



Royal Far West
Children's health, country-wide

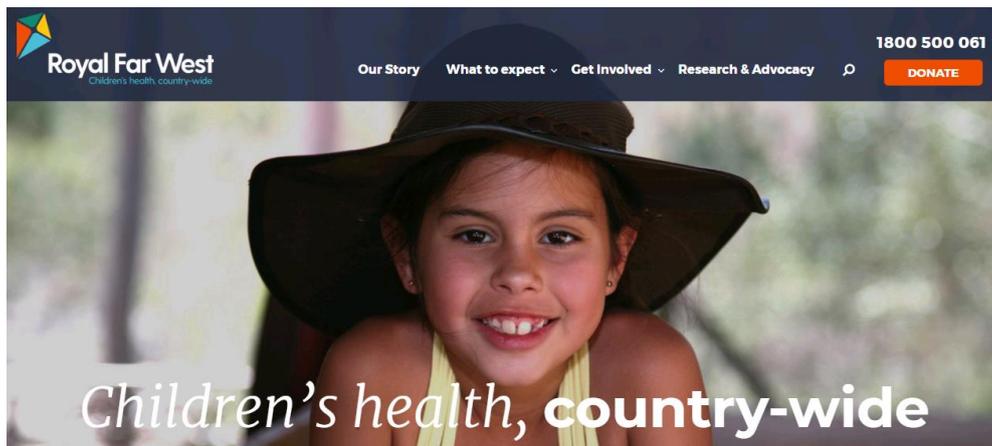
Royal Far West
Australian Charity Awards
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Table of Contents

1. Profile	3
2. Method	7
3. Execution	9
4. Outcomes	11
Appendices.....	13

1. Profile



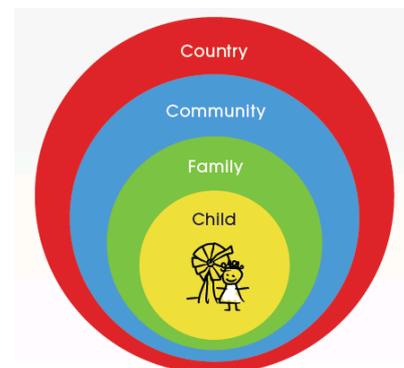
For 94 years, Royal Far West (RFW) has served country children and communities. Whilst its approach has changed and evolved over this time to respond to the most pressing needs of country communities, it remains relentlessly focused on the health and wellbeing of country children and their families.

Today, RFW is a service provider, capacity builder and advocate for country children and their developmental health. RFW leverages new models of remote service provision, working in partnership with families, schools and communities to create services and solutions that respond to the complexities of rural and remote environments. RFW uses specialist paediatric workforce, technology, and its understanding of country communities to help improve children's health outcomes and life trajectories as much as they can. RFW's integrated health, education and disability services for children aged 0-12 years are delivered through a combination of residential, telehealth and in-community programs. Its multi-disciplinary teams work closely with healthcare professionals, schools, communities, parents and carers, with capacity building of teachers a major focus.

Staffed by over 120 medical and allied health professionals, educators, researchers, advocacy and community staff, RFW provides an intensive service for children with complex developmental needs on site in Manly, and virtual assessment, therapy and capacity building via Telecare programs provided directly into schools, homes, and local clinics. RFW also works directly in communities.

Services (refer Appendix A) are directed at improving:

- The mental health rates of isolated children
- The vulnerability rates of rural and remote Australian children
- Family support for children with complex needs
- The capacity of isolated teachers, health practitioners and families to support children with complex health and development needs



Royal Far West's vision is healthy country kids.

RFW's organisational values of respect, integrity, energy and care are reflected in its strengths-based approach supporting recovery and inclusion, as well as policies and procedures, in line with the principles of the National Mental Health Standards and the National Framework for Recovery Oriented Mental Health Services.



RFW's purpose is to ensure that all children can access the services and supports that are essential to their development, no matter where they live. It advocates for all country children, and by 2020 aims to support up to 15,000 beneficiaries.

RFW Strategic Objectives (refer Appendix C – Strategic Plan 2016–2020):

1. Champion Country Kids - by building a strong evidence base on rural and remote child health and wellbeing that influences policy from an informed position.
2. Extend our Reach - by improving access to isolated and remote communities through partnerships and innovative use of new technology.
3. Empower Communities - by building capacity through outcomes-based collaboration, education and training.
4. Strive for Service Excellence - by providing professional, high quality services, fostering innovative research, partnerships and new program development.
5. Strengthen our Business – by continually improving organisational capability, efficiencies and sustainability and enhancing fundraising and enterprise capability.

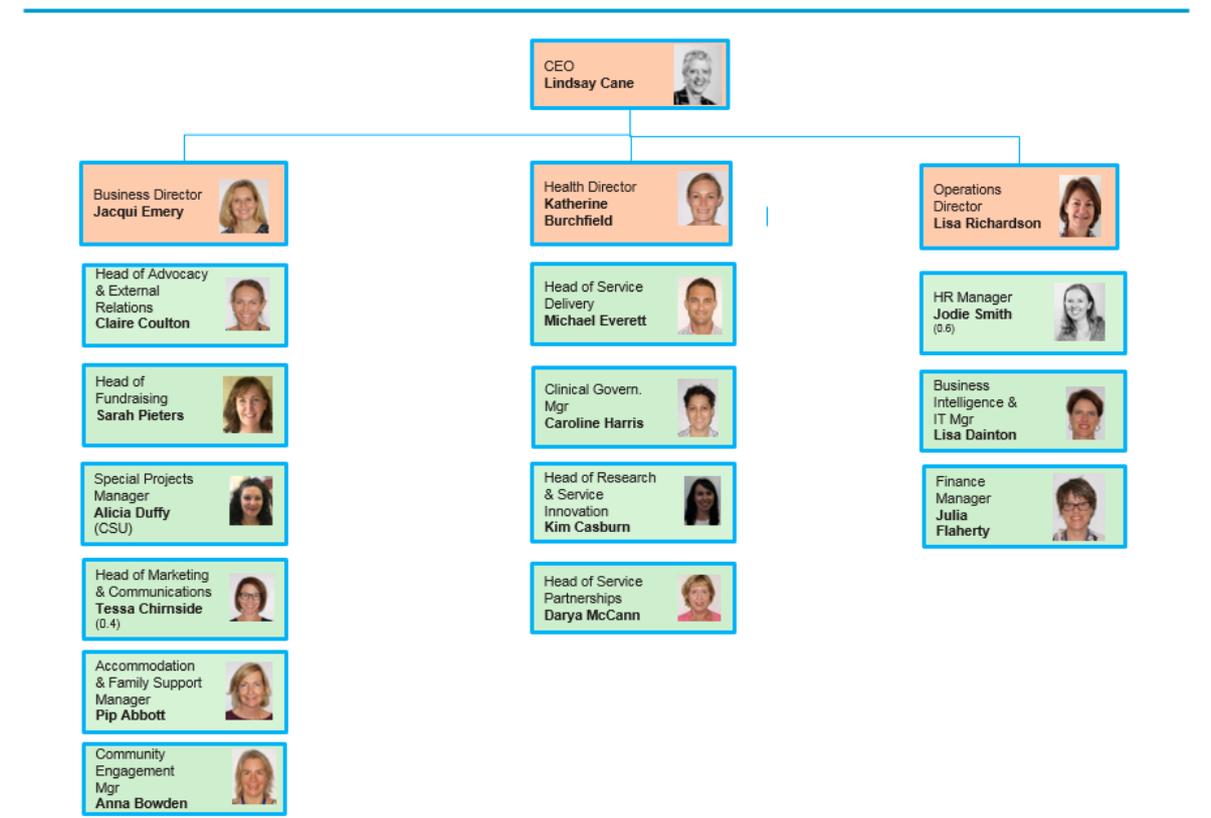
Five strategic pillars support our vision, inform our decision making, and enable us to deliver on our goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Country Kids	Access and Equity	Partnerships	Families and Communities	Value
Our services and programs are focused on children up to 12 years of age with developmental and behavioural issues who live in rural and remote Australia.	We seek to improve access to health services, and reduce inequalities in this access, through service delivery, capacity building and advocacy.	We work in partnership with governments, schools and local services to make best use of limited resources to support children and families.	We understand the importance of family and community for a child's wellbeing. We work with them to meet their needs and build capacity.	We value our people, our donors, our volunteers and supporters. We strive to make every dollar count, and to make a real difference to children's lives.

RFW's Executive team collectively hold extensive experience in education, business, health, advocacy, policy reform, and service delivery:

- RFW CEO Lindsay Cane is an experienced non-profit CEO and company director with experience in leading, managing and inspiring organisational development and growth in the non-profit sector and previous directorship roles that include The Australian Physiotherapy Association, The Asthma Foundation (NSW) and Netball Australia.
- Heath Director Katherine Burchfield is an economist with experience in health reform, strategy, research, policy and health management in Australia and internationally, working the public, NGO and consultancy sectors. Katherine was previously Director of the Integrated Care Branch of the NSW Ministry of Health, leading a broad portfolio that covered integrated care reforms, primary and community care, aged care, hospital substitution, disability and priority programs.
- Business Director Jacqui Emery set up a new business development team at the Australian Institute of Company Directors, to provide bespoke education and training to improve the governance of organisations across Listed, Private, Public and NFP sectors. Jacqui has also held a number of leadership roles in the media and publishing industries.
- Operations Director Lisa Richardson has been part of the Royal Far West team since 2014, contributing as Corporate Projects Volunteer before her 2018 appointment to the Operations Director role. Lisa brings more than 25 years of Australian and international executive experience acquired with Macquarie Group in investment banking, the finance industry and the public sector.

Royal Far West Management Structure:



RFW Board of Directors:

- Joan Treweeke OAM, the Vice-President of the Royal Flying Doctors Association
- Michael Gill, former CEO of the Financial Review Group
- Ted Waters, former Chief Executive of ING global businesses
- Mark Drummond, over 31 years' management experience and more than 15 years' experience as a Company Director
- Sheridan Dudley, former Chief of Staff to the NSW Education Minister
- Richard Hattersley, extensive business and investment experience over many years having previously been Director and Private Client Advisor with financial services firms
- Richard Barron, successful career in construction and project management, has held Directorships in various propriety companies for more than 41 years
- Peter Veenstra OAM, a former teacher, now CEO of Central West Rugby Union and Director with New South Wales Rugby Union and New South Wales Country Rugby Union

The Board and Executive are supported by RFW Patron, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of NSW.

For further information refer Appendix D – 2016/17 Annual Report

2. Method

The challenge: to ensure that all children can access the services and supports that are essential to their development, no matter where they live.

Royal Far West's award winning Telecare for Kids program (Telecare), now Australia's longest continually operating child and family telehealth service, was created in 2013 in response to the overwhelming need of isolated and disadvantaged rural children and young people to access services remotely.

RFW used Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data as evidence to support the business case for Telecare trials. The AEDC data identified that one in five Australian children are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains and would benefit from RFW's primary and community care services, and one in 10 children are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains and would benefit from RFW's complex care services. This translates to approximately 331,000 children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain and 171,000 developmentally vulnerable on two or more in regional Australia.

Disadvantage is linked to vulnerability and children living in very remote areas are up to five times as likely to be developmentally vulnerable as children from urban areas. This disadvantage is compounded by a lack of access to services. Vulnerability increases the risk of poor life outcomes, including poorer educational outcomes. Evidence shows that multi-disciplinary health interventions are effective in reducing childhood vulnerability and thereby improving educational outcomes, including literacy and numeracy, and behavioural and social outcomes. This evidence provided a strong platform for the Telecare initiative and trials.

The aim of the Telecare for Kids initiative was to connect country children with the healthcare they need without leaving their local community. The plan was to link specialists in Manly through online video consultations into schools, homes or health clinics.

The scope of the Telecare initiative was to provide assessment and therapy for children, and capacity building sessions for schools, pre-schools, parents and carers. The program was also designed to provide access to high quality children's healthcare and capacity building services in the following areas:

- Speech Pathology
- Occupational Therapy
- Psychology
- Paediatrics

Working in trial sites in partnership with preschools, primary schools, parents and local clinicians, RFW planned to offer intensive mental health services, as well as assessment, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and capacity building via Telecare. The program design was evidence-informed and scheduled to be delivered by ehealth trained specialist paediatric allied health staff. Telecare program objectives included helping children achieve their developmental goals, and to screen for and treat mental health concerns in the context of the overall child, by broadening the lens to focus on developmental health.

The effectiveness of the Telecare initiative would be measured by:

- Percent of clients who met or exceeded therapy goals
- Percent of parents would recommend the service to other parents
- 100% of children who participated in Telecare would be set Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) goals. GAS is a method of scoring the extent to which patient's individual goals are achieved in the course of intervention, an improvement on more traditional standardised measures.
- Percentage of students showing speech and motor skill development gains, and degree to which this translates into improved learning outcomes and improved confidence and socialisation
- Feedback from educators via evaluation interviews regarding any professional development gains from working alongside speech and occupational therapists
- Feedback from parents via evaluation surveys

3. Execution

Telecare for Kids connects country children with the healthcare they need without leaving their local community. RFW does this by linking specialists in Manly through state of the art videoconferencing technology into schools, homes or health clinics.

Telecare was devised and trialled in 2013 by the RFW team in response to the compelling evidence and issues challenging Australia’s rural and remote communities, and provides assessment and therapy for children aged 3-12, and capacity building sessions for schools, pre-schools, parents and carers. The program also provides access to high quality children’s healthcare and capacity building services in the following areas:

- speech, language & communication
- fine & gross motor skills
- sensory processing & regulation
- mild to moderate mental health issues (anxiety, stress, depression)
- conduct disorders
- behavioural & social issues

Families, schools and health professionals can directly refer children to Telecare. Following an initial screening, the RFW team assist with the setup of technology and appointments. Children always have an adult next to them (e.g. Education Support Staff) to help the clinicians deliver the care, and parents are encouraged to get involved too.

TELECARE SERVICES – BY PATHWAY	
Screeners	Targeted screening by a specialist clinician to determine whether a child has developmental issues and would benefit from speech, occupational therapy or psychology intervention.
Specialised Assessment	Individual assessment via video technology to support children and families with health, development and specialised education needs.
Individual Therapy and Intervention	One-on-one therapy via video-link targeting early speech and language, fine motor, sensory regulation, behavior or mental health difficulties.
Group Therapy and Intervention	A cost effective intervention for improving speech and language, or fine motor coordination skills, with sessions delivered via video-link to two to four children of similar levels and needs.
Capacity Building for Professionals	Tailored capacity building for up to 6 teachers/other professionals using a mixture of tele-tutorials, online resources, and live video-link panel discussions with senior RFW clinicians. Designed to build skills and confidence in supporting preschool and school children with issues in speech and language, motor development, sensory regulation, behaviour, anxiety or with other developmental or behavioural diagnoses.

A number of pilots were conducted in 2013 to develop models of service delivery, funding, and community engagement.

Pilot example: A Telecare pilot was conducted in 2013, in partnership with BUPA Health Foundation, and schools and local fundraisers in regional NSW. Over a six month trial period, 153 children (43% identifying as indigenous) from 23 schools received 911 Telecare sessions. Of these children, 113 (74%) attained 100% of their treatment goals and 127 children (83%) met or exceeded at least one of their therapy goals.

Positive results across a number of trials led to RFW’s decision to embed Telecare services as a core service strategy.

RFW has a strategic commitment to evidence-based practice. It believes children are our future and every one of them deserves access to specialist healthcare regardless of where they live. Our organisational evidence-based practice framework guides and informs our work to:

- Enhance the quality, effectiveness and reach of our services and programs
- Decrease inequalities in service access through identifying areas of need and alternate modes of service delivery
- Inform future policy, program development and practice

Royal Far West partners with universities, industry groups and government and non-government organisations to undertake research projects that are aligned to our strategic directions. RFW’s sector partners include:

Deakin University	The George Institute for Global Health
University of Sydney	National Rural Health Alliance
University of New South Wales	Australian Research Alliance for Children and Young People
University of Newcastle	Centre for Community Child Health
Charles Sturt University	Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health
Macquarie University	

RFW is currently involved in a TRIP Fellowship with the University of Sydney, which is a mixed methods evaluation of an enhanced telecare intervention using realist and cost evaluations to improve telecare for children. A five year partnership with Charles Sturt University to create a National Paediatric Telecare Centre was announced in December 2017.

Some difficulties and challenges were encountered and overcome during execution of the Telecare initiative. Initial funding issues were resolved during the trials, which allowed RFW to set a price point that schools could afford within their resource allocation, and also allowed RFW to match funding through other avenues. With an array of technology options and potential for connectivity issues, the platform has been designed with the Department of Education “Go to Meeting” in mind, given schools are primary users. As RFW in Manly has a government school on site, this gives an advantage of access to their secure network. In terms of questions about market penetration, RFW recently secured National Education Standards Accreditation (NESA) for the Capacity Building modules, validating RFW’s approach to upskilling the education workforce, and increasing the value-add to this service offering.

4. Outcomes

After the success of the initial trials, RFW has experienced unprecedented demand for Telecare. Since 2013, it has worked with 200 schools and communities in rural and remote NSW, Queensland, and Western Australia. In the 2016/17 financial year over 700 clients received nearly 10,000 occasions of service, an average 14 occasions of service per client.

Telecare is a collaborative project which involves RFW expertise from its team of over 70 clinicians, as well as buy in from participating schools, Primary Health Networks, Local Health Districts, Departments of Education, Catholic Dioceses, benevolent partners, corporate partners, and other fundraising activities.

The effectiveness of Telecare is demonstrated by 85% of clients meeting or exceeded therapy goals and 93% of parents recommending the service to other parents. Telecare has been proven to be as effective as face to face intervention.

All children who participate in Telecare are set Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) goals. GAS is a method of scoring the extent to which patient's individual goals are achieved in the course of intervention. In effect, each patient has their own outcome measure but this is scored in a standardised way as to allow statistical analysis.

The consistent message is that Telecare creates tangible value for the children, educators, and parents involved. The children who receive treatment have shown speech and motor skill development gains.

The educators also benefit from being involved. Evaluation interviews reveal strong professional development gains from working alongside speech and occupational therapists. Several educators have commented that this service has added important skills and strategies for working with developmentally delayed children in their classrooms.

Finally, parents are empowered with directed exercises and strategies for assisting their kids at home. While parental engagement remains the largest challenge, Telecare helps bridge the divide between health practitioners, teachers, and parents. By doing so, this provides additional points of reference and access to necessary care.

Testimonials from parents and teachers include:

"I have noticed a massive improvement with his schooling and behaviour towards classwork... Extremely happy and grateful for the program!" – Parent, Tele-OT Program

"Teachers (and parents) walk away so 'empowered' with knowledge and understanding – and eager to put the information / strategies they get into practice. What an incredible service these ladies are providing our community" – Special Education Teacher, Tele-OT Program

"We feel like Royal Far West psychologists are part of the fabric of our community now" –Teacher, Tele-mental health Program

"The program has been a lifeline for our kids and their future prospects in life. I cannot underestimate the value of this opportunity for our kids and for our learning community. The individual tailored expert support for our kids is fantastic. The follow up, support, specific lessons, professionalism, feedback, communication, relationships and implementation on all levels has been outstanding. The impact on the student learning outcomes has been phenomenal." – Principal, Tele-Speech Program

The Future

Currently Royal Far West provides services to approximately 5,500 children, families and teachers each year. In 2014, it made the strategic decision to expand its service with an aim to support up to 15,000 beneficiaries across regional Australia each year by 2020. To support this level of service new facilities are required at RFW's site in Manly to accommodate additional allied health staff, specialised paediatric oral health facilities, health and education assessment, treatment, observation and sensory rooms, family respite and recreation facilities, Telecare hub, clinical administration and specialist services. The new facility, the \$38 million Centre For Child Health and Learning (CCHL), will open in December 2018, and will service the disadvantaged children of regional Australia for decades to come.

In early 2017, in response to concerns about the growing vulnerability of country children, RFW commissioned a review of the state of children's developmental health in rural and remote Australia from the Murdoch Children's Research Institute's Centre for Community Child Health. Their report shines a light on "The Invisible Children" (refer Appendix B) – the complexity and challenges facing country children and families, the gaps in and fragmentation of services, the growing disparities in outcomes between children in urban and rural and remote areas, and the critical role that the social determinants of health play in this picture. It reinforces the gaps that RFW sees through its work with country children and families, and highlights the need for united government leadership across health, education, disability and social services to reduce developmental vulnerability.

But there is hope – the report highlights a way forward, with strong cross-government strategy, improved information and telehealth providing significant and potentially transformative opportunities. In many communities, the local school is the one service guaranteed to families – it is often the one public service that remains when health services have left. It is often the case that primary school teachers are the first to identify a child's issue, and RFW receives a significant number of referrals first initiated by teachers.

The importance of supporting teachers cannot be overstated. Research from the Telethon Institute showed that nine out of ten young people in juvenile detention in Western Australia have severe neuro-disability. RFW is, however, seeing the early benefits of empowering communities to tackle these issues, through a partnership with Marninwanantikura Women's Resource Centre (MWRC) in the Fitzroy Valley (WA), which includes service delivery into local schools, combined with capacity building. RFW and MWRC recognise that change will require a long term, community-led and multi-pronged approach, and an investment in people, systems and communities. Marninwanantikura CEO Emily Carter says:

"After seeing what supports RFW offers, we are not going to accept the status quo. Our kids deserve the best supports possible, this is what drives us to seek solutions such as those we are working with RFW to deliver into the Valley".

With nearly a century's experience working with children, a proven Telecare program with teams of trained health professionals, and a national footprint with strong links into the education system, RFW is creating national access to health services, delivering services in some of the areas of greatest need and creating an evidence base that will lead to systemic change.

Appendices

Appendix A – RFW Core Programs

Paediatric Developmental Program (PDP)

Royal Far West's Paediatric Developmental Program (PDP), delivered onsite at RFW in Manly by expert multi-disciplinary team, is an intensive assessment and therapy program for children aged 0 – 12 years who have complex health and development needs and cannot access the services they need in their own rural and remote areas. Telecare for Kids

Telecare for Kids

In rural and remote communities, local infrastructure and/or workforce is often not sufficient to respond to health and development needs, particularly for children. Royal Far West's Telecare for Kids program connects children, families, local health services and educational staff with Royal Far West's specialist clinicians via video conferencing technology. Designed to provide assessment and therapy for speech, OT and psychology, and capacity building for staff, directly into community, this program supports client-centred care delivered in the right way, in the right place, at the right time and reduces expense, travel and disruption to families. The program is typically delivered into schools using existing infrastructure, and Royal Far West works closely with communities to set it up. Royal Far West monitors and evaluates this program carefully, and it has a proven track record in achieving goals, with evidence indicating that it is at least as effective as face-to-face services.

Windmill

The Windmill program is an innovative early intervention therapy service for children with disabilities, with funding under the NDIS, "Better Start" and "Helping Children with Autism" programs. Royal Far West has been trialling delivery of some aspects of this program via Telecare, and has recently won an NDS Innovation Award for this work.

Healthy Kids Bus Stop (HKBS)

Healthy Kids Bus Stop (HKBS) is a team of health professionals who visit rural and regional communities, providing a holistic, one-stop-shop child development screening and pathway to care, for children 3-5 years of age. It aims to support effective transition to school, and is targeted at vulnerable communities with a high proportion of children who do not have or are not able to access local services. In each community, Royal Far West partners with local health services, councils, preschools, schools, Aboriginal Medical Services and other community groups to deliver the HKBS program.

Community Partnerships

In some cases, Royal Far West will enter into a deep community partnership that draws on some of the above programs and services, or involves the development of new solutions that utilise Royal Far West's specialist expertise, together with the strengths of the community and its partners. The objective is always to improve outcomes for children and families in a way that is collaborative, funded and sustainable. This can involve service

delivery, capacity building and/or advocacy. Royal Far West's Telecare initiatives in Fitzroy Crossing (WA) and Walgett (NSW) are examples of this.

Camps

Each year, Royal Far West runs a program of health and wellbeing camps designed to educate, build knowledge and capacity, and to give confidence to children in a fun, relaxed environment. Children and their families receive a combination of therapy, recreation and respite. In 2017, we are running camps for Indigenous Young Leaders, and children with Autism and Intellectual Disability.

Oral Health

Poor oral health in childhood is a strong predictor of poor adult oral health, which can lead to health issues such as diabetes, obesity and oral cancer. Oral health is often neglected in rural communities. Royal Far West has dental and orthodontic programs for children who have difficulty accessing oral health services they need locally.

Appendix B – The Invisible Children Report

Key Findings

-  NSW has the greatest number of children living remotely in Australia (360,743)
-  Northern Territory has the greatest proportion of children living remotely (48.3%)
-  Children living in a very remote area are twice as likely as those living in major cities to be developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains in their first year of school.
-  Children living in very remote areas are three times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.
-  NSW has the largest number of children who are vulnerable across both one or more and two or more domains (18,378 and 8,733 respectively)

- Click [here](#) to access “The Invisible Children” Report
- Click [here](#) to access the full research paper prepared by the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, Centre for Community Child Health “Reporting the Health and Development of Children in Rural and Remote Australia”

Appendix C – 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan

- Click [here](#) to access



Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Appendix D – 2016/17 Annual Report

- Click [here](#) to access

