

AMPLIFY OUTCOMES REPORT

MAITLAND FAMILY SUPPORT

August 2024



Maitland Family Support (MFS) is a small organisation that provides practical support to families in the Maitland LGA, the fastest growing region in NSW. Our small size and the ever-growing needs of the community require us to be creative, community-led and efficient in what we offer.

"Thanks for your support and advice through this journey called parenthood."

- 'Mum', 39

The challenge our community faces

Our community post COVID-19 is experiencing higher numbers of families with lived experience of family and domestic violence, in housing stress, and struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. This additional complexity of need requires our organisation to respond with a shift in supports offered.

How we help

We provide wraparound services for our clients with our family capacity building and deliver intensive support. Our services have expanded to offer parenting and skills programs to address issues contributing to family and domestic violence, and support recovery from it.

What we hope to achieve

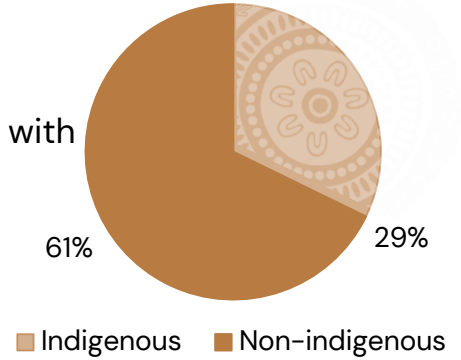
Knowledge	Skills	Empowerment
<p>Access to information</p> <p>Parents/carers learn about healthy relationships and optimal child development, and how to apply this learning to support their family.</p>	<p>Changed Skills</p> <p>Parents/carers develop additional strategies to support theirs and their children's safety and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Choice and control to make own decisions</p> <p>Parents/carers increase in confidence to make independent decisions about their parenting and circumstances.</p>

WHAT WE DO

MFS programs work along side each other to provide wraparound support. During 2023-2024 across our TEI program we provided 3,530 client engagements over 1,994 sessions. Delivery of service client engagements include: Information, Advice & Referral (632), Intake & Assessment (254), Material Aid (29), Parenting Programs (343), Supported Playgroup (344) and Targeted Family Capacity Building (663).

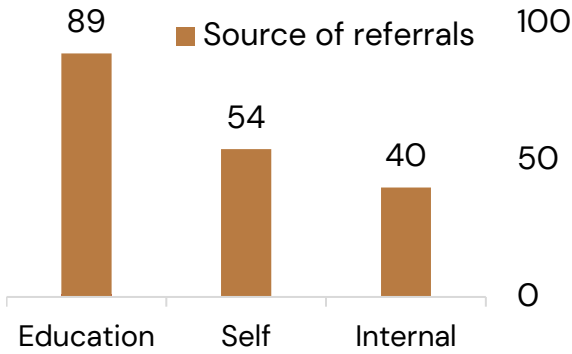
This report focuses on MFS Intensive Family Capacity Building service. Data highlights we supported 24 clients with 1,265 engagements, over 1,027 sessions with an average of 50 sessions per client.

Clients supported	Sessions delivered	Average # sessions per client
24	1,265	50

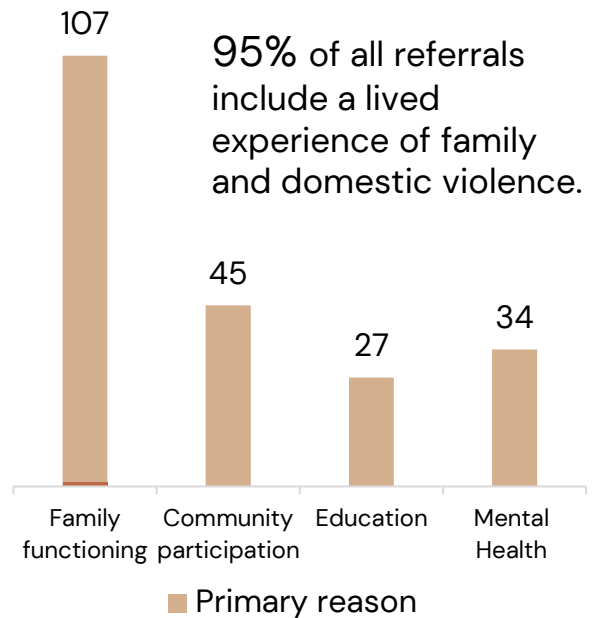


Demographic data reveals a dominance of families with increasing complex support needs. Of those 24 clients, 54% were sole parents, 29% indigenous and 12.5% at risk of homelessness.

Intensive Family Capacity Building
54% are sole parents



Our referral data showcases our strong links to Education and Self-Referrals in the community. Internal referrals highlight the wraparound services we provide. As expected, the primary reason our support is sought, is to address issues in Family Functioning.



95% of all referrals include a lived experience of family and domestic violence.

Parenting Programs
32% of parents/carers accessing are **fathers**

Additional Outcome
we saw an increase in engagement due to father focused content delivery

Parents/carers reporting an overall positive change
100%

OUR OUTCOMES

Our most vulnerable clients, particularly our Indigenous families, have not consented to share their feedback with government systems. Of those who agreed, the following outcomes were captured in Family Capacity Building Intensive stream.

Highlights

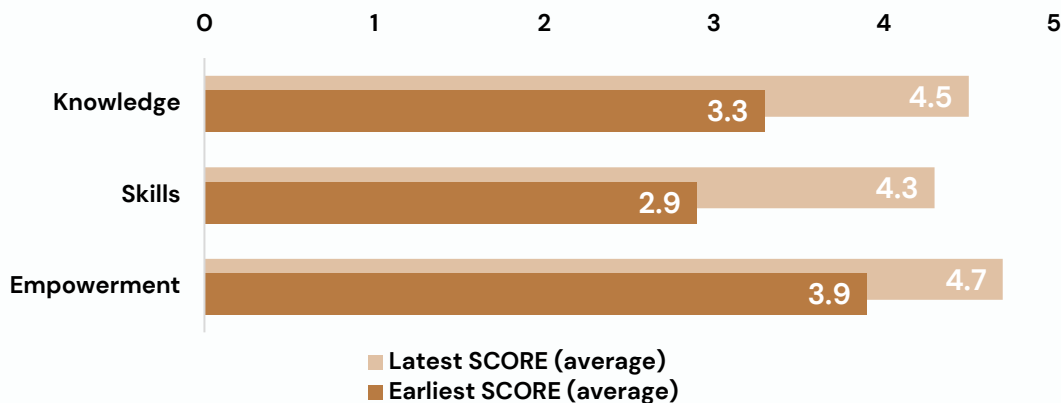
Children at the centre
(as illustrated by this image)



We supported 24 clients in Intensive Family Capacity Building across 2023–2024 with children at the centre of our work. 100% reported a positive shift due to engaging with our services.

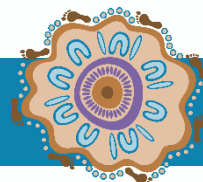
Knowledge	Skills	Empowerment
<i>"I have a better understanding that DV is very distressing for children in many different ways, from a young age to being a parent themselves" (Dad, 48)</i>	<i>" [Worker] provided skills that were easily able to be put into practice... and helped strengthen the relationship between my step-children and me" (Dad & step-dad, 40)</i>	<i>"We are the making of our parents; we must show our children the right ways" (Dad, 24)</i> <i>"I can focus on what I've learnt to improve my surroundings" (Mum, 36)</i>

Greatest impact
Changed Skills
Increased by 48%!
2.9 to 4.3



Learning Points

Connections are important to us
(as illustrated by this image)



Our partnership with Department of Education is strong, however we identified building stronger referral pathways with services who interact with families when children are under 5. We have begun developing closer partnerships with the maternity and child protection social workers in the Hunter–New England health system.

There is also a gap in post-crisis, recovery-based support options for those impacted by family and domestic violence. We have commenced delivery of two parenting programs (Bringing up Great Kids After DV; Start Today Again) and (The Shark Cage). We are also establishing an ongoing support group for women parenting after FDV.

Alison's STORY

Alison

- 29 year old single parent with a 10 years and 8 months child
- Family impacted by FDV with recent separation
- Mum recently had extensive hospital stays due to organ failure
- Mum's mental health concerns included severe post-natal depression and anxiety
- Eldest child's anxiety for mum's safety led to school refusal and experiencing 'meltdowns'
- Ongoing financial stress to sustain home, health and safety
- Social isolation of all family members due to stalking and fear of child abduction with ex partner's substance misuse



Alison's Journey through our services

Alison came to the service through a referral from a DoE Home School Liaison Officer. Her eldest child wasn't attending school regularly. Alison was open to receiving support from us as we built rapport learning of the complexity of the family situation. As expected on leaving the violent relationship, the safety issues increased over time, but the family remained securely engaged with us. Alison and the children received 150 sessions within Family Capacity Building Targeted then Intensive Support and Parenting Programs throughout 2023–2024.

Activities included collaboration with the school to support engagement and safety; provision of financial assistance (food, toiletries, nappies); addressing safety concerns (installation of security cameras, ensuring the ADVO included the children); linking to victims' services, DV services and mental health casework for eldest child; involvement in on-site FDV relevant programs including Shark Cage and Bringing up Great Kids after DV.

"I was able to help [Alison] understand that speaking with her eldest child about her safety concerns was contributing to the child's anxiety. We developed healthy boundaries of communication and suitable adults to speak to about the issues. Then by getting the school aware of the risks and casework support in for her child, school refusal was no

What's changed for Alison?

Alison has a suitable support network of peers and workers that she can turn to if distressed, anxious or has safety concerns. While building her awareness of the impact of FDV on herself and her children, she has also built social connections with other parents attending the group programs. She "loved being able to relax and learn knowing [child] is safe and being watched without distracting me".

Alison is experiencing less anxiety and is empowered to set goals that will keep herself and her family safe and well. Though her SCOREs fluctuated over the year, she ultimately left the program reporting a *5:strong agreement* that she was satisfied with the support received and that she had built the knowledge, skills and sense of control to improve her circumstances.

The children have observable outcomes as well with the eldest child feeling safer at home and school and attending school regularly. The youngest child socialised with peers and workers in the group program childcare and is meeting all milestones.

"My worker has helped so much. I definitely would not be where I am right now without their help, support and guidance."