Kinship Carers VICTORIA

grandparents VICTORIA



ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026





GPV/KCV acknowledges the peoples of the Kulin nation as the traditional owners of our great land and offers respect to Elders, past and present.

GPV/KCV acknowledges that the Aboriginal culture existed in Australia before European settlement and consisted of many community groups. Further, we acknowledge the Indigenous peoples of this land as the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

GPV/KCV acknowledges that laws and policies of the past have inflicted grief and suffering on our fellow Australians and regrets the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

GPV/KCV believes that a society that is inclusive of all is crucial to individual and community wellbeing and will behave with respect towards all irrespective of their race, religion, sexuality, gender, or socio-economic background.

GPV/KCV acknowledges 13th of February as National Apology Day, the anniversary of then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, delivering the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples in 2008. GPV/KCV will take steps that promote a happier and healthier future for Indigenous Australians, particularly the children and young people.

Key words which influence GPV/KCV approaches are:

Truthfulness
Confidentiality
Inclusiveness
Integrity
Constancy
Gratitude
Commitment
Compassion

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Kinship Carers Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian government

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ABOUT GPV/KCV

In April 2001, Grandparents Victoria (GPV) was formed as an organisation based on the belief that grandparents can play a valuable role in supporting and advocating for families and the wider community and promoting the value of the public sector. At this early stage, with only four members at the first meeting, it was not clear what action the group would take, or how its activities were to be funded, but enthusiasm was high.

For the first two years, GPV focused on consultation with grandparents to learn what challenges they and their families were facing. A series of forums were also held across Victoria to collect different many opinions. Since then, regular forums and surveys have been conducted to verify these early views.

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 its first local grandparents support group. This was the first of many visits to support groups across the state. In 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) awarded GPV the contract to establish Kinship Carers Victoria (KCV) as the peak group representing the views of kinship carers.

GPV/KCV addresses a wide range of issues. Some issues, aside from support for kinship carers, appear on its work program year in and year out, with family poverty being the most urgent of all the issues addressed over the years.

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, protecting the privacy of all who associate with GPV/KCV
- uphold individual rights and advocate for the rights of disadvantaged groups
- foster a culture of fairness

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 families is significant
- grandparents and kinship carers have unique understandings and attitudes that should influence decisions about children's wellbeing
- grandparents and kinship carers have a responsibility to engage in public discussions and to act to ensure the wellbeing of children

Privacy Guarantee

GPV/KCV securely stores and manages personal information shared through all forms of communications with the organisation. No personal information is ever shared with any other agency, including DFFH or any other government agency. When survey reports are completed the personal data of participants is destroyed.

LIFE MEMBERS

Helen and Mal Brown

Anne McLeish

Jack Lloyd

Trevor and Christine Wilson

Francis and Susan Morgan

Allan and Noelle Mawdsley

Bob Ives and Barbara Champion

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Board made 36 decisions, 19 related to governance matters and 17 were substantive decisions taken after general discussion and related to issues affecting families, including kinship care families, as outlined below (some issues were discussed at more than one meeting before a final decision was made).

Board Members

- Carole Cheng, Grandparent–2021, Chair
- Helen Brown, Grandparent –2001, Dep. Chair
- Angela Hogan, Grandparent–2001
- Kerrie Doquile, Grandparent–2001
- Helen Corcoran, Grandparent–2010
- Sandy Harbison, Grandparent–2021
- Meredith Oglethorpe, Grandparent-2025
- Bruce Murchie, Kin/carer–2023
- Michelle Max, Kin/carer–2024
- Eileen McAdam, Kin/carer–2024
- Teresa Pastore, Kin/carer–2025

Staff Members

- Anne McLeish
- Naomi Whyley
- Aye Thandar Phyo Wai
- Bradley Dawson
- Lisa Mills
- Zoe McLeish
- Ali Grantham

Volunteers

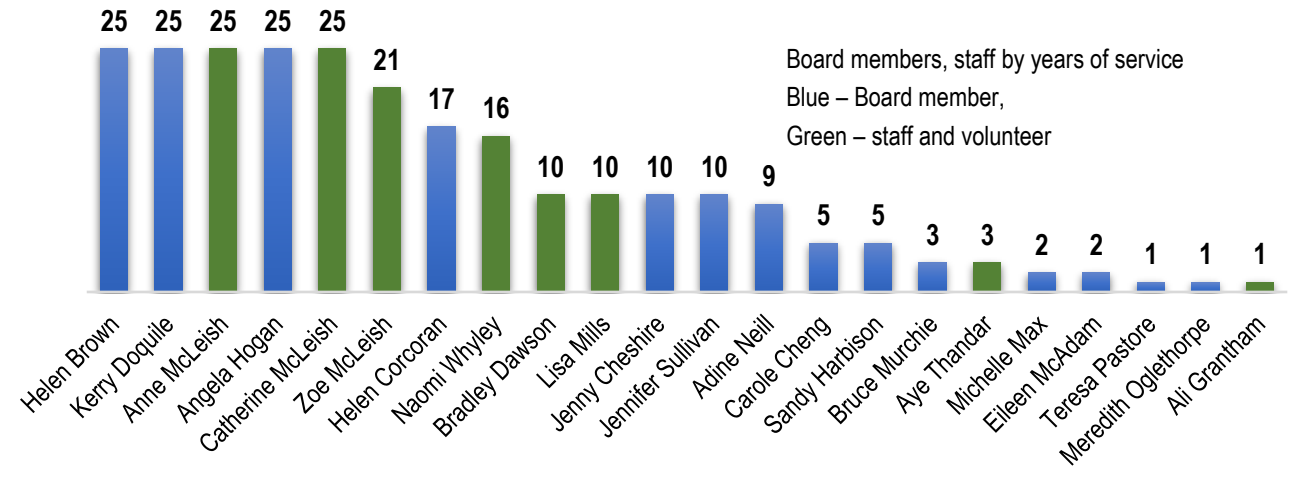
Catherine McLeish

The three Board Members listed below served for part of the financial year up until the AGM.

- Jennifer Sullivan, Kin/carer–2016
- Jenny Cheshire, Kin/carer–2016
- Adine Neill, Kin/carer-2017

The overall attendance rate by all Board Members across all meetings was 73%. The attendance rate of each board member was:

- Kerrie Doquile (100%)
- Meredith Oglethorpe (100%)
- Teresa Pastore (100%)
- Jenny Cheshire (100%)
- Helen Brown (83%)
- Carole Cheng (83%)
- Helen Corcoran (83%)
- Bruce Murchie (67%)
- Jennifer Sullivan (66%)
- Adine Neill (66%)
- Sandy Harbison (50%)
- Michelle Max (50%)
- Eileen McAdam (50%)
- Angela Hogan (33%)



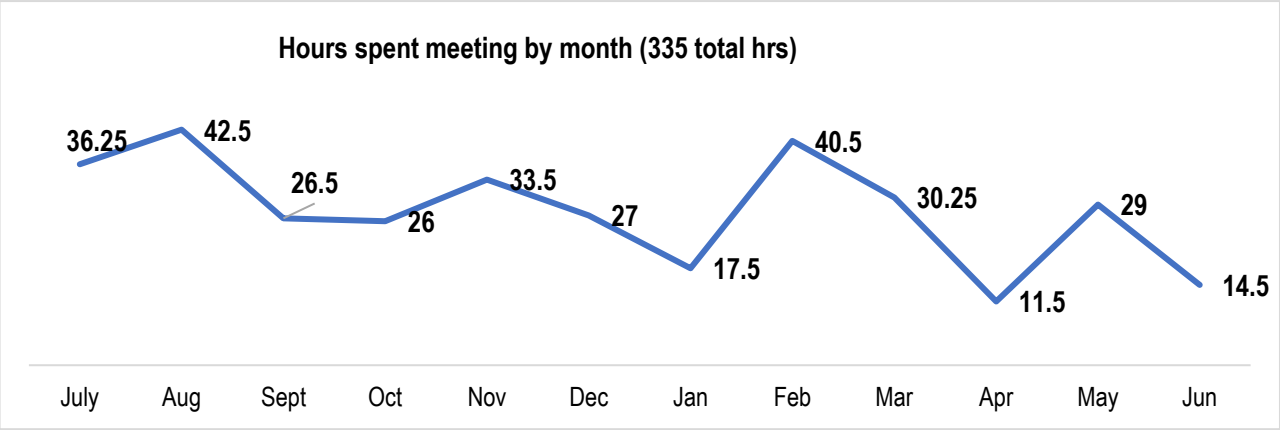
The issues addressed by the Board Included:

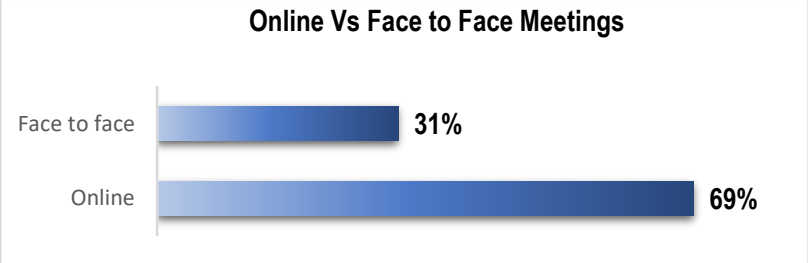
- GPV/KCV future structures under new Standing Orders
- Refugees – Afghanistan judges and children hosted in Australia and support of other refugees and migrants
- The Vic. Children Youth and Families Act
- Aboriginal Reconciliation
- Education – school facilities and national perspectives
- Support for the ABC
- A state-wide conference for kinship carers
- A National Gold Card for children in out of home care
- The GPV/KCV campaigns program
- The connection between kin/care and outcomes for children
- Prevention of removal of children from parents
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Online sexual exploitation of children
- The rights of children to know their biological identity
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- How to address drug taking with young people
- Changes to Australia social media laws
- Social isolation of children and young people in care
- School refusal
- Kinship care of children with parent/s in prison
- Kinship care of orphaned children from war torn countries

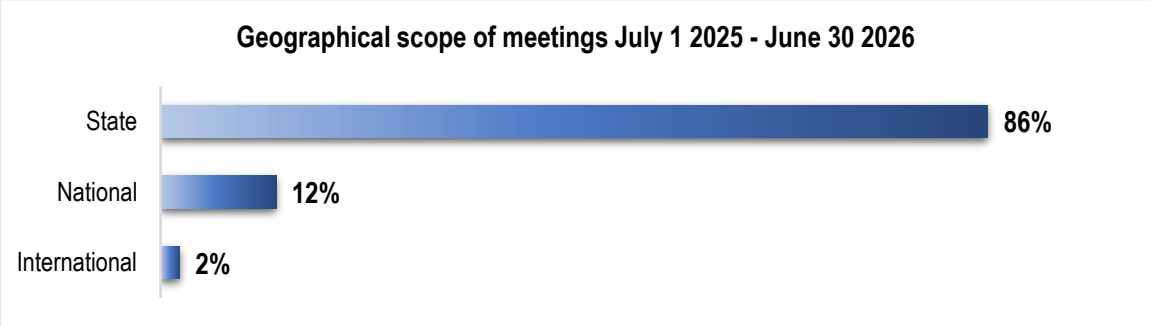
REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

The issues raised by GPV/KCV reflect the issues raised by the Board and by the people who contacted the Support and Advice service. In this financial year, the issues most spoken of in meetings between GPV/KCV and other agencies were:

- Children's and family legal rights
- Carers learning and development
- Education for children in out of home care
- Carer financial, and non-financial support
- The Victorian Children's Youth and Families Act
- Reunification and family contact
- Centrelink support for k/carers
- Children's biological identity
- Placements breakdown
- Poverty
- Loneliness

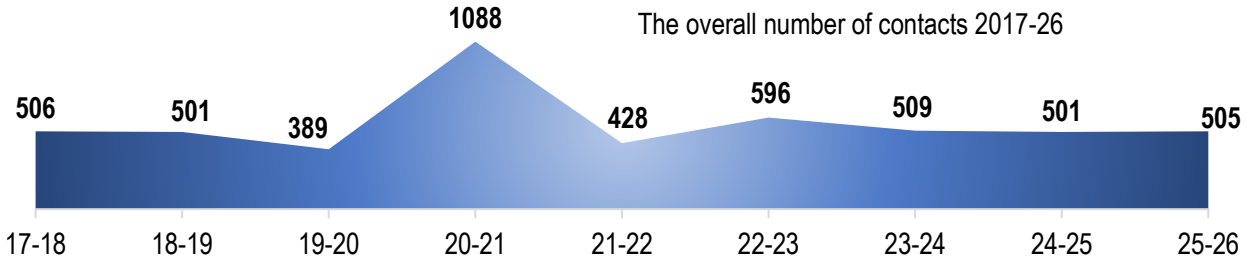


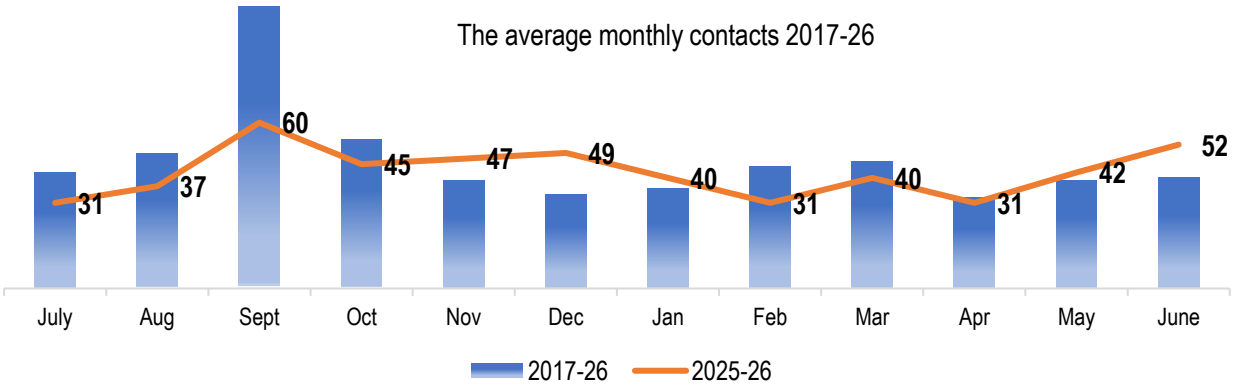


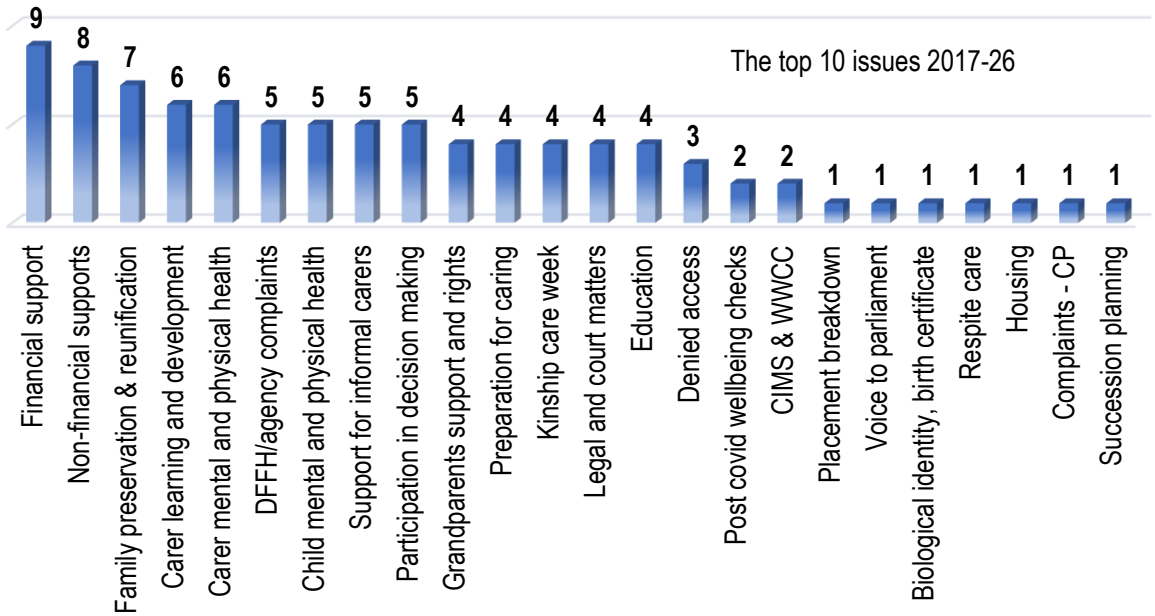


SUPPORT AND ADVICE SERVICE 2017-26

The trends over the years since 2017 are consistent and settling at around 500 contacts per year. The only exception remains the Covid years.







SUPPORT AND ADVICE SERVICE 2025-26

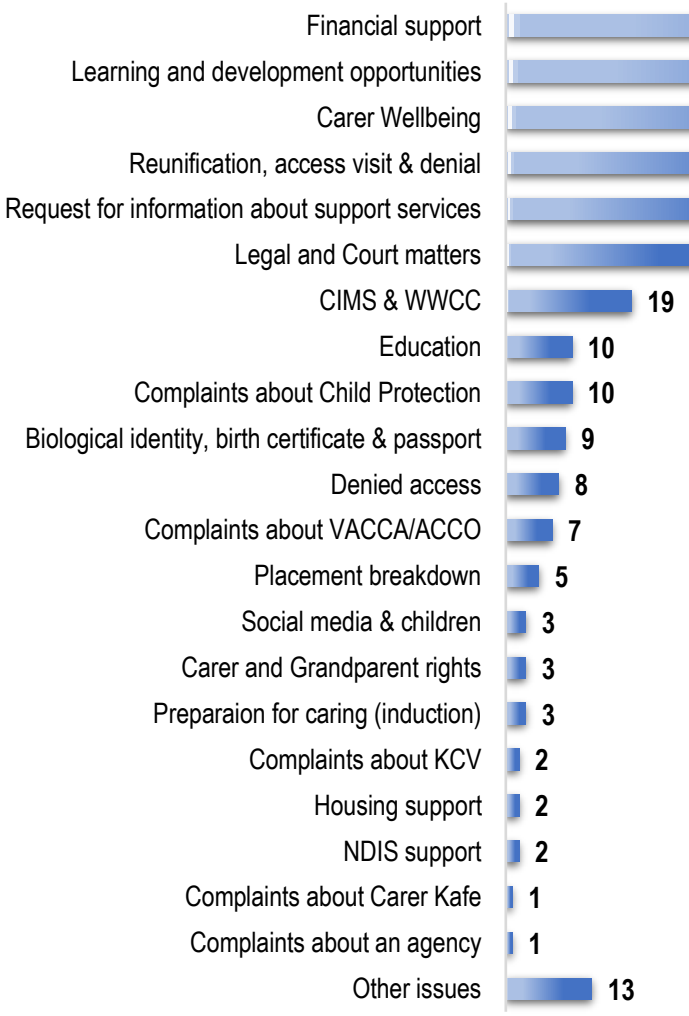
Snap shot results for 25-26 financial year are that:

- The range of issues raised within the service follows general patterns as for previous years with the exception of family contact and reunification with calls about this issue increasing.

- The range of people contacting the service has followed the same as for previous years. However, there was a dramatic increase in the first-time contacts (45% of all contacts) in the 25-26 financial year due to corporation between KCV and South Division. This has resulted in a partnership between KCV and South Division for the delivery of Welcome to Kinship Care Seminars.

- The number of contacts from carers raising Aboriginal children has increased, especially from Aboriginal carers. These contacts relate mainly to access to the KCV Resources for Kinship Carers and the KCV Learning and Development Program. Also mentioned was support from Aboriginal agencies.

- 384 carers answered the questions about how many children they are raising. Those 384 are raising 618 children between them as outlined in the graph below.



The issues raised 25-26

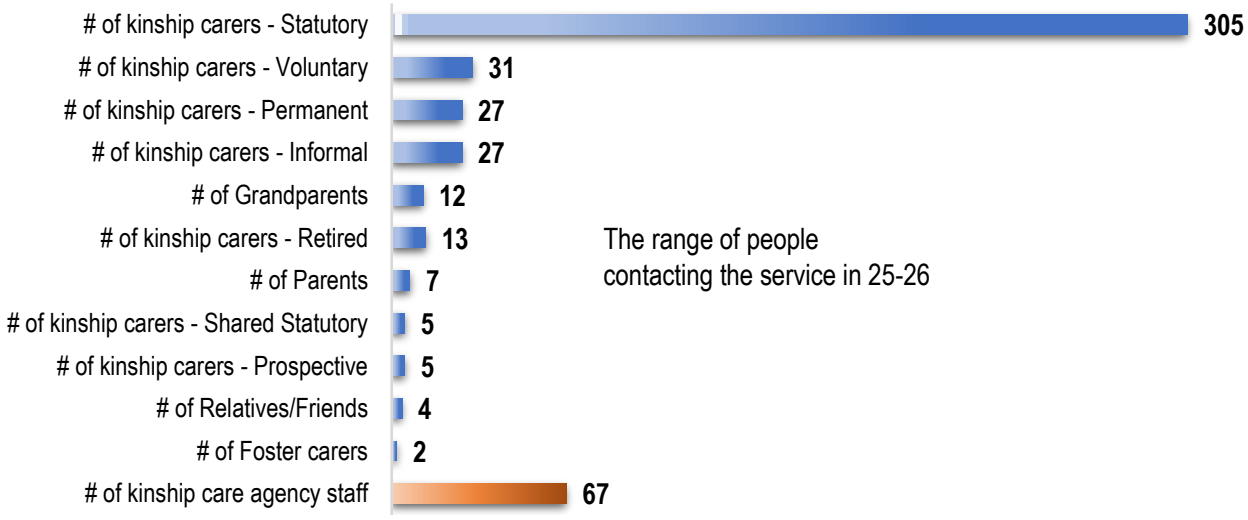
The issues listed here were the main issues raised in the contacts. It must be noted that on most occassions more than one issue was actually raised.

Other issues only mentioned once were:

- access to KCV by aboriginal carers,
- counselling for sibling groups,
- drug testing for carers,
- family violence,
- placement change,
- violence in the placement,
- support group for young carer,
- youth mental health,
- aged care,
- proof of caring requirements,
- child wellbeing,
- respite care, and
- follow up after death of child's parent.

The first-time contacts in 25-26

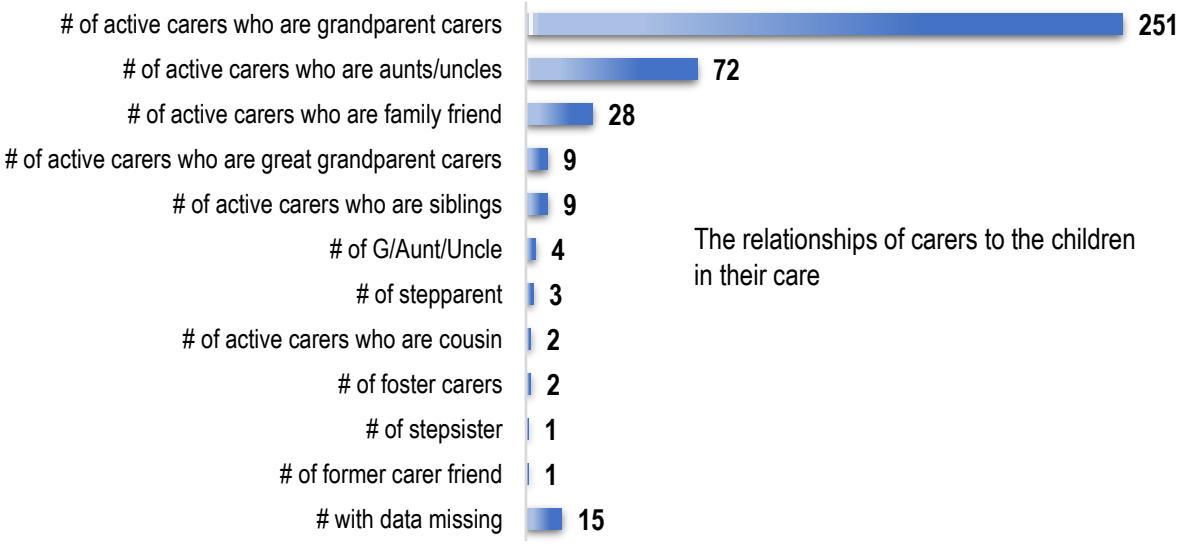




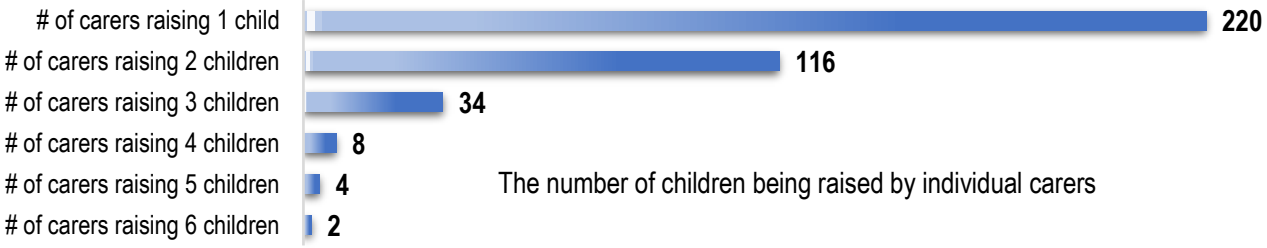
The range of people contacting the service in 25-26

384 carer contacts	were raising	**618** Children between them
41 Aboriginal carer contacts	were raising	**54** Aboriginal children between them
43 non-Aboriginal carer contacts	were raising	**74** Aboriginal children between them

The number of children being raised by carer groups



The relationships of carers to the children in their care



The number of children being raised by individual carers

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

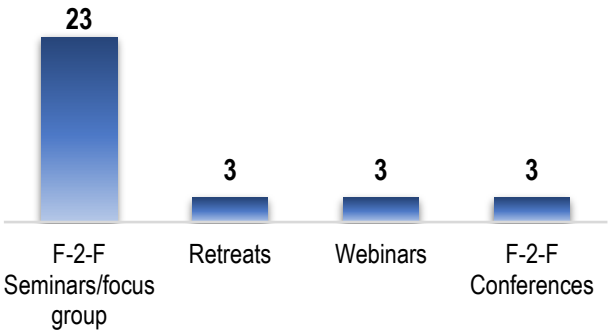
In the 25/26 financial year, GPV/KCV delivered and participated in learning and development events at which grandparents, kinship carers and agency staff interacted to examine topical issues. A total of 37 events were planned and 32 delivered or co-delivered.

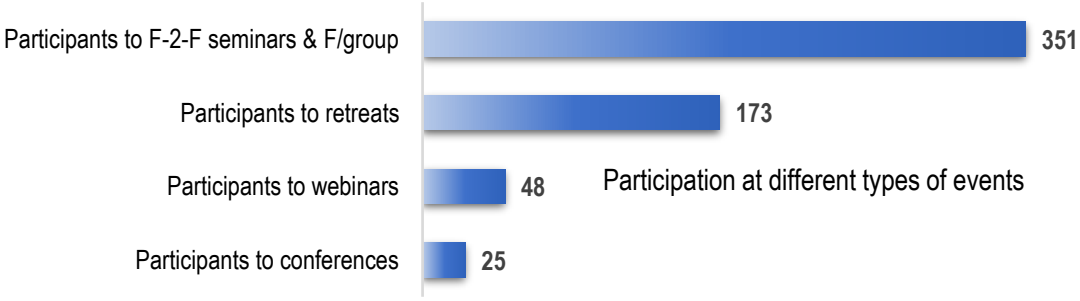
- 23 face-to-face seminars/focus group (14 part funded by Carer Kafe)
- 3 retreats (fully funded by Carer Kafe and attended by KCV staff as facilitator)
- 3 webinars (2 part funded by Carer Kafe, hosted by KCV)
- 3 face-to-face conferences (some participants part funded by Carer Kafe and attended by KCV)

The participants who attended the activities were drawn from 125 locations. This is an increase on previous years by approximately 60 locations.

Four events were cancelled and one was postponed – two due to insufficient registrations and one because the partnering agency was not yet ready to continue with the event. This was the Prison Network which is still establishing a network of carers of children whose mothers are in prison. This cohort of carers is shy of public engagement. A total of 597 participants engaged in this program.

- 351 participants attended face-to-face seminars/focus group
- 173 participants attended retreats
- 48 participants attended webinars
- 25 participants attended conferences





THE 9TH WORLD CONGRESS ON FAMILY LAW AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

This conference took place from 27th to 30th July 2025 at the Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. Two GPV/KCV staff members attended this conference.

The theme for the conference was "Children Caught in Conflict – Inspiring Positive Change". Around 300 international delegates, including judges, lawyers, academics, psychologists, and government officials attended.

The Core Topics Covered were:

- Child marriage and protection from abuse
- The Hague Abduction Convention and its intersection with domestic violence
- High-conflict divorce and international family law (including joint custody dynamics)
- Online child exploitation and safety
- Children impacted by armed conflict and displacement

POVERTY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In March, seven GPV/KCV people attended a conference on *Poverty and Social Protection* held in Bangkok. The 20 other participants who participated were drawn from academia and large non-government agencies across eleven countries.

Participants presented insights into their research outcomes. The GPV/KCV Australian team, by contrast, presented a model of collective action and the process of participation through representation. The difference in Australia's approach was welcomed.

The nature and scope of poverty in other countries is far more widespread and ingrained into the social fabric than in Australia. However, there are growing pockets of hardship in Australia that resemble international experiences.

One participant from Singapore made reference to the high incidence of single parent families living in poverty in Australia. An initial searching the Australian Census data upon return from the Bangkok conference has revealed that, in regard to, single parent families:

- 15.9
- % of all families are single parent families (1.4 million) with the majority being single mothers. These numbers will include single kinship carers, the majority of whom are elderly. In June 2024 there were:
- 740,900 single parent families with dependent children aged 0-24 years and
- 560,200 single parent families with dependent children aged 0 to 14.
- Single parent families make up 1 in 5 of all families with dependent children in Australia today. Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) of them were headed by mothers and more than 9 in 10 (94%) of the poorest single parents (those relying on Parenting Payment Single) are mothers.
- There were more than 1.2 million dependent children aged 0-24 living in single parent families in June 2024.

The discussion about the most effective methods of delivering funding to families in need, without stigma being attached, recurred during the conference. GPV/KCV has addressed this question at various point in its history and believes that delivering people cash payment is the most empowering way to proceed with a card system which sends a message that families cannot be trusted to manage. Further, past attempts to use a cashless card system in Australia have resulted in rorts, and to unintended consequences causing deeper problems than previously existed. It was noted that the charities such as St. Vincent De Paul that dispense emergency cashless cards are having to take steps to prevent rorts.

Overall reflection of the conference

Reflecting on the cost and effort attached to attending the conference, the team was asked if the conference was worthwhile: 5 answered *very much* so and 2 answered *yes*.

THE ENDING LONELINESS TOGETHER

On November 7th & 8th 2025 GPV/KCV representatives, including kinship carers, attended the national ***Ending Loneliness Together Conference*** in Melbourne. As a result of discussions held after the conference, the following actions have been enacted.

Activity	Outcomes
Report to the GPV/KCV Board (17/12/25)	The GPV/KCV Board: ▪ designated loneliness a priority GPV/KCV campaign ▪ conducted a snapshot survey to determine levels of loneliness amongst grandparents/ kinship carers (launched 10th November 2025)
Report to kinship care support groups	Kinship carers who attended the Ending Loneliness Together Conference gave verbal reports and stimulated discussions of loneliness at community groups: ▪ Highett, Frankston, Let's talk about Jewish youth, Lighthouse Foundation ▪ Wellbeing Co-ordinator Yeshiva - Beth Rivkah College, Pathways Melbourne, St Kilda - Jewish kinship care support group, Orly House Cultural committee
Podcast on loneliness	Professor Michelle Lim, CEO and Scientific Chair of Ending Loneliness Together, was interviewed on a KCV podcast
GPV/KCV Occasional paper	A GPV/KCV occasional paper was launched by GPV/KCV in early 2026
Tip sheets on combating loneliness	▪ Websites to feature tip sheets with links to the Ending Loneliness Together website (27/01/26) ▪ Printed version of the flyer about tip sheets to be issued to kinship carers who attended the conference for distribution

KINSHIP CARE WEEK (KCW)

Kinship Care Week remains an important fixture in the GPV/KCV calendar. Carers enjoy the celebration of their work and the opportunity to note the outcomes for children placed in kinship care.

For the past few years, the annual oration has been at the centre of these celebrations with local activities conducted by GPV/KCV and other agencies satelliting around it.

This year at the annual oration, GPV/KCV announced ongoing efforts to promote civil discourse with the kinship care movement and beyond.

275 People gathered at 11 locations….

Ballarat Cowes Dandenong
Epping Leongatha Melbourne
Melton Morwell Nicholson
Shepparton Warragul

Three launches….
1 video, 1 book, and 1 podcast

- The Minister's video of greetings
- The Navigating Difficult Conversations book

A mailout to over 500 carers….

A surface mailout to urban and provincially based statutory carers of the Navigating Difficult Conversations book, and various other gifts.

Participating agencies and programs….

Kinship Carers Victoria……Berry Street……
Carer Kafe……Uniting……Oz Child……
Child and Family Services

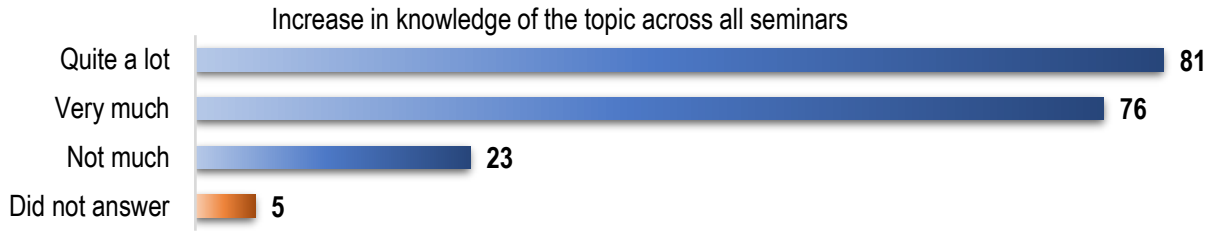
A highpoint….

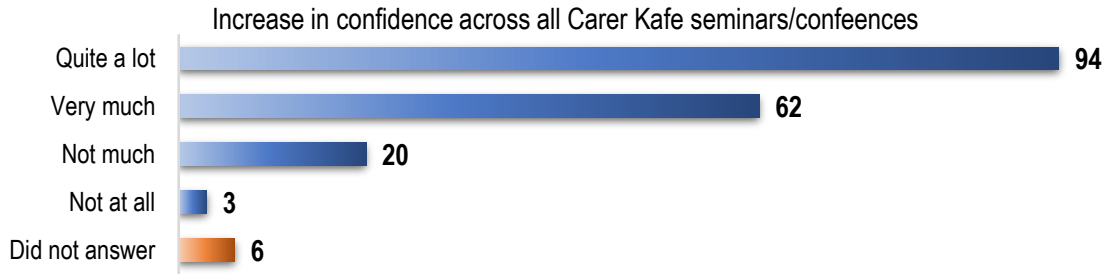
The luncheon at The Windsor Hotel for 120 people was much appreciated by all in attendance - the carers and the people who support them.

Still to come….

A video – Navigating Difficult Conversations
This was launched in December.

GPV/KCV pays particular attention to the value of attending face to face functions. The growth in knowledge and confidence of carers is monitored closely. The graphs below outline the increase in knowledge and confidence reported by the carers who completed evaluation forms at the selected activities. All reported in increase in knowledge by quite a lot or very much.

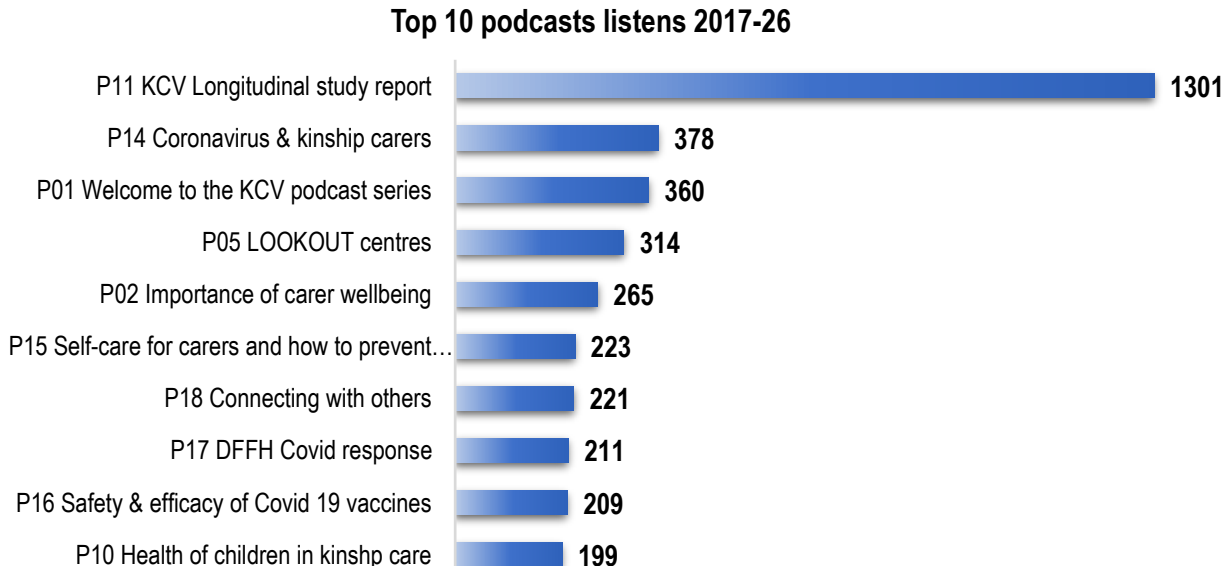


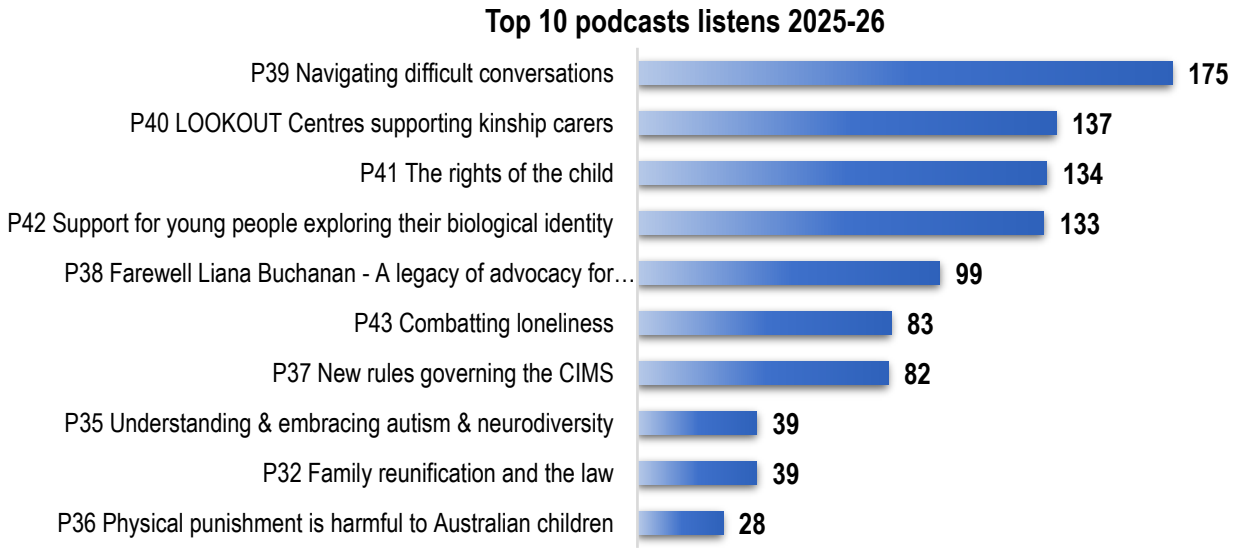


RESOURCES PODCASTS

Six podcasts were produced in the 25-26 financial year:
P44 Understanding the changes to the Children, Youth and Families Act
P43 Combatting Loneliness
P42 Support for young people exploring their biological identity
P41 The Rights of the Child
P40 LOOKOUT Centres supporting kinship carers
P39 Navigating difficult conversations

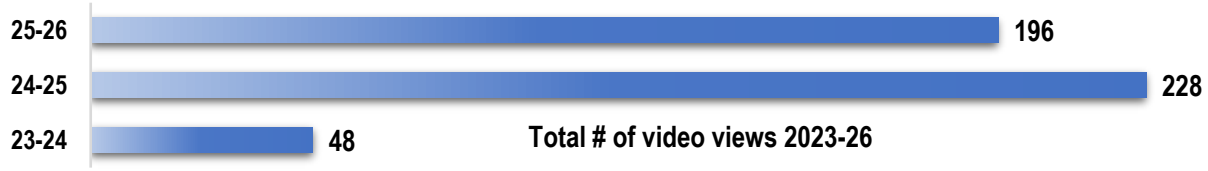


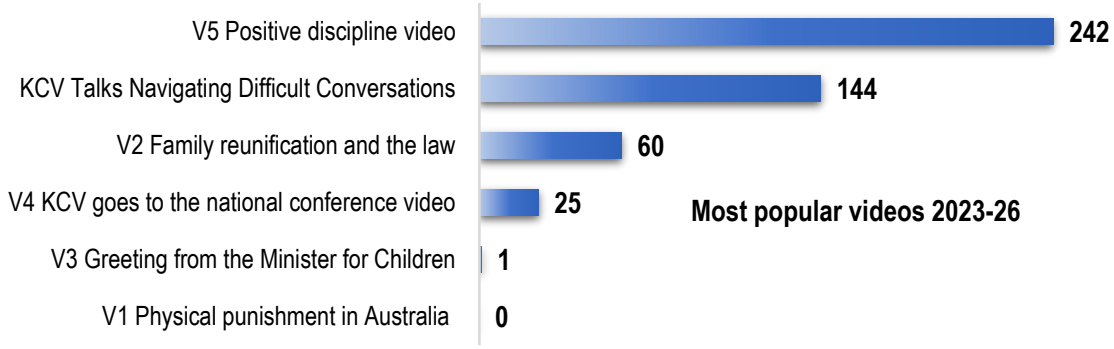


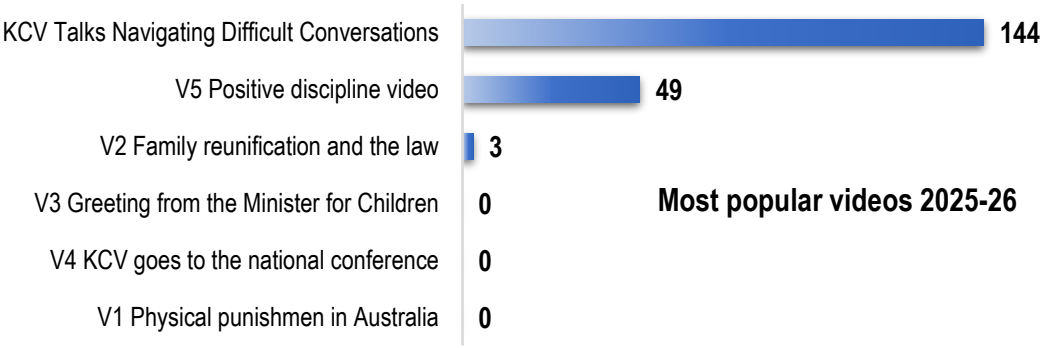


RESOURCES VIDEOS

One new video was produced in 25-26 financial year - KCV Talks - Navigating Difficult Conversations.

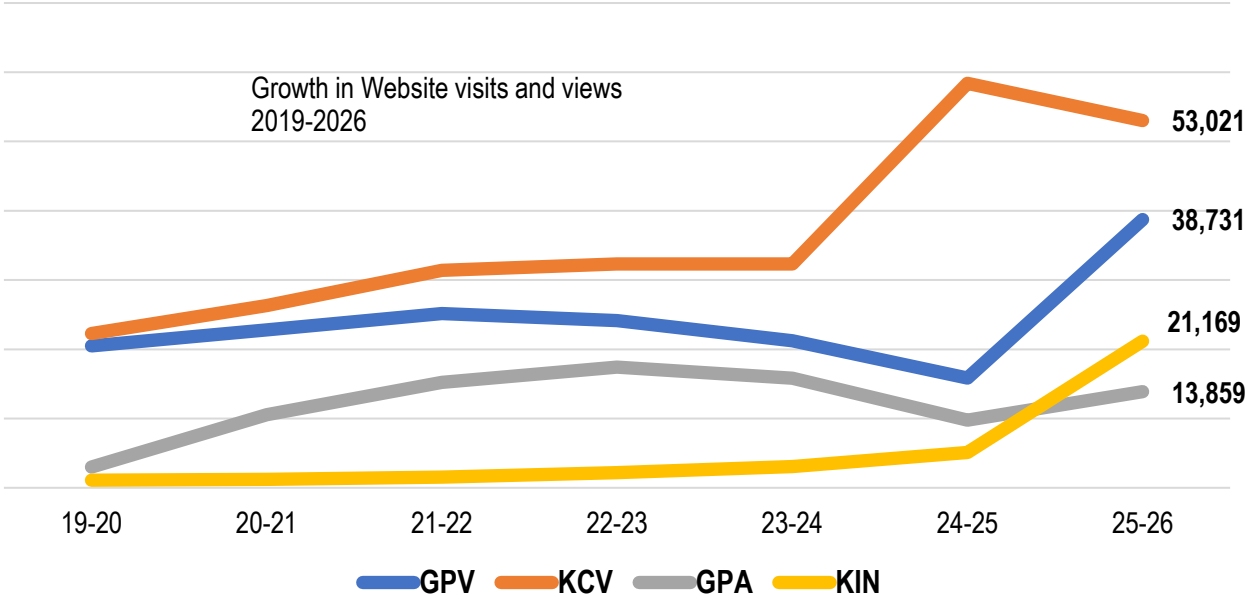






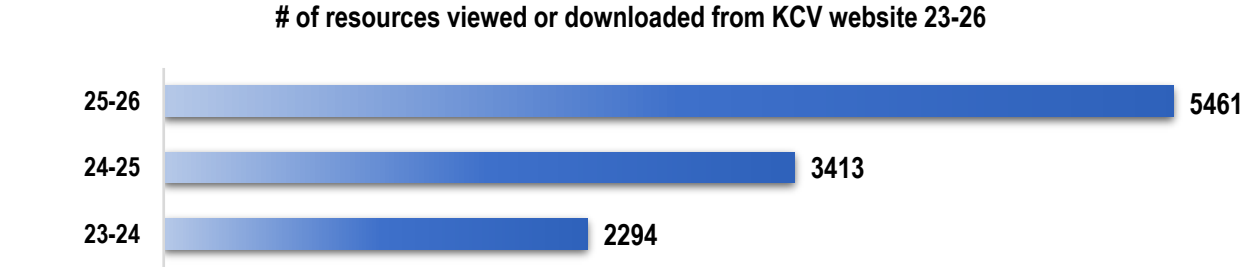
RESOURCES WEBSITES

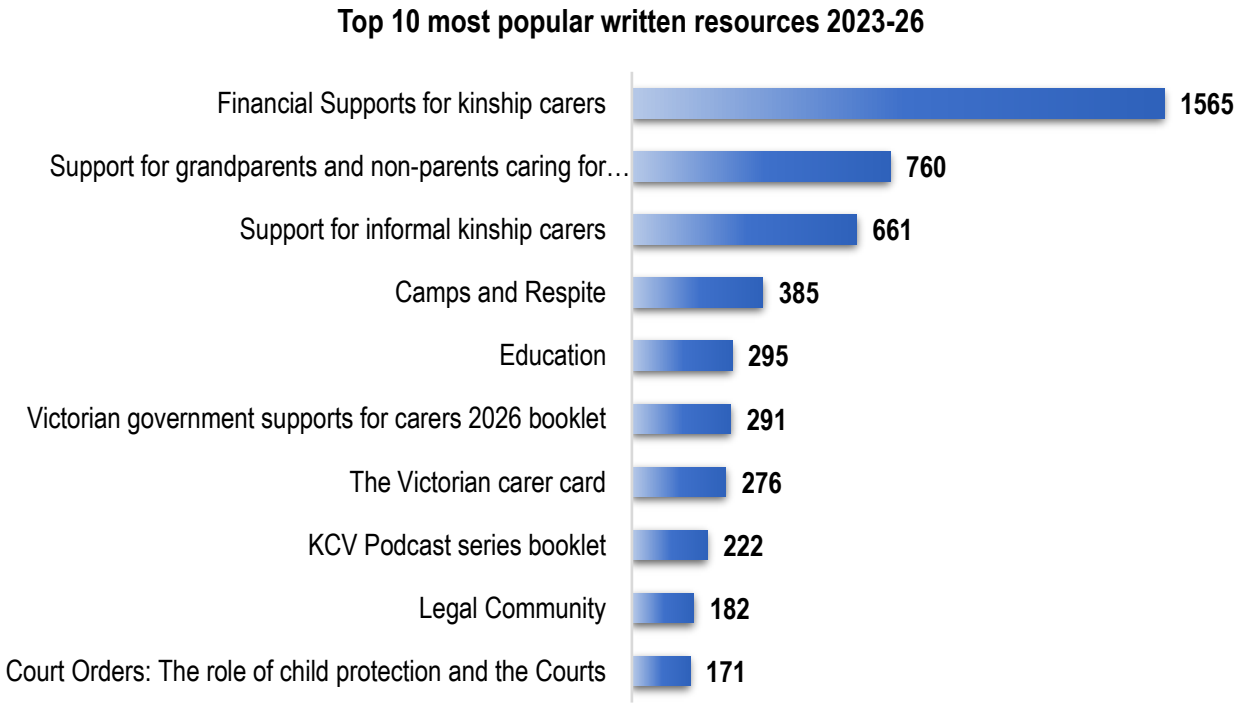
As more resources are posted to the websites, they become more popular as a source of information, particularly for kinship carers.

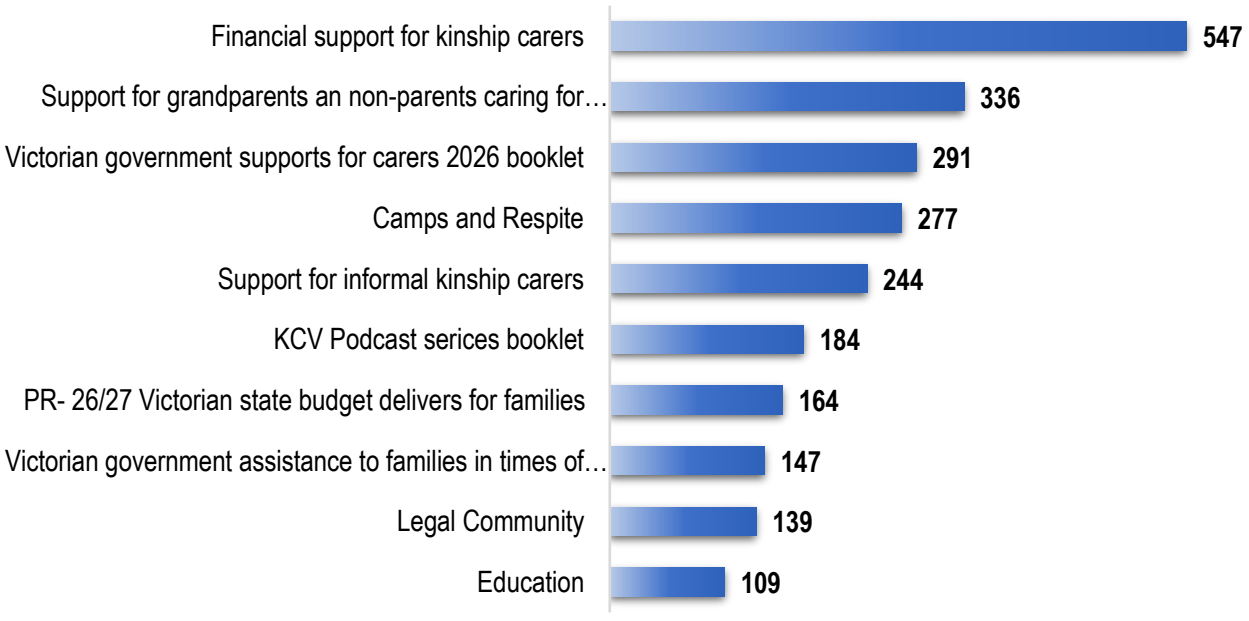


RESOURCES WRITTEN

Seventy-nine written resources were produced in 25-26.







Auditor's Report

Independent Auditors Report to the members of the Association

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Grandparents Victoria Inc. (the association), which comprises the committee's report, the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2026, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, cash flow statement, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of Grandparents Victoria Inc. is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001/ACNC Act* and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects (or gives a true and fair view –refer to the applicable state/territory Act), the financial position of Grandparents Victoria Inc. as at 30 June 2026 and (of) its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001/ACNC Act.*

Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Grandparents Victoria Inc. to meet the requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001/ACNC Act* . As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Paul Vassiliadis

18/10/2024
Level 1,
30 Amis Crescent,
Keilor East VIC. 3033

Income and Expenditure Statement

Income		2026	2025
Grants		602,042	397,324
Total Grant Operating		602,042	397,324
Donations			
Donations Received		0	455
Total Donations		0	455
Membership Fees		664	244
	Total Income	602,707	398,023
Gross Surplus		602,707	398,023
Other Income			
Other Revenue		273	115,587
	Total Other Income	273	115,587

Expenditure			
Accounting Fees		1,113	1,104
Bank Fees		1,276	406
Board and Governance Expenses		1,199	4,470
Client Support Services		13,406	6,749
Computer Expenses		849	678
Conference & Seminar Costs		10,419	108,208
Consultancy Fees		381,078	298,129
Donations paid		1,285	0
Hire of Plant & Equipment		31,560	3,324
Interest Paid		0	593
Meeting Expenses		8,682	10,829
Membership Fees Paid		229	127
Office Expenses		600	615
Postage, Freight & Courier		1,549	816
Printing & Stationery		9,494	10,730
Publications & Information Resources		30	0
Sundry Expenses		2,791	1,446
Training & Development		0	779
Travelling Expenses		13,376	21,313
Utilities		5,461	1,462
Subscriptions		554	4,237
	Total Expenditure	484,949	476,015

	2026	2025
Current Year Surplus/ (Deficit) Before Income Tax Adjustments	118,031	37,594
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit) Before Income Tax	118,031	37,594
Net Current Year Surplus After Income Tax	118,031	37,594

Assets and Liabilities Statement

Assets

Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	657,238	528,121
GST Receivable	0	4,263
Total Current Assets	657,238	532,384
Non-Current Assets		
Plant and Equipment and Vehicles	1,346	1,346
Total Non-Current Assets	1,346	1,346
Total Assets	658,584	533,730

Liabilities

Current Liabilities		
GST Payable	6,823	0
Total Current Liabilities	6,823	0
Other Current Liabilities		
Rounding	0	0
Total Other Current Liabilities	0	0
Total Liabilities	6,823	0
Net Assets	651,761	533,731
Member's Funds		
Capital Reserve	651,761	533,731
Total Member's Funds	651,761	533,731