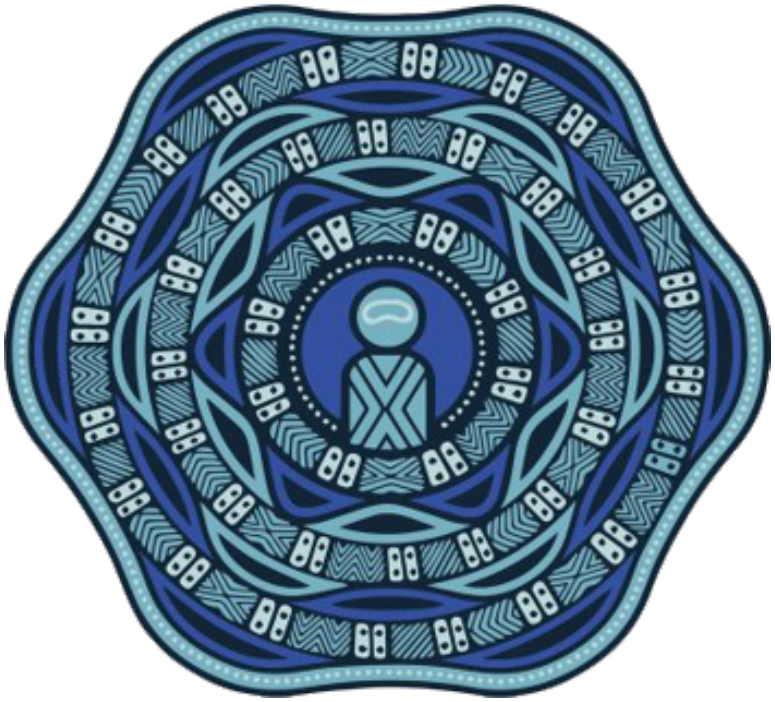






families at the centre

Annual Report 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

Better Place Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the many lands on which we live and work across Victoria. We recognise their enduring connection to land, waters, skies and community, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to emerging leaders who continue to shape the future.

Our offices are located on Bunurong, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Gunaikurnai and Wadawurrung lands.

Better Place Australia is committed to advancing reconciliation through our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We strive to build respectful relationships, create culturally safe services, and support the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Purpose, Strategy and Leadership



Better Place Australia has been the most empowering and successful experience which has given me the tools to live a happy, normal life again in a better place.

Anonymous BPA Client

CEO Message

“As we look ahead, I am optimistic about the future of Better Place Australia.”



Throughout FY2025-26, Better Place Australia continued to support individuals, children and families through some of life's most complex and challenging circumstances. Whether navigating relationship breakdown, family violence, mental health challenges, financial hardship, elder abuse or major life transitions, thousands of people placed their trust in our organisation and in our people.

Every interaction, every conversation and every service delivered reflects our purpose of helping people build positive relationships, strengthen wellbeing and create better futures. I remain deeply grateful to our staff, whose professionalism, compassion and commitment make this work possible every day.

FY2025-26 was also a year of significant organisational renewal.

While maintaining our focus on clients and communities, we undertook important work to strengthen the foundations of Better Place Australia for the future. We invested in leadership, governance, quality, safety and organisational performance. We strengthened our understanding of service demand and client outcomes. We improved access to support for many clients and continued to build a culture of learning, accountability and continuous improvement.

Importantly, this was not change for its own sake. Every decision we made was guided by a simple question: how do we ensure Better Place Australia continues to deliver the greatest possible impact for the people who rely on us, both now and into the future?

Throughout the year we continued to advocate for stronger systems and better outcomes for the communities we serve. Through our Centre for Better Relationships, our Elder Abuse Prevention work, our partnerships and our engagement with government and sector stakeholders, BPA continued to contribute practical expertise and lived experience to important policy and reform discussions. We believe that effective services should not only support individuals and families but also help shape the systems around them.

The year also saw continued investment in our future. We progressed planning for a new client management system, strengthened our approach to risk management and organisational assurance, improved our understanding of service activity and utilisation, and laid important groundwork for future improvement initiatives. These efforts will help ensure BPA remains sustainable, responsive and well positioned to meet future community need.

I would like to sincerely thank our Board Directors for their stewardship and guidance throughout the year. I would also like to thank our funding partners, sector colleagues and community stakeholders whose trust and collaboration enable us to achieve far more together than we could alone.

On behalf of the Executive team, I also extend our sincere thanks to the leaders who concluded their time with the organisation during the year, recognising their valued contribution, leadership and commitment to our purpose which has helped to drive excellence at Better Place Australia. We wish them every success in their future endeavours.

Most importantly, I want to acknowledge the clients. Their resilience, courage and determination continue to inspire us every day. Whether through a single conversation or a longer journey alongside our services, it is a privilege to support people as they navigate change, overcome challenges and create brighter futures for themselves and those around them.

As we look ahead, I am optimistic about the future of Better Place Australia. We enter the next year with renewed leadership, clearer priorities, stronger foundations and a continued commitment to placing families at the centre of everything we do.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our journey during FY2025-26.

Kirstan Corben

CEO of Better Place Australia

Chair
Message

‘We are building a strong & resilient Better Place Australia’



As we reflect on the past year, I am pleased to present Better Place Australia's Annual Report and acknowledge another year of meaningful impact, growth and adaptation in support of the communities we serve. Throughout the year, our commitment to helping people find hope, stability and connection has remained at the centre of everything we do. At a time when many individuals and families continue to experience financial pressures, housing insecurity, mental health challenges and relationship stress, the need for accessible, person-centred support has never been greater.

Guided by our vision of an Australia where all people have the opportunity to experience positive relationships, value one another, and live safer and more fulfilling lives, we have continued to strengthen our services and extend our impact. Across our programs, we have supported thousands of individuals, couples, families and older Australians to navigate complex circumstances and build greater resilience and wellbeing.

This year marked the second year of implementing our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. We have made significant progress in embedding our strategic priorities, including enhancing client experience, strengthening organisational capability, deepening our commitment to inclusion and accessibility, and leveraging innovation to improve outcomes.

Importantly, we have continued to ensure that the voices of clients and lived experience remain central to how we design and deliver services. Alongside this strategic progress, significant and considered internal change is intended to future-proof Better Place Australia. This reflects our commitment to building an adaptable, resilient and sustainable organisation, equipped to respond to evolving community needs while remaining true to our purpose. We know that a dynamic, changing environment is energising and can also add complexity- we thank our dedicated workforce for their resilience through this process.

Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion remains unwavering. We continue to build on the foundations established through our Rainbow Tick accreditation and strive to create welcoming environments where every person feels safe, respected and supported.

The Board has been very encouraged by the continued dedication and professionalism of our staff and leadership team. Their ability to respond compassionately to increasingly complex client needs while maintaining high-quality service delivery reflects the values that define Better Place Australia. Their work is the reason so many people trust us during some of the most challenging periods of their lives.

Financial sustainability remains a key focus. Like many community service organisations, we continue to operate in an environment characterised by rising costs, workforce pressures and increasing demand. Through prudent governance and careful stewardship of resources, we have maintained a strong financial position while continuing to invest in service quality, workforce capability and systems that support long-term impact.

Looking ahead, we recognise both the opportunities and challenges before us. Demand for integrated, holistic support services continues to grow, and we are committed to responding through innovation, collaboration and evidence-informed practice. Our focus will remain on delivering services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to changing community needs while ensuring the long-term sustainability of our organisation.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to sincerely thank our Chief Executive Officer, leadership team, employees, volunteers, funding partners, government agencies and community stakeholders for their ongoing commitment and support. I also extend my thanks to our dedicated Board Directors who voluntarily contribute their expertise to the governance of the organisation, drawing on their wide range of skills and experience. Most importantly, I thank the clients for placing their trust in Better Place Australia and allowing us to be part of their journey.

As you read this report, I hope you see the positive difference being made through the collective efforts of our people and partners. Together, we are helping individuals, families and communities build stronger relationships, greater resilience and brighter futures.

Warm regards,

Anne Goldsbrough AM
Chair of the Board

Our
Purpose and Strategy

Throughout FY2025-26, Better Place Australia remained focused on its purpose of empowering people to build resilience, improve wellbeing and determine better futures. Across Victoria, our teams supported thousands of people including children and families experiencing relationship challenges, separation, family violence, mental health concerns, financial hardship, elder abuse and other complex life circumstances.

Better Connection and Support

A major focus throughout the year was understanding how we can better connect people with support. We continued to improve referral pathways, strengthen relationships with service partners and increase our understanding of service demand and client access. This work helps us provide the right support at the right time and through the most appropriate pathway.

Strengthening Organisation Capacity

The year also saw us strengthening our organisational capability. Leadership structures were reviewed, workforce capability was enhanced and greater emphasis was placed on understanding service performance, quality and client outcomes. We also invested in improving the systems, governance and organisational insights needed to support evidence-informed decision-making and practice.



Our
Purpose and Strategy

Organisational Transition and Renewal

While community need remained high, the year was also one of significant organisational transition and renewal. Alongside delivering essential services, Better Place Australia undertook important work to strengthen leadership, governance, quality systems and organisational performance. These investments were made with a clear objective: ensuring BPA remains well placed to deliver meaningful impact for families and communities into the future.

Partnerships

Partnerships remained central to the way we provide services. Working alongside government departments, Primary Health Networks, community organisations and referral partners, we helped strengthen pathways into support and influence broader discussions about how services can better respond to the needs of children, families and older Australians.

Contributing Beyond Service Delivery

We also continued to grow our contribution beyond direct service delivery. Through research, advocacy and the work of the Centre for Better Relationships, BPA helped inform conversations and understandings about family wellbeing, healthy relationships, elder abuse prevention and healthy community support systems.

The year reinforced that meaningful impact requires both a clear purpose and a willingness to continually learn and adapt. As we look to the future, Better Place Australia remains committed to building on the momentum from this year and ensuring our services continue to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve.

Living Our
Values

At Better Place Australia, our values are reflected in the way we engage with clients, support one another and make decisions every day. They shape both what we do, and how we do it.



Creative

Many of the most powerful examples of our values in action are not captured in statistics or reports. They occur in moments every day when we take the time to listen, when a team works together to tackle a problem, when a client feels heard and respected, or when someone experiences hope and support during a difficult period in their life.



Caring

This year, our workforce worked alongside people facing some of life's most difficult circumstances. Whether supporting families through separation, advocating for a person experiencing elder abuse, providing counselling during a period of crisis or helping someone navigate financial hardship, our people consistently demonstrate empathy, professionalism and respect.



Welcoming

Feedback from clients, staff, community representatives and partners informed improvements to services, systems and our practice. By remaining open to new ideas and perspectives, Better Place Australia strengthened its ability to respond to community needs and continuously improve the way services are delivered. This was a powerful demonstration of the power of listening and learning from one another.



Responsive

Our values show in the way that we respond to change. The year involved significant organisational transition and transformation, including changes in leadership, service delivery and business operations. Throughout this period, members of our workforce consistently demonstrated resilience, adaptability and a strong commitment to providing high-quality support for clients and communities.

Living Our
Values

Thriving

Collaboration was another defining feature of the past year. Staff worked across teams, programs and locations to address challenges, improve access to services and identify opportunities to enhance positive client outcomes. This spirit of partnership enabled Better Place Australia to respond to emerging issues, reduce barriers to support and continue delivering excellent services in a changing environment.

These moments are a reminder that our values are more than words. They are the foundation of Better Place Australia and remain central to creating positive outcomes for the individuals, families and communities we serve.

Pictured Below (Left to Right):
Recipients of the 2025 Staff Recognition Award, who consistently went above and beyond to demonstrate the values of BPA:

Joshua Strachan
Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner
Jhooma Barthwal
Manager and Clinical Lead - Mental Health Services
Laura Stark
Customer Service Manager
Peyton Yan
IT Support Officer
Olivia Grant
Office Administration Co-ordinator



Understanding the

Families We Support

BPA supported
6,907
people in FY26

Gender

38.4% *Male* ***60.9%*** *Female*
0.3% *Gender Diverse*
0.1% *Not Stated*

Employment

54.9% *not in labour force including unemployed*
68.7% *on household income of less than $50,000*

Birth Country

Of the ***20.9%*** *of clients not born in Australia, the most represented were from:*

- ***India***
- ***England***
- ***New Zealand***
- ***Sri Lanka***
- ***Italy***
- ***China***
- ***Philippines***
- ***Vietnam***
- ***Greece***

Households

28.5% *Sole Parent*
16.6% *Single Person*
8.2% *Couple*
9.9% *Adult family*
15.1% *Couple with dependants*
21.6% *Group of unrelated adults*

Presence of Family Violence

37.3% *of Adult Clients*

Governance and Leadership

The BPA Board



Magistrate Anne Goldsbrough AM *Chair of the Board*

Drawing on her career as a Victorian magistrate, Anne brings specialist expertise in family law, family violence, law reform and judicial practice. Her experience encompasses the development of specialist family violence court services, contributions to national law reform, and legal and judicial education. In addition to being the Board Chair, Anne sits on the Finance, Risk & Audit and the People & Governance Committees.



Delia McIver *Director*

With senior executive experience across the post-secondary education sector, Delia brings expertise in people and culture, human resources, workplace safety, risk and corporate services. Her background combines responsibility for workforce capability and people management with board service in not-for-profit organisations. Delia is Chair of the People & Governance Committee.



Garry Button *Director and Treasurer*

A Fellow of CPA Australia, Garry brings specialist knowledge of finance, risk management and corporate services. His governance experience encompasses board reporting and non-executive directorships across not-for-profit, professional association and ASX-listed organisations. Garry is Chair of the Finance Risk & Audit Committee.



David Speyer *Director*

David's career spans commercial and financial management, organisational change, business turnaround, mergers and acquisitions, and business restructuring. He combines senior leadership experience in multinational and for-purpose organisations with executive responsibility for disability services. David is a member of the Finance, Risk & Audit Committee.



Professor Helen Cooper *Director*

Combining a clinical background as a registered nurse with experience as a health service chief executive, Helen brings expertise in health service management, healthcare governance and performance improvement. Helen is a member of the Finance, Risk & Audit Committee.



Dr. Joy Humphreys *Director*

Joy brings expertise in organisational dynamics, leadership and culture. Supported by doctoral study in human systems and psychodynamics, her practice encompasses governance advisory services and reflective practice for leaders and teams across health, aged care, government and community sectors. Joy is a member of the People & Governance Committee.



Judy Small AM *Director*

An accredited Family Law Specialist, Judy has served as a Federal Circuit Court judge in the family law jurisdiction. Judy's experience also spans psychology, private legal practice and leadership of Victoria Legal Aid's Family, Youth and Children's Law services. Judy is a member of the People & Governance Committee.



Terri Smith *Director (Retired May 2026)*

Terri has more than 20 years' senior executive experience in the not-for-profit sector, including CEO roles and Board appointments. Her expertise spans clinical governance, risk management, government relations and advocacy, underpinned by a commitment to accountable governance. During her tenure, Terri was a member of the Finance, Risk & Audit Committee.

Governance and Leadership

Executive Team



Kirstan Corben *Chief Executive Officer*

Kirstan Corben brings over 20 years of leadership experience in health, community, sport, and government sectors. She is committed to equity, wellbeing, and community empowerment and leads with a strong belief and focus on bringing people together around the Better Place Australia's shared purpose.



Di Nally *Executive Manaager - Quality and Impact*

Di brings more that 30 years of professional clinical practice experience. Her approach is grounded in continuous improvement and evidence-informed decision making. Di is committed to demonstrating impact and ensuring our services create lasting positive change.



Johann Kelaart *Executive Manager - Corporate Services*

Johann is an accomplished finance executive with expertise in strategic planning, financial management, and governance. He leads with a strong commitment to transparency, sound decision making and long term organisational sustainability.



Kate Stobart *Executive Manager - People and Culture*

Kate brings over 15 years' experience across not-for-profit, private and government sectors, bringing a strategic, values-driven focus on people and culture. Kate is passionate about unlocking the potential of people and believes that an organisation's greatest advantage lies in its workforce.



Leanne Coupland *Executive Manager - Client Services*

Leanne brings extensive expertise in service delivery, workforce leadership and organisational culture. She leads with integrity and accountability whilst remaining authentic in her approach. Ensuring that Better Place Australia remains client centred, accessible and responsive is a primary focus.



Our People
and Places

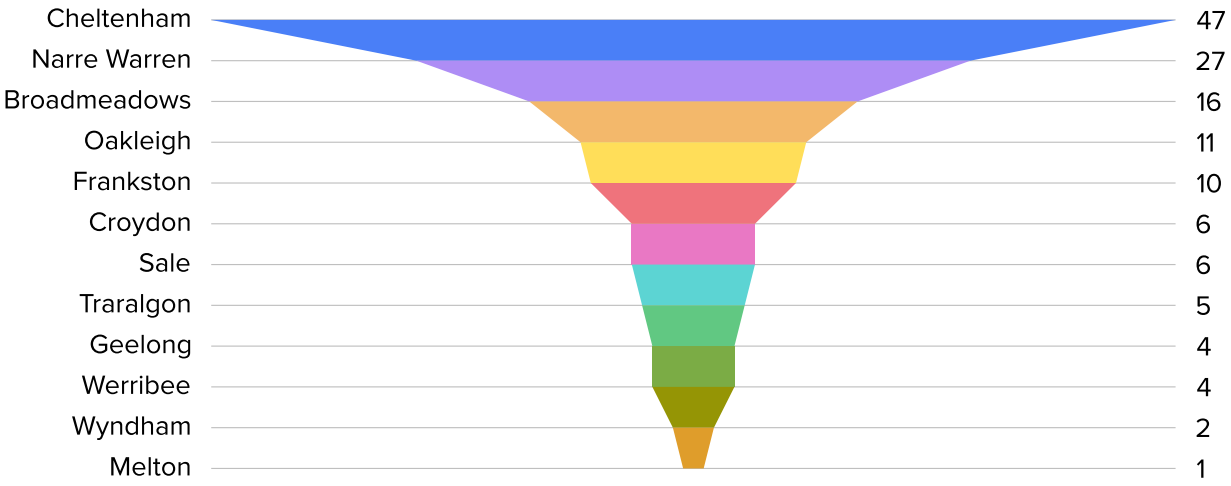
Our people are the heart of everything we do. Guided by our vision for an Australia where all people experience positive relationships, value one another, and live safer, more fulfilling lives, we continue to invest in the capability, wellbeing and success of our workforce. Our employees are integral to delivering meaningful outcomes for clients, families and communities every day.

A key priority this year has been supporting employees to do their best work. This included investing in professional development, enhancing leadership capability, and promoting employee wellbeing through a strong focus on health and safety. We also celebrated the dedication and achievements of our workforce through staff recognition awards and nurturing a culture that values contribution and excellence.

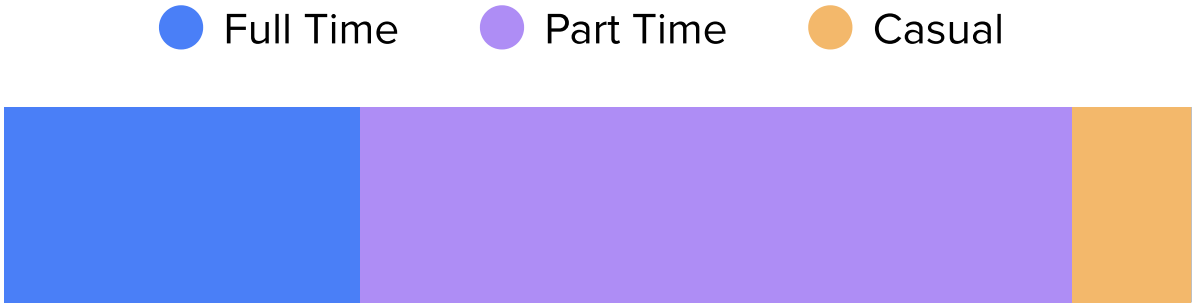
Our Workforce at a Glance

Almost half of our workforce has been with Better Place Australia for four years or more, reflecting the strong culture, engagement and sense of purpose that encourages people to build long-term careers with us. This commitment is exemplified by one employee who has achieved an extraordinary 24 years of service, demonstrating the depth of experience and dedication that supports our clients and communities.

Where We Are Located



Employment Status



Looking Forward

In the coming year, we will enhance our people strategy by:

- Building a leadership culture that is aligned, inclusive and authentic;
- Expanding professional development pathways;
- Strengthening recruitment and onboarding processes; and
- Elevating employee wellbeing, safety and engagement initiatives

By investing in our people, Better Place Australia can better empower individuals, families and communities to improve wellbeing and determine their futures with confidence.

Supporting Families Through Change



... I have nothing but praise for the work ethic, effort and professionalism exhibited towards us and our child. Really pleased that we were recommended...

Anonymous BPA Client



Case Study

Stronger Relationships

To protect client confidentiality, names, specific geographic locations, and identifying details in this case study have been changed.

Jackie and Sam reached out to BPA for relationship counselling due to increasing communication difficulties, conflict, reduced trust and feelings of disconnection. Jackie felt she was left with the majority of mental load and was critical of Sam's apparent disengagement and lack of prioritisation of the family (they have a two year old daughter) and their relationship, which had resulted in persistent arguments.

Sam expressed Jackie's communication style left him feeling not good enough and that he had shut down and given up on trying to rekindle the intimacy he missed in the relationship. Sam would therefore withhold input to avoid conflict out of fear of further disconnection, and had become dismissive of Jackie's requests for support. Jackie felt unheard and alone in the relationship, which further increased the lack of connection with Sam.

This dynamic led to both partners feeling unsafe to express their feelings, feeling unappreciated by the other, and led to a cycle of non-transparency and decision fatigue. Both expressed concern they felt they had become more like "roommates" and began questioning the sustainability of the relationship moving forward.

Outcome

The couple utilised the full episode of care (ten joint sessions).

The initial goal was to increase positivity and connection. The final outcome was increased emotional expression and overall communication. Positive steps were taken towards re-building intimacy.

Interventions were effective – the couple were able to have a new emotional experience of each other and implement skills to help them regain the trust and safety to express and respond to each other' s needs.

Jackie felt less alone, more connected to Sam and more energised. Sam felt more hope, reduced defensiveness and less fear about expressing his needs. Both were able to see a future together and felt confident they had the skills to manage any challenges they may face.

> ***I have realised since attending the service how freeing it has been to use the tools I was given... it has changed my outlook on how to deal and react to situations...***



Case Study

Improved Mental Health and Wellbeing

To protect client confidentiality, names, specific geographic locations, and identifying details in this case study have been changed.

Matteo, a fifteen-year-old transgender young person (he/him), was referred to Better Place Australia's Family Mental Health Support Service (FMHSS) by his mother. Matteo lived with his mother, stepfather and two older brothers. In our initial conversations, his mother expressed concerns about his health and wellbeing, school disengagement, personal hygiene and increasing social isolation. Matteo spent most of his time in his bedroom, sleeping during the day and staying awake throughout the night, only leaving his room late in the evening to eat.

Outcome

Over ten months of support, Matteo made significant progress. He developed healthier daily routines, spent more time outside his bedroom, and increased his involvement in family life, including cooking with a parent several times each week. He also achieved the important milestone of attending an outdoor event.

Matteo's personal hygiene improved considerably, with more regular showering, dressing and participation in daytime activities. He began spending time in the backyard and demonstrated a more positive outlook when facing challenges. His confidence grew, and he re-engaged with his passion for art, sharing his work through YouTube and TikTok platforms he created independently.

Matteo also developed a stronger understanding of healthy relationships, personal safety and boundaries. Most importantly, he reported feeling heard, understood and accepted by his case worker.

By the conclusion of support, Matteo had made the decision to return to formal education and was exploring school re-enrolment options. His mother expressed immense gratitude for the support provided, noting that BPA's persistence, flexibility and commitment to relationship-based practice enabled Matteo to access the help he needed and achieve meaningful improvements in his wellbeing and future goals.

> ***I've really taken on board a lot of the strategies you have put in place to help alleviate my anxiety...***



Case Study

Navigating Family and Change

To protect client confidentiality, names, specific geographic locations, and identifying details in this case study have been changed.

Brendan initiated Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) with his ex-partner, Shivani. Their relationship had recently ended, and they were finding it difficult to communicate and agree on care arrangements for their eleven year old son, Ajay.

In his assessment with the Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner (FDRP), Brendan reported that Ajay has autism and was struggling with the separation. Brendan had left the family home but hadn't yet found stable accommodation and was staying with various friends. Brendan said Ajay loved spending time with him but found Brendan's changing accommodation difficult, so he did not visit Brendan at home. Ajay preferred to spend time with Brendan at more familiar places such as his local skate park.

Shivani was invited to meet with the Practitioner and expressed relief, as she had been struggling to navigate co-parenting matters with Brendan on her own. Shivani told the Practitioner that Brendan's lack of suitable accommodation was impacting Ajay. She reported having numerous supports in place for Ajay, and hoped Brendan could be more involved in his care.

Outcome

Both parties expressed thanks to the Practitioner for supporting them to develop their agreement and stated they would return to Family Dispute Resolution if they couldn't reach agreements in future. Most importantly, both parents reported that Ajay was managing better since they'd implemented their plan.

> ***I had a really positive experience with the mediator. She was professional, understanding, and made me feel heard throughout the entire process.***



Case Study

Building Financial Stability

To protect client confidentiality, names, specific geographic locations, and identifying details in this case study have been changed.

Nia is a single woman who purchased her home in 2018 and has two mortgages. She had maintained her financial commitments without affordability issues until experiencing a series of significant life events.

In 2024 - 2025, Nia was diagnosed with breast cancer and required time away from work while undergoing treatment and recovery. This was followed by significant bereavement when both her mother and brother passed away in her homeland. Nia was required to travel overseas and take further time away from work to attend to family matters.

Nia has since returned to employment four days per week and is exploring additional Friday employment to increase her income. She also has a tax payment arrangement, a short-term loan from friends and provides regular financial support to family overseas. The combination of illness, time away from employment, bereavement and overseas travel disrupted Nia's previously sustainable financial position and contributed to mortgage arrears.

Nia sought assistance to determine whether her current financial position remained affordable and how best to address the arrears while managing her other commitments. Her current financial position indicated that she had underlying capacity to meet her commitments, suggesting that the financial difficulty was primarily associated with the period of disruption rather than a fundamental inability to afford the property.

Outcome

Following this period, Nia planned to return to her normal mortgage repayments from a more stable financial position. The arrangement provided a practical pathway to address the immediate arrears without creating an unnecessarily prolonged hardship arrangement. Nia gained clarity about her financial position and a better understanding of her capacity to meet her commitments. She recognised that while her income was sufficient to meet her identified financial obligations, she needed to remain mindful of discretionary spending and taking on any further financial commitments outside her current requirements.

> ***The Financial Counsellor is the most helpful and empathetic person I have spoken to in regards to my financial situation. I am very grateful for her help.***

Outcomes, Impact and Learning



I have found this service life saving. I didn't know it existed... Thank you Better Place Australia.

Anonymous BPA Client

Building Evidence and Insight



The Centre for Better Relationships turns evidence into action. Through research, policy and advocacy, we explore the complex systems that shape people's lives to create positive and lasting change for the children and families we serve.

Research, Evaluation & Advocacy

Our research, evaluation, and advocacy projects generate evidence to improve practice, inform policy and strengthen responses to complex issues. During the year, the Centre completed a range of projects focused on diverse families across the life course.

Papers Published in 2026

Transitioning into Residential Aged Care Research Project

Moving into residential aged care is a major life change. Through surveys and interviews with residents, families, nurses, and personal care assistants, we explored how this transition affects mental health and wellbeing. The findings provide practical guidance for aged care providers to better support residents during this vulnerable transition.

Capturing children's voice within a Children's Contact Service

Children's Contact Services provide safe spaces for children to spend time with a parent they do not live with when their parents cannot manage their own care arrangement. We developed and evaluated a visual feelings tool to help children share their experiences within a Children's Contact Service. The findings demonstrate how simple, child-centred approaches can create space for children's voices and inform practice.

LGBTQI+ family formation and known donors: Pathways, risks and the role of written agreements

Developed in partnership with Better Pride, we explored informal donor arrangements for LGBTQI+ families. This research highlights the role of written agreements in supporting informed decision-making and reducing risk. The work has strengthened Better Place Australia's donor agreement service and informed educational resources for families considering known donor arrangements.

Financial Elder Abuse: Understanding Risk, Interventions & System Responses

We examined how elder abuse can develop over time through changing relationships, life transitions, social isolation, and increasing reliance on others, proposing a stepped care approach from community connection and early support through to civil and criminal responses.

Respecting dignity and reducing harm: The need for a tiered response to elder abuse

We advocate for a broader response to elder abuse that extends beyond crisis intervention. The proposed tiered response framework supports earlier intervention and more tailored pathways to safety and autonomy.

Building on strong foundations: Enhancing Victoria's response to elder abuse

We exploreD the strengths and challenges of Victoria's elder abuse response system. It identifies key system gaps and outlines practical reforms to improve access to support, strengthen workforce capability, and enable earlier intervention.

Policy and Sector Engagement

Working alongside Better Place Australia and Southern Melbourne Elder Abuse Prevention Network (SEMPHN), the Centre contributed evidence and practice expertise to consultations, submissions, and policy reform focused on strengthening systems for children and families across the life course.

A New Approach to Programs for Children and Families

We provided feedback on the Australian Government's proposed children and families program reform, advocating for flexible, life-course approaches that reflect diverse family structures and changing needs.

Ageing Well Action Plan Refresh 2026 to 2030

We contributed to the development of the Ageing Well Action Plan Refresh 2026-2030, advocating for approaches that support inclusion, wellbeing, and dignity later in life. Key recommendations included extending funding for Elder Abuse Prevention Networks, strengthening age-appropriate support pathways, and addressing ageism through Framing Age training in government communications and workplace learning.

Financial Elder Abuse Risk and Response

Building on the Centre's elder abuse research, we engaged with the Age Discrimination Commissioner and representatives from the Australian Human Rights Commission to share insights on financial elder abuse prevention and early intervention. This discussion is supporting the development of visual frameworks to support the understanding of financial elder abuse risk and response.



Creating Better Futures for Children

Over the past year, our child and youth focused programs have continued to strengthen their commitment to placing children and young people at the centre of service design and delivery.

Voice of the Child Policy

A key achievement has been the development and implementation of our Voice of the Child Policy. This policy ensures that children and young people are provided with meaningful opportunities to express their views and have those views considered in decisions that affect them. The policy has influenced the way we develop and review programs, policies, procedures, and service improvements, ensuring that the experiences and perspectives of children remain a central consideration across our organisation.

Youth Advisory Committee

To strengthen participation, we established a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) comprising young people aged 12 to 17 years. The YAC provides a dedicated forum for young people to share their insights, experiences, and ideas about how our services can better meet the needs of children and young people. This initiative has empowered young people to actively contribute to organisational decision-making and has provided valuable guidance on how services can be more engaging, accessible, and responsive.

The impact of the YAC has already been significant, in the complete redesign of our Youth Information Booklet. Young people from the YAC led the review process, providing direct feedback on the language, content, design, and presentation of information. The result is a resource that is more relevant, engaging, and user-friendly for the young people accessing our services. This initiative demonstrates our commitment to co-design and highlights the value of involving young people as partners in service development.

Child Inclusive Mediation Service

This year we also expanded delivery of our Child Inclusive Mediation service. We invested in training additional practitioners to become child consultants, increasing our organisational capacity to ensure children's perspectives are considered throughout Family Dispute Resolution, where possible. As a result, more practitioners are incorporating Child Inclusive Mediation into their work, enabling children's experiences, needs, and concerns to be safely communicated to their parents and form part of the decision-making process. This approach supports families to better understand and respond to the needs of their children while promoting outcomes that are focused on the child's best interests.

Recognising the importance of hearing directly from children and young people about their service experiences, we implemented an organisation-wide feedback and complaint process specifically designed for children and young people. This initiative provides a consistent and accessible way for young people to share their experiences and contribute to ongoing service improvement. The feedback gathered is helping us better understand what is working well and where further improvements can be made.

Child's Voice Tool

In partnership with our Centre for Better Relationships team, we also developed and implemented the Child's Voice Tool within the Children's Contact Service. This innovative feedback tool invites children to identify and record how they are feeling before and after their contact visits. The information gathered provides valuable insight into children's experiences and wellbeing, supporting service responsiveness and continuous improvement. Importantly, the Child's Voice Tool ensures that children have an opportunity to communicate their experiences in a developmentally appropriate way, further embedding their voices into service evaluation and practice.

Together, these initiatives represent a significant step forward in our commitment to listening to, valuing, and acting upon the voices of children and young people. By embedding participation across service delivery, program development, and organisational decision-making, we continue to create services that are informed by the people they are designed to support.

Advocating For Stronger Communities



Better Place Australia is committed to fostering a culture that celebrates diversity, inclusion and accessibility for staff, clients, consumers and the communities we serve.

Diversity and Inclusion

Better Place Australia is committed to fostering a culture that celebrates diversity, inclusion and accessibility for staff, clients, consumers and the communities we serve.

Through Better Pride, we provide inclusive relationship services tailored to the needs of LGBTIQ+ communities, supporting individuals, couples and families to build stronger connections, navigate separation respectfully, and access services where all voices are heard and valued.

In 2025-26, the LGBTIQ+ Working Group partnered closely with Better Place Australia's Consumer and Community Advisory Groups to strengthen the way we communicate and engage with diverse communities. A key achievement was the complete redesign of the Better Pride website, which was co-designed with consumers and community members throughout the development process.

Community feedback helped shape the site's content and functionality, including the addition of practitioner profiles that highlight connections to community and approaches to service delivery. The result is a more accessible, welcoming and user-friendly website that has received strong endorsement from community members.

Better Pride maintained a visible presence at the Midsumma Festival for the eighth consecutive year. Staff engaged with community members at the Midsumma Carnival, facilitating conversations about what healthy and positive relationships mean to them, and proudly participated in the Pride March in St Kilda.

During the year, Better Place Australia also reviewed its systems and processes to strengthen the recognition of diverse gender identities and to better meet the needs of intersex people accessing our services.

To further enhance inclusive practice, staff participated in the See, Hear, Believe training program, building greater understanding of the experiences of LGBTIQ+ communities and strengthening their ability to listen, respond and provide affirming support.

Through Better Pride and the leadership of the LGBTIQ+ Working Group, Better Place Australia continues to strengthen inclusive service delivery, amplify community voices, and create more welcoming and affirming experiences for LGBTIQ+ people and their families.

South Melbourne Elder Abuse Prevention Network (SMEAPN)

The Southern Melbourne Elder Abuse Prevention Network (SMEAPN) brings together more than 30 member organisations from local government, community health, mediation and counselling services, women's health organisations, and agencies supporting older people across Melbourne's southern region.

Hosted and led by Better Place Australia for the past four years, the network works collaboratively to prevent elder abuse through community education, workforce development, advocacy, and awareness-raising initiatives that promote the rights, dignity, and inclusion of older people.

Key activities and achievements in 2025–26 included:

- Delivering the *Building Stronger Teams through Age Diversity* Business Breakfast in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, bringing together employers and community leaders to explore the benefits of age-diverse workplaces and the role they play in preventing ageism and elder abuse.

- Leading ageism awareness campaigns across social media, encouraging workplaces and community members to reflect on the language, attitudes and assumptions that can contribute to age discrimination.

- Collaborating with Elder Abuse Prevention Networks across Victoria to deliver eight workshops for 120 professionals and community members on values-based messaging and the principles of the *Framing Age Message Guide*. The workshops aimed to challenge ageist attitudes and promote more inclusive ways of communicating about ageing. Evaluation results showed that 60% of participants reported an increased understanding of ageist language, while 70% indicated they would reflect on and address their own age-related biases.

Through strong partnerships, community engagement and sector leadership, SMEAPN continues to strengthen local efforts to prevent elder abuse while fostering communities where older people are respected, valued and included.

Growing

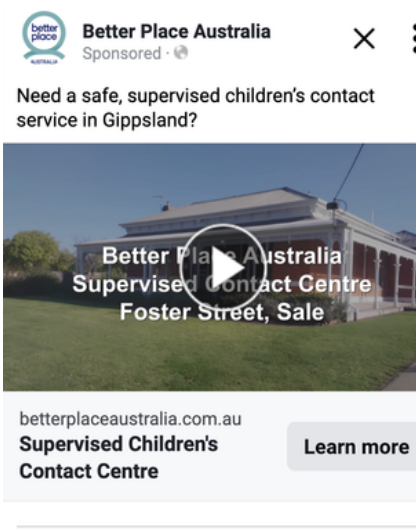
Our Reach

Website | Referrals | Phone | Online Chat | Social Media

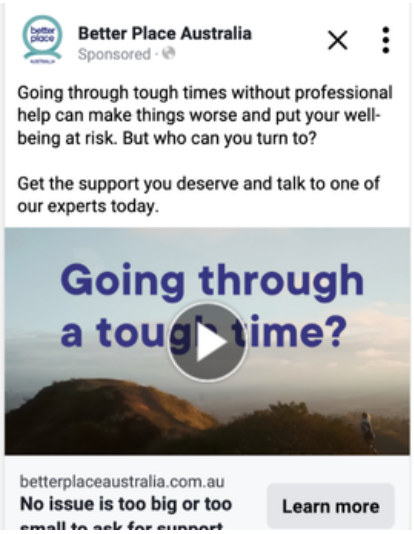
Better Place Australia Website Metrics (FY25-26)

85,000 *Total Visitors*
(22.3% *Increase From This Time Last Year)*
57,000 *From Organic Search (**6.5%** Increase From This Time Last Year)*
19.3% *Increase in Visitors Came From Referral Traffic*
22.5% *Increase in Key Events (Enquiries, Click To Call, etc.)*

Campaigns with the Highest Engagement



Children's Contact Centre
373,589 *Impressions*
95,551 *Reach*



Relationship Counselling
251,382 *Impressions*
51,325 *Reach*



Tuning Into Teens
229,282 *Impressions*
123,440 *Reach*

Looking Forward



Better Place has been the most empowering and successful experience which has given me the tools to live a happy normal life again in a better place.

Anonymous BPA Client

Our Priorities For
2026-2027



As we look ahead, Better Place Australia enters FY2026-27 with renewed leadership, a clear strategic direction and a strong commitment to improving outcomes for the individuals, children and families we serve.

The year ahead provides an opportunity to build on the foundations established during FY2025-26. While the environment in which we operate remains challenging, with ongoing funding pressures and increasing community demand, we are well positioned to continue strengthening our services, our organisation and our impact.

Improving Service Performance and Increasing Client Access

A key focus for the coming year will be improving service performance and increasing client access. We know that every occasion of service delivered, every family supported and every barrier removed creates meaningful value for the communities we serve. Improving activity levels, reducing delays and ensuring our resources are directed where they have the greatest impact will remain a central organisational priority.

Strengthening Organisational Leadership and Accountability

We will continue to strengthen leadership and accountability across the organisation. FY2026-27 will focus on embedding our leadership model, building capability throughout the organisation and fostering a culture that supports collaboration, transparency, performance and continuous improvement.

Our Priorities For
2026-2027

Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability will remain an important focus. We will continue to improve organisational visibility of financial performance, strengthen decision-making regarding resource allocation and ensure that available funding is utilised as effectively as possible. This work supports not only Better Place Australia's long-term sustainability but also our ability to respond to future changes in funding models and service expectations.

Technology and Innovation

Technology and innovation will also play a critical role in our future. Planning for the replacement of our current client management system will be a major area of focus, providing an opportunity to improve the experience of both clients and staff while creating stronger reporting, data and service delivery capabilities. We will also continue to explore opportunities to responsibly utilise emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, where these can improve client outcomes, efficiency and organisational effectiveness.

Quality, Safety and Governance

Quality, safety and governance will remain at the centre of our work. We will continue strengthening our approach to risk management, clinical governance, occupational health and safety, cyber security and organisational assurance to ensure BPA remains a trusted provider of high-quality services.

Learning From Those We Serve

Importantly, we will continue to learn from those we serve. Better understanding client outcomes, service effectiveness and lived experience will help shape future service design, advocacy efforts and organisational priorities. Through the Centre for Better Relationships and our broader advocacy activities, we will continue contributing evidence, insights and practical solutions to discussions that influence the wellbeing of families and communities across Australia.

Our Priorities For
2026-2027

While our focus remains firmly on delivering excellent services today, we are equally committed to preparing Better Place Australia for tomorrow. By strengthening our people, systems, leadership and culture, we are building an organisation that can continue to adapt, grow and deliver meaningful impact for many years to come.

FY2026-27 is not about doing more for the sake of doing more. It is about doing what matters most, doing it well and ensuring Better Place Australia continues to be a trusted partner for individuals, families and communities seeking support, connection and positive change.

Financial

Statements

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	2026	2025
Revenue	$ 17,550,166	$ 17,069,877
Employee Benefits	-$ 14,825,673	-$ 13,949,053
Supplies and Services	-$ 1,478,460	-$ 1,527,396
Depreciation and Amortisation	-$ 532,684	-$ 561,197
Occupancy and Utilities	-$ 547,675	-$ 602,430
Surplus for the Year	$ 165,674	$ 429,801

Financial Position (Assets)

Current Assets	2026	2025
Cash and Cash Equivalents	$ 518,845	$ 832,726
Trade and Other Receivables	$ 468,847	$ 930,271
Financial Assets at Amortised Cost	$ 5,585,000	$ 4,585,000
Other Assets	$ 532,295	$ 437,722
Total Current Assets	$ 7,104,987	$ 6,785,719

Non-Current Assets	2026	2025
Property, Plant and Equipment	$ 7,940,250	$ 7,855,446
Total Non-Current Assets	$ 7,940,250	$ 7,855,446
TOTAL ASSETS	$ 15,045,237	$ 14,641,165

	2026	2025
NET ASSETS	$ 10,398,362	$ 10,232,688

Financial Position (Liabilities)

Current Liabilities	2026	2025
Trade and Other Payables	$ 757,638	$ 660,779
Lease Liabilities	$ 174,278	$ 216,460
Provisions	$ 1,388,641	$ 1,318,319
Other Liabilities	$ 16,221	$ 141,056
Total Current Liabilities	$ 2,336,778	$ 2,336,614

Non-Current Liabilities	2026	2025
Lease Liabilities	$ 1,930,497	$ 1,692,360
Provisions	$ 379,600	$ 379,503
Other Non-Current Liabilities	$ 2,310,097	$ 2,071,863
TOTAL LIABILITIES	$ 4,646,875	$ 4,408,477

Financial Position (Equity)

Equity	2026	2025
Accumulated Surplus	$ 10,398,362	$ 10,232,688
TOTAL EQUITY	$ 10,398,362	$ 10,232,688

Our Funders

We gratefully acknowledge the financial grants received

Commonwealth Government
Attorney General's Department
Department of Social Service

Victorian Government
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Primary Health Networks
Monash Health
South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network
North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network
Western Victoria Primary Health Network

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