

Family Inclusion Strategies in the Hunter (FISH)

STRATEGIC PLAN July 2025- June 2027

What is FISH?

At its core, Family Inclusion Strategies in the Hunter (FISH) is a social movement dedicated to children and young people being safer, better supported and with improved long-term outcomes.

FISH was created over a decade ago by a group of parents, family members, carers and practitioners committed to promote family inclusion in the lives of children and young people whose lives are impacted by the child protection and out-of-home care system and the agencies that are part of it.

We want the children and young people impacted by these systems and agencies to have great relationships with their families and for their families to be actively and meaningfully participating in their lives.

FISH's Guiding Principles are:

- Children's rights guide our movement. Children have a right to family, culture and community. All children need their families.
- We are first and foremost a movement that is guided and led by parents and family with lived experience and the voices of those most directly impacted by the actions of child protection and out of home care systems.
- We believe that all children and young people have the right to be safe and protected from harm, and that the best way to achieve this is through the participation and agency of their parents and families.
- Parents and family need effective support and advocacy.
- We believe that all people do the best they can with the information, support and resources they have available, and we believe that people are always capable of change.
- We respect that people's pain and ability to remain at the table will change, and we commit to meeting people where they are, with empathy.
- We are committed to being courageous advocates and allies, who speak up for the importance of meaningful family inclusion in any room we walk into.

FISH's Objectives are:

- To partner with and learn from the lived experience of families and children, modelling collaboration and partnership between practice, research and family and children.
- To promote and advocate for the respectful inclusion of families in out of home care and child protection systems and practice.
- To reduce the number of children and young people in out-of-home care and increase children and young people being restored to the care of their families.
- To amplify the voice and build participation of parents, family and children in discussion about child protection and out-of-home care.
- To identify and make visible family inclusive practice to generate learning and change in the broader system.
- To question conventional thinking, concepts and ways of working in the child protection system which undermines family inclusion.
- To generate knowledge, solutions and strategies for better practice and system change.
- To improve access to advocacy, information and peer support for parents and families.

FAMILY INCLUSION STRATEGIES IN THE HUNTER INC

Family Inclusion Strategies in the Hunter Inc. is the legal organisational structure that we use to anchor and drive our collective efforts to achieve the movement’s objectives. This organisation is led by a volunteer Management Committee, who govern our operational and strategic activities, and act as custodians of the combined history, knowledge and purpose of the social movement.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2025-2027

PRIORITY AREA 1: SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY & CHANGE	PRIORITY AREA 2: STRONG & SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE	PRIORITY AREA 3: PARENT AND FAMILY ADVOCACY & SUPPORT	PRIORITY AREA 4: COMMUNITY ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide strong systemic advocacy and policy advice, based on lived and living expertise, to challenge the status quo and achieve real change. ● Strengthen our strategic communication capacity, to reach more people and influence thinking about family inclusion across society. ● Support research and enquiry that builds the evidence for effective family inclusive practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain and strengthen FISH’s governance. ● Maintain and strengthen FISHs financial position. ● Strengthen FISH’s data, and reporting capability. ● Review FISH’s internal policies & procedures for the next stage of our growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build on the successes of our Peer Support and Advocacy Service to support more families, in more places, with more services. ● Demonstrate the impact of family inclusive practices and peer support and advocacy in enabling restoration and family inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build awareness of the lived experiences and expertise of parents and families who are impacted by the actions of child protection and out-of-home care services. ● Grow the FISH Community with more families, allies and supporters. ● Consolidate and expand our service offerings, including services and programs that support practitioners and carers to better understand family inclusion and support it in practice. ● Build presence and connection with allied groups at local, national and international levels. ● Build relationships with funding bodies and allies who align with and want to contribute to the FISH social movement.