



## Our Vision

Children and families feel safe, supported, and included in our communities.

## Our Mission

Family Support Network is partnering with families, supporting them to:

- Reach their goals
- Use their strengths
- Encourage a safe and nurturing environment

## Our Values

**Partnership**  
**Respect**  
**Integrity**  
**Diversity**  
**Equity**

## At Family Support Network, we

- develop parenting and other skills,
- share and create knowledge,
- provide support,
- promote and assist with access to resources
- connect people and families to each other and to relevant services and advocate together with families and children.

# Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025

Operating since 1989, Family Support Network (FSN) is a small non-government organisation (and registered charity) providing free services and support to families, children and communities in the greater Lismore area.

A strategic plan is a management tool. It helps an organisation to do a better job – it can focus energy, ensure that everyone in an organisation is working toward the same goals, and provide a framework for assessing and adjusting the organisation's direction in response to a changing environment. In short, strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce key decisions and actions that shape and guide what our organisation is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future.

Family Support Network reviewed its strategic plan covering the period 2019 to 2021 and is pleased to note that goals are largely achieved. Through this review, Family Support Network also reflected on the importance of setting measurable outcomes that are focussed outwardly on our community, as well as internally on strengthening our own organisation. With each plan, we learn and improve.

We are proud to present our strategic plan to you.

## Our Community

Lismore is a region in Northern NSW, with a diverse population of approximately 44,000, of whom about 26% are under 18 years of age, 2.7% are Indigenous Australians, approximately 5% are from Non-English-Speaking Backgrounds (NESB), and about 28% of families are managed by single parents. Lismore has the highest LGBTQI+ community outside Australia's major cities, so same-sex couples with children also form a significant cohort of the region's families.

Lismore is one of the most flood prone areas in Australia. Currently, Lismore City and surrounding region is recovering from two huge floods, in February and March 2022. The first reached 2 metres above the level of the worst flood ever recorded, and the second reached just one metre below. Consequently, many homes and businesses, including FSN properties, were inundated with water and residents are cleaning up the subsequent damage, and living with the trauma attached to these devastating events.



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## Our Beliefs

Our values shape our beliefs as follows:

**Partnership** - We believe that strong, respectful and mutual relationships with others are the foundation of our success. We expect to build these relationships with individuals, families, communities, organisations, donors, and other stakeholders with whom we work.

**Respect** – We believe that it is important to accept everyone for who they are, even when they are different from others and even when we do not agree with them. We want people to be able exercise their rights, use their strength and courage, make their own decisions and seize the opportunities available to them.

**Integrity** – We believe it is important to say what we mean, mean what we say and follow through on the commitments we make.

**Diversity** – It is important to us that we include all voices and provide access to all families of all types. We believe that we are stronger and make better decisions when we listen to the widest possible range of views.

**Equity** – We believe that everyone must have fair and equal access to resources and opportunities, regardless of their gender, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, indigenous status or disability. No one can be left behind.

## Our Values



## Our Commitments

Our beliefs shape our actions and commitments:

**Partnership** – We develop and maintain strong, respectful and mutual relationships with the individuals, families, communities, organisations, donors, and other stakeholders with whom we work. We respect people’s rights to self-determination.

**Respect** - We try to see things from others’ perspectives. We work hard to understand and connect with others. We provide resources and support to enable people to exercise their rights, use their strength and courage, and seize the opportunities available to them.

**Integrity** – We say what we mean, mean what we say, and we follow through on our commitments.

**Diversity** – We acknowledge and celebrate the differences between us. We make every effort to include all voices, especially those who may otherwise struggle to be heard. We provide access to all families of all types.

**Equity** - We provide fair and equal access to resources and opportunities to all people, regardless of gender, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, indigenous status or disability. We work hard to ensure no one is left behind.

## About our work

At Family Support Network, we:

- develop skills
- share and create knowledge
- provide support
- promote and broker access to resources
- connect people and families to each other and to relevant services
- advocate together with families and children

We are engaged in:

- Prevention
- Early Intervention
- Timely responses to challenges faced by families

We work across the life cycle with:

- Children
- Families
- Indigenous people
- Communities

## How we work

Our values, beliefs and commitment shape our approach to our work. We welcome all families no matter where they are from and how they define themselves. We work in partnership with others, especially families, showing respect and bringing integrity to create equitable opportunities and outcomes. The approaches that we use are as follows:

Person-centred	Trauma-informed	Evidence-informed
Child-focused	Strengths-based	Accountability-driven

**Person-centred practice** puts the service-user at the centre of everything we do. It recognises that every individual and every family is unique and complex. It respects their goals, skills and strengths and the knowledge they bring about their themselves and their life.

**Child-focused practice** means that we focus on protecting and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and ensuring that they are heard in situations that directly affect them. We work with families to help them to view their current circumstances from the point of view of their child/children.

**Trauma-informed practice** is important because trauma is a serious public health issue which tends to go unrecognised, unacknowledged and unaddressed. Trauma arises when dangerous or potentially life-threatening experiences, like floods and COVID, affect people's mental, physical, emotional and social well-being. Retraumatization can occur when service systems do not take adequate account of the sensitivities, vulnerabilities and triggers of people who have survived trauma. We work to understand:  
the dynamics of traumatic stress,  
survivors in the context of their lives and  
the role of coping strategies.

We try to do no harm by ensuring that we are safe and trustworthy, we offer choices and support people's own choices wherever possible, and we collaborate [with](#) and empower others.

**Strengths based practice** focuses on individuals' and families' assets and abilities which may include personal qualities and coping abilities as well as social and community networks.

**Evidence-informed practice** means using evidence to design, implement and improve our programs and interventions. When we reflect on what good evidence is available to us, we are careful not to privilege dominant voices over other voices that may struggle to be heard. For us, good evidence can be academic research, practitioner reflection, lived experience and voices of service users, as well as cultural and indigenous wisdom.

**Accountability-driven practice** is based on our belief that we must first answer to the people and communities whom we serve. We also recognise the importance of answering to the government, our donors and each other. We understand that we must answer for the quality of our work (processes and interventions) as well as for the outcomes that we achieve with and for people.

## Enabling our work

We recognise the importance of investing in our organisational capacity for service delivery, management and governance.

From 2022 to 2025, we will:

- Support staff and our communities to recover from the trauma of floods and COVID, consolidating current work before considering (integrated) growth\* opportunities
- Secure safe and appropriate premises
- Invest in learning from and about our indigenous communities and newly arrived communities
- Plan for the succession of board members and senior positions

	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
	Staff and communities receive appropriate supports to recover from the trauma of floods and COVID	Safe, user-friendly and appropriate premises are secured	Staff learn from and about indigenous communities and newly arrived communities	Succession plans for board and senior staff are in place
Strategies	Actively contribute to Resilience Lismore and other community-wide efforts to plan and support Lismore's recovery	Prioritise face to face interactions, wherever safe to do so	Recruit at least 1-2 staff who identify as Indigenous and provide Indigenous wisdom to all staff.	Plan for sustainable and continuous delivery of Parents as Teachers program
	Acknowledge and validate the trauma experienced by staff and communities	Plan for temporary and long-term accommodation options that take account of municipal rebuilding priorities and processes	Provide development and training days for staff regarding indigenous cultural practices and new communities	Invest in capacity assessment, gap analysis and targeted recruitment of board members
	Ensure staff have access to training in trauma-informed care and are supported in their self-care efforts	Ensure premises are accessible, welcoming, child-friendly and fit for purpose.	Explore opportunities for collaborative work with indigenous organisations and newly arrived communities, building partnerships wherever relevant	Invest in career progression pathways for all staff, ensuring succession plans are in place for key senior roles

\*Integrated growth, for Family Support Network, refers to the idea that priority should be given to exploring and pursuing opportunities for new work that closely aligns and integrates with current programs and services, rather than pursuing new projects that would stand alone and be discreet from other work.

## Strategic Outcomes for 2022-2025

We have selected 14 strategic outcomes for the period 2022 to 2025 and we are willing to be held to account for achieving these:

1. Workshops and learning events addressing parenting skills, resilience, living skills, managing money, using technology and other relevant skills are planned, delivered to local community members at least three times per year, and evaluated for continuous improvement and learning purposes.
2. Case management is provided, for up to six months, to families at risk of experiencing disadvantage and hardship.
3. Families are supported in preventing and responding to family violence
4. An internationally accredited program known as 'Parents as Teachers' is offered to various organisations and local parents, on a fee for service basis
5. Advocacy for and with children and families is provided when needed, as it ensures just outcomes when people interact with complex service systems
6. Opportunities for children to play and learn, and for parents to access support, advice and peer connections are provided through supported playgroups
7. Families, children and community members are encouraged and supported to build community connections with each other at open days, festivals and other celebrations at least five times each year
8. Book libraries, toy libraries, school lunch programs, scholarships, providing access to supplies of uniforms, shoes, books and bags, together with related initiatives, support children to access diverse learning opportunities and stay connected to school.
9. School holiday programs support children to access diverse learning opportunities and enable parents to stay connected with their child by participating in activities as a family and/or accessing respite when needed.
10. Referral protocols are in place and facilitate smooth connection of families to other local and regional services
11. Value is added to existing programs and services by seeking additional funding/partnerships for/with complementary services
12. FSN's participation in, and contribution to the Wellbeing Collective and Resilience Lismore contributes to generating hope and resilience for a stronger Lismore
13. Partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' organisations ensure mutual learning and sharing of resources
14. A reconciliation action plan (stage 1: reflect) is developed in collaboration with, and accredited by Reconciliation Australia

## Monitoring and Evaluation

FSN recognises the importance of monitoring, evaluating, learning and being accountable for the outcomes to be achieved. Processes for developing and monitoring, evaluation and learning plan are in process. This is expected to be complete by December 2022.

