



*My family have been delighted to be a part of the study. Please pass on my thanks to as many as you can. The thoughtfully chosen books have been well received and the data collecting day has been regarded as a highlight.*

DAVID STRATTON (foster carer)

A newsletter for participants in the Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study

## Your stories are helping to improve the lives of children across NSW

Thank you for being part of this landmark study in Australia. By sharing your stories we have been able to create rich knowledge of children's experiences and development over time, with information collected at three time points since 2011.

Researchers are currently analysing information across a range of child wellbeing indicators to learn how to better support children, young people, families and caregivers. This new knowledge will be used by decision makers to build better service systems in NSW.

We now have important new knowledge on:

- what children say about their circumstances and experiences
- children's physical health, language skills, cognitive ability and socio-emotional wellbeing over time
- how children are going at home and at school, children's relationships and contact with their family and the services and support received.

*"It's crucial that the decisions that so profoundly affect children's lives and those of their families and carers are based on the best evidence available."*



*"It's also crucial that the evidence is based on more than one point in time in children's lives, and takes into account the perspectives of different people, to see how things change for children and what makes a difference."*

Dr JUDY CASHMORE AO | Professor of Socio-Legal Research and Policy The University of Sydney

## Coming Up

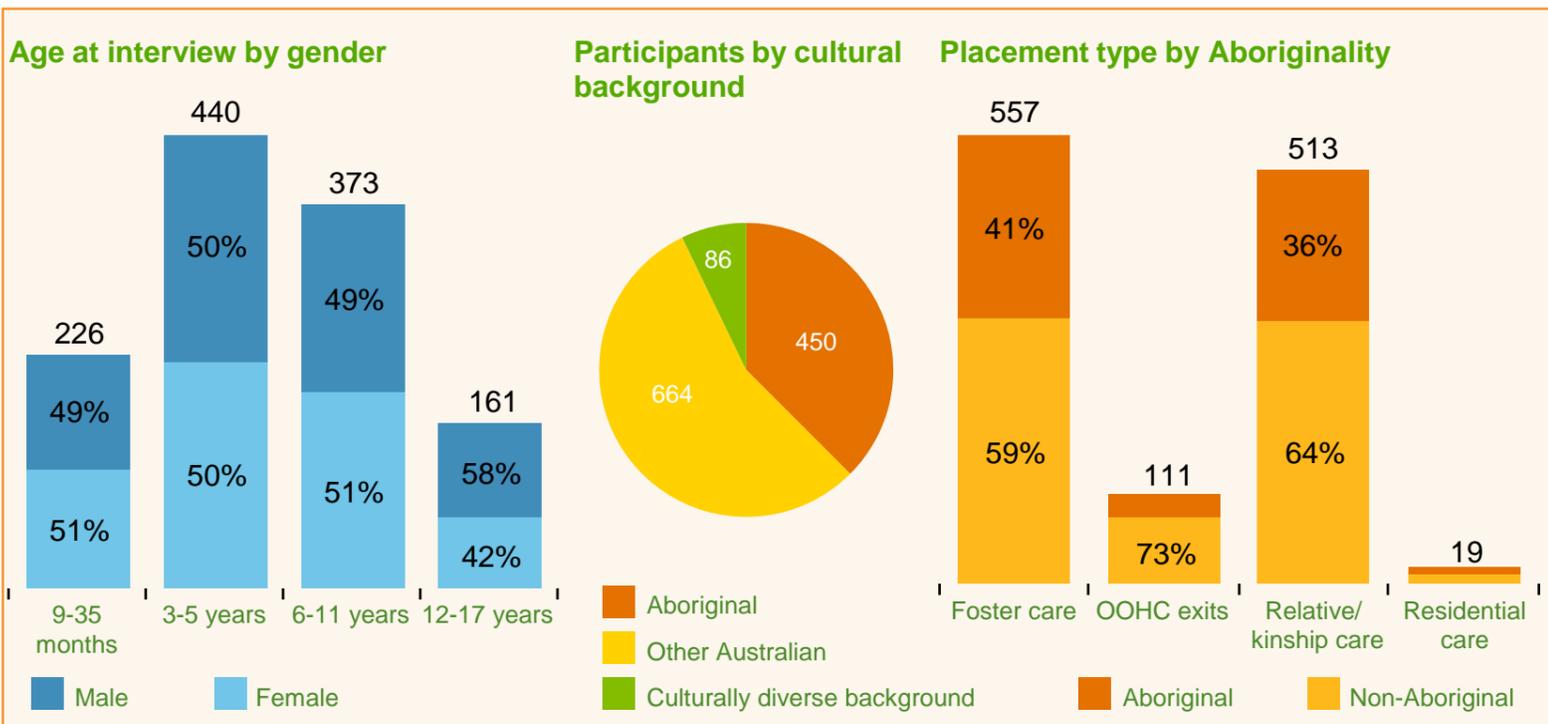
We will soon be collecting information for the 4th time from children and their caregivers. The 4th data collection will be underway in 2017-2018. We really hope you can continue to share your experiences with us. The information becomes increasingly valuable as we follow children as they grow up and learn more about their pathway through life.

## How the study is tracking...



The goal is **1,000 interviews** at **Wave 4**

## Characteristics of children participating in interview 2...



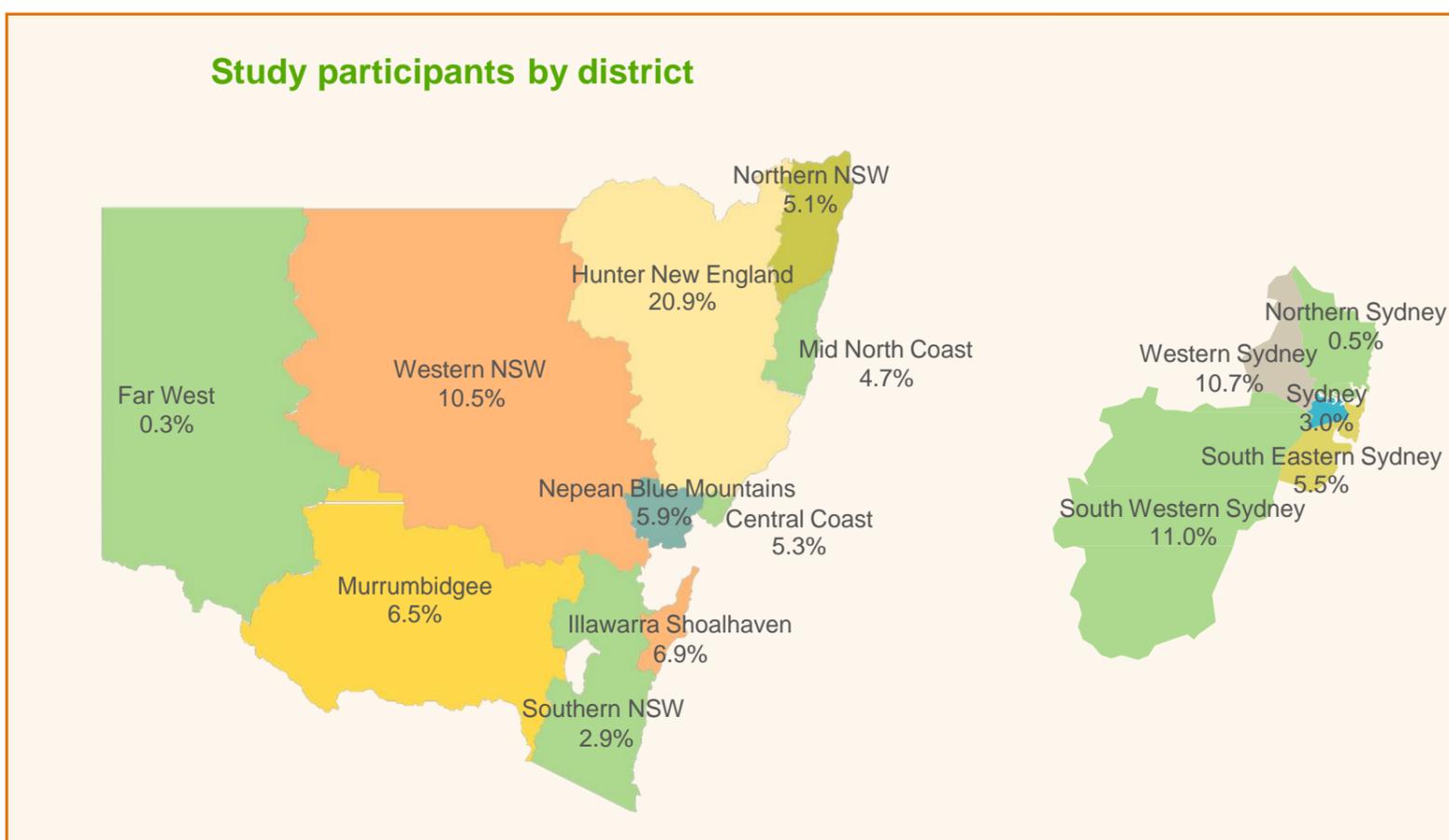
Just over **50%** of children were under 6 years of age.

More than **1 in 3** children were Aboriginal.

Almost **even split** between children in foster and relative/kinship care.

**1 in 10** children had returned home. **2** were adopted.

## Where children in the study live...



About **2 in 3** children in the study live in regional, rural and remote areas of NSW.

# What we are hearing from you...



## Stability in care

Children placed with carers who get help from their caseworkers, and report a positive caring experience, move less frequently. Most carers reported being satisfied with their caring experience. When carers feel less positive, children are about twice as likely to change placements.

## Support for carers

Grandparents tend to be the most vulnerable with respect to their health and financial situation. And kinship carers have less access to social support and casework support than foster carers. These findings suggest a need to examine the resources and casework support available to relative/kinship carers.



## Children's needs and services

Most children access services for their health conditions, behaviours and learning difficulties. The biggest barrier to services is waiting lists and rural areas being less serviced. The majority of children attend childcare before they start school. Older children entering care as teenagers have more socio-emotional wellbeing and learning difficulties than the general population.

## Family contact and feeling secure

Most children are having regular contact with at least one parent and siblings. Children have more contact with maternal relatives. Kinship carers report more problems with parental behaviour and need more support with contact. However, children in relative/kinship care have more frequent contact with their birth family and reportedly better relationships with them but children in foster care were reported to be as close to their carers as those in relative/kinship care.



These are not photos of FACS clients

## Look out for your letter about the next interview

I-view who are conducting the interviews independently of FACS will send all people participating in the Study a letter and information about joining in the upcoming interview. We are very grateful for your ongoing involvement.

## Update your contact details

If you are part of this Study, please let the researchers at FACS or I-view know if you change your address or phone number so we can keep in contact with you.

## Contact us

FACS Research and Analysis:

- email [Pathways@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Pathways@facs.nsw.gov.au)
- phone 1800 997 960.

I-view, who are conducting the interviews:

- webpage [www.iview.com.au](http://www.iview.com.au)
- phone 1800 105 088.

## Study webpage

Information about the study and publications can be found on the study webpage

[www.community.nsw.gov.au/pathways](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/pathways)

## Your privacy & ethics

All information collected for the Study remains confidential. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from the Study at any time.

UNSW Human Research Ethics Committee Approval No. HC16542.

Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW Ethics Committee Approval No. 766/10.



*"I value this important research and the insights it provides, empowering our communities and policy makers to better support families, carers and communities to achieve better outcomes for our children."*

Mr TIM IRELAND, CEO, Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec)

This drawing is by Jaylinta, 9 years old, expressing her thanks to everyone looking after her.

