

East Gippsland Children with Additional Needs

5 Year Framework 2021 – 2026



Children With Additional Needs
Working Group



Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The members of the Children with Additional Needs Working Group would like to acknowledge the First Custodians of the land, the Gunaikurnai People Monero and Bidawel People of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire and on which we work and play. We deeply acknowledge their ongoing connection to culture and country and acknowledge that their land was never ceded.

Other Acknowledgments

Thank you to the members of the Children with Additional Needs Working Group who have given their time and support for this framework. Your contribution and commitment to the group has been outstanding.

To the families and carers who have contributed to the surveys, participated in conversations and continue to share your stories – thankyou. Without your continued voice and contribution, we would not be where we are today.

Thanks also goes to those volunteers who have been so generous with their time.

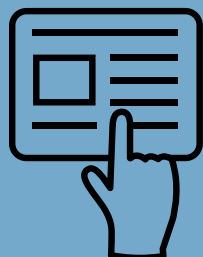


Introduction

The Children with Additional Needs Working Group (CWANWG) Five Year Framework is the local plan with a strategic view of the key outcomes for addressing the challenges and opportunities for children with additional needs in East Gippsland.

This Framework builds on the CWANWG Action Plan (2018-2020) through a review of the Objectives, the Terms of Reference, the Action Plan and incorporates data which the group have collected over the past two years to further build and enhance the opportunities for families and carers of children with additional needs and of course the children themselves.

Supporting some of the most vulnerable in our community cannot be achieved without a collaborative effort between service providers, families, carers, not for profit organisations and Government (local, state and Commonwealth). The hope of the CWANWG is that by adopting all activities and outcomes of this Framework, we can continue to have our voices heard to better the outcomes for all children with Additional Needs in East Gippsland.



Background Context

In 2013, Good Beginnings Australia (merged with Save the Children Australia in 2015), developed the State of East Gippsland's Children and Youth Report (the Report) with funding through the Ian Potter Foundation, the RE Ross Trust and Gandel Philanthropy.

The Report provides a framework that not only measured how children and young people were doing, would also track changes into the future. The Report used data to tell the story of wellbeing through wide and varied consultation where five areas/domains of wellbeing were created.

Following the Report, Good Beginnings obtained further funding to establish the Children's Wellbeing Initiative (CWI) in partnership with the Children's Wellbeing Collective. The Children's Wellbeing Initiative draws on collective impact/collaboration principles to improve children's wellbeing through five priority areas which were identified by consultation using selected indicators in the Report. The five priority areas include:

1

Children with Additional Needs – Children get the support they need for development.

2

Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing – Families are able to support psycho-social needs.

3

Family Violence Prevention – Strong families demonstrate respectful relationships.

4

Substance Abuse Prevention – Strong families with positive attitudes and behaviours

5

Service Access – “family ready” agencies focus on children and families' unique circumstances.

The Children's Wellbeing Collective

The Children's Wellbeing Collective (CWC) were established to support and provide governance for this work. CWC worked with local government to establish the East Gippsland Early Years Plan (2015-17) and identified a number of priorities for a two-year Action Plan. The outcome identified in this plan for children with additional needs was:

Outcome Area 1: Our Children are Healthy, Developing Well, Safe and Secure

Objective 1.3: To increase support for Vulnerable Children and Children with Additional Needs Strategies

The following **strategies** have been identified within the Early Years Plan:

1. Increase participation and collaboration between all stakeholders to facilitate and support children with additional needs (child protection; child first); and
2. Develop partnerships with children, families, communities and service providers for the planning and delivery of evidence-based services.

Success measures include:

- Increase in kindergarten participation rates for vulnerable children.
- Decrease in repeated reports to child protection.
- Decrease in waiting lists for special needs/ support services; and
- Increase level of adoption of service standards that support vulnerable families and their children.



The Children with Additional Needs Working Group

The Children with Additional Needs Working Group (CWANWG) is a sub-group of the Children's Wellbeing Collective (CWC).

The CWANWG identifies issues for children with additional needs and their families and how improvements can be made.

Diagram 1: Children with Additional Needs Working Group and its relationship to the Children's Wellbeing Collective (CWC).



The CWANWG Strategies are:

1

Strategy 1- Strengthen services, organisation and community group's ability to be inclusive and work with families.

2

Strategy 2 – All activities are evidenced informed, place-based, adaptive and based on community needs.

3

Strategy 3 – Children with Additional Needs Working Group has more profile in the community

The Children with Additional Needs Working Group

A number of Actions have now been developed to align with the new Strategies. The Action Plan is a complimentary document to this 5 Year Strategic Framework. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually.

