



# Playgroup SA

## Annual Report 2020/21





# VISION:

All children in South Australia  
are developmentally on-track

# PURPOSE:

To support families and communities  
to improve children's development



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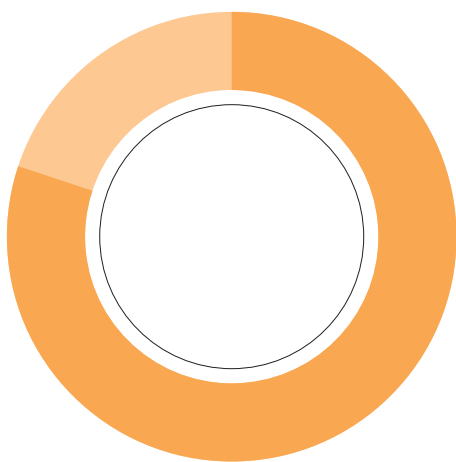
Playgroup SA Board,  
Staff, Sponsors & Partner



Playgroup South Australia have established an impact measurement framework. This framework ensures children and families attending supported programs have individual needs identified and staff can respond to specific needs of children and parents.

**Measurement & planning includes:**

- Protective Factors Survey
- Parental Engagement and Empowerment Survey
- Results-based Accountability



**Demographics**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| ● Playgroups in Metropolitan Adelaide             | 81% |
| ● Playgroups in Regional & Remote South Australia | 19% |



# Chairs Message

01

As a smaller organisation we continue to have a positive impact for children and their families with an increase in the number of attendances at our playgroups.



Playgroup SA like many organisations, remained optimistic about a reduction of the impact of the COVID pandemic and looked forward to the economic recovery. However, the adjustments we put in place last year have undergone a reluctant “normalisation” process as we learn to live with COVID in the longer term. South Australia’s children, families and communities have fared well compared to our colleagues in the eastern states that have spent extended periods in lockdown.

The limitations that have continued through COVID has still allowed Playgroup SA to demonstrate its leadership, and resilience. This year has seen a consolidation of those attributes with the organisation achieving a level of maturity that extends beyond our size, as a small not-for-profit entity. As a smaller organisation we continue to have a positive impact for children and their families, with an increase in the number of attendances at our playgroups.

We continue to build on our achievements in the final year of our strategic plan with progress made against each goal. We aspire for excellence in working towards the Australian Service Excellence Standards. We are honouring our commitment to Aboriginal families by making our organisation more sensitive and responsive to their needs through the development of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

The renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between SA Health Child and Family Health Service and Playgroup SA is a good example of our continued focus on building partnerships.

In an environment of tighter financial allocations and increased competitiveness within the sector, Playgroup SA has secured Federal funding for the next 5 years. This is complemented by the SA Government allocation through the Department of Human Services and Department for Education that has allowed us to diversify the programs on offer to children and families with additional needs. We have also received some philanthropic funding to allow us to increase training programs for staff and volunteers.

The Playgroup Australia Federation has undertaken an organisational review to improve our national approach to the way we do business across all states and territories. This has been both challenging and confronting as we take a hard look at our strengths and area for development. South Australia has played a lead role as the secretariat for the project.

**The resilience and strengths of our organisation can be attributed to three main features:**

1. The skilled and committed Chief Executive Officer – Craig Bradbrook whose leadership ability and integrity has left its mark on PGSA.
2. The commitment and skill of a small but dedicated team – who often go above and beyond the call of duty
3. A committed and energetic Board who readily contribute to the discussion and fulfill our governance obligations with insight, expertise, and professionalism.

As a small organisation our contribution to the broader service system for SA children and families is only achieved by the league of dedicated volunteers, our government and non-government service partners and especially our children, families, and communities.

To everyone that has contributed to the work of PGSA in whatever capacity, we thank you on behalf of SA children and families and for the long term benefits for the next generation.

We strive every day to make a difference.

**Trish Strachan**

Chair



# Hello from the CEO

Playgroup SA has continued to provide backbone support for Community Playgroups during 2020/21. Continuing to feel the impact of COVID, during the brief stay at home orders in November, the team were prepared providing clear directions for Playgroups across South Australia. Upon returning to face-to-face Playgroup sessions, the team again paved the way, providing clear and concise directions for Playgroups to reopen across South Australia.

In October, we were honoured to be awarded with a Children's Week Special Award – for our work on Playgroup at Home during the Pandemic. It was wonderful to be acknowledged for the hard work to keep families connected during the start of the pandemic.

Our Community Impact Team has continued to excel in the provision of support for new Playgroups, working through support plans to ensure they have the resources and processes in place to support children and families to have a positive experience at Playgroup. The online learning platform welcomed 64 enrolments over the year, compared with 15 previously, with our Playgroup Foundations course being the most popular.

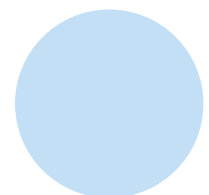
At the end of last year, on reviewing our enrolment data we found that infants enrolled and attending Playgroups had fallen to 1% of total enrolments. Recognising the importance of the first 1,000 days, a clear focus for the coming year was to promote the benefits of Playgroup for babies. By June 2021 infants enrolled had increased to 10%. The Marketing and Programs Team worked well together to identify and promote the benefits of Playgroup attendance for infants.

Our Programs Team piloted the PALS program. Underpinned by a co-design process, families including children with a disability, came together to share decision making on different cultural, sport and recreation activities to participate in. A participatory budget is provided to Playgroup families, and the role of the facilitator is to work with families, and

source the CSAR organisations to deliver the activities as requested. Families attending the pilot of this program have made lifelong connections and are looking to start their own Playgroup sessions. This program has highlighted the importance of inclusion.

Playgroup SA have developed our first Impact Measurement Strategy with input from staff and stakeholders. Outlining an organisation wide theory of change, has been essential for aligning our long term goals and impact with outcomes at a program and individual level. This work has been crucial in preparing for the Impact Measurement software due to come online during 2021/22.

The team and the Board have begun the process of planning and drafted our first Reconciliation Action Plan. We will be working closely with Aboriginal Controlled Organisations to progress this work and build meaningful partnerships with First Nations communities across South Australia.





# Recognising the importance of the first 1,000 days, a clear focus for the coming year was to promote the benefits of Playgroup for babies.



**During this final year of the current Playgroup SA strategic plan, we will:**

- Achieve accreditation in Service Excellence.
- Implement our Impact Measurement reporting and software.
- Finalise the organisations first Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Publish an evidence-informed Playgroup Planning framework.
- Provide developmental activity booklets for families.
- Continue to expand our supported playgroup programs across South Australia.



# Community Impact

03

## Community Playgroups

The Community Impact Team have spent a lot of time over the last year supporting Playgroups as they continue to navigate their way through COVID. Playgroup SA offered training and guidance for Playgroup Coordinators, so they felt comfortable and supported during these challenging times. As well as support for families who have been finding the current restrictions a little overwhelming.

Funding provided by Playgroup Australia continues to support the vital infrastructure including managing the online learning and development system, providing ongoing support with negotiating venues, find-a-playgroup function on the website and supporting any queries from Playgroup Coordinators.

**19%**

Playgroups in Regional  
& Remote South Australia

**81%**

Playgroups in Metropolitan Adelaide

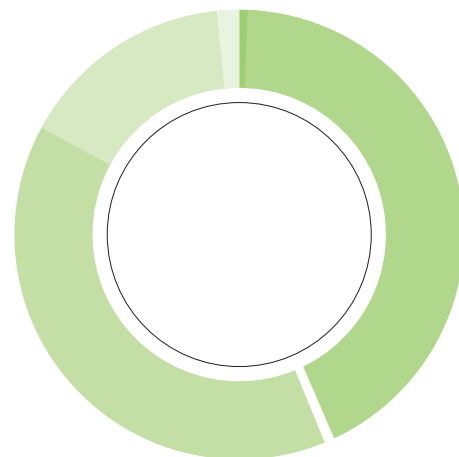
**1627**

enrolled families

**2306**

enrolled children

## Ages of children



Ages enrolled children

- 1% - 0-12 Months
- 42% 1-2 Years
- 37% 3-4
- 12% 5+
- 2% no age





### Coordinate & Play

We saw an increase in the number of Playgroups registering with Playgroup SA, who welcomed the additional support and help we were able to offer them during COVID stay-at-home orders and the re-sets. This has continued into 2021, with 40 new Playgroups registering and being supported with our Coordinate and Play Support program.

By the start of Term 3 2020, the majority of our Playgroups had returned, much to the delight of families. After lockdown and many months of tough restrictions, it was very important for them to get back to their Playgroup communities, to feel connected and for the children to Play to Learn once again. We had many families contact us to let us know how much Playgroup at Home helped them when they weren't able to physically attend Playgroup.

### Community Development

Lobethal Playgroup continued to provide support for children and families affected by the bushfires in the community throughout 2020 and transitioned to a Volunteer led Playgroup at the start of 2021. Playgroup SA successfully gained a grant from Country SA PHN to hold a family fun day Christmas celebration and work with Playgroup families and local community to build a community garden. The official opening of the garden took place in May 2021.

In partnership with Playgroup Australia, and the Ian Potter Foundation, a small grants program that supported resourcing for Playgroups was open to Playgroups in South Australia. Over 75 small grants were distributed to Community Playgroups.







## Across the Regions

We travelled to Yorketown in March this year to support and help the local Community hold an event. It was designed to bring the Community together for a celebration after the devastating Bushfires that had occurred on the Yorke Peninsula in November 2019. Yorketown Playgroup received a grant through Country SA PHN to deliver the event. The Community fully embraced the opportunity to come together and have some fun.

Playgroup SA remained engaged in the Thriving Communities initiative and continued their involvement in the Peterborough Early Childhood Groups, supporting the development of a proposal that lead to the redevelopment of the West Park in Peterborough, including new climbing equipment designed by Climbing Tree. Playgroup SA and other local services attended the COVID safe launch event and provided activities for the morning. Although the morning was quite windy, over 100 people attended.

### Collective Impact

**2**

pop-ups

### Training & Info Sessions

**14**

training and info sessions

**22**

organisations involved

**180**

participants

**Over 200+**

children and families



# Supported & Specialist Programs

04

## PlayConnect

(Mt Gambier, Renown Park, Whyalla)

The delivery of PlayConnect Playgroups, supporting children with ASD or ASD-like characteristics, continued in Mount Gambier, Renown Park and Whyalla on a weekly basis. Mount Gambier PlayConnect has found challenges in the engagement of families, particularly during COVID but continues to provide ongoing referral pathways through the early intervention network and local kindergartens. Whyalla PlayConnect continues to engage families and children, attendance has been consistent across the year whilst Renown Park PlayConnect has had lower attendance but has seen a couple of new children and families attending.

Social media and digital engagement have played a large part in the support for children and families during lockdowns and to those families a little hesitant to return to face-to-face sessions. PlayConnect facilitators regularly engaged in closed Facebook groups, reading stories and singing songs as a way to stay connected with families during stay-at-home directions.

Playgroup SA thank Playgroup Australia for the ongoing investment in this important program.

## PALS

(Prospect, Mt Gambier)

A pilot program focusing on inclusive practices bringing together children with and without a disability has been well attended and welcomed by all families attending. A codesign approach, asks children and parents to work together to identify Cultural Sport and Rec activities to do together. CSAR organisations either attend the Playgroup sessions or the families go on an excursion to try different activities.

## Supported and Specialist

72

sessions in Regional SA

342

sessions in Metro SA

106

Families

148

Families

53

0-2 year olds

73

3-4 year olds

35

5 years old and over

5

no DoB



## **Innovative Solutions**

(Mt Gambier)

Innovative solutions projects have been provided to three early childhood settings with a fourth approved through to June 2022. Funding for these projects is available through the Inclusion support program and focusses on the floor mentoring of Early childhood educators, training and resource development to support successful inclusion and professional practices of educators in OSHC, childcare and family day care settings.

## **Every Body Play**

Every Body Play

(Findon, Hendon, The Parks, Angle Vale, Lobethal)

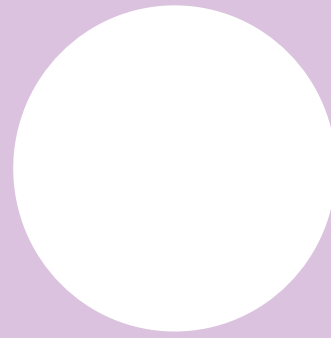
Every Body Play provides a valuable Supported Playgroup program for children and families who attend, providing opportunities for improving child development and wellbeing and connecting families to other services. Despite the continuing impact of the pandemic, the Every Body Play program has been well attended by children and families at all sites.

Measurement outcomes, impact and building a strong evidence-base for our work with families is central to Playgroup SA demonstrating value for investment in our programs. The Every Body Play program implements pre and post outcome surveys completed by families. Results from these surveys have shown the benefit of Playgroup, to each family, particularly in relation to supporting children's wellbeing and healthy development.

We want to thank our funders, North West Adelaide Communities for Children, Uniting SA; Playford Communities for Children, Anglicare SA; Department for Human Services and Country SA PHN, who have made it possible for the Every Body Play Playgroup program to continue this year and beyond.



# Marketing and Events



## Marketing and Events Team

Playgroup SA's flagship event, Playgroup at the Zoo came around quickly, due to COVID limitations the offering was rethought. "A Day at the Zoo" was an opportunity for enrolled families to attend and enjoy the surroundings and animals at their leisure, whilst still taking advantage of the heavily discounted rate. The friendly Playgroup SA team was in attendance on the day, ready to greet all families with an activity book and activity map.

On the 28th of May the Playgroup SA team attended the opening Launch of Lobethal Community Garden. With 50 families in attendance along with other members of the community, celebrations included music, face painting, native animals, pot painting and sensory playdough along with playgroup activities at Lobethal Community Playgroup!

Along with the support of Country SA PHN, Playgroup SA and the Lobethal Community Playgroup, the opportunity to establish a community garden at the Lobethal site was warmly received by the community and Playgroup.

The Adelaide Pregnancy, Baby and Child Expo was a successful event, seeing record numbers in a COVID safe environment. Many new and expecting families were introduced to the Playgroup Movement and enjoyed the Play area with their young children.

Big Family Weekend, part of DreamBIG Children's Festival on the Adelaide Riverbank Area, soon followed. It was a wonderful opportunity for young families to explore and take part in children's activities and culture in and around the city. The events team worked the weekend, with amazingly unseasonable warm weather, to provide COVID friendly crafts and chalk drawing to South Australian families. These events provided a sense of normality after a tough year and cemented the notion that indeed, South Aussies are lucky to be situated right here in SA.

In May, the Community Impact Team held a space at the Reconciliation in the West Event, at Tauondi Aboriginal College, Port Adelaide. Children had the opportunity to partake in a Tiddalick the Frog craft to take home. There were many great connections made with families and community.

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6

events

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1,644

children enjoying the activities

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4,492

families out and about

---

13,550

Facebook likes increase of 10.5%

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19%

Instagram 1,321 followers increase

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36,089

visits to Find-a-Playgroup on website

05





# Strategy and Service Improvement

## **Technology: building efficiencies**

This was our second year operating the new CRM. The SASI team reviewed the first year of implementation, identifying quality improvements for updating, to improve the user's experience. The Cloudmasons have since provided ongoing maintenance and support, working diligently to ensure the CRM operates 'bug' free.

## **Service Excellence**

All standards in the Service Excellence framework have been self-assessed, the gaps in policies and processes identified, and ready for an external assessor to work with the team in the coming year. Playgroup SA look forward to the opportunity to demonstrate that our organisation applies sound management principles, manage risks, meet legislative, industry and government guidelines and operating confidentially and efficiently.

## **Early Years Strategy**

The Department for Education invited submissions as they prepared the Early Years Strategy 10 year plan. Playgroup SA developed a considered response highlighting the importance of Playgroups in promoting healthy development for children, and improved social connections and peer support for parents. A partnership with the Department for Education has resulted in investment in improving the quality of Playgroups across South Australia.



# Financials

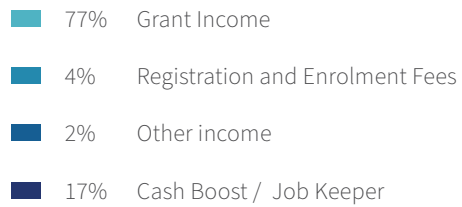
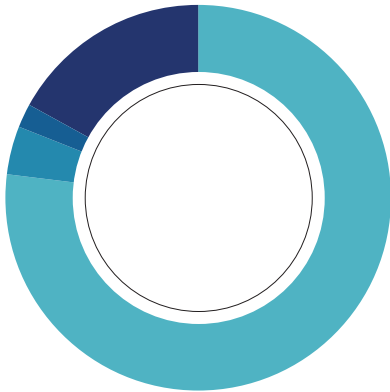
COVID-19 has continued to have a devastating economic impact on businesses in Australia and globally. Playgroup SA are fortunate to not expect any significant effects resulting from the pandemic in future financial years.

Playgroup SA remains in a strong financial position, with cash flow boosts and JobKeeper supplements providing stability for employment. Cash reserves remain in a strong liquidity position.

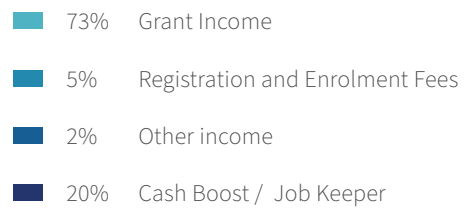
Income	
Grant Income	73%
Registration and enrolment fees	5%
Other Income	2%
Cashflow boost / JobKeeper	20%
Expenditure	
Administrative expenses	20%
Occupancy expenses	8%
Employment expenses	66%
Enrolments & program expenses	6%



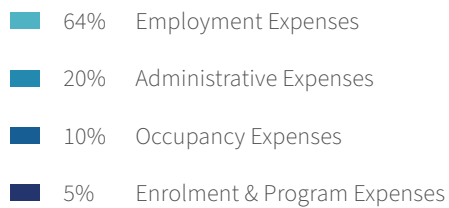
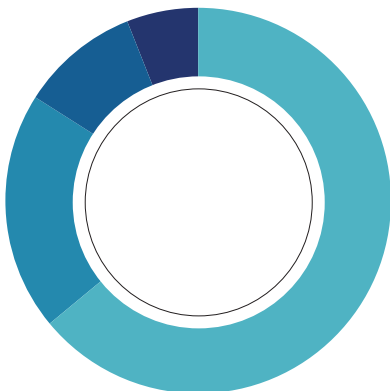
Income 2020



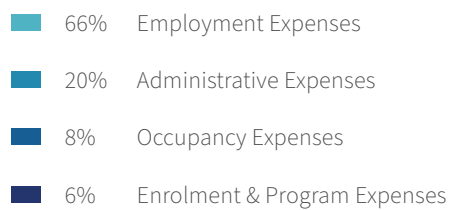
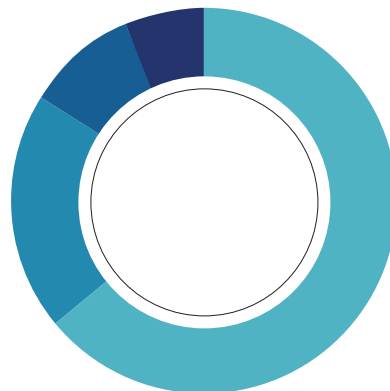
Income 2021



Expenditure 2020



Expenditure 2021



# Playgroup SA Board, Staff, Sponsors & Partners

Playgroup SA recognise and acknowledge the continued support of Volunteer Coordinators and thank them for their many hours of work each week to keep our families connected and support our children in their early learning years. We also acknowledge the many partnerships we have with a number of organisations, bringing quality programs to families and children to help support and develop family connections. While helping children to be developmentally on track. **We love working with you all.**



### **To our valued Donors**

West Beach Parks  
Adelaide Zoo  
Bunnings  
Codesnap  
Crayola  
Department of Human Services  
Department for Social Services  
Educational Experience  
Libraries SA  
Modern Teaching Aids  
Multiple Birth Association of SA  
Raising Literacy Australia  
Scholastic  
Colourbox Print  
HeartKids SA  
The Amazing Magic Mike  
Rover Communications  
Mono Design  
Kids Promotions  
William Buck  
Prospect Council

### **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*  
Ann Perriam, *Treasurer*  
Rose Deane, *Board Member*  
Gaynor Ramsey, *Board Member*  
Ben Birch, *Board Member*  
Tania Potts, *Board Member*  
Cecilia Pascale, *Board Member*

### **Playgroup SA Staff**

#### **Strategy and Service Improvement Team**

Craig Bradbrook, *CEO*  
Teresa DiBartolo, *Senior Business Administrator*  
Amy Elliott, *Enrolment Officer*

#### **Community Impact Team**

Alicia Beames, *Program Manager*,  
Rebecca Blunn, *Community Impact Officer*

#### **Marketing and Events Team**

Emma Sordillo, *Marketing Manager*  
Sarah Zulian, *Digital Officer*

#### **Programs Team**

Belinda McLaren, *Program Coordinator*  
Syeda Chowdury, *Inclusion Officer*  
Ellie Bahnisch, *Program Facilitator*  
Sarah Carbone, *Program Facilitator*  
Rachael Stroud, *Program Manager*  
Jemima Althorpe, *Program Development*  
Catherine Mangelsdorf, *Program Development*

#### **Program Facilitators & Support**

Alison Blake  
Nicki Hume  
Tracy Vine  
Sherrie Abdilla  
Lauren Tobin  
Kristy Mayfield





**Playgroup SA**  
[www.playgroupsa.com.au](http://www.playgroupsa.com.au)