

# Enhancement of emotion-focused parenting skills to support the wellbeing and resilience of children following a natural disaster

Royal Far West delivered the emotion-focused parenting program, Tuning In To Kids (TIK), to parents and carers impacted by bushfires as part of the Community Recovery Program. This award-winning program supports families living in communities impacted by natural disasters.

## Why are parenting programs important after a natural disaster?

Following a natural disaster, children can experience emotional distress, separation anxiety and changes in behaviour, mood, reactivity and attachment to others. Parents play an essential role in children's recovery but may require support to do so due to their own experience of the traumatic event which can affect the quality of their family relationships. Some parents may also be seeking new knowledge and skills to gain a deeper understanding of their child's emotional response to the natural disaster.

### What is Tuning in to Kids®?

Tuning in to Kids® is a globally recognised evidence-based parenting program. The program teaches parents and carers skills in emotion coaching – a way of responding to emotions that can help children understand and work through their emotions to help manage their behaviour.



## How did Royal Far West enhance the program to meet the needs of disaster impacted communities?

Embedded Hobfall principles of community recovery: safety, calm, self and collective efficacy, connectedness and hope

Pre-group individual session with facilitator to establish rapport and group expectations. This included a plan for emotional safety, identifying parenting goals and providing the opportunity to discuss experience of natural disaster privately

Psycho-education on impact of community trauma on children and adults

Use of accessible evidence-based concepts to help understand the impact of trauma e.g. "flip your lid", "window of tolerance", "regulate, relate, reason"

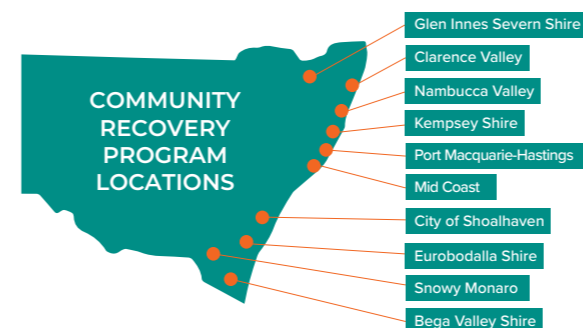
Utilised expertise from multi-disciplinary team

Offer of additional individual sessions with clinician in between groups

Education on regulation and strategies for child and self

*Online delivery format meant some parents who do not have access to this support locally could join the program.*

## Where did the Program take place?



We acknowledge those communities that lived through the natural disasters, with each person having their own experiences. We acknowledge the resilience, courage and strength which has been shown by communities and the efforts to maintain and grow this each day.

We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and sea, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging.

## What were the outcomes?

**87%** of parents/carers found the pre-group individual appointment very or extremely helpful, and all parents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TIK program.

**100%** of parents/carers indicated there were positive changes in their children since participating in the program.

### Most parents/carers indicated they:



Felt heard by the facilitators

Learnt new and helpful ways to understand and respond to their children

Were more confident in connecting emotionally with their children

Had a greater understanding of their own emotional needs.

## What did parents value?



Connecting and sharing stories with other parents



Being in a safe, non-judgemental, encouraging and respectful online group environment



Learning and practicing a new parenting approach - emotion coaching



Flexibility, care and warmth of facilitators



Opportunities to apply and discuss new skills to individual situations



## Positive feedback from parents

*"I am so incredibly grateful for this course! I couldn't be more thankful for my learning and the strategies that are making an amazing difference with both of my boys, especially through some tricky times in their lives."*

*"The support was so useful, breaking down my own situation with the RFW clinician outside of the zoom group sessions has been invaluable"*