172
Springwood: 94

Total sessions
delivered

7300+

Emerton: 2376
Orchard Hills: 2510
Springwood: 2500

REFUGEE AND MIGRANT PROGRAMS

Total clients
supported:

13

135 Culturally and linguistically
diverse clients

Total sessions
delivered:

170

Building skills and connections at Mamre House and Farm

Every Wednesday at 10am during school terms, clients gather at Mamre House and Farm in Orchard Hills to improve language skills, build confidence, and receive employment support. Facilitated by Nepean Community College, the program helps refugees and migrants develop practical English and written skills—from everyday communication to preparing resumes and job applications.

"For our clients it's not just about learning English," said Lisa Malcher, Catholic Care's Community Engagement Officer. "It's about feeling connected, being part of something, and gaining confidence to take the next steps in life."

The sessions foster learning, social connection, and pathways to education and employment across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

OzHarvest provides more than food

Each week, Catholic Care teams up with OzHarvest to deliver fresh food and groceries to families in need across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. These deliveries provide more than sustenance – they bring relief, dignity, and connection to households experiencing financial hardship. Volunteers and staff carefully pack and distribute the food, ensuring families receive nutritious items to support their wellbeing.

"OzHarvest allows us to meet immediate needs while fostering community," said Lisa Malcher, Catholic Care's Community Engagement coordinator.

Many families have praised the benefits of this vital service.

"We come regularly and it helps us out so much, the food is so fresh," said one client with young children. Through this partnership, hundreds of local families access reliable food support each week.



Image courtesy of Blacktown City Council.

Refugee Week 2025 highlights unity and community support

Refugee Week 2025 highlighted unity, resilience, and community support, with Catholic Care joining the Diocese of Parramatta, Jesuit Refugee Service, House of Welcome, and other partners.

Events across Granville, Parramatta, Penrith, and St Marys celebrated the theme "Finding Freedom: Diversity in Community" through panels, personal stories, and market stalls.

Catholic Care staff contributed to workshops and discussions, sharing insights on the challenges refugees face and the agency's role in practical support and connection.

Collaborating with parish social justice groups and community partners, Catholic Care demonstrated its ongoing commitment to inclusion, advocacy, and the Diocese's Pastoral Plan priorities of Mission, Dialogue, and Community.

First Nations support services

Always was. Always will be.

In FY24–25, Catholic Care strengthened its support for First Nations communities by delivering practical, cultural, and wellbeing programs that foster connection, healing, and a sense of belonging.

A dedicated community drop-in centre at Emerton, now named the Aboriginal and Multicultural Centre following consultation with local Elders, expanded its programs under the leadership of a new community and engagement team.

Working closely with other services at Emerton, Catholic Care supported local events of significance for First Nations peoples, including the 60th anniversary of Holy Family Parish, Mt Druitt, the annual Reconciliation Walk hosted by Blacktown City Council, and NAIDOC Week 2024 celebrations, including a smoking ceremony at Mamre House and Farm – bringing the community together to reflect, heal and strengthen cultural bonds.

The 2024 NAIDOC theme was ‘Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud.’ In a spirit of solidarity, Holy Family Parish, Emerton, Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation, Aboriginal Catholic Care and Blacktown City Council held a celebration on the grounds of Holy Family Parish Mt Druitt in July 2024.

Programs at the centre included the Men’s Shed activities to promote healing; yarning and art groups for Aunties; and ear acupuncture to support physical and emotional wellbeing. Participants also engaged in cultural and creative initiatives, such as hand-painted crosses and stones, helping to nurture cultural expression and community connection.

Supporting the mission of the Catholic Church and leaving a legacy for visitors to the Diocese of Parramatta, Bundjalung Elder Auntie Rhonda

kindly provided hand-painted crosses, stones and artwork that featured in Catholic Care’s community engagement materials, raising awareness of the services available.

Through these initiatives, Catholic Care created safe, welcoming, and culturally respectful spaces, supporting the wellbeing, connection, and empowerment of First Nations people across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.



NAIDOC Week events in Emerton in 2023. Image: Supplied.

At a glance

- 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients supported
- 22% of Houses to Homes clients identified as First Nations peoples
- 2196 clients attended the community centre Emerton, which provides focused support for First Nations peoples
- 400+ Aboriginal Literacy classes were held on Fridays at Emerton
- 500+ Aboriginal Art Group classes were held on Wednesdays at Emerton



NAIDOC Week 2024: ‘Blak, Loud and Proud!’

In July 2024, Catholic Care joined the wider Western Sydney community to celebrate NAIDOC Week, supporting local First Nations peoples to keep culture alive.

The 2024 theme, ‘Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud,’ inspired a vibrant gathering at Holy Family Parish, Emerton, hosted in partnership with Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation, Blacktown City Council, and Aboriginal Catholic Services.

Hundreds of people came together to enjoy cultural performances, music, rides, face painting, a petting zoo, and free food and drinks. Dozens of local service providers, including Greater Western Aboriginal Health Services, Link-Up (NSW), Jarara Cultural Centre, Mission Australia, Legal Aid, Headspace Mount Druitt, Service NSW, and Mt Druitt Police, showcased programs and support available to the community.

Young Aboriginal Community member Deykodah Ebsworth said, “It’s about getting together with friends and family, connecting with the old ones and hearing stories... Never let it go out.”

Elder Mavis Pacey reflected on the significance of gathering.

“It’s all about everyone coming together... seeing our community celebrate and share in our culture is very special.”

Local artist Sheridan Blair, a Yuin and Bundjalung woman, shared her creativity through Aboriginal contemporary art and jewellery, while mothers and children engaged in hands-on activities, gaining confidence and pride in their culture.

Events like NAIDOC Week provide safe, welcoming, and culturally respectful spaces for connection, learning, and joy – keeping the fire of culture burning brightly for generations to come.



Ear acupuncture and Aunties: a healing journey at Emerton

At Emerton, Catholic Care creates culturally safe spaces for First Nations community members to connect, heal and strengthen wellbeing.

Specialist Kelli Howard incorporated ancient practices, including ear acupuncture, chair yoga, and gentle touch therapies, using the NADA protocol to support trauma, stress, and grief.

“It’s about trust,” Kelli said. “I listen to what the aunties need – they’re cultural wisdom keepers.”

Sessions included yarning circles, massages, and tiny ‘ear seeds’ for ongoing support. Complementing Men’s Shed activities, art programs, and NAIDOC Week celebrations, these initiatives fostered cultural identity, intergenerational engagement, and holistic healing.

Our chaplaincies

Catholic chaplains share Christ's love through care and support in our community

A Catholic chaplain is a religious or lay person who offers support, compassion and comfort to those in need, serving as both a wellbeing guide and a messenger of Christ.

Catholic Care's chaplains work closely with Sydney's diverse and vibrant multicultural communities, as well as in local hospitals and correctional centres, providing care and guidance to individuals, families and communities.

When life brings unexpected or overwhelming challenges, Catholic Care's chaplains are just a phone call away. Their ministry offers emotional and spiritual support every step of the journey, ensuring that no one ever walks alone.

In FY24-25, chaplains were active in local correctional centres. Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, celebrated Mass and washed the feet of inmates at John Morony Correctional Centre on Holy Thursday, echoing Jesus' acts of love and service and the Church's presence in prisons.

Br Cyril Bosco CFC, a longstanding prison chaplain, shared his personal testimony at Kairos Prison Ministry's annual conference in Sydney in 2024. Drawing on his experience with Kairos, Br Cyril reflected on assisting inmates to discover their potential and God-given gift of reconciliation and love, emphasising that repentance and salvation are available to all.

prison chaplain Richard Korkor shared their experiences, with Richard reflecting on the ministry in Catholic Outlook and also speaking on ABC Radio in Parramatta about his niche role as a Catholic chaplain.



In addition to direct care, Catholic Care chaplains advocate for community needs, including lobbying relevant parties to secure funding for subsidies, helping ensure the public has equitable access to essential services.

Through these initiatives, Catholic chaplains continue to bring hope, support, and Christ's presence to those who need it most.

At a glance

20+	15
Multicultural communities	Chaplains
7	4
Hospitals Visited	Correctional centres visited

This year also marked 30 years of Kairos Prison Ministry reflecting a long-standing commitment to pastoral care for those in custody. Chaplaincy Manager Bernard Ellis and



Chaplains at staff anchor day in 2025.

Kairos ministry: bringing hope to inmates

For 30 years, Kairos Prison Ministry Australia has been transforming lives “from the inside out,” bringing hope, healing, and the love of Jesus to people affected by incarceration.

Catholic Care has played a vital role in this ministry, providing chaplaincy services across local prisons and supporting inmates and their families with pastoral care, guidance, and compassion.

Br Cyril Bosco CFC, a Chaplain at Parklea Correctional Centre for a year and seven years at John Morony Correctional Centre, shared his experience at Kairos' annual conference in 2024.

“I moved into chaplaincy assisting inmates to discover their potential and God-given gift of reconciliation and love,” he said.

“We are meant to be God's instruments, planting seeds of love, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, trusting God to determine how they grow.”

He recalled an inmate struggling with drug dependency and feelings of parental rejection.

“All I could do was be present, listen to his story, and offer support,” he said.

“Kairos is an alternative for inmates to interact with people who offer understanding and care. I support Kairos because it complements my ministry.”

Chaplaincy Manager Bernard Ellis shared a story from his interaction with a female inmate at Emu Plains Correctional Centre.

Encouraged by Bernard, the inmate arrived at the weekly Kairos gathering unsure but pleasantly surprised.

“What she found was complete acceptance, no judgement and a listening ear filled with love and compassion,” Bernard recalled.

“She found women who simply wanted to journey with the ‘women in green,’ accompany them wherever life was taking them, and support them in any way they could through simple fellowship and prayer.”

Richard Korkor reflected, “Many inmates discover that God offers second chances and love for all, which can spark genuine change.” Through Kairos, Catholic Care chaplains bring hope, support, and Christ's presence to those who need it most, helping individuals and families encounter forgiveness, healing, and new beginnings.

Listen to prison chaplain Richard Korkor talk about this niche job on ABC Radio.

Listen to prison chaplain Richard Korkor talk about this niche job on ABC Radio.

Our supporters

We are supported to deliver leading social welfare programs through generous donations, grants and strong community partnerships.

Thank you to all our donors, funding providers and community partners!

Major donors

- Australian Youth & Health Foundation
- Eric Storm Charitable Trust
- Estate of Joan Estelle Margaret Nolan
- The Inagh Foundation
- Vera Visevic

Other key funding providers

- Brotherhood of St Laurence (HIPPI Australia)
- Charles Sturt University
- Department of Social Services
- Parramatta Catholic Foundation
- The generous parishioners of the Diocese of Parramatta
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Health

Community providers

- Alula Products
- Angel Long Day Preschool, Emerton
- Bedford College, Norwest
- Bunnings Warehouse
- Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese
- Community Housing Limited
- Diamond Women
- Dignity Food Relief
- Diocese of Parramatta
- Dress for Success
- Drive for Life
- Evolve Community Housing
- Good things Foundation
- Homes for Older Women
- Macquarie Community College
- Multicultural Centre of Excellence
- Mobile Eyes
- Nepean Community College (NCC)
- Nepean Multicultural Health
- Ngroo
- National Museum of Australia
- OzHarvest
- Parramatta Mission
- Penrith City Council
- Presbyterian Preschool Tregear
- Ronald McDonald House, Westmead
- S2 (baby formula)
- San Miguel Family Centre
- Share the Dignity
- Staretts
- TAFE NSW, Nirimba
- The Salvation Army Rouse Hill
- White Lady Funerals



LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Our governance

Our leaders drive our organisation towards achieving a vision of high quality, compassionate care and support for vulnerable individuals and communities in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

Advisory Council



Dr Rodger Austin
Rodger is an experienced canon lawyer working with individuals within the Catholic Church, diocesan bishops, agencies, parishes, and religious institutes for over 50 years, and is the Advocate for the Ecclesiastical Regional Tribunal of Sydney.



Peter Bellman
Peter is the former Head of Finance for Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. He has more than 45 years' experience in finance working in private industry and across public and private health in New South Wales.



Helen Emmerson, Executive Director
Helen has 20+ years' experience in aged care and disability services in Australia and the UK. A Catholic Care Advisory Council member since 2019, she formerly led Southern Cross Care (NSW & ACT), now holding a non-executive industry role.



Angela McKay, Chair
Angela is the Chief Executive officer of the Juvenile Arthritis Foundation of Australia and has more than 20 years' senior leadership experience with a background spanning not-for-profit and for-profit organisations in the charity, professional services, consumer goods and aged care sectors.



Very Rev Luis Fernando Montano EV PP, Episcopal Vicar of Social Welfare
Fr Fernando is the Parish Priest at St Bernadette's in Castle Hill. In June 2020 he was appointed as the Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare.



Most Rev Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta
Bishop Vincent was appointed as the fourth Bishop of Parramatta in May 2016.



Geoff Officer
Geoff is the Chief of Operations and Finance for the Diocese of Parramatta. He has more than 25 years' experience as a company executive, commercial human resources consultant and practitioner.



Vera Visevic
A partner at Mills Oakley law firm, Vera specialises in not-for-profit and social enterprise law. She has more than 25 years' experience acting for numerous charities, religious and not-for-profit organisations.

Leadership Team

Meet the faces of our leadership team and learn more about our service model.



Helen Emmerson
Executive Director

Helen has 20+ years' experience in aged care and disability services in Australia and the UK. A Catholic Care Advisory Council member since 2019, she formerly led Southern Cross Care (NSW & ACT), now holding a non-executive industry role.



Brooke McGilvray
Head of Services

Brooke has 18+ years' experience in social services, including leadership and case management at Catholic Care Sydney. She supports staff, volunteers, and clients while fostering strong community and stakeholder partnerships.



Dimsy Kapoor
Head of Finance

Dimsy has led Catholic Care's finance division since 2023, bringing 15+ years' experience in corporate and non-profit finance. Her strong financial and accounting skills continue to support the growth and success of Catholic Care.



Caitlin Rozairo
Customer and Risk Assurance Manager

Caitlin has over 10 years' experience in social services. She oversees risk management, compliance, and quality assurance; ensuring programs and services are delivered efficiently and meet regulatory and industry standards.



Courtney Pullbrook
Project and Systems Officer

Courtney has 10+ years' administrative and business support experience, including in social services. She manages projects and ensures consistent information and reporting across government-funded services and regulatory requirements.



Nevena Kuljanin
Counselling Services Manager

Nevena joined Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains in November 2023. With a strong social and community background, she has extensive experience in child development, case management, and team leadership.



Abby Wells
Family Services Manager

Abby has 12+ years' experience in social and family services, including child protection and custodial settings. With qualifications in Health Science and Psychology, she delivers programs that support local vulnerable families.



Linda McDonald
HIPPIY Coordinator

Linda began in 2014, leading four tutors who support parents in fostering children's learning and reading. She holds multiple teaching and community services qualifications and positively impacts local families.



Lisa Malcher
Community Engagement Coordinator

Lisa, a former volunteer, works with families and partners to deliver inclusive programs that build connection, skills, confidence, and community impact.



Bernard Ellis
Chaplaincy Coordinator

Bernard supports chaplains serving hospitals and prisons. A former teacher, he has provided Catholic chaplaincy since 2016, serving some of society's most vulnerable with compassion and care.



Maree Hanna
Houses to Homes Coordinator

Maree has 25+ years' experience, and she manages multiple residences in Western Sydney, holding qualifications in Early Childhood, Nursing, Child Protection, and Parenting programs.



Emma Low
Family Day Care Coordinator

Emma joined Baulkham Hills Family Day Care in July 2023, bringing nearly 30 years' early childhood experience. She holds a Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood 0-8 years) and is passionate about quality care and education.

Financials Overview

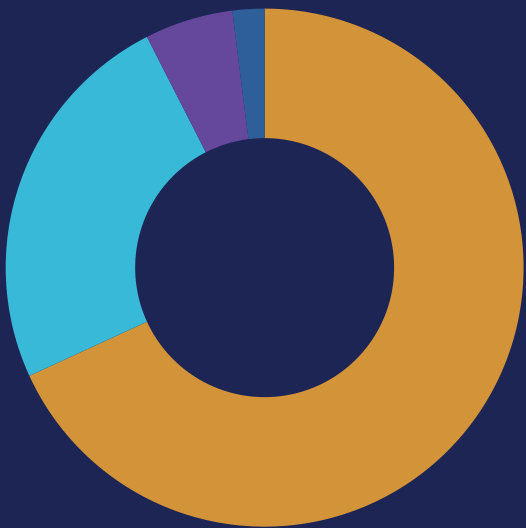
Catholic Care is proud of its financial performance and its ability to respond to increasing demand for services across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

Guided by the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, the agency continues to refine programs and introduce new initiatives to address the evolving

social service and welfare needs of our diverse communities.

Ongoing improvements to financial management and client systems ensure Catholic Care can deliver a strong, sustainable service model that effectively supports people in need, now and into the future.

EXPENDITURE



- 68% Employee Related Expenses
- 24% Program Delivery and Support Costs
- 5% Occupancy Cost
- 2% Depreciation and Amortisation

REVENUE



- 35% State Grants
- 32% Diocese Grants
- 16% Other Income
- 16% Federal Grants
- 1% Donations and Bequests

Our people

Our dedicated, passionate and skilled staff and volunteers make a difference in the lives of the people we support

In early 2025, Catholic Care held its annual ‘Anchor Day’ at St Patrick’s Cathedral Hall in Parramatta.

The day brought together around 120 staff and volunteers from across Catholic Care’s services to connect, share, and learn more about the agency’s work in line with the Diocese’s Pastoral Plan. Participants explored how their roles contribute to the broader mission and took part in workshops

to identify priorities for the year ahead, ensuring alignment with Catholic Care’s strategic goals. The event fostered collaboration, strengthened understanding of shared objectives, and offered a valuable opportunity for staff and volunteers to reflect on their impact while contributing ideas to guide the agency’s work in supporting communities across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.



OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers support our wide range of services, including visiting the elderly and socially isolated, as well as working with disadvantaged and vulnerable community groups.

Volunteer with us

If you are interested in supporting our ministries, please scan here to find out more.



Catholic Care acknowledges the support from the Diocese of Parramatta, including its Risk, Property, HR, Communications and IT staff.

Where to find us

Services Directory

Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains

1 Head office, Parramatta
Level 2
10 Victoria Rd
Parramatta NSW 2150
P: (02) 8843 2500
E: enquiries@catholiccarewsbm.org.au
W: catholiccarewsbm.org.au

Open: Mon-Fri (9am-5pm) -
General enquiries

Services provided:

- Counselling
- Financial guidance
- Head Office of Hills Family Day Care
- Corporate services

2 Branch office, Blacktown
St Patrick's Church (foyer)
51-59 Allawah Street
Blacktown NSW 2148

Open: Mon-Fri (9am-5pm)

Services provided:

- Information, advice and referrals counselling
- Financial guidance
- Family and children's services

Community drop-in centres and service locations

At Catholic Care, there's always a place to drop in and get support – no appointment needed.

For further details on the services we provide, please visit our website.

1 Emerton
Holy Family Parish, Aboriginal Catholic Services
13 Emert Parade
Emerton NSW 2770

Call Catholic Care for the latest schedule.

2 Orchard Hills
Mamre House and Farm
181 Mamre Road
Orchard Hills NSW 2748

Open: Mon-Thu (9am-3pm)
General community drop-in, all welcome

Services provided:

- Mamre Creche childcare (*school term only*)
- Make-up class for migrants and refugees
- Men's Shed
- English language classes (*school term only*)
- Citizenship classes (*school term only*)
- English language classes
- Sewing class
- Senior's Day club
- OzHarvest First Teacher parenting program (*school term only*)
- Art and craft group
- Farm maintenance and horse agistment
- Community garden

3 Springwood
Unit 3 / 163 Macquarie Road
Springwood NSW 2777

Open: Mon-Thu (10am-4pm)
General community drop-in, all welcome

Other services provided:

- Hairdressing classes
- About Time Men's Group
- Community gardens and working bees at Springwood and Blackheath
- Exercise classes
- Read4Wellbring (adult reading group)
- Vinnies food and clothing voucher distribution

Hills Family Day Care

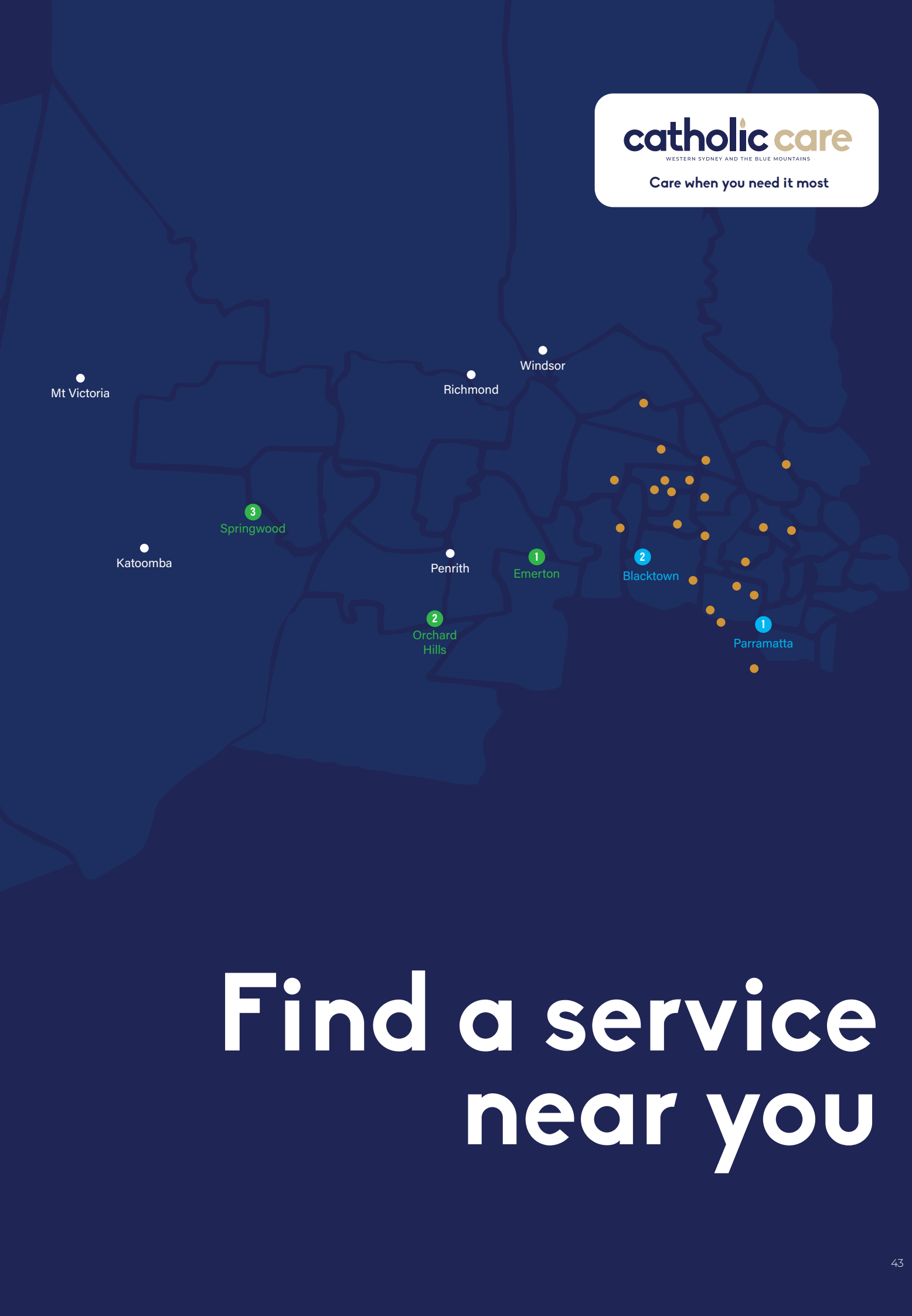
Head office
Level 2
10 Victoria Rd
Parramatta NSW 2150

P: (02) 8843 2560
E: FDCAdmin@catholiccarewsbm.org.au
W: hillsfamilydaycare.com.au

Family day care service locations

Baulkham Hills Family Day Care provides around 50 childcare services in Western Sydney.

- Baulkham Hills
- Beaumont Hills
- Box Hill
- Bella Vista
- Castle Hill
- Cherrybrook
- Dural
- Glenwood
- Kellyville
- Kellyville Ridge
- Merrylands
- Northmead
- North Kellyville
- Pendle Hill
- Quakers Hill
- Rouse Hill
- Schofields
- Seven Hills
- Stanhope Gardens
- The Ponds
- Wentworthville
- Winston Hills



Find a service near you



WESTERN SYDNEY AND THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Care when you need it most

Level 2

10 Victoria Road

Parramatta NSW 2150

P: (02) 8843 2500

E: enquiries@catholiccarewsbm.org.au

W: catholiccarewsbm.org.au

