

FEARLESS 2.0

**STANDING  
WITH CHILDREN  
FOR A BETTER  
TOMORROW**

SAVE THE CHILDREN AUSTRALIA  
GROUP STRATEGY 2025 – 2027

Photo credit: Digital Story Tellers



**Save the Children**



# OUR VISION

A world where every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

# OUR MISSION

Inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting impact in their lives.





# HELLO

At Save the Children Australia, we are proud to be part of the world’s first and largest independent children’s rights organisation.

Our founder, Eglantyne Jebb, drafted the original UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1923, a legacy we’ve continued to uphold ever since.

Children’s rights and participation are at the core of everything we do, alongside our organisational values of accountability, ambition, collaboration, creativity, and integrity.

In turn, our approach to delivering impact for children is guided by Save the Children’s global theory of change.



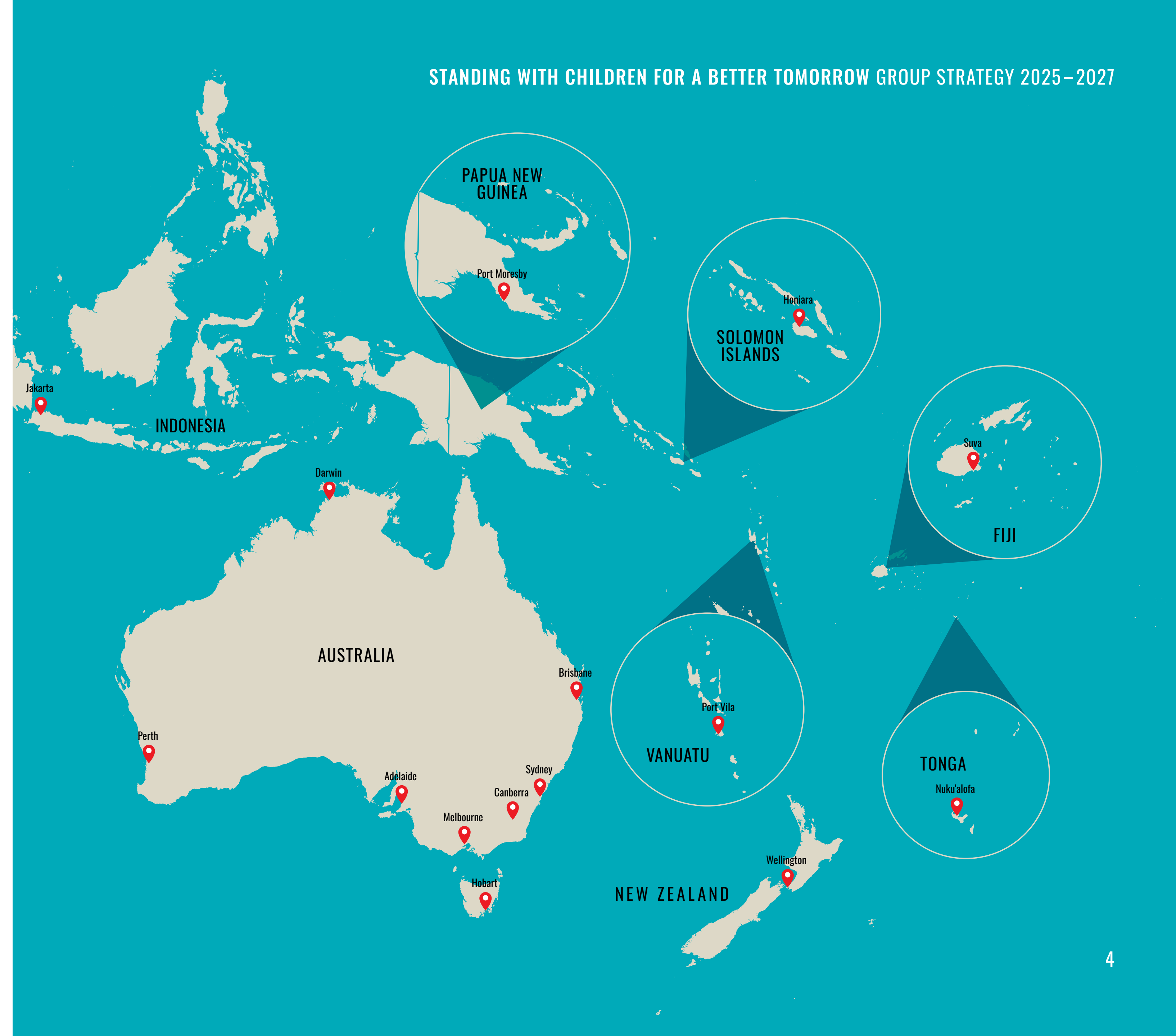


As a global organisation, Save the Children operates in 120 countries around the world, and here in Australia we are directly responsible for delivering impact for children in both the Pacific (in countries like Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tonga), and Australia (where our work is delivered under the name 54 reasons).

Additionally, through our international programming and humanitarian contributions we help to make an impact in numerous other countries around the world, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam — to name but a few.

Alongside this we seek to generate further impact for children from a diverse portfolio of enterprises and initiatives that include:

- **Library for All** — a social enterprise on a mission to support global literacy by ensuring access to engaging and culturally relevant books and learning materials for those least served by formal education
- **The Centre for Evidence and Implementation** — a specialist consultancy that helps translate evidence into policy and program implementation
- **Impact Investment Fund** — provides loans and equity investments to help mission-aligned startups and social enterprises grow.





# WE BELIEVE CHILDREN DESERVE BETTER

As we embark on this new strategy period, the truth is that in too many places around the world, it's a difficult time to be a child.

Climate change, war, economic instability, collapsing state structures, and the rise of autocratic and nationalist regimes all place children's rights at severe risk.

In Australia, poverty, domestic violence, racism, and inequality undermine children's ability to reach their full potential and secure a safe, promising future.

In the Pacific, malnutrition and violence continue to harm children's well-being, even as new threats emerge due to climate change.

More than a century after Save the Children was founded, the need for a fearless child rights movement is as urgent as ever.

We remain steadfast in our ambitions for children and our desire for world where —

- no child dies of preventable causes before the age of five
- every child has access to quality education
- and violence against children is never tolerated

— but we face a monumental challenge to achieve these goals by 2030.

The needs of children are growing faster than our capacity to meet them, requiring us to prioritise with discipline, hold our mission tight and focus on activities that deliver the greatest impact.



Photo credit: Emily Garthwaite / Save the Children

SAVE THE CHILDREN

## STANDING WITH CHILDREN FOR A BETTER TOMORROW GROUP STRATEGY 2025–2027

In this next strategy period, we will focus on two of the most pressing threats to children’s health and rights in our region: **gender-based and family violence** and the **escalating impacts of climate change**.

At the same time, we will continue to ensure children receive the support they need to survive and thrive in their earliest years and to access quality learning opportunities.

To achieve these goals, we will invest in the essential building blocks of our organisation—our people, data and evidence capabilities, financial sustainability and ensuring we are future-ready with a commitment to elevating local leadership while remaining globally connected.

We will continue to build on good governance practices, further maturing our safeguarding and risk management processes, and fostering a culture that prioritises transparency and accountability. At the same time, we are committed to increasing our efforts to reduce the environmental impact of our operations by embedding sustainable practices and actively exploring new eco-friendly solutions.

Children’s rights and participation will remain at the core of everything we do and advocate for, as we stand with and for children, working toward a better future for all.



# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN ON A PAGE





# OUR GOALS FOR CHILDREN

SAVE THE CHILDREN

Photo credit: Ulet Ifansasti / Save the Children





# CHILDREN ARE SUPPORTED TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN THE EARLIEST YEARS OF LIFE

The earliest years of a child's life are critical. Approximately 90% of brain development occurs during the first five years of life, laying the foundation for future physical and emotional well-being. Quality healthcare, early learning experiences, nutritious food, nurturing relationships, and opportunities for play are essential ingredients for giving every child the best start in life.

However, despite Australia's overall wealth, 22% of children starting primary school are assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable.' This group is disproportionately made up of children living in poverty, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, and those from non-English-speaking households.

Across the Pacific, malnutrition severely impacts children's development. In Papua New Guinea, more than half of all children are stunted, with similarly alarming rates in the Solomon Islands (31%) and Vanuatu (28%). Limited access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services further exposes children to disease, jeopardizing their health and well-being.

Globally, the number of children facing hunger is at its highest in a decade. By 2030, 3.8 million children are projected to still die each year before reaching their fifth birthday—many from preventable causes driven by conflict, poverty, climate change, and other factors.





# OUR COMMITMENTS

1. In Australia we will focus on supporting children’s social and emotional development in regions and communities affected by shared adversity.
  - We will redesign our child development services to maximise impact, ensuring that priority populations receive the greatest share of resources.
  - We will enhance inclusion across all our services by translating tools and resources into multiple languages and collaborating with community leaders to build trust and confidence in our ability to deliver safe, responsive support.
  - We will actively seek partnerships with settlement and multicultural services to provide rights-based care for children and families.
2. We will ensure children in the Pacific countries where we operate have equitable access to quality health and nutrition services, and work to support Pacific governments to have multi sector nutrition policies that are resourced.
3. We will support humanitarian interventions in the toughest places to be a child through targeted fundraising.
  - We will drive community fundraising, expand the Australian Regional Leadership Initiative, and collaborate with the Emergency Action Alliance and its INGO network to build awareness and grow Australia’s humanitarian funding landscape.
  - We will push for 1% of Australia’s budget to be allocated to aid spending and for a tripling of the Humanitarian Emergency Fund.



# CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO ACCESS AND PARTICIPATE IN QUALITY LEARNING AND EDUCATION

**Education is a fundamental building block for helping children realise their full potential.**

Higher levels of education are linked to better health, higher employment rates, and greater life satisfaction. A child's earliest school years, and their readiness for them, significantly shape their future success.

Globally, the world is off track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims for all children to complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education. The lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are still disrupting learning, while conflicts and natural disasters continue to cause further interruptions.

Currently, an estimated 70% of 10-year-olds in low and middle-income countries cannot comprehend a simple written text — a figure mirrored in literacy rates across Pacific nations. In many contexts, challenges are even greater for girls, LGBTQ+ youth, and children with disabilities, who face additional barriers to accessing education.

In Australia, increasing numbers of children and young people are struggling to attend school. Attendance rates are falling, and instances of school refusal are rising, often due to acute distress. Children experiencing trauma, stressful life events, mental health challenges, or neurodivergence are particularly at risk.







Photo credit: Khash-Erdene Bayarsaikhan / Save the Children

# OUR COMMITMENTS

1. In Australia we will grow proven school engagement strategies and early years interventions.
  - We will expand our flagship engagement program, Hands on Learning to Western Australia and strengthen the evidence for its efficacy across the country.
  - We will co-design an approach for young people in contact with the justice system, to ensure their right to education is met.
2. We will work to ensure more children around the world have access to quality, inclusive and safe learning and education opportunities.
  - We will continue to grow our partnerships with key education donors.
  - We will support Pacific governments to adopt and implement the Comprehensive School Safety Framework, and ensure more Pacific children feel safe in school and equality gaps are closing.
  - We will support Library For All to increase access to culturally appropriate books and reading materials, with an increasing focus on the millions of children displaced by conflict and natural disasters.



# CHILDREN ARE SAFE IN THEIR HOMES, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

**Everyone has the right to live in a safe environment, free from violence.**

However, the stark reality is that in Australia, 1 in 3 children are reported to experience domestic and family violence before the age of 10. In the Pacific, as many as 80–90% of children are subjected to violence in their homes, schools and/or communities.

Beyond the immediate harm, exposure to violence in childhood significantly increases the likelihood that children will use violence themselves, perpetuating cycles of harm.

When children enter the youth justice system, they often encounter punitive measures instead of treatment and rehabilitation, further violating their rights and trapping them in life paths that are hard to escape.

With violence presenting a critical threat to children across Australia and the Asia Pacific region, we are committing to a concerted effort throughout this strategic period to drive significant change.





# OUR COMMITMENTS

1. Through a group-wide, concentrated effort, we will deliver significant advancements in our approach to eliminating violence against children.

- We will ensure that children who experience domestic and family violence are recognised as victim-survivors in their own right, amplifying their voices and experiences and working with allies to influence governments to center children's needs in policy and service responses.
- We will generate evidence, forge powerful partnerships, and build momentum for solutions that eliminate violence in homes and communities.
- We will raise awareness of children's right to live free from violence and for systems to respond appropriately, including through the provision of child-specific services and supports in response to family and domestic violence in Australia and access to child protection services in the Pacific.
- We will explore fundraising and advocacy opportunities to address the chronic underfunding of child protection in the Asia Pacific region.

2. We will continue to advocate for and demonstrate the value of a rights-based youth justice system, promoting evidence based alternatives to punitive measures that fail to reduce recidivism or enhance community safety.

- We will co-design a rights-based approach to school engagement with young people and service system representatives, testing it across different communities and contexts.
- We will publish a follow-up Rights-Respecting Youth Justice report, tracking the performance and progress of each state and territory, and release the findings publicly.
- We will create opportunities for young people's voices to shape policy development and guide the identification of service needs.



# CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE RESILIENT AND CAN ADAPT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is arguably the greatest threat to the realisation of children's rights worldwide, intensifying inequalities and making the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals even more challenging.

A child born today will face significantly more climate related disasters than their parents and grandparents did, and nearly 1 billion children live in countries at extreme risk from climate change — many in our region.

The Climate Crisis increases the risks to children of disasters, conflict, and forced migration, threatening children's health, safety, and survival, while disrupting their education and access to essential services.

Despite the disproportionate impact on children, only 2.4% of climate finance from key multilateral climate funds supports projects that incorporate child-responsive activities.

Children in Australia and around the world are demanding action, and they are demanding change.





# OUR COMMITMENTS

As the first Green Climate Fund (GCF)-accredited development NGO in the world, we will play a leading role globally in efforts to help children and their communities build their resilience and adaptability to climate change. Over the next three years:

1. **We will ensure our GCF portfolio delivers scalable impact for and with children by delivering on our funded projects and developing a robust operating model and evaluation strategy embedded across all our work.**
2. **We will influence climate policies and finance to elevate children's voices and be child-responsive.**
  - We will expand the Pacific Next Gen Climate Ambassadors Program, share our evidence and elevate children's voices at COP30 and 31.

3. **We will grow and diversify our climate partners and funding.**
  - We will deliver a new phase of our partnership with GCF, including larger, multi-country projects focused on the countries and sectors where we add most value.
  - We will facilitate strategic partnerships between GCF and other international donors, and support Save the Children's increasing global focus on climate and education.



# OUR IMPACT ENABLERS

SAVE THE CHILDREN

*Photo credit: Shona Hamilton / Save the Children*





## OUR PEOPLE

In today's rapidly changing world, people remain the true driving force behind every successful organisation. At Save the Children Australia, our success stems from our people. Their diverse talents, fresh thinking, and deep commitment to Children's Rights are at the core of all we do.

Our teams infuse every project with energy and passion. Save the Children is a place to feel valued, a place to belong, and a place to make a difference. By fostering an environment that values and supports our people, we unlock their full potential and amplify our impact for children.

Our values guide us: our commitment to accountability ensures every team member takes responsibility for their work and its outcomes. Our ambition fuels our pursuit of child rights. Through collaboration, we harness the collective strength of our team, fostering an environment where ideas flourish and partnerships thrive. Our creativity means we think outside the box to develop solutions to complex challenges. Our unwavering integrity ensures we operate with honesty, transparency and trust with children, their families, our teams, our partners and our stakeholders.

The needs of children and young people are changing, so is our context. During the next strategy period we will focus on three areas that will collectively strengthen our ability to create meaningful impact for children and young people.



# OUR COMMITMENTS

## 1. Leaders with Impact:

- We will invest in leadership capability, clarifying what it means to be a leader at Save the Children and developing the mindsets, skills, and behaviours needed to drive our organisation forward.

## 2. We build the skills and capabilities required to deliver on our promises:

- We will partner internally to forecast key capabilities needed to deliver our strategy; and
- We will develop simple, practical tools for effective workforce planning.

## 3. We will deepen our commitment to being a diverse and equitable workplace:

- We will act to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all;
- We will address the drivers of our gender pay gap;
- We will deliver the commitments in our Reconciliation Action Plan; and
- We will cultivate and support the next generation of Pacific leaders.







## DATA AND EVIDENCE

It's not enough to believe we are making a difference. Data and evidence are critical for creating meaningful impact for children and young people.

Evidence-based approaches enable us to identify children's most pressing needs, measure the effectiveness of our programs, refine our methods and predict future outcomes with greater precision.

Integrating data and evidence into our operations improves transparency, accountability, decision making and performance.

Through commitment to improving our use of data and evidence, we ensure that every significant decision we take will make a tangible difference.

## OUR COMMITMENTS

1. We will modernise our data and analytics platforms and invest in our analytical capabilities so they can scale in support of our goals for children and young people while remaining cost efficient.
2. We will digitise data capture in our Pacific programs and advance the data maturity plan at 54 Reasons. This will enable us to evaluate our impact more effectively and strengthen the evidence base for outcomes benefiting children.
3. We will ensure accountability across all areas of our operations by implementing data-driven frameworks to measure performance and impact.



# EVOLVING TO BE A MORE LOCALLY LED AND GLOBALLY CONNECTED ORGANISATION

The challenges facing children today are complex, making our work increasingly difficult. To address rising inequality, the continued impacts of colonisation, and intergenerational poverty in Australia and abroad, it is essential that we adapt our operating model and continuously strive for operational excellence.

In a world still dominated by wealth inequality, we must serve as the link between those who want to help—governments, UN agencies, corporations, and the general public—and the communities that need their support.

As an intermediary we won't always be working directly on the ground with children and families. At times, we will work 'upstream,' partnering with governments and civil society to help them deliver on their ambitions for their communities.

We must be locally led and globally connected. Our programs will achieve better outcomes when they are guided by local leadership and informed by the wisdom and cultures of the children and communities we support.





# OUR COMMITMENTS

- 1. We will work closely with our Pacific Country Offices to define and realise their ambition for a locally led future.
- 2. We will continue to develop and maintain genuine two-way relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations, recognising their collective right to self-determination and only operating on First Nations land/directly engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in partnership and when invited to do so.
- 3. In our international programs we will refine our role as an intermediary that provides targeted, demand-driven support to Save the Children country programs and local and national actors, and ensure we fulfil our obligations as part of Save the Children’s global localisation initiatives.



# INVESTING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

In today's competitive fundraising landscape, it's crucial that every dollar is optimally invested in the people, tools, and innovations that maximise our impact.

Rising inflation and increasing program support costs mean we must rely more on unrestricted income, as institutional donors often don't cover the full cost of our work. With cost-of-living pressures affecting donor capacity, we must prioritise sustainable revenue to meet our growth ambitions for impact.

# OUR COMMITMENTS

1. **Retail Expansion Strategy** — We will expand our retail operations focusing on larger, more profitable stores, backed by market analysis to optimise investment. We will also lift the capability and improve performance of smaller stores, maximising return on investment to create a more efficient, profitable retail network.
2. **Bold and Sustainable Fundraising Strategy** — We will drive a bold cash-giving strategy to attract new donors for immediate revenue while simultaneously increasing investment in regular giving acquisition by 25% to secure a steady, sustainable income stream. In parallel, we will implement a 10-year legacy investment plan to secure long-term funding, ensuring a robust foundation for future program growth and sustainability.
3. **Sustainable Financial Management** — We will prioritise growth for impact with full cost recovery, maintaining a balanced donor portfolio, and controlling costs to ensure our long-term financial health.
4. **Leveraging capital for impact** — We will continue to channel resources into innovative finance solutions that deliver both impact for children and financial return via Save the Children's Impact Investment Fund.



OUR FOUNDATION

# CHILD RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION

SAVE THE CHILDREN



Photo credit: Save the Children



## CHILD RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION: AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

To build a future where every child can thrive, we must change how communities and governments view, engage with, and support children. This means seeing children not only as vulnerable but as active participants in shaping their own futures. It requires listening to their experiences, understanding their perspectives, and creating policies and systems that truly meet their needs.

We've heard from children, partners, and funders that they expect us to lead in advocating for child rights — translating principles into meaningful, practical action. We are committed to continuing the national conversation on child rights and participation here in Australia and beyond, and to standing up for and with children affected by conflict, disaster and crises around the world.



# OUR COMMITMENTS

1. We will embed children's rights and participation across our entire organisation — from the frontline to senior decision making — ensuring that all our work is developed, implemented, and evaluated within a child rights framework. We will equip our staff with the skills and tools needed to engage meaningfully and safely with children and young people.
2. Advocate for policy and institutional change to embed children's rights and participation across society and systems as priorities in their own right, bringing others together as we do.
  - We will develop and deliver a suite of external child rights initiatives, providing tools, resources, and convening opportunities to help all child-focused organisations in Australia become rights-informed.
  - We will actively support the National Children's Commissioner's Act for Children campaign to secure the Federal Government's commitment to a National Plan for Children.
3. Through fearless advocacy, we will spotlight the world's worst crises affecting children, protect their rights in conflict and humanitarian settings, and demand accountability for grave and serious violations of child rights.





# JOIN US. TOGETHER WE CAN BUILD A BETTER FUTURE.

LEARN MORE AT [SAVETHECHILDREN.ORG.AU](https://savethechildren.org.au)



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