



Annual Report

2018 - 2019



Family Spirit



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Chairman & CEO's Letter

“The bright vision we have for a world in which all children experience ‘the family spirit’ and places where they feel unconditionally loved has been our driving light as an agency.”

As we close this inaugural year of operations for Family Spirit, let us take time to reflect on the tremendous journey we have been on in this time. This year has not only seen the launch of the agency, but also the launch of the Permanency Support Program.

The bright vision we have for a world in which all children experience ‘the family spirit’ and places where they feel unconditionally loved has been our driving light as an agency.

As we have moved through our first year, there have been natural growing pains and these have helped us to learn and grow. We have developed a feedback culture in which we celebrate the input, ideas and reflections of our stakeholders and celebrate these for the value they provide to our continuous quality improvement. This feedback culture has paved the way for an incredible amount of positive and rewarding work which has been accomplished.

This work, and the work of our stakeholders, have all contributed to services which enable positive outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families.

It is wonderful to take stock of these achievements and congratulate our staff, foster carers and partners on the teamwork and commitment which have made these possible.

As we move ahead to our second year of operations, there is much to focus on and we are confident we will continue to grow and strengthen as an agency. We will undoubtedly face challenges and we are confident that our commitment to teamwork and continuous quality improvement will help is to navigate these.

On behalf of our Chairman, Board of Directors and CEO, thank you to all of our team for their contributions over our first year.



Nieves Murray
Chairman, Family Spirit



Morgan Anne Fitzpatrick
CEO, Family Spirit



Overview

Family Spirit Ltd launched on 1 July 2018. Family Spirit formed from a partnership between two Catholic social service agencies, Marist180 and CatholicCare Sydney, who believed that by working together they could achieve more to improve the lives of children, young people and families in need.

Family Spirit operates services across the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta and Archdiocese of Sydney.

Family Spirit has an annual revenue of approximately \$8.9M and supports families in the areas of:

- Family preservation
- Local domestic adoption
- Foster care (Permanency Support Program)
- Youth services

Family Spirit's Board of Directors includes:

- Nieves Murray, Chairman and Director
- Mark Phillips, Director
- Peter Hanson, Director, Public Officer and Company Secretary
- Sharron Matayalo, Director
- Steve Bailey, Director

Family Spirit's leadership team is led by Morgan A. Fitzpatrick, CEO, and the following key staff:

- Paul Roberts, Executive Manager
- Jeff Hamilton, Senior Manager
- Annette McCaffery, Associate Manager
- Brenda Freeman, Senior Manager
- Benjamin Jeggle, Senior Manager
- Caitlin Rozairo, Team Leader
- Brooke Norman, Senior Manager

VISION

Our vision is to be the leader in permanency solutions for children, young people and families in NSW.

MISSION

Our mission is to enable permanency and wellbeing for children and young people by supporting families and carers to provide safe, stable and nurturing environments for them up to the age of 25.

VALUES

We follow in the footsteps of Christ and come together as a Catholic community, in partnership with our valued stakeholders, to promote the following principles:

- **The Family Spirit** - We undertake to build community, belonging, and promote the family spirit for all. We believe in the innate goodness of everyone and foster acceptance and unconditional care of families, children and young people in need. We aim to support those in need and their cultural, religious or other beliefs and needs with respect and dignity.
- **Human Dignity** – We believe everyone is created in the image of God. As such, we treat everyone with love, respect, compassion, and the utmost care and safety.
- **Subsidiarity** – We aim to ensure the child's voice and view is taken into consideration by putting the best interests of the child at the core of all decision making and practice. We value the views and needs of our families and carers and aim to ensure that these are heard and understood in the work that we do.
- **Solidarity** – We walk alongside children and families, helping them through their challenges.
- **Common Good** – We encourage networks of support for each and every child, building and strengthening the families and communities that support these children and promoting them to grow into active participants of the community as adults.



Achievements 2018 - 2019

Family Spirit's first year of operations has launched it into the social service sector. Family Spirit is proud of its achievements over this first year and the difference its staff, foster carers and partners make to the lives of vulnerable children and young people.

Over the last year, as a team, Family Spirit has:

- Established our strategic direction with the development of our Strategic Plan for 2019-2021;
- 👥 Launched our Staff Recruitment and Retention Plan;
- 💬 Launched quarterly staff surveys, a feedback board and fortnightly all staff communication emails;
- 🏠 Launched a Royal Commission Action Plan and begun work to strengthen our child safe practices;
- 🎓 Trained our team in attachment, cultural care, child protection, and trauma-informed practice;
- ✝️ Commenced working relationships with other Catholic agencies to share practice knowledge;
- 👨👩👧 Authorised 14 new carers;
- 👥 Welcomed two new Board members – Peter Hanson and Steve Bailey.

In this time, our staffing profile has grown and evolved. As at 30 June 2019 Family Spirit employed 40 staff. Reflecting the gender mix of the sector, 80% of our employees are female and 20% are male. Our employees are highly educated, holding 39 Diplomas, Bachelor or Masters Degrees between them.

As a new agency in the sector, we are very pleased and honoured that universities and university students have recognised our unique focus, which has resulted in five students undertaking their university work placements with Family Spirit.

Employees are and were supported through the provision of workplace benefits and resources including:

- Access to professional Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Access to salary packaging arrangements
- Wellness programs
- Flu vaccinations
- Ongoing professional clinical supervision and training
- Rostered day off program
- Employee recognition/award program



Support for Children, Young People and Families

- Overall, we have supported a wide range of children, young people and families across our suite of services including:
- 20 birth families through preservation services
 - 54 children at risk of entering the out-of-home care system
 - 102 children in foster care
 - 56 children and young people previously in care
 - 14 young people experiencing family breakdown
 - Three local voluntary adoptions
 - Up to 87 foster carer households

Foster Care

- In the foster care space we have:
- Reviewed our practices and strengthened our compliance with the Office of the Children’s Guardian standards and the new Permanency Support Program to ensure children in our care have positive outcomes;
 - Launched our Carer Advisory Group which will provide a voice for our foster carers in the decisions of the agency;
 - Launched Regional Support Groups across four areas to better support our carers;
 - Recruited 14 new foster care households;
 - Launched monthly carer communications including twice annual video messaging;
 - Participated in an Office of the Children’s Guardian audit related to the Carer Register;
 - Updated Working with Children Checks and National Police History Checks for the majority of our carers and household members;
 - Begun partnerships with new organisations to help achieve improved educational pathways for children in care.

Adoptions

- Our adoptions team has:
- Completed three local adoptions;
 - Completed nearly 60% of the digitisation process for historic children’s homes records;
 - Transitioned to the Redress Scheme, offering record access to many who were engaged in previous Catholic Children’s Homes.

Youth Team

- Our youth team has:
- Implemented a new lead tenant model with Rose Gallagher House;
 - Provided in house leaving care training;
 - Re-designed our program model to provide best outcomes to young people and their families;
 - Begun tracking outcomes data to evidence the great work we do.

Preservation and Restoration

- Our preservation and restoration team has:
- Supported over 20 complex families in need, including over 79 family members;
 - Supported 86% of these families with preservation work (14% achieved restoration);
 - Reviewed intake processes to strengthen our relationship with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (formerly Family and Community Services);
 - Commenced outcome tracking to better track the outcomes achieved from the work with families.

Business Support

- Our business support team has:
- Updated policies and procedures to align to Family Spirit as an organisation;
 - Reorganised our internal data management systems to be more user friendly;
 - Streamlined services in our client management information system, Carelink+, to make this easier to use and provide more information which helps in day-to-day practice;
 - Worked with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (formerly Family and Community Services) to get Family Spirit live on the new government system ChildStory;
 - Set up streamlined internal intake processes.

Family Spirit is grateful to all of its stakeholders who have contributed to its first year of operations. Family Spirit is excited to work with its partners in coming years as it continues to grow and establish its work in support of vulnerable children and families.



Family can be the best medicine

Darcy* was taken into care in June 2018 after he was admitted to Bankstown hospital for failure to thrive even though his birth father and stepmother were doing their best.

In these circumstances Family Spirit looks for options for children to be cared for by family. Sadly, Darcy's birth mother has an acquired brain injury and she did not have the capacity to care for him. After thorough matching, Darcy was placed with a short term carer until an appropriate long term placement was investigated with his extended birth family.

Fortunately, Darcy's paternal grandfather and uncle were identified as potential kinship carers for him and they were open to completing an assessment and becoming authorised as carers. Darcy was placed with his grandfather in April this year and he is doing very well, is much more settled and is thriving again.

Darcy's grandfather is keen to keep Darcy connected to his birth father and mother because he understands the importance of that for his ongoing growth and development. At the moment he feels he needs the support of Family Spirit to keep Darcy settled and establish a contact schedule with his parents. Once that is established, he will progress towards guardianship for the ongoing care of Darcy.

While there is a way to go for Darcy and his family, the future is looking brighter with a permanent solution for care that also offers an ongoing connection with his family and story.

* Names were changed in this story to protect privacy.

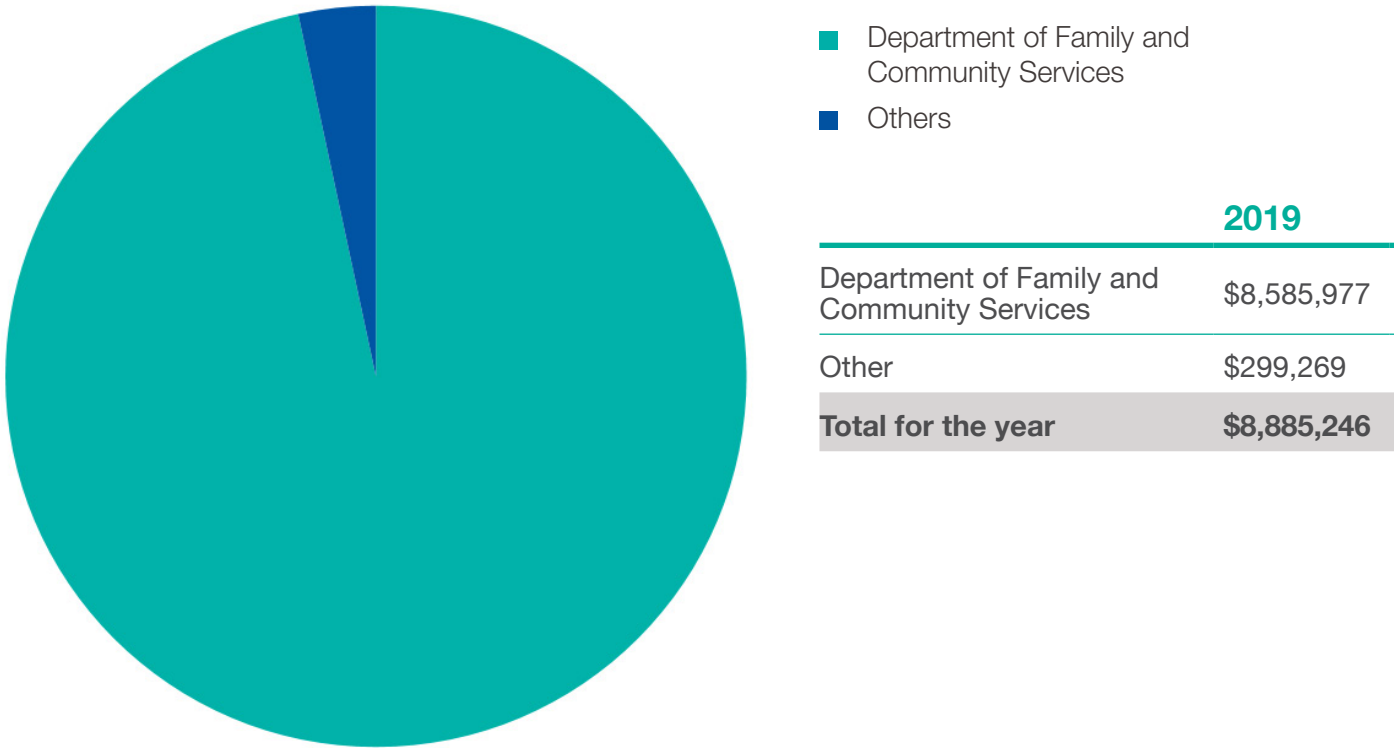
Family Spirit Limited

Statement of financial position

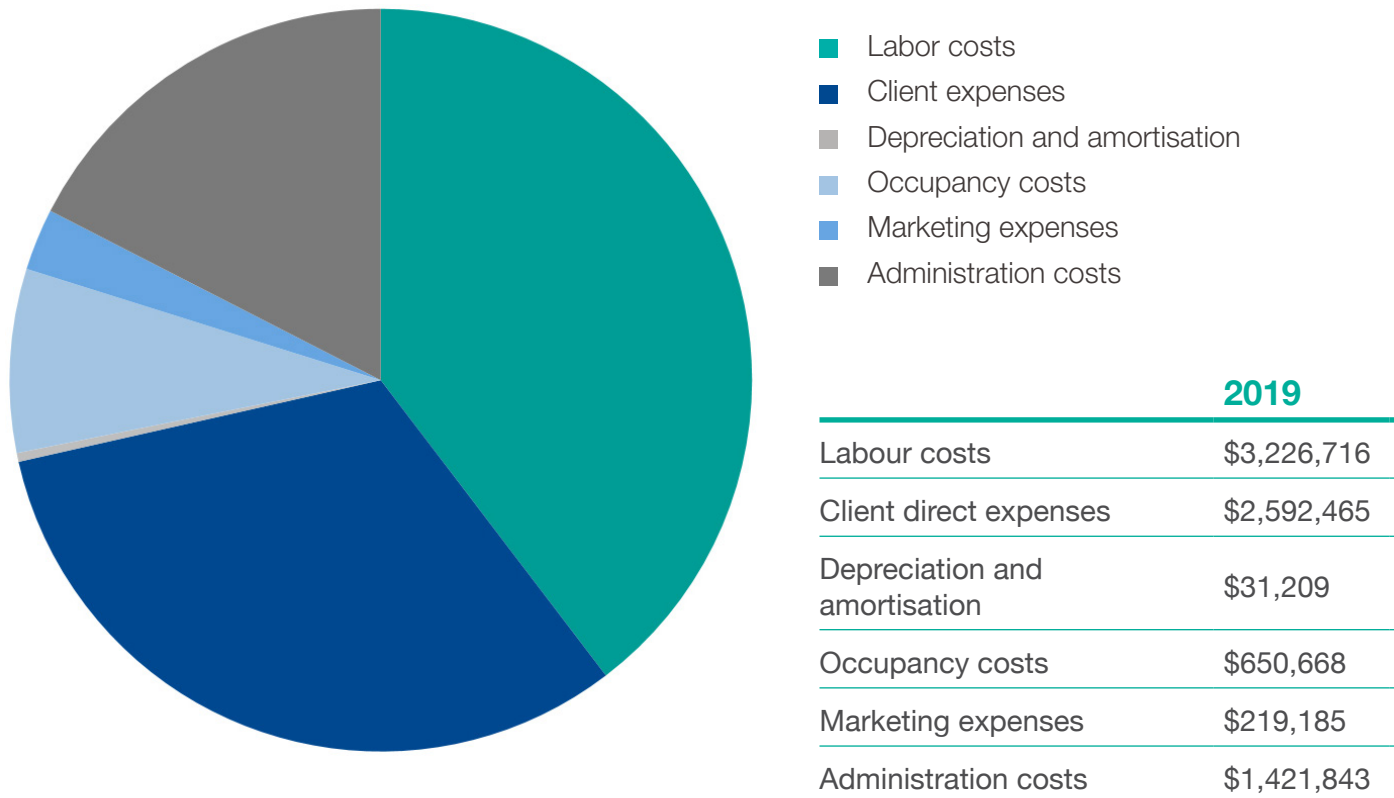
as of 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
ASSETS	\$	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	1,613,108	-
Trade and other receivables	146,470	373,196
Total Current Assets	1,759,578	373,196
Property, plant & equipment	7,391	-
Intangibles	54,795	82,304
Total non-current assets	62,186	82,304
TOTAL ASSETS	1,821,764	455,500
LIABILITIES	\$	\$
Trade and other payables	542,894	-
Deferred income	15,986	-
Employee benefits	181,403	-
Total current liabilities	740,283	-
Loans	353,851	603,851
Other provisions	102,200	-
Employee benefits	55,344	-
Total non-current liabilities	511,395	603,851
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,251,678	603,851
NET ASSETS	570,086	(148,351)
EQUITY	\$	\$
Accumulated Funds	570,086	(148,351)
Total accumulated funds	570,086	(148,351)

Source of Income




Expenditure







Registered Office:

Level 3, 2-14 Meredith St,
Bankstown, NSW, 2148

 **13 18 19**

 connect@familyspirit.org

 facebook.com/familyspirit

 [@familyspiritnsw](https://www.instagram.com/familyspiritnsw)

ABN: 35 623 563 422