

HOPE

HOPE IMPACT REPORT 2024

Supporting pathways to possibility



Dear Friends,

It is with great pride that I present the HOPE Program's Impact Report for FY24. This past year has been a remarkable journey of growth, resilience, and hope for young families. We have witnessed the power of early intervention as HOPE has continued to make a huge impact, supporting 107 families and 129 children.

A poignant example of the impact HOPE can have is the story of Tiana, which you will read about later in this report. Tiana's journey from uncertainty to stability, and ultimately, to a hopeful future for her and her child, underscores the unique, holistic approach that HOPE champions. Her story is a testament to what is possible when we address not just immediate needs but also the underlying challenges that young families face — challenges that span beyond traditional government support structures.

This year, we also took a significant step in evaluating the HOPE Program's efficacy. CatholicCare Sydney worked with the Australian Catholic University (ACU) to conduct a thorough evaluation, which confirmed many aspects of our program logic while also highlighting areas for growth. The valuable insights and recommendations from this evaluation

and feedback that we have received directly from young families, will guide our continuous improvement efforts and ensure that we remain responsive to the needs of the families we serve and children remain at the centre of everything we do. As we continue to reflect and build on our learnings and achievements, I am confident the HOPE program will have even greater impact, achieve positive outcomes and young families will have their rights realised in a meaningful way.

The success of HOPE is made possible by the unwavering support of our donors, partners, and community. Together, we are creating a comprehensive approach that addresses housing, education, health, and family dynamics — providing the foundation for young parents to thrive and for children to grow in safe, loving environments.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all our supporters. Your contributions are making a tangible difference, allowing us to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma and empower the next generation to flourish. The impact of your generosity is truly immeasurable.

Thank you for standing with us as we continue this vital work.

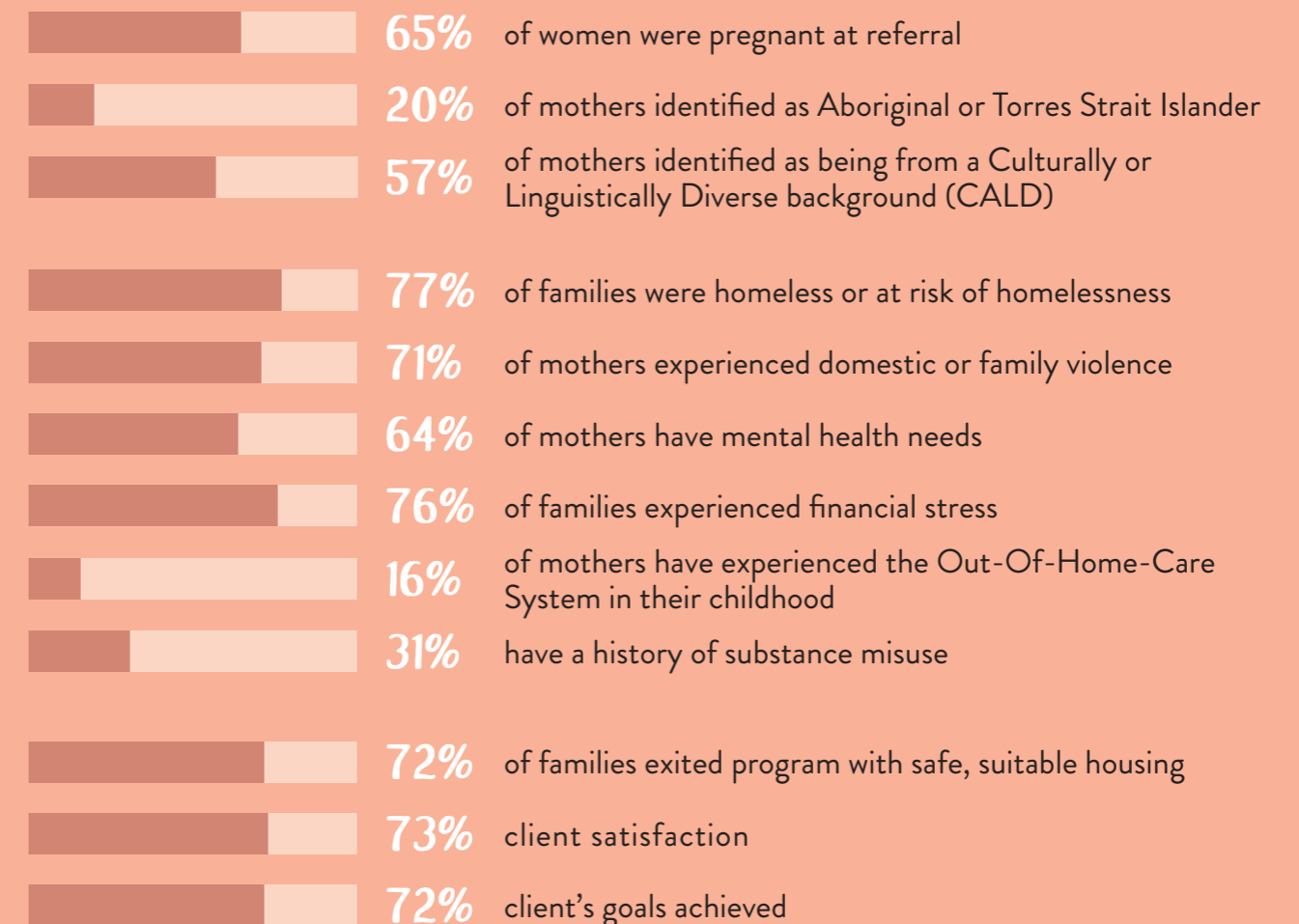
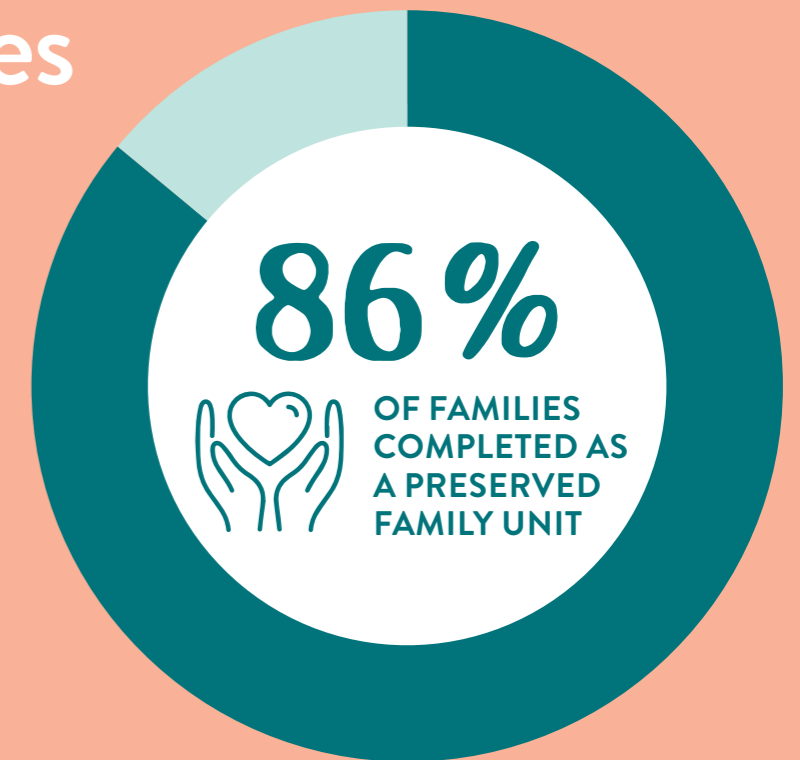
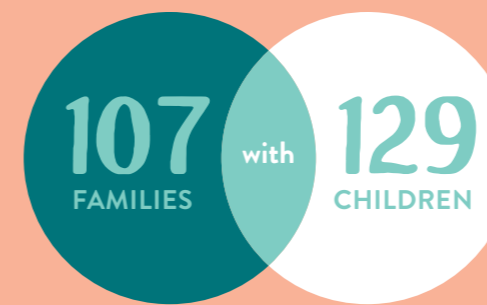
Warm regards



Alastair McGibbon
Chief Executive Officer
CatholicCare Sydney

The difference HOPE makes (FY24)

During the year HOPE reached



Client's Goal Outcomes

At the beginning and at the end of a client's participation in the program, they complete a pre and post assessment. Clients also set goals to achieve during the 12-months. Whilst a family may not achieve every goal that they set, the HOPE Program is responsive to their changing priorities and needs. These results highlighted:



Percentages of families who reported same/better circumstances at completion of the program:

Personal Wellbeing Index	
feeling part of a community	80%
achieving in life	100%
future security	90%
personal health	80%
personal relationships	60%
personal safety	70%
standard of living	80%

Percentages of parents that reported an increase to their efficacy to parent and connect with their child:



100% of young families who set safety goals achieved them

67% of young families who set community connection and participation goals achieved them

83% of young families who set mental health, wellbeing and resilience goals achieved them

64% of young families who set knowledge and skills goals achieved them

Program Updates from FY24

The HOPE Program has made significant progress in FY24, enhancing our practice and resources to support families.

Routine Outcome Measurements have been implemented to inform our approach so that we can increase the quality of our case plans and case management, provide timely client progress updates, and better tailor service to individual needs.

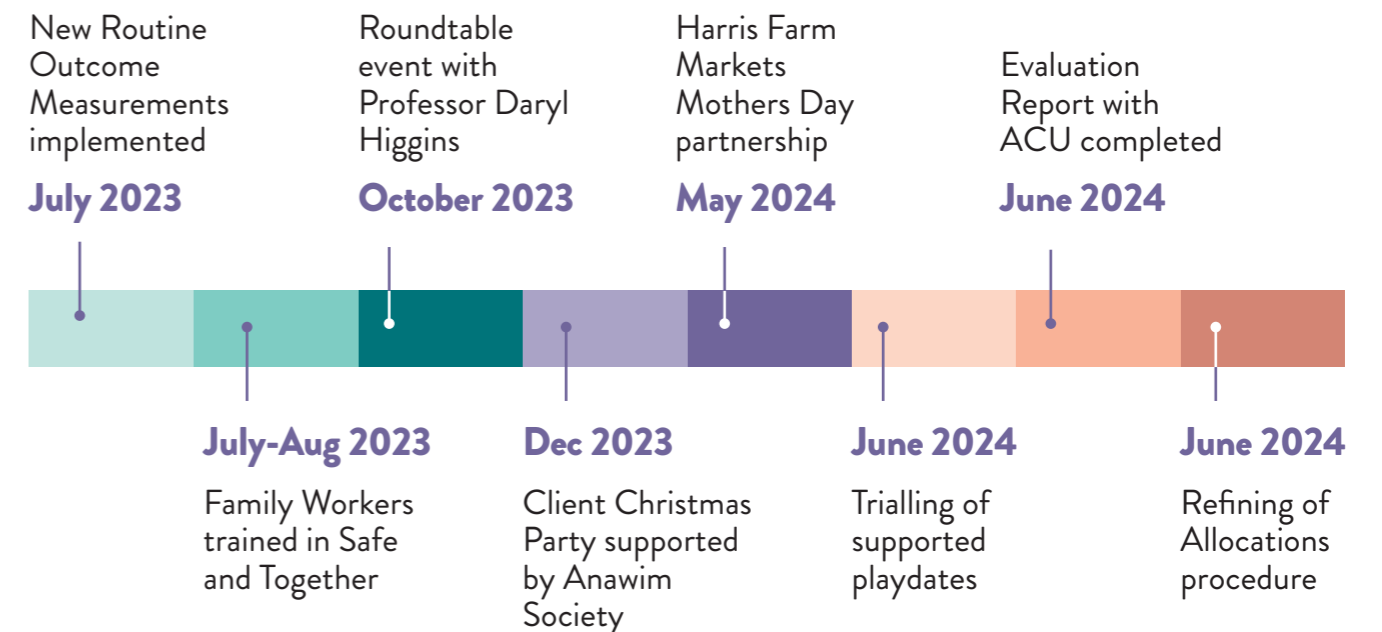
The program continues to innovate with new initiatives including trialling supported play dates to promote social connection among young parents and their children, refining the allocations procedure to improve understanding of the needs of families to maximise service

delivery effectiveness and ensure timely support for families, and explore more explicit supports through parent coaching.

Our commitment to continuous quality improvement has seen our team receive training in the Safe and Together model, strengthening our trauma-informed, family and domestic violence informed practice.

An extensive waitlist since March 2024 highlights the continued demand for the support of young families by the HOPE Program. The team have applied priority criteria processes to help assess critical needs and how with the resources available, we can best support in a timely and effective way.

Highlights from the year:





Evaluation Report

CatholicCare Sydney worked with the Australian Catholic University (ACU) to conduct an evaluation to assess the HOPE Program's effectiveness and alignment with its intended outcomes between January 2023 and June 2024. The findings create a rich source of early data and learning points to inform program design, practice and impact measurement moving forward. This perfectly aligns with our continuing strong commitment

to the journey of building evidence that demonstrates the impact of the HOPE Program.

The evaluation highlighted several key findings regarding its impact on young families. The program significantly helped participants improve their circumstances and build confidence, knowledge, and skills in various areas based on their individual needs.



Key Findings:

Meeting Immediate Needs

Most participants received support to address their immediate basic needs, such as baby supplies, household items, and assistance in finding temporary or permanent accommodation. This immediate support was crucial in creating stability and provided a foundation for further progress.

Parenting Skills

Participants increased their confidence, knowledge, and use of positive parenting strategies. This improvement came through working closely with Family Workers and participating in referred programs, such as Circle of Security and sleep support clinics for mothers and babies.

Community Connections

Participants gained greater awareness of other available service providers and connected with other families in the community, which helped to build a supportive network.

Educational and Employment Support

Some participants benefited from practical assistance, such as resume writing, which helped them work towards educational and employment aspirations. This support was pivotal in empowering them to pursue further education or employment opportunities.

Program Success Factors

The evaluation identified the quality of the relationship between participants and Family Workers as a critical contributor to positive change and strong engagement with the HOPE program. Effective processes around intake, assessment, goal setting, case planning, and case management were proven pivotal in achieving program outcomes.

Affirmations and positive reinforcement were also key features of high quality participant-practitioner relationships,

which fostered a sense of safety and acceptance among participants. This supportive environment increased young mother's capacity and confidence to better address challenges and pursue their aspirations for a better life.

Overall, ACU's evaluation underscores the importance of tailored support and strong, trusting relationships in helping young mothers improve their circumstances and achieve their goals.



Why HOPE?

Young parenthood is strongly associated with poor outcomes for mothers, fathers and their children.

These challenges include lower levels of education, unstable employment, inadequate housing, mental health issues, and increased risks of substance abuse. For children, the consequences can be serious, such as poorer neonatal health, higher infant mortality rates, developmental delays, behavioural issues, and a higher likelihood of involvement in the child protection and criminal justice systems. We know these outcomes are not always as a result of pregnancy, but in most cases have been realised in the context of pre-existing adverse childhood conditions, challenges and experiences.

The HOPE Program aims to walk alongside young families, providing integrated and comprehensive person-centred care and support for their most pressing needs while also helping them create and build a safe, positive and sustainable future.

Our impact is seen when:

- ✓ young families have high quality social access and connection (social capital)
- ✓ young people have a better quality of life and their rights realised
- ✓ young families have a stable foundation for their future
- ✓ young families are safe and together, caregivers are sensitive in their parenting, and children are thriving across all early development.

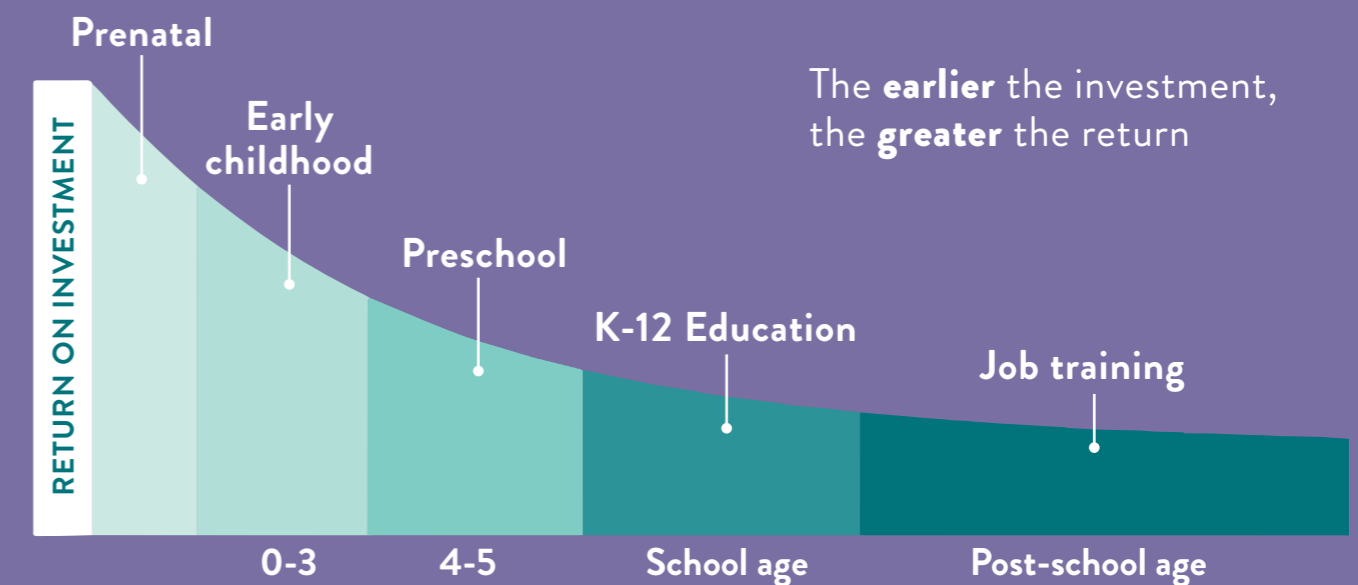
To achieve this, early intervention plays a crucial role when partnering with young families. The HOPE Program is designed to provide essential support at the right time and right place, focusing on basic material needs, community connections, therapeutic youth support and parent coaching, with children and young people at the centre. Empowering young families by harnessing their resilience and strengths will ensure they have the knowledge, skills and opportunities to create and build a stable and healthy environment for their growing family.

The evidence is irrefutable, the first 2,000 days of a child's life provides a critical window of opportunity as it is a highly sensitive time of physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. Engaging with young families during this window, means better outcomes can be achieved by working together in providing the most optimal early life experiences as possible. Without intervention, exposure to toxic stress, the continuing impact of intergenerational trauma and further adverse experiences early in life, can disrupt development and have deep, long-lasting effects, including increased susceptibility to broader lifelong health challenges, and involvement in the juvenile justice system.

The HOPE Program offers up to 12 months of service, taking a holistic approach to ensure support evolves, progresses, and the outcomes are realised and sustainable once families transition from HOPE. The core of the HOPE Program is to ensure young people, and their children are safe, seen, heard, connected

and empowered in the partnership and that this becomes the foundation throughout their HOPE Program journey. The provision of support that increases access to local services and supports, increases therapeutic readiness, strengthens peer networks, increases connection to identity and culture, improves family functioning and strengthens parent and child bonds, makes the HOPE Program a unique and vital service for young families.

However, funding for such comprehensive support remains a challenge. While government funding often focuses on specific areas like health or social services, the HOPE Program's broad approach does not fit neatly into existing funding streams. As a result, the program relies heavily on philanthropic contributions to continue its essential work. Investing in early interventions makes a significant difference with young families and also yields significant economic returns by reducing the future costs associated with health, welfare, and criminal justice services.





Case Study

Tiana was 20 years old and expecting her first child when she was referred to CatholicCare Sydney's HOPE Program.

Living in South West Sydney, Tiana was navigating a complex and challenging period in her life. At the time of her referral, she was still in a relationship with Stephen, the father of her child, but they soon parted ways. Despite the separation, Tiana and Stephen remained committed to co-parenting their baby girl, Olivia, who was born in March 2023.

Tiana's early experiences were marked by trauma, disconnection, and mental health challenges. She often felt isolated, as she was the only one in her friendship circle with a baby. Her family provided no support and had kicked her out of home when she told them she was pregnant. Tiana faced significant housing instability, moving from couch to couch with no place to call home.

Disconnections from her school, family, and friendship circle took a significant toll, severely impacting her sense of self, confidence and hopes for Olivia's and her future.

Tiana's situation highlighted a pressing need for partnership. The isolation she felt was exacerbated by her lack of knowledge and access to social services and positive social networks. She was overwhelmed by the complexity of the systems she needed to engage with and required help navigating them. The disconnection from her peer supports and her local community meant she had very little available resources, leaving Tiana feeling lost and unsupported.

The isolation she felt was exacerbated by her lack of knowledge and access to social services and positive social networks.

Connie, a Family Worker at CatholicCare Sydney, began walking alongside Tiana through this difficult time after a referral was made by a nurse who was part of Tiana's hospital antenatal care team. Understanding the importance of building trust, Connie focused on creating a safe and supportive environment for Tiana so she felt safe, seen, heard, connected and empowered. This relationship became the foundation for the positive changes that followed.

Connie guided Tiana through the complex systems she found overwhelming. Together, they worked on setting goals and accessing the resources needed to meet basic needs, such as housing. Connie also helped her with forms, supported her to engage with services and advocated for Tiana, ensuring she had access to resources and opportunities she needed and was interested in.

Recognising the importance of social connections, Connie referred Tiana to a local playgroup and even hosted a facilitated play date. This provided Tiana with a peer network of other young mothers, helping to alleviate her sense of isolation. "I now know other mums who I can talk to about parenting things, and I feel a part of something" Tiana shared.



“I now know other mums who I can talk to about parenting things, and I feel a part of something”

-Tiana

During their conversations, Tiana expressed a desire to finish her education. She had left school before completing Year 11 but was determined to create a better future for herself and Olivia. Connie introduced her to HOPE Education, a flexible and free service within HOPE, designed to help young parents who are ready to return to work or study, or who want to imagine or explore what their next steps could look like. Through one-on-one sessions, Tiana was supported to enrol in the HSC online at TAFE. Her long-term goal is to become a social worker, inspired by the support she received from Connie. “My priority is that Olivia has a better life than I did, so my first step has been the HSC,” Tiana said.

Understanding Tiana’s past trauma was crucial to her healing. Connie connected Tiana with a local therapist, who helped her make sense of her experiences and the impacts on her as a young person and now as a mother. Tiana’s sessions with the therapist complemented the work Connie and her were doing, making their parent coaching sessions more meaningful in the way in which it helped Tiana be more attuned and responsive to Olivia’s needs. “Connie supported me to take the steps I needed to help make sense of my upbringing”.

Throughout their time together, Connie remained a steady and reliable support for Tiana. The trust they built was crucial to the success of their partnership. Tiana described Connie as “a consistent stable support” during the end of her pregnancy and the first few months of Olivia’s life. This relationship allowed Tiana to feel heard and understood, providing her with the confidence to make positive changes in her life.

Connie’s support helped Tiana to be well on her way to achieving her goals. After completion of the program, she has continued to work to build a stronger future for herself and Olivia. The connections she has made through the playgroup and the therapeutic support she has received have empowered her to break the cycle of dysfunction she experienced growing up.

This case study is an example inspired by the experiences of the courageous young families we support through the HOPE Program. While not based on a specific individual, it reflects the common challenges and successes of many of the families we have the privilege to work with.



Donor Profile: Cathy Harris

Cathy Harris has been a dedicated supporter of the HOPE Program since 2022, inspired by her belief in the power of giving. Her parents, Mary and Theo Rossi, taught her from a young age to embrace generosity, often quoting St. Francis of Assisi: “For it is in giving that we receive.” Cathy embodies this philosophy in her life and work, drawing inspiration from Winston Churchill’s words, “We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

As Chair of Harris Farm Markets and a leader in numerous organisations, Cathy understands the importance of community and giving back. Her passion for philanthropy is evident in her support for the HOPE Program, where she sees the impact of her contributions on the lives of those in need.

Cathy was drawn to HOPE because of a connection between her own family and children in out of home care. During COVID, Cathy’s daughter-in-law became a foster parent to young siblings and observed the powerful

bond between them. Her daughter-in-law saw firsthand the importance of family units being kept safe and together, particularly in the context of the trauma that the children had already endured at such a young age.

When Cathy was introduced to the HOPE Program and asked if she’d like to support it, she leant on the stories of the two young siblings and knew she had to do anything to help keep children out of the system.

“Every child’s needs are different and unique, it’s the same as their families. We need to make sure we continue this program that supports each young family according to their needs and wishes, helping them to thrive and stay together.”

Supporter Acknowledgement

We are deeply grateful for the generous financial and in-kind contributions made throughout the year. Your support is the driving force behind the HOPE Program, allowing us to positively impact young lives and create a lasting legacy of hope and resilience.

Our sincere thanks go to our supporters including:

Charitable Foundations

- Curran Access Children's Foundation
- Charitable Works Fund
- Betty Wade Charitable Foundation

Corporate

- Harris Farm Markets
- Pallas Group

Government

- NSW Health

Individuals and Family Foundations

- Phillips Family Foundation
- The Harris Family
- Judith and Paul Beswick
- Anthony and Gai Wales
- Charles Mellick
- D'Leanne Lewis

Community Housing Providers

- Amelie Housing
- Hume Community Housing
- Metro Community Housing

Community

- Anawim Society
- Dandelion Support Network
- Bankstown Sports Club
- Ashfield RSL
- Liverpool Catholic Club

Ways to Get Involved



We need to raise \$25,000 for each young family that participates in the 12-month HOPE Program. Each year we aim to support 90 families.

HOPE Giving Circle:

We are delighted to launch the 'Give Hope' Giving Circle, connecting young business and community leaders to support the HOPE Program Endowment through annual gifts. This initiative aims to engage the next generation of philanthropists, expand our network, and highlight CatholicCare Sydney's work.

Participants will have the chance to exchange ideas and build relationships with like-minded peers committed to making a difference. These emerging supporters join our tradition of dedicated donors, contributing significantly to the growth of our Endowment fund. To get involved please contact Sandra Harris: sandra.harris@catholiccare.org

Other ways you can help us reach our goal:

- Donate to CatholicCare Sydney
- Become a Corporate Partner
- Become a Housing Partner
- Host a fundraising drive
- Leave a legacy gift
- Share our work

Program Feedback from Participants

“Thanks for staying so positive with me. I know I’m doing better but it feels so much better hearing it from others especially you (Family Worker) because you’ve seen how far I come”

– **Feedback from a Mum living in Georges River LGA**

“I want you to know that you have been a pillar in my life, and your presence, help and support gave me so much confidence and comfort. Thank you for being kind to my daughter and me.”

– **Feedback from a Mum living in Canterbury-Bankstown LGA**

“You’ve been so much help since I met you and I can’t thank you enough for everything you have done. From being by my side at the hospital, through my pregnancy, all my hardships and more. It all means a lot to me”.

– **Feedback from a Mum living in Fairfield LGA**

Donate to the
HOPE Program or
watch Tiana’s story

