



# 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Child Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land.

We pay respects to Elders past and present for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation.

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\* Child Australia follows the Australian Privacy Principles and respects the privacy of the children and families we work with. As a result, names or referring images used within this report may have been changed.

# Message from the Chairperson and the CEO

As we reflect on the past year, we are incredibly proud of the continued dedication and resilience of our teams, who have once again ensured that high-quality education and care services reached children and families across Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Their commitment to our mission has been steadfast, despite the ongoing challenges faced by the sector, particularly in addressing workforce shortages. Every staff member has played a crucial role in strengthening our organisation's impact, and together with our Board Members we extend our sincere gratitude to each individual across the organisation.

Working alongside our dedicated teams, Executive, and Board Members, we are proud to reflect on another year of meaningful achievements at Child Australia. This past financial year saw the successful implementation of key priorities from our Strategic Plan, all focused on empowering our staff, amplifying our impact, and enhancing the way we operate. With each initiative, we have moved closer to our goals of creating a stronger, more resilient workforce and ensuring we continue to provide exceptional support to the children and families we serve.

At the heart of Child Australia's achievements are our people—an extraordinary team whose commitment shapes the very fabric of our organisation. Every day, their talent, energy, and perseverance drive us forward, ensuring that we remain true to our mission. They not only deliver exceptional education and care, professional learning, and support the development of the sector broadly, but they also cultivate the culture that makes Child Australia a vibrant and impactful place. Their dedication empowers us to meet the evolving needs of the children, families, practitioners, and stakeholders, fuelling our continued success.

This year, we expanded our efforts to support and recognise our staff. The introduction of a 5% wage increase for all employees—surpassing the Fair Work ruling—demonstrates our commitment to our people acknowledging the incredible value our educators and staff bring to our organisation. Building on the positive feedback from the 9-day fortnight initiative, we introduced a range of new initiatives and continue to place a strong focus on the wellbeing and growth of our staff by enhancing professional development and career pathways, ensuring they feel fully supported in every aspect of their roles. Our Thriving Futures initiative, funded by BHP, continued to address critical sector workforce shortages across the Pilbara (WA), Roxby Downs (SA), and the Goldfields (WA). Through strategic efforts to attract and retain educators in these remote communities, the program has supported and significantly improved the capacity of participating services. This progress ensures more children and families can access high-quality early learning, ensuring the long-term sustainability of services in these vital regional areas.

A critical element of the initiative, the Educator Recognition Program (ERP) has been instrumental in pushing the status quo on educator wage conditions. The ERP provides wage subsidies to educators, connected with structured pathways for continuous professional development, which has been a key factor in improving job satisfaction and retention rates in these regions. This success has drawn national attention as a leading model for tackling workforce challenges in the early childhood sector, highlighting the need for fair compensation and career progression development pathways for educators.

We also continued our strong partnership with the WA Government, playing a key role in the Empowering Early Childhood Education and Care in Regional WA Program and the Supporting Children in Early Childhood Education and Care Grants Program. These programs have been vital in supporting regional early learning services and ensuring greater access to quality early education for children across the state.

In addition, we coordinated and celebrated the Sector Awards and Early Childhood Learning & Development (ECLD) Conference in WA and coordinated the Awards on behalf of the NT Government alongside the Little People, Big Dreams Conference in Darwin. These events, which attracted well over 1,000 participants combined, highlighted the incredible work of early childhood professionals and reignited passion across the sector, reminding us of the pivotal role educators play in shaping little lives.

Our commitment to Reconciliation remains at the forefront of our work as we continue to implement our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This year, we have made substantial progress in integrating cultural understanding, respect, and responsiveness throughout our organisation. By embedding these principles into our everyday practices, we ensure that our services are inclusive and culturally safe, honouring the diverse communities we serve and building meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This year we were also thrilled to welcome Xavier Teo and Pandora Reddy to our Board. Xavier, a certified MSP® and ITIL® professional, has extensive experience in governance and performance-driven reforms, contributing to both operational and clinical governance. Pandora, with over 20 years of experience in accounting and strategic problem-solving, brings her passion for improving the lives of children and uplifting women. Their combined expertise has already proven invaluable as they support our ongoing mission to create impactful outcomes for children and communities. A special thanks to Board Member Nick Warth, Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee, who, despite relocating to the UK during this reporting period, continues to navigate the time difference and joins us online. His dedication and commitment, even from across the globe, has been truly invaluable.

Child Australia is pleased to report another financially strong year, with results that continue to support our mission. Our diversified revenue streams, combined with careful resource management, contributed to positive financial outcomes. This financial stability has allowed us to reinvest thoughtfully in our services and provide continued support for our teams, ensuring we can meet the evolving needs of the children and families we serve. Finally, we extend our deepest thanks to our funders, strategic partners, collaborators, and the entire Child Australia community. Whether you have walked alongside us for many years or have recently joined us, your support is truly invaluable in helping us fulfill our mission. Together, we have touched the lives of countless children, and for that, we are profoundly grateful. We look forward to continuing this journey with you, as we embrace new opportunities and work to shape brighter futures for the children and families we serve.



# Our Vision, Mission and Values

## Vision

A community where children grow, thrive and reach their potential.

## Mission

To support children’s wellbeing, learning and development by advocating for and developing the community of professionals working for them.

### Values



#### Integrity

We are honest, trustworthy and accountable. We take responsibility for our actions.



#### Collaboration

We work together on shared goals, seeking opportunities to work with diverse expertise and perspectives.



#### Recognition

We acknowledge and celebrate the efforts and achievements of our staff.



#### Respect

We treat each person as we expect to be treated. We value diversity.



#### Innovation

We look for the best solution. We think outside the box and challenge ourselves to do things differently.



#### Commitment

We follow through on decisions and promises – we do what we say.

# Who we are

Child Inclusive Learning and Development Australia Inc. (Child Australia) is a not for profit organisation dedicated to improving outcomes for children.

With humble beginnings in 1987 (known then as the Resource Unit for Children with Special Needs or RUCSN) with an original objective to include children with disabilities into child care services, we have grown significantly and now offer a wide range of programs and services to improve outcomes for all children.

Our practice is guided by evidence-based research and provides innovative professional development and support to the sector. We aim to facilitate the development of nurturing and stimulating early childhood learning environments and support families in helping their children thrive.

Through professional education, the provision of early childhood services, community and family supports, and sector advocacy, we

actively pursue opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders across Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Our programs and services span metropolitan, regional and remote locations and include:

- Early Learning Centre’s
- Out of School Hours Care
- Bagot Community Program
- West Pilbara Mobile Children’s Service
- HIPPY Geraldton and Hedland
- Community Support
- ECEC Sector Conferences and Awards
- Professional Practice Training and Support



# Reconciliation Action Plan

Child Australia made significant strides in its journey toward reconciliation, marked by the launch of its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in the Northern Territory. Honoured to be welcomed by the Bagot Community, the event began with a Welcome to Country by Larrakia person Edwin Fejo, followed by a powerful smoking ceremony led by Kiyuk woman Natalie Harwood and Kiyuk / Malak-Malak women Sheila and Valemina White.

## Fostering Understanding and Respect

CEO Tina Holtom spoke about Child Australia’s dedication to reconciliation, emphasising the importance of respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The RAP includes key actions such as increasing First Nations representation, ensuring culturally safe programs and building stronger community partnerships.

RAP Champion Connie Borg showcased the unity amongst the team in promoting reconciliation and acknowledged the significant contribution of Indigenous artist Rosie Paine, whose artwork is featured in all Child Australia RAP Uniforms. These shirts symbolise the ongoing commitment to reconciliation and represent Child Australia’s mission.

## Uniting Through Action

After the RAP artwork launch, plaques featuring the artwork’s story were presented to leaders, uniting all Child Australia centres. Child Australia continues to embed reconciliation into daily practice and recently recorded a webinar on cultural sensitivity for staff induction. Indigenous leaders like Natalie Harwood and Marita Mummery guided the team in confronting racism and integrating First Nations perspectives into services.

## Celebrating Progress

In June 2024, National Reconciliation Week was celebrated at Child Australia’s head office with a morning tea, followed by an inspiring video that tackles personal experiences with racism. This sparked deeper reflection and conversations within the team about standing against racism. Additionally, the Bagot Community’s Walking Bus Project continues to grow and was featured in the news, demonstrating the impact of our collaborative efforts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

## Looking Forward

The Reflect RAP serves as a guiding framework in fostering respect, unity and equity whilst embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures throughout the organisation. This year, the creation of a RAP evidence chart ensures the ongoing documentation of progress across all programs, reinforcing the organisation’s commitment to reconciliation. Child Australia remains dedicated to creating inclusive, culturally safe environments and increasing workforce representation to pave the way toward a more just and equitable Australia for all.



# Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024

Child Australia is dedicated to promoting, supporting and enhancing the quality of life and positive developmental outcomes of all children and families. In particular, those who are vulnerable and at risk, living with disability and those from Indigenous or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## Our areas of focus:



### Sector Development

We will support and develop the community of professionals working with children.



### Advocacy and Leadership

We will actively promote the needs and rights of children, their families and the professionals working with them.



### Sustainability

We will be operationally effective and financially strong with the resources to support quality and growth.



### Quality Services

We will deliver the highest quality programs and services that improve outcomes for children, families, communities and the professionals working with them.



### Exceptional People

We will be an employer of choice and empower our people with the skills, expertise and resources to deliver high-quality services in support of our mission.



2023 Roundtable Discussion, Perth WA

2023 Shaping our Future Discussion, Canberra ACT

2024 Empowering ECEC in Regional WA, Albany WA

# Sector Advocacy

## Insights from the National Workforce Forum

CEO Tina Holtom shared insights on the Thriving Futures program at the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority’s (ACECQA) Inaugural National Workforce Forum. This event brought together leaders to discuss workforce challenges in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Sector to explore sustainable development strategies.

Through the partnership with BHP, Child Australia gained valuable perspectives on workforce development in regional and remote areas. Tina emphasised that this collaboration has helped understand critical workforce shortages and identify innovative solutions. Tina stated, “We are grateful for the chance to contribute to the dialogue on shaping a brighter future for the dedicated professionals in the sector, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for children.”

## Collective Feedback

In response to the Productivity Commission Draft Report on ECEC, Child Australia along with other ECEC providers, advocated for developing a sustainable, well-supported ECEC workforce. Key recommendations included:

Establishing a National Workforce Development Council to guide professional development

Reducing barriers to upskilling educators in rural areas with targeted funding and support.

Supporting innovative pathways for teaching qualifications and career progression.

Implementing mentorship programs on culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices.

These measures aligned with Child Australia’s commitment to strengthening workforce capacity through initiatives such as the Thriving Futures program.

Our Publications



## Launching the ECEC WA Grant Program

Child Australia proudly launched the “Supporting Children in ECEC” WA Grant Program as part of the Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA), designed to assist the ECEC sector (registered Providers with a Service Approval) to improve the accessibility, quality and outcomes of preschool education for all children. Tina Holtom expressed pride in supporting the WA Government to distribute funds that facilitate children’s transition to school.

## Empowering Regional ECEC Services

Child Australia announced the “ECEC Support: Empowering Regional Services WA” Program, a \$2.9 million initiative designed to strengthen not for profit ECEC services across Great Southern, Peel, Southwest and the Wheatbelt. This coordinated support model program is designed to strengthen and enhance regional services, ensuring their sustainability, boosting the capacity of local sector professionals, and fostering the growth and viability of ECEC services in targeted regions.



# Our Early Learning Services

This past year has seen significant growth and transformation across Child Australia's centres. The organisation continued to prioritise the development of nurturing and supportive environments for children, fostering confidence, social skills and resilience. Community engagement remained a key focus, with strong partnerships and cultural celebrations helping to create inclusive spaces where children and families feel connected.

Various initiatives aimed at enhancing learning environments were implemented, leading to increased occupancy and a positive response from families. Staff development and wellbeing were also prioritised, with training programs ensuring educators were equipped to deliver high-quality care.

The focus on fostering relationships, both within the centres and with the broader community, has continued to strengthen Child Australia's commitment to providing a safe, enriching and supportive environment for children's development.

## Children in our care



582

Children enrolled in Outside School Hour Care



378

Children enrolled in Early Learning Centres



### Early Learning Centre (ELC)

- 1 Farrar ELC
- 2 Palmerston Child & Family ELC
- 8 Larapinta Child & Family ELC

### Campus (combined ELC and OSHC)

- 3 Nightcliff Campus
- 9 Lockridge Campus

### Outside School Hours

- 4 Anula OSHC
- 5 Bagot OSHC
- 6 Wanguri OSHC
- 7 Wagaman OSHC

# Western Australia

Campus (ELC and OSHC)

Lockridge Campus

## A Visit from Minister Sabine Winton

A significant moment for Lockridge Campus came when Minister for Early Childhood Education and Care, Sabine Winton, visited to announce the recipients of crucial grants. In the company of sector leaders and curious children, Minister Winton passionately expressed her admiration for the incredible work happening in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector. Her words underscored the vital role the ECEC sector plays in shaping the future, highlighting the importance of continued investment in quality care for young learners.

The visit was a proud moment for Lockridge Campus, bringing attention to the hardwork and dedication of the educators, and showing just how impactful Early Childhood Education can be in setting a foundation for lifelong learning.

## A Journey of Confidence and Belonging

Lockridge made a difference in the lives of many families. This is the story of Nikki.

When Nikki\* first enrolled her 4-year-old daughter at Child Australia Lockridge Campus, she was nervous about moving her daughter from a small centre to a larger one. However, her fears quickly faded as the educators warmly welcomed them and created a nurturing environment where her daughter could thrive.

Initially, drop-offs were difficult. Nikki's daughter clung to her each morning, but the patient and caring educators helped her adjust, offering gentle support and making her feel safe.

Over time, her once-reserved daughter blossomed. She started talking about her new friends and the fun she had each day. One highlight is the outdoor nature playground, where she could explore and play freely, which soon became her favourite part of the day. Ever since then, her daughter looked forward to going to our Lockridge Campus. Nikki is so grateful for the care and attention her daughter received. The team at Lockridge has played a huge role in building her confidence and social skills, and she couldn't be happier.

## Finding Family at Work

Educator Amanda shares her story.

As both a team member and a parent at Lockridge, Amanda felt incredibly fortunate to have found educators who felt like extended family. Every day, she experienced firsthand the genuine care and dedication the staff provided, not only to her child, but to all the children at the centre.

From the management team to the floor staff, everyone was thoughtful, attentive, professional and always strived to meet the children's needs. Amanda often reflected on how she wants to share the amazing staff with the world. The warmth and care from her team were felt daily, making her job and her days as a parent much easier.



# Northern Territory

## Campus Combined (ELC and OSHC)

- Nightcliff Campus

## Early Learning Centre (ELC)

- Farrar ELC
- Palmerston ELC
- Larapinta ELC

## Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)

- Anula OSHC
- Bagot OSHC
- Wanguri OSHC
- Wagaman OSHC

More than providing care, Child Australia strives to foster confidence in young learners whilst creating a vibrant community that celebrates cultural events and occasions.

This year has marked a period of transformation and growth across Northern Territory centres, with significant milestones achieved and numerous heartwarming stories of children blossoming in their environments.

## Connecting Hearts in the Territory

Community engagement was at the core of Child Australia's NT centres' missions. At Palmerston ELC, partnership with the Palmerston Child and Family Centre (CFC) was pivotal in enhancing local families' overall wellbeing. Through outreach programs and collaborative initiatives, the team built stronger connections within the community, ensured that families felt supported and valued.



The Young Mothers Strong Mothers program at the Palmerston Child and Family Centre supports mothers under 25 in continuing their education while caring for their children. It offers a Certificate II in Community Services, along with transportation, meals, and on-site childcare, helping mothers build a better future.

Liz Chick, a lecturer at Batchelor Institute, noted the program's transformative impact, "This course enables the mums to feel liberated, reimagining themselves as learners and teachers". This initiative allowed mothers to break

free from limitations and envisioned brighter futures for themselves and their families, fostered personal growth, education and confidence as they balanced motherhood with new opportunities.

Bagot OSHC demonstrated exceptional community spirit this year, leveraged the increased CCCFR funding to employ a third educator and established a First Nations Community Liaison Officer position. This funding not only improved programming but also strengthened ties with local organisations, such as the Darrandirra Centre, which donated Christmas gifts, and Books n Boots, which contributed over 500 books for Indigenous Literacy Day.

At Farrar ELC, the community came together for a heartwarming working bee. Families, staff and children rolled up their sleeves to rejuvenate the outdoor yard, creating fairy gardens and vegetable patches. This collaborative effort highlighted the importance of community spirit and engagement, ensuring that outdoor spaces are inviting for exploration and play.



## Transformations and Growth

This year brought transformative changes in many of the NT centres, enhancing the learning experiences for children. At Nightcliff Campus, the Early Learning Centre studios were reimagined with names reflecting the Gulumerrdjin (Larrakia) language. Play Studio 1 became "Banimadla" (long-necked turtle) room, Play Studio 2 was renamed "Wilwilma" (rainbow lorikeet) room, and Play Studio 3 became "Wudut" (frog) room. These changes, adorned with stunning artwork by local artist Rochelle Minberrignully Fejo-Tasker, a proud Larrakia and Warramunga woman created inspiring spaces for children to explore and learn.



Similarly, Larapinta ELC achieved remarkable milestones with the reconfiguration of Play Studios 3 and 4. This change allowed for better alignment with children's developmental stages, resulting in an enriching learning environment that led to increased enrolments and the hiring of additional staff. The team at Larapinta ELC also collaboratively rewrote the centre's philosophy, a lengthy yet rewarding process. The result was a philosophy that truly reflects Larapinta's values, team spirit and dedication to the children's growth and development. A shining example of this commitment is the journey of a young girl who joined Play Studio 3.



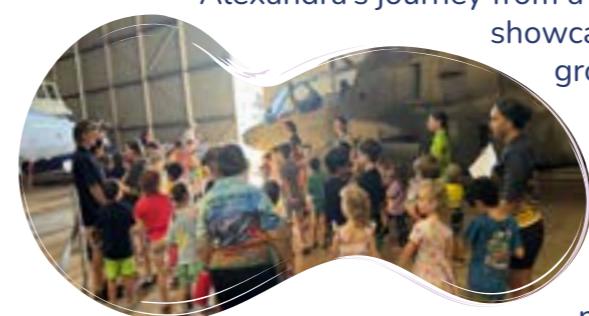
Initially, she struggled to adapt to her new surroundings and often cried during her first two months. However, with the support of educators and open communication with her family, she gradually found her place within the centre. One day, she arrived with a radiant smile, ready to embrace the day. This marked a significant turning point in her journey of growth and belonging.



Wagaman OSHC also underwent transformation, restructuring the room into five specialised areas, including Reading, Arts & Crafts, Construction, Home Corner and Makeup/Dress Up, and Colouring/Drawing Area. This design invited creativity and exploration,



ignited young imaginations and fostered engagement. As part of this evolution, our team at Wagaman OSHC proudly launched the Progressive Afternoon program. This dynamic initiative offered a series of enriching experiences tailored to the children's interests, promoting active participation and social engagement. A remarkable illustration of this transformation is Alexandra, a five-year-old girl who initially struggled with shyness. Through her involvement in team sports and creative arts within the program, she began to communicate more confidently and forge meaningful friendships.



Alexandra's journey from a reserved child to one who eagerly embraces new challenges showcases the power of our OSHC service in nurturing emotional growth. The Progressive Afternoon program has not only enhanced children's social skills but also instilled a sense of belonging and confidence, ensuring they thrive in a supportive environment.

Meanwhile, Anula OSHC experienced positive change with the launch of new educational programs focused on nutrition, sustainability and children's interests. Staff training in guiding challenging behaviour and first aid further strengthened the centre's ability to support children's growth.

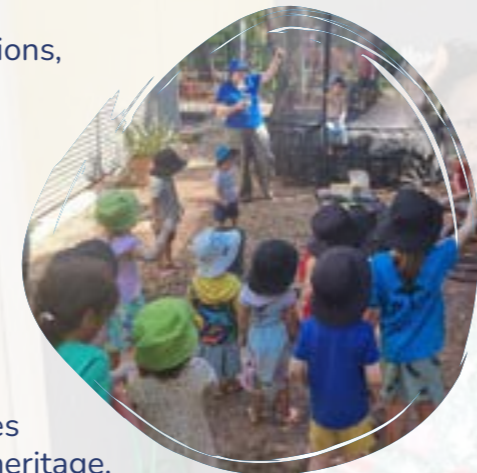
## Embracing Culture and Community

Child Australia centres proudly celebrated significant cultural occasions, fostering a sense of belonging and respect for diverse traditions.

Nightcliff Campus came alive during NAIDOC Week, where children participated in enchanting campfire experiences and exciting excursions to the Territory Wildlife Park. These activities deepened their connection to the land and enriched their understanding of Aboriginal culture.

Similarly, Bagot OSHC embraced cultural pride during NAIDOC Week, engaging the community with activities that celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Their Halloween Disco created an inclusive atmosphere, uniting families through fun and laughter.

At Wanguri OSHC, ANZAC Day was marked with heartfelt remembrance. Children crafted handmade wreaths that were laid at the Darwin City Dawn Service, teaching them the importance of honouring those who served in the armed forces. These celebrations have nurtured respect for cultural diversity while fostering a strong sense of community.



## Building Confidence and Nurturing Young Learners

Fostering confidence in children is at the heart of Child Australia's philosophies. The centres have implemented initiatives that encourage children to express themselves and develop essential social skills.

At Nightcliff Campus, Ryan, a four-year-old in the Wudut Room, initially struggled to express his thoughts and feelings. However, with the support of dedicated educators trained in trauma-informed practices, Ryan learned to share his emotions and develop resilience. Daily activities designed to promote a sense of belonging have helped him thrive, transformed him into a confident and expressive young learner.

Farrar ELC also witnessed transformative moments in its young learners. A touching story emerged when a mother shared how her two-year-old son ran to the door, calling for his beloved educator, Lara, after feeling upset. This incident highlighted the powerful bonds formed between educators and children, reinforcing the importance of nurturing relationships in Early Childhood Education.

Bagot OSHC also focused on nurturing young learners' confidence. Tristan, a six-year-old boy, initially found it difficult to attend school regularly. However, he loved going to Bagot OSHC, where he formed friendships and engaged in play. Staff members worked closely with his family, helping him build the confidence he needed to reconnect with school.



## Rising Demand

The trust and engagement from families have resulted in significant increases in occupancy across the NT centres. Palmerston ELC has experienced steady growth, reflecting the community's confidence in the service. The stable and committed team of educators built strong relationships with children and families, which contributed to this upward trend.

At Larapinta ELC, a record occupancy of 93% was achieved in June 2024, highlighting the positive impact of recent changes and community trust. Families appreciated the high-quality care and education provided which drove the centre's success.

Wagaman OSHC also expanded its capacity, increasing from 75 to 85 places to accommodate the growing demand. This expansion reflected the centre's popularity and the trust families place in our commitment to providing a safe, nurturing environment for their children.



## A Journey of Growth and Connection

As we reflect on the past year at Child Australia, it is clear that the centres made significant progress in celebrating cultural diversity, engaging with the community and fostering growth in young learners. Through their commitment to these values, they empowered children to thrive in an environment that values their individuality and promotes their development.

The stories of children like Ryan, Tristan and Alexandra, along with the collective achievements across the centres, illustrate the positive impact of each program, and the dedication of the staff. As Child Australia continues to expand its services and strengthen its connections with families, the organisation remains committed to its mission of providing high-quality Education and Care that enriches the lives of children and families within its communities.

## Supporting Social Growth and Self-Regulation

At Anula OSHC, Jack, an 8-year-old in Grade 3, initially resisted joining after-school activities, preferring to stay home. However, when OSHC introduced daily footy sessions, led by two enthusiastic male educators, Jack's love for football drew him in. Over time, his social skills developed through teamwork and communication, and his parents were thrilled with his growing enthusiasm and engagement at OSHC.

Similarly, at Wanguri OSHC, two high-functioning children from a Defence family struggled with social interactions. The centre's Quiet Room provided a calming space where they could self-regulate before rejoining group activities. With personalised support, they gradually became more comfortable in group settings, much to their parents' satisfaction.

Both Anula and Wanguri OSHC illustrate how tailored programs can help children build meaningful connections and navigate social interactions with greater ease.



“It’s a hard decision to send your children to daycare. I chose Lockridge Early Learning because the staff are caring and knowledgeable, the facility is well maintained with a great outdoor play space, and the food is really good. Both of my children have been very happy there, and I’m happy knowing they’re well cared for.”

-Parent at Lockridge Campus

“It’s great to see how caring and compassionate the staff are, they really make us feel special.”

-Parent at Wanguri OSHC



“The activities allowed children to be more engaged especially when they built the Cubby House at the garden.”

-Parent at Wagaman OSHC



“Thank you so much with helping our little one settle in, we were very worried but the whole transition went really smooth.”

-Parent at Palmerston ELC

“Thank you for your creativity and for designing such a fun vacation care program for the June/July school holidays.”

-Parent at Anula OSHC



“I’m happy my daughter is happy to come each day. She has lots of friends, and has built strong relationships with educators.”

-Parent at Farrar ELC

“The educators and their care for our child and inclusion of the parents is much appreciated.”

-Parent at Larapinta ELC



“I love the staff! My child has been growing in confidence every day and I can clearly see his positive connections when I drop him off every day.”

-Parent at Nightcliff Campus

“After school, my daughter goes to osch everyday, she loves the staff, she has a feed and feels safe being there. I love that my daughter has a safe space in the community that encourages her to play and learn.”

-Parent at Bagot OSHC

# Community Programs

## Bagot Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS)

### Walking Bus



The Walking Bus Project has been a cherished part of the community which made a significant impact on school attendance for both primary and preschool-aged children. Each morning, an educator collected children from their doorstep, walking them safely to school while serving as a bridge between the school and the community.

In a news interview, Ludmilla Primary School shared that the Walking Bus was a key reason children arrive at school on time, ready and prepared for their day. The success of the program went beyond just attendance; it was the relationships built between educators and community members that truly made a difference, ensuring the children felt supported every step of the way.

View our news feature 

### Families for School Attendance (FFSA)

The Families for School Attendance (FFSA) Program played a vital role in providing consistent support to families, enhancing school attendance and participation. This year, we celebrated significant events like Harmony Day and Reconciliation Day, which brought together many parents who eagerly engaged with FFSA staff. These gatherings featured activities where families explored Aboriginal culture through traditional foods, dance and songs, fostering a sense of community and understanding.



This group served as a platform for parents to discuss what mattered most for their children’s education, envisioning a future where Aboriginal culture is embraced in the curriculum. Together, they explored ways to support not only their children but also non-Aboriginal families in learning about Aboriginal culture, history and the significance of the land they share.



In addition to these cultural celebrations, Bagot held discussion sessions focused on the importance of school attendance. These conversations increased involvement, with more parents joining our Aboriginal Reference Group and collaborating closely with Ludmilla Primary School staff.

The FFSA Program continued to strengthen ties between families and schools, creating a richer educational experience for everyone involved.

### Expanding Educational Access and Community Safety

To improve educational access, every household with a student will receive free WiFi until the end of 2025, removing barriers to online learning. This initiative has already made an impact, with six parents from Bagot Programs completing a computer course and proudly receiving their certificates—an achievement they once thought unattainable.

Additionally, a new Safety Working Group was formed in partnership with NT Police and the Ludmilla Neighbourhood Advisory Committee (LNAC). Residents were excited to contribute to a safer community, recognising the positive effects this would have on their children’s education and overall wellbeing.

## Bambatj Learning

The Bambatj program thrived, brought together parents, community residents and networks that provided essential support for young mums and families. Each week, familiar partners like LPS FaFT (Ludmilla Primary School Families as First Teachers), Bernie from Danila Dilba (Dietician), and Millie from NT Health (Nutritionist) joined Bagot IAS. The program also welcomed Jackie from Relationships Australia to the growing team.



One of our standout initiatives was the Kid Safe Car Seat Awareness session, where parents learned vital safety tips. To reward their participation, each family received a brand-new car seat—an invaluable resource for child safety.

Another highlight was the Baby First Aid session led by St John Ambulance, equipping parents with essential skills to handle emergencies.



Bambatj Learning also organised a memorable excursion to Fish Feeding at Doctors Gully, where families joined the LPS FaFT program. The children's excitement was evident as they fed the fishes and enjoyed a picnic and playtime at the Esplanade afterwards.



Bambatj Learning collaborated on a large mosaic project with FaFT, mothers and community residents, which turned out beautifully. With more babies being born in the community and attending Bambatj, it's clear that the program made a meaningful impact and strengthened family connections.

## Chantel, A Bright Light in her Community

Chantel is an 8-year-old girl with a heart full of kindness and an infectious smile that lights up the morning. Despite living in a crowded house with her mother, siblings and other families, she rises each day with enthusiasm, ready for the Walking Bus. Chantel is often the first to arrive, her big grin welcoming others as she encourages her peers to join her on the walk to school.

Even when time is tight, and she's running late, Chantel makes sure she gets to school, determined not to miss a moment of learning. At school, her caring nature shines brightly. She looks after the younger children, always willing to lend a helping hand or share a cheerful word.

Chantel's love for reading is evident in everything she does. At the Outside School Hours Care (OSHC), she is the first to dive into the books, eager to read with the younger children. Acting as if she's their teacher, she patiently guides them through stories, sharing her passion for reading and helping to spark their imaginations.

Chantel exemplifies compassion and responsibility, inspiring everyone around her.

"I go to the Bambatj play group with my son because I get to learn how to make new ways of cooking foods and I can share with my families at home"

-Chamelisha, Parent at Bagot Programs

## West Pilbara Mobile Children's Service

Child Australia's West Pilbara Mobile Children's (WPMCS) service is funded by the Australian Government National Indigenous Australians Agency. WPMCS delivers a quality Education and Care program to remote Indigenous communities located in the Pilbara region of WA.

The program is influenced by the Early Years Learning Framework and reflects the individual context and culture of each community we work with.

### Nurturing Health and Knowledge

With support from a Rio Tinto grant, the Yandeyarra Community came together to create a Bush Tucker Garden on the school grounds. Children, families and Elders all participated, watering, mulching and caring for the plants, ensuring access to fresh, healthy food.



As the garden grew, it became a hub for learning, sparking discussions about the importance of fruits and vegetables in remote communities. This initiative not only nourished the body but also fostered a deeper understanding of healthy living, helping children grow strong in their early years. The Bush Tucker Garden represents the community's unity, demonstrating how collective effort can promote learning and wellbeing.

### Building Bridges Through Community Events



Collaboration remains fundamental to the community, where partnerships with local organisations and Early Years services have created a robust network of support for children and families. Community events like the Teddy Bears Picnic, National Close the Gap Day and Hedland Says NO to Family and Domestic Violence strengthened bonds and fostered a sense of shared purpose.

Celebrations such as the World's Biggest Play Date and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day reinforced cultural recognition. The Sizzle and Support event for National Homelessness Week 2024 highlighted our commitment to addressing critical social issues, bringing the community together while offering a platform to connect and share resources.

### Learning and Joy Through WPMCS Playgroup

Anntonette Hale, a teachers aide from Warralong Aboriginal Community, shared how the WPMCS playgroup has brought immense joy to her son Rhys and his classmates. The toddlers light up when the WPMCS educators visit, introducing new skills through engaging activities. Rhys, at just three years old, has learned to paint, draw and play with toy cars and the fishing game. The excitement when the WPMCS car arrives shows the lasting impact the playgroup has on the children's development. Anntonette hopes the program continues, as it fills homes with happiness and fosters new talents in the children.



### Recognised for Excellence

The West Pilbara Mobile Children's Service (WPMCS) was nominated for the Gowrie WA Early Learning Community Award as part of the 7NEWS Regional WA Achievement Awards. This nomination, made by an external individual, reflects the powerful impact the program has had on the community, highlighting its importance in early learning and child development.



# Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)

HIPPY is a two-year home based, early learning and parenting program for families with young children. It provides parents and carers with the confidence and tools to support their child's education and helps them create a home learning environment that improves their child's school readiness and the parent-child relationship.

Child Australia delivers HIPPY in Hedland and Geraldton and are committed to fostering a fun learning environment to promote a positive transition to school and are passionate about supporting and empowering families to be their child's first educators.

## New Beginnings at HIPPY Geraldton and Hedland

HIPPY Geraldton and HIPPY Hedland embraced new families, marking the start of an exciting chapter. Geraldton welcomed 27 families into the Age 3 Program, celebrating this milestone with a joyful morning tea filled with laughter and connection.

Meanwhile, HIPPY Hedland began the year with fresh energy as a new coordinator and three enthusiastic mentors joined the team, eager to support families on their educational journey. Their commitment and fresh ideas promised to enhance the programme significantly.

Community events, such as the Welcome to Hedland gathering, fostered connections among families, creating a supportive network. These new beginnings not only strengthened relationships but also laid a foundation for children's learning, ensuring each child felt valued and empowered as they explored their world.

## Connecting Families

The HIPPY programs in Geraldton and Hedland thrived on strong community connections and partnerships. Celebrations during the year brought families together, such as the Teddy Bear's Picnic and the Welcome to Hedland event, fostering a sense of belonging.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day provided an opportunity for families to share stories and engage with local organisations, while Homelessness Awareness Week highlighted the commitment to supporting those in need. Through active participation in these events, HIPPY has established a vital network of support that enhances the lives of children and families.

## Evolving Curriculum

This year marked a significant transformation in the HIPPY curriculum. The introduction of a new Age 4 curriculum enriched with play-based and open-ended activities complemented the Age 3 curriculum enhancements.

Families embraced these changes, creating a lively atmosphere filled with creativity and engagement. The ongoing evolution of the curriculum ensures that children enjoy meaningful learning experiences tailored to their developmental needs.



## Training for Excellence

Staff development has been a priority, with extensive training covering vital topics such as First Aid, Trauma-Informed Practice and Child Protection. Additional sessions on wellness & self-care, guiding behaviours and foundations of behaviour equipped educators with the skills to create nurturing environments. This commitment to professional growth ensures that staff are well-prepared to support the children and families they serve, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the HIPPY programs.



## Becoming a Child's First Teacher

Meet Lee, a dedicated mother who enrolled in HIPPY after being part of the Geraldton Toy Library. She observed the differences in the Australian education system compared to her own background and was eager to learn how to support her son, Rhys, in his learning journey. Through HIPPY, Lee discovered engaging activities that enabled her to bond with her son while fostering his development.



Their home buzzes with learning in both English and Mandarin, nurturing Rhys' growth. Regular group gatherings allow them to deepen their connection, and Lee has gained confidence in her role as her child's first teacher. The resources provided by HIPPY empowered her to embrace this role fully, enriching both their lives.

## A Story of Growth and Engagement

Z, who joined HIPPY last year with limited communication skills, made remarkable progress thanks to his mentor's support. His confidence blossomed and his mother, Putri, observed his increasing language skills in both English and Malay. Z's enthusiasm for HIPPY activities is infectious, particularly as he shares these experiences with his sister.

His development has been impressive, especially in mastering fine motor skills. Putri joyfully shared, "The storybooks that HIPPY provides always excite him, making him want to reread them. His imagination flourishes, helping us create new everyday activities as a family." With such positive experiences in the HIPPY program, Putri hopes to join the team as a mentor next year, eager to give back to the community that supported her family.



## HIPPY Facts



Children Enrolled

40 Geraldton

31 Hedland



Families Graduated

18 Geraldton

10 Hedland



Families Attended Regular Meetings

15 Geraldton

10 Hedland

“The HIPPY activities have been great for Finn to improve on his cutting skills. He loves having his own pair of scissors in his special HIPPY box.”

-HIPPY Hedland

“We always look forward to our mornings with you girls. The children love it.”

-WPMCS Participant



“I like taking my daughter to the Bambatj playgroup. She gets to explore and play in a clean and safe environment, and the staff love playing with her.”

-Parent at Bagot Programs



“Sarah\* said HIPPY is such a great program, it brought her children closer together, her oldest daughter has been a great help to Adam\*. She drew many different masks for Adam to trace and the rest of the family also joined in the mask conversation.”

-Comment written by one of our mentors, from a home visit with the family

“Such an awesome turnout today for playgroup. You’re smashing it and the kiddos are all so grateful for the effort you go to every week.”

-WPMCS Participant

“Chloe\* is looking forward to starting HIPPY again this year. We loved re-doing activities during the school holidays.”

-Parent at HIPPY Geraldton



“The poem ‘where is the beehive’ was great for Braxton’s fine motor skills as singing the song and doing the actions on his hand was a tremendous help for starting that skill of motion. Also, loved making handprints that was his favourite.”

-Parent at HIPPY Hedland

# Sector Development Team

## Driving Excellence in Early Childhood Education

Over the past year, the Sector Development Team made remarkable progress in enhancing professional skills and knowledge across the sector. They developed and facilitated a series of full-day workshops, covering key topics such as “Assessment and Rating”, “Compliance and Risk Management”, “Early Childhood Trauma and Self-Regulation”.

Each workshop was designed to address the unique needs and challenges professionals face in Early Childhood settings. The Assessment and Rating workshop provided participants with essential insights into the evaluation process, equipping them with tools to navigate assessments with confidence.

The Compliance and Risk session highlighted the importance of adhering to regulatory standards, offering strategies to mitigate potential risks. Addressing the sensitive issue of trauma, the Early Childhood Trauma workshop introduced evidence-based approaches to support affected children, while the Self-Regulation workshop focused on fostering emotional and behavioural regulation in early childhood settings.

The positive feedback and high attendance at these workshops underscored their significance in the sector, reflecting a growing recognition of the need for continuous professional development. Participants praised the practical content, expert facilitation and opportunities for meaningful discussions and networking.

These workshops not only equipped attendees with valuable knowledge and skills but also reinforced Child Australia’s commitment to fostering excellence and resilience within the sector. Being recognised as the preferred provider for supporting services in other states, particularly in the Northern Territory, allowed for closer collaboration on topics including Assessment and Rating and Compliance and Risk Management. With increased regional interest in areas like Esperance and Albany, the Sector Development Team continues to make a lasting impact.

## Transforming Practices

With the introduction of the Circle of Security training, educators began to deeply understand their roles in meeting children’s needs. This training helped services reflect on their practices, revealing not only what they were doing well but also the areas that needed improvement.

As the educators delved into this new framework, they gained insights into how their own behaviours could inadvertently trigger responses in children that were not helpful. This realisation sparked meaningful conversations within the team, enabling them to shift their mindset and approach to support children more effectively. The result has been a more nurturing environment where children’s emotional and behavioural needs are understood and met, ultimately leading to more positive outcomes for all.



# Sector Development Team Highlights

## Online Learning Centre OLC



**19** new courses developed

**8,162** total students enrolled

**2,323** new students enrolled

### Top 3 Self-Paced Courses

1. Supervision Essentials

2. Child Aware

3. Self-Regulation: Identify, Reflect, Respond

### Top 3 On-Demand Webcasts

1. Introduction to Child Protection

2. Using Respectful Interactions to Guide Behaviours

3. Meaningful Interactions with Children

## Face-to-Face Training



**12** new courses developed

**51** courses delivered at services

**16** courses delivered at Child Australia

**1,610** participants attended (Approximate only)



**40**

flights taken to deliver training



Worked with **146** services



Thriving Futures was established in July 2020 in response to the shortage of available places and high staff turnover within Early Childhood Education and Care centres in Newman and Port Hedland; the program then expanded Roxby Downs in South Australia.

A key cause of the placement shortages and high staff turnover is the lack of ongoing workforce development initiatives within the Early Childhood Education and Care sector – something that Child Australia recognises is a complex issue, particularly in the regions.

Thriving Futures works to improve outcomes for children by recruiting, training and retaining a quality, sustainable Early Childhood Education and Care workforce and strengthening professional practices so that children have access to high quality early learning.

Funded by BHP, Thriving Futures works collaboratively with the participating Early Learning Centres and stakeholders such as local schools and job provider networks to successfully deliver the program.

### A Year of Growth and Development

The Thriving Futures program achieved substantial outcomes last year. Focused on an agile recruitment process responsive to individual service needs, the program successfully built the capacity of participating staff members, ensuring robust foundations for future growth

By supporting the local workforce to gain skills and qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care, Thriving Futures concentrated on:

- Professional development and consultation for participating services
- Mentorship for candidates and directors of participating services
- Engaging local stakeholders to create productive partnerships
- Developing a local workforce through the Thriving Futures Academy Program
- Implementing local and interstate recruitment campaigns
- Enhancing the attraction and retention of educators through the Educator Recognition Program

The continuation of these initiatives allowed participating centres and local stakeholders to deeply invest in the work being done, providing opportunities for Thriving Futures staff to build on past successes and tailor the program to best meet the needs of participants and program outcomes.



### Educator Recognition Program in the Goldfields

In a significant stride towards enhancing the quality of Early Childhood Education, Thriving Futures is thrilled to announce the launch of the Educator Recognition Program (ERP) in the Goldfields. The Goodstart Somerville location was the epicenter of this initiative, offering educators opportunities for professional growth and development and quarterly bonus.

The Educator Recognition Program is designed to empower educators by providing them with a holistic framework for self-improvement. Participants in the program gained access to a range of benefits that not only enriched their professional skills but also contributed to their personal and financial wellbeing.

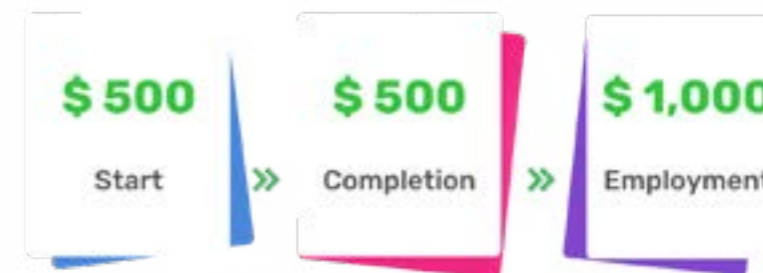
The launch of the Educator Recognition Program in the Goldfields marked a significant step forward in Thriving Futures' mission to elevate the standards of Early Childhood Education. By providing educators with the tools and support they need to excel in their roles, the program not only benefited individual educators but also contributed to creating a thriving and dynamic learning environment for children.

Since the launch of ERP, Thriving Futures witnessed the positive impact on the educational landscape in the Goldfields. As of June 2024, 18 active participants engaged in the ERP program within the region. Introduced in early 2024, the ERP received positive engagement from the team. Between January and June 2024, an impressive 95% of participants achieved their individual commitments as part of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program, while the retention rate stood at 88%.

### The Academy

The Academy is a free pre-employment training program that provides a fast-tracked pathway to enter and explore the ECEC sector. It is the ideal platform for people who are looking to explore a career in the sector but keen to give it a try before fully committing.

Thriving Futures continued to offer financial incentives Academy candidates. This gave the students the opportunity to explore their passion and try out the ECEC sector while financial rewards along the way.



Since its inception, the Thriving Futures Academy has seen remarkable outcomes:

- 26 Candidates engaged in the program
- 8 Academy candidates graduated
- 8 Secured employment at one of the participating centres

# THRIVING FUTURES FACTS

**7** Early Learning Centres involved



**21** Educators employed

**30** Relationships established with organisations



**4** Scholarships provided



**187**

hours of consultancy



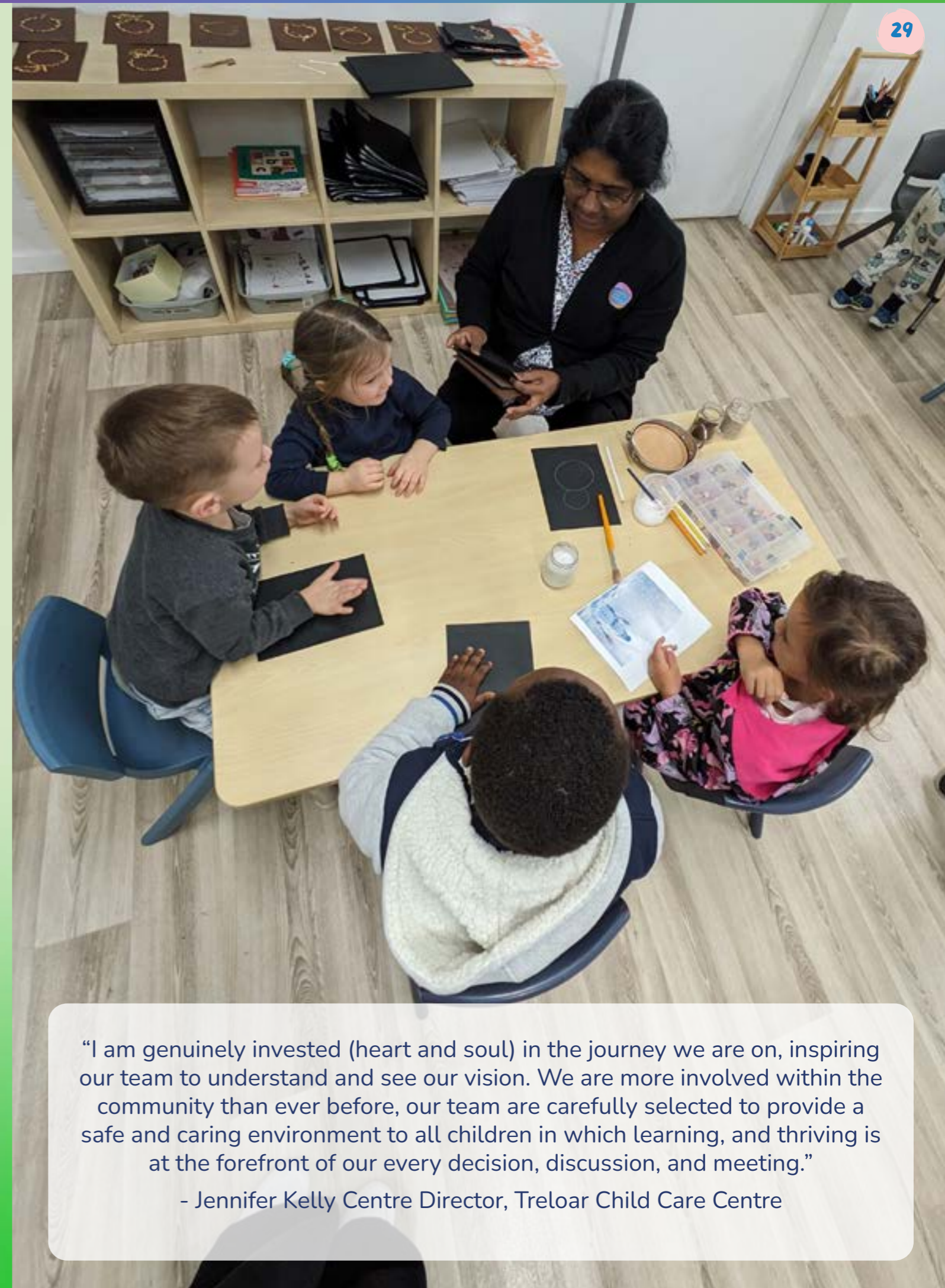
**56**

hours of professional development workshops



**225**

hours of mentoring



“I am genuinely invested (heart and soul) in the journey we are on, inspiring our team to understand and see our vision. We are more involved within the community than ever before, our team are carefully selected to provide a safe and caring environment to all children in which learning, and thriving is at the forefront of our every decision, discussion, and meeting.”

- Jennifer Kelly Centre Director, Treloar Child Care Centre



# LPBD Conference

The Little People, Big Dreams Conference was an inspirational success! On Saturday, 23 September, over 400 attendees from across Australia's ECEC sector united in Darwin for a day filled with incredible insights and thought-provoking speakers.

The day started with the Minister for Education, Honourable Eva Lawler opening the conference and inspired the delegates with her words and presence.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC, captivated the audience as she opened the keynote program, showcasing the aboriginal approach to learning through the powerful art of storytelling.

After the inspiring first keynote, Linda Harrison who worked on both versions of the EYLF, provided an overview of the new EYLF V2.0. She explained how they worked to clarify understandings and in particular expanded to the glossary, to make it three times as big, to assist.

The breakout sessions featured many fabulous speakers like Sasha Beirne and Connie Borg from Child Australia. The feedback stated: "Sasha and Connie were sensational. Their content was engaging, and I took a lot away from this."

The day finished with Robbie Fig from Happiness Co., who motivated those at the end of the day with a presentation on happiness and the distinction between personal and peak performance. Robbie's words left the delegates with a renewed sense of purpose - to strive for excellence while also nurturing inner happiness.



## Reimagining the Early Years Panel Discussion

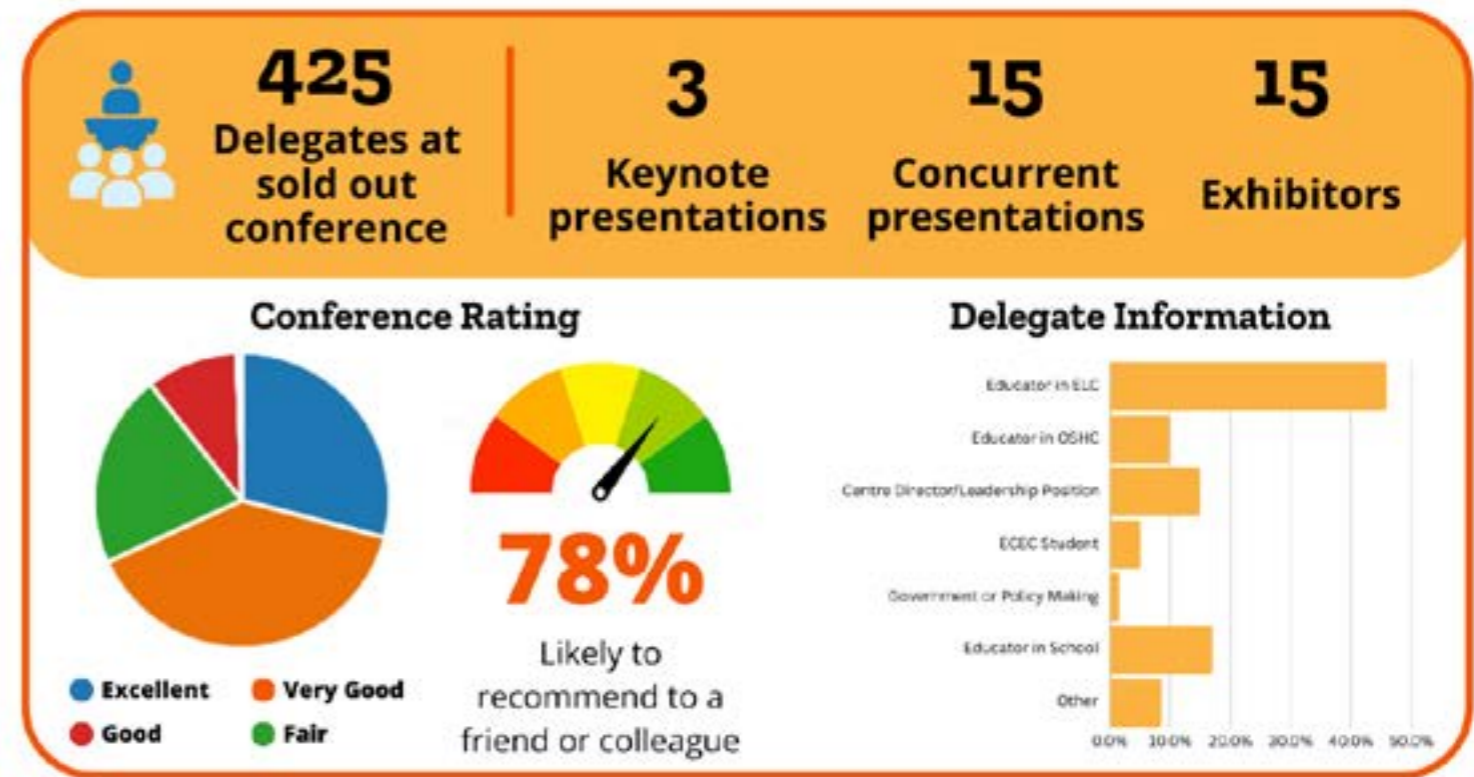
The "Reimagining the Early Years" panel discussion was held as part of the Little People Big Dreams Conference in Darwin. Child Australia gathered with a shared commitment to prioritise the early years of children in the Northern Territory and throughout our country.

Esteemed panelists Catherine Liddle (CEO of SNAICC-National Voice for our Children), Sam Page (CEO Early Childhood Australia) and Karen Weston (CE of NT Department of Education) and engaged delegates contributed thought-provoking insights and visions for the future, leaving delegates with a renewed sense of purpose and determination.

The panel discussion highlighted the progress already made and inspired a shared commitment to creating a more inclusive and brighter future for children in their early years.



## LPBD Conference Facts



"Learning about different behaviours of children and what happiness means to an individual in creating a good working environment. Thank you for putting on such an amazing conference that give us opportunities to grow. Was a truly amazing experience that I am thankful for."

"The highlight of the conference is about reminding me how important my role is and how important to also consider about selfcare and always being present for children"



## Thank you to our sponsors





# ECLD Experience and Awards

## ECLD Immersion Unplugged: An Interactive Professional Development Experience

The ECLD Immersion Unplugged: An Interactive Professional Development Experience brought delegates throughout Western Australia's ECEC Sector to the Pan Pacific Perth Hotel on Saturday, 4 May.

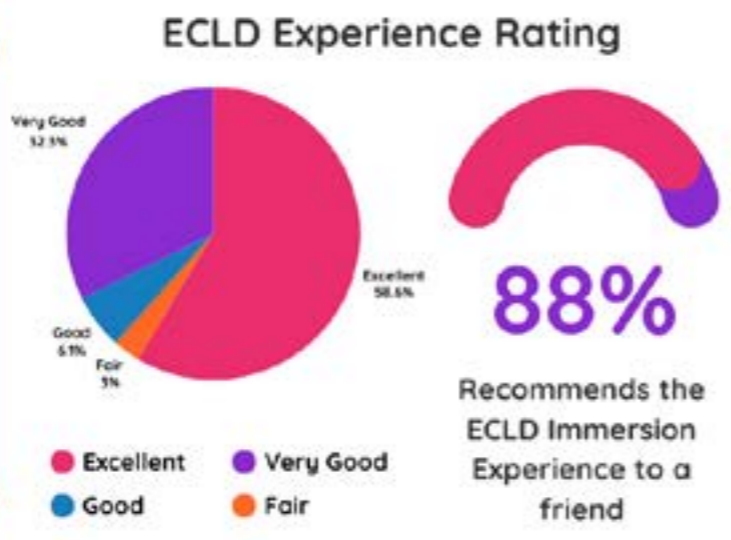
The sold-out event inspired 350 attendees with a variety of exceptional speakers and hands-on breakout sessions.

Overall feedback from the day has been overwhelmingly positive, with many delegates commenting how valued they felt after the stellar event. There was a common theme throughout the sessions reminding us of our purpose in the Early Years sector, and the important role we play in the lives of children in WA.

**350** Delegates | **3** Keynote presentations | **12** Breakout sessions | **28** Exhibitors

"This was a fantastic first experience for me and I will definitely be back next year! Very informative and eye opening."

"Thank you for organising this experience as it was beneficial and rewarding to be in a room of like-minded individuals from the early childhood community."



## ECLD WA Sector Awards

In 4 May 2024, Child Australia, in partnership with various organising partners and the Department of Communities, hosted the ECLD WA Sector Awards. This esteemed event, attended by approximately 200 guests, followed the ECLD Immersion Experience held at the Pan Pacific Hotel.

The awards ceremony served as a platform to honour and recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals and services dedicated to enhancing outcomes for children and families within the Early Childhood Sector.

Building on the success of last year's inaugural Sector Awards, this year's event witnessed an impressive surge in participation, with nominations doubling to over 200. This response not only reflects strong support from sector professionals but also underscores the increasing commitment to excellence and the remarkable talent present in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Sector across Western Australia.

A total of 24 finalists were selected across eight award categories, recognising those who have made significant contributions to the field. The evening was filled with inspiring stories shared among the guests.

An independent judging panel, comprising of experts from tertiary education, independent training organisations, and leading sector consultants, faced the difficult task of selecting the winners.

In addition to the honour of receiving these awards, winners were awarded tickets to the Early Childhood Learning and Development Immersion Unplugged professional learning experience and received a cash prize of \$1,500.



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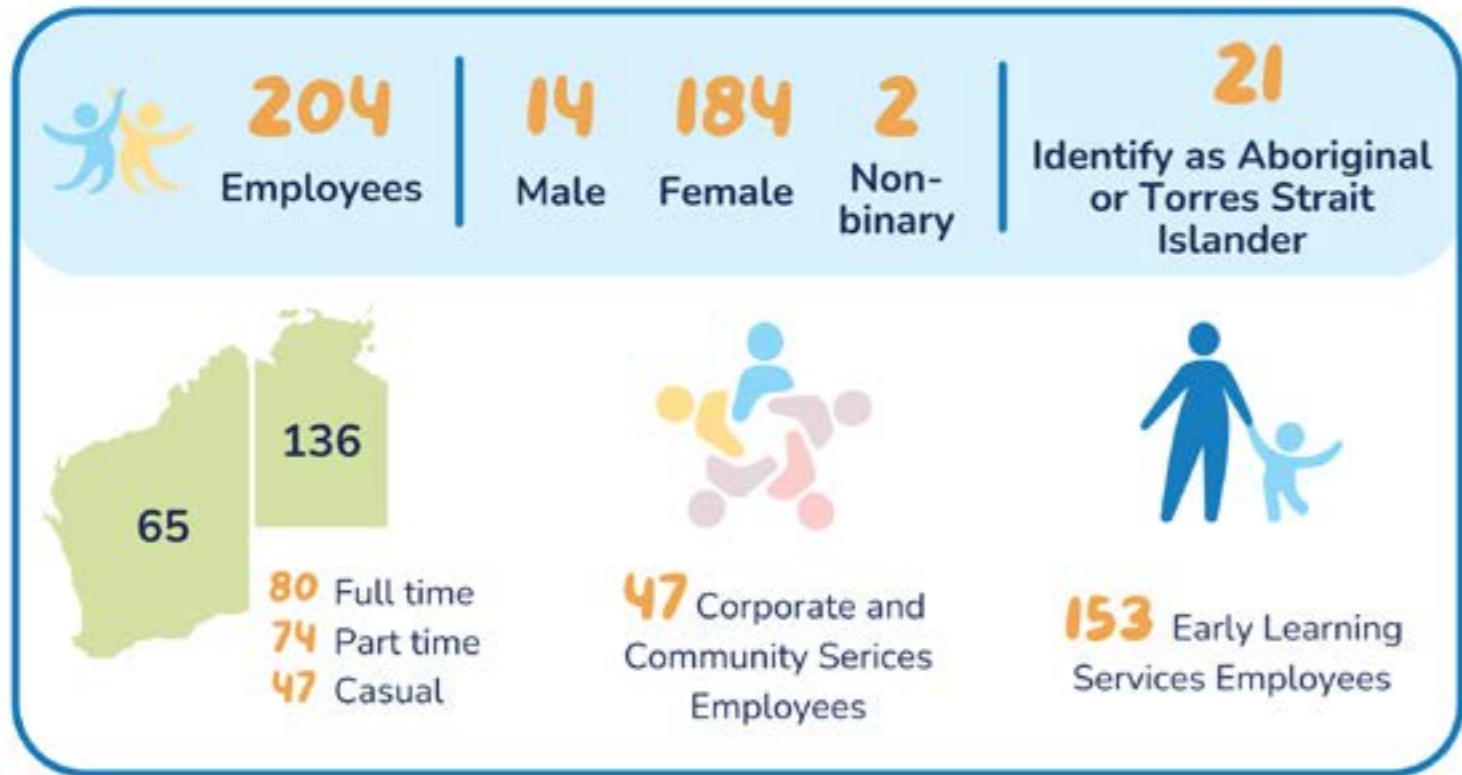


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Door Prize Sponsor

# Our People



## Launch of a new HRIS/Payroll System

In October, Child Australia made a major improvement by implementing the Employment Hero HRIS/Payroll system.

This new platform has simplified how employees access key information. Paperwork searches are now eliminated, and team members can easily review leave balances, payslips and rosters with minimal effort through digital access. This upgrade not only improves administrative processes but also helps employees manage their work-life balance more effectively.

## Listening and Responding

The People and Culture Team conducted two Pulse Check Surveys — one in September 2023 and another in June 2024.

These engagement surveys provided insights into staff sentiments, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

In response to the feedback received, the People and Culture team implemented changes aimed at enhancing the work environment and addressing the concerns raised by the team. The collaborative effort driven by these surveys reflects the organisation’s commitment to fostering a supportive and responsive workplace.

## Managing Psychosocial Hazards Training

Understanding the importance of mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, Child Australia rolled out the “Managing Psychosocial Hazards Training” for all line managers.

This training equips leaders with the tools to identify and address potential psychosocial risks, fostering a healthier and more supportive environment for our employees. Prioritising mental health not only ensures compliance but also enhances the overall wellbeing and productivity of the team.

## The Leadership Listening Tour

The People and Culture Team along with CEO Tina Holtom conducted a Leadership Listening Tour across all Western Australia (WA) and Northern Territory (NT) Services.

This initiative provided staff with the opportunity to engage directly with senior leaders, either in person, virtually or via a survey.

Several key themes emerged from these conversations, which will play a significant role in the development of the organisation’s future strategic plans.

These include a renewed emphasis on employee development and engagement, a commitment to enhancing our service delivery to better meet the needs of our families and communities, and a strategic focus on innovation and continuous improvement.

Some immediate changes were implemented:

### 1 Professional Learning & Support Portfolio renamed “Sector Development”

This change reflects the broad and evolving scope of work undertaken to support the sector.

From providing onsite consultancy in Early Learning Centres (ELC) or Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services to assisting community-led committees and conducting feasibility studies for corporate and government clients, the organisation’s expertise grew significantly. The updated name and focus better represent this expansion.

### 2 Child Safety as a Top Priority

The Regional Manager role for the Northern Territory was redesigned to better align with Child Australia’s critical risk areas in service delivery, with a specific focus on Quality and Compliance. Child safety remains the top priority, and this role adjustment enabled a more targeted approach to these essential areas.

By refining the role, Child Australia strengthens its commitment to maintaining high standards of quality and compliance across all operations, ensuring the wellbeing of children whilst improving operational efficiencies.

### 3 New Working Groups

Two new working groups have been developed:

#### Child Safe Group

Led by Executive Director of Programs & Services, Sara Hinchley, the Child Safe Group is dedicated to ensuring that children’s safety remains a top priority throughout the organisation.

This initiative focuses on maintaining and strengthening Child Australia’s commitment to child protection and safety.

#### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group

The group is focused on cultivating a diverse and inclusive workplace for all staff.

The group aims to embed inclusion through policies and practices while implementing a comprehensive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy. Members coordinate events celebrating cultural and religious significance and ensure responsiveness to diverse needs within the organisation.



# Our Executive Team

## Tina Holtom Chief Executive Officer

Tina joined Child Australia in 2014 as Executive Manager and was appointed Chief Executive Officer in 2017. With an extensive background in the Education and Child Development sectors, she is a strategic leader dedicated to innovation, continuous improvement and growth.

Tina brings in-depth expertise to Child Australia's service delivery model and has consulted widely on best practice models throughout the Education and Care sector, in schools and various agencies.

Tina has also worked extensively with children and their families in various therapy settings and has held senior business management roles, teaching and lecturing positions.

Tina is a ferocious advocate for the education and wellbeing of children of all ages, and strives to nurture and support the parent-child relationship.

## Sara Hinchley Executive Director, Programs & Services

Sara joined Child Australia in 2006 with an extensive background in the Education and Care Sector.

In her role, she is responsible for Executive Management oversight of all Child Australia Programs and Services located throughout Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Sara has extensive experience working across various roles within the Early Childhood Sector including overseas experience.

## Maria Miller Executive Director, Corporate Services

Maria is a highly experienced finance manager with particular expertise in the not for profit and childcare sectors. Maria's role at Child Australia is to provide financial expertise and guidance, and is responsible for driving and administering the finance activities enabling the organisation to fulfill its mission.

Maria is a qualified CPA accountant. She is a strategic thinker with a 'big picture' focus who can question the status quo, generate new ideas and always strives to achieve best practice.

Maria is passionate to contributing towards improving outcomes for children especially with 2 teenagers at home. Outside of spreadsheets and budgets, Maria enjoys spending time with family and cooking.

# Our Board



## Elaine Pavlos, Chairperson

Elaine is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Notre Dame Australia. She holds a Master's in Nursing from Edith Cowan University and an MBA from the University of Western Australia, along with qualifications in tertiary education, counselling, and coaching. Her professional focus is on supporting individuals new to management roles. Elaine is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a member of the College of Nursing Australia. She serves as a Director on the Board of Southern Cross Care (WA) and Chair of the Quality Care and Advisory Committee. Additionally, she joined the Child Australia Board in 2011.



## Julia Millar

Julia practices in the areas of competition and commercial litigation for Clayton Utz. She acts for a number of large Australian and overseas clients in complex disputes. She has over 10 years of experience in all facets of litigation and has a specific focus on co-ordinating applications across international jurisdictions.



## Steph Shorter

Steph has a diverse range of experience in early childhood development, youth justice, out of home care, mental health, indigenous disadvantage and affordable housing. She previously managed a fund with the Department of Communities to provide more housing options for Aboriginal families supporting them to achieve social and economic independence.



## Mark Fitzpatrick

Mark Fitzpatrick has been the Chief Executive Officer of Telethon Speech and Hearing since February 2017. Prior to this role, Mark was the CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Western Australia for five years. After graduating from Curtin University with a Commerce degree, Mark has worked in a variety of roles in a range of not for profit, education and government organisations.



## Nick Warth

Nick is a Director at KPMG and is a qualified Chartered Accountant. He has international, tax and transfer pricing experience, providing tax advice to multinational companies, assisting in determining and defending the pricing of their cross border transactions with related parties.



## Susan King

Dr Susan holds a PhD (Cultural Foundations of Education) and other academic qualifications, and has had broad experience across the schools, vocational education and higher education sectors. Susan is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD), a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management WA (FAIM WA) and currently serves on ECU's governing Council and Legislative Committee.



## Pandora Reddy

Pandora is a Director at Iuvo Group, a Melbourne consulting firm specialising in problem-solving and dynamic solutions. With over 20 years of experience in financial and management accounting, she is a FCPD with a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) and a Masters in Commercial Law. Pandora is passionate about improving children's lives and empowering women.



## Xavier Teo

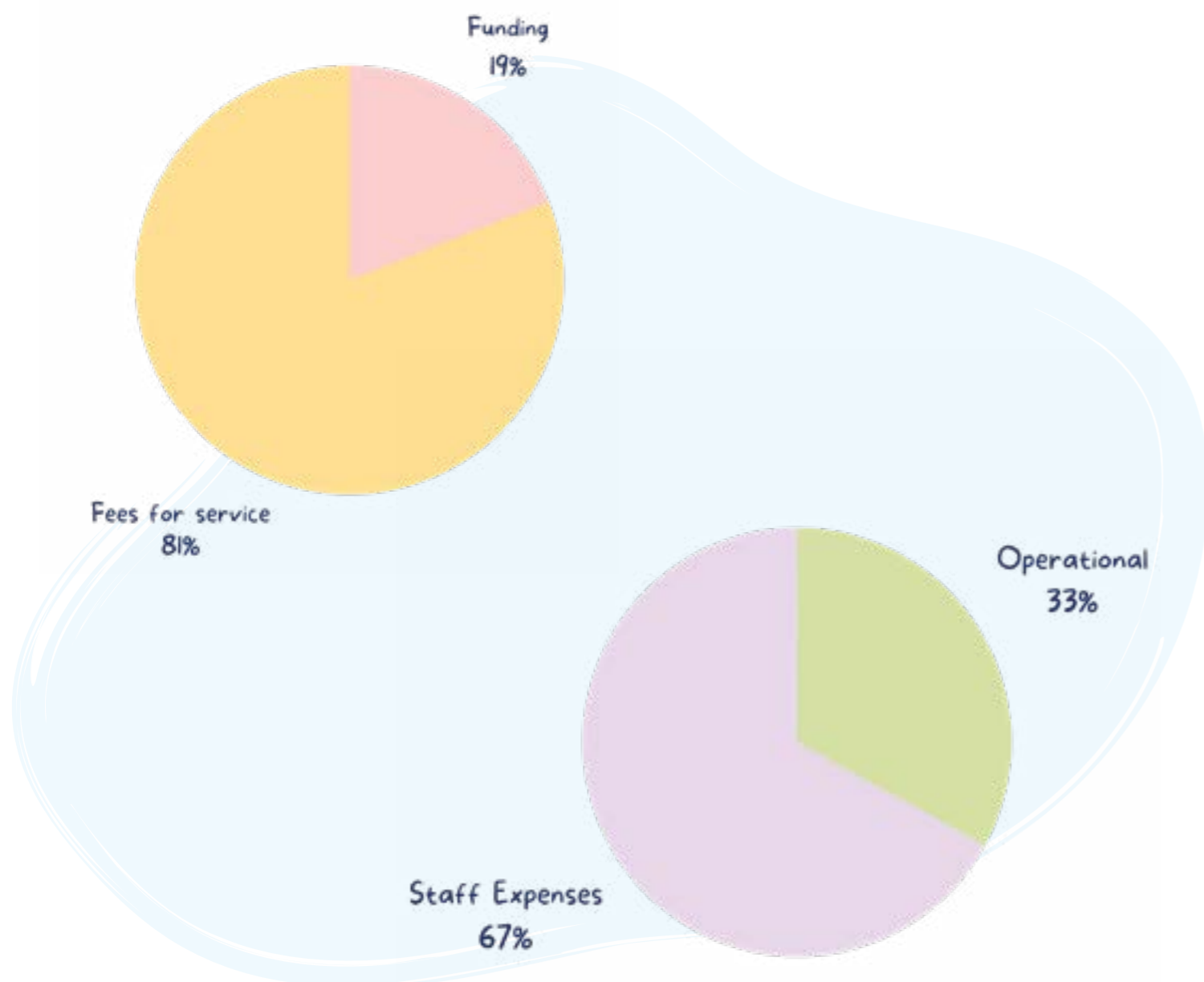
Xavier has over nine years of combined experience as a Non-Executive Director, Board Chairperson and member. He actively contributes to the development and execution of business plans, ensuring robust operational and clinical governance while driving organisational performance. He builds strong relationships with stakeholders and collaborates with leaders from the various government departments to implement transformative reforms.

# Financials

Child Australia is pleased to report another year of strong financial growth, closing the 2023-24 financial year with a consolidated profit of \$1,085,073. Our revenue stems from a blend of State, Territory, and Federal Government funding, corporate contributions, and fee-for-service offerings, which enable us to deliver essential early to middle childhood services.

Staffing costs remained the largest expenditure item and accounted for 67% of the organisation's total expenditure. Our employees are the cornerstone of our success, and their wellbeing is central to our mission. We recognise that investing in our team goes beyond providing a workplace—it means fostering a supportive and healthy environment where employees can truly thrive. Through our wellbeing initiatives and training opportunities, we aim to equip our staff with the tools they need for personal growth, professional development, and resilience. These initiatives not only enhance productivity and job satisfaction but also reflect our commitment to creating a culture of care, empowerment, and long-term success for both Child Australia and our people.

As we look ahead toward a year of growth and expansion, we remain committed to fiscal prudence to ensure financial sustainability and high-quality services for every community we serve.



# Thank you to our partners



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