



Family Day Care

Family Handbook



Welcome

to Intereach Family Day Care

Intereach is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation that has been working with older people, people with disability, carers, children and families and communities in the Riverina-Murray region of NSW and in central and northern Victoria for over 40 years.

Our vision is Strong Supported Communities. We work toward this through our purpose, which is to:

- **Strengthen and improve** social and personal well-being for individuals, families and communities;
- **Promote and facilitate** access, equality and social justice; and,
- **Deliver services** locally that are of quality and have value.

Our values are defined as:

- **Leadership** - We use our social influence to motivate others to reach their full potential;
- **Partnerships** - We work collectively with others toward a common goal of positive social and cultural change; and,
- **Social Justice** - We protect and promote human rights by recognising that all people are free and equal in dignity and rights.

Family Day Care

Where children 0-13 years (not attending secondary school) are provided with education and care in a home environment with a registered educator. Educators are trained and supported by the experienced and highly qualified Intereach Coordination Unit. Intereach FDC operates in NSW and Victoria, offering flexible childcare options for full-time, part-time, casual, overnight and weekend care.

Policies and Procedures	3
Philosophy	4
Belonging, Being and Becoming	6
Our Staff and Educators	8
National Quality Framework	10
Your Rights and Responsibilities	11
Child Protection	11
Early Childhood Code of Ethics	12
Quality Childcare	13
Attending FDC	14
Enrolling in FDC	15
Inclusion	15
Important Information	17
Priority of Access	18
Fees and Payments	19
General Information	20
Food and Nutrition	21
Frequently Asked Questions	23
Feedback	26
Keep in Touch	27

Policies and Procedures

At Intereach, our children's services policies and procedures are readily available to families via our [website](#). These include but are not limited to the required policies and procedures under the National regulations.

All service stakeholders are regularly asked to give feedback on new and revised service policies. Your feedback and comments are appreciated and valued. Parents/guardians are welcome to view or request a copy of the policies at any time, from Intereach or the educator.



Philosophy

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional indigenous owners of the land on which we work, play and learn and pay respects to elders past, present and emerging.

We believe that in small groups, children will enjoy a natural approach to play and discovery, while forming genuine lasting bonds with their passionate and qualified early childhood educator.

We recognise the importance of families in the lives of their children and promote the belief that families are children's 'first educators'. In smaller group care, educators can support families in their individual wishes for their child's care, development and learning and can tailor this to meet those specific needs. We encourage and invite all families to become involved in their child's curriculum on a regular basis.

Intereach Family Day Care focuses on each individual child's development and individual needs, while providing high quality early learning in the natural environment of a family home. We believe that play should be fun, hands-on, spontaneous, stimulating and challenging while providing opportunities for children to experiment, discover, explore, create, take risks, learn through achievements and mistakes, practice skills, make choices and decisions with the support of their peers and educators.

We value the uniqueness of opportunities that Family Day Care provides to the community and the need to offer families quality and flexibility with the care and education we provide.



We value our community links and strive to continue to strengthen and build on these partnerships to create best outcomes for children and the community's future. We will continue to be active participants in our local community by supporting and partaking in local events and activities. Our service values the diversity of our communities and our practices are reflective of families' culture, home lives, religion, child rearing practices and language.

Intereach is committed to improving the mental health and wellbeing of the children, young people, families and staff within our learning community to ensure every member of our learning community feels a sense of belonging and connectedness. Intereach is committed to reducing stigma and discrimination about mental health and promoting inclusion, healthy relationships and resilience.

We believe in creating supportive, respectful and equal relationships between team members where all members' skills and knowledge are valued and educators can develop and succeed.

We promote and are committed to continual self-reflection and ongoing professional development that continues to build on current skills and knowledge and be actively involved in the quality improvement process. The National Quality Framework underpins our philosophy. We believe that quality of the service we provide is enhanced with the consistent application of the seven quality areas in the National Quality Standards (NQS) and the Principles, Practices and Outcomes for the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the My Time, Our Place (MTO) framework.

Belonging, Being and Becoming

The Early Years Learning Framework - Belonging, Being and Becoming - was developed to ensure children receive quality education programs in their early childhood setting. The Framework's vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

The Framework assists educators to provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning.

Educators use the Framework in partnership with families to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities, and recognise that children learn through their play.

Through the Framework's five learning goals educators will assist your child to develop:

- a strong sense of their identity;
- connections with their world;
- a strong sense of wellbeing;
- confidence and involvement in their learning; and
- effective communication skills.

FDC educators also embed the school-age framework My Time, Our Place when providing education and care to school age children.

For more information on the Early Years Learning Framework visit:
<https://docs.education.gov.au/node/2636>

For more information on My Time, Our Place visit:
<https://www.dese.gov.au/schooling/resources/my-time-our-place-framework-school-age-care-australia-information-families>





Our Staff and Educators

Family Day Care operates under the direction and leadership of an experienced and qualified Manager/Nominated Supervisor who is further supported by skilled and committed coordinators and educators.

Educators are passionate about providing quality care for children through effective programming and implementation of a variety of activities that facilitate fun, excitement and discovery within a safe and caring environment.

Along with the Early Years Learning Framework Educators follow the Early Childhood Code of Ethics, which provides a framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals.

All registered educators must, at a minimum, hold a formal qualification of Certificate III in Children's Service. Educators must also hold current First Aid, Anaphylaxis and Asthma training. In addition, our educators undergo regular child safe and child protection training along with annual professional development to ensure their skills and knowledge are current.

Educators hold a current Working With Children Check and National Police Check clearance. Any other persons over the age of 18 years residing at the premises must also hold a current Working with Children Check as well as a National Police Check and Child Protection Awareness..

How educators are supported

Intereach values educators' knowledge and skills and understands they are integral in providing Family Day Care. To ensure educators maintain a high quality education and care service, Intereach employs experienced and knowledgeable staff to provide ongoing support and guidance. This is provided through:

- regular support visits (from fortnightly up to every 6 weeks based on individual educator's needs);
- phone support;
- resources to support program development and implementation; and
- professional development opportunities.



Early Childhood Code of Ethics

The Early Childhood Code of Ethics provides a framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals. The Code is intended for use by all early childhood professionals, and sets out principles indicative of the values we share as early childhood professionals.

The core principles of the Code of Ethics are:

- each child has unique interests and strengths and the capacity to contribute to their communities;
- children are citizens from birth with civil, cultural, linguistic, social and economic rights;
- effective learning and teaching is characterised by professional decisions that draw on specialised knowledge and multiple perspectives;
- partnerships with families and communities support shared responsibility for children's learning, development and wellbeing;
- democratic, fair and inclusive practices promote equity and a strong sense of belonging;
- respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationships are central to children's education and care;
- play and leisure are essential for children's learning, development and wellbeing; and
- research, inquiry and practice-based evidence inform quality education and care.





National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement for FDC. The Framework is designed to drive continuous improvement of quality and compliance within education and care services across Australia.

The NQF sets out the following seven quality areas against which childcare services will be assessed and rated.

- educational program and practice;
- children's health and safety;
- physical environment;
- staffing arrangements;
- relationships with children;
- collaborative partnerships with families and communities; and
- governance and leadership.

Intereach Children's Services policies and procedures are developed to incorporate these seven quality areas.

You can find more information about the National Quality Framework at www.acecqa.gov.au

When undergoing the NQF assessment and rating process, the assessors spend time visiting at individual educator's services and appraising the coordination unit. To find out more about the assessment and rating process visit www.startingblocks.gov.au. Intereach FDC has a long and proud history of success when being measured against early childhood quality standards. We welcome families enquiring about our service rating. More information is available at www.mychild.gov.au.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

We recognise that all people are free and equal in dignity and rights and commit to working within a human rights framework.

We ensure that people we work with:

- are treated with respect;
- do not encounter discrimination based on any real or perceived differences;
- experience a safe and secure environment;
- have their privacy maintained;
- are provided with clear and accessible information about services;
- are encouraged to contribute to decision-making around services and issues that affect them; and
- are able to be represented by an advocate if needed.

We ask those who work with Intereach to:

- be respectful;
- act safely;
- maintain privacy and confidentiality in group settings; and,
- give us feedback about our services.

Please see our Human Rights Policy for more information (available to download from our website www.intereach.com.au or on request).

Child Safety and Protection

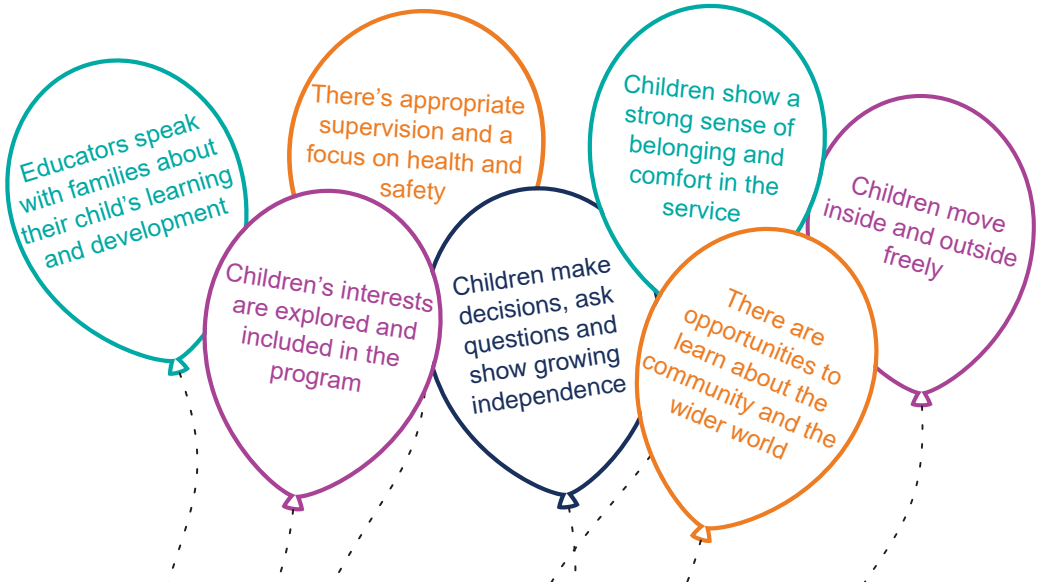
Intereach is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. Intereach FDC Coordination Unit staff and educators are mandatory child protection reporters. This means they are required by law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to government authorities. Staff and educators undergo regular Child Protection training to ensure they are up to date with legislation and the best strategies to keep children safe.

Child Safe organisations create cultures, adopt strategies and act to prevent harm to children, including sexual abuse. A Child Safe organisation is one that:

- Creates conditions to reduce the likelihood of children being harmed;
- Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm; and
- Responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations and suspicions of harm.

Quality Childcare

Education and care should be convenient, affordable, and available when you need it. The following indicates quality education and care:



Asking the following six questions can help you gauge the quality of an early childhood service when visiting the service for the first time.

1 How will you let me know what happens during my child's day?

2 What's the daily routine and activities? Is there plenty of variety?

3 Are there opportunities for children to play outside and learn about the environment?

4 How are children's interests included in the learning program?

5 How do you deal with sickness and accidents?

6 Has your service been assessed under the National Quality Framework? What rating did you receive?



Enrolling in FDC

Families should contact the Coordination Unit to discuss enrolment and availability; from here families will be provided with an online enrolment link for completion and submission electronically.

The Coordination unit will provide referrals to a choice of educators; or, if there is no availability, will place you on a wait list and stay in touch regularly to provide updates relating to availability.

Parents can arrange an interview with the educators at a convenient time (initial contact must be made within the first 48 hours of referral being made or the place may be offered to other families) to discuss the education and care expectations and needs.

Once an educator is chosen, families will contact the FDC Coordination Unit to discuss your decision and organise a start date.

Families will need to register for Child Care Subsidy (CCS); you can do this via your MyGov account or contact the Department of Human Services (DHS) on 13 61 50. How-to guides are available on the Centrelink website regarding claiming the Child Care Subsidy.

Inclusion

All children are welcome to participate in our programs and we aim to provide a service which recognises and responds positively to the needs of children and their families, irrespective of the abilities or disabilities of the child, parents/guardians or family. If your family needs additional support, please speak to the Coordination Unit prior to booking to ensure your child's needs are met.



Important Information

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

The Australian Government provides a number of subsidies and programs to help with the cost of childcare. The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is the main type of assistance that most families will use.

For eligible families enrolled, the CCS will assist with reducing out-of-pocket childcare costs and help to make childcare more affordable.

Please note that if your CCS has not yet been approved and finalised by Centrelink, full fee payment will be required. The service can backdate attendances up to 28 days only. To find out more about what you may be eligible for, please visit the Department of Human Services website.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)

The ACCS is a top-up payment in addition to the CCS which provides targeted additional fee assistance to families and children facing barriers in accessing affordable childcare. For more information on ACCS visit

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au

Immunisations

Children need to be fully immunised, on a 'catch-up' schedule or have a medical reason for non-immunisation.

Families must provide a copy of the child's Immunisation Statement at the time of enrolling and when the child's immunisation status changes.

Absences

Each child is entitled to 42 absence days per financial year for any reason, without giving the service any supporting evidence. After the initial 42 days absence have been used, CCS is only paid for additional absences where they are taken for reasons such as illness with a medical certificate, preschool attendance, local disaster, etc.

Inform the educators or staff if you are aware of an intended absence or provide necessary documentation for any additional absences after reaching your 42 absence days.

Priority of Access

There are no requirements for filling vacancies however Intereach will prioritise children who are:

1. at risk of serious abuse or neglect
2. a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

This meets the Australian Government's aims of helping families who are most in need and supporting the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.

In addition, Intereach will also consider:

- children of families already enrolled at the service; and,
- where possible, access is ensured for any child irrespective of cultural background, religion, sex, disability, parent/guardians' marital status, health status, residency status or income whilst meeting the specific needs of the local community depending on availability.

Intereach will provide families with 14 days' notice, when possible, if a placement needs to be changed to allow care for a child considered to be of high priority.

In situations where the service does not have any vacancies, the service will establish a waiting list.

No longer needing care?

If cancelling a permanent booking, a childcare service is taken to have permanently ceased providing care for a child on the day the child last physically attends a session of care. This means that CCS will not be paid for absences submitted after a child last physically attends a session of care. Parents or educators can cancel care with a minimum of two weeks' notice or by negotiation.

If we don't know that care is ceased, we may still report absences for several weeks and receive CCS for you incorrectly.

Custody matters

Where there is a restriction on access to or contact with a child, a copy of the relevant court order must be provided to the Coordination Unit.

Fees and Charges

FDC educators provide education and care on behalf of Intereach. As independent contractors, educators set their own fees, in accordance with the Fees Procedure.

- A one-off registration fee applies to new family registrations and an administration levy is charged per hour, per child to assist in covering Coordination Unit and administration costs.
- Educators will provide all families with a fee schedule on enrolment which will identify all fees.
- Families are able to contact the Coordination Unit to gain a fee estimate before the start of care.
- Families will be notified within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or any changes in the way fees are collected.

Payments are made through direct deposit or BPay to Intereach

- There are two payment options for direct debit:
 - Direct debit via bank account
 - Direct debit via credit card
- The following Direct Debit Fees are paid by the parent
 - Bank account txn fee \$0.70/ fortnight
 - Credit card txn fee \$0.70
 - Credit card surcharge 1.9%
 - Dishonour fee \$8.00
- The following BPay fees are paid by the parent
 - \$0.99c/ fortnight
 - 0.2% bank charges
 - 1% credit card
- Direct Debit payments are required to be made fortnightly, an invoice and Statement of Entitlement will be distributed to families via email once timesheets have been finalised.
- Families will receive receipts for fees paid from Intereach.
- Where accounts are outstanding by 6 weeks, care will be cancelled until fees are paid in full. During this time care positions will not be held.

Overdue accounts

If families are experiencing financial hardship, we encourage you to speak to your educator as soon as possible to assist you to ensure suitable payment arrangements are in place. Please note that it is the educator's right to refuse care to a family whose fees are in arrears.

General Information

FDC setting

Safety is imperative in the Family Day Care home. Regular safety checks are carried out by educators with the support of Coordination Unit staff. Thorough safety audits are conducted yearly to ensure home safety is maintained. Government Regulations, Quality Standards and Service Policies and Procedures require a minimum standard to be met.

SunSmart

FDC is a SunSmart service, and consequently, hats are required to be worn by children who are outdoors (between September 1 and April 30). Children are expected and encouraged to wear hats when on excursions and partaking in outside activities as well. Educators are also expected to wear a hat whenever outdoors. Educators minimise the time children spend outdoors during peak UV times. The use of sunscreen is mandatory and is to be applied before going outdoors and reapplied.

Educators provides sunscreen, however, if your child is sensitive, please provide your own.





Food and Nutrition

We encourage families to pack a variety of nutritious and healthy foods, avoiding soft drinks and large quantities of sugary foods.

We encourage positive learning experiences during snack times where good food habits are developed in a happy, social environment. Snacks provided are healthy, balanced and varied. We can accommodate a number of dietary requirements i.e. gluten free, dairy free, so please speak to us about your child's specific needs.

FDC supports good dental and oral health by being active participants in the Smiles for Miles program. To learn more visit: www.dhsv.org.au

Child lunchbox ideas:

See the next page for healthy lunchbox suggestions. Choose one item from each section. Mix and match each day. For more information visit www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au



Pack your child a HEALTHY LUNCH BOX



Choose a variety of foods from each food group

Fruit



Vegetables



Dairy



Wholegrains



Lean meat
& alternatives



A Healthy Lunch Box



MAKE WATER
YOUR DRINK



PACK ICE BRICKS
TO KEEP FOOD
COOL



USE A THERMOS
TO KEEP FOOD
WARM



This resource was developed and designed by the Health Promotion Service, Western Sydney Local Health District with contribution by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District.

Frequently Asked Questions

Bookings

Can I make a casual booking?

Yes! We recognise that family needs are ever-changing and casual bookings are able to be offered as long as places are available. Please speak directly to your educator or contact the Intereach Coordination Unit.

Can I change my permanent days?

Yes, provided there are vacancies, you are able to change permanent days with two weeks' notice via your educator.

What will my child do while in Family Day Care?

Intereach Family Day Care educators are professionals who provide children with an opportunity to be engaged in a wide variety of fun learning experiences and in some cases excursions within the community.

Your child/children will be provided with a program which is led by the Early Years Learning Framework's principles, practice and outcomes. The EYLF aims to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school.

Experiences and excursions could include, but are not limited to:

- Music
- Books
- Puzzles
- Arts and crafts
- Outdoor play
- Construction
- Play dough
- Excursions - local parks, nursing homes, libraries and play groups

Educators will monitor your child's learning and development and work in partnership with families to ensure programs are tailored to continuing to build and scaffold their current skills and knowledge.

General

What happens if your educator is unavailable to provide education and care due to holidays or illness?

There may be times when your educator is not available to care for your child due to illness or periods of annual leave. When this occurs your educator will provide as much notice as possible and notify the Coordination Unit of their leave. Your educator and staff from the Coordination Unit will liaise with you to ensure that appropriate replacement care is offered if you and your family require.

How many children can an educator care for?

Educators can provide education and care for up to seven children at any one time with no more than four children being under school age.

Current research confirms the importance of strong relationships with significant adults to a child's early learning; FDC's small group environment facilitates strong bonds and promotes effective early learning and social development.

Can my educator have visitors while they are providing education and care to my children?

Yes, all visitors must sign the educator's visitor book. All families will be notified of any visitors staying at the premises and any visitor staying longer than three weeks requires a Working with Children Check.

What should my child bring to care?

Children should bring a water bottle, a SunSmart hat and any food required. Where meals are provided, families will be notified. Children should also bring any personal items to support their individual care needs (e.g. medication or change of clothes).

Excursions

Excursions are an essential and valuable part of childcare as they provide variety and a unique opportunity for children to participate in outings, offering diverse learning opportunities, participation in activities and community engagement.

Excursions are well-considered and planned, provide meaningful experiences and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from any harm or hazard likely to cause injury or illness.

Families are advised of any forthcoming excursions, including the date, location and other necessary information. Families are required to sign consent prior to the excursion, allowing their child to attend.

Health

What if children are sick?

Children should not attend care if they are unwell. Please ensure you inform your educator if your child will not be attending and abide by the illness exclusion periods.

If a child becomes unwell while attending care, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child. If your child is injured whilst at the service, you will be notified.

For both injury or illness you will be required to sign the Incident/Injury/Trauma and Illness Record that an educator will complete.

What should I do with my child's medication?

All medication must be handed directly to the educator before leaving the child in care and an Administration of Medication form must be completed.

What if a person shows signs of an infectious disease?

When any child or educator is found to be showing signs of an infectious disease:

- We will contact you immediately to collect your child and seek medical advice. If this is not possible to arrive in a timely manner, alternative arrangements must be made for collection of your child and the service must be notified of these arrangements. Whilst waiting to be collected, your child will be provided with appropriate First Aid, ensuring your child is comfortable and receives adequate supervision.
- For any diseases or conditions that require a medical certificate to clear the child or educator from the illness, we refer to the Staying Healthy in Childcare Edition 5, available at www.nhmrc.gov.au. This medical certificate will be required before that child or educator can return to care.
- Clear medical information, such as signs and symptoms of any illness or condition, will be posted in the parent area.

Transportation

Educators are committed to providing transport where every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from any harm or hazard likely to cause injury or illness. Where required, educators will ensure age appropriate child restraints are used.

Feedback

We encourage feedback and complaints and understand they are an important part of the continuous improvement of our services. We commit to handling any concerns raised fairly and in an objective and unbiased way.

You can give us feedback or make a complaint in any manner that suits you, for example, in person, by phone, email or letter or through the online complaint form on our website.

We will:

- promptly acknowledge receipt of a complaint;
- try to resolve any complaints as quickly as possible;
- keep you informed of any progress;
- maintain strict confidentiality;
- accept anonymous complaints;
- support you to be represented by an advocate; and
- support you to refer your complaint to an external agency if you are unhappy with the outcome.

How to lodge a complaint

In person: to any Intereach employee

Phone: 1300 488 226

Email: complaints@intereach.com.au

Post: PO Box 501, Deniliquin NSW 2710 (marked confidential)

Online: www.intereach.com.au/contact-us

You may also contact the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate at any time for help with matters pertaining to Intereach Children's Services. Free call 1800 619 113 or email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au or contact the NSW State Ombudsman Office (free call) 1800 451 524.

Please see our Complaints Handling Policy for more information (available to download from our website www.intereach.com.au or on request).

Note: If the feedback is alleging that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child was or is being compromised, or that the law has been breached, the appropriate documentation will be forwarded to NSW Early Childhood Education Directorate (ECED). The ECED is the independent statutory authority for NSW. Once the ECED receives the form it will make contact with the Family Day Care educator and may arrange to visit the service.



Keep in touch

We value our families' points of view. If you have feedback or suggestions for us, you can:

- Speak to our friendly educators on the phone or in person
- Speak to our friendly Coordination Unit team members
- Complete a feedback form via www.intereach.com.au

Need help? Contact FDC

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Phone – 1300 488 226

Email – fdc@intereach.com.au

Where does Intereach Family Day Care offer education and care?

Intereach currently has educators available in Berrigan, Deniliquin, Echuca, Finley, Jerilderie, Kerang, Lake Boga, Moama, Nanneella, Rochester, Swan Hill, Tocumwal and Wagga Wagga.

Interpreter services

If you need an interpreter Intereach will arrange this service where available and where needed or families can contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50.



P: [1300 488 226](tel:1300488226) | www.intereach.com.au