



**Act for kids**  
Preventing and treating child abuse and neglect

**NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2015**

**ISSUE # 61**

Coby came to Act for Kids after experiencing severe neglect and witnessing domestic violence. He had been facing many challenges and had experienced multiple foster placement break downs in a very short timeframe due to his behaviour. He showed us how upset and confused he was on the inside through some really difficult behaviours such as not following directions, having temper tantrums and destroying his belongings. The people in Coby's life described him as a very active and intelligent four year old boy with a very big heart. We certainly got to see these qualities in him.

Our multidisciplinary team at Act for Kids worked with Coby and his foster carer to address his developmental and emotional needs. He came to our therapy centre for weekly sessions, and we worked on strengthening his attachment relationship with his foster carer through play therapy and teaching him different strategies to express his anger. Coby's foster carer learnt how to understand and help him when he was feeling frustrated. When we asked Coby's foster carer what had been helpful about sessions at Act for Kids she expressed to us that "his therapist provided easy activities that were not hard for him to pick up, he takes his new skills home and teaches the rest of us".

Coby also attended our Cool for School program, which is run by our occupational therapist, with the help of our speech pathologist and psychologist to assist him in getting ready for school. Coby is a great helper, is able to follow directions, play with other children and enjoy assisting the other children in the program. Since starting at Act for Kids, Coby has made significant progress, he is doing well at home and takes great care of his belongings, and he is able to have relationships with other children and is doing well at day care now. Coby's carer reflected that "he was aggressive, had outbursts and now he is a kind, calm and a loving four year old".







## From the CEO

Child abuse and neglect is one of Australia's most misunderstood social problems. Unfortunately, most people don't understand how often it happens and how severe some cases are. The damage, if not treated, can

be irreversible. The greatest satisfaction for us is having the privilege of seeing children flourish and develop once we have the opportunity to help them.

We have exciting news for 2015. The Queensland Governor His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC has agreed to be our patron. We are looking forward to working more closely with PACT. PACT stands for Protecting All Children Today Inc., they have unique expertise in supporting child and young person victims and witnesses throughout Queensland in the Criminal Justice System. We are also excited to begin work with the newly appointed Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Child Safety and Multicultural Affairs, Shannon Fentiman.

Along with our exciting news, 2015 is shaping up to be a big year in service growth for Act for Kids. We were awarded recurrent funding by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, as part of the Queensland Government's *Stronger Families* initiative. Thanks to the initiative, Act for Kids will provide support and assistance to vulnerable families in Gympie, Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast, under Family and Child Connect. The community-based intake and referral service will better support local families who are at risk of entering or re-entering the child protection system. We were also successful in tenders to provide Intensive Family Support services to families with complex needs in Toowoomba, Roma, the Gold Coast and Townsville. The *Stronger Families* initiative programs opened for referrals on 19 January this year.

Through the goodwill of our sponsors we were able to fund new services so that we can fill the gaps in social needs, boost local service delivery and help reduce the number of children entering out-of-home care. Thanks to the support from corporate sponsors, Budget Direct and Subway® Restaurants, Act for Kids opened its doors in Ipswich in January 2015 to help prevent and treat

child abuse and neglect. The Ipswich centre provides an Integrated Therapy Service to help children and young people overcome their experiences through therapeutic support, and counselling for families under stress or experiencing a range of challenges.

Act for Kids was proud to participate in the annual 'Walk for Daniel' event to raise awareness of child safety in the Sunshine Coast region. The Daniel Morcombe Foundation formed a partnership with Act for Kids to set up a new integrated therapy service at the Daniel Morcombe Foundation in Woombye. Walk Tall is funded by the Daniel Morcombe Foundation and is managed by Act for Kids. The initiative provides counselling and emotional support to children and adolescents on the Sunshine Coast who have either experienced or are at risk of physical, emotional and/or sexual harm.

The Act for Kids Gala Ball is a must for the Brisbane social calendar. Over 400 guests will spend the evening dancing beneath the stars in the Grand Ballroom at Sofitel Hotel on 16 May to raise funds for Australia's most vulnerable children. Guests will indulge in a three course dinner while enjoying live performances from Redtie Band. There will also be live and silent auctions throughout the evening with some incredible prizes on offer.

Already this year we have had two successful events, the Auto & General Insurance golf day and Subway® Australia's 'Sub for a Cause' day. In March Auto & General Insurance held their first charity golf day and raised over \$21,000 for Act for Kids. Also in March, Sub for a Cause was held across all regional Queensland stores when \$1 from every sub sold went to Act for Kids.

This newsletter is a reflection of the strong community network we have who are dedicated to partner with us in the treatment and prevention of abuse and neglect. There are no words to describe how truly appreciative we are to the thousands of caring Australians who support our work. We would not make a difference in the lives of so many vulnerable children without your continued kindness and trust.

**Dr Neil Carrington**  
Chief Executive Officer

## New services to better support vulnerable families in Queensland

Act for Kids has expanded its services across Queensland after being awarded recurrent funding by the former Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disabilities Services, as part of the Queensland Government's *Stronger Families* initiative in November 2014.

In January 2015, the new community-based intake and referral service known as Family and Child Connect was rolled out across Queensland to provide better support to families who are at risk of entering or re-entering the child protection system.

Act for Kids has successfully tendered to provide support and assistance to vulnerable families on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast including Gympie, under Family and Child Connect. Family and Child Connect will provide better access and help families avoid a path of stress, reaction and potential child abuse and neglect.

Family and Child Connect is supported by new Intensive Family Support services, helping families address any issues that might be compromising the safety and wellbeing of their children. Act for Kids has been selected to operate the new Intensive Family Support services in Townsville, Toowoomba and Roma.

The funding has already increased the charity's capacity to deliver additional services to children and families to prevent child abuse and neglect. Through Family and Child Connect, Act for Kids will assist approximately 3,500 families per year by responding to enquiries and providing referrals for support, and through our new Intensive Family Support programs, will provide support to 460 families per year.

Dr Katrina Lines, Executive Director of Programs, Research and Education at Act for Kids, said Act for Kids has provided significant input into the Queensland Child Protection

Commission of Inquiry and continues to work closely with the government to shape the new child and family support system.

"Family and Child Connect will mean families at risk of statutory child protection intervention will no longer need to go through the door of Child Safety to get the help that they need. Service providers will be able to work together more effectively through the new Family and Child Connect.

Act for Kids CEO, Dr Neil Carrington, said the new services will help parents develop skills to better care for their children and reduce the number of children entering out-of-home care.

"We know the level of support needed for families in these regions, so the real benefit of the additional funding will be our capacity to increase service provision to more children and families.

"In January 2015, we employed 58 new staff, so now we have a team of more than 200 dedicated professionals providing the highest level of support to help vulnerable families become stronger," Dr Carrington said.



## Early Education Program awarded for excellence in inclusive education

Previous Minister for Education, Training and Employment John-Paul Langbroek opened the 15th annual Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools gala dinner on 17 October 2014, congratulating all state winners and finalists. The awards aim to recognise and reward excellent practice in Queensland state schools that create positive outcomes and improved performances for students.

The Royal Children's Hospital School won the 'Showcase Award for Excellence in Inclusive Education' for the school's empowering kids to fly program, an initiative of Act for Kids' Early Education Program kindy.

Young kids who have experienced severe trauma from abuse and neglect can have significant emotional, social, cognitive and physical developmental delays that mean they can't cope with normal school environments.

Our Early Education Program kindy is only available at our North



Brisbane centre and is our most intensive program. We have two teachers working with five to eight kids from our Intensive Therapy Program. There are two classes, tadpoles (toddlers) and frogs (pre-prep). Children receive wrap-around therapy support and early learning so they don't miss out on any early education.

Our classes run in line with school terms and our private bus picks kids up and drops them off so they get used to the whole school routine. By the time they graduate from our kindy they are ready to transition to prep, our teachers take them to visit their school and work with the prep teachers to ensure it will be a smooth, stress free transition.

Act for Kids Executive Director of Programs, Research and Education, Dr Katrina Lines, said she is very proud of the partnership with the former Royal Children's Hospital School and the outcomes of the Early Education Program.

"I would like to congratulate Michelle Bond, Royal Children's Hospital School Principal, Marina McLaren our Early Education Teacher, Melanie McLaren our Teacher's Aide and the entire Act for Kids Brisbane team for their continued hard work and commitment to providing excellent educational services to the children enrolled in our Early Education Program.

"Many of these children suffer significant social, emotional, physical and behavioural effects of trauma from their early experiences. The time they spend in the kindy really ensures they're set up for success when they start 'big' school and allows them to stay connected to education," Dr Katrina Lines said.





## Brisbane business helping kids sing and grow

Act for Kids would like to acknowledge the dedication and loyalty of our sponsor Capitol Body Corporate Administration for supporting Act for Kids' Sing & Grow music therapy program at our Woolloowin centre in Brisbane. Without their tremendous fundraising efforts the program would not have succeeded.

For the second year running the Sing & Grow Program will be funded by Capitol, with a goal to raise \$10,000 in 10 months, where they will match donations dollar for dollar.

This Sing & Grow program helps children express themselves through music therapy. It aims to improve the child's overall motor skills, social skills, quality of life and emotional development.

The Sing & Grow program will commence again in Term 2 at our Woolloowin centre, with the aim to support parents and/or carers to either form or enhance their attachment to the child. An additional program has

been devised for children attending our Early Education Program, enabling them to express themselves freely through music.

The three main themes delivered through the program are play, praise and consistency. The program also aims to improve the child's fine and gross motor skills, speech and language development and social skills within a supportive environment.

Angela Kretz, Acting Team Leader at Act for Kids, said the program is designed to help children verbalise their feelings and overcome their experiences.

"Each child receives an instrument pack to explore at home. This helps the child and parent/carer establish a musical relationship and build positive interactions through music.

"At the end of the nine week program, each child receives a musical instrument pack to encourage ongoing parent-child interactions and further strengthen attachment," Angela said.

In 2014, Capitol hosted a Christmas in July trivia night raising over \$3,000 for Act for Kids, helping to fund 60 musical instruments which were supplied to 30 local children. Capitol has been supporting Act for Kids since 2007 and we're sincerely grateful for their ongoing support.

## Student placements leading future service development in child protection

In May 2014, we opened our first Child and Family Centre of Excellence at James Cook University in Townsville. The facility leads the way in Australian education, training and research in child protection practice. Act for Kids has established a training centre for students undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate courses at James Cook University.

Chanelle is currently studying a Bachelor of Speech Pathology at James Cook University. Chanelle undertook a six week student placement with Act for Kids in February 2015. During this time, she assisted the Growing Learning Team to provide help to kids who have developmental delays and educational disadvantage due to experiencing abuse and neglect. From this she has grown to understand ways that professionals can help struggling kids and families which will not only help her in her future career, but will also help more children and families in need.

Chanelle Chate, said that it was such an encouraging and supportive environment at the centre and the learning experience went beyond her expectations.

"Speech pathology is an opportunity for me to give people a voice. Communication is the key to building relationships with those around us.

"It can be frustrating and isolating for people who aren't able to communicate effectively with those around them. I am privileged to be able to help these people communicate and build relationships with those who are important to them.

"Speech pathology is so much more than just teaching people to talk properly, it's about giving people an opportunity to express their needs, wants, ideas and thoughts with those around them and engage with the world," Chanelle said.

Renée McAllister, Townsville Regional Director at Act for Kids, said student placements ensure graduates are learning current best-practice support services and are better equipped for specialist work in the child protection sector.

"Act for Kids has a very strong relationship with James Cook University allowing us to offer approximately 10 students placements per year, which not only gives students hands on experience, but also helps to increase the capacity and capability of the human services sector in the North Queensland region," Renée said.

**If you're interested in completing a student placement at Act for Kids, please send an email to [mail@actforkids.com.au](mailto:mail@actforkids.com.au)**



**Meet Chanelle Chate**

## Indigenous kids to benefit from our protective behaviours program

Act for Kids has been awarded generous funding as part of nib foundation's sixth annual Community Grants Program. The funding will allow Act for Kids to adapt its Learn to be safe with Emmy protective behaviours program to be culturally appropriate and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, parents and communities.

Our Learn to be safe with Emmy program teaches grade one kids to recognise when they feel safe and unsafe, to identify trusted adults in their own lives and what they can do when they feel unsafe. It's taught at school through weekly one-hour workshops over five weeks. In 2013-14, the program was delivered to more than 30 schools and 5,000 children by trained Act for Kids facilitators.

The program is activity based, fun and interactive and has received very positive feedback from teachers whose classes have participated in the program – kids retain the knowledge and feel empowered. Parents understand what their kids are learning because they have homework they do together. Early results of our evaluation show there is long-term learning and retention of these important messages, and there have been cases of kids disclosing abuse and getting help and support after they've gone through the program.

Dr Katrina Lines, Executive Director Programs, Research and Education at Act for Kids, said the funding will enable Act for Kids to modify the materials, content and delivery methods of the Learn to be safe with Emmy program.

"This way we can ensure the delivery method is culturally appropriate and manageable for Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander children and their families. The adjustments to the program will improve learning opportunities for Indigenous children and those with English as a second language.

"This culturally appropriate program will be delivered to thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children living in Cairns, Yarrabah, Mossman, Kuranda, Mareeba, Weipa, Napranum, Aurukun, Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Doomadgee and Mt Isa," Dr Lines said.

nib foundation Executive Officer, Amy Tribe, said they believe healthy communities are the key to improving the lives of Australians now and for future generations, which is why their annual Community Grants support initiatives that deliver real health outcomes for local communities.

"We are pleased to provide funding to help Act for Kids expand on the success of Learn to be Safe with Emmy and draw on their considerable experience working with Aboriginal communities to adapt a culturally sensitive version of this great program," Amy said.

For more information:  
<https://www.actforkids.com.au/empowering-kids.html>



## Santa delivers Christmas cheer to kids in need

Last Christmas, Act for Kids' teams were busy celebrating the festive season with kids' parties and Christmas gifts. Thanks to many kind supporters, hundreds of toys, gift cards, books, scooters and board games were donated to Act for Kids so children in need could enjoy a happy Christmas.

Cheerful volunteers in Brisbane banded together to wrap Christmas gifts and removalists Santa Fe Wridgway helped transport some of the gifts to children living in the Gold Coast, Maryborough, Cairns and Townsville.

Santa gave Rudolph a rest this year, hauling many of the gifts onto a festively decorated minibus, in what has become an annual tradition at Act for Kids. Santa joined forces with his elves to put a smile on many children's faces by making surprise deliveries to homes across Brisbane.

Thank you to the following companies for donating Christmas gifts to children in need.

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Bambini Early Childhood Development, Licensys, Gail Bubb and dancers, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Development, Madd Gear, Worley Parsons, Advisian, Morgan Financial Limited, Origin Energy, Capitol Body Corporate Administration, Aerotelecom, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Hutchinson Builders, Stockland Townsville, Northshore Stockland, Townsville Bulletin, Glencore, Lions Club, La Luna Youth Arts and many others who contributed.

While all kids love presents, what abused and neglected kids really need is ongoing therapy and support. We rely heavily on donations to support our intensive therapy programs for abused and neglected kids, and early support for families at risk.

**To make a donation, please go to [www.actforkids.com.au/donate.html](http://www.actforkids.com.au/donate.html)**





## Act for Kids continues to support families in need



On Tuesday 3 February 2015, Mayor Paul Pisasale officially opened the new Act for Kids centre in Ipswich. With the help of funding support from corporate sponsors, Budget Direct and Subway® Restaurants, Act for Kids opened its doors in January 2015 to support the Ipswich community.

The Ipswich centre provides an Integrated Therapy Service to help children and young people overcome their experiences through therapeutic support, and counselling for families that are under stress or experiencing a range of challenges.

Budget Direct have generously contributed towards establishing the new service by embracing the season of giving by supporting Act for Kids with a '12 days, 12 donations' social media campaign to help raise awareness of Act for Kids and support our new Ipswich centre.

For 12 days, Budget Direct promoted an item of therapy equipment to purchase for our new Ipswich centre. To encourage Facebook fans to get involved in the 'giving' spirit, Budget Direct asked for a minimum of 30 Likes for each post. And because every post received a minimum of 30 likes, Budget Direct went even further, giving Act for Kids an extra \$1,000!

Ellen Park, Fundraising Manager at Act for Kids, said the team are very thankful to have Budget Direct helping purchase vital equipment and tools for the new Ipswich centre.

"The therapy equipment is a critical part of our intensive therapy program – it helps kids express themselves so our therapists can work through their experiences of abuse and neglect.

"For several years the team at Budget Direct have dedicated their time and effort to supporting Act for Kids' initiatives through fundraising, volunteering, Christmas hampers and toys and many more activities. It's great to see them rising to new challenges and bringing changes to children's lives," Ellen said.



## Artwork to take away a child's monster

During National Child Protection Week (7-13 September 2014), Act for Kids launched a public awareness campaign in conjunction with Channel Seven to encourage Queenslanders to stand up and take action.

The campaign featured Act for Kids Ambassador, Kay McGrath with a community service announcement designed to increase awareness and the importance of primary prevention to reduce child abuse and neglect in Australia.

With the help of our pro-bono advertising agency Publicis Mojo, Act for Kids transformed Brisbane's King George Square into a pop-up art gallery filled with 120 monster paintings to showcase the importance of art therapy in helping children verbalise feelings and overcome their experiences. The event raised almost \$5,000 through artwork sales and donations.

The artwork was generously produced by children from Ironside Community After School Activities Group (ICASAG) and YMCA Rainworth Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) with vibrant hues of watercolours, pastels and crayons, depicting their own stories and interpretations.

Act for Kids Therapist, Angela Kretz, explains that art therapy helps children work through their experiences and allows therapists to identify any concerns they may have in a creative way.

"Sometimes children are unable to verbalise their

experiences or talk about what they are thinking or feeling, so art therapy provides a forum for them to express themselves in a non-threatening manner by drawing, painting, utilising art and craft materials, clay or sand to depict their experiences," Angela Kretz said.

Rob Williamson, Executive Director of Marketing, Communications and Fundraising at Act for Kids, said the pop-up art gallery helped to generate community awareness and the importance of intensive therapy programs.

"The funds raised on the day will help us continue our free intensive therapy programs so we can help more children deal with their monsters. We want every child in need to have access to therapy and specialised treatment so they can lead a safe and happy childhood," Rob Williamson said.



Artwork is still available online. Visit the online pop-up art gallery: [www.actforkids.com.au/art](http://www.actforkids.com.au/art)

## Act for Kids joins forces with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation

Act for Kids has formed a partnership with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation to set up a new Integrated Therapy Service at the Daniel Morcombe Foundation office in Woombye, Sunshine Coast.

Walk Tall is funded by the Daniel Morcombe Foundation and is managed by Act for Kids. The Walk Tall program provides counselling and emotional support to children and adolescents on the Sunshine Coast who have either experienced or are at risk of physical, emotional and/or sexual harm.

Act for Kids CEO, Dr Neil Carrington, said he's delighted to be working with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, an organisation taking proactive steps to protect children.

"We've been working with abused and neglected kids for almost 27 years, and we've learned how important it is for all children to

have access to vital support services. Professional support can result in positive outcomes for children and young people; and with the right help they can overcome their experiences, and lead happy and fulfilling lives.



"We hope this announcement marks the beginning of a nationwide movement to protect children," Dr Carrington said.

Act for Kids Ambassador and Patron of the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Kay McGrath, played a key role in bringing the partnership together.

"I'm thrilled about these two highly regarded organisations coming together to help heal Queensland children. It's long been a wish of mine to see a more cohesive approach to tackling the issue of child protection. I'm certain this will be a very positive and effective partnership," Kay McGrath said.



## Don't miss out, register for the Act for Kids Vietnam Challenge!



Following on from the huge success of Act for Kids' inaugural 2014 Larapinta Trail Challenge, we have another exciting charity challenge for 2015 – the Act for Kids Vietnam Challenge.

The 8-day challenge is designed to provide a fascinating insight into the diverse culture by trekking, riding and kayaking through the country. The challenge takes place from 30 September to 8 October 2015. Starting in North Vietnam, you'll explore the post-colonial 'Paris of the East' in Hanoi, ride and trek through the beautiful valleys of Maui Chu and kayak around Halong Bay's mystical limestone islets.

Challenge yourself on the Act for Kids Vietnam Challenge and experience a once in a lifetime adventure while helping to raise vital funds so we can expand our preventative services.

If you're in need of a personal challenge, an adventurous holiday or just something out of the ordinary, sign up to the Act for Kids Vietnam Challenge and make a meaningful difference to the children and families we work with.

To register or for more information about getting involved, visit [www.trekforkids.com.au](http://www.trekforkids.com.au) or email [fundraise@actforkids.com.au](mailto:fundraise@actforkids.com.au)



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Act for Kids is a not-for-profit organisation providing free professional therapy and support services to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. Established as the Abused Child Trust in 1988, we have helped thousands of Australian children and families who have experienced, or are at risk of child abuse and neglect.

To buy tickets in the Act for Kids Platinum Class Lottery call:  
1800 968 946 or visit [www.platinumclass.com.au](http://www.platinumclass.com.au)