

## Families Supporting Families Annual Report 2018

This has been an eventful year for Families Supporting Families as we celebrated 15 years of supporting local families of children with additional needs. It was very successful with a significant growth in membership, an increase in followers on our Facebook page and increased attendance at the many events we held throughout the year. These events included school holiday activities for the whole family, informal coffee mornings, educational seminars with guest speakers and the annual Carers Dinner. Members have connected with FSF and with peers through the FSF newsletter, website and Facebook page. Feedback following events and via social media has been overwhelmingly positive.

I would like to thank our major supporters: Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group who sponsored our holiday activities again this year; Tomago Aluminium, Carers NSW and Port Waratah Coal Services. I would also like to thank Central Charlestown Leagues Club, Noah's on the Beach and Grill'd, The Junction for their generous donations of prizes and/or room hire costs. We also very much appreciate the generosity of our Auditor, Graeme Pritchard, who kindly donated his services to FSF this year.

I've enjoyed working with the other volunteers on the committee to provide opportunities for FSF members to connect and learn together. Thank you to all the 2018 committee members for the time and energy you have put into your roles, organising and running events, keeping track of the finances, managing the inbox and database, writing minutes and grant applications, managing social media and producing the newsletter. I would also like to thank Natalie Atherton who has continued to manage the FSF website. The work of the committee is summarised in the reports that follow.

Eilis Corrigan  
FSF Coordinator

### Treasurers Report

Total assets at 1/07/2017	\$13,490.94
Total assets at 1/07/2018	\$11,655.98
We had a trading deficit of	\$1,834.96

Major expenses included:

- Carers Café & Carers Café plus \$2,147.90
- Carers dinner \$1,724.95
- Holiday Activities \$1,377.40
- Web Management \$274.82
- Insurance \$1,183.13
- Printing \$160.21

There were also small amounts for our running costs e.g. Incorporation fees, post office box hire, postage and stationery.

We received funds including \$1,400 grant from Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group, \$806.89 from Carers NSW, \$600 donation from Port Waratah Coal Services, \$378 from holiday activities, \$310 from Carers Dinner, \$770 in membership fees and \$153.37 in interest.

Catriona Kazuno  
FSF Treasurer

## Carers Café Plus Report

We had 8 educational seminars (known as Carers Café Plus) in 2018, twice as many as in previous years. We continued our partnership with Newcastle Middle School, which began last year, co-hosting their “Pop up Coffee Club” program. This has been a very successful and worthwhile partnership for FSF increasing the number of seminars available to our members, while at the same time offering an opportunity for FSF to reach out to a wider audience. The Term 1 topic was “The Role of the School Counsellor” which was presented by Mrs Nikki Burdack.

In Term 2 Shae Rogers, from Small Talk Speech Therapy, gave a very informative presentation on “Setting Your Child up for Success in School”. At Middle School we heard from Carmel Smith of Interrelate and from Annette Messenger and Tracy Dudding-Byth about the interesting research they are doing.

Term 3 was particularly busy with Kim Moore of Youth Connections presenting on “Post-School Options”; Erin Donnelly from the Sydney office of Family Planning NSW speaking about Personal Development Issues and Dr Lee Sturgeon, local Child Psychologist, who kindly offered to present to our members on “Anxiety & Emotional Regulation”. Dr Sturgeon is always a popular speaker and there was such demand for this seminar that it was decided to repeat it to accommodate those who were unable to attend.

This repeat seminar was held in Term 4 on the evening of November 14<sup>th</sup> (rather than our usual morning time slot) and was again very popular with 98 people attending. Many attendees who are in full-time employment appreciated the opportunity to attend. The final event of the year was a question and answer session on the NDIS with Liz Anderson from the NDIA and Local Area Coordinators Libby Pike and Kathy Richards.

The Carers Café Plus program was funded using the money kindly donated through Tomago Aluminium’s workplace giving scheme. FSF also appreciate the generosity of many of our guest speakers who donated their time and expertise to FSF. All attendees at the educational seminars were asked to complete an evaluation form following these events. Feedback from these evaluations has been very positive (over 90% of respondents rated their overall experience as excellent or good) and over 95% of respondents indicated that they wish to continue attending FSF events.

13 <sup>th</sup> March 2018 “The Role of the School Counsellor” presented by Mrs Nikki Burdack Pop-Up Coffee Club – Joint event with Newcastle Middle School on site. No. attending: 17
16 <sup>th</sup> May 2018 at Merewether Bowling Club “Setting your Child up for Success at School” presented by Shae Rogers, Small Talk Speech Therapy. No. attending: 16
12 <sup>th</sup> June 2018 “The FaceMatch Project” presented by Dr Tracy Dudding-Byth: Annette Messenger who spoke about her research on well-being in Teenagers on the Autism Spectrum; Carmel Smith from Interrelate. Pop Up Coffee Club - Joint event with Newcastle Middle School on site. No. attending: 25
23 August 2018 “Post-School Options”, Kim Moore, Youth Connections, Newcastle Central Charlestown Leagues Club, Bula Street, Kahibah No. attending: 16

<p>4<sup>th</sup> September 2018  Personal Development Issues presented by Erin Donnelly from Family Planning, NSW  Pop Up Coffee Club - Joint event with Newcastle Middle School on site.  No. attending: 19</p>
<p>13<sup>th</sup> September 2018  "Anxiety &amp; Emotional Regulation", Dr Lee Sturgeon,  The Place, Charlestown.  No. attending: 77</p>
<p>14<sup>th</sup> November 2018  "Anxiety &amp; Emotional Regulation"  Central Charlestown Leagues Club, Bula Street, Kahibah.  No. attending: 98</p>
<p>27<sup>th</sup> November 2018  "Q &amp; A session on The NDIS" presented by Liz Anderson from the NDIA.  Pop Up Coffee Club - Joint event with Newcastle Middle School on site.  No. attending: 23</p>

### Carers Café Report

Carers Cafés are a great chance to relax and meet with like-minded people for support and good conversation. The Carers Cafés this year were very successful, and feedback was very positive. One new member remarked that she was so glad she decided to attend as she was in very bad humour before arriving but went away feeling much happier following the break and a chat.

The Carers Dinner was a great chance to catch up with members new and old. This year was extra special as we celebrated 15 years since FSF was founded. Noah's on the Beach was a very popular venue. We had the highest number to-date of men attending which was wonderful as it's one of the few times they get together with other male carers. We were entertained by singer and guitarist Ben Davis who has high-functioning autism. It was a great opportunity to showcase Ben's talents.

#### **Carers Cafes - 2018**

22<sup>nd</sup> February - Euro Patisserie, New Lambton. No. attending: 10

3<sup>rd</sup> May – Poppy's, Gateshead. No. attending: 10

3<sup>rd</sup> June - Gamble & Brown, Kotara. No. attending: 6

1<sup>st</sup> August – Pegs Café, Whitebridge. No. attending: 6

26<sup>th</sup> September – Williams Artisan Bread & Espresso, Lambton. No. attending: 7 (1 male)

6<sup>th</sup> December - Awaba House, Booragul. No. attending: 10 (1 male)

#### **Carers Dinner**

26<sup>th</sup> October 2018 – Noah's on the Beach. No. attending: 39 (15 male).

Regards,

Katie Reedman.

Amanda Lindstrom.

### School Holiday Activities

The following school holiday events were run this year:

Date	Activity	Venue	Number Attending
23 January 2018	Museum Outing to see "Dinosaur rEvolution"	Newcastle Museum	14 children and 8 Carers
18 <sup>th</sup> April 2018	Ten Pin Bowling	Superstrike, Warners Bay	24 children
10 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Movie – Incredibles 2	Event Cinemas, Glendale	26 children and 10 Carers
7 <sup>th</sup> October 2018	Sports Party	Hunter Sports Centre, Glendale	26 children

Feedback from all events was very positive with families appreciating the opportunity for parents/Carers, children with additional needs and their siblings to come along and enjoy a fun activity together at minimal cost.

FSF also assisted 12 families to access tickets to see Circus Quirkus during the July School Holidays and 2 families to attend the 2018 Sydney Lord Mayor's New Year's Eve picnic. A great time was had by all!

### Media Officer Report

The role of the Media Officer is to publish the FSF newsletter each term and publicise events on social media. I have produced flyers for the Carers Cafés, educational seminars and holiday activities and created Facebook events to help promote them. I take photos at each event for use on social media and for publication in the newsletter. I have also assisted with the transition to using EventBrite, an automated event booking system.

I initiated and organized Kim Moore's presentation and was very involved with organising both of Lee Sturgeon's seminars and I assisted with the Sports Party and the Carers Dinner.

This year on our Facebook page we have increased page views, likes, post engagements and reach. The number of followers has increased since the start of this year from approximately 560 to 770.

I look for every opportunity to promote FSF to other services and to families in need of support. I also seek out information about what services would be useful to our members for support and what guest speakers might be helpful presenters at our events.

Kind Regards,  
Jennifer Mills.

## Grants & Fundraising

The following grants applications were submitted in 2018 –

<b>Grant Name</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Newcastle Coal Foundation Community Support Program	Successful
Commonwealth Bank Staff Community Grants Program	Unsuccessful
Inger Rice Foundation	Unsuccessful
Honda Foundation	Unsuccessful
Newcastle Area ClubGRANTS	Unsuccessful
Lake Macquarie ClubGRANTS	Unsuccessful
Stockland Community Grants Program	Unsuccessful
Carers NSW Carers Week Grant	Successful
Suez Community Grants	Unsuccessful
Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation	Unsuccessful
Volunteer Workers Grant	Not yet known

We have communicated with funding bodies throughout the year to keep them informed about progress and to seek new sources of funding. Funds of \$558 was received from Carers NSW Together Program and this was used towards the cost of insurance and printing. We participated in Grill'd Local Matters and received \$100 donation through this initiative. A donation of \$600 was received from Port Waratah Coal Services.

Regards,  
Eilis Corrigan.

### Secretary's Report

Listed below are the key activities fulfilled in the role of secretary for 2018:

1. Taking minutes at the monthly meetings & distributing to committee.
2. Updating the membership database with new members & updating members status to paid membership for 2018 when advised by Treasurer.
3. Checking FSF inbox approx. on weekly basis and forwarding relevant emails to our members.
4. Answering & responding to messages left on the FSF phone and specifically collating RSVP's for FSF events and forwarding to FSF Coordinator.
5. Collecting mail from the Post Office box regularly and distributing this to relevant committee members.

Along with these roles, I also organised and ran the Sports Party at Hunter Sports Centre Glendale during the October School holidays and assisted with other events throughout the year.

Regards,  
Louisa Boyle