

oaktree ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Oaktree recognises and respects the traditional owners of all the lands on which we operate We pay our respect to them, their culture, and their Elders past, present and future. Sovereignty was never ceded.

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Who Are We?

Oaktree are a development organisation based in Australia that is entirely powered by young people between the ages of 18 and 26 years old.

We work primarily in the Asia-Pacific region and work to support youth empowerment, education, and leadership projects in this region.



Vision:

We envision a just and sustainable world, where every young person has an equitable chance to reach their potential.

Purpose:

Oaktree empowers young people to become agents of change.

Across the Asia-Pacific, young people have very different experiences and challenges. So here's the deal: we don't set the agenda alone because we recognise that young people are the experts in their own local communities. We share our skills and build the capabilities of young people across our region to lead, demand and create solutions to address these challenges themselves.

We also acknowledge the power of existing as a youth-led organisation, providing opportunities for young leaders in Australia to grow their skills and learn from other youth-led initiatives in the region.







Co-Chair Address

Dear Oaktree Community,

It's been a year of firsts for Oaktree, with the organisation exploring new ways of working and transitioning to a new leadership model. We bid farewell to our fearless CEO and leader Thenu Herath, and welcomed new Co-CEOs, Zahra Al Hilaly and Lucie Tolhoek. Zahra and Lucie did an incredible job managing their respective portfolios and leading the organisation through this year of change and continuing to ensure Oaktree was making a positive impact in the lives of young people in Australia and the region.

2023 also marked a period of transition for the Oaktree Board, with the organisation bidding farewell to our Chair, Finbar Piper and long-serving Board Directors Elyse McInerney and Jack He who were pivotal in leading Oaktree through important periods of change, including COVID and the transition to our decolonial approach to development. We transitioned to a Co-Chair leadership model which gave us both the exciting opportunity to lead Oaktree's Board, and also welcomed three new Board Directors who bring with them a wealth of experience from the international development and government sectors.

Even through this period of change, Oaktree was able to continue its sector leading approach to decolonise international development through our Oaktree Youth Solidarity Fund (OYSF). In its third year, the OYSF

expanded its support to 7 grassroots youth-run organisations within the Asia-Pacific, enabling them to address a wide range of development issues, such as Indigenous ownership of communications, mental health awareness, digital literacy and climate change through their community projects.

The Oaktree team also continued to be bold in their advocacy, bringing to the forefront young people's voices on key issues that affect them through policy submissions to the Australian government on Human Rights, the Multicultural Review Framework, as well as the Duty of Care and International Climate Equity Bill, and advocacy on the Voice to Parliament.

Our successes in 2023, would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our passionate army of volunteers who have worked tirelessly to realise Oaktree's vision of a just and sustainable world where every young person has the opportunity to reach their potential.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Oaktree's staff, volunteers, advisors, partners, Board Directors and our loyal donors for their support throughout the year and look forward to another exciting year in 2024.

Thank you.

- Manasi Kogekar and James Poulton (Co-Chairs, Oaktree Board) It's been a year of firsts for Oaktree, with the organisation exploring new ways of working and transitioning to a new leadership model.



A Quick Note From Our Co-CEOs

It has been an absolute privilege to be amongst the wonderful community at Oaktree for another year and to witness the incredible work undertaken by staff, volunteers, partners and other key stakeholders.

Whilst we have inevitably faced challenges, we have nonetheless remained resilient and have continued to contribute meaningful work in the sector. In the past year, we have consistently seen young people leading change and challenging traditional leadership structures, including advocating for our decolonial approach to development.

Our Oaktree Youth Solidarity Fund is a testament of this. In 2023, we expanded the number of partners who joined the Fund from 5 to 7 partners. This is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our volunteers who continue to provide invaluable support to our partners on the journeys of their projects. In looking forward to shaping what the Fund looks like in 2024, we hope to push just one message across our work - young people are capable of changing the world, because they already have.

Led by Zahra, we also expanded our advocacy activities and outreach in the community, supporting

many notable campaigns including the Voice to Parliament. We worked incredibly hard on three separate policy submissions, to ensure young people nation-wide are heard and our voices reflected in different forums. This included writing submissions for Australia's Human Rights Framework, a Multicultural Review Framework, and the Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity Bill. Additionally, following on from our work in 2022, our Advocacy Team addressed the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade in a hearing as part of their inquiry into democracy building in the region, advocating that young people and youth-led organisations play a key role in fostering resilient democracies.

We are incredibly excited to see the work Oaktree staff, volunteers, and partners do in 2024 and beyond. We know that they will continue to champion the voice of young people to drive systemic change and create more opportunities for youth across the Asia-Pacific region. We extend our deepest gratitude for the support we have been provided with this year and for an unwavering sense of commitment to Oaktree's vision and purpose.

- Lucie Tolhoek and Zahra Al Hilaly (Outgoing Co-CEOs, Oaktree)



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Our Priority Areas:

Our 2022-24 Strategy outlines our priority areas. These areas guided both our international development and our domestic advocacy work in 2023.



Youth Empowerment and Leadership:

All young people deserve the opportunity to develop their skills, increase their confidence and build their capacity to lead. At Oaktree we do this both through our Youth Solidarity fund, and through our youth-led organisational model here in Australia, and we will continue to support initiatives that have youth leadership at their core.



Education:

Oaktree has had a focus on education and its role in breaking the poverty cycle, empowering young people and creating change since our very beginnings in 2003. While our programmatic work may have shifted away from traditional models, our commitment to supporting young people to access informal and formal education has not wavered!



Civic Participation:

Barriers to young people participating in formal decision making, civic and political participation and representation are still very apparent across the Asia-Pacific. We prioritise backing initiatives that increase young people's involvement in civic society at local, national and regional levels through formal and informal means.



Equity and Justice:

Oaktree will continue to support and partner with organisations that have a focus on alleviating issues of injustice and inequity, with a focus on issues of racial, economic and gender-based discrimination.

Doing Development Differently: Oaktree's De-Colonial Model

Oaktree believes in the power of young people to create social change.

We invest in youth-led organisations which share our vision and who work to empower young people to innovate and drive the changes they wish to see at a local, national and global level.

Our development philosophy is guided by these 3 principles:

Solidarity

Collaboration

Decolonisation

Our primary impact vehicle is the **Oaktree Youth Solidarity Fund (OYSF)**, which is a model that provides youth-led organisations, groups and grassroots movements across the Asia-Pacific with access to flexible funding to implement youth-led projects in their local communities.



Oaktree Youth Solidarity Fund

2023 was the third year of the Fund's operation and we are so proud to see the impact this year's partners made in their communities.

We were able to increase our number of partners from 5 to 7 which is incredibly exciting. Here are their stories.



Conserve Indigenous Peoples' Languages Organisation (CIPL)

CIPL is an Indigenous-led and staffed organisation with the aim to ensure Indigenous community leadership and ownership of communication and media activities in Cambodia.

CIPL's mission is to support Indigenous Peoples access to information by encouraging Indigenous youth to produce media in their own languages so they can better understand their culture and identity. In 2023, CIPL ran a series of education-based activities that focused on facilitating young people's access to education.

As part of this series, they first consulted numerous people within their community, including school teachers, families, and other stakeholders to determine how best to select a group of young people that this program would empower. After providing each participant with the necessary materials and equipment to participate in the program, CIPL conducted 2 workshops that aimed to equip 19 young people, including 10 women, with essential digital literacy skills. They were taught how to design documents, presentation slides, logos, posters, and social media tiles in Canva, an online graphic design platform.

CIPL is now currently producing a video that will showcase the outcomes of participant learning within these workshops.

Established under the Global Shapers Vientiane Hub, Gamlangchai is a youth-led initiative that aims to promote mental health awareness and destigmatise mental illness in Laos. Gamlangchai's vision is to normalise conversations about mental health in the Lao community and make basic mental health support accessible for young people in Laos.

In 2023, Gamlangchai conducted a mental health-focused workshop series over an 8-week period. The workshop group comprised 25 participants between 15 and 30 years old, with more than 85% of this group identifying as female. Gamlangchai designed these workshops to provide a safe and confidential space to discuss mental health and to equip participants with tangible skills and tools to discuss the topic of mental health with others. Throughout this program, participants described learning about breathing exercises and relaxation techniques, proper language use in communicating about mental health, setting visions, and how to talk about their own mental health journeys in a constructive and productive dialogue.

At the conclusion of the program, participants completed a questionnaire. Through this, it was found that 50% of participants were very satisfied with the program and 33.3% were somewhat satisfied; 66.7% felt they learnt skills to manage and improve their mental health to a large extent; and 66.7% were very satisfied with the way in which the program was run by Gamlangchai facilitators. Anecdotal feedback was also generated from these workshops, with both the program participants and facilitators noting that "they felt they also learned new skills in managing their well-being and formed

friendships with other leaders and facilitators who shared common interests." These have "worked to inspire them to continue advocating for mental health."

Throughout the year, Gamlangchai went on to conduct mental health workshops for paramedics under Vientiane Rescue, a not-for-profit organisation that provides all forms of emergency assistance. They used learnings from this first program to create and structure the program for this second workshop. The continuation of workshops to reach young paramedics is currently ongoing.

Gamlangchai is now currently developing a website to make mental health resources more accessible to young people in Laos.





JPF Interpersonal Development Foundation

The JPF Foundation is a dynamic digital space led by youth. The goal of the program is to facilitate the development of human capabilities and general knowledge in the possibilities and power of digital connectivity. The program includes and draws focus on digital rights education within the country.

With the support of the Oaktree OYSF, JPF held its first community workshop focusing on youth digital literacy. The two-days consisted of roundtable discussions facilitated by presentations of local advocates and decision makers from universities, youth focused organisations, and government members.



The workshop on youth digital rights

development was a significant and informative event for the community that delved into the challenges and limitations surrounding internet freedom of expression and the distribution of internet inequalities within the country. The 100 participants present for the first workshop, of whom just over 50% were female, actively contributed to the facilitation of a robust discussion and exchange of ideas, encouraging knowledge sharing across roles, organisations and the community.



The team hopes to begin clearing the way for a more fair and inclusive digital landscape in Timor-Leste, with over 50% of participants agreeing that digital literacy needs to be elaborated on in High Schools and Universities to properly equip youth for the future.

Asosiasaun Timoriana

Timoriana Association, a non-profit organisation in Timor-Leste, embodies a vision and mission rooted in advancing fair, responsible, and just socio-economic development both locally and globally. Since its establishment in 2018 and subsequent recognition as an official non-profit entity, the organisation has harnessed the energy of its young founders to elevate awareness regarding the critical significance of environmental conservation.

Central to their initiative is the implementation of interactive dialogues, designed to effectively communicate positive messages surrounding environmental protection while also fostering a deeper understanding of pertinent issues and potential solutions within the community.

Through the support of OYSF funding, Timoriana was able to initiate an environmental protection program in both the Mantelolão Village, Administrative Post Metinaru, and Dato Village, Administrative Post Liquiça, Liquiça Municipality.

The project saw the successful implementation of various initiatives, reaching a total of 200 community members across both villages. The activities conducted included two informative environmental sessions, two terrace-sharing events, and two tree-planting activities focused around the water spring area. The project fostered a sense of community ownership, encouraging active involvement, accountability, solidarity, and teamwork among residents to effectively address ecological challenges within their respective areas.

One of the project's key achievements was the successful planting of 1,000 new trees. The trees were strategically positioned around water springs in targeted locations in effort to bolster vegetation around critical water sources. The project aimed to contribute to the preservation and sustainability of local ecosystems, ultimately fostering resilience against environmental degradation and enhancing the well-being of surrounding communities.

The collaborative spirit from the Timoriana team has exemplified the transformative potential of grassroots efforts in addressing environmental challenges and promoting holistic community development.



PEPY Empowering Youth

PEPY Empowering Youth is a local non-profit organisation committed to delivering comprehensive personal and professional development training to rural youth in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Their local team is devoted to recognising and navigating pathways for modern-day youth.

OYSF funding has supported the local team to organise courses, workshops and seminars within

and for the local community. Activities have included social enterprise exhibitions, courses on internet technology, and a learning exchange with Singaporean students led by My Toeu, from HTB consulting based in Cambodia.

Mr Phan, a participant of PEPY's IT for Business Professionals course reported: "I've learned so much. I can create my own Gmail account and now know how

to keep my account secured. I learned about online social media like Facebook and how to create and protect it from being hacked. I look forward to joining another course at PEPY in the future".

Following the organisations Fourth Youth Innovators Exhibition, over 82% of participants confirmed they would join again, reporting that the event helped connect them to their target customers AND they enjoyed having the opportunity to explore what other entrepreneurs are doing in the Siem Reap community.

PEPY also successfully launched a new community computer lab, serving as both a co-working space and an educational resource for members. The facility offers an array of resources, including computer literacy training and a supportive environment where locals can enhance their technological proficiency. Additionally, it serves as a valuable platform for individuals seeking to establish their online presence, offering guidance on brand development and account and payroll management. With a blend of both a collaborative workspace and educational opportunities, the lab represents a significant stride towards empowering the community with digital tools and know-how.

PEPY continues to demonstrate dedication to fostering the personal and professional growth of youth communities in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Through the support of OYSF funding, the organisation has been able to orchestrate impactful activities throughout the year.

Tonga Women in ICT

Tonga Women in ICT (TWICT) aims to empower women and girls to engage with information and communication technologies (ICTs) in a range of exciting ways and fully participate in the ICT industry. They will foster and encourage the participation of women and girls within the Kingdom of Tonga's ICT industry and provide a voice within the male dominated industry.

Following on from their projects in 2022, we continued to support TWICT to deliver workshops to students in Tonga. In 2023, they endeavoured to increase participation in their cyber security training and leadership training seminars, as well as contextualise the content of their training and awareness materials to be more relevant to their audience.



Manggala Jingga is a student-led organisation committed to making a positive impact within Indonesia, particularly in the Kampung Air community. Through its programs, the team endeavours to empower community members with essential skills in social entrepreneurship and environmental advocacy, catalysing sustainable development and collective growth.

With support from OYSF funding, Manggala Jingga has successfully spearheaded three pivotal projects within the community: Sekolah Jingga, Jingga Market, and the Jingga Environmental Program.

Sekolah Jingga is an educational initiative, focusing on prioritising and nurturing the minds of Kampung Air's children aged 4 to 12. The program arranged for approximately 140 educational books tailored for children and teenagers, alongside an assortment of writing tools with the aim of providing a more conducive learning environment.

The Jingga Market initiative serves as a platform for economic empowerment, offering entrepreneurship training to the youth community and facilitating the development of small businesses to bolster productivity and improve economic conditions within Kampung Air. With the successful execution of two market events, the program has provided valuable insights empowering participants to navigate the world of small business within their community.

Furthermore, the Jingga Environmental Program addresses pressing environmental concerns in Kampung Air, particularly focusing on nonorganic waste management. Manggala Jingga's commitment to environmental stewardship is shown through the implementation of a waste bank method in the community. With the waste bank operational for five months and boasting 24 active members, the JEP stands as a testament to the organisation's dedication to fostering sustainable practices by way of community involvement and collaboration, enhancing the overall well-being of Kampung Air's residents.







Live Below The Line Campaign 2023

Live Below the Line is Oaktree's flagship peer-to-peer fundraising and awareness campaign, operating in its 13th consecutive year in 2023.

The Live Below the Line campaign encourages leaders across the world to dedicate and drive meaningful change across five domains: energy, food, shelter, technology, and waste.











With no bounds to this approach, leaders choose which area of poverty they hope to address and understand.

The Live Below the Line Challenge Week took place from May 15 to May 19, raising a fantastic \$28,726 with a total of 550 donations. Our long-term supporters, Glen Waverley Secondary College, did an outstanding job in spearheading Live Below the Line in 2023. They raised a total of \$18,600 dollars during challenge week, raising 71% of total funds overall. Glen Waverley Secondary College has supported our mission at Oaktree for numerous years, and continues to train the next generation of young leaders.

A special thank you goes to the Live Below the Line campaign team: Sabrina, Kelsey, Ellie, Chanilka, Jojo, Molly, and Felix. This year, the team delivered numerous workshops to schools and industry professionals to ensure our mission to end poverty is championed through multisectoral collaboration.



Policy and Advocacy Submissions

We recognise that creating change means that we must work within systems that often exclude young people's voices.

This is why, at Oaktree, we are committed to ensuring young people are represented in national policies that may affect young people's present and future.

In 2023, we worked on three separate policy submissions, to ensure young people nation-wide are heard.

Human Rights Framework Inquiry Submission

The Australian Human Rights Framework Inquiry was conducted to review and assess the effectiveness of the country's human rights framework. Led by the Australian Human Rights Commission, submissions were accepted nationwide to recommend new and innovative approaches to ensuring the Australian Human Rights Framework was representative of all demographics.

Oaktree's policy recommendations focused on ensuring young people were represented in decision-making processes that would affect their future. We also highlighted the integral importance of ensuring investment into leadership opportunities for youth, was a priority.

Multicultural Review Framework

At Oaktree, we believe coalition work is needed to fast track change and innovation. This is why we were so proud to partner wit the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) to submit policy recommendations for the upcoming Multicultural Framework.

Our policy recommendations highlighted our beliefs in ensuring cultural competence education is accessible for all Australians. Similar to our Human Rights Framework Inquiry Submission, we also recommended young diverse Australians are to be provided equitable opportunities to partake in eadership opportunities.

Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity Bill Submissions

Led by powerhouse and fellow youth advocate, Anjali Sharma, Oaktree jumped on board to ensure decision makers are to consider the wellbeing of current and future children when making certain decisions that are likely to contribute to climate change.

As an organisation that is committed to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, this Bill fundamentally supported SDG13: Climate Action, and we are proud to see young people demanding accountability and transparency in this area.

Thank You Thankyou Thank You Thank You Thank You

It is not enough, but it is a start

Oaktree Family: Volunteers

Our volunteers are the backbone of our organisation. Their dedication and commitment to Oaktree's mission powers us each and every day. We extend our deepest thank you for choosing to volunteer at Oaktree and collaborate with us in creating a more just world.

Alexis Zhang	Catherine Le	Kelsey McGowan	Molly May
Ani Prakash	Chanilka Jayakodi	Jess McNeill	Nadeesh Warusamanna
Andrew Gerges	Darren Chen	Jojo Zheng	Narendra Kesavalu
Andrew Wang	Davi Singh	Li-Nelle Teo	Nicholas Eastham
Anton Baez-Anceski	Ellie Mueller	Li Shi Goh	Nicholas Toumbourou
Ariella Susanto	Eloise O'Neill	Madeleine Ossovani	Oliver Holberton
Ashlea Henley	Felix Faber	Max Tanaka	Reynanda Rivai
Ashleigh McNeill	Gus Richardson	Melody Zhou	Shania Austine
Begona Lee	Indi Danansooriya	Michael Gibson	Tania Sadhani
Cara Eyers	Karleen Han	Michelle Lim	Taya Bergman

Oaktree Family: Executives, the Board and Committees

The Executive Team:

Lucie Tolhoek (Co-CEO)

Zahra Al-Hilaly (Co-CEO)

Ava Rego (Business Development Manager)

Lawrence Phillips (Chief Financial Officer)

Oshadha Iddawela (Chief Operating Officer)

Michaela Jansens (Outgoing Chief Marketing Officer)

Alyssa Harding (Incoming Chief Marketing Officer)

Rainy Zafira (Chief International Partnerships Officer)

Sabrina Dong (Live Below The Line Campaign Lead)

Patrick Bates (Chief Advocacy Officer)

Tasha Goonting (HR Lead)



The Board:

Finbar Piper (Board Chair)

Jack He (Company Secretary)

Thenu Herath

Christos Gatsios

Vanh Mixap

Nikki Bartlett

Elyse McInerney

Finance Subcommittee:

Steve Mills

William Kabira

Joshua Ng

Fundraising Advisory Committee:

Victoria Burns

James Atkinson

Roxy Kavanagh

Alex Balsillie

Paul Bailey

Olivia Simmons

Risk & Compliance Subcommittee:

Cameron McGowan

Lova Jansson

Raja Noureddine

Pamela Wyatt

Maria Gulay

Jamie Hodgson

Impact Committee:

Holly Fingland

Aidan Craney

Ayesha Lutschini

Kate Horwood

Oaktree Family: Major Supporters

We want to extend a large thank you to our supporters who provide ongoing support to the organisation and our mission.

Through their support, we are able to continue working with our partners and championing a more just and sustainable world through our advocacy work.

The Arnold Foundation

The Grace Foundation

Kinrara Foundation

Lotterywest

Abbotsleigh School

Tech for Good

And a huge thank you to all of our wonderful mentors that support our volunteers to kick goals!



Looking Forward: 2024 and Beyond

I am honoured to be joining Oaktree in 2024 to continue the important impact we have on championing youth voices around the world.

As Oaktree embarks on another year of impact, we understand that more now than ever, young people must be active stakeholders in growing an equitable and prosperous world for future generations.

In the last twenty years, Oaktree has had the privilege of working with hundreds of thousands of young people across the globe, and what is consistently found in every young person, is their passion to build a world that recognises young people as visionaries for change. We hope that in our next twenty years of operating, Oaktree upholds this vision, especially in seeing young people as consistent stakeholders in influencing what the international development space holds.

Young people will always be at the forefront of driving innovation and sustainable progress.

At Oaktree, we believe that there is no stronger vision than collective action, mobilised from grassroot movements that can catalyse transformative change that extends for generations to come. Whilst young people have been empowered by our vision to connect, and create, we also recognise that there are numerous barriers that limit young people from growing their work.

Our deep commitment will always be to serve young people and to continue forging relationships with young leaders across this world.

- Charli English (Incoming CEO, Oaktree) found in every young person, is their passion to build a world that recognises young people as visionaries for change.



Accountability & Transparency

Oaktree is fully committed to remaining accountable to our partners, supporters, and all the incredible youth we work with.

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)

As a registered charity, our work is guided by the Australian Charities and Non-for-Profit Commission Governance Standards and External Conduct Standards, and complies with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) Act 2012.

ACFID:

We are also an active member of the Australian Council For International Development (ACFID) and committed to the ACFID Code of Conduct, which is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice. As an active member of ACFID and a signatory to the Code, we are committed to fully adhering to the Code and conducting our work with accountability, transparency, and integrity. We are committed to ensuring our work follows best practice, and applies an evidence-based approach to help improve outcomes for youth. In 2023, Oaktree successfully completed a Self Assessment against the ACFID Code.

Complaints Handling

To lodge a complaint against our organisation, please email complaints@ theoaktree.org. Our complaints handling policy can be found on our website. If you are not satisfied with the response and believe our organisation has breached the ACFID Code of Conduct, you can lodge a complaint with the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee at code@acfid.asn.au. Information about how to make a complaint can be found at www.acfid.asn.au.

Privacy Policy

You can read our Privacy Policy here.







A (Financial) Year in Review

Income:

Sadly, donations have continued to decline yearon-year with a 33% decrease. The current cost of living challenges faced by many Australians meant that fundraising continued to be a challenge during FY23, this was particularly pronounced in the reduction in donations received through the Live Below the Line campaign.

Grant income was down 72% from FY22, a result of the downsizing of our staff footprint and shift toward the Oaktree Youth Solidarity Fund (OYSF).

Similarly investment income was down 58%, this though was driven by a shift in the structure of our investment portfolio during the year.

Expenses:

Total expenditure amounted to \$278k, a reduction of \$230k (45%), the result of stringent cost management measures implemented by management and the Board.

Unfortunately, these cost reductions were balanced across the whole organisation including in the OYSF, our primary international impact project. This reflects our commitment to ensuring both the effectiveness of how we utilise our funding as well as the longevity of our operations. International program expenditure was higher than usual in FY22 due to the transition from a legacy program to the OYSF. Outside of this, expenditure movements are primarily driven by reduced employee expenditure resulting from a downsized staff footprint.

Our net deficit for the year improved to \$132k, a significant improvement from the prior year (\$204k), whilst the total comprehensive loss also improved by \$217k to a loss of \$132k for the year.

Our 2023 Financial Report has been prepared in line with the ACFID Code of Conduct and Good Practice Toolkit. More information can be found at www.acfid.asn.au

Our Full 2023 Financial Report can be accessed at the following link - https://www.oaktree.org/transparency