GENDER EQUITY

ACTION PLAN

A proud initiative of Cafs Gender Equity Action Group,









Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation we give deepest respect to Australia's First Nations Peoples. Their histories, their stories, their resilience. Their connection to culture and land. The wisdom of their Elders past, present and emerging.

Child & Family Services (Cafs) acknowledge the Wadawurrung, Djab Wurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung people as Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and live. They are First Nations people of the Kulin nation. They have cared for the land and each other for generations, and continue this care today.

As a result of historical and ongoing violence, colonisation, assimilation, racism, discrimination, embedded structural disadvantage and a dominating Eurocentric culture in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have suffered many losses including family, land, culture and language. The impact of this dispossession has resulted in significant social, political, economic and health inequities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians today. In spite of this adversity the strength of First Nations Peoples is seen in their ongoing fight for justice, self-determination, recognition, land, language and culture. We also acknowledge that our own past organisational policies and practices contributed to the irreparable breaking up of families through the Stolen Generation, especially in Ballarat and surrounding areas where a number of Aboriginal children were placed in children's homes.



INTRODUCTION

Cafs is proud to have developed this Gender Equity Action Plan as part of the organisations overall commitment to Inclusion and Diversity. We believe in providing quality service provision, a culturally safe workplace, and assisting people in overcoming barriers that might hinder them living a full and dignified life.

In 2018, Women's Health Grampians delivered the Act@Work program to Cafs. An intensive 6-month gender equality program to enable a safe, respectful, inclusive and equal workplace. This program provided a great platform to understand gender-related issues in our own workplace and, from there, our work has grown.



During this process it was identified that there are some barriers to organisational change. One of the key areas that required addressing was how we treat one another. We are always striving to deliver a service with the best outcomes and most constructive pathways for our clients, but it was identified that often we struggle treating each other, our colleagues, in a respectful and caring manner. We were reluctant to call out behaviour that wasn't aligning with our values.

Act@Work, as run by Women's Health Grampians, was seen as an initiative that could help our staff and leaders to understand and practice acceptable behaviour, but also to be an active bystander and call out behaviour that we recognise as discriminatory.

The primary purpose of the Plan is to outline the strategies and actions that Cafs will undertake over the next 3 years to eliminate discrimination and improve access, equity, inclusion and participation for people who identify as female within the organisation, our service users, volunteers and the broader community.

The secondary purpose is to attract more male identifying practitioners to work at Cafs, so that our workforce closer reflects the demographic of the community that we serve

Understanding the ever-changing environment created by the Covid-19 pandemic and to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of this Plan, it is important to us to deliver outcomes in a variety of formats where face to face engagement in not possible.





A message from the CEO

It is with pleasure that I endorse Cafs Gender Equity Action Plan. It is an important step in the maturing of Cafs, and contributes to identifying areas where we can do better whilst contributing to a shared vision for an equal and inclusive future.

In supporting this plan, Cafs is building on the existing formal and informal practices, and committing to align our practices and processes with our vision of *Wellbeing, Respect and Safety for everyone*.

Cafs understands the complexities that drive gendered violence, structural inequalities, attitudes and behaviours that enable violence against women. We know that the foundation for changing social attitudes, behaviours and systems lies in being curious, getting informed, and promoting and delivering evidence-based actions for change.

Violence against women affects women's well-being and prevents them from fully participating in society. It is a gendered issue. It impacts on families, the community and the nation. As a White Ribbon accredited organisation, we make a stand in preventing violence against women and children.

In acknowledging that the Community/Social Services sector traditionally attracts a strong female workforce, our aim is to increase the number of male-identifying workforce at Cafs (currently 16% of staff). This is a present challenge for Cafs.

The Cafs Gender Equity Action Plan 2022-2025 presents clear strategies for supporting the needs and aspirations of people who work with us and who use our programs and services.

We are excited about the role this plan will play in strengthening our commitment to an inclusive culture for all people.

WENDY STURGESS she/her Chief Executive Officer

A Message from Community

On behalf of Women's Health Grampians and the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance Leadership Group, I congratulate Cafs in developing this important plan which is another important stride in Cafs' journey for equality and inclusion that has included early membership of the CoRE Alliance and undertaking of the Act@Work Program. The key focus of the CoRE Strategy is prevention of violence against women through improving gender equality and the Cafs Gender Equity Plan provides another tangible means to strengthen its role in this area and ensure sustainability going forward.

We applaud Cafs' leadership in this important area. This Gender Equity Plan demonstrates to staff and service users a strong commitment to respect and inclusion. It is also influential in the communities you serve; it provides a blueprint and an incentive for other organisations to strive towards achieving a more equal and respectful community.

MARIANNE HENDRON
Chief Executive Officer
Womens Health Grampians

OUR BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITIES WE WORK IN

Cafs is a community services organisation that provides a range of programs and services across the Central Highlands area of Victoria to children, young people and families who are vulnerable or in need of support. Our areas of service currently fall within the traditional boundaries of the Kulin Nation, with the Wadawurrung, Djab Wurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung people being the Traditional Owners. It is worth noting however, that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Ballarat and surrounds is largely comprised of persons whose traditional lands are outside Wadawurrung, Djab Wurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung country.

Our goal is to give every individual the optimal opportunity to live in, and be part of a safe and nurturing family. To maximise their potential and ability to participate within the communities of their choice.

At the time of writing this Plan Cafs employs approximately 260 staff, engages with approximately 180 carers & volunteers, and provides help and support to more than 6,800 individuals and families each year. We have offices in Ballarat, Ararat, Daylesford and Bacchus Marsh. In addition, we run several youth residential houses and an Early Childhood Parenting Centre in Ballarat.

Based on a March 2022 Culture and Engagement Survey administered to all staff (146 respondents, or a 61% response rate), 81% of Cafs staff identified as female, 16% as male and 1% as non-binary. These statistics fall well above the Australian workforce female representation of 47% (Diversity Council of Australia national benchmark), and the Ballarat regional demographic of 22% female workforce representation (2016 census). But conversely, well below the Australian and Regional male workforce representation demographics.

Leadership @Cafs:

Presently at Cafs, Wendy Sturgess (she/her) is the CEO. Wendy is the organisation's first female CEO in its history of 156 years.

Composition of Executive Leadership is 3 female and 1 male.

We strive to achieve equal gender composition of Board Members at any one time.



CAFS VISION

Wellbeing, respect and safety for everyone.

CAFS MISSION

To deliver quality services with positive outcomes and experiences for the communities we serve.

CAFS VALUES

Respect

We treat all people, including ourselves, with dignity. We have genuine compassion for our colleagues and the individuals, families and communities we serve.

Integrity

We act ethically and do what is right – even if it's uncomfortable.

Collaboration

We embrace collaboration. We celebrate inclusiveness and work together with the individuals and families we serve to make a difference in their lives.

Kindness

We genuinely care about people and actively look for ways to offer a helping hand to those in need.

Innovation

We encourage and explore different ways of working and fresh ideas to improve our practice and outcomes for those we serve.

'WORD CLOUD' ENQUIRY; SINGLE WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE CAFS CULTURE

Cafs Culture

Through Cafs March 22 Culture and Engagement Survey, 96 people took the time to respond to the question "If you had only one word to describe your experience of Cafs culture as a workplace, what would that one word be". Of these 96 descriptors, 56 (65%) of the words used were positive, 15 (17.5%) were neutral and 15 (17.5%) were not so positive.

As this word cloud shows, the most frequently used words to describe Cafs culture were

Supportive
Challenging
Friendly
Inclusive

In relation to the entire organisation, the most commonly words used are represented in the word cloud graphic:



Woman at Cafs Culture

Of the 81% of respondents who identified as female, (113 people) the words used to describe Cafs culture were (multiple word responses are highlighted) below:



Family, Inconsistent, Collaborative (2), Interesting, Supported (11), Friendly (4), Team, Changed, OK, Inclusive (4), Caring, Disappointed, Good, Constant Change, Compassionate, Empowering, United, Inspiring, Challenging (5), Welcoming (4), Delayed, Superb, EBA, Busy, Individualised, Opportunistic, Positive (2), Enriching, Frustrating, Fair, Interesting, Fluctuates, Dynamic, Inexperienced, Uplifting, Uncertain (2), Engaging, Enlivening, Confusing (2), Thoughtful, Unsafe, Unsupportive, Dictatorship, Segregated, Fine, Fluid, Aspirational, Disconnected, Generous.

1 The idea of the word cloud, is that it visually depicts the frequency of words used. The frequency that a word is used, correlates with the size of the font of that word. In other words, the more frequent a word is used, the bigger the font in the word cloud: the least frequently a word is used, the smaller the font will be.

Woman at Cafs Culture (continued)

When comparing other key culture and engagement indicators from the overall organisational results to the female specific survey results, it would appear that women are mostly engaged with the organisation, but the overall relationship with their managers requires attention.

Measure / Indicator	Organisational results	Female specific results
Engagement Index	76.9%	78%
Quality Manager Index	78%	76.1%
Overall satisfaction with Manager relationship	91%	83%

Direct feedback from female staff included:

"Cafs culture is one of the most positive I have experienced"

"There is a disconnect between executive team and their staff"

"Blown away by the warm, welcoming workplace environment"

"I only have positive things to say"

"We need to be more connected"

"Look at why people are leaving Cafs"

"Undervalued when staff leaving aren't acknowledged"

We also learned that 17% of female staff would either

- 1. Let it go
- 2. Not be phased or
- 3. Wouldn't know what to do if someone told a sexually explicit joke in the workplace.

Cafs has a zero tolerance for these attitudes, and we are committed to addressing these unsatisfactory results.

We thank all people who participated in Cafs Culture and Engagement Survey. It is important to acknowledge that not all feedback was positive. We invite, respect and learn from this commentary. These voices have been heard and through this plan we hope to address these concerns. Staff have taken the time to share their valuable thoughts (both negative and positive) and all feedback will contribute to a positive Cafs culture.

OUR ACTION PLAN

Why is this important?

Violence against women is a serious public health issue in Australia and across the world. On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner; 1 in 3 Australian women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15; 1 in 5 Australian women has experienced sexual violence since the age of 15; 1 in 3 Australian women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by a man since the age of 15; 1 in 4 Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence by current or former intimate partner since age 15; 1 in 4 Australian women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.

Gender inequality and other forms of discrimination and disadvantage exist in the forms of:

Australia's full-time gender pay gap is 14.0%, with women earning on average \$241.50 per week less than men; On average, women spend nearly 32 hours a week on household labour and caring for children, compared with nearly 19 hours by men; While women comprise almost half (47.0%) of all employed persons in the labour force, women continue to be under-represented in traditionally male-dominated industries, and in managerial positions across industries; In 2018, only 35% of Australians who have witnessed workplace sexual harassment in the previous 5 years took some form of action; In 2018, 19% of the Australian population reported have experienced racist or xenophobic discrimination in the previous 12 months.

The statistics go on. And they are real.

Violence against women takes a profound and long-term toll on women's health and wellbeing, on families and communities, and on society as a whole.

Legislative Context

There are a number of Commonwealth and Victorian legislative requirements, regulations and policies that guide organisations in relation to matters of gender equity, equal opportunity and discrimination. Any review or updating of this Gender Equity Action Plan will ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and regulations, and demonstrate Cafs commitment to the protection of the rights of Cafs stakeholders

Local (Grampians region) and National initiatives & networks

While there is no local legislation that requires Cafs to do undertake this piece of work, there are local and national initiatives that Cafs are affiliated with and committed to. These initiatives further support, motivate and inspire our investment in the prevention space, including:

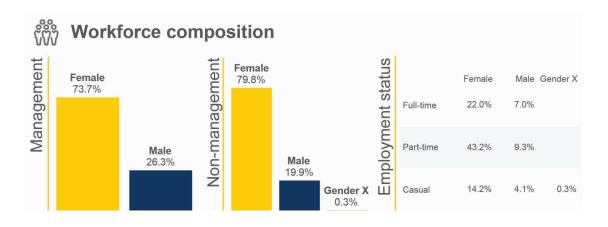
- Communities of Respect & Equality (CoRE) and Act@Work
- White Ribbon Australia and
- Say No to Family Violence

Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency is an Australian Government statutory agency created by the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012. The Agency is charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. Cafs are proud to be aligned, and report annually to WGEA.

The 2020-2021 snapshots demonstrate that our workforce of practitioners, at all levels, are female dominated.

Workplace Gender Equity Agency (WGEA) — Cafs INSIGHTS at a glance 2020-2021







Gender Equity @Cafs

Cafs Gender Equity Action Plan 2022-2025 aims to provide a framework and roadmap around our approach to preventing violence against women, promoting communities and cultures of respect and equality and increasing male-identifying participation in Cafs workforce.

This action plan specifically addresses the 5 action areas to reduce violence against women, as identified in the National Framework for preventing violence against women, OurWatch's Change the Story:

- 1. Challenge Violence Against Women
- 2. Empower Women and Girls
- 3. Challenge Stereotypes and Norms
- 4. Build Respectful Relationships
- 5. Promote and Advance Gender Equity

In addition to this, the Plan should be considered in conjunction with the suite of Cafs other Inclusion and Diversity action plans, because we recognise the intersectional nature of marginalisation and discrimination. These are:





Cafs Attitude Check - Where are we now?

Nine Prevention of Violence Against Women Introduction training sessions were delivered to Cafs staff between October 2020 and April 2021. Training was delivered by Womens Health Grampians staff and trainers in an online format.

The training sessions covered:

- Prevalence and nature of violence against women
- Gendered drivers of violence against women
- What is an active bystander?
- Why is it important?
- Active bystander tips and techniques

118 staff attended the nine training sessions. 64 training evaluation surveys were returned which is a 54% survey return rate. The training evaluation results detailed below show that:

- 64% of participants said that the training helped them a lot with their understanding of the role they can play creating a culture of respect free from sexism and discrimination.
- There was a 21.5% increase (to 100%) of participants indicating that after the training they would be very or quite likely to speak out against family violence.
- There was a 26% increase (to 96%) of participants indicating that after the training that they would be very or quite likely to act to address sexist behaviour in the workplace.
- There was a 16% increase (to 97%) of participants indicating that after the training that they would be very or quite likely to act to address sexist behaviour with family or friends.
- 94% of participants said that the training increased their confidence to take bystander action to challenge sexism and discrimination in an appropriate and safe manner (note a smaller sample size asked in 5 of the 9 sessions)
- 48% of participants said that the training helped them a lot with their understanding of how community attitudes about men and women can support men's violence against women.
- 93% of participants indicated they would recommend this training to all staff.

Attitudes towards violence

After training, out of the 64 survey respondents, 96% said they would be quite likely or very likely to take action to address sexist behaviour in the workplace – the other 4% said "a little bit likely".

100% of respondents were willing to be an active bystander. All respondents said they would be quite likely or very likely to speak out against Family Violence.

Action 1

Leadership & Commitment

How will Cafs demonstrate its commitment to staff and external stakeholder in taking action to address gender inequality and the drivers of violence against women?

Action	Deliverables	Responsibility
Take steps and measures to improve manager relationships with staff.	 Introduce a Team Leader Development program for those exhibiting leadership potential Maintain regular PASER supervision for all employees Conduct regular Leadership Group and Executive Team meetings to nurture and enhance manager / staff relationships 	Executive Team and Senior Management (Those who have direct staff reports)
Maintain and support a dynamic and diverse leadership team and workforce reflective of the local community	 Ongoing monitoring of Gender Equity through WGEA annual report findings Advocate to CEO for Gender Equity on the Board. Position statement on Gender Equity to be communicated throughout the organisation including the Board Targeted employment strategy for male-identifying prospective employees 	Gender Equity Action Group with Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Support the roll-out of measures designed to strengthen pathways into leadership and professional development. Promote the learning pathways to improve leadership capacity	 Ongoing professional development delivered to Action Group members and staff around gender equality Ongoing attendance and exposure to Women's Health Grampians, CoRE, Community of Practice and White Ribbon events 	Learning Development Lead; Inclusion & Diversity Lead; Gender Equity Action Group
Action and support Resource organisational wide Committees of Governance	Eliminating Family Violence CommitteeGender Equity Action Group	Executive Team
Reinforce Eliminating Family Violence messaging at new staff inductions	Eliminating Family Violence is one of Cafs organisational pillars	Manager Family Violence & Child Wellbeing Executive Manager People & Engagement

Action 2

identified.

Organisational Culture

What is the culture of the workplace, and how does it promote respectful relationships, bystander action and gender equality?

relationships, bystander action and gender equality:		
Action	Deliverables	Responsibility
Zero tolerance to bullying, harassment and negative attitudes towards women at Cafs	 Mandatory Active Bystander Training for all staff within six months of being at Cafs Eliminating Family Violence Commitment Statement included in all new staff on- boarding packs 	All staff, Executive, Board Members, People & Engagement Team, Carers, Contractors, Volunteers
	Offer opportunities to join Cafs Eliminating Family Violence Committee during Corporate Induction session – reinforcing that Eliminating Family Violence is one Cafs three core pillars	Gender Equity Action Group Inclusion & Diversity Lead
	 Mandatory Eliminating Family Violence questions asked of prospective employees during job interviews 	
	 Visible promotion of the results of Cafs 'attitudes towards women' Culture & Engagement survey questions – focussing on the identified areas of concern 	
	 Implementation of the Gender Equity Action Plan 	
	 Participation in Communities of Practise like CoRE Alliance 	
	 Actively promoting and encouraging participation in events, while highlighting their meaning(s) 	
Ensure a safe and inclusive workplace through, but not limited to: access to breast feeding and prayer rooms, duress alarm systems, building safety and lighting.	 Ensure relative procedures contain information regarding safe places Ensure on-going promotion of safe places 	Facilities Management; People and Engagement
Staff undertake opinion survey on Gender Equity and discrimination in the workplace.	 Staff complete annual Culture & Engagement Survey. Survey to include explicit questions about people's attitudes towards women 	People & Engagement Team Executive Team
Management act on these results where unacceptable attitudes in the workplace are	 Baseline survey data circulated to management and findings communicated to staff 	Learning & Development Lead

Action 2 continued

Action	Deliverables	Responsibility
cont	Staff undertake opinion survey on Gender Equity and discrimination in the understand shifts in perceptions of gender discrimination and violence against women as a result of training undertaken	People & Engagement Team
survey on Gender Equity		Executive Team Learning & Development Lead
and discrimination in the workplace.		
Management act on these results where unacceptable attitudes in the workplace are identified.		
Enhance and Maintain Diversity & Inclusion Networks	 Ongoing commitment to Rainbow Tick, CoRE Alliance, White Ribbon and WHG Community of Practice sessions to share gender equality achievements with CoRE members. 	Gender Equity Action Group; People and Engagement; Inclusion and Diversity Lead
	 Sharing connections and information throughout the organisation through fortnightly Inclusion & Diversity eNewsletters and the Intranet 	

Action 3

Corporate Policies & Procedures

Taking into account Cafs specific human resource policies and practices, including recruitment - how does our workplace support staff that may be affected by family violence?

affected by family violence?		
Action	Deliverables	Responsibility
Ensure that this plan intersects with Cafs Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and the broader suite of Cafs Inclusion & Diversity Plans.	All Cafs Inclusion & Diversity Plans use consistent branding, imagery and language. That they 'talk to', and reference each other	People and Engagement team; Marketing and Communications Team
Provide a flexible working environment to attract and retain a committed and diverse workforce.	Monitor and report on the uptake of flexible work arrangements through WGEA annual report	People and Engagement team
Review induction content to better ensure Prevention of Violence Against Women/ Gender Equity is adequately included.	 Review the existing Induction content Review the Eliminating Family Violence and Inclusion training delivered to staff in their first 3-6 months of employment. 	People and Engagement team; Eliminating Family Violence Commitee
Take a conscious approach towards recruitment that removes biases from start to finish.	 Ensure recruitment practices are diverse and inclusive. Ensure Unconscious Bias Training is included in training to Managers and Team Leaders Ensure Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Eliminating Family Violence foundations training is completed by all Cafs staff 	People and Engagement team
Foster a systematic approach to, and management of, staff professional development (PD) and training opportunities for all.	 Deliver a Cafs Learning and Development policy and procedure to ensure that appropriate training and development modules are accessible for all Ensure that the new performance appraisal process will include a section on Professional Development/Training. 	Learning Development Lead
Implement awareness-raising	Develop a communications strategy detailing what when and how to convey	Marketing and

Implement awareness—raising campaigns that speak to and motivate action towards stopping gender—based violence and discrimination

 Develop a communications strategy detailing what, when and how to convey relevant messaging related to Prevention of Violence Against Women/Gender Equity Communications; Eliminating Family Violence Committee

Action 4

Programs and Services

What can the organisation do, based on its specific programs and services, to ensure that they consider gender in the planning, delivery and evaluation of programs?

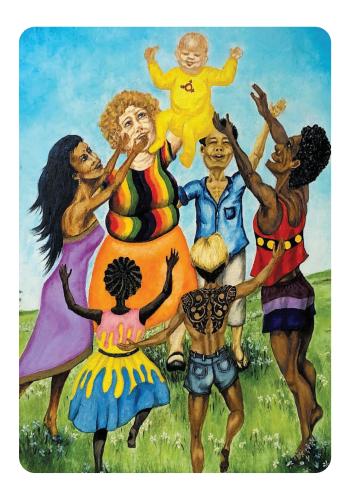
Action	Deliverables	Responsibility
Review marketing and advertising materials/ resources to ensure people of all backgrounds are represented, and gender stereotypes are challenged – thereby normalising Gender Equity	 Review Cafs communications and marketing materials/ to remove gender stereotypes and promote Gender Equity. Ensure imagery is reviewed with a diversity lens 	Marketing and Communications with assistance from Act@Work
Increase the uptake of programs and services by people from marginalised communities, such as CALD, First Nations, LGBTIQA+ and those with diverse abilities	 Identify relevant stakeholders Network with key agencies to better promote Cafs programs and services to those most in need Ensure Cafs services are directly marketed to marginalised and diverse communities Review and update website annually 	Marketing and Communications; Cafs Leadership Team
Take measures to increase Cafs male-identifying and non-binary workforce, so that it better reflects the communities that we serve	 Promote careers at Cafs by attending Career Expos at local secondary schools and community events Promote Cafs Rainbow Tick status as a 'welcoming place to work' 	People & Engagement Team

Action 5

Governance and Tracking Progress

How does Cafs commit to ensuring that the Gender Equity Action Plan becomes embedded in its organisational culture and the way we do business?

Action	Responsibility
Promote the Gender Equity Action Plan on Cafs website, social media platforms; and internally via Cafs 'Inclusion & Diversity' All Staff fortnightly newsletter	Marketing and Communications team; Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Register our updated Plan with Act@Work and the CoRE Alliance team – Women's Health Grampians	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Develop a new Gender Equity Action Plan based on learnings, challenges and achievements. Align the development and duration of the plan with the Cafs Strategic Plan.	Access-Ability Action Group; Inclusion & Diversity Lead



Inclusion and diversity

I have used the Cafs company colours, green, blue and orange prominently.

You will notice that figures all stand on their left foot while lifting the right. This is to show that we follow our Policies and Procedures.

You will also notice that their heads are proportionally larger. This is to show that we remain continually mindful of our values, duty of care to our clients and of their rights.

The long grass depicts our company's continued commitment to growth and improvement. The daisies are a reminder to see the beauty that is always there when you choose to look for it.

The little girl's dress is in the colours of the pansexual flag.

The mother figure is of Indian descent and the young man of Asian descent.

The boy in the front has used a Maori tattoo to camouflage his spinal curvature and torso deformity.

The Nanna figure is gay.

The father figure is Aboriginal and bisexual.

The baby is transgender.

Lastly, we work together as a team, with diversity being our strength and inclusion being our culture.

Statement from the artist,

DENISE SWAN. Cafs Residential Carer 2020

Cafs is all about support.



Cafs Ballarat

115 Lydiard St Nth, Ballarat 3350

Cafs Bacchus Marsh

52 Grant St, Bacchus Marsh, 3340

Cafs Ararat

4 Banfield St, Ararat, 3377

Cafs Daylesford

8 Park Lane, Daylesford, 3340

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