



Playgroup SA

Strategic Plan

2019/22



Play is the beginning of knowledge.

George Dorsey.

Foreward

The Playgroup SA Strategic Plan outlines the direction, objectives, expected outcomes and activities to be undertaken during the 2019-2022 period.

Our vision is that all South Australian Children are developmentally on track.

Key to realising that vision is our core purpose of supporting families and communities to improve children's development. Our services reflect this purpose recognising that this can only be achieved in partnership, with families, volunteers, the community, other agencies and service providers.

The 2018 figures for Playgroup SA, show that almost 2,500 families participated in a registered playgroup, representing over 4,500 South Australian children.

In early 2019 we undertook to refresh our directions, objectives and strategies. After bedding down changes at senior management and Board level, the time was right to consult with employees and Board members. The 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan has been developed with the benefit of insights from several workshops and these were then reviewed and approved in July 2019 by the Board.

In terms of structure, this Strategic Plan adopts a perspective of change and improvement. It communicates the relevant challenges of an ever-changing environment and our response to them, including:

- Changing government priorities at state and national levels;
- Increasing cost pressures;
- The need to build organisational capacity to ensure sustainability;
- Greater accountability for service quality and outcomes; and
- Increasing community expectations.

To support the achievement of our vision, Playgroup SA has identified four key strategies for implementation over the next three years, namely:

1 Measure for Quality

Ensuring the services we provide to children and families are high quality means they must be measurable against industry standards and the contribution to improved children's development is evident.

2 Work with the Community

All services and new initiatives will be responsive to children, families and communities needs and will include engagement with families.

3 Partnership and Sustainability

Position Playgroup SA as a professional organisation with high quality programs and measurable outcomes, targeting relevant key challenges across communities and providing a good rationale for investors to partner with Playgroup SA.

4 Build Organisational Capability

A competent and capable workforce will provide the foundation for Playgroup SA to achieve our strategies and sustain the organisation into the future.

This Strategic Plan communicates the focus, urgency and impetus to improve the way we deliver our services and measure the effectiveness of what we do. We are committed to continuing to develop our leadership and professional reputation in the early childhood sector to the benefit of South Australian children now and into the future.

Trish Strachan
Chair



Contents

Foreward	2
01 Strategic Context	4
02 Strategic Directions	6
03 Strategic Projects	8
04 Strategy Map	12



01 Strategic Context



Playgroup SA staff and the Board identified the potential influence of aspects of our internal and operating environments on business operations.

This analysis identifies the opportunities and threats in our business environment in terms of our strengths and weaknesses. It focuses on the most important operating environment challenges that have the greatest potential to impact our business over the short and medium term.

Key issues, positive or negative, internal or external, current or future have been evaluated for both impact and urgency.

Potential key issues identified represent the strongest and most important environmental signals to be addressed in our Strategic Plan, as illustrated in the diagram. Each strategic issue is discussed in context of the current operating environments.

		Potential Impact		
Urgency		Low	Significant	Major
Low (2-3 years)				
			2	
Significant (2-3 years)				
				1
Pressing (Next 12 months)			4	3
				5

Key to issues				
1	2	3	4	5
Benchmarks, standards and program development	Sustainability and partnerships	Shifting government priorities	Future directions and communication	Organisational development and service excellence

Organisational development and service excellence

Operating for 45 years, Playgroup SA has a long history in the community of South Australia, supporting universal and targeted programs delivered by community volunteers and support workers. By adopting the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES), Playgroup SA will ensure that its operations stand up to scrutiny and there is confidence in the operation of the organisation.

Playgroup SA will focus on benchmarking all programs and services against the ASES standards. Supporting the workforce with an internal environment that provides up to date systems and processes, including software solutions, will be essential for Playgroup SA to deliver on its vision for South Australian children.

Focusing on organisational development strategies provides a strong foundation for our staff ensuring we are responsive to community volunteers, non-government and government partners and most importantly the children and families of South Australia.

Benchmarks, standards and program development

National Standards, a competitive marketplace in early childhood programs and government priorities serve as a reminder of the importance to deliver high quality programs and services that meet the need of the market. Reporting on the outcomes of programs and services are essential to demonstrate to government, investors and the community the impact and positive benefits Playgroup SA return to the community.

In the current environment, programs and service models are expected to be based on evidence and articulate the outcomes they achieve. Service quality will be supported by established processes for monitoring and evaluation of programs.

Future directions and communication

Programs and services currently delivered by Playgroup SA include training, support and resources for community playgroups, training for coordinators, and membership for community members attending affiliated Playgroups. The existing program and services can be improved by ensuring all new initiatives use program planning standards through the design phase, this will improve the ability of Playgroup SA to communicate our outcomes to target markets.

Playgroup SA will undertake significant consultation with key stakeholders to identify opportunities for expansion, new initiatives and partnerships that could help to improve child development. As an example, there may be community and supported Playgroups that exist across South Australia that are neither affiliated or accessing any programs or services offered by Playgroup SA. Training packages that support Community Playgroup Coordinators are likely to offer benefit to all playgroup facilitators in the supported playgroup market run by health, education and/or community service organisations.

One example is the Playing Together framework, currently being trialled in 5 Community Playgroups. The outcome of this framework is for Community Playgroups to be more accessible for children and parents/carers with a disability.

Sustainability and partnerships

Accessing funding for community service programs has been on the decline for the past 20 years across all tiers of government. Impact investing, corporate social responsibility programs, philanthropic funding and social impact bonds offer potential avenues for Playgroup SA to explore and target for additional funding. Future funding applications, to government or other impact investors will require clearly defined outcomes and measurement systems to record the change for beneficiaries of programs.

Establishing systems and processes for measuring outcomes is an essential piece of work for Playgroup SA to complete. Developing a conceptual model of how Playgroups offer solutions for policy makers and investors for supporting improved child development and parenting outcomes will demonstrate an excellent value proposition for potential investors. Key topics for discussion in the conceptual model will include forecasting the cost-benefit and social return on investment on proposed models.

02 Strategic Direction



Quality, partnerships, community and the organisation are the four pillars that form the basis of the strategic response to future challenges.



Community



Partnerships



Quality



Organisation



Working with Community

Delivering on the purpose of Playgroup SA will require initiatives that are central to improving children's development. New initiatives that are responsive to children, families and communities' needs will include a targeted engagement model with families, playgroup coordinators and other leading organisations and academics within the early childhood sector.

In South Australia the Australian Early Development Census shows an increase in children's developmental vulnerability between 2015 to 2018. Playgroup SA will work to initiate and embed community playgroups in areas where there are none, through the process of establishing supported playgroups, capacity building and then transitioning to sustainable community led playgroups.

Key projects:

- Pathways through play
- Community Development Program



Innovation, partners and new ventures

Positioning Playgroup SA as a professional organisation with high quality programs and measurable outcomes for beneficiaries, will help to target key challenges across communities providing a good rationale for investors to partner with Playgroup SA.

A targeted marketing and communications strategy will deliver key messages to stakeholders. Playgroup SA aims to develop partnerships that will target the impact investment market, local, state and federal governments, research organisations and academics.

Key projects:

- Collaboration & Communication
- Responsible Investors Options



Measure for Quality

Establishing high quality, evidence-informed programs and services will result in improved outcomes for children, families and all Playgroup SA's beneficiaries. Strategic objectives will focus on improving our program planning standards and processes, and strategic benchmarking projects against industry standards.

We will engage experts in the sector to provide feedback and support in the development of improved program models and services. Benchmarking programs and services to industry standards will provide the foundation for quality programs and services.

Key projects:

- Organisational Service Development
- Playgroup SA: Service Excellence



Organisational Capability

A competent and capable workforce will provide the foundation for Playgroup SA to achieve the intended strategies and sustain the organisation into the future. A focus on staff retention and supporting wellbeing will be included in the strategy.

Invest in software and systems required to monitor the organisations performance in achieving the outcomes for children, families and community.

Key projects:

- Staff Wellbeing and Capabilities
- Technology: building efficiencies



Playgroup SA has
a vision that every
child will be
developmentally
on-track.



03 Strategic Projects



Community

Pathways through Play

Playgroup will be presented in a tiered public health model, demonstrating the potential for investment and outcomes for specific targeted populations as well as a universal access point. The conceptual model informed by outcome data for all playgroups will forecast potential savings to government for the different interventions. Specifically, the model will focus on different levels of intervention including transitioning parent groups to baby playgroups, children with a disability, child protection.

Community Development Program

Training modules on play, child development and inclusive practices will be developed and marketed for Playgroup Coordinators, health, education and the community services sector. Playgroup SA's Community Impact Team will deliver Communities of Practice to support learning for community playgroup leaders, families and other staff in the workforce.

Partnerships

Collaboration & Communication

Marketing and partnerships plan will focus on updating existing marketing collateral and the development of an updated style guide to align with modern contemporary approaches to branding. A sponsorship strategy will provide a tiered model for sponsors and options for collaboration. Specific requests for sponsorship will draw on this document and provide detailed options for interested stakeholders.

Responsible Investors Options

Pathways to Play project will inform a strategy paper for impact investors. Communicating the central outcomes and return on investment for specific playgroup models with full-costing applied to the models will aim to open existing markets for investors to consider Playgroup SA.

Quality

Organisational Service Development

Program planning processes will be developed to guide the development of new programs and services. Current and future programs and services will be benchmarked against national standards and guidelines including the Australian Qualifications Framework for non-accredited training. Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Standards will provide the benchmark for support and advice offered to community playgroups.

Playgroup SA: Service Excellence

Playgroup SA will work through the process of meeting the Australian Service Excellence Standards, a program managed by the State Government Department of Human Services. This will support Playgroup SA to develop the capacity of the organisation with a focus on continuous improvement in quality service delivery greater public confidence, and improved efficiencies and processes.

Organisation

Staff Wellbeing and Capabilities

A review of existing projects and mapping current workforce capabilities in Playgroup SA's existing workforce will be completed. This project will identify the current competencies necessary to meet the outcomes of strategic projects. Staff wellbeing and retention strategies will be supported through mentoring and regular work-in-progress meetings to maintain a focus on progressing the necessary actions to deliver on the strategic projects.

Technology: building efficiencies

A complete operational and business analysis will be completed to identify and map current processes and use of technology including software. A technology strategy paper will be developed including recommendations outlining how to utilize software to improve business processes and marketing. A key outcome for improving our software capabilities is to ensure Playgroup SA can report on outcomes for all children and families attending playgroups.



04 Strategy Map



The strategic context informs the response from Playgroup SA to improve internal operations to effectively plan for meeting the challenges in the external operating environment. The following strategies, their objectives and the urgency of issues provide the basis for decision making of project planning to position Playgroup SA as leaders in the early childhood sector. These strategies and projects are outlined below.

Vision:
All children in South Australia are developmentally on-track

Purpose:
To support families & communities to improve childrens' development

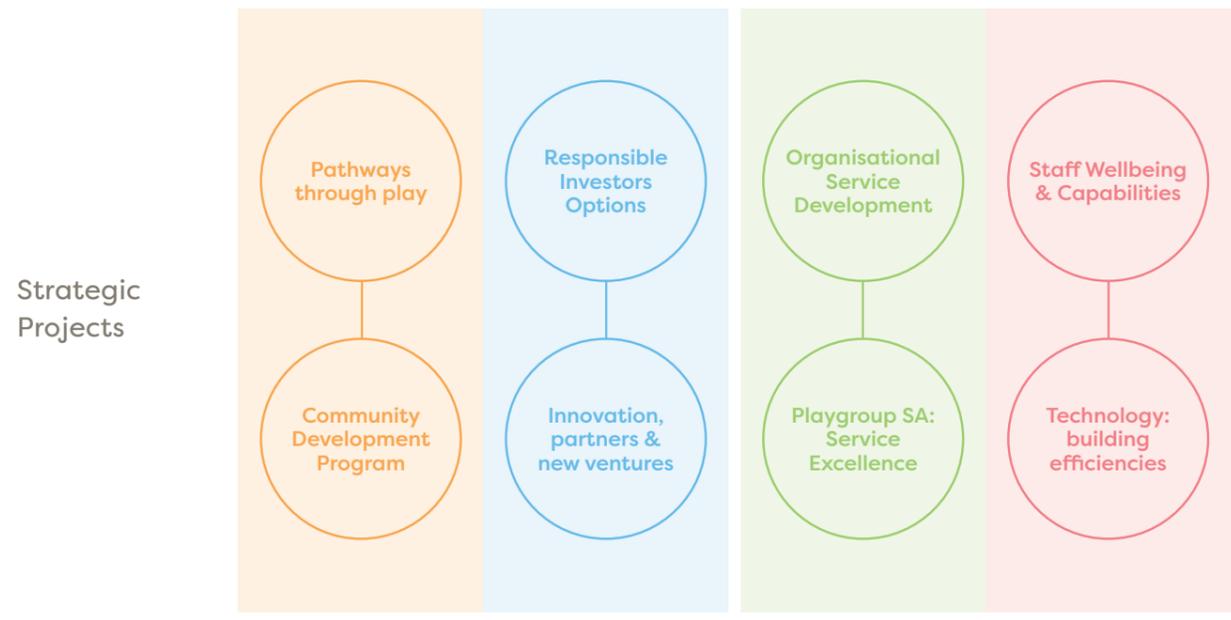


Business Functions



External

Internal



Values





Playgroup SA Inc.
ABN 78 201 463 413
91 Prospect Road, Prospect SA 5082
T 08 8344 2722
Free call 1800 171 882
www.playgroupsa.com.au