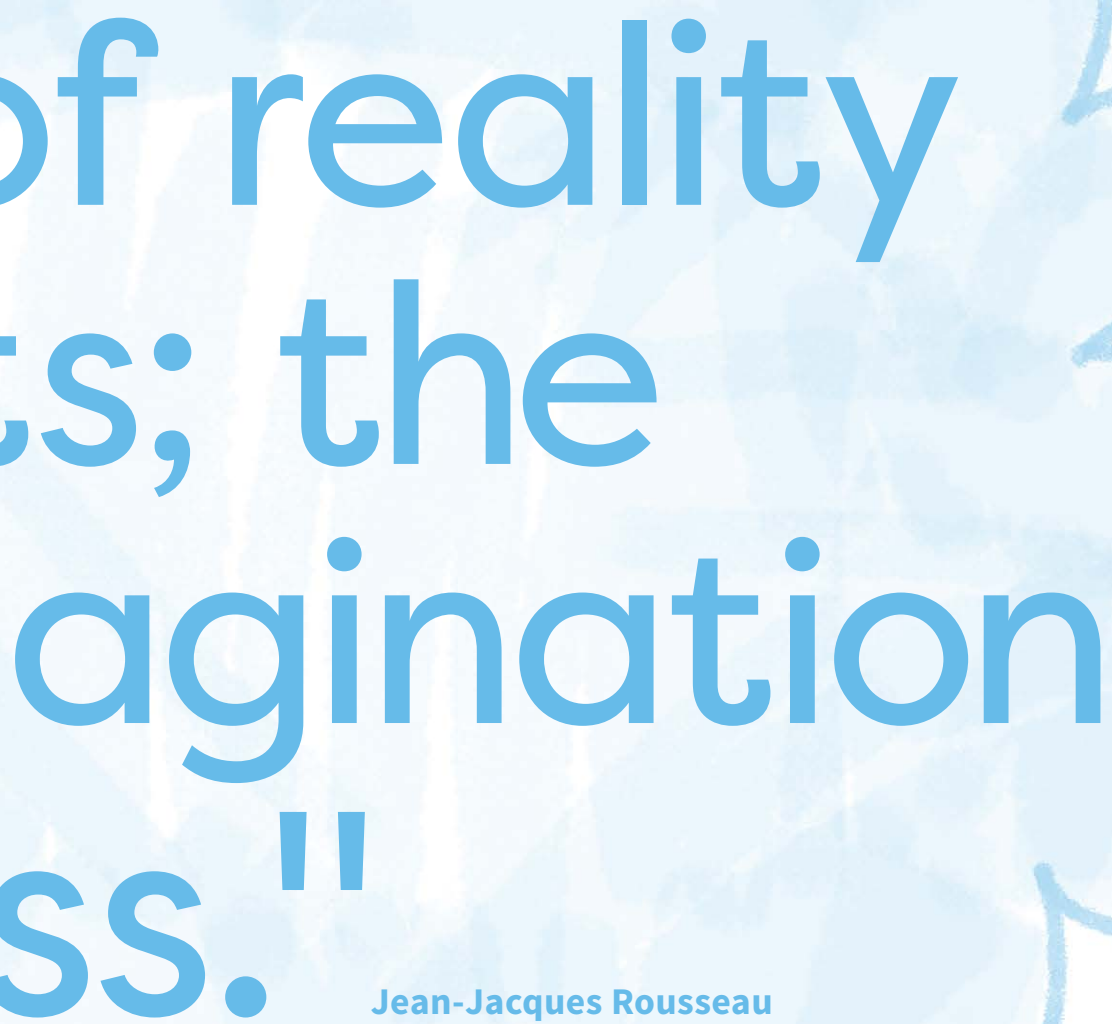




Playgroup SA
Annual Report
2022/23

"The world of
has its limits
world of im
is boundless





of reality s; the agination ss."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

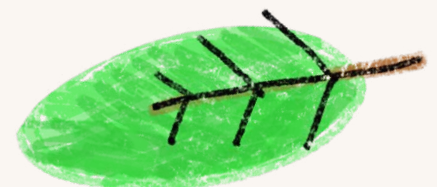
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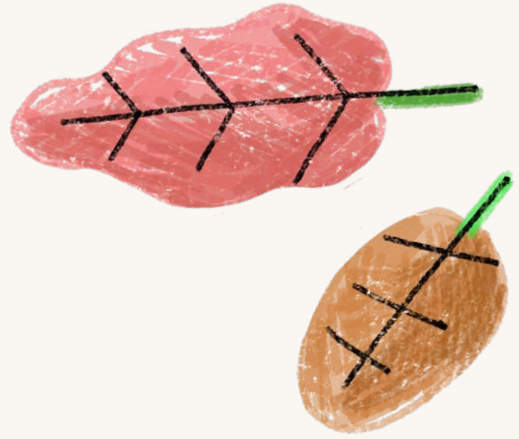
Chair's Report

Playgroup SA remained optimistic over the last 12 months with the year being one of significant growth and development. We have achieved a level of maturity, that reflects the commitment of Playgroup SA Board and staff to meet the ongoing obligations to South Australia's children, families and the community.

In February 2023 we fulfilled our aspiration as a quality organisation achieving certification at 100% under the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES). The external assessment for ASES is the culmination of three years of preparatory work. The ASES report stated, "overall the assessment of Playgroup SA demonstrated that the organisation has and will likely continue to evolve into an organized, positive and service oriented place of work". We pursued this goal to increase both efficiency and public confidence with our community, service partners, government and philanthropic funders.

Playgroup SA achieved 98% of the goals for the 2019-2021 strategic plan, with the Board commencing the next planning phase in early 2022. The Board varied the methodology to planning, moving from an in-house process to external facilitation. We recognised the need to look for a different approach and take a quantum step to ensure our organisation survived, thrived and remained relevant to the community we serve.





The Board identified five key priority projects to lead us over the next 3 years. They are:

- **Project Cottage** - strengthen the profile and capacity of Playgroup SA to adapt and respond to emerging community needs.
- **Project Einstein** – partner with academic authorities to build the research and development evidence on the value of play in children’s development.
- **Project Peak** – position Playgroup SA as the peak body for play in the early years across the state.
- **Project International** – provide play-centred tools, resources, and technology support to regional communities.
- **Project Scalable** – expand Playgroup SA's reach with a suite of play-centred literature, resources and learning products

Playgroup SA relies on a volunteer workforce. Our dedicated team, ably led by CEO Craig Bradbrook, continues to leave their mark. Craig is supported by a small, committed and skilled workforce, who bring a breadth of skills and experience to the work of Playgroup SA.

The team has been a stable and consistent influence in achieving the goals of our strategic plan, coupled with the growth and development of services to meet the ongoing needs of children and families. The team often goes above and beyond the call of duty.

Our organisation is supported by a skilled and energetic Board who bring compassion, insight, and professional expertise to fulfill their governance responsibilities. Last year we farewelled Tracy Foulkes, Krista St John and Alison Crouch, their contribution is recognised and applauded. We welcomed new members Darren Allison, Wiebke Billows and Russell Schrale who bring strong governance experience across the NGO sector, legal and accounting disciplines. I also acknowledge Melissa Watson who is the Playgroup SA appointed Director on the Playgroup Australia Board.

We recognize the need to work in partnership, and share our expertise and experience to make a difference to improve and enrich the lives of children and families. This can only be achieved with the league of volunteers, government and non-government service partners, families and children who all contribute to the work Playgroup SA undertakes. We extend our thanks to everyone that helps us make a difference for children, families and our communities.



Trish Strachan

Chair - Playgroup SA

CEO's Report

The year was marked by significant growth including an expansion of the pilot program Ready, Set, Progress, achieving accreditation against the Australian Service Excellence Standards, and the appointment of a Research Partner to support building our organisational capacity and evidence-based practices.

Achieving accreditation against the Australian Service Excellence Standards reflects the hard work put in by the Systems and Service Improvement Team, and recognises all our team's input, providing feedback and identifying gaps in the systems and processes. A special thanks to our partners and volunteer playgroup coordinators who volunteered their time to be interviewed for the accreditation process. We thank BDO for their professionalism and support throughout the process.

Playgroup SA welcomed the announcement of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care. The opportunity to contribute to two round-table discussions with the Commissioner, and providing input regarding decreasing attendance of babies at playgroup highlighted the importance of greater supports needed in the first thousand days. Playgroup SA made two formal submissions, one for the three-year old preschool and one for the first thousand days. We thank the Commissioner for recognising the critical contributions playgroups make to supporting child development and peer support for parents/caregivers in her final report and recommendations.

We were invited by the Industry Skills Commission to join the Industry Skills Council for Health, Disability, Aged Care, Community Services and Early Childhood. We have been able to provide input to planning sessions, and ensure that the training needs can be supported across the system. Through our membership of the South Australian Council of Social Services (SACOSS) we have been active participants on the SACOSS Policy Council, contributing to discussions of the impact that poverty has on child development. We thank both the Industry Skills Commission and Commissioner and SACOSS for the continued support.

During this year we piloted the impact measurement software Socialsuite. Socialsuite has provided our organisation population-level dashboards and data visualisation, which enables us to identify local government areas that require additional Playgroup SA services.

Our Learning and Development strategy has continued to lead to improvements, with the establishment of a specific framework that include rubrics to guide the design of all learning topics. We have begun to work toward the alignment of a foundational early childhood skills course that will meet the requirements of microcredentials. This will provide a pathway through to other tertiary qualifications in early childhood.

During the year, we developed an evidence-informed playgroup program planning framework. This framework is implemented in the fortnightly session plans provided to all registered playgroups. A training package for this framework is under development to be published in 2023/24.

In our Programs and Services space, we have had the opportunity to pilot Child Development Checks through the Ready, Set, Progress program. We thank the Office for the Early Years for their support throughout the planning and design of the model for this critical service that supports parents to have greater access to Child Development Checks. The outreach model has been welcomed by families at all playgroups the team has visited. We have also continued to grow our Supported Playgroup programs across Port Augusta and Whyalla. The longstanding program PlayConnect expanded from three to six sites, with improvements to the service model including two facilitators delivering the program.

I thank the Playgroup SA board members for their ongoing support for myself and the organisation, as we continue to expand our programs and services in excellence. The staff have remained positive throughout this period of accelerated growth and expansion of programs. Without their commitment, positivity, and resilience none of this would be possible. Thank you to all our supporters, and funders who ensure we can deliver high-quality evidence-based programs. I personally thank and recognise the contribution of the volunteer playgroup coordinators who give up their time every week to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and families to celebrate the early years of a child's life. Finally, to the children and families out there enjoying, having fun and learning through play and playgroup every week across South Australia. Thank you all.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Bradbrook'.

Craig Bradbrook

CEO Playgroup SA





Community Impact



Community Playgroups

We have seen huge growth in our community playgroups over the year. The Community Impact team supported playgroups to find new venues, advertise for new coordinators, provide session plans, resources, and address issues such as behaviour supports for families at playgroup, language and cultural supports. We have also supported the closure of a long running community playgroup and the distribution of their resources.

The Community Impact team delivered a Pop-Up playgroup in Pt Augusta in November. The team worked with local services and early years providers for a wonderful morning of all things playgroup for the local community. A regional visit to Kulpara Playgroup in May delivered the Early Bird Registration prize. We met Jade the coordinator, and families, who meet once a month at the Kulpara Memorial Hall. The children made crowns ready for King Charles' Coronation the following day, and craft cupcakes for their mums for Mother's Day. It is always special when we visit our regional playgroups and support them.

Playgroup SA recognises and thanks Playgroup Australia who facilitate the funding for this essential backbone support we are able to provide to community playgroups. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Coordinate & Play (New playgroup support)

This year we have seen an influx of new community playgroups join the Playgroup SA community, with 30 new playgroups registering. We have welcomed 8 new regional playgroups, from Lucindale and Mt Gambier in the Southeast to Bordertown, Pt Augusta and Pt Pirie. The Community Impact team have been supporting new playgroups, with Starter Kits, online training, emails, phone calls and over 55 in-person visits. Coordinators have also taken up the opportunity to share and promote their playgroups with our online communities via our social media platforms. As part of the new playgroup support plan, coordinators can access 6 weeks of support from the Community Impact team to assist in the early stages of a playgroup starting up. This has been very popular with first time coordinators.

Walk Along Playgroup

Playgroup SA worked closely with the Walk Along Initiative (Aboriginal Education Directorate) to deliver a weekly playgroup for Anangu families living off Country. There was a need for a space for families to come together and reconnect, with the focus of the playgroup being school readiness for the children. Families were provided with a safe space to play, learn and explore.

Families learnt about the benefits of play for their children in a culturally safe environment. It was a great opportunity to introduce families to services such as Aboriginal Health, the Aboriginal Oral Health Program, and Foodbank. These services all visited playgroup and the families to talk about their services and what they could provide for them.

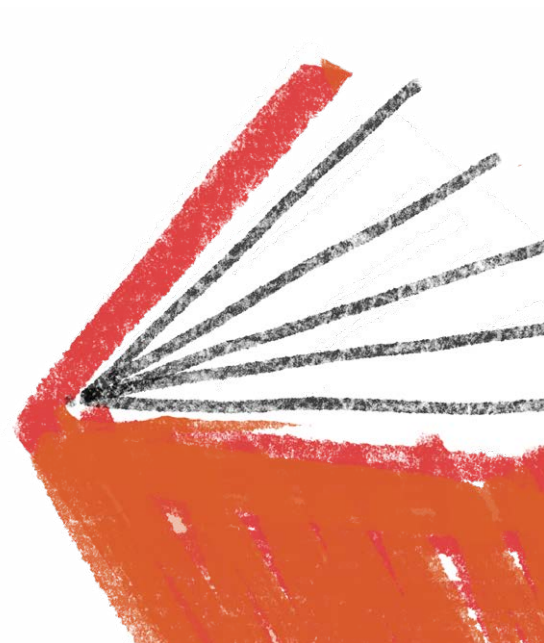
The families were consulted about what they would like to see at playgroup to ensure that playgroup had activities connected to their culture. Some of the mums translated a few Nursery Rhymes into Anangu language, which they then sung to the children. We had a special Christmas playgroup that saw over 20 families attend a fun session with lots of Christmas themed activities, and included a feast of delicious local food, with the Kangaroo tails expertly cooked by Derek from Walk Along over a campfire.

Playgroup SA recognises and thanks the State Government department for the funding for these programs.

Learning and Development

Learning and Development opportunities continued to be offered in 2022/23 with many new enrolments to the online learning platform, as well as an upgrade to the existing PlayTogether course in early 2023. Not only are the online courses offered to those across Australia, we also saw our very first international student enrolment, all the way from Massachusetts, USA.

Face to Face workshops including Safe Environments for Children and Young People (SECYP) and Coordinate & Play were offered several times across the year, and the Community Impact Team delivered the SECYP course to volunteers of the Vietnamese Women's Association, with much of the content being translated live during the training.



Community Playgroups

Regional	32
Metropolitan	40
Organisational	132
Special focus (supported)	16
Total Playgroups	220

-

Family Enrolments

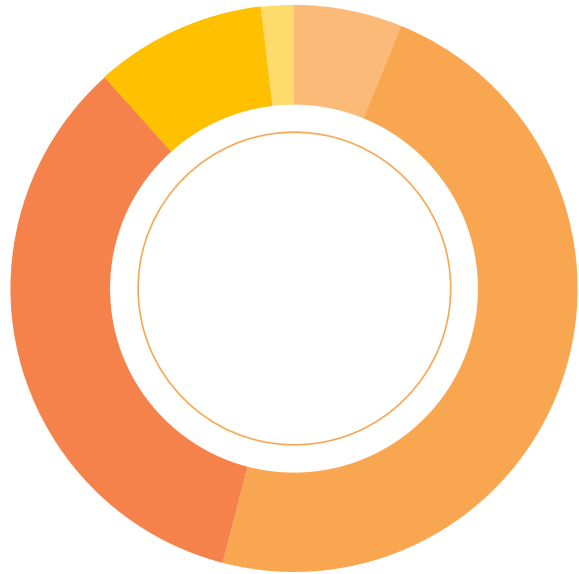
Total Parents	1376
Total Children	1754

Demographics

CALD Families	27
First Nation Families	32

Ages of Enrolled Children

0-12 months	6%
1 – 2 years	47%
3-4 years	35%
5+ years	10%
No DOB	2%



Inclusive and Supported Programs

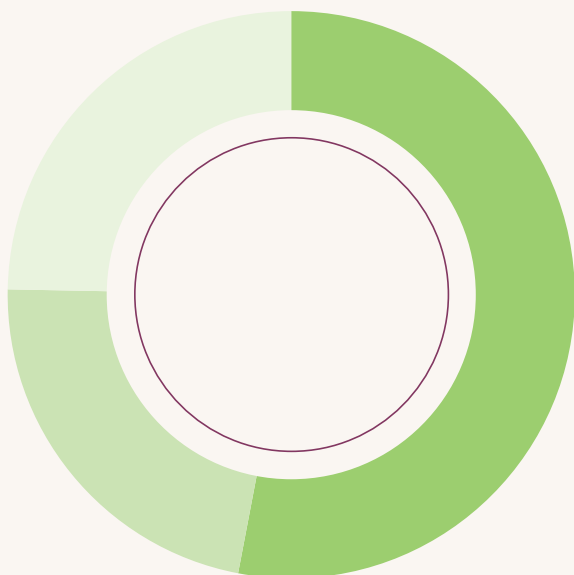
Inclusive and Supported Programs

Information sessions delivered	64
Approx number of families Attending info session	684

Developmental Checks

Developmental checks completed	393
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- On track 53%
- Monitor 22.3%
- Follow-up 24.7%



Ready, Set, Progress

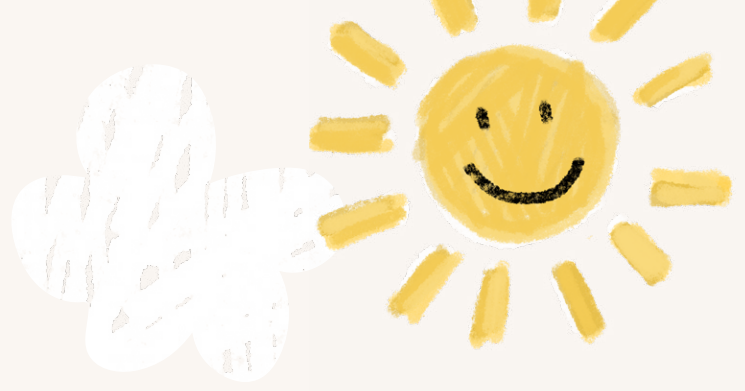
Playgroup SA partnered with the Department for Education to pilot a new innovative way to offer families Child Development Checks for their children. The initiative formed part of the 2021 to 2031 Early Learning Strategy to increase Child Development Checks up to 80% and reduce the proportion of children in South Australia assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable' in one or more domains on the Australian Early Development Census.

Playgroup SA coordinators across South Australia jumped at the opportunity to provide this service to their families in the familiar, safe environment that is playgroup. Playgroups across a range of sectors and programs participated; Community, Supported, Department for Education and SPiCE.

Close to 400 child development checks were completed in 64 playgroups across South Australia including as far as Mount Gambier and Renmark. Of the 400 checks completed 22.3% of parents/caregivers were provided with activities, resources and connected in with community programs to promote their child's development while 24.7% were recommended further assessment and services for their child.

To promote access for all, the RSP team engaged interpreting services for families of CALD background as well as completing training to allow them to deliver screening with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families using a culturally appropriate tool.

We recognise and thank the Office for the Early Years for their support and stewardship of this critical pilot program.



Supported Playgroup Programs

Supported Playgroups

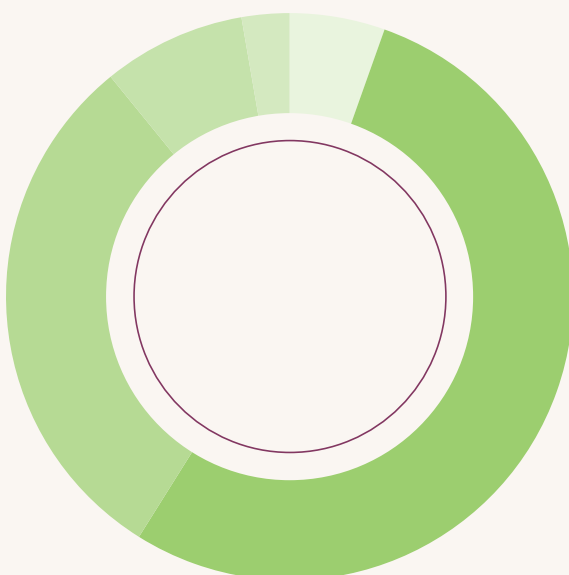
Total Parents	271
Total Children	331
Total Session Regional (13 per week)	520
Total Session Metro (9 per week)	360

Demographics

CALD Families	38
First Nation Families	19

Ages of Enrolled Children

0-12 months	6%
1 – 2 years	53%
3-4 years	30%
5+ years	8%
No DOB	3%



PlayConnect Plus

Parents/Caregivers	63
Children	81
Sessions	

Playgroup SA continued to support children with ASD or ASD-like characteristics and their families through the PlayConnect Playgroups located in Whyalla, Renown Park and Mt Gambier for the first half of 2022/23.

Fortunately, Playgroup SA, along with the other Playgroup State and Territory Organisations, partnered with Autism Queensland, who were successful in receiving funding under the Department of Social Services National Early Childhood Program for Children with Disability and Developmental Concerns (the NECP). The new program, known as PlayConnect+, has had a significant change to the target groups to include all children with a disability, delay or behavioural concern and their siblings. The model utilises two program facilitators to deliver the sessions. Playgroup SA was able to expand the number of groups across the state from three to six, which includes three metropolitan, two regional sites and a weekly online session.

The playgroups are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (funding facilitated by Autism Queensland) and we thank them for their ongoing commitment to provide expertise and backbone support for the PlayConnect + program.

PEEP North-Western Adelaide (Uniting SA)

Parents/Caregivers	112
Children	122
Sessions	

The Every Body Play Playgroups in the western metropolitan area had a change to the program in 2022/23 with the exciting opportunity for Playgroup SA facilitators to complete training in an AIFS evidence-based program called PEEP Learning Together (PEEP). The program supports parents and caregivers to use simple, everyday experiences as learning opportunities for their children. Another change this year was the relocation of Hendon Playgroup to Port Adelaide.

The beautiful venue was offered to us by Uniting SA, and children have lots of space to run around outside in a safe, enclosed environment, or relax with quieter activities inside.

The playgroups are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services Communities for Children funding held by North West Adelaide Communities for Children, Uniting SA and we thank them for their ongoing commitment to provide programs in the north-west metropolitan area.

PEEP Callington

Parents/Caregivers	5
Children	7
Sessions	37

Playgroup SA, funded by AC Care, Communities for Children Murray Bridge have continued to support families at Callington by providing the PEEP Learning Together Programme. This program allows facilitators to tailor their programming to the interests of the children while also offering opportunities for families to support their children's early learning journey. We have built a wonderful, supportive group at Callington with 10-12 families in regular attendance and with the support of the community and our funders at AC Care, we are moving towards improved connection to other programs, services and community organisations to provide further support to families.

The playgroups are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services Communities for Children (funding held by Murraylands Communities for Children, ac.care) and we thank them for their ongoing commitment to provide programs in the Adelaide Hills area.



PALS

Parents/Caregivers	44
Children	55
Sessions	131

We have continued to have incredible success in our PALS program across our 3 sites at Prospect, Hallett Cove and Whyalla. PALS is an inclusive, supported playgroup where families together with their program facilitator codesign a program that accesses cultural, sporting and recreational activities. Each PALS site has 10- 15 places, half reserved for children with disabilities and half for other families. The PALS program fills a much needed space in disability support, bridging the gap for all families and building the inclusive practices of the cultural, sport and recreation organisations engaged in delivering activities to families.

Playgroup and Parenting Programs Pt Augusta

Parents/Caregivers	47
Children	66
Sessions	154

Playgroup SA continues to deliver playgroups and parenting programs to children and families across the Port Augusta region. Playgroups have been provided 4 times per week in a range of locations including at the Connected Beginnings Aboriginal Hub, Augusta Park Kindergarten, The Ochre Room, local parks and playgrounds and at Stirling North. Parenting programs included the evidence-based PEEP LT program, Parent-Child Mother Goose and in the first half of 2022 financial year, INFANT. A new and exciting evidence-based program, PlaySteps, will be added to our scope of delivery in 2023/24. Outcome surveys continue to show the importance and benefit of the playgroups and parenting programs to the community.

These programs are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services Communities for Children (funding held by Uniting Country SA) and we thank them for their ongoing commitment to delivering high quality programs in the region.

A photograph of children playing with toys on a green table. In the foreground, there are colorful plastic toys including a pink cup, a purple pot, and various blocks. In the background, a boy in a teal shirt is focused on a task. To the right, a girl is wearing a white paper hat with a chalkboard-like surface, which has a simple drawing of a house with a cloud-like roof. The scene is brightly lit and captures a moment of active play.

" Children need the freedom
and time to play. Play is not
a luxury. Play is a necessity."

Kay Redfield Jamison



Marketing and Events

Mud Play at Cleland Wildlife Park

A new partnership between Playgroup SA and Cleland Wildlife Park, resulted in the inaugural 'Mud & Play' event in September at Cleland Wildlife Park! Hundreds of families came out to experience a morning of fun and messy playgroup activities. There were lots of fun activities on offer and the weather held up well despite the forecasts. Feedback from the event was that it was a resounding success. We saw plenty of muddy happy faces and rosy cheeks! We look forward to working with Cleland again in the future. Playgroup SA members were able to purchase tickets at a heavily discounted rate as a thank you for their support throughout the year.

Messy Play in Pt Augusta

The Community Impact team visited Port Augusta in November for a combined MESSY PLAY playgroup organised in collaboration and with the support of the Port Augusta Early Childhood Services Network. Activities on the day included edible mud, building blocks with shaving cream, finger painting, water play, sand play, gloop, physical activities, song and dance sessions, story time, craft jelly fish making, baby play zones and more. More than 90 families joined us to enjoy a perfect morning. The weather was brilliant, and we saw many happy smiling faces. Parents were engaging with their children; it was great to see the community connecting with each other and with the local services that work so hard to build these connections.

Playgroup at the Zoo

We saw loads of playgroups arriving and celebrating at our flagship event Playgroup at the Zoo in October! This annual event is especially for Playgroup SA enrolled families and is a great excursion for Term 4. Ticket prices are highly discounted, making Adelaide Zoo accessible for more families. Minister Amanda Rishworth and the Playgroup Australia CEO joined in the fun for the National Launch of the Playgroup Statement at the event.

Christmas Pop-up Playgroup

In December, we celebrated Christmas with an outdoor pop-up playgroup at Prospect Memorial Park. With 200 in attendance, the day was a great success. The grass was full of sensory activities, a bubble show, soccer demonstrations and skills. Facepainting was a hit with the children who were excited to choose from a range of face or arm decorations. Bubbly Belinda performed Christmas songs and nursery rhymes for the children and parents to join in with. We had a very special visit from Santa and Mrs Claus, who gave out eco-friendly reindeer food!

National Playgroup Week

We celebrated National Playgroup Week by inviting playgroups to showcase their playgroup with photos and details of what makes their playgroup special. A social media campaign was launched with our Facebook and Instagram feeds full of wonderful playgroups from across the state. 2022 saw us dip our toes into the world of Tik Tok, with some great engagement. We will continue to grow this platform and reach new audiences.





Technology: building efficiencies

During 2022/23, the team worked to make further improvements to the CRM and implement Socialsuite Impact Measurement Software. With data visualisation and dashboards created, Playgroup SA now have a robust system that supports planning and development of programs and identifies areas of need. The importance of outcome measurement is now firmly entrenched in the culture of Playgroup SA staff. We thank all the families enrolled in community and supported playgroups for completing the outcome surveys that have been distributed. Your responses have helped our team to identify improvements in the services we provide

Service Excellence

Playgroup SA have now been assessed as meeting all Australian Service Excellence Standards. The Systems and Service Improvement Team worked diligently to update and prepare new policies and procedures in preparation for the Service Excellence audit. A special thanks to the Senior Business Partner for her work in coordinating the audit, including organising interviews for the audit team, and attention to detail in preparation of files for review.

Strategy and Service Improvement.

Relocation

Following a comfortable 20 years at our Head Office at Prospect, following the sale of the building in April we said goodbye to this space. We leave with many fond memories of playgroups, and growth in this location. During the final months of this year, the staff have moved to a work from home model. We recognise the challenges, and remain appreciative and grateful for the understanding as we begin to search for a new location.





Research and Advocacy

Appointment of a research partner

Playgroup SA welcomed the appointment of a new position on the team: Research Partner. The position has been focused on updating the suite of Playgroup SA training courses, developing submissions to the Royal Commission into Early Education and Care and building the evidence base of playgroup practices. Moving forward, this position will assist Playgroup SA will accelerate and amplify our voice in the sector.

Healthy Conversations

The delivery of Healthy Conversations @ Playgroup research concluded in Term 2 this year, with the findings to be published by Flinders University. A Community Impact Facilitator implemented the program under the direction, and with training support from, the research team at Flinders Uni. There were 10 participating Playgroup SA playgroups involved. The research investigated the benefits for families who participated in conversations held at playgroup amongst peers, on topics such as sleeping, fussy eating, screen time and active play.

Ian Potter Foundation Grant

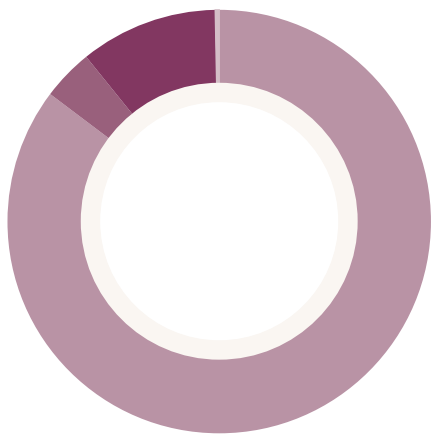
Playgroup SA are part of a collaborative project, known as Project Amplify, which is funded by the Ian Potter Foundation. The current active members of the Playgroup Consortia are Playgroup NT, Playgroup Tasmania, Playgroup Victoria, Playgroup SA, Playgroup NSW, and Playgroup Australia. There are three connected but distinct phases of this project, to be conducted over the next couple of years. (1) Is driving a research and implementation project to understand the needs of members and volunteers; (2) is a research and implementation project focused on increasing available/ accessible playgroup venues and 3) will focus on data consistency, evaluation, and quality.



Financials

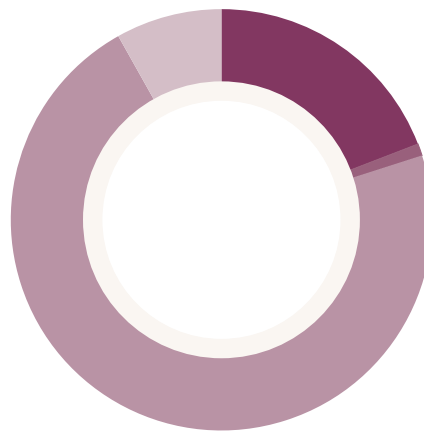
Playgroup SA remains in a strong financial position, with increasing income through government grants providing stability for employment and services to the community. Cash reserves remain in a strong liquidity position.

Revenue 2023



- 85.2% Grant Income
- 3.9% Enrolments and Registration Fees
- 10.5% Other Income
- 0.3% Cashflow boost / JobKeeper

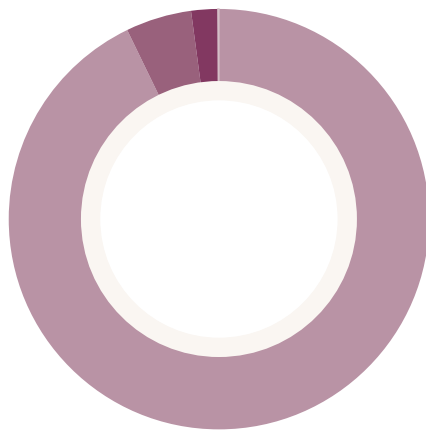
Expenses 2023



- 18.8% Administrative Expenses
- 0.90% Occupancy Expenses
- 70.5% Employment Expense
- 8% Enrolments & Program Expenses

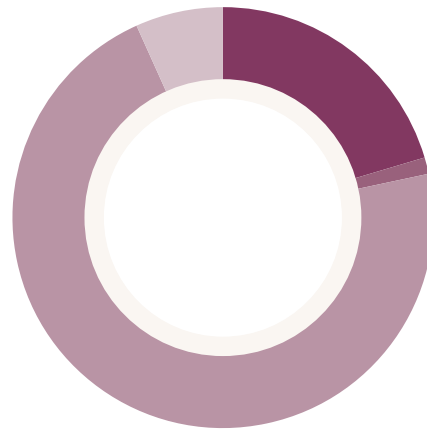


Revenue 2022



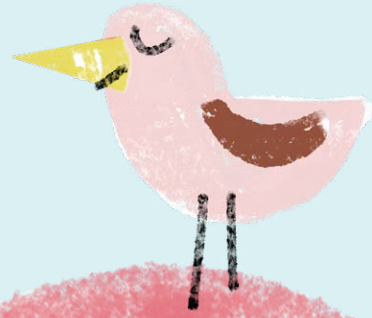
- 92.81% Grant Income
- 5.06% Enrolments and Registration Fees
- 2.04% Other Income
- 0.08% Interest Received

Expenses 2022



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





" We love
working
with you
all."



Acknowledgements

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.

To our valued Partners

West Beach Parks
Adelaide Zoo
Bunnings
Codesnap
Crayola
Department of Human Services
Department for Social Services
Educational Experience
Libraries SA
Modern Teaching Aids
Raising Literacy Australia
Scholastic
Mono+ Design
Colourbox Print
HeartKids SA
The Amazing Magic Mike
Rover Communications
Kids Promotions
William Buck
GP Plus Clinics across all regions
Adelaide University
Pangula Mannamurna
Hallett Cove Civic Library
Governor of South Australia
Uniting Country SA
Uniting SA
Meals on Wheels
Ac.care
AE Access Programs
Catholic Education
City of Port Adelaide Enfield
Kudos

To our valued Life Members

Di Connew
Deane Palmer
Elizabeth Giola
Gloria Palmer
Helen Holland
Helen Miller
Jennie Fenton
John Harley
Leslie Ratcliffe
Lorry Jordan
Maralyn Blake
Pam Witto

Playgroup SA Board

Trish Strachan, Chair
Dr Sally Brinkman, Deputy Chair
Darren Allison, Treasurer
Ben Birch, Board Member
Mel Watson, Board Member

The following Board members retired their positions during this Financial year we thank them for the invaluable volunteer service to the association.

Ann Perriam, Treasurer
Krist St John, Board Member
Alison Crouch, Board Member
Tracy Foulkes, Board Member



Playgroup SA

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