



Who Are Vietnamese Families with Special Needs? <https://www.vfsn.org.au>

The Vietnamese Families with Special Needs (VFSN) is a parent led, volunteer based Incorporated Association providing peer support, parent information and community inclusion opportunities to the Vietnamese Community living with disability in Western Melbourne. Established 17 years ago to enhance the emotional and social wellbeing of Vietnamese families, the VFSN today provides a highly successful weekly parent support group, disability and parent education sessions, an annual family camp and a variety of social and cultural events that build skills, connection, cultural understanding and wellbeing. At the core of all its activities and services is the VFSN vision of living in a society where Vietnamese families who have a child with a disability live with respect and dignity, are able to reach their optimum wellbeing and capacity; and are understood and accepted without judgement and stigma.

Who Are Extended Families Australia? <https://www.extendedfamilies.org.au>

Extended Families Australia is a not for profit organisation supporting young people and families living with disability in Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula. The organisation began in the 1970's as the Foster Grandparents Scheme offering volunteer based social supports to children living in institutions. In 2003, the organisation was renamed Extended Families Australia and today offers a spectrum of services that facilitate positive connections within the community, widen social networks, promote inclusion, empower individuals and strengthen the bonds people have within their communities. As a registered NDIS Service Provider, the organisation offers Support Coordination, Plan Management, Community Inclusion Assistance and Volunteer based Social Support. At the core of each program offered is the belief that being a part of the community is important and that we must all strive to create a society where children and young people with a disability experience full community inclusion and participation and their families are strong, resilient and connected.

Our Work Together

Based on an earlier relationship, the VFSN and Extended Families began a more significant collective journey in 2014 by collaborating in the delivery of a parent support program to Vietnamese families in the western metro region of Melbourne. This initiative marked the beginning of an ongoing and highly successful working relationship between the two organisations that continues today and has resulted in a number of successful service outcomes that have enhanced the lives of Vietnamese children, young people and families living with disability. Similarities in vision and mission have led to resource sharing – of staff, project management expertise, financial and administrative resources. This has deepened the relationship between the two organisations and led to the VFSN and Extended Families undertaking a number of collaborative grant applications and auspicing arrangements that have resulted in culturally sensitive and innovative service outcomes for consumers.

The Project We are Celebrating Today

With funding gained in the 2018-19 Disabled People and Families Organisations (DPFOs) – NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Grant Readiness Round, the VFSN and Extended Families partnered to undertake a project dedicated to building the VFSN's organisational capacity. The work undertaken in the project reflects common elements of vision and mission and has focused upon strengthening VFSN organisational governance; strategic planning to build VFSN service capacity and piloting of an innovative peer group and community inclusion program for young Vietnamese adults with Autism.

We look forward to sharing some of the many achievements of this project with you at the launch on 21st May 2020!