



Annual Report



We think of family as a group of individuals who come together and create a nurturing environment that supports the development and wellbeing of their children and family members



Acknowledgement of Country

We begin our report by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we walk, live, work and play, the Widjabul Wia-bal People of the Bundjalung Nation.

We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and community and pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past, present and emerging.









Our Ethos

At Family Support Network, we celebrate the vibrant diversity within our community. We value the unique backgrounds, experiences, family structures, abilities, ethnicities, racial identities, gender identities, ages, sexual orientations, religions, and cultures of everyone. We wholeheartedly invite everyone to connect and engage with us as we actively strive to create an environment where inclusivity is at the heart of what we do, and each person feels valued, respected, and supported.

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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



2023/24 Snapshot

4385 Connections

898 Family Support Participants

398 Capacity Building Sessions

2164 Visits to Playgroup

142 School Holiday Program Participants

12 Parenting Courses Delivered

354 Community Event Participants



Board Chair

Family Support Network continues to adapt and change as it evolves to meet an ever-changing context pertaining to family support and wellbeing. Currently the Board is supporting the CEO and the team, to review the organisation and its purpose in readiness for the impeding re-tendering of our IFP Program. Reviewing and evaluating all functions and enhancing the team to ensure its members have the skills and knowledge needed to meet this ever changing context in which a family, in Australia, finds itself today, is front and central to our current activities.

A top priority being to ensure all strategies for moving forward are underpinned by processes and procedures which ensure the organisation meets participant needs and contractual obligations, and that the team is connected to these so to ensure quality outcomes. FSN is also keenly aware of the need to find suitable premises from which to operate a quality provision. A provision that will expand as family support requirements alter. This is why much activity is occurring as I write this message to do just that.

As Governments, at both State and Federal level, react to an ever changing environment of political, economic and social factors; (Note the Intergenerational Report, 2023, from the Federal Government, which highlights these). One is made aware of how demographic, technological and digital advances will impact all care services going forward. Participant change, geo-political risk and an ever-changing industrial base will all need to be considered when planning and organising care services!

A major challenge for all care services will be to ensure continuing access to financial resources which will become ever more challenging as the demands for value for money and cost of living factors drive political thought. As stated, FSN is reviewing its strategic goals and aims in lieu of this situation. FSN feels secure in its value base which underpins it's goals and aims. It has required the Board as well as the Team, to challenge some historical perspectives and behaviour. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in its report of 2022, speaks of the fact that family structures are more nuanced than the traditional nuclear family structure. Greater attention to diversity will be the hallmark going forward.

Understanding such concepts as family functioning, family financing, and where children are located within a family structure, particularly when non parental care is the model, is an emerging concept along with disability and parental health status. All need to be part of planning services for diversity. Other things to consider within this brief are neighbourhood safety, community health and investment in social capital. It is likely that funding, to meet these factors, will be allocated to those organisations which are best placed to meet them. Hence for FSN to ensure it has the structures etc. to receive such funding.

In our current programme offerings, the team are dealing with a local profile of family violence, child safety, single parent financial hardship, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, poverty, disability, and unemployment. All of which are reflected in a National, if not Western World scenario!

Things are more complex, more challenging, more demanding today within the environment that FSN has to work within. In order to meet these complexities FSN under the leadership of its CEO, is working hard to work in partnership and collaboration with a number of agencies, including the State Government. FSN has a team that possesses the resilience, sustainability, and creativity to rise to these challenges.

Over the last eighteen months a more robust foundation for FSN has been established. The Board acknowledges



the CEO and Team for the work it has done. It is gratifying for the Board to note the positive regard FSN is held in by the community it serves. As the Board Chair I wish to also acknowledge the contributions of the Board members themselves to the functioning of FSN. Together we all aspire, the Board, the CEO, the Team, to provide a relevant and beneficial service to so many families across the area. Please enjoy reading the report and I hope you learn something about FSN as a consequence, we are moving in a very positive direction.

Emeritus Professor Iain Graham Ph.D Board Chair

CEO

I am inspired by our participants, community, and team, emerging from the challenges of the past two years, they have become stronger, more adaptable, and even more committed to supporting our local families and community. Engagement has increased from our participants and community and we are delivering more services each year, FSN started delivering services in 1989 and the need has never been greater.

This past year has marked significant progress in our community's recovery from the 2022 flood events. The Lismore CBD has regained some vibrancy, and the community is gradually moving out of survival mode. This transition for people often brings the realisation that much work remains in recovery and highlights the need to improve conditions for children and families raising children. There are still ongoing housing challenges in Lismore which means many participants still reside in hotels or emergency accommodation, there is however a palpable urgency among providers and progress is being made.

Enabled with the funding from the NSW Government's Department of Communities and Justice for the Targeted Earlier Intervention and Intensive Family Preservation programs we support the most vulnerable and in need families and community members. We deeply value the trust placed in us to support these families and are committed to making a positive impact in their lives. We are grateful for Wesley Mission's support in providing emergency relief and brokerage to our participants and broader community, especially during these times of increased cost-of-living pressures.

Thank you to the community members and businesses that support our Christmas appeal each year, this support make a huge difference to the families we support and lets them know they are not alone on their journey. This year we were also honoured to be one of the recipients of the Ingrained Foundation's 2024 Northern Rivers Grants Programme. Their generous support will allow us to train five accredited facilitators in the Parents Under Pressure programme, an innovative evidence-based program developed in Australia. Efforts continue to strengthen our collaboration with local grassroots organisations, our partnership with Women Up North Housing on the project Enhancing Workforce Responses to Sexual Violence is delivering excellent outcomes across the Northern Rivers and we are also delighted to support Tursa Employment and Training in their Lismore Rebuild Project, a vision for a space that will enable and support service and interagency collaboration.

There were significant changes within our team this year. Helen Lieschke, our Case Work Manager, retired after twenty-four years of dedicated service to FSN. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Helen for her invaluable contributions and wish her a fulfilling retirement. I also am grateful to each and every team member at FSN for their dedication, contribution and service to our participants and community.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Board and our Chair for their unwavering support and guidance. Each member brings unique strengths and perspectives which are invaluable contributions to our organisation.

We are as an organisation emboldened, we are doing amazing work with limited resources, we have a vision, and

we know with more, we can do more. If you are looking for an organisation to support please reach out to us. Our aim is to enable the children in our community to reach their potential and flourish, we can do this by strengthening families and supporting community.

Kaali Ortmann Chief Executive Officer

Our Governance



lain Chairperson



Andrea Vice Chairperson



Dale Treasurer



Cath Board Member



Airdre Board Member

Kylie Board Member

Our Team















Kaali - CEO, Helen - Casework Manager, Amber - Finance Officer, Natalie - Administration Officer, Anne - HR Coordinator, Kelly - Intensive Family Worker













Courtney - Family Support Worker, Julia - Program Officer, Lisa - Family Support Worker, Caz - Playgroup Facilitator, Erica - Playgroup Assistant, Trudy—Playgroup Assistant

Zoe - Family Support Worker, Ela - Family Support Worker, Sharmaine - Research & Development



Programs

Family Support Network Inc is currently funded to deliver two programs by the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice, they are the Targeted Earlier Intervention Program and Intensive Family Preservation Program.

Targeted Earlier Intervention Programs—TEI

TEI provides flexible and responsive support to children, young people, families, and communities experiencing or at risk of vulnerability. The programme focuses on early intervention to prevent risks or vulnerabilities from escalating. We currently deliver two streams within our TEI Program, the Community Strengthening Stream and the Wellbeing and Safety Stream. Under these streams we provide: assessment and casework, family capacity building, parenting programs, supported playgroups, school holidays activities and community events. The TEI program is built on robust empirical evidence, which highlights the critical importance of timely support in driving and sustaining positive changes for families. Research and evaluations have consistently shown that early intervention can significantly improve outcomes for children and families by addressing issues before they escalate. See the following pages for more information about our activities in the TEI program.

Intensive Family Preservation

The Intensive Family Preservation (IFP) programme prioritises the child's best interests by keeping children within their family's care whenever it is safe to do so. This service enhances children's safety, promotes placement permanency, and fosters overall well-being. Inspired by the Homebuilders® model, the IFP programme equips families with problem-solving skills to prevent crises and unnecessary out-of-home care placements. Recent Australian research underscores the importance of minimising child placements in care, highlighting poorer outcomes for children in non-parental care, systemic issues needing early intervention, the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care, and safety concerns within the care system.

The IFP programme supports families with children aged 0-17 years at risk and works towards improving child safety and well-being, generally providing up to 6 months of intensive, in-home support to improve family functioning, parenting skills, and child development. The primary goal is to keep children safely at home and support family restoration and stability. The Family Action Plan for Change (FAPFC) guides the intervention process which is developed collaboratively with the family to address child protection concerns. Our commitment to this program aligns to our ethos that children should remain with their families whenever it is safe to do so.

Community Connection

FSN actively participates in and hosts community connection activities throughout the year. In times of economic stress open community events and activities are vital. They offer families opportunities to engage in enriching experiences without financial burden, promoting social cohesion and resilience. Being present and active in the community supports us to build trust, foster a sense of belonging, and support the overall wellbeing of our participants and community members.

The annual Lismore City Council NAIDOC Day event is a wonderful celebration of the rich history, culture, and achievements of the Widjabul Wia-bal people of the Bundjalung Nation. FSN looks forward to participating and supporting this event each year. The 2023 event was a fantastic day and wonderful chance to experience the cultural traditions of the Widjabul Wia-bal people and connect with our local Aboriginal communities. We're looking forward to making up for 2024's rain-cancelled event next year.

A highlight of FSN's year is our annual community event at Heritage Park during the January school holidays, each year it continues to grow. It is a fantastic chance for current and past participants, community members and our team to connect—the only item on the agenda is fun. It also provides an opportunity for us to meet the extended family members of people engaging our services.

This year we celebrated National Family's Week, it was a great morning with over 60 attendee's - it was a school day, so a great turn out for the little ones. The families enjoyed the chance to get to know each other better outside of the service delivery environment and making new connections. The activities were well received, dress ups for photos ops, canvas bag decorating, butterfly peg artwork, and outdoor games and activities.

We also held two after school activities, lantern making workshops to support Lismore's landmark event the Lantern Parade. They were loads of fun and really well attended.



School Holiday Program

We offer community-based holiday activities during each school holiday period. We endeavour to introduce families to new ideas and activities that can be enjoyed at home or within the community. As a team we design a variety of activities to ensure families can interact, have fun, learn new skills, enhance their wellbeing, and strengthen community connections.

We hosted eight activities this year, six were held at local outdoor parks and recreational areas, highlighting and celebrating our community assets. These locations included Lismore Botanical Gardens, Birdwing Butterfly Walk in Kadina, Nesbit Park, and Wade Park. Community assets like these parks and gardens provide invaluable benefits. They offer safe, accessible spaces for families to engage in physical activities, which are crucial for children's physical and mental health. Outdoor activities help children develop motor skills, reduce stress, and foster a connection with nature. Moreover, these communal spaces encourage social interaction and strengthen community bonds, contributing to a more cohesive and supportive community environment.

In response to the increased cost of living pressures this year, we also introduced facilitated activities such as Family Zumba and Fitness Kidz. These structured activities were designed to provide enjoyable experiences that promote physical fitness and family bonding. Research indicates that providing children with accessible experiences can significantly enhance their social inclusion and confidence. These opportunities help children build social skills, develop a sense of belonging, and improve their overall mental health and wellbeing.



Family Support

The Family Support Program delivered by FSN offers a range of services and activities to families with children aged 0-17 in the Lismore Local Government Area.

The support we provide in family support includes:

Information and Advice

Information about available resources to help with raising children, wellbeing, health, finance, housing and education.

Assessment and Case Planning

Conducting comprehensive assessments and establishing tailored case plans to address individual family needs and goals.

Family Capacity Building

Skill building and coaching to encourage positive interactions between parents and children, as well as between families and service providers. Helping families develop essential skills such as planning, problem-solving, and emotional regulation, while also providing support to identify and mitigate stressors in the family's environment.

Parenting Programs

Structured programs to enhance parenting skills, promote positive parent-child interactions, and support parents in managing behavioural challenges effectively.

Advocacy and Referral

Advocacy on behalf of families and facilitating and supporting appropriate referrals to external agencies

Members of the Family Support Team use strength-based, person-centred, child-centric, and trauma-informed approaches. Flexibility is a key aspect of their service provision, allowing practitioners to respond effectively to the unique experiences and needs of each family, and to tailor services accordingly.

Parenting Programs

Each year we deliver a diverse range of parenting programs aimed at enhancing parents' understanding of and responses to their children's behaviour, in alignment with developmental stages. These programs are designed to support the strengthening of familial bonds and support children's social and emotional well-being.

These programs are typically conducted in group settings to foster community support and shared learning experiences. However, they can also be integrated into individual family plans and delivered on a one-to-one basis to cater to specific family needs. Research indicates that structured parenting programs can significantly enhance parents' confidence, reduce parenting stress, and improve children's behavioural and emotional regulation. Circle of Security and 123 Magic and Emotional Coaching have been particularly noted for their positive impact on parent-child interactions and emotional coaching.

By adopting a strength-based, person-centred, child-focused, and trauma-informed approach, our team ensures that each family's unique experiences and circumstances are addressed. This flexibility allows us to tailor our services to meet the specific needs of each family, promoting optimal alignment with their individual requirements.

This year we delivered 12 Parenting Programs to our participants and community, they included:

Bringing up Great Kids, Engaging Adolescents, No Scaredy Cats, Circle of Security, 123 Magic and Emotional Coaching, Tuning in to Kids, Tuning in to Teens, Thoughtful Parenting, Black Box, Anxiety Coach.



Supported Playgroups

This year, our Supported Playgroups have remained a warm, welcoming space where children and their families come together to learn, play, and grow. We are dedicated to fostering an environment that sparks exploration, curiosity, and authentic connections within the community. As we continue to deepen our practice, inspired by Montessori and Reggio Emilia principles, our supported playgroups encourage children to develop their social, emotional, and motor skills at a pace that honours their individuality and unique growth.

Our playgroup space is thoughtfully created with areas for active play, creativity, and mindfulness. Children can challenge their gross motor skills through movement and play, while also having opportunities for quieter moments that promote self-regulation. The Calm Corner provides a gentle space for children to step away, regroup, and practice managing their emotions in a supportive environment.

Each week, we introduce new activities and crafts that are designed to nurture fine motor skills, sensory exploration, and creative expression. With materials provided, families are free to focus on quality time with their children. Our healthy morning tea gives everyone a chance to relax and recharge, while also encouraging an appreciation for healthy eating habits by introducing a variety of fruits and vegetables for both parents and children to enjoy.

This year, we were proud to introduce a specialised sensory and supported playgroup tailored to children with disabilities or who are neurodiverse. This smaller group offers a nurturing space with individualised support, where activities are thoughtfully adapted to meet each child's specific needs. Through sensory-rich experiences, children are encouraged to explore their environment at their own pace, while parents and caregivers receive personalised guidance to support their child's development in a compassionate and understanding setting.

At the heart of our playgroups is the support we provide for families. Our facilitators are present to offer guidance, answer questions, and provide insights on child development, behaviour, and parenting. This support empowers families to better understand their children and to nurture stronger, more meaningful connections with them. We are fortunate to have the ongoing support of health nurses from Child & Family Health who visit our Babies' Group, providing families with the opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and receive valuable guidance on their child's health and development. Their presence allows families to connect to a range of health services and access personalized support that can make a meaningful difference in their journey. This partnership has enriched our playgroups by giving parents peace of mind and empowering them with the information they need to support their children's well-being.

We are also thankful for the continued involvement of the Lismore Library, which connects with our group regularly to engage families in story time and craft activities. Their visits foster a love of reading and creativity in our children, while also promoting family bonding through shared learning experiences. The library's dedication to supporting our playgroups has strengthened our connection with the community, and we deeply appreciate their ongoing commitment to enhancing our program with these enriching activities.

Beyond the playgroup itself, our program serves as a gateway for families to access additional services offered by the Family Support Network. It is through these sessions that caregivers often discover new resources, programs, and supports that can make a positive impact on their family's well-being.

Over the past year, we have had the pleasure of welcoming 455 participants to our playgroups. With our sessions in Lismore for ages 0-2 and 0-5, as well as our outreach in Nimbin, we remain committed to building a vibrant, supportive community. Together, we celebrate the shared experiences, challenges, and triumphs of raising young children.

Start Together Program

The Start Together program is designed to holistically support families with children aged 0-3 as they work toward achieving important developmental milestones and strengthening their parenting skills. This year, our focus has remained on empowering parents and caregivers—helping them recognize their child's unique capabilities and build on their own strengths through thoughtful, personalised sessions.

One of the unique features of the Start Together program is the one-on-one support we offer to families. These personalised sessions allow us to meet parents exactly where they are in their journey, providing individualised guidance tailored to their specific needs and goals. This dedicated approach ensures that each family receives support uniquely suited to their circumstances, empowering them to foster their child's growth with confidence.

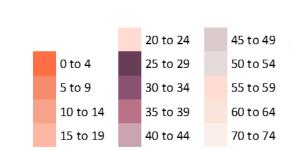
Start Together provides practical, accessible strategies that parents can weave into their everyday lives. We have covered topics like:

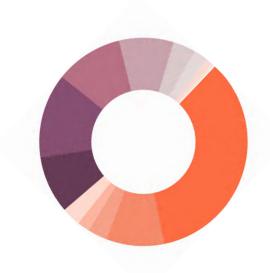
- Creating simple yet meaningful learning experiences through everyday routines.
- Understanding developmental stages and identifying key milestones.
- Cultivating a lifelong love for books, stories, and language.
- Implementing positive discipline strategies that encourage cooperation and respectful boundaries.
- Reflecting on parenting values and goals to strengthen parenting skills.

In addition to our one-on-one services, we also successfully piloted the First Time Parent Support group, aimed specifically at parents with infants aged 0-6 months. In this group setting, participants explore a range of relevant topics such as parental well-being, age-appropriate milestones, simple crafts for early development, and brain growth during the first months of life. We had the pleasure of welcoming Tresillian to our group for a session on establishing sleep routines and introducing solids— providing invaluable advice to new parents as they navigate this stage of early parenthood.

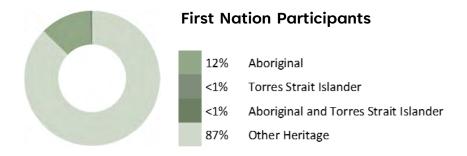
Over the past year, 34 participants have taken part in our Start Together programs, receiving the tools and encouragement they need to support their child's development. Looking ahead, we are excited to further develop the program's framework and enhance our supporting resources. By doing so, we can train additional facilitators, allowing us to extend Start Together's reach and empower even more families in the future.

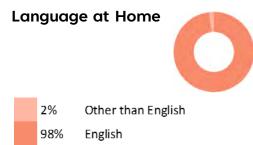
Participant Demographics

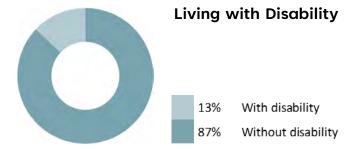


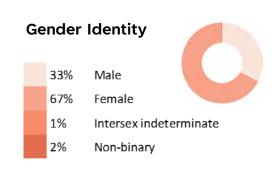


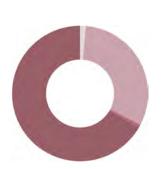
Age Group

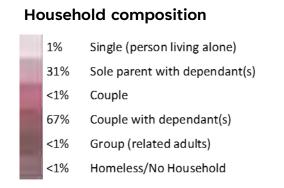


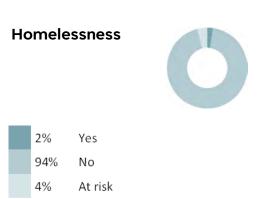














FINANCIAL REPORTS AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

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PROFIT AND LOSS AND STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	Note	2024	2023
		\$	\$
Grant Income	2	1,048,962	1,003,893
Interest Received	2	65,880	27,420
Fee for Service	2	15,124	15,918
Other income	2	101,730	386,742
Depreciation and amortisation expense	3	(60,719)	(105,686)
Employee benefits expense	3	(795,510)	(748,870)
Other expenses	3	(211,706)	(207,090)
Profit before income tax		163,760	372,326
Income tax expense		_	_
Profit for the year		400 700	070.000
		163,760	372,326
Other comprehensive income:			
Other comprehensive income for the year		_	
Impairment of Land and Buildings		_	- (231,735)
Total comprehensive income for the year			, , ,
, ,		-	(231,735)
Profit attributable to members of the entity			
, i		163,760	140,591
Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity			,
		163,760	140,591



FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK INCORPORATED ABN 41 275 778 565 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Note	2024 \$	2023
ACCETC		Φ	.
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS		4.045.000	4.044.750
Cash and cash equivalents	4	1,615,009	1,341,759
Trade and other receivables	5	5,702	-
Other assets	6	4,424	28,618
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		1,625,135	1,370,378
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	7	11,443	103,672
Intangible assets	8	1,560	3,660
Right of use assets	9	10,527	17,156
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		23,530	124,488
TOTAL ASSETS		1,648,665	1,494,865
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	10	106,185	87,529
Borrowings	11	12,675	15,456
Short term provisions	12	80,057	102,534
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		198,917	205,519
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Borrowings	11	-	7,512
Long term provisions	12	11,413	7,260
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		11,413	14,772
TOTAL LIABILITIES		210,330	220,291
NET ASSETS		1,438,335	1,274,574
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		1,438,335	1,274,574
Reserves		=	-
TOTAL EQUITY		1,438,335	1,274,574

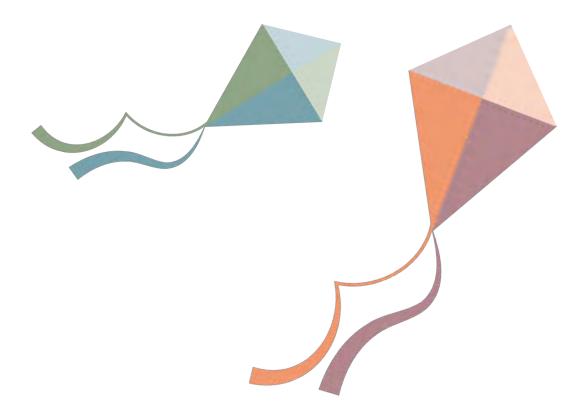


STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

	Retained Earnings \$	Reserves \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2022	1,133,983	79,745	1,213,728
Profit (Loss) attributable to the entity	372,326	-	372,326
Total other comprehensive income for the year	(231,735)	-	(231,735)
Revaluation of Land and Buildings Balance at 30 June 2023	1,274,574	(79,745) -	(79,745) 1,274,574
Profit (Loss) attributable to the entity	163,760	-	163,760
Total other comprehensive income for the year	-	-	-
Revaluation of Land and Buildings	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2024	1,438,335	-	1,438,335

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

	Note	2024 \$	2023
CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash receipts from customers Payments to suppliers and employees Reciepts from Grant Funding Interest received Finance costs		13,335 (1,027,797) 1,048,962 65,880	430,332 (1,047,005) 1,003,893 27,420
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	17(b)	100,379	414,640
CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES Payment for property, plant and equipment Proceeds from sale property, plant and equipment Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		(21,241) 200,000 178,759	(50,996) - (50,996)
Repayment of borrowings		(23,218)	(32,148) 25,878
Increase in borrowings Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		17,330 (5,888)	(6,270)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		273,250	357,375
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	17(a)	1,341,759 1,615,009	984,384 1,341,759



Families are the most important part of a child's life, they

- shape their child's brain development
- contribute to their child's success in life
- influence the quality of their child's future relationships
- impact their child's short and long-term health and well-being

