

grandparents
V I C T O R I A



 **Kinship
Carers**
V I C T O R I A

**ANNUAL REPORT
2019–20**



GPV is supported by donors, life members and ordinary financial members
KCV is supported by the Victorian Government

Key words which influence GPV/KCV approaches are:

- Truthfulness
- Confidentiality
- Inclusiveness
- Integrity
- Constancy
- Gratitude
- Commitment
- Compassion

14 Youlden Street, Kensington 3031
Ph: (03) 9372 2422
Email: director@grandparents.com.au
www.grandparents.com.au
www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org



ABOUT GPV/KCV

In April 2001, Grandparents Victoria (GPV) was formed with the belief that the life experiences of grandparents mean that they can play a valuable role in supporting their families and the wider community.

At this early stage, with only four core members at the first meeting, it was not certain what the group would do or how its activities were to be funded, but the idea was welcomed.

For the first two years, GPV focused on consultation with grandparents. A number of informal gatherings were held in an attempt to learn what challenges grandparents and their families were facing in the 21st century. A series of more formal forums were also held across the state to get grandparents talking about what they saw as the most pressing issues. Subsequent more regularly held forums have refined these foundational understandings.

In March 2002, the issues faced by grandparents raising their grandchildren were noted, with the GPV Board deciding that the role of grandparents within child protection would be a priority area of work.

Another landmark was reached in 2004 when GPV staff attended the inaugural meeting of the Shepparton Kinship Care Support Group. This was the first of many visits to support groups across the state and heralded a commitment to local peer support for kinship carers.

The first statewide kinship care conference was held in the Moonee Valley Town Hall in 2009. The conference brought kinship carers, bureaucrats and community sector representatives together. The kinship carers proved their skill at raising issues and from this occasion the work of advocacy flourished.

In 2010 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) awarded GPV the contract to establish Kinship Carers Victoria (KCV) as a network formed to connect carers across Victoria, and to act as the peak group representing the views of kinship carers. Thus, GPV/KCV emerged as a statewide agency for addressing a range of issues from the viewpoint of grandparents.

GPV/KCV is committed to an ethical approach to its work, undertaking to:

- maintain a commitment to its beliefs and aims, prioritising the wellbeing of families,
- maintain confidentiality at all times, protecting the privacy of all who associate with GPV/KCV,
- uphold individual rights while at the same time advocating for the rights of disadvantaged groups,
- foster a culture of fairness,
- respect a diversity of views.

GPV/KCV believes that:

- all children must be protected and given every opportunity and support to fulfil their potential,
- the needs of families are becoming more complex and the support grandparents can offer to their own family and to other families is significant,
- grandparents and kinship carers have unique understandings and attitudes that should influence decisions about child wellbeing, and that through acting together, they will be strong advocates,
- grandparents and kinship carers have a responsibility to engage in public discussions and to act to ensure the wellbeing of children.



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CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

What a rollercoaster the past year has been! We have certainly experienced some highs and lows.

The first ever Victorian Kinship Carers Week, held in September 2019, was a great success, with events enjoyed by kinship carers right across the state. This was an important milestone, giving kinship care the recognition it deserves as a unique form of out-of-home care, and celebrating the significant contribution that kinship carers make, both to their families and to the wider community.

The year 2020 began with great optimism, but as much of Victoria came to a standstill due to COVID-19 we faced new challenges in finding ways to continue the important work of GPV/KCV. The challenge before us was to not merely respond to COVID-19 related issues but to press ahead with issues related to a future beyond COVID-19.

A number of new projects were conducted, including a series of campaigns highlighting the importance of adequate Australian Government support for families and others whose income had been impacted by lockdowns, and calling for increased benefits to be extended beyond the current crisis.

Office staff made contact with many kinship carers to see how they were coping during the pandemic and commenced work on a research project into family reunification. Thirteen special newsletters were issued offering carers advice which was specific to the pandemic whilst also supporting our members through the hardships of lockdown.

We will continue to strive to do what we can for families and children through this difficult time but look forward to returning to more normal operations as soon as possible.

We have all done our best to carry on in spite of adversity, and I would like to take this opportunity to praise the resilience of the entire GPV/KCV community, who have maintained strong connections with each other while being asked to physically stay apart.

I would like to thank the staff for their hard work behind the scenes, keeping things going as best they can in what have been very trying circumstances. As always, I would also like to acknowledge my fellow Board members for their contributions to the governance and management of the organisation, and the many other people who make up the GPV/KCV network for enriching the work of GPV/KCV by participating in its surveys, forums and other consultations.



Helen Brown
Chairperson



ISSUES

Aboriginal reconciliation	GPV/KCV supports moves towards Aboriginal reconciliation and recognises the value of keeping children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander heritage connected to their culture and supports Aboriginal self-determination in child protection matters.
Reunification	GPV/KCV supports reunification of children with their parents, wherever feasible. In 2020 work commenced on a study examining the processes of reunification because concerns were raised about the ways in which COVID-19 lockdowns have impacted access visits and reunification.
Adoption	GPV/KCV believes that adoption should always be the last resort when it comes to finding a placement that is in the best interests of a child.
Carer wellbeing	It is the view of GPV/KCV that kinship carers are better able to provide positive outcomes for the children and young people in their care if carers themselves are given opportunities to focus on their own wellbeing.
Welfare payments	For a number of years, GPV/KCV has protested against the introduction of measures to micro-manage the ways in which welfare recipients can spend their payments, for example through the use of the Cashless Welfare Card. In 2019–20, GPV/KCV campaigns also supported the increasing of welfare payments to a higher level, and called for these increases to be extended throughout the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.
Children’s play	GPV/KCV takes a special interest in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – A Child’s Right to Play. The value of play as a therapeutic tool for children and young people who have experienced trauma in particular merits further research.
Children’s rights	GPV/KCV grounds much of its work in the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
COVID-19	An emerging issue was the concern for the wellbeing of members during lockdown, and particularly the wellbeing of kinship carers and children they are rearing.
Education	GPV/KCV has always recognised the importance of education. Of particular interest was the home schooling of children during COVID-19 lockdown.
Permanent care	GPV/KCV questioned the information given to kinship carers considering transition to a Permanent Care Order. It is crucial that carers are made aware that the payments which they are eligible for as kinship carers may change as a result of moving to Permanent Care.
Restorative justice	GPV/KCV supports restorative justice as an alternative to incarceration in the case of youth offenders, and called for it to be more widely used in Victoria.



GOVERNANCE

The Board decides on the issues addressed by GPV/KCV

The Board of GPV/KCV is ultimately responsible for the direction taken by the organisation. Board members are elected annually and for the 2019–20 year were:

- Helen Brown – Chairperson
- Gedda Burke – Deputy Chair
- June Smith – Treasurer
- Kerry Doquile – Member
- Helen Corcoran – Member
- Beverly Gardiner – Member
- Angela Hogan – Member
- Miralde Crankshaw – Member
- Anke Kenter – Member
- Adine Neill - Member
- Jennifer Sullivan – Member
- Jenny Cheshire – Member

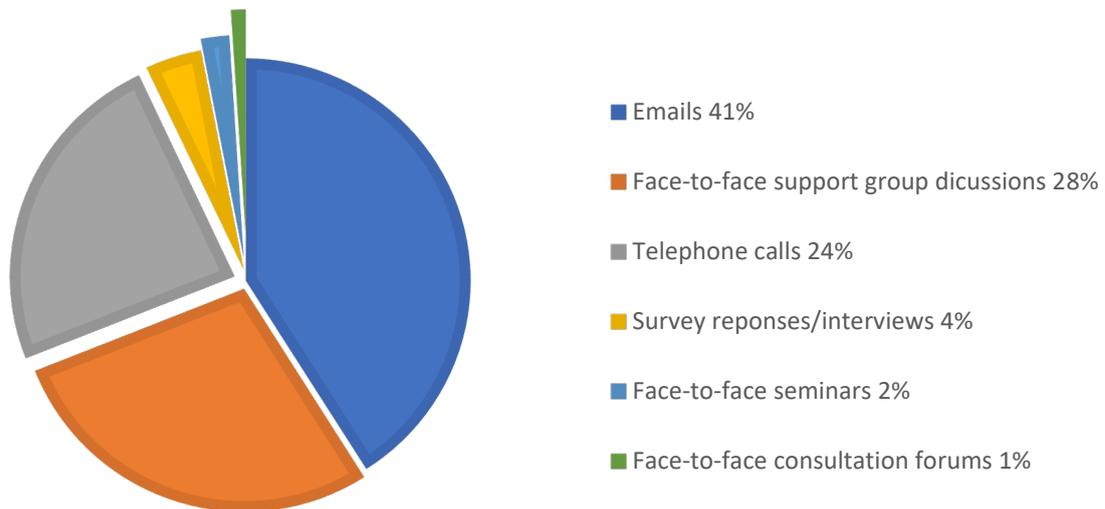
The Board met face to face four times for Board meetings: #71 in July 2019, #72 in December 2019, #73 in March 2020 and #74 in June 2020.

The Board made many substantive decisions, other than decisions related to administrative matters. They addressed the following themes:

- Aboriginal reconciliation
- Adoption
- Children’s rights
- Communication with carers
- KCV podcasts
- Overseas study tours
- Permanent care
- Restorative justice
- Reunification
- Support groups
- Commonwealth family welfare payments

The members guide the overall directions taken by GPV/KCV

GPV/KCV acts to ensure that both grandparent and kinship care members are provided with convenient and easy opportunities to communicate their views. Those members unable to attend face-to-face activities are encouraged to make use of the telephone and email. The graphic below depicts the use members make of the opportunities provided to communicate with GPV/KCV.



A comparison of the communications with members in the 2018–19 financial year and the 2019–20 financial year indicates a shift in balance that was expected and can be explained by the increased interaction at face-to-face support group meetings resulting from the well-attended gatherings during Kinship Carers Week.

2018–19	%	2019–20	%
Emails	34	Emails	41
Telephone calls	25	Face-to-face support group discussions	28
Survey responses/interviews	20	Telephone calls	24
Face-to-face support group discussions	11	Survey responses/interviews	4
Face-to-face seminars	8	Face-to-face seminars	2
Face-to-face consultation forums	2	Face-to-face consultation forums	1

Emails/telephone

The COVID-19 pandemic, which started affecting the GPV/KCV work program in March 2020, caused an initial slight drop in the number of telephone calls to the office as general members and carers became preoccupied with everyday survival.

GPV/KCV had planned for an increased number of calls from distressed kinship carers in particular. This did not eventuate, as carers went about the business of coping, in most cases without complaint. The issues raised by carers during COVID-19 lockdown were predominantly about:

- access to schooling, online learning
- family contact/reunification
- understanding the COVID-19 restriction rules.

When the COVID-19 lockdowns commenced, GPV/KCV office staff initiated calls to the carers to check on their wellbeing. Few carers made complaints beyond those being expressed by the general

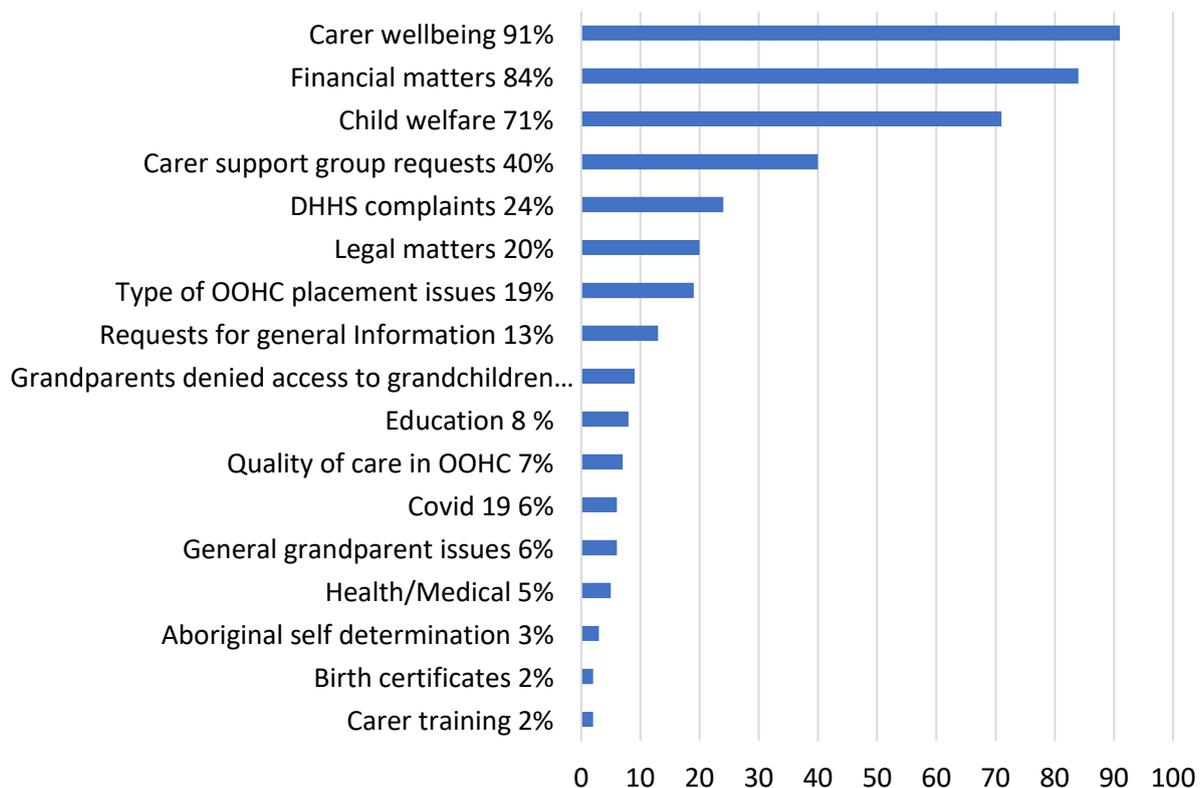
population about the difficulties of living with lockdown restrictions. None of the usual challenges the kinship carers might talk about presented themselves in these conversations.

Aside from COVID-19 related conversations, kinship carers addressed a mix of complex issues:

- 62% of calls addressed one issue only
- 22% of calls addressed two issues
- 7% addressed three issues
- 4% addressed four issues or more (one call addressed six issues)
- 5% of messages left were unable to be returned because callers did not pick up the return call

The issues raised across the email/telephone conversations held in 2019–20 reflected the balance of issues raised in the previous financial year. There were only minor differences, with birth certificate issues not mentioned as often as in the previous year.

The table below indicates the number of times substantive issues were raised. Between them these issues garnered a total of 410 mentions, with the % figure indicating the percentage of the total mentions that any given issue received.



Face-to-face support group discussions

Carers attended support group meetings in seven locations. Attendance at a further seven support groups was scheduled but had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

Survey responses and interviews

The Longitudinal Study of Kinship Care

The ninth report was released this financial year. From 2011 to this financial year, the number of original families in the study (113) reduced by ten, with the latter no longer having children in their care. No carers reported that additional children had been welcomed into their families. However, since 2011, 14 families have, between them, welcomed 20 new children into the study.



In the past 12 months, five families ceased providing care for any children or young people. In all of these cases, the reason for the end to caring responsibilities is that the young people had turned 18 since the last survey.

Since the commencement of the study, 49 families have ceased their kinship caring role because:

- the young people in the family have turned 18,
- the young people in the family have been reconciled with a parent,
- the placement broke down and alternate accommodation was found for the child(ren).

When asked to define their attitude to their role over the previous 12 months, in 2019 for the first time no carers reported having 'negative' feelings:

- 44% (11 of 25) reported having 'positive' feelings overall about their experience
- 56% (14 of 25) reported having 'mixed' feelings

No children were reconciled with parents in the 2019 survey period. However, across the study 29 children/young people have been reconciled with parents. Thirteen of these children returned to their father and 15 to their mother, while one returned to both parents together. Twenty-six of these children/young people were reconciled with parents after two or more years in the placement, some as many as 16 years later.

It was during this financial year that GPV/KCV decided to examine the issue of reconciliation with parents in more detail in the forthcoming 2020-21 financial year, and possibly beyond.

Young People and their Elders Speak about Children's Rights - survey

The report of this survey was released to coincide with Kinship Carers Week. It drew on a report previously released by the National Children's Commissioner which listed 15 issues as points of concern when considering Australia's progress in advancing the rights of children and young people.

Responses were collected in person at support groups and forums, and electronically via phone or email from five cohorts:

- Young adults aged over 18 who had not yet had children of their own
- Parents
- Grandparents
- Kinship carers
- Staff/organisations – people who work in child-related fields such as CSOs.

Each respondent was asked to choose up to six issues which they felt were of the most concern, requiring the most urgent action. The responses were analysed in two ways, examining how the issues were perceived by the community as a whole, and how the responses differed between cohorts.

Face-to-face consultation forums

Two consultation forums were planned. However, due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions only one was able to be conducted.

In early July, kinship carers sat with staff from the Commission for Children and Young People's office to discuss a range of matters related to the rights of young people in out-of-home care. The discussion was held to inform the Commission's inquiry into the lived experiences of children and young people in out-of-home care.

The 'In our own words' report was subsequently published to determine the common experiences of children and young people in out-of-home care, including those of Aboriginal children and young



people, to determine the extent to which children and young people in out-of-home care participate in formal and informal decision-making processes having an impact on their rights to health, safety and development in out-of-home care.

A second members' consultation on restorative justice was scheduled to be conducted in May. It had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The staff implement decisions taken by the Board and members

A team of seven paid staff and three volunteers implement the decisions made by the Board and respond to members' interests and concerns. Staff members for 2019–20 were:

- Anne McLeish – Director (ongoing)
- Naomi Whyley – Administration Manager (ongoing)
- Megan Crowle – Publications Officer (ongoing)
- Bradley Dawson – Website Manager (ongoing)
- Lisa Mills – Podcast Developer (ongoing)
- Beryl Gallacher – Clerical Assistant (ongoing)
- Zoe McLeish – Clerical Assistant (one off, casual)

Across all paid and unpaid staff, a total of 3619 hours was contributed to achievement of the work program.

Staff travelled to 23 different locations, as outlined in the table below.

	Interstate	Inner metropolitan	Outer metropolitan	Regional rural
2018–19	2	4	8	11
2019–20	1	8	8	6

Risk management

The GPV/KCV risk management plan is reviewed at the commencement of the financial year. Despite the increased risks of staff illness or feelings of isolation due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, none of the possible risks were realised.

The service agreement with DHHS also requires that GPV/KCV meets standards of propriety within DHHS policy and Australian/New Zealand Risk Management Standards AS/NZS ISO 3100:2009 (Australian Standard). These requirements are taken seriously by the GPV/KCV Board and were satisfactorily achieved.

KINSHIP CARERS WEEK



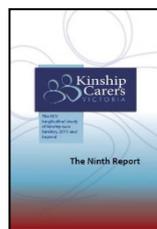
The highlight of this financial year was the inaugural Kinship Carers Week celebration, staged in September 2019. The work of coordinating and

promoting the week's activities, although rushed, was worth the effort, given the feedback from carers. A statistical summary provides a snapshot of some of the highlights of the week:

- 14 morning teas enjoyed by over 450 people
- two luncheons attended by over 50 people
- two seminars attended by 40 people
- two meetings with MPs attended by 10 people
- three KCV documents launched at the official opening morning tea
- seven media engagements, five radio interviews and two newspaper articles
- \$5000 in prizes distributed

Three key documents were published:

- ***Kinship Carers Wellbeing Magazine #3*** – A magazine helping carers to focus on their own wellbeing.
- **The Ninth Report of the KCV Longitudinal study of Kinship Care** – Tracking the lives of kinship care families.
- **Young People and Their Elders Speak Out about Children's Rights** – Survey report detailing the most pressing issues regarding children's rights in Australia



The first and final events to mark the week were with politicians. The first was a meeting with the Hon Luke Donnellan MP, Minister for Child Protection and the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, in his electoral office, and the last was in the electoral office of the Hon Nick Wakeling MP, Shadow Minister for Child Protection, in Narre Warren. Small groups of carers attended these meetings to talk in detail about topical issues related to kinship care.

True to the spirit of Kinship Carers Week, both the minister (in photograph on left) and Nick Wakeling (photograph on right) thanked the carers and reiterated their understandings of the strengths of kinship care, not the least of which was the connection to family it affords children. Both hosts reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening kinship care and spoke in detail about their aspirations for all children in out-of-home care.



Although the week was planned as a celebration free from any specific messages about kinship care, two seminars were offered and well attended. The one in Pakenham featured a guest speaker talking about emotional intelligence. The seminar in Kensington addressed an issue that carers never tire of talking about – education. This workshop featured a speaker and resulted in many plans being made.



Attendees at all functions were invited to enter the draw for major prizes:

- **Three \$500 gift vouchers** went to participants from Geelong, Cranbourne and Mildura
- **Four \$250 gift vouchers** were won by carers from Melton, Lilydale, Bendigo and Ballarat
- **Five \$100 gift vouchers** went to carers from Shepparton (2), Mildura, Cranbourne and Warrnambool.

In addition to these prizes, door prizes and gifts were distributed at each of the morning teas and luncheons held across the state.

Official celebrations commenced with a morning tea hosted by KCV and the Minister in Kensington. This was followed by 14 morning teas in 13 locations which were enjoyed by over 450 people at Mount Martha, Warrnambool, Wallan, Rosanna, Bendigo (two events), Melton, Shepparton, Mildura, St Kilda, Altona, Lilydale, Cranbourne and Geelong.

The Kinship Carers Week podcast featured The Hon Luke Donnellan MP, Minister for Child Protection and Minister for Disability, Aging and Carers.

CAMPAIGNS

GPV/KCV conducted three campaigns in the 2019–20 financial year. The campaigns were designed to pursue ongoing battles to encourage the Australian Government to adopt a more compassionate approach to supporting the most vulnerable families in the community. The campaigns centred around letters sent to all members of parliament. The campaigns called for the following:

An ongoing increase to JobSeeker (formerly Newstart) payments

This letter campaign pointed out that the COVID-19 crisis had thrown a spotlight on the inadequacy of JobSeeker payments, and urged the government to maintain increased payment levels and the removal of mutual obligation requirements throughout the economic recovery period.

The letter supported a communique co-signed by the following agencies/people:

- Grandparents Australia, Kinship Carers Victoria and Grandparents Victoria
- Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
- FamilyCare
- Financial Counselling Victoria
- Council of Single Mothers and their Children
- Elise Klein, the Australian National University



Increased funding for informal carers supported by Centrelink in the time of COVID-19

This letter campaign reminded MPs of the pressures faced by kinship care families, and cited the findings of the senate report into grandparents who take primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren as evidence that the government has previously recognised this pressure. GPV/KCV requested a one-off \$500 payment to all kinship carers currently receiving assistance through Centrelink in order to help ease some of the financial pressure faced by kinship carer families during the COVID-19 crisis.

Support for casual workers during the COVID-19 pandemic

This letter campaign conducted on behalf of Grandparents Australia and Grandparents Victoria broached concerns that grandparents held for their grandchildren in casual employment who had lost income due to the COVID-19 shutdown. In particular, GPV/KCV highlighted the discrepancy between the high cost of rental accommodation in major cities and the minimal capacity of casual employees to live on their savings when out of work. It recommended an increase to JobSeeker payments, or some alternative payment which would help prevent mass homelessness among young people no longer able to cover their rent payments.



PUBLICATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated some changes to the publications program in the second half of the 2019–20 financial year. The types of publications distributed were altered and the overall number of publications was reduced. For example, no GPV/KCV position papers were developed and no submissions to enquiries were submitted.

Position/discussion papers developed by GPV/KCV

Position and discussion papers are two- to four-page documents expanding on a particular issue, for example 'loneliness' or 'restorative justice'. No position/discussion papers were published in the 2019–20 FY.

The Kinship Carers Wellbeing Magazine

Following the success of the previous issues of the magazine, a third issue was released in September 2019 to coincide with Kinship Carers Week.

The Kinship Carers Wellbeing Magazine was conceived as part of a larger strategy to encourage carers to look after their own wellbeing, after the GPV/KCV Longitudinal Study found that carer wellbeing was decreasing from year to year for some carers. Even those who reported no health and wellbeing concerns during the survey were still facing stressful situations. The magazine was interactive. In addition to puzzles and exercises to help carers develop their understanding of wellbeing, those who read the magazine carefully could find opportunities to claim gifts for themselves and occasionally for the children in their care.

The KCV podcasts

Two podcasts were produced this financial year, bringing the total number of podcasts released by the end of the 2019–20 FY to 13.

- Podcast #12 – Happiness is a choice, with Dr Sanjiv Chopra
- Podcast #13 – Sleep, a crucial element in wellbeing

Reports of GPV/KCV activities

These reports presented details on activities undertaken by GPV/KCV. The following were printed and distributed in the 2019–20 FY:

- A report on issues arising from conversations with GPV/KCV members
- KCV Longitudinal Study of Kinship Care Families, 2020 report #9
- Young People and Their Elders Speak Out about Children's Rights - survey
- Report on parent-school partnerships forum
- GPV/KCV Annual Report for the 2018–19 FY
- A summary of CCYP and DHHS Annual Reports (2018–19)
- A carer strategy briefing paper

Website/Facebook postings

Regular updates of the website provide members with current information and contribute transparency to the general public, a responsibility the organisation takes seriously. Indications are that a range of people other than kinship carers and grandparents are accessing the website. Use of the websites for the 2019–20 financial year is shown in the table below.

KCV website	22,275 visits by people who engaged in continuous activity across the site 9882 visitors who visited the website without continued activity
GPV website	20,471 visits by people who engaged in continuous activity across the site 9151 visitors who visited the website without continued activity
KIN website	1543 visits by people who engaged in continuous activity across the site 683 visitors who visited the website without continued activity
GPA website	no statistics available due to a malfunction in website for this financial year
KCV Facebook page	905 views with 272 likes. Launched in March 2019

A visit is a session of continuous activity where all hits are recorded in the log file for one visitor to a website. A 'visitor' is a person who visits a website.

Press releases/media

GPV/KCV received a number of requests for media interviews in the 2019–20 FY, particularly during Kinship Carers Week and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of these interviews were for radio (six), with some in print media (three). GPV/KCV issued six press releases throughout the financial year: on Kinship Carers Week events, carer strategies and COVID-19 support for carers.

GPV/KCV also produced two articles which were published:

- *Kensington/Flemington News* – article on Kinship Carers Week morning tea with Minister Donellan
- *Developing Practice Journal* – article on KCV

Newsletters

Usually GPV/KCV issues three different newsletters, which cater to different groups of members. However, the emergence of the Coronavirus led to the publication of a new newsletter specifically designed to inform members about COVID-19 lockdown matters.

Prior to the emergence of the Coronavirus, the GPV/KCV Board had already made a decision to reduce the overall number of newsletters. The effect was that a total of 39 newsletters were distributed in 2019–20. This was 26 fewer than in the previous financial year.

Kinship Care in the Time of Coronavirus – In response to the needs of families during the COVID-19 pandemic, GPV/KCV released 13 special newsletters. These covered topics such as:

- stay-at-home measures
- financial supports
- respite care
- education
- maintaining health and wellbeing

Kinship International News (KIN) – Two newsletters were published, sharing news of international importance to an international audience. The topics covered were:

- International day to eradicate poverty
- Repeal of medevac laws



The Grandparent – Seven newsletters were published on issues of general interest to grandparents.

These included the following:

- GPV members' half-year update
- International eradication of poverty day
- Inquiry into forced adoptions
- What separation from parents does to children!
- Lost not forgotten – report into child suicide
- UN advice on the age of criminal responsibility
- Repeal of medevac laws

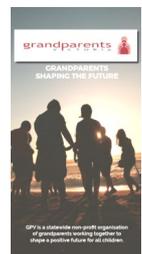
The Kinship Carer – 16 newsletters were published on issues of interest to kinship carers covering subjects such as:

- Kinship Carers Week
- Additional services and special offers available to kinship care families
 - One-off health checks for Australian children 11–12yrs
 - Dream night at the zoo tickets
 - Backpacks for kids
 - Victorian Carers Card
- Reports into aspects of Child Protection and NDIS
- Child and carer health and wellbeing
- Reunification of children with parents
- International eradication of poverty day

Information pamphlets

Five hundred copies of a new Grandparents Victoria (GPV) information pamphlet were printed for ongoing distribution.

Work was commenced on a suite of pamphlets informing kinship carers of community resources they might make use of.





OUTREACH

Communication with other peak bodies

During 2019–20, GPV/KCV staff attended regular meetings with 23 other agencies (approximately 60 engagements were attended). These agencies included the following:

- one overseas agency, a UK-based charity supporting kinship carers – Grandparents Plus
- three national agencies
 - two peak bodies – Families Australia and Play Australia
 - one community organisation supporting children – OzChild
- 19 Victorian-based agencies
 - three government agencies – DET, DHHS, Victoria Legal Aid
 - six community organisations supporting children and young people, families and women – Berry Street, Bethany, CAFS, Council for Single Mothers, MHYF, National Council for Women (Vic)
 - three peak bodies representing families – Centre for Excellence (including Treating Families Fairly), FCAV, PCAF
 - three academic institutions – Melbourne University, Monash University, RCH
 - one independent statutory body – Commission for Children and Young People
 - one politician – the Hon Nick Wakeling MP, Shadow Minister for Child Protection
 - one legal practitioner

Liaison with Victorian Local Government (LGAs)

GPV/KCV liaised with seven LGAs, briefing them on kinship care-related issues. The LGAs were Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay, Wyndham, Moonee Valley, Melbourne City, Mildura and Mt Alexander.



POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Whilst GPV/KCV engages in many policy discussions with Department of Health and Human Services staff and with other agencies, there are a number of these discussions that are more formal.

Attendance at 30 DHHS-led initiatives and liaison meetings with DHHS, including a number of priority commitments is outlined in the table below.

The Carer KaFE Governance Group	This committee is chaired by the Director of KCV and sets the strategic direction for the statewide training program for carers.
Liaison meetings with DHHS	These meetings are attended by two DHHS representatives and two GPV/KCV staff members. They are important forums for discussing forthcoming issues affecting kinship carers.
Carer Advisory Groups (CAG)	There is one Carer Advisory Group for each of the four DHHS divisions. KCV attends each one to give an update on issues affecting kinship carers and to hear from kinship carers.
Roadmap Implementation Ministerial Advisory Group	The Director of GPV/KCV is a member of this committee. This forum decides on broad policy directions that advance the Victorian Government's agenda for vulnerable children, youth and families.
Carer Strategy Working Group	The Director of GPV/KCV is a member of this committee, which assists in the development of The Strong Carers, Stronger Children policy framework designed to strengthen the supports available to kinship, foster and permanent care families.
Kinship Services Network meeting	The Director of GPV/KCV is a member of the Kinship Services Network committee, which draws together agencies from across Victoria to discuss kinship care and services provided.



FINANCIAL REPORT

14/09/2020

Grandparents Victoria Inc.
14 Youlden St.
Kensington, Victoria. 3031



Dear Members,

RE: Review of Financial Accounts for Year Ended 30th June 2020.

We, CSS Partners, have reviewed the accounts of Grandparents Victoria Incorporated for the twelve (12) months for the Year Ended 30 June 2020 with the intention of determining the following: -

Accuracy of the accounting transactions.

We have reviewed the books as supplied to by Anne McLeish and find that the accounting transactions have been recorded and allocated accurately.

We find that they are a true and fair representation of the affairs of the organisations.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Vassiliadis', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Vassiliadis

CSS Accountants & Business Advisors

ABN: 5490016106

Telephone: (03) 9337 3222

Fax :(03) 9337 2911

Email: info@csspartners.com.au

Address: Level 1, 30 Amis Crescent
East Keilor, Victoria. 3033



Grandparents Victoria Inc.

ABN: 54 173 492 849
Income Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2020

INCOME	2020
Fee Income	255,313.54
Fundraising Receipts	-
Member Receipts	868.21
	256,181.75
EXPENSES	
Accountancy Fees	1,248.50
Bank Charges	64.30
Bookkeeping	0.00
Consultancy	123,196.39
Donations	317.50
Insurance	340.69
Light & Power	1,237.23
Meeting Expenses	11,527.95
Office Expenses	2,129.99
Permits, Licenses, Fees	897.86
Postage	3,592.01
Printing and Stationary	11,402.73
Rate and Taxes	91.30
Rent	21,600.00
Repairs and Maintenance	340.90
Sundry Expenses	363.64
Telephone	3,759.76
Travelling Expenses	4,855.22
	186,965.97
NET PROFIT (Loss)	69,215.78
Retained earnings at the beginning of financial year	164,343.91
Retained earnings at the end of financial year	233,559.69

THE 2019–20 PROJECTS IN SNAPSHOT

Face-to-face consultation forums	<p>One attended: Commission for Children and Young People’s office – the rights of young people in out-of-home care.</p> <p>One planned: Members’ consultation on restorative justice cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.</p>
GPV/KCV celebratory statewide events	Kinship Carers Week
KCV Longitudinal Study	Of 113 original families surveyed, 22 continued to provide kinship care.
Young People and Their Elders Speak Out on Children’s Rights – survey	Survey exploring the views of a variety of age groups on children’s rights.
GPV/KCV information pamphlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500 copies of a new Grandparents Victoria (GPV) information pamphlet were printed for ongoing distribution. • Work commenced on a suite of pamphlets informing kinship carers of community resources.
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • six radio interviews • three print media interviews • six press releases
Feature articles published	<i>Kensington/Flemington news</i> <i>Developing Practice Journal</i>
Emails/telephone	<p>538 calls recording substantive issues were logged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 454 KCV related calls • 54 GPV related calls • 30 joint GPV/KCV related calls
Face-to-face support group discussions	<p>Attended support group meetings in seven locations.</p> <p>Attendance at a further seven support groups was scheduled but had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.</p>
Kinship Carers Week 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 morning teas enjoyed by over 450 people • two luncheons attended by over 50 people • two seminars attended by 40 people • two meetings with MPs attended by 10 people • three KCV documents launched • seven media engagements, five radio interviews and two newspaper articles • \$5000 in prizes distributed

Reports of GPV/KCV activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report on issues arising from conversations with GPV/KCV members • The KCV Longitudinal Survey, Report #9 • Young People and Their Elders Speak Out about Children’s Rights – survey • Report on parent-school partnerships forum • Annual Report for 2018–19 FY • A Summary of CCYP and DHHS Annual Reports (2018–19) • A carer strategy briefing paper
<i>The Kinship Carer Wellbeing Magazine</i>	Issue #3 released to coincide with Kinship Carers Week 2019
KCV podcasts	Podcast # 12 – Happiness is a choice, with Dr Sanjiv Chopra Podcast # 13 – Sleep, a crucial element in wellbeing
Campaigns	Three campaigns undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing increase to JobSeeker (formerly Newstart) payments • Increased funding for informal carers supported by Centrelink in the time of COVID-19 • Support for casual workers during COVID-19 pandemic
Website/Facebook postings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCV website 22,275 visits by people who engaged in continuous activity across the site • 9882 visitors who visited the website without continued activity • GPV website 20,471 visits by people who engaged in continuous activity across the site • 9151 visitors who visited the website without continued activity • KIN website 1543 visits by people who engaged in continuous activity across the site • 683 visitors who visited the website without continued activity • KCV Facebook 905 views with 272 likes. Launched in March 2019.
<i>Kinship Care in the time of Coronavirus</i> newsletter	13 special newsletters distributed.
<i>Kinship International News (KIN)</i>	Two issues distributed
<i>The Grandparent</i> newsletter	Eight issues distributed
<i>The Kinship Carer</i> newsletter	16 issues distributed
Communication with other peak bodies	Approximately 60 engagements attended with 23 agencies.
Liaison with local government areas	Liaison with seven LGAs
Policy development	Attendance at 30 DHHS-led initiatives and liaison meetings with DHHS



14 Youlden Street, Kensington 3031

Ph: (03) 9372 2422

Email: director@grandparents.com.au

www.grandparents.com.au

www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org