

# The Role of Grandparents in Intergenerational Connection



From interviews with Grandparents across Australia, we found:

## Grandparenthood is a core identity

Grandparents describe the role as central to who they are, not a side-role or afterthought.

Grandparenting provides purpose, belonging, and emotional grounding to their families through illness, ageing, migration, and family change. These factors also contribute to their ability to grandparent.



## Intergenerational connection is essential

Intergenerational relationships stabilise families during transitions such as separation, illness, and relocation.

Connection requires negotiation and emotional investment from all family members, but it is what holds families together.



## Care flows both ways

Grandparents offer practical, emotional and cultural care.

Adult children and grandchildren also provide comfort, affection and a sense of meaning.

Care is reciprocal, not one-directional.

## Play is a language of bonding

Intergenerational play provides opportunity for intimacy, learning and cultural sharing.

Everyday routines - gardening, cooking, games, shared meals - create emotional safety and connection.

## Relations are shaped by social structures

Grandparenting is influenced by migration histories, work demands, health, finances, and custody arrangements.

Grandparents' roles are shaped by cultural norms and family dynamics, these are not always a private choice.



## Grandparents are family anchors

Grandparents provide continuity across generations, linking past, present, and future.

Their relationships with grandchildren strengthen identity, belonging, and resilience for the whole family.

To find out more about this research visit the [Bridges to Play for Wellbeing](https://www.monash.edu/education/research/projects/bridges-to-play-for-wellbeing) website:  
<https://www.monash.edu/education/research/projects/bridges-to-play-for-wellbeing>