



IMPACT REVIEW

2024

emerge

women and children's
support network

BLESSINGS

COME IN MANY FORMS.
THEY WILL SHOW UP AT
THE RIGHT TIME,
HELP YOU THROUGH
THE HARD TIMES AND
STAY INTO YOUR BEST TIMES.
THOSE ARE GUARDIAN ANGELS
EMERGE

THANK YOU FOR GIVING US
THE CHANGE TO LIVE
FREELY.



FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO / REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

The year 2024 has been a dynamic and transformative one for our organisation.

We have created new, innovative programs aimed at breaking the cycles of violence and committed to rigorous evaluation to understand the impact of our work. We are working alongside new funding partners and academics to drive meaningful and measurable change through our practice, building a strong evidence base for system reform.

Much-needed renovations have progressed at both our refuge and head office, ensuring better working and living environments for our staff and our clients.

We have welcomed new Board members who bring a remarkable breadth and depth of expertise to our organisation and farewelled deeply valued and long-standing members of our Board of Directors.

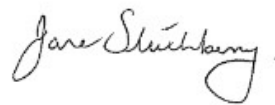
It has been a challenging year in our sector, with funding changes and the rising cost of living impacting our service delivery and programs. We have focused on sustainable practice to continue to provide the highest quality of service delivery and ensure that we are providing the support our clients need.

It is a privilege to work with victim-survivors. This year, we have been part of incredible journeys of recovery and resilience. We are inspired by the strength and integrity of our clients as they heal from the trauma of family violence towards their safety and freedom.

Our organisation's goal remains simple: nobody should be homeless because of violence, and we have a crucial role to play in breaking the cycles. Our focus remains on holistic and victim-centric service delivery that embeds evidence-based early intervention and secondary prevention.

Our wonderful people remain our strongest asset. We thank our remarkable team for their professionalism, compassion, flexibility and commitment to walking alongside our clients. They understand that recovery is complex and multi-faceted, and that every person - including every child - has their own unique needs in their journey of healing.

We are deeply grateful to our partners, supporters, donors and colleagues across the sector. Your support changes lives.



Jane Stuchberry
Board Chair



Claire Marshall
Chief Executive Officer

About the artwork

This artwork was created by a woman with four young children who stayed at our refuge in 2024 and exited to secure housing, a new job and education for all of her children.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands where we live, work and gather. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge that sovereignty of these lands was never ceded. We acknowledge the strength, pride, advocacy and endurance of First Nations peoples. This always was and always will be First Nations land.

OUR BOARD



Jane Stuchberry – Chair

BA Hons (University of Melbourne), MA Organisational Psychology (University of Melbourne), MAICD

Jane is an organisational psychologist who specialises in helping organisations strengthen their board and governance practices. She is a Director of Board Partners and an affiliate with the global consulting firm Mercer, where she leads the Board Effectiveness practice. Jane has a background in human resource consulting, leading talent management and people strategy at Andersen, EY and Mercer.



Claire Murphy – Deputy Chair

BPhysio (La Trobe University), MPhysio (Research) (University of Melbourne), GAICD

Claire works with organisations to strengthen corporate and clinical governance, change management and strategic business development. She started her career as a physiotherapist at Monash Health, branched briefly into clinical research before working in change and innovation roles. Claire's roles have included working closely to support executive teams, including at Australian Red Cross Lifeblood as Chief Executive Advisor.



Lucie McKenna – Treasurer

BComm (Deakin University), GradDip Chartered Accounting, Member (CAANZ), Accredited Family Business Australia Advisor, Cert Governance and Directorship (Governance Institute of Australia)

Lucie is a Chartered Accountant with over 18 years' experience in professional services. She has worked across agriculture, hospitality, retail, medical, transport, not-for-profit and property development. Lucie is passionate about empowering families to make informed decisions about their financial future and protect their assets.



Jane S Evans – Secretary

GradDipBusAdmin, GAICD

Drawing on 25 years of executive experience across diverse industries including insurance, emergency services and the disability sector, Jane undertakes pro bono mentoring through Leadership Victoria and has 22 years of board involvement. For her board roles, Jane draws on her diverse people and change management knowledge, augmented with strategic, analytical and organised thinking, and a sound understanding of governance and risk management.



Shasta Holland – Director

BA (Psychology), MA (Psychology) (University of Canterbury), PhD (Criminology) (University of Melbourne)

Shasta has more than 20 years of public policy experience and has held executive roles in the Victorian and Australian public service, in the justice and domestic, family and sexual violence portfolios. She previously led monitoring of government progress to implement recommendations from the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence and delivered policy and system reform in women's prisons.



Avital Kamil - Director

LLM (Human Rights) (Monash University), LLB/BA (Monash University)

Avital has practised law for over a decade, specialising in family law and family violence. Her practical experience includes work in the private and community legal sectors, at Victoria Legal Aid and with Victoria Police. She has prepared and appeared in complex legal matters, delivered professional education sessions and mentored legal practitioners throughout Victoria. She consulted on the rollout of the Specialist Family Violence Courts.



Corri McKenzie - Director

Corri is Deputy CEO of Service Design and Improvement and a member of the leadership team at the NDIA. Corri previously led the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group as Deputy Secretary at the Department of Justice and Community Safety. Prior to this, Corri held senior executive positions in social policy, service design and delivery. Before joining the public service, Corri was the General Manager of Community Services at Mission Australia.



Christina Murambi - Director

BHumServ/MSW (La Trobe University), MC-HumRLaw (University of Melbourne)

Christina has over 10 years of experience in policy, advocacy, and social work, and holds a Master's degree in Human Rights Law and Social Work. Christina is an experienced policy and advocacy manager with expertise in policy development, advocacy, project management, strategic planning, leadership and engagement. She has worked in family violence, mental health, youth services, victims of crime and policy advocacy.



Penny Anderson - Director

MPPM, BA (Politics, Asian Studies and Development Studies), DipAppSc (Nursing), GAICD

Penny has over 25 years' experience as a senior executive in the Victorian health, community, welfare, acute, public health, private sectors and state government departments, including as CEO of Your Community Health. She is a member of the Austin Health Board Safety and Quality Committee. Penny is currently studying a Graduate Certificate in Business (Arts and Cultural Management).



Eva Perez - Director

BA (Hons) (University of Melbourne)

Eva is the Director of Strategic Initiatives within Victoria Police. This role is the culmination of close to 20 years of working in various policy and strategy roles within Victoria Police. Prior to working for Victoria Police, Eva was a consultant specialising in business and government management with EY New Zealand and a Policy and Research Officer with the NZ Department of Internal Affairs.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

Creation of our innovative therapeutic program Back on Track, to reduce the risks that children become teenagers who use violence – generously funded by the Kelly Family Foundation.



Strong partnerships with our colleagues including Regenerate, StreetSmart, Rotary Moorabbin and Mordialloc, CMV and Bayside Emergency Community Relief to provide our clients with the support and material goods they need to rebuild their lives free from family violence.



Creation of our legal health check program for women in refuge in partnership with Peninsula Community Legal Centre – generously funded by Kingston Council.

Renovations at our head office to ensure a welcome and fit-for-purpose space for our staff and clients – generously funded by the Multiplex Graduate Program.

Renovations at our refuge to upgrade our facilities and ensure more housing for more clients.



Building the evidence base through our research partnerships with LaTrobe University, Swinburne University, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, ANROWS and RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice to evaluate our practice.



OUR PURPOSE

We provide support to people who have experienced family violence toward safety, autonomy and healing and to rebuild their lives

OUR VISION

Emerge Women and Children's Support Network drives innovative practice that disrupts the cycles of family violence

OUR GOALS

GOAL 1

Driving a sustainable organisation that is positioned to grow and impact change.

GOAL 2

Supporting our staff and retaining a highly skilled workforce to achieve the best outcomes for our clients.

GOAL 3

Continuing to ensure best-practice, holistic, comprehensive and tailored support for our clients.

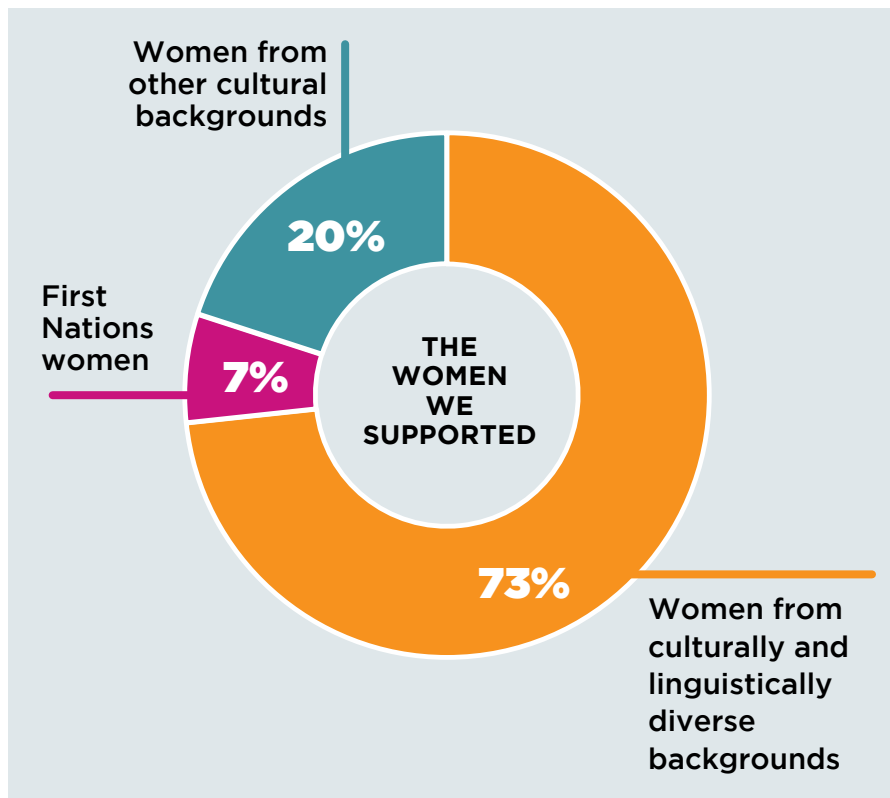
GOAL 4

Working as leaders to advocate, influence and drive system change for victim-survivors.

OUR VALUES

Collaboration • Respect • Courage
Creativity • Inclusivity • Impact • Kindness

CLIENTS AND OUTCOMES



90%
of clients were families with children

7%
of women clients were pregnant

87%
of women and children participated in therapeutic support

834
THERAPEUTIC SESSIONS

- 525 individual sessions
- 89 dyad sessions
- 220 group sessions

70%
of kids in crisis accommodation enrolled in childcare or school

HOUSING OUTCOMES

83%
of women obtained medium or long-term safe housing



THE WAY WE WORK /

A FOCUS ON CHILDREN AS CLIENTS AND VICTIM-SURVIVORS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT



Our staffing model includes specific workers who focus on the case management and therapeutic needs of children, including dedicated Children's Case Managers and expert Therapeutic Practitioners who work with children as individual clients.

We understand that family violence can have a lasting and significant impact on the development, health and wellbeing, and outcomes of children - and build our practice around ensuring they are supported to recover and thrive.

Our practice centres our commitment to ensure that each child has their own individualised case plan, safety planning, risk assessment and recovery pathway. Our approaches support the autonomy and participation of children in decisions that affect them.

Our built environments are designed to be welcoming, safe and supportive of the needs of children of all ages.

Our programs include specific support for children to ensure that we can respond to their development and recovery needs through therapeutic practice, art and play.

We have an important role in building the evidence for secondary prevention and early intervention and invest in evaluation to ensure our practice delivers safe and effective outcomes for children.

THE WAY WE WORK /

A CLIENT-CENTRED APPROACH FOCUSED ON SAFETY, SUPPORT AND RECOVERY

Our work ensures a strengths-based approach that embeds trauma-informed practice - we work with women and support them to make their own decisions, for themselves and their family with long-term goals.

Crisis support is only part of our role - we work with our clients towards long-term recovery, with our holistic approach incorporating support to secure housing, financial independence, access to justice, the right legal mechanisms for ongoing safety, and therapeutic support to address the trauma caused by family violence.

We understand that the health and wellbeing of a parent is closely linked to the outcomes of their children, and work both individually and holistically with families to ensure both individual and collective outcomes.

Our programs are flexible and creative and engage with our clients depending on their specific needs. We understand that not everyone responds to every support model and tailor our supports to individual needs - rather than expecting clients to adapt to us.

Breaking the cycles of violence is central to our work, and we support women to build their independence and self-esteem, and recover from trauma to reduce the risks of re-victimisation and further harm.



REFUGE /

TRANSFORMATIVE, HOLISTIC PRACTICE THAT DRIVES OUTCOMES

Refuge is a place of transformation after crisis. Our clients often arrive with the clothes on their back and what they have been able to stuff into the boot of their car. Their resilience and transformations are an honour to walk alongside as we provide support towards their independence and confidence.

We have seen transformative outcomes through our refuge, with our clients rebuilding their lives, accessing education, gaining employment, and securing safe housing. We see the children we work with rejoin school or kinder and thrive in new communities. We are deeply proud of our holistic, wrap-around approach to service delivery which facilitates these changes.

The housing crisis continues to affect client outcomes. Social housing waitlists are long, and the rental market remains largely inaccessible for our clients. We are grateful for our colleagues and partners at Launch Housing and Women's Housing for facilitating transitional accommodation for our clients.

Our refuge renovations will be completed by Christmas. We successfully supported all of our refuge clients into safe alternative accommodation, and work alongside them in a hybrid outreach while we continue to support new clients in our CAP properties.

When refuge reopens, it will be supported by an internal specialisation model where each worker holds a specialist portfolio focused on a specific area of complex and intersectional needs. These portfolios include secondary prevention and early intervention, financial support, people with disability, parenting skills, housing, and pets in refuge. Our portfolio model ensures that we have the knowledge and service scope to support clients with diverse needs while continuing to support the capability and professional development of our team.

Next year, we are embedding our therapeutic team at refuge to ensure the immediate provision of therapeutic support for all refuge clients when we reopen and double our client numbers at refuge. This will ensure that all clients at refuge – from infants and teenagers to adults – can access specialist therapeutic support when they need it.

THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT /

PERSON-CENTRED, STRENGTH-BASED SUPPORT

This year, we have continued to provide a considered range of trauma-informed, person-centred and strengths-based therapeutic supports to women, children and families.

This has included individual counselling and art therapy for women and children, dyadic therapy for parent and child together, and therapeutic groups such as:

- the **Peek-A-Boo Club** – this group for mothers and infants (0-3 years) uses movement, singing, play and talking to strengthen connections and enjoyment in the mother-baby relationship
- **Scribble and Play** – this group provided a safe space for mother and child (3-5 years) to connect and strengthen parent-child bonds, while also connecting with others who have had similar experiences
- **Women's Group** – a weekly art therapy group which provided a safe space for women to relax, reflect and create, so popular it was extended to two groups per week.

Our committed therapeutic team have continued these important programs while preparing to transition their focus to the needs of our new clients when the refuge reopens as well as our pilot program Back on Track, both commencing in early 2025.

The therapeutic team's forward-thinking approach and ability to adapt will enable us to provide even more impactful support.

to our clients and their evolving needs. An expanded presence at the refuge will mean individuals and families can receive personalised therapeutic support including specialised individual, dyadic and group therapy, as well as tailored psychoeducation programs.



While some of our therapeutic groups are wrapping up, we're excited to offer Back on Track to families with children who are exhibiting challenging behaviours. By focusing on parent-child relationships and positive behaviour strategies, we aim to create a brighter future for both parents and children.

A special thank you to Wendy Bunston for her invaluable contributions in both Safe Nest and the Peek-A-Boo Club.

PILOT PROGRAMS / EMBEDDING SECONDARY PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION IN OUR PRACTICE

A key strategic focus for Emerge has been to increase our service delivery functions to address the cycles of violence. We know that the risks of cyclical, intergenerational violence are heightened for our clients, and that trauma-informed, evidence-based intervention reduces the risk that our clients will be re-victimised, or will go on to use violence.

Our suite of pilot programs ensures that clients at risk have access to the right support, at the right time, to ensure that their needs are met.

We are deeply grateful to the funders and supporters of our pilot work, including the Kelly Family Foundation, Kingston Council, Rotary Moorabbin and CMV.

- **Back on Track** is a therapeutic early-intervention program for primary school children who have experienced family violence and are showing signs of developing the risk factors that they will use violence as teenagers. Our program will launch in 2025, and work with both Mum and child to address trauma, repair attachment, promote regulation, and increase protective factors to increase safety.
- **Legal Health in Refuge** program, in partnership with Peninsula Community Legal Centre, provides intensive legal health checks to women in refuge to ensure that they receive expert support for complex legal issues that accompany family violence, including family law, property and criminal proceedings. Our partnership program will launch in 2025 and will work to support all refuge clients, helping them get the right legal information, advice and pathways in a time of crisis.
- The **Women's Psychoeducation Program** provides a rolling therapeutic program targeting the key needs and risk factors experienced by women at refuge. The pilot will be embedded into ordinary practice at refuge and will operate as both a group therapeutic program and a secondary prevention model aimed at reducing the rates of re-victimisation.



CLIENTS SHARE THEIR STORIES

A woman with four children, all of whom had experienced family violence from Dad, arrived at our refuge. They'd just arrived in Australia with no money and little material goods. The team worked closely with each family member, ensuring that every child had supports tailored to their needs, providing intensive therapeutic support, and working with Mum to find employment and housing. The family are now thriving, with the kids all in school and Mum working in secure ongoing employment in her field of work.

A woman who had been homeless for years with her young child arrived at our refuge. The team worked closely with Mum to empower and support her after a lifetime of family violence and break the cycles of re-victimisation and intergenerational trauma. The family are now in long-term social housing and are linked with social services in the area, the child is in school, and they have ongoing financial support.

A woman without permanent residency and a small child arrived at our refuge with limited English skills. She had experienced a lifetime of family violence and had limited access to education across her life. In refuge, the team worked intensively with her to support her with employment pathways. She now has secure housing, employment, and improved English language skills. Her child is enrolled at a mainstream secondary school.

A woman with five children, who had received four years of support from Emerge, was embroiled in a complex and contentious legal battle that lasted for two years. The case went to trial, during which the Emerge team worked closely with the woman's lawyer and provided invaluable support by attending court proceedings. Thanks to the team's collaborative efforts, the outcome was favourable for the woman, ensuring her safety and that of her children. She continues to reside in housing provided by Emerge, has secured employment, and is proud to see one of her children pursuing a university degree.

Note: These stories have been anonymised to ensure client safety.

CELEBRATING OUR STAFF

Our people are our strongest asset. We are deeply fortunate to have our dedicated, professional and agile team who work tirelessly alongside our clients to ensure better outcomes and safety.

Our values are collaboration, respect, courage, creativity, inclusivity, impact and kindness. Our staff demonstrate these values every day in the rigour of their work and the outcomes they achieve for clients.

Our work is incredibly diverse and complex - on any given day, there may be court attendance, support at the police station, intervention for mental health concerns, individual therapeutic support, retrieving belongings, safety planning, debriefing with traumatised clients, art and play therapy sessions, organising school enrolments,

navigating Centrelink support, applying for housing, group work, getting access to medical care, immigration support, dyadic support with Mum and kids together, programs to enrich the lives and community of children, and helping Mum with the care of young kids.

Our clients have to rebuild their lives. This is complex, exhaustive, and affecting work. Our team achieves remarkable outcomes.

Alongside their work, they continue to develop their own professional competencies, supported by our staff training fund.

Vale Bianca

This year, we farewelled a long-standing and beloved member of the Emerge team. Bianca was a therapeutic practitioner and Art Therapist who worked with Emerge for more than ten years, showing passion and commitment in her work with families impacted by family violence. Bianca had specific expertise in supporting infants and their Mums, and played an integral role in leading our dyadic groups, Safe Nest and The Peek-A-Boo Club. Bianca was consistently kind, compassionate and a dedicated advocate for the families she worked with. She was deeply valued, admired, trusted and respected by all who knew her. Bianca passed away in April following a long battle with cancer. Bianca will be missed greatly, by colleagues and clients alike.



OUR PARTNERS, SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS

PARTNERSHIPS

- Kingston Council
- The Kelly Family Foundation
- Regenerate
- Bayside Emergency Community Relief
- CMV Truck and Bus
- StreetSmart
- Marco Polo Property
- Multiplex
- RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice

SUPPORTERS

- Rotary Club - Moorabbin
- Rotary Club - Mordialloc
- Pymble Ladies College
- Harry Cohny Charitable Foundation
- Monbulk Football and Netball Club
- Waverly Wood Workers
- Kardinia International College - Geelong
- Uniting Church - Mentone/Charman Road
- Grilled
- Alannah and Madeline Foundation
- John Carter, Assisted Accommodation Consultants
- Two Good Co
- What Our Women Want
- Clayton Utz
- Members of the Chinese Australasian Cultural Community
- Hema In Pyjamas
- Bunnings Moorabbin
- Rize Up
- Samsonite
- Nappy Collective
- Thread Together
- Next Steps
- Share the Dignity
- DV Collective
- Good 360
- Country Women's Association - Dingley

SUPPORT OUR WORK

All gifts, large or small, help us provide services, activities and amenities that enable us to deliver essential housing and support programs for women and children escaping family violence.

MAKE A DONATION

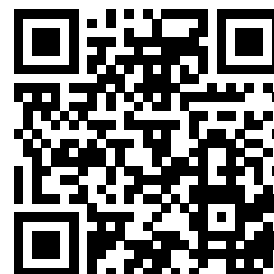
To donate, please scan the QR code and choose your amount; or use the details below for Electronic Funds Transfer.

Account name Emerge, Women and Children's Support Network Inc.

Bank Westpac

BSB 033 060

Account number 164606.

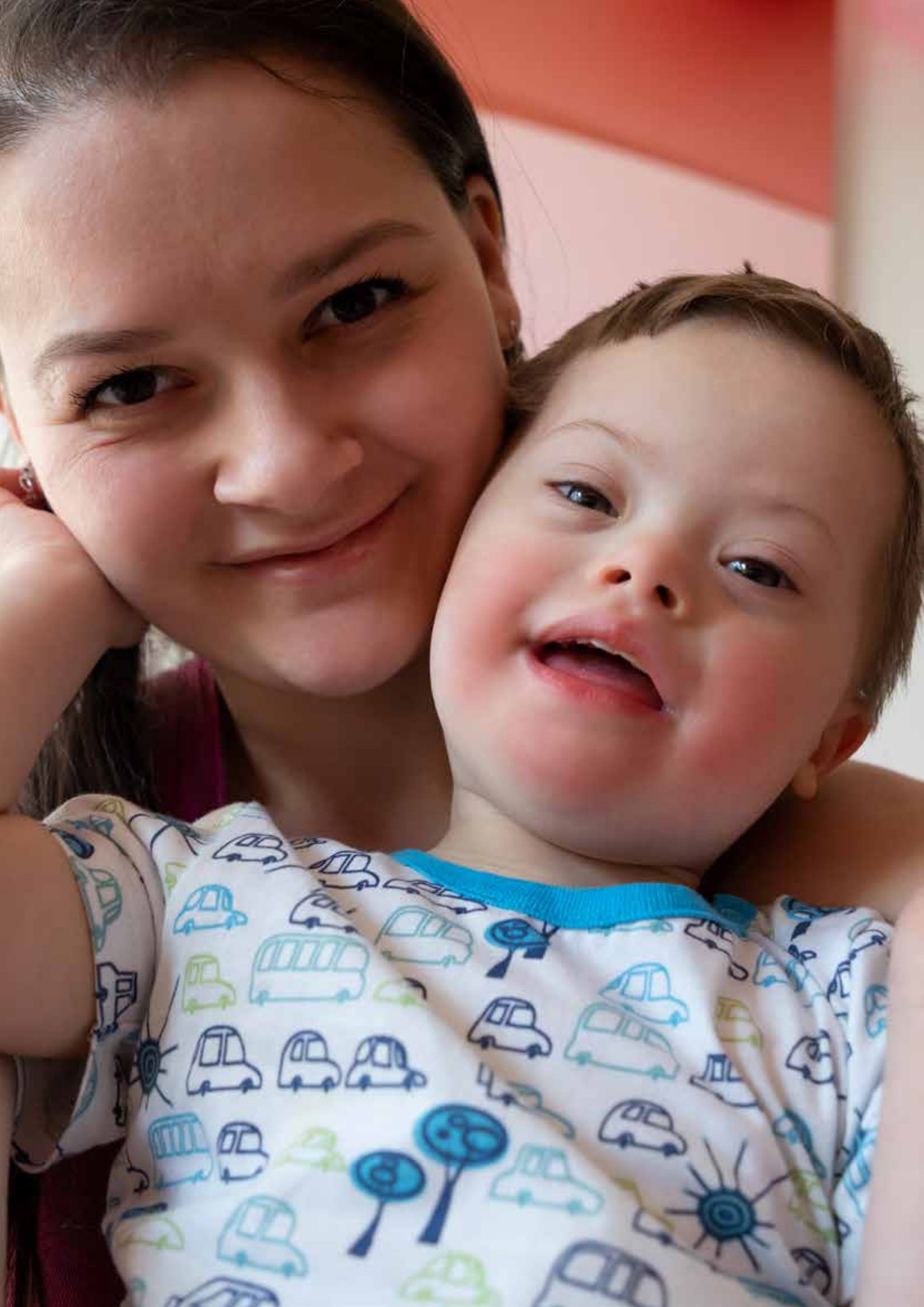


JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER

Sign up to our newsletter for occasional updates on news and updates from Emerge Women and Children's Support Network - please go to emergesupport.org.au/subscribe/

HOST A FUNDRAISING EVENT

If you would like to host a fundraising event on our behalf, please contact: mail@emergesupport.org.au



CONTACT US

If you are in immediate danger call 000.

If you or someone you know is experiencing family violence please call the Safe Steps 24/7 Family Violence Response line on 1800 015 188.

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