




Playgroup SA

Annual Report

2021/22



Our future
organisation
will be
recognised
as a strategic
asset for
government
and service
partners.

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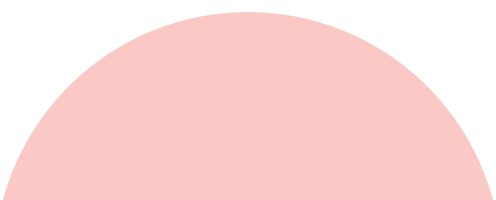
Staff and Board

Chair's Report

Playgroup SA started the year with a positive outlook, and through hard work and diligence we have forged new partnerships and diversified our programs and services in regional and metropolitan South Australia.

We are optimistic for our organisation's future, amidst a national and global climate of uncertainty. COVID has progressed to a business-as-usual activity and has returned to a new-normal, while ensuring our children and families are safe.

At the very heart of Playgroup SA is a commitment to play-based learning for children's development. Early learning through play is a fundamental need for a child's healthy development. The role of parents and carers and the broader community is vital in setting up a supportive and nurturing environment. These two elements, set the scene for success for the child and the next generation. In SA we support 195 playgroups across 46 local government areas, with more than 3,000 children from 2,300 families taking part on a regular basis. The return on investment for every \$1 spent, is \$3.60. Parents report the benefits, as time spent with their children, connecting with other parents, and an increased understanding of the importance of play for a child's development.



Our aspiration is to be recognised as a quality organisation, and in 2021–22 Playgroup SA committed to pursue accreditation through the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES). The standards aim to help improve business practices and client services. Pursuing accreditation generates greater public confidence, improves efficiency and work processes, and supports an empowered and engaged workforce. The team has been actively working towards the assessment over the last 18 months. The assessment is planned for the end of November 2022.

During the year we closed off the 2019-2022 strategic plan, delivering on 98% of our commitments. Key highlights include:

- Greater discipline and rigor in planning new services and programs, with the adoption of a stronger evidence base to inform decisions,
- Measuring outcomes, including outcome reporting with the use of new software to increase accountability and transparency,
- Building technical efficiencies with the adoption of a new Customer Relationship Management program,
- Doubling our supported programs in regional SA specifically Port Augusta, Whyalla and Mount Gambier.

We began the development of a new strategic plan 2022-2026 drawing on our future ambitions. Our future organisation will be recognised as a strategic asset for government and service partners, with the ability to exert influence across the community. This transition will ensure continuity and sustainability of our business at a time when families need us now more than ever. Our commitment is to contribute and invest in our communities through the proliferation of a play culture in all contexts.

The coming year will be a mix of challenges and opportunity as we deliver on the strategic plan 2022-2026, and use the results of the ASES assessment to strengthen our business processes and instil greater confidence for our parents, families and community.

As a small not-for-profit enterprise with a volunteer workforce, our dedicated team, ably lead by CEO Craig Bradbrook continue to leave their mark. We are supported by a skilled and energetic Board who bring compassion, insight, and professional expertise to fulfil their governance responsibilities. Their contribution is recognised and applauded.

The league of volunteers, government and non-government service partners, families and children all contribute to the work Playgroup SA undertakes. We extend our thanks to everyone that helps us make a difference for children, families and the community. Our collective effort is needed if we aspire to make a difference and improve and enrich the lives of children and families.



Trish Strachan
Chair - Playgroup SA

Hello from the CEO

Disruptions from the COVID pandemic continued to have an influence on our operations throughout the year.

Regardless, Playgroup SA continued to deliver on its purpose, to support families and communities to support children's development.

Across the year, Playgroup SA have provided strategic advice, and support for the Office of the Early Years in establishing the State Playgroup Reference Committee. Ensuring the benefits for children's development and parenting support remain in the purview of community, policy makers, and investors is central to a thriving society in the future.

In keeping with our strategic objectives, Playgroup SA has expanded and improved its organisational capabilities to deliver evidence-based programs across metropolitan and regional South Australia. These programs ensure families have access to high-quality child development information, without compromising the integrity of the Playgroup model, and adding value-adds like the Parent-Child Mother Goose, PEEP LTP and INFANT programs.

Measuring the impact our organisation has, came to the forefront with this year being our first-year measuring outcomes across all registered community playgroups. A first in Australia, the data collected promises to provide insights as to the outcomes, while contributing to the evidence-base of why Community Playgroups are beneficial for children's development and peer support.

During the 2021/22 year, we focused on reconnecting infants and parents to playgroups, following the reduction in enrolments for this age group during the first year of the pandemic. As a result, we did indeed see an increase in baby playgroups, and young children enrolled. In Mount Gambier we partnered with the local Children's Centre to support the facilitation of a specific infant playgroup, while coordinating regular visits with CaFHS.

We continue to partner with Aboriginal Controlled Organisations, including the planning of a playgroup in partnership with the Aboriginal Research Directorate of the Department of Education, and Iwiri, a member based Aboriginal Corporation for Anangu (Pitjantjatjara/ Yankunytjajara people) who live in Adelaide.

During the coming year we will lay the foundation for our 2023-2026 strategic plan, highlighting the significance and importance of play across the first 2,000 days of life. We will position ourselves as experts, redefining high-quality across early childhood community-based activities. We will be investing in updating our online training courses to meet the requirements for Micro-credentials as outlined by the Industry Skills Commission of South Australia.

We will continue to build on our evidence-informed Playgroup Planning Framework and resources, investing in a platform that will provide access for parents and caregivers, to every relevant resource for all their children's pre-emptive and preparation needs for the first 2000 Days of Life.

The final piece of work to complete for our current strategic plan will be achieving our certificate for the Australian Service Excellence Standards delivered through the South Australian Government Department of Human Services.



Craig Bradbrook
CEO





Stories of Change

Jane's Story

Jane and her two children attended a community event run by Playgroup SA. This was her first foray into the world of playgroup. She has four children ranging from 11 months to 8 years old. Jane had mixed feelings about attending the event as she didn't know anyone and was nervous to attend on her own.

She was warmly welcomed by the team and made to feel comfortable. Her daughter aged 3 also attended along with her 11-month-old baby. The three-year-old does not enjoy sensory play and was not enticed by the trays of messy, squelchy activities. One of the facilitators sat with the three-year-old to increase her confidence in taking part in the craft activity. She was, by her mother's admission, quite shy. Confidence was quickly gained and she was happy to play and converse with the team in a fun and friendly environment.

This meant Jane was able to focus on the baby, who was having a great time feeling, tasting, and smelling all the messy play activities. Jane let us know that she had left her four and a half year old daughter with her grandmother, as she has developmental delays and was not confident bringing her to an event in case her behaviour was not seen as acceptable to others attending the playgroup. Jane had fears of being judged due to meltdowns and other behaviours associated with her daughter's diagnosis. Jane was heard, assured, and referred to Playgroup SA's various supported playgroups that are in her local area. Jane is now confident to attend an ongoing supported playgroup with all her children and now knows of other services available to her within her community. Jane's experience at the community event means that she is now confident to support all of her children's development with social interactions (not only therapeutic), by attending playgroup with her family.





Community Impact

Community Playgroups

The Community Impact team welcomed and supported 34 new playgroup registrations during the 2021-2022 Financial Year. Despite ongoing COVID challenges, we visited 18 new playgroups. COVID continued to have an impact on playgroups, with many not reopening until Term 2, 2022. The team continued to support playgroups and families as they found themselves dealing with COVID head on once the borders opened, and COVID numbers increased significantly within the community.

Other activities included the Community Impact team facilitating a Baby Messy Play playgroup and Book Week playgroup, where some of our team dressed up in their finest Book Week costumes to celebrate the world of books.

We thank Playgroup Australia and the Australian Government Department of Social Services for their ongoing support for this program.

Learning & Development Program & Play

Providing online training and learning and development workshops across a number of topics, is a key focus as part of our Community Playgroups program. Playgroup SA has continued to provide online training to coordinators, families, and other interested members of the public. This year also saw the PlayTogether training extending across the country as part of the National PlayTogether program.

Workshops including Safe Environments and Coordinate and Play continued to be delivered via a mixed mode method, some being face-to-face and others being delivered online. The CEO and Programs Partner also spent time redesigning the Coordinate & Play workshop and delivery has been trialled in Mount Gambier with positive feedback.

Unfortunately, after 4 years of supporting multicultural families in South Australia, funding for the Kickstart Program ceased in June 2022. For Playgroup SA, providing this information to families has been extremely positive, with many families enrolling into their local playgroup, as well as the establishment and ongoing registration of 2 playgroups, supporting Korean and Multicultural families.



When I first started out Playgroup SA was so good at reaching out and welcoming me and offering support and help.

Coordinate and Play

In partnership with the Mount Gambier Children's Centre, Playgroup SA has supported the facilitation of a baby playgroup, named Mulga Street Bubs. The group improves opportunities for new parents to connect with peers, to reduce isolation, and improve their knowledge and access to local support services within their community. Families are supported to learn about developmental milestones of their children and how to support these in play. Guests to the group included speech therapists to discuss early feeding and development of language skills, Circle of Security delivered over several weeks for the group, breast feeding association, and several others, according to family identified needs and interests.

Another opportunity, led to Playgroup SA planning a playgroup in partnership with the Aboriginal Education Directorate, Department for Education in setting up and running a playgroup for Anangu children and families currently living off Country.

The Community Impact team worked with Community Development Coordinators' from Safer Family Services, Department of Human Services and Prospect Council to coordinate and promote an outdoor event which saw 200 people in attendance. It was a beautiful day with lots of playing fun and sunshine. CEO, Craig Bradbrook, performed a music set of singing and dancing, where a number of children had an opportunity to sing their favourites into the microphone.

Playgroup SA continues to welcome the support from the State Government Department of Human Services for the Coordinate and Play program.

Community Development

Playgroup SA continued to partner with Multicultural Communities Council of SA's Kickstart Program delivering education sessions on the Importance of Play and Playgroups, including a mini sensory session. Two of these sessions were delivered via Zoom and two others were delivered face to face. The highlight was delivering the session to the newly arrived Ukrainian refugees. The children were really engaged in the sensory session and made lots of mess!

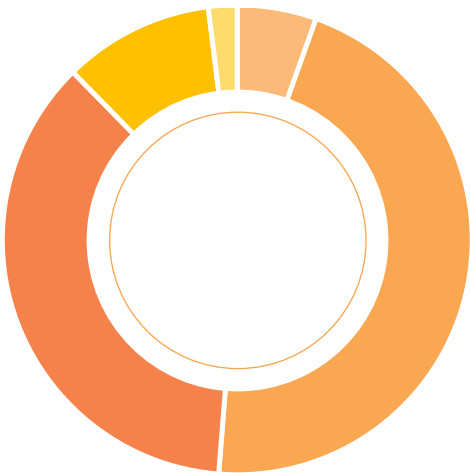
In October, three of our playgroup coordinators from East Para Primary School and Early Intervention Kids Oncology Playgroup, won awards for their services to Children in the Early Years at the Children's Week Awards held at Government House. All three were extremely worthy of their awards, and very humbled to have been nominated by Playgroup SA to receive an award for their hard work and dedication.

Playgroup SA has played a key role in partnership with Raising Literacy Australia, working alongside the development of the Words Grow Minds campaign set to launch in October 2022.

Support for Community Playgroup Research

We have also been facilitating the Healthy Conversations at playgroup program with Flinders University this year. The children of playgroups and families who register with the program have height and weight measurements taken and wear an activity tracker for a week. We then attend playgroup to facilitate conversations with the families on 5 topics: reducing stress at mealtimes, limiting screens without tantrums, supporting active play, bedtime activities and routines to support sleep, and celebrating achievements. The goals of these conversations is to empower parents to try new things and talk amongst their peers on topics all parents can relate to. This showcases again why a sense of connection to community is so important, especially when raising a young family.

Playgroups



Ages enrolled children

0-12 months	5%
1 - 2 years	46%
3-4 years	36%
5+ years	10%
No DOB	2%

Universal Playgroups

Total Playgroups	186
Playgroups in Regional SA	53
Playgroups in Metropolitan Adelaide	133
Enrolled Families	1195
Enrolled children	1467

Stories of Change

Emily's Story

Emily had been attending Playgroup with her young daughter for the last couple of years, as a way to make connections in the local community and to encourage early play and learning for her daughter. Emily quite quickly made some strong connections with the existing coordinator as well as the other families and children attending.

Despite having some medical concerns, Emily attended regularly, and even through the COVID pandemic, when this could have been a risk to her health. In early 2021, the existing Playgroup coordinator decided she was going to step back from her volunteer role. Emily put her hand up to volunteer and step into the role. The playgroup is a very well-connected group and runs at capacity most weeks. It has always been a volunteer-led playgroup.

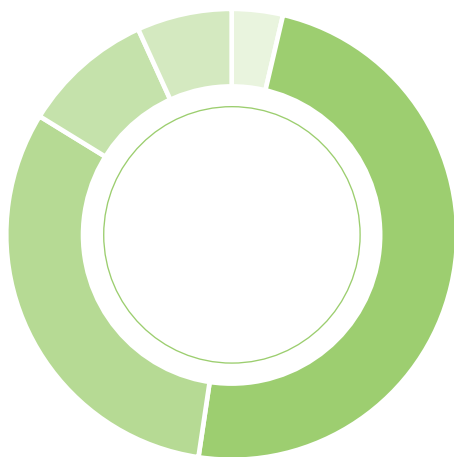
Emily had a smooth transition into the coordinator role, and then another wave of COVID hit and the playgroup went into lock-down for a couple of weeks. Emily remained connected with the families and upon re-opening, all families returned to playgroup. The Community Impact Team has strong ties with this playgroup and checks in often. During one of these conversations, the team discovered that Emily had a health condition that could put her at risk of hospitalisation if she contracted COVID, and on an ongoing basis, left Emily fatigued and unwell at different times. Emily mentioned to staff how the playgroup was one way she was able to reconnect to her community and gave her the motivation to get up out of bed and out of the house, knowing the benefits to her as an individual, as well as the new friendships and connections her daughter would make with others around her. Even in times of uncertainty, Emily attended to ensure connections remained strong. Once Emily stepped into the coordination role, she mentioned it gave her a sense of purpose and she enjoyed getting to know new families and children. Prior to her medical diagnosis, Emily worked in the corporate world, so this new pathway gave her a new sense of achievement and she could really see the benefits of playgroup not only for herself, but also to the attending children and families.





Supported and Specialist Programs

8 metro and 7 regional



0-12 months	4%
1 – 2 years	49%
3-4 years	31%
5+ years	18%
No DOB	7%

Supported & Specialist Program Stats

Sessions in Regional South Australia	72
Sessions in Metropolitan Adelaide	342
Enrolled	137
Children	191

High Quality Evidence-based Programs

Playgroup SA expanded the specialist programs on offer with new evidence-based programs including PEEP Learning Together Program (PEEP LTP). PEEP LTP recognised by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) on the evidence-based program list, as an adult learning program that aims to support parents to develop sensitive and responsive relationships with their babies and young children and improve the home learning environment. Other evidence-based programs now on offer include Parent-Mother Goose, a program which strengthens attachment and interaction between parents or caregivers and their young children by introducing them to songs, rhymes and stories. INFANT (Infant Feeding, Active play and Nutrition) is designed to help parents and families with healthy eating and active play from the start of their baby's life.

Every Body Play

(Findon, Hendon, the Parks, Angle Vale, Port Augusta, Callington)

Every Body Play Playgroups, funded by the Australian Government Department for Social Service's Communities for Children funding, provide all children (aged 0-5) and families with an opportunity to participate in experiences that improve child development outcomes and connects families to other local services. This year, the program continued at Hendon and Findon, and successfully expanded into 2 regional areas, Port Augusta and Callington. Being able to offer early educational experiences to children and provide opportunities for families to connect with others across South Australia is a part of Playgroup SA's core business, vision and purpose.

PlayConnect

(Mt Gambier, Renown Park, Whyalla)

The PlayConnect program continued in 2021/22 with three playgroups continuing in Renown Park, Mount Gambier and Whyalla. Attendance numbers remained steady across all 3 programs, and Whyalla welcomed a new facilitator, Fiona in the second half of the year. COVID had an impact early in the year, however, we have seen many new families join, particularly in the Whyalla region. It has been great to see families attending the playgroup for the long term, and although always exciting, it is a poignant moment when the children start kindergarten or school. Having attended PlayConnect sessions, children are more confident having had the opportunity to play and socialise with other children.

The connections parents make with other families has reduced feelings of isolation resulting in friendships and a more connected community.

Again, Playgroup SA thanks the Department of Social Services for the continued investment for the PlayConnect program, now in it's 12th year, as well as the managers at Melaleuca Kindergarten, Mount Gambier, Whyalla Baptist Church and Renown Park Children's Centre for allowing the PlayConnect Playgroups to run from the venues.

PALS Inclusive Playgroups

(Prospect, Ingle Farm, Mount Barker, Mount Gambier and Whyalla)

PALS is one of our very successful inclusive programs. Each site consists of 10 -15 families, half have children with disability or learning delay and half without. Group numbers are kept small and consistent to create a comfortable and supportive environment for both families and children.

Using our co-design approach, children and families along with our incredible facilitators, work together to create a program that accesses cultural, sport and recreation activities in the wider community. Some of the activities children and families accessed across the year included visits to Pottering Around, Cleland Wildlife Park, Yoga, and the Adelaide Art Gallery and much, much, more.

We have had significant success with this program building over the last 12 months. The PALS program fills a much needed gap in disability support and we have been incredibly lucky to grow our reach from two sites to five.

Across the Regions

In September 2021, Playgroup SA was presented with a wonderful opportunity by Uniting Country SA's Port Augusta Communities for Children (CfC) team to expand their funded programs into the region of Port Augusta. Playgroup SA are now delivering three supported playgroups to children and families, and four parenting sessions to the local community. In collaboration with the CfC team, three programs were identified: PEEP LTP, Parent-Mother Goose and INFANT. Staff have now been trained in delivering these evidence-based programs, and they are all well attended by local community.

Marketing Events

Marketing and Events Team

Playgroup at the Zoo, our flagship event was once again a huge hit with more than 700 families in attendance on the day. There was a bubble show, entertainment, loose parts play and lots of playgroup activities. Lots of smiling and happy faces were seen on children, parents and caregivers. The events team was so happy to get back into action on a larger scale!

Monday 29 November saw us at Old Gumtree Reserve, for PlayTogether on the Green event attended by Jay Weatherill and media. We celebrated with music performances, crafts, story time with Raising Literacy Australia, loose parts and sensory play with Mobile Junk and Nature Playground. We also had NDIS, Canine Assist, and Helping Care in attendance to offer information around services and community assistance.

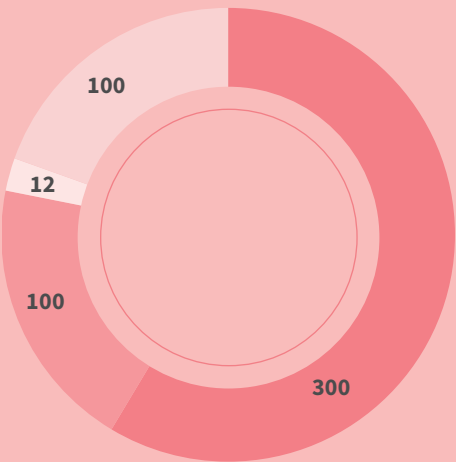
June saw the event team travel to Mount Gambier to provide support for a pop-up event which was held at Mount Gambier Library. Due to weather conditions the event was moved inside, and families were able to enjoy the wonderful underwater scenes of the library. The event saw an increased uptake of families attending the PALS Playgroup and Mulga Street Baby Playgroup. Working with our regional team members is always a joy and increases connections and communication between teams.

Playgroup SA partnered with Adelaide Festival Centre on Tuesday 21 June to help celebrate Make Music Day. The Let's Play Bush Cabaret with Woody Clarke was geared to 3 to 6 year old's making it an ideal day out for Playgroup SA audiences. The event was a (free) sell out, with over 100 families taking part in the event on the day. Playgroup SA offered activities before and after the show to provide free family entertainment in the newly launched festival space.

We were able to hold a few community events during the year in between the COVID outbreaks, with a wonderful event playgroup at St Helen's Park in Prospect attended by 200 people. The Community Impact Team worked with local Community Development Coordinators from Safer Family Services, Department of Human Services and Prospect Council Community Development to organise an event for the wider community.

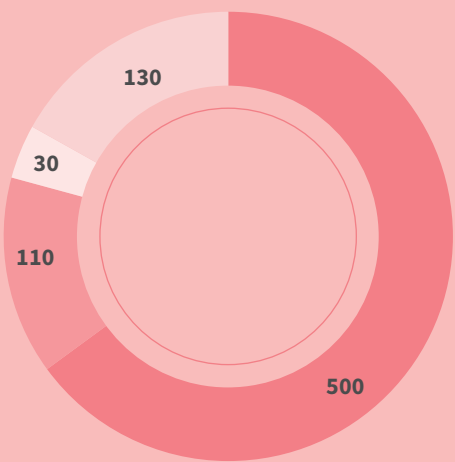
and

Approx Number of Families



- PG at the Zoo
- PlayTogether on the Green
- Mt Gambier Pop Up Playgroup
- St Helen's Pop Up Playgroup

Approx Number of Children Enjoying Event



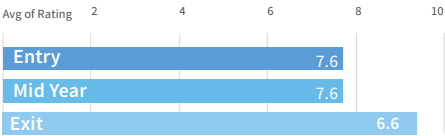
- PG at the Zoo
- PlayTogether on the Green
- Mt Gambier Pop Up Playgroup
- St Helen's Pop Up Playgroup

Online Presence

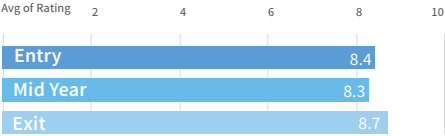
- 15008 Facebook followers
- 1653 Instagram followers
- 28693 visits to our find-a-playgroup page

Parenting Knowledge and Skills

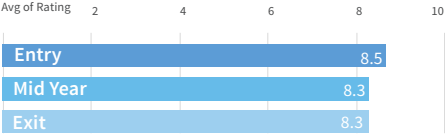
I feel good when I think about the future for my children



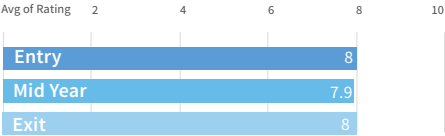
In my family there is more to enjoy than to worry about



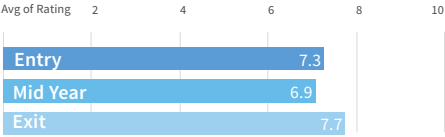
I believe my children will do well at school



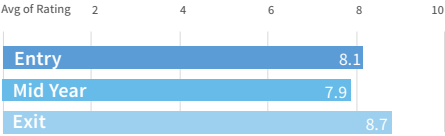
We have clear rules and routines in my family



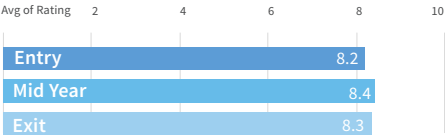
I stay calm and manage life even when it's stressful



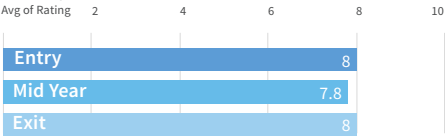
I feel that I'm doing a good job as a parent



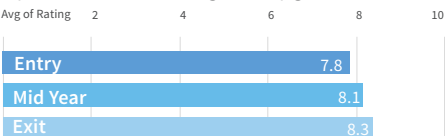
I find it easy to talk to people like teachers, doctors and nurses about my children



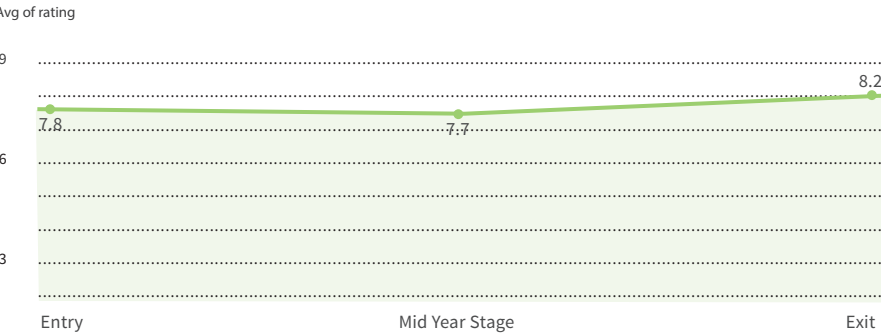
I can work out what to do if my children have a problem



I know how to get useful information about how my children's needs change as they grow



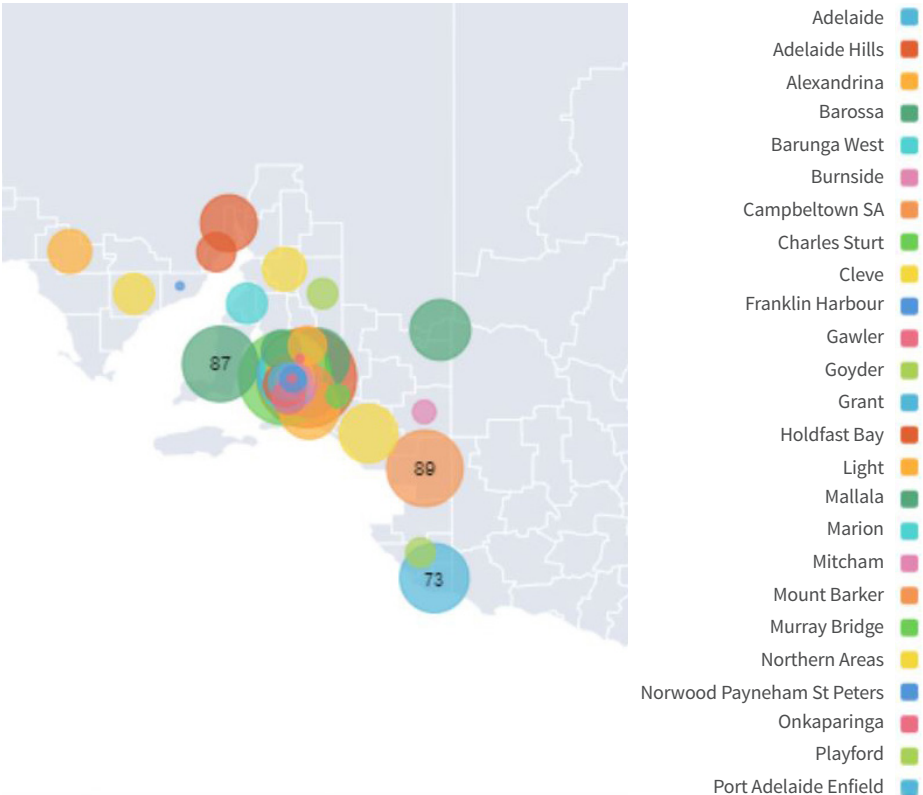
Efficacy to Parent



Summary



Playgroup Mapping



Impact measurement

During 2020 Playgroup SA embarked on an Impact Measurement journey, the key objectives included:

- Demonstrate the impact of Playgroup SA's programs and services;
- Improve accountability to community and funders;
- Improve service delivery.

Having established a new CRM in 2021, we moved on to stage two of our organisation's Impact Measurement journey in 2022. Working with SocialSuite, we aimed to measure outcomes in all of our programs from the universal base of our community playgroups to our supported playgroups. The Parental Efficacy and Empowerment Measure (PEEM), was selected as an evidence-based planning and outcome measurement tool. Recommended by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, the PEEM measures two constructs, Efficacy to Parent, and Efficacy to Connect.

The administration of the tool was set up to collect data at entry to program, mid-year and end of year. Of the initial 462 families, we received 144 completed entry surveys and 52 mid-year surveys. One of the benefits of how data is collated in the system, allows us to look at outcomes at an individual, playgroup, LGA and State level.

Currently, Playgroup SA are working with SocialSuite to construct dashboards to demonstrate outcomes. The above image Shows outcomes related to parenting knowledge and skills, over three time points. It should be stressed, that the entry and mid data points are based on actual surveys, while the exit submissions have been entered as test cases for the purposes of demonstrating the dashboards.



Staff Wellbeing

The opening up of the borders, which had been closed for so long saw a rapid increase of COVID in the state. Many were in isolation, or starting to contract COVID, and during this time the majority of staff were working from home. Playgroup SA has continued to ensure an Employee Assistance Program is available for all staff and have nominated a Happiness Hero, to lead staff wellbeing activities. At the conclusion of the 2021 calendar year, the team enjoyed a unique cooking experience, that involved working in teams at the Sticky Rice Cooking School.

Technology: building efficiencies

Following our second successful operational year of operating the CRM, stage one of our building efficiencies plan was implemented. Utilising the intelligence of SocialSuite, Playgroup SA's Impact Measurement Strategy is in full swing, measuring outcomes across all programs, from community to supported playgroups. Results of the intel gathered will go on to inform improvements to service design, and how Playgroup SA can provide greater support to families and registered playgroups.

Strategy and Service Improvement

Service Excellence

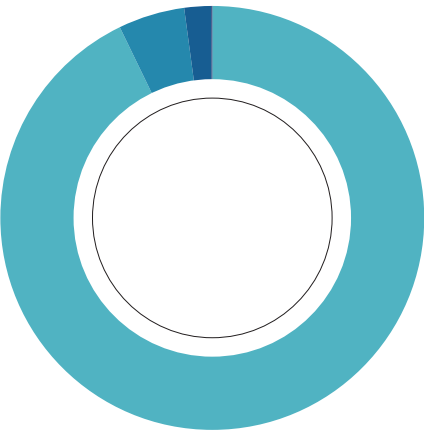
During the year the Strategy and Systems Improvement team worked diligently to finalise Playgroup SA's policies, procedures, and processes to meet the standards required in Australian Service Excellence. We will be engaging consultants in the first half of next year and for the first time work through the process of accreditation under the Australian Service Excellence Standards.

Financials

Playgroup SA remains in a strong financial position, with cash reserves providing a strong liquidity position, while a small deficit for the financial year was recorded, in relation to a decrease in the retained surplus. Irrespective of this deficit the organisation remains in a strong financial position.

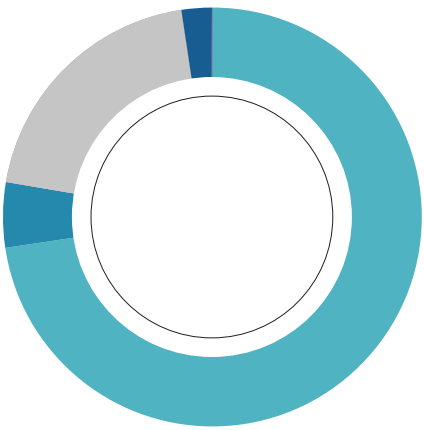
INCOME	
Grant Income	1,019,955
Enrolment and Registration Fees	55,658
Other Income	22,460
Interest Received	874
Total Revenue	1,098,947
EXPENSES	
Administrative Expenses	225,676
Occupancy Expenses	14,010
Employment Expenses	792,498
Enrolments and Program Expenses	74,511
Total Expenses	1,106,695
Surplus/ Deficit	(7,748)

Revenue 2022



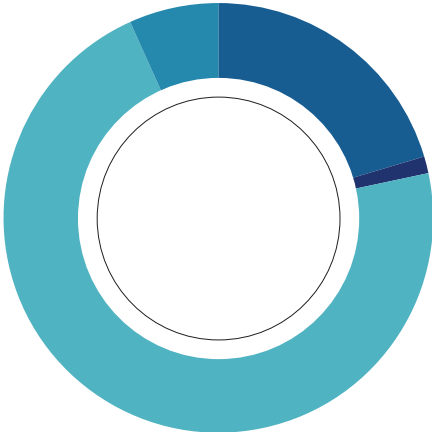
- 92.81% Grant Income
- 5.06% Enrolments and Registration Fees
- 2.04% Other Income
- 0.08% Interest Received

Revenue 2021



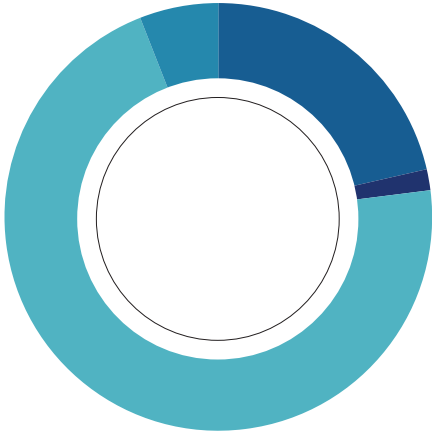
- 72.64% Grant Income
- 5.03% Enrolments and Registration Fees
- 19.95% Cashflow boost and JobKeeper
- 2.28% Other Income
- 0.09% Interest Received

Expenses 2022



- 20.39% Administrative Expenses
- 1.27% Occupancy Expenses
- 71.61% Employment Expense
- 6.73% Membership and Program Fees

Expenses 2021



- 20.39% Administrative Expenses
- 1.27% Occupancy Expenses
- 71.61% Employment Expense
- 6.73% Membership and Program Fees

Thank you to
our funders
and supporters
who contribute
towards
Playgroup SA
achieving our
vision that all
South Australian
children are
developmentally
on track.

Playgroup SA recognise and acknowledges the continued support of Volunteer Coordinators and thanks them for their many hours of work each week to keep our families connected, and support for children in their early learning years. We also acknowledge the many partnerships we have with several organisations, bringing quality programs to families and children to help support and develop family connections. These partnerships all contribute to Playgroup SA taking a step forward to achieving our vision that all South Australian children are developmentally on track. **We love working with you all.**

Staff and Board

To our valued Sponsors and Donors

West Beach Parks
Adelaide Zoo
Bunnings
Codesnap
Crayola
Department of Human Services
Department of Social Services
Department for Education
Office of the Early Years
Educational Experience
Libraries SA
Mad Hatterz Parties
Modern Teaching Aids
Raising Literacy Australia
Scholastic
Rover Communications
Mono Design
Kids Promotions
William Buck
Adelaide Festival Centre
Cleland Wildlife Park
Minderoo

To our valued Life Members

Di Connew
Deane Palmer
Elizabeth Giola
Gloria Palmer
Helen Holland
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