



Koorana Child & Family Services  
**Annual Report 2023**

All children. All abilities. All possibilities.





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### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we live and work and pay our respects to elders past and present. We recognise their continuing connection and care of country, and the education they have provided to children for thousands of years.



## OUR VISION AND MISSION

### > Our Vision

**Our vision is for children and their families to have supportive connections, discover possibilities and participate to their full potential in all aspects of family and community life.**

### > Our Mission

**We create and support learning and social opportunities in caring environments for all children and young people in our areas of operation.**

### > Our Core Values



Self Determination



Access & Equity



Collaboration



Respect



Ethics & Integrity



Sustainability



>  **2106** Children and young people supported

> **80** Suburbs

**498**

Families supported by our **Supported Playgroups**

**298**

**Children in preschools** (including 68 children with high learning support needs)

**150**

Families supported by our **Start Strong Pathways** program

**92**

Children in schools receiving **screening clinics** under the CFC program

**51**

**Sessions delivered** by Start Strong Pathways

**399** Children receiving **Speech Therapy**

**23** Children receiving **Psychology**

**347** Children receiving **Occupational Therapy**

**32** Children receiving **Behaviour Support**

**249** Children receiving **Specialist Education**

**38** Children receiving **Physiotherapy**

**435**

**NDIS Participants**





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**Koorana, more than just an organisation, is a beacon for children and their families.**

**The passage of another year presents us with an opportunity to pause, reflect, and appreciate the strides we have taken together as a cohesive community.** While the winds of change and challenges have been plenty, our voyage through the financial year 2022-2023 is marked by collective resilience, profound dedication, and an unwavering commitment to the core values that define Koorana.

### Our Vision and Unyielding Commitment

Koorana, more than just an organisation, is a beacon for children and their families. We hold a special place for those originating from diverse migrant backgrounds. Our guiding vision - to assist every child and their families in establishing supportive connections, uncovering boundless possibilities, and ensuring full-fledged participation in the community and familial life - has been at the heart of our actions. This year, despite the evolving landscape of challenges, has witnessed significant steps toward actualising this vision.

### Transition in Leadership and Gratitude

Stepping into the role of President in December 2022, I am profoundly humbled by the legacy and enduring spirit that Rodney has infused into Koorana. His leadership remains an anchor, guiding us towards our north star. His transition to a Non-Executive Director is both a gain and a testament to his commitment. Additionally, our heartfelt gratitude goes to Sandra Angel, whose invaluable contributions to the Board will always be remembered.

### Strategic Collaborations for a Broader Impact

A notable highlight this year has been the inception of the Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network. This collaborative initiative, brought to life in partnership with fellow non-profit entities, is an endeavour to advocate for superior early childhood intervention services. Our collective voice champions the imperatives of accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainable practices. It's a true embodiment of the spirit of collaboration, highlighting the strength and potential of co-design and unity.

### Challenges in Financial Landscape and Our Resolute Adaptations

Our mission, which pivots on fostering learning and social opportunities in nurturing environments, has faced fiscal challenges, especially against the backdrop of the static NDIS Price Guide. It is imperative for decision-makers to grasp the tangible costs associated with delivering top-tier services, particularly when our beneficiaries encompass a diverse and largely migrant clientele. Yet, through these trials, our commitment to ensuring Access, Equity, and Sustainability remains indomitable.

### Vision Manifested and Values Brought to Life:

- **Infrastructure Advancements:** The unveiling of our state-of-the-art office in Belmore, fortified with a sensory gym, echoes our value of Self-Determination. It stands as a testament to our commitment to innovation in enabling children to freely explore and thrive.
- **Pursuit of Service Excellence:** With the incorporation of psychological and behavioural support services and our extended outreach to the Sutherland Shire, we reiterate our allegiance to the principles of Access and Equity, thereby ensuring a 360-degree care framework for our cherished families.
- **Engaging in Meaningful Partnerships:** Our continued collaboration with a myriad of sector partners amplifies our core value of Respect. It is a recognition and celebration of the invaluable role every stakeholder plays in fortifying the Koorana community.
- **Governance and the Spirit of Betterment:** Each governance enhancement, from reviewing our SIB's Club program to internal policy modifications, is steered by an uncompromising dedication to the principles of Ethics and Integrity.
- **Inclusion for All:** Our new preschool project, expected to open in 2025, will enable access to more children with disabilities and high learning support needs to access quality early childhood education and equity for these children.

In drawing to a close, it is imperative to shine a light on our dynamic CEO, Morgan A. Fitzpatrick. The resilience, ingenuity, and sheer determination displayed by Morgan, even in turbulent times, has been nothing short of exemplary. A commendation is also due for Jacqui Myers for adeptly assuming the responsibilities of Acting CEO during Morgan's maternity leave.

A profound word of appreciation is reserved for the Koorana Board. Their unwavering passion, insights, and dedication have been pivotal in shaping our successes. It is with the concerted effort of each stakeholder that we stride confidently towards our mission and vision, day after day.

Lastly, and certainly not least, I wish to thank our staff team who strive each day to support children and families and bring our mission and vision to life.

Here's to a future filled with hope, milestones, and boundless possibilities.

**Sujeet Jena**  
President





**We believe that all children will grow and thrive if their families are well supported.**

### **I am pleased to present our Financial Year 2022-2023 annual report to our valued stakeholders.**

This has been a year of exciting changes for Koorana as we have finalised a range of important internal projects and seen growth within our team. We also have had the pleasure of establishing a sector advocacy group – the Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network (*the Network*) and engaging with our industry colleagues and government on important matters which will enable better experiences and outcomes for our families. The Network consists of not-for-profit providers of early intervention services who are committed to ensuring children and families are provided quality early childhood intervention services which are aligned to research-based best practice guidelines. Together, as a group, we have engaged on issues related to access to services, inclusion in services, quality of services and sustainability of the sector. This has been a positive reminder of the power of collaboration and codesign in addressing issues that matter.

Through this year, however, we have also experienced significant challenges in our Early Intervention and Allied Health teams as it relates to sustainability of those programs. In the post COVID-19 era we have seen significant service disruptions with our clients. There have been external limitations to our ability to support children in natural settings, and illness and the necessary caution required currently around this has impacted our ability to meet our staff targets and financial targets. Further, the lack of indexation to the NDIS Price Guide for our services for four years has further strained our bottom line.

During this time, we have met rising costs in wages to enable staff retention, adopted regulatory costs (e.g., increasing superannuation guarantee) and have seen operational costs rise due to COVID-19 and inflation. We have worn those costs without any increase to our price. This is an unsustainable position for not-for-profits like us and we call on the government to review the NDIS Price Guide and recognise the true costs of service delivery, especially service delivery that is delivered in line with best practice guidelines in early intervention (e.g., delivered in natural settings).

Despite these challenges, we are pleased with our internal projects and how these are enabling an improved working environment for our team, improved experience for our customers and efficiencies across the organisation.

### **Some of the highlights from the last year include:**

#### **1. Our People**

- Continued implementation of our stakeholder feedback strategy with latest results being:
  - Staff satisfaction of 54 NPS
  - Client satisfaction of 73 NPS
- Moving to a new office space which provides modern and collaborative facilities for our team.
- Implementation of our new Employment and Payroll systems which enable streamlined recruitment and induction, staff self-service, and streamlined timesheet and leave applications.

#### **2. Our Clients**

- An audit of our practices against the new Child Safe Standards and commencement of an action plan to enhance our child safety.
- Review of our practice standards and implementation of a range of quality improvement activities across all service areas.
- A review of our preschool model, especially around inclusion practice and pedagogy.
- Commencement of a research project to better understand the experience of Bengali families who are accessing services.

#### **3. Our Services**

- Further recruitment in our Early Intervention and Allied Health teams, including the appointment of two Physiotherapists and a Psychologist.
- Launching a new sensory gym at our head office.
- Council application for our new preschool which will open in late 2024 or early 2025.
- Upgrade of our Phillip Street Preschool facilities including a new landscaped section funded partially by the Community Building Partnership 2021 grant from the NSW government.
- Expansion of our social media content to bring expert knowledge to the general public and help parents on their parenting journey.

#### **4. Our Partners**

- Establishment of a sector advocacy network with 14 other providers called the Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network.
- Establishing and rebuilding relationships locally with face-to-face services becoming more common.

#### **5. Our Resilience**

- Commencement of a range of projects to transform our client management systems and tech stack to better meet our needs.
- Continued review of our policies to ensure they are fit-for purpose.
- Training for our leaders and key staff in Work Health and Safety.
- Training for our executives in early learning requirements to ensure best practice is maintained.
- The procurement of a new van for our Supported Playgroups team with the help of the Community Building Partnership 2022 grant.



Looking forward, internally Koorana will continue to be focused on these areas over the coming year with key focuses including:

- Implementation of new client management systems to better meet our needs.
- Implementation of a range of other IT applications to enhance our day-to-day operations and streamline the experience for our staff.
- Building and launch phase for our new preschool in Bass Hill.
- Establishment of our new Psychology and Behaviour Support services.
- Establishment of our services within the Sutherland shire.
- Review of our SIB's Club program to best meet families' needs and find sustainable funding options.

We will also be continuing to establish ourselves as a trusted advisor and parenting partner to families. We believe that all children will grow and thrive if their families are well supported.

Externally, we look forward to continuing to advocate alongside our colleagues in the Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network for improved use and access to best practice early intervention for all children and families.

As we close this year and look forward, as always, we would like to thank our staff team for their commitment and hard work. Without their passion and family-focus, we could not achieve what we do, and I am truly proud to know and work with each of them.

I would also like to thank our outgoing President, Rodney Timm, who retired from this position in December 2022. Rodney has been a fantastic mentor and support to me in my role as CEO, and a strategic leader for the Board and organisation. More broadly, I thank the Board for their continued support of the team. And I welcome Sujeet Jena to the role as President.

Lastly, we could not do what we do without our stakeholders including our local MPs, Hon. Sophie Cotsis, Ms Kylie Wilkinson and Hon. Tony Burke, our funding partners including Canterbury-Bankstown City Council, Canterbury League Club, Revesby Worker's Club, Colliers, The Smith Family, and other community partners. We look forward to working with all of you moving forward.

**Morgan A. Fitzpatrick**  
CEO







## OUR SERVICES

Koorana has been operating since 1976 supporting children and their families. We guide families to have supportive connections, discover possibilities and participate to their full potential in all aspects of family and community life.

This year, Koorana provided a broad range of therapeutic and educational services to 2,106 children and young people between the ages of 0-18 years and their families and 648 families through our Child and Family Support services.

### Our services are divided into streams of service activity:

- Early Childhood Education
- Early Intervention and Allied Health
- Child and Family Support

Our service streams support children and their families to access a variety of services embedded in their local schools, communities, and homes.

### Koorana strives for outcomes that are built upon a foundation of:

- Complete customer focus;
- Delivering evidence-based best practice;
- Service delivery in the natural environment;
- Continuous quality improvement;
- Financial sustainability; and
- A strong governance framework.

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**Koorana strives for an inclusive society where all children, of all abilities have complete and equal access to all possibilities.**



## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

### Preschools

Koorana operates two inclusive preschools within the Canterbury-Bankstown local government area. Phillip Street Preschool is located in Roselands offering 40 places per day and Croydon Street Preschool is located in Lakemba offering 24 places. Our opening hours are 8:15am to 3:45pm.

We cater to a culturally and linguistically diverse community. Our preschools belong to a multicultural community, with the following backgrounds: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Lebanese, Serbian, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Myanmar, Somalia, and Turkey.

Koorana preschools operate in alignment with the NSW Department of Education school terms (four terms in 10 weeks increment). Koorana preschools offer an innovative educational and intervention program model, based on the National Quality Framework for Early Education and Care Services and a commitment to equity and inclusion of all children. Both preschools are rated as "Meeting the National Quality Standard" for Early Education and Care Services.

Our unique preschools have 25% of the enrolments reserved for children with high learning support needs and disabilities. Many of these children are accessing NDIS for therapeutic therapies in a holistic integrated package based inclusively in the preschools.

We have a ratio of 1: 6 which is unique compared to the legal required 1:10 for children aged 3 to 5 years.

The educational program is designed and delivered by university-qualified and experienced early education teachers and educators, alongside integrated intervention programs for children with identified high support or additional learning needs, delivered by qualified allied health professionals.

Over the course of the financial year 2022-2023 our preschools enrolled the following children:

**298** Total children attending preschools

**188** Children attending Phillip Street

**110** Children attending Croydon Street

### Navigating Challenges in 2022-2023

Koorana's initial preschool challenge for 2022 was a staff shortage, which was experienced nationally for the early childhood sector, post COVID-19. Whilst we value our casual workforce and agency partners, not having consistent staffing was challenging for the children in our care. This also added financial burden for our centres.

### We celebrated many achievements during 2022-2023 and some of them are listed below:

#### New Staffing Structure

This year we increased our enrolments at Phillip Street Preschool from 36 to 40 children per day. This included an increase to 10 integrated higher learning support needs positions each day. At both preschools we in turn have also implemented a new preschool staff structure that provides additional support roles for the children.

As part of this staffing restructure, we introduced Educational Leaders who are independent from the Directors. Those who stepped into these roles did so with outstanding enthusiasm and dedication, and as a result, our educational programs are thriving.

#### The Preschool Intervention Review

Throughout this year, Koorana's commitment to enhancing our integrative approach to inclusive education has been a top priority. The preschool Directors, preschool Intervention Team Leader, Head of Early Childhood Education Services, and Head of Early Intervention and Allied Health Services have been actively engaging in ongoing discussions to assess and refine our approach.

A significant step forward has been the enhancement of our induction process, which now incorporates a dedicated section in the induction booklet focusing on integrative practice.

The primary goal of this refined induction booklet is to promote uniformity in information and approach, ensuring that our dedicated educators receive the support they need to seamlessly integrate this approach into their daily practices.

In addition to this, we have delved into several reflection sessions aimed at streamlining our approach, addressing topics such as:

- The planning and programming cycle;
- Resource requirements during therapy sessions; and
- Identifying potential opportunities for advocacy.

To gather valuable insights, we recently distributed surveys to both our staff members and clients as part of our comprehensive review process. The feedback received will play a pivotal role in shaping our future initiatives, including the development of a new policy and guidelines, the creation of new resources, and the establishment of an integrative approach framework.

This demonstrates our commitment to improving our approach and ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and their families.

#### Funding and Grants

##### Woolworths Land Care Grant for Croydon Street Preschool

This grant facilitated the acquisition of valuable resources aimed at promoting environmental consciousness among children and families. Our investment enabled us to introduce new, user-friendly bin systems and enrich our educational library with insightful books on recycling and reusing.

At Phillip Street Preschool, we have received funding to foster sustainability initiatives. Our dedicated team is working on implementing these initiatives to create a more environmentally responsible and forward-thinking learning environment.

##### Bankstown Central and Vicinity Community Grant

This grant aims to provide early intervention services to children attending our preschools, who need support and are currently unable to access therapy and Specialist Teachers through NDIS funding.





Landscaping after

### Preschool Landscaping

This year we were excited to see our front yard of the Phillip Street Preschool transformed to create a community yarning circle and new play space for the children. This project was generously made possible with the Community Building Partnership 2021 grant from the NSW Government. This completed Stage 2 of landscaping at Phillip Street Preschool.

We also have received funding for Stage 3 of landscape works in the backyard. Our aim was to introduce more natural features to the Phillip Street Preschool's backyard including bark, teepee, and a garden bed. This project was funded through the Department of Education's Quality and Participation Grant and has been completed.

### Other Successful Projects:

#### The Kitchen Garden Project

A few years ago, our preschools embarked on an exciting journey with the installation of three raised garden beds at each site. This marked the birth of our very own kitchen garden.

This season, we extended an open invitation to our families and the local community for an afternoon tea at Phillip Street Preschool. Together, we stood side by side with the children, guiding them as they planted herb and vegetable seedlings of their choice.

**Our collective efforts brought to life a garden tailored to our program, ready for children to explore the joys of cooking and food preparation.**

The Kitchen Garden Project seamlessly integrates with Phillip Street Preschool's educational programs. From tending the garden and witnessing plant growth to harvesting and preparing fresh produce, our children gain insights into healthy foods, nature, and the intricate web of connections between all living things. Our approach also nurtures crucial life skills like cooperation, sharing, and critical thinking, while enhancing language, literacy, and numeracy abilities among our young learners.



Landscaping before

#### Program and Practice

Both preschools have crafted unique curriculum vision statements aligned with the philosophies of our dedicated staff.

At Phillip Street Preschool, we have conducted an extensive review of our Program and Practice to enhance the quality of our educational offerings and better align with our evolving goals.

#### "The Front Project"

Koorana's Phillip Street Preschool and Croydon Street Preschool participated in The Front Project – Future Envisioning Conversations with Children & Families.

The Australian Government is working on an Early Years Strategy and undertaking important reforms to the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system. In August 2022, the First Minister at the National Cabinet agreed to work together on a long-term vision for the ECEC system to 'support parent's workforce participation and deliver improved early learning and child development outcomes as a national priority.'

The Front Project and Koorana have been collaborating to engage children and families in activities that will ensure their voices are included in our advocacy work for shaping national, shared visions for the future of early learning.

This project aims to understand children, families and professionals' future aspirations for early learning in Australia. In doing so, we can highlight the implications for early childhood or social sector reforms across Australia.

This project has been a remarkable success, empowering children aged 0-6 to shape their preschool's future, bolstering critical thinking, life skills, and wellbeing. By actively engaging children, Koorana has joined stakeholders nationwide in shaping a shared vision for the future of early learning in Australia.

This collective vision will guide us in developing strategies, shared aspirations, and a unified sense of purpose, transforming the early learning system to ensure every child, family, and community thrives.

#### Environmental Sustainability

Additionally, are proud to announce our commitment to sustainability with the Croydon Street Preschool being a "Plastic Bag Reduced Preschool" initiative.

Our "ECO Kids Project" underscores our dedication to instilling environmental awareness in our young learners, fostering a generation of environmentally responsible citizens.





## EARLY INTERVENTION AND ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES

### > Client Access to our Early Intervention Services

Koorana's Client Access team serves as a vital gateway to our intervention services. Our team comprises Early Childhood Specialist Teachers with a profound understanding of early intervention, NDIS, and the unique developmental needs of children. We ensure that every family referred to Koorana has the opportunity to connect with our Specialist Teachers, who guide them through understanding their funding packages and illuminates the service possibilities available within Koorana.

**Throughout the year, our Client Access team engaged with hundreds of local families, offering invaluable support as they navigated the often-intricate NDIS process for the first time or sought assistance with ongoing NDIS plans.**

While the NDIS planning process aids families in setting goals for a child with additional needs, our Koorana team members take this a step further, helping families break these overarching goals into manageable components. They assist in identifying the ideal therapists to address specific needs and help families determine the number of sessions and types of therapy covered during the funded period.

Accessing intervention services can be a complex and overwhelming process. Koorana's approach is intentionally designed to provide steadfast support to families, helping them understand the intervention process, pinpoint the most effective supports for their child, and manage any adjustments or changes to their plans during reviews and renewals. Our Client Access team stands by families during transitions, such as school enrolment or departure, ensuring a seamless continuum of care and support.

This is a service Koorana provides free of charge to its families.

675

Children supported



NDIS audit completed successfully



Foundation for Growth Program Launched



## › Intervention and Service Delivery

Koorana's Early Intervention and Allied Health team is made up of a diverse mix of therapists and teachers, united in their passion and drive to see the children of South and South-West Sydney achieve their goals and enjoy a safe and fulfilling childhood. The Early Intervention and Allied Health practitioners work according to the best practice guidelines to deliver educational and therapeutic supports to children between the ages of 0 and 18, and their families.

The principles of best practice guide the team's service delivery and set the gold standard for how we structure and carry out sessions with children and their supports. We prioritise therapy in **natural environments**, understanding that children learn best when therapy is contextualised to their home, school, or other community setting. We operate under a capacity building model, whereby our focus is not one-on-one therapy and treating an impairment, but in building the capacity of the child and their supporters to continue to implement therapeutic and educational strategies to enable them to reach their goals. The highly trained and capable team employs **evidence-based** practice in the preparation of their intervention plans, ensuring that funding and time are used appropriately to achieve outcomes. Finally, our practice is **family-centred**, understanding both the diversity and centrality of families and how this effects our service delivery.

The therapists and teachers of the team work in a highly collaborative manner, coming together to share goals and concerns and to collectively plan for future sessions. The team is dedicated to their own and their colleagues' professional development, and many opportunities are given for the team to share learnings from formal training or experiences with children they support. Our Team Leaders are particularly experienced and are dedicated to the growth and support of their team. They regularly meet with each member of their discipline-specific team and provide feedback, clinical supervision, and support. They represent their teams in terms of their concerns and requirements and are constructive and positive when coming together to plan for the future of the wider team.

## Navigating Transitions and Challenges in 2022

2022 marked a period of significant leadership change within the Early Intervention and Allied Health team after the departure of our long-standing operational manager. The team's relocation to a new office on Canterbury Road towards the year's end, coupled with the implementation of revised travel billing procedures, introduced further adjustments for the team.

Owing to their determined efforts, ongoing consultation, and an abundance of behind the scenes work by our Client Access team and Intake team, services were able to continue with little disruption. Though testing and difficult at the time, these changes have left Koorana in a better position, with increased ability to continue to meet the emerging needs of a dynamic community and cover costs.

The Financial Year 2022-2023 has seen Koorana add two disciplines to the Early Intervention and Allied Health team. Our services have expanded to include Physiotherapy and Psychology, in addition to Occupational Therapy, Specialist Teachers, and Speech Pathology. This has been a welcome response to the significant need for these services as expressed by the families of the child we support. Koorana is proud to offer these services and delighted with the new therapy and teaching staff that have joined this year.

Providing therapy within school settings has presented growing challenges. Public schools, understandably, are concerned about the potential disruption therapists may pose to their students in the classroom, leading to an increased denial of access. While Koorana remains committed to advocating for children with disabilities in this context, we also acknowledge the need for enhancements in our therapy model and communication with schools. Our aim is to establish ourselves as the preferred therapy provider to address these concerns. We are dedicated to strengthening our relationships with schools, and we are encouraged to report that these efforts have resulted in new referrals.

## Empowering Growth: The "Foundations for Growth" Program

In the Financial Year 2022-2023, Koorana achieved a successful launch of the inaugural year of the "Foundations for Growth" program, in collaboration with the Communities for Children initiative by The Smith Family.

This program involved our dedicated Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, and Speech Pathologists, who screened, assessed, and provided crucial therapy and capacity-building support to nearly 100 children attending five government schools in the Bankstown region.

The overwhelming positive reception of the program by the participating schools has led to the commencement of its second year in 2023-2024, furthering our commitment to nurturing growth and development within our community.





## CHILD AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

**We are dedicated to fostering an environment where play-based learning takes centre stage, while simultaneously empowering families to actively engage in their children's early educational journeys.**

In this path, we have achieved significant milestones that have reshaped the landscape of our child and family supports. From empowering parents with essential skills and knowledge to emphasising the transformative power of play and early learning, our Supported Playgroups and our Start Strong Pathways teams have become an example in the community.

The collaboration between our dedicated teams, families, and the broader community has resulted in a holistic approach to early childhood development, enriching lives across various domains.

**In our continuous efforts to promote high-quality play-based learning, significant achievements have been accomplished:**

- **Empowering Parents:** Parents have acquired invaluable skills, knowledge, and fresh confidence to provide developmentally appropriate play activities for their children at home.
- **Emphasising Play as a Learning Tool:** Through a multitude of engaging activities and experiences at all our playgroup sessions, families have gained a profound appreciation for the fundamental role of play in early childhood development, particularly in the first three years, which significantly impacts brain development.
- **Modelling Excellence:** The Supported Playgroups and the Start Strong Pathways teams have consistently exemplified high-level teaching, knowledge, and skills, providing opportunities for parents to engage in enriching experiences that expand curriculum learning. This collaborative effort has enriched learning across various domains, catering to individual children's interests and needs.
- **Recognising the Significance of Early Learning and Play:** Families have embraced a deep understanding of the crucial role that play and early learning play in children's development and learning. Exposure to these settings has cultivated essential skills that set children on a path to success in life and school.
- **Building Collaborative Relationships:** Our team has established and maintained respectful and collaborative relationships with parents, families, and teachers, prioritising children's learning and overall wellbeing.
- **Responsive Family Engagement:** Families have benefited from our responsive approach, where we actively address their concerns about their children's learning and wellbeing. We have also connected them to vital support networks and referral services.
- **Community Connection:** By initiating and implementing opportunities and networks, families have actively engaged in the multicultural community. These connections have fostered valuable interactions, allowing families to meet, share stories, and learn from one another, further enhancing the sense of community and shared experiences.







### Supported Playgroups

Koorana's Supported Playgroups program provides a soft entry point to early childhood education where children are exposed to play-based experiences that promote early learning potential. We provide support for parents and carers in their parenting role to enhance family functioning and assist families to establish supportive social connections.

Facilitators program an all-inclusive play-based learning environment where children, aged 0-6 can socialise, play, develop new skills, and boost wellbeing.

Facilitators support the enhancement of the parent-child relationship with the aim to increase parental understanding, skills and confidence in supporting their child's development and early childhood learning.

We provide a safe environment for parents and children to establish ongoing social support networks and connection.

Facilitators provide families with access to information, advice, and referral to internal and external services in the community.

#### Locations for Financial Year 2022-2023

##### Playgroup in the park – Canterbury:

- Jubilee Reserve Lakemba, Harcourt Reserve Campsie, St Mary Mackillop Canterbury, Terry Lamb Reserve Belmore

##### Playgroup in the park – Bankstown:

- Bankstown City Gardens, Johnstone Reserve Revesby

##### Playgroup in a venue – Canterbury:

- Lakemba Uniting Church Hall

##### Playgroup in a venue – Bankstown:

- Bankstown PCYC

#### Playgroup numbers for Financial Year 2022-2023

1,339

Identified clients registered and attending playgroups

624

Hours in total of playgroup time

498

Families attending playgroups

312

Individual supported playgroup sessions

39

Weeks of face to face service delivery

8

Playgroup locations

##### Playgroup in the park – Canterbury:

- Jubilee Reserve Lakemba – 345 identified clients registered and attending
- Harcourt Reserve Campsie – 109 identified clients registered and attending
- St Mary Mackillop Canterbury – 174 identified clients registered and attending
- Terry Lamb Reserve Belmore – 285 identified clients registered and attending

##### Playgroup in the park – Bankstown:

- Bankstown City Gardens – 394 identified clients registered and attending
- Johnstone Reserve Revesby - 468 identified clients registered and attending

##### Playgroup in a venue – Canterbury:

- Lakemba Uniting Church Hall - 268 identified clients registered and attending

##### Playgroup in a venue – Bankstown:

- Bankstown PCYC – 305 identified clients registered and attending



## Empowering Communities: Collaborative Achievements in the Supported Playgroups World

In our ongoing pursuit of excellence, we extend our gratitude to the Canterbury-Bankstown Council, who, through the Community Grants and Events Sponsorship Program, played an integral role in our mission to enrich the lives of families through our family support services. Together, we achieved significant milestones that have transformed the landscape of early childhood support, creating meaningful experiences for all involved.

Under this partnership, **Uncle Jimmy**, a respected local Aboriginal elder, delivered an Aboriginal educational program during five playgroup sessions held across parks in the Canterbury-Bankstown local government areas. The program encapsulated the rich knowledge of Aboriginal culture through storytelling, music, and enlightening ecology walks within the parks. This immersive approach of incorporating Aboriginal knowledge and education at playgroup sessions has significantly enriched the learning experiences for all our families.

More than just educational, these sessions served as an opportunity for our families to collectively build a shared wealth of knowledge. This knowledge, in turn, acts as a pathway towards a deeper understanding and profound respect for the world's oldest, continuously thriving culture.

Uncle Jimmy's involvement extended to supporting our playgroup facilitators in gaining cultural confidence and proficiency. His guidance has played a pivotal role in integrating Aboriginal viewpoints into our planning and programming, establishing meaningful connections with indigenous families and local community groups.

In further collaboration with the Community Participation Team from Canterbury Hospital and with the invaluable support of a regular interpreter, our Supported Playgroups team delivered engaging and educational monthly sessions. Throughout the Financial Year 2022-2023, we explored various crucial topics such as accessing local Child and Family Health Nurse services, the importance of oral health care, healthy eating, and active play experiences. These sessions not only provided essential information but also fostered connections between families and vital healthcare resources.

Furthermore, we had the privilege of welcoming community partners such as Constable Elise from Campsie Local Area Command and Road Safety Officer Carol from Canterbury-Bankstown Council. These visits served to raise awareness and educate our families about topics such as road safety, stranger danger, and how to contact community helpers in times of need.

Throughout the year, we were fortunate to collaborate with Early Years Specialists from EACH, an NDIS Partner in the Community, who offered invaluable developmental support to children and families. Additionally, our collaboration with Canterbury-Bankstown Council extended to a memorable outing to Sydney Zoo at Eastern Creek during the April school holidays, providing playgroup families with a day of adventure and education.

Every week, our dedicated playgroup facilitators continue to serve as a vital resource for parents, providing information, advice, and referrals to internal and external services in the community, offering unconditional support for the wellbeing of their children and families.

These collaborative achievements underscore our commitment to empowering families, enriching lives, and fostering strong community bonds. Together, we have created a lasting impact in the lives of those we serve, exemplifying the essence of community support and the power of collective effort.

## Overcoming Challenges

Throughout the year, Koorana Supported Playgroups confronted and effectively managed a series of challenges. One significant obstacle was the increasing demand for service delivery in the Canterbury-Bankstown districts. As our services continued to gain recognition and trust, the demand for our support grew, requiring meticulous planning and resource allocation to meet these needs effectively.

Another notable challenge involved the recruitment of staff. In an environment where talent is in high demand, finding and retaining skilled professionals was a crucial focus. Ensuring our team remains adequately staffed with the right expertise is essential to sustain our growth and uphold our commitment to providing exceptional services. These challenges, while demanding, were met with dedication and strategic solutions, allowing us to continue our mission of supporting children, families, and communities.

 [Join our Facebook community](#)





## ➤ Start Strong Pathways

Koorana's Start Strong Pathways program is designed for families with young children under 6 years of age, focusing on the younger years.

The purpose of the program is to support families and provide pathways into early childhood education for their children.

The program facilitates four playgroup sessions per week and the target locations include Campsie, Lakemba and Wiley Park.

The playgroups are teacher-led, play-based learning with explicit learning outcomes for all children. The Early Years Learning Framework guides the program, and the learning environments provide opportunities for all children to extend their learning and development.

Start Strong Pathways is staffed by Early Childhood Teachers and works in collaboration with families. The program also draws on the expertise of other professionals to share information about children's learning and development on topics such as:

- Child development and education;
- Health, oral health and wellbeing;
- Road safety;
- Toilet training; and
- Transition to School (TTS).

In the Financial Year 2022-2023, a significant milestone was achieved by enrolling over 200 children to actively participate in the program.

These children benefit from playgroup sessions held four times a week, each running two hours, creating a consistent and enriching learning experience. Our program prides itself on inclusivity and celebrates diversity, with over 97% of participating families coming from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Furthermore, our strong partnerships with families extend beyond the program itself. The Start Strong Pathways program has facilitated the enrolment process for families seeking preschool education and care, ensuring access to quality early childhood education.

Collaborating with professionals in the sector, the program actively engages with the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Partners, reinforcing our commitment to supporting the holistic development of children and families in our community.

“

**A family with one child recently visited a Supported Playgroup in the park [delivered under the Start Strong Pathways program]. The mother was highly concerned about her child's development. Through active listening and gaining information from the parent about their child and observing the child, I was able to interpret the information for ongoing planning. I sent via email relevant information, resources, and community programs to promote the child's wellbeing, development, and learning.**

**The child and mother continue to attend the weekly playgroup session and a positive and trusting partnership is growing. The mother is becoming more confident in her parenting.**

**We are happy to note that the child is currently on a waiting list to a local community-based preschool.**

**Early Childhood Educator**

## Fostering Inclusivity and Family Partnerships: Celebrating Achievements

In our continuous pursuit of inclusive learning environments and building strong partnerships with families, the Start Strong Pathways program consistently offers enriching learning opportunities. Several notable successes from our program are highlighted below:

**Dental Week Celebration:** The team joined the community in celebrating Dental Week through engaging songs, conversations, stories, and shared experiences, all emphasising the significance of dental care. As a bonus, dental kits were distributed to all the children. The impact of this initiative was evident when a mother shared her child was no longer scared of brushing their teeth and indeed brushed morning and night!

**Promoting Healthy Eating Habits:** During progressive morning tea sessions, our teachers actively modelled and discussed healthy eating habits with the children. As a result, a positive shift was observed in the children's eating behaviours. Many children now bring a piece of fruit to share and take pride in discussing their healthy snacks with both peers and teachers.

**Fostering Collaborative Partnerships:** Our collaborative efforts with community health services have facilitated connections for families to openly discuss their child's development.

This has resulted in valuable referrals made to support the development of their children. Additionally, strategies for promoting children's learning at home are being actively shared, contributing to holistic child development and family engagement.

In the first half of 2023, we proudly established a meaningful partnership with MTC Australia, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to making a positive impact. Together, we started on a journey to provide invaluable support to parents of young children through their return-to-work coaching program. This initiative was further supported by Start Strong Pathways program, designed to guide families to navigate the early learning and childcare system and ensuring accessibility for their children.

The results of this collaborative effort have been nothing short of inspiring. Notably, several mothers who attended our programs have successfully re-entered the workforce. Their journey reflects the transformative power of support, guidance, and opportunities in helping individuals achieve their career aspirations while balancing the responsibilities of parenthood.

## Overcoming Challenges and Strengthening the Start Strong Pathways Team

The Financial Year 2022-2023 marked the establishment of a new Start Strong Pathways team, with Patricia Angelopoulos joining in July 2022 and Khine Lwin commencing her role in April this year. Through a dedicated process of critical reflection and continuous professional development, the team has successfully implemented a program that aligns seamlessly with the Department of Education's Start Strong Pathways program and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

This year, we have made significant investments in early childhood resources, enriching our program, and enhancing the learning experience for children. Additionally, we have introduced a 6-week Transition to School (TTS) program specifically designed for children who have had no prior exposure to preschool. Furthermore, we have taken proactive steps to provide families with weekly resources and literature to support their children's education and care at home.

Looking ahead, our vision is to foster closer collaboration with the Campsie community, strengthening our ties and working together to create an even more supportive and inclusive learning environment for all children and families in the area.



## > SIBs Club

Koorana has been running a SIBs Club program for over 15 years to support the siblings who have a brother or sister with a disability.

Experienced staff work collaboratively to deliver a recreational program for children aged between 7-12 years. The objective of the program is to support and help siblings manage and understand their experience related to having a sibling with additional needs and build social supports and friendships with peers who can relate to their situation.

Due to COVID-19, we saw reductions in engagement with the program and in this financial year we have begun reviewing with families the most valuable way to continue the program and meet their needs.

## Canterbury Child and Family Interagency (CCFI)

CCFI is a project funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. It aims to facilitate professional networking and to promote interagency collaboration across the Canterbury region. This interagency collaboration ensures that outcomes are improved and coordinated so that all children have equal access to services in the Canterbury region.

This year we continued to welcome new members to the CCFI Group, and the network had over 200 workers on the mailing list. Over 80 child and family workers participated in regular interagency meetings, training, and a variety of collaborative projects. The interagency meetings have been an important platform for workers to share information, discuss local issues and develop plans and strategies to address them.

The services that are represented at the CCFI include health, education, Council, child protection, family support, disability support, community neighbourhood centres, multicultural services and ethnic community organisations.

In the 2022 July school holidays, we had a wonderful community engagement event. Over three hundred children and their parents took part in the event and enjoyed various fun activities.

Those activities ranged from arts and crafts to Zumba dancing and volleyball games. Families also had a good opportunity to connect with each other, as well as with local child and family services.

We continued to support the local child and family sector by providing information and training. For instance, the "Raising Concerns with Families" workshop was well attended by local childcare and preschool educators. It equipped workers with strategies to raise concerns with families and build a positive partnership with them.

Throughout the year we have worked with other interagency networks and advocated for families who have been further disadvantaged due to COVID-19, including children missing out on key services. One was the "Transition to School" project which aimed to help families in preparing their children for schooling.

Overall, the team at Koorana has risen to the challenge presented by the post COVID-19 pandemic and excelled in many ways. The engagement with families has improved significantly both in quality and quantity and there are aspects of service delivery developed which we will be able to continue in the future.





## OUR STORIES

### ➤ Meet the Baniks Family

Our journey with Koorana began this year when Ahmad joined the preschool following supported interviews in May. Ahmad is a beneficiary of the preschool early intervention program, which includes Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and guidance from a Specialist Teacher.

Without a doubt, Ahmad has shown incredible progress. He has become more expressive and interactive with his peers. The use of the augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device has been instrumental in his speech development. He is now exploring various sensory activities like slime and playdough and even welcomes friends to join in his play. He is taken a significant step forward in approaching other children and engaging with them.



“It’s an amazing feeling. When I pick him up from Koorana, I see a happy, confident child. Witnessing the activities, he now enjoys at Koorana, like painting, playing with slime, doing puzzles, working with numbers, blocks, and the sandpit, fills me with joy.”

Ahmad relishes the variety of activities offered at Koorana. Ahmad’s father believe the new Koorana therapeutic preschool model is a great step forward, encouraging active involvement and mutual support among the children.

“Certainly, Ahmad has made progress in engaging with other children, improving his speech, and developing better tolerance for being around peers.”

“

**I recommend Koorana without hesitation. I’ve already recommended Koorana to my husband’s cousin, whose child has been diagnosed with autism and was facing challenges at their previous childcare. Koorana is my go-to recommendation for anyone looking for comprehensive support.”**

After his first early learning experience in another service, it was terrible, and Ahmad’s father used to experience anxiety. But now, he is content knowing that Ahmad is happy at Koorana, and the team knows how to cater to his needs. He has a strong and effective relationship with the Koorana team, and the team communicates well: “Koorana, with its specialised focus, has been a game-changer”.

“Parenthood is a learning journey, and I acknowledge that I don’t have all the answers, so I’m grateful for the support and guidance I receive”.

### ➤ Meet the Pham Family

Back in 2009, the Pham family, led by mom Kim Vui, embarked their remarkable journey with Koorana. It all began with a Supported Playgroup in Campsie, Canterbury. Kim Vui and her first child, Hannah, quickly found themselves attending weekly sessions, making new friends with facilitators and other families in the community.

As the years went by, a new addition, Emmanuel, joined the family in 2011. This led to an exciting development – they started attending playgroups twice a week! During this time, the playgroup facilitators became like a guiding light for Kim Vui. They not only helped her understand how to support her children’s development but also connected her with formal and informal support networks.

The Pham family’s playgroup journey continued until Hannah and Emmanuel headed off to school.

Fast forward to 2021, and Kim Vui reached out to the playgroup team online. This time, she had some concerns about Emmanuel’s development at school, and she had just welcomed her third child, Mia.

With Mia in tow, Kim Vui reinitiated her connection with our Supported Playgroups, attending as many as four sessions per week. The playgroup facilitators stepped in to assist Kim Vui in addressing Emmanuel’s development concerns, leading to a formal diagnosis and ongoing Speech and Occupational Therapy from both Koorana and National360.

Over the last year, Kim Vui raised new concerns, this time about Mia’s speech and language development. The playgroup facilitators are currently helping Kim Vui with an external referral to explore Mia’s support needs further. Kim Vui remains closely connected with the Supported Playgroups team, attending multiple sessions each week with her daughter Mia.

With the playgroup facilitators’ guidance, Mia’s therapy goals continue to extend in this nurturing environment.

This remarkable journey is a testament to the incredible support and empowerment Koorana offers to families in our community. It’s a story of growth, connection, and a whole lot of heart.

### ➤ Meet Louis

“We have been involved with Koorana since 2020, referred by The Shepard Centre. We get our Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy via Koorana and couldn’t be happier. Louis really loves going to the sessions and is grinning ear to ear in the sessions. There have been substantial improvements since starting with Koorana. Louis can more confidently move his body and manipulate objects with his hands.

As a parent, seeing Louis’ improvement is the highlight of my life. Louis loves the sessions at Koorana as all the sessions feel like he is there to play. He will work on his fine motor skills with toys and gross motor skills in the gym room. It caters to all his needs and interests.

I would recommend Koorana to any parents who are looking for support for their child. Koorana has the people and the expertise to help your child improve and grow.”

Louis’ journey exemplifies the positive impact that early intervention and specialised therapy can have on a child’s development. At Koorana, we’re dedicated to providing comprehensive support, in line with best practice guidelines, and creating an environment where children like Louis can thrive, learn, and enjoy every step of their journey towards growth and independence.



## OUR STORIES

### > Sonia's Story

"It has been an incredible 12-year journey with Koorana, and our story began with the Early Connections Playgroup. Koorana used to run this wonderful playgroup, which quickly became a beloved part of our lives. The playgroup sessions were three hours long, and we spent the first hour and a half playing together with our children. Parents, workers, Occupational Therapists, and Speech Therapists all joined in, creating a supportive community for our kids."

Sonia's mother noticed that Sonia needed more support so not long after, they started incorporating therapy into their routine. During this time, we had the privilege of meeting the incredible Doctor Blackmore. He had a list of recommendations for us, one of which was to enrol our child in a specific preschool, KU. Additionally, he provided us with a list of organisations in the Bankstown area offering therapy services, with Koorana being at the top of his list.

The Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy sessions became a regular part of their week, and this consistent support has continued for the past 12 years. Leo, Sonia's sibling also joined us at Koorana in the SIBs Club. It has been a journey filled with warmth, dedication, and in unconditional support.

However, the path was not without its challenges. COVID-19 brought about massive disruptions, and Leo missed the opportunity to continue attending the SIBs Club.

"I would like to highlight Koorana's Client Access team, particularly Kathy, who has been a beacon of support. They accommodated our family wherever we were, whether it was at home, in parks, or any other location.

“

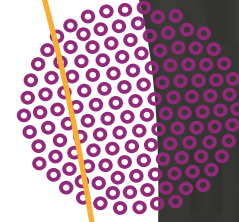
**The level of care and understanding has been truly exceptional.”**

“Our experience with Koorana has been nothing short of amazing. We've received Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and now Psychology support. The progress our child, Sonia, has made is nothing short of beyond belief. When we started, we had doubts about her ability to communicate, but now are incredibly proud to see her evolving into a young chef.”

She bakes her own cakes, conquering her fear of the heat and blossoming into a remarkable individual. Her journey has been marked by tremendous growth in social interaction, language skills, understanding idioms, budgeting, telling time, and mathematical equations. The support she received from Koorana has been comprehensive, and the progress has been remarkable.

Additionally, one heartwarming experience that Odile (one of Koorana's Speech Therapists) shares with Sonia is their regular trips to the IGA for shopping. This shared activity not only promotes independence but also strengthens their bond.

“Koorana has been our constant source of support and growth, and we're so satisfied with the care and services that we don't want to go anywhere else. It's been a journey of transformation, and we look forward to continuing working with Koorana by our side.”





## LOOKING FORWARD FOR OUR SERVICES

**We are looking forward to the Financial Year 2023-2024. Below we have outlined our focuses and goals:**

### Preschools

- **Phillip Street Assessment and Rating:** Achieving a positive assessment and rating for Phillip Street Preschool, reflecting our commitment to high-quality education.
- **3rd Preschool Development:** Advancing our mission with the development of our third preschool.
- **Landscaping Enhancements:** Ongoing landscaping projects at both preschools to create vibrant and welcoming environments.
- **Policy and Procedure Refinement:** Continuing our rigorous review of policies and procedures to maintain excellence and relevance.

### Early Intervention and Allied Health

- **Expanding Services:** Introducing Behaviour Support Practitioners: Koorana is dedicated to aligning our service offerings with the needs of the surrounding communities. Recently, we have had many of our families and practitioners identify a need for positive behaviour support for their children. The Early Intervention and Allied Health team is therefore looking to expand its service offerings once more to include a team of Behaviour Support Practitioners. Positive behaviour support improves quality of life by assessing, understanding and changing behaviour, and putting appropriate supports in the child's environment. We are excited to branch out in this direction and hope to be offering the service soon.
- **Strengthening Our Teams:** Psychology and Physiotherapy Growth: Having introduced our Psychology and Physiotherapy services, we plan to grow these teams in the coming year. We want to capitalise on the peer learning that occurs within a discipline and between disciplines as part of working in a transdisciplinary model. Growing our Psychology and Physiotherapy teams not only allows us to provide more services but will increase the quality of all our services.
- **Community Outreach:** Extending Workshops and Programs: The Foundations for Growth program has included the development of parent and teacher workshops, which have been well received. We recognise the potential such resources have to benefit others in our community, and plan to adapt these workshops to offer more widely. We will also be continuing with the Foundations for Growth program itself, continuing in four of the five schools from 2022-2023 and starting in one new school.

### Supported Playgroups

The Supported Playgroups team is committed to delivering high-quality playgroup services to eight different locations across the Canterbury-Bankstown districts. We will continue with our dedication to providing a nurturing and enriching environment for all families and their children.

- **Expanding Our Team** In our ongoing efforts to enhance the services we offer; we are excited to welcome three new staff members to the playgroup team. Their expertise and enthusiasm will undoubtedly contribute to the positive experiences of the families we serve.
- **New Venue-Based Playgroup** Beginning in the fourth term of 2023, we are thrilled to introduce a new venue-based playgroup at Riverwood Public School. This expansion represents our ongoing commitment to making our services accessible and beneficial to more families in the community.

### Start Strong Pathways

- We look forward to participating in review of the Start Strong Pathways program in 2023 along with the NSW government.
- In the meantime, we aim to ensure that every toddler has the opportunity to enrol in an early childhood education and care setting, paving the way for a bright future. Our aspiration is that every child, when they reach the age of three, will have the chance to receive a preschool education, setting the stage for their lifelong learning journey. We will continue working toward this goal in the year ahead.

### SIBs Club

- We will be reviewing family feedback received and considering the best way to support the mission of this program through partnership and collaboration.







## WORKING GROUPS

**Our dedicated team members have implemented and started to actively participate in various working groups. These groups are leading our culture and helping to embed our values in practice.**

**Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP):**  
Nurturing partnerships and initiatives to support reconciliation

Koorana acknowledges that reconciliation is everyone's business and for everyone's benefit.

The purpose of this working group is to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan for Koorana, increase our connection to the local Indigenous community, improve our practices to be respectful and open to the community, and improve our understanding of issues which affect reconciliation.

The group has begun working under the Reconciliation Australia Framework.

**Sustainability:**  
Fostering eco-conscious practices and a greener future

The purpose of this working group is to assist Koorana to positively contribute to climate change by adopting measures which reduce our carbon footprint and impact on the environment. This group will also be looking at sustainability from various points of view (e.g., employment, wellbeing, finance) and identify steps and actions that we can take to make an impact in these areas.

The group has started the discussion and started meaningful initiatives which already have been embedded in our services such as a pilot program focused on reduction of plastic usage at Koorana Croydon Street Preschool.

**Work Health and Safety:**  
Ensuring the wellbeing and safety of our community

The purpose of Koorana's Workplace Health and Safety Advisory Committee is to assist Koorana to provide a safe and healthy environment for all employees, contractors and visitors. The group will be responsible for reviewing, developing, implementing and monitoring workplace health and safety policies, procedures and practices.

The Work Health and Safety Advisory Committee has started to provide feedback, advice and support to the organisation.

**Diversity and Inclusion:**  
Championing diversity and equitable participation for all

The purpose of this working group is to improve inclusion and safety within Koorana from various perspectives including culture, language, gender, disability/medical/or other special needs, sexual orientation, etc.

The activities of this group will support and assess Koorana's operations to identify opportunities to improve Koorana's inclusion, engage with relevant teams and stakeholders to seek feedback about potential areas for improvement, prepare recommendations for the Executive Leadership Team where opportunities are identified, develop an implementation and change management plan where initiatives are approved, and oversee the implementation of these initiative.

The group has already held multiple meetings to start working on an action plan that will include training, fun activities and celebrations.



## KOORANA'S COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

**Koorana Child & Family Services is dedicated to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in all our programs and activities.**

As part of our ongoing efforts to uphold this commitment, we have conducted a comprehensive self-assessment and successfully developed an action plan to ensure we fully meet the Child Safe Standards. This evaluation has resulted in valuable insights into our progress towards implementing the Child Safe Standards, and we are pleased to share our findings.

Our self-assessment has shown that Koorana has robust practices, processes and systems in place to meet the Child Safe Standards. Our highest priorities for continuous development lie in Standards 3, 7, and 8, which encompass aspects such as Family and Community Involvement, Training, and both Physical and Online Environments.

We are dedicated to making significant advancements in these areas to provide the best possible environment for children and young people under our care.

We are pleased to report that we have excelled in several key areas, demonstrating our strong performance in maintaining the Child Safe Standards. Notable standards where we have excelled include Standard 4: Equity and Diversity, Standard 5: Human Resource Management, and Standard 10: Policies and Procedures.

These achievements reflect our continued dedication to fostering inclusivity, effective human resource management, and robust policies and procedures.

In addition, Koorana has taken steps to ensure that our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy remains up-to-date, accessible, and well understood. We have made this policy available to our team members and conducted informative workshops to promote its understanding and implementation. This proactive approach ensures that our commitment to child safety is effectively communicated throughout our organisation.

Furthermore, our team has undertaken essential training to better equip them for their roles in maintaining a safe environment for children and young people.

This training includes:

- SAFE Series delivered by the Office of the Children's Guardian.
- Risk of Significant Harm Process session – Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).
- Positive Behaviour/Restrictive Practice session – Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT).
- Child Safe Online course refresher.

We are resolute in our dedication to continuous improvement. Koorana will persist in advancing our practices, policies, and procedures to create an environment where children and young people can flourish, knowing they are safe and valued.







## OUR PEOPLE

Koorana Staff as of June 2023

> **72**

**Staff members**

**28**

Early Intervention and Allied Health practitioners

**16**

Early Childhood Educators in Preschools

**11**

Staff members in Corporate Services

**4**

Staff members in Client Access



**18**

Early Childhood Educators



**9**

Speech Pathologists



**8**

Occupational Therapists



**6**

Specialist Teachers



**5**

Casual Workers



**2**

Social Workers



**2**

Physiotherapists



**1**

Psychologist

“

**Koorana is dedicated to becoming a great place to work, where our teams find an incredible environment to thrive. We believe in offering our team members a positive, supportive atmosphere, surrounded by fantastic colleagues. Here, they can pursue their professional aspirations, enjoy flexibility for a harmonious work-life balance, and have the opportunity to have the best of both worlds.**



## GOVERNANCE REPORT

### The Board of Directors

As a community not-for-profit organisation, Koorana is run by a Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for the governance of Koorana and its outputs.

Board membership is voluntary. Board members bring with them specific professional expertise in finance, IT, property, education, human resources, law and not-for-profit management.

To ensure due diligence, four subcommittees complement the general Board structure:

- Stakeholder Feedback
- Risk Management
- Governance and Performance
- Finance



**Sujeet Jena**  
President  
2022 - Present

Sujeet joined the Koorana Board in 2018 and took on the role of President in December 2022.

Sujeet Jena is a senior finance, audit, technology and risk executive with career highlights from global professional services, the community sector, academia and arts in Asia, USA and Australia. He is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Fellow of Chartered Accountants of India. Sujeet is also a leader of an Australia-wide cultural community organisation. He is a keen Gardner and bushwalker.



**Allan Laurie**  
Vice President  
2017 - Present

Allan is an executive search consultant with a background in business analytics, operational performance talent identification/assessment/attraction, business development and government advisory. He consults to a group of diverse businesses in the Local, State and Commonwealth Government, infrastructure, heavy engineering, agriculture, education, health, social purpose, and the cultural sectors.



**Rodney Timm**  
Non-Executive Director  
2022 - Present

Rodney Timm joined the Koorana Board in 2016. He was Koorana's President from 2018 until December 2022.

Rodney has in excess of 30 years' experience in the construction and real estate industry and has been involved in property and facilities management, valuation and development. He has provided consultancy services to both the property funds management and the corporate real estate sectors.



**Syed Ammar Hasan**  
Treasurer  
2008 - Present

Syed came to know about the work of Koorana when his children, now aged 15 and 17, attended one of the Supported Playgroups. Syed is the Senior Finance Manager at Toll Logistics. He is the Finance lead for their Retail, Consumer, Auto (RCA) and Grocery divisions. Syed brings with him a wealth of knowledge on best practice financial reporting. Syed has influenced Koorana's development of financial procedures and reporting. Syed joined the board in 2008.



**Jodie Rollason**  
Non-Executive Director  
2021 - Present

Jodie joined the Board in 2021 as a non-executive Director. Bringing over 10 years' experience in the not-for-profit sector, Jodie is the CEO of MYST (Mountains Youth Services Team). With her passion for helping disadvantaged communities, Jodie thrives on advocacy and is committed to reducing social inequalities and systemic barriers to providing opportunities for the most vulnerable.



**Luisa Vumbaca**  
Non-Executive Director  
2021 - Present

Luisa joined the Koorana Board in 2021 as a Non-executive Director. Bringing a wealth of industry experience, Luisa is a strategically focused senior marketing and communications professional, who has worked within multi-stakeholder organisations, across a variety of sectors. Admitted as a legal practitioner in NSW, Luisa also has in-house experience in ESG, policy and compliance, and commercial matters. Luisa is passionate about social justice and is a strong believer in the power of education where even the smallest effort can make a big difference.



**Justin Hogg**  
Company Secretary  
March 2022 - Present

Justin works to deliver sustainable social impact through tailored advisory, governance and specialist services delivered with his highly experienced team at Right Source. A team that understands that when you set out to change the world you see problems as possibilities, so you need partners that set out to overcome challenges with a positive mindset.

Justin Hogg is a Member of CPA Australia and a Fellow Member of the Governance Institute of Australia.



In early 2023, Sandra Angel stepped down from our Board after 8 years of service.

We are incredibly grateful for Sandra's strong staff focus and her tireless commitment to quality education, learning and support for our children and families. She has led a stakeholder-centric culture at Koorana that is deeply embedded and will continue as a legacy of her valuable contributions.





“Koorana has proven to be a strong organisation and delivered another solid year in terms of their financial performance, sustainability, and excellence in service.”

➤ It is my pleasure to deliver the report on the financials of Koorana Child & Family Services Ltd, for the year ending 30th June 2023.

The result for the year has been audited and signed off by our external auditor Stewart Brown on 23rd September 2023 and it is publicly accessible via the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). I thought last year was the biggest year in the history of Koorana, but I was wrong. Koorana keeps growing and has proven to be a strong organisation and delivered another successful year, in terms of their financial performance, sustainability, and excellence in service.

Financial records show that Koorana has maintained its low operating expenses and consistently maintained its financial position over the period of time.

Koorana has been able to consolidate its position over the past year to expand our reach and influence. Koorana serves approximately 2,106 families compared to 1,423 families for the same period last year through its various activities and will continue to provide flexible and responsive services to families and children, with a deep commitment to an inclusive and holistic approach to early education, intervention, and family support.

This report covers the financial accounts for the period ending 30th June 2023 which represents the annual transactions of all Koorana activities delivered through our sites located at Croydon Street-Lakemba, Phillip Street-Roselands, Cleary Avenue-Belmore, Gibbs Avenue-Miranda and various community locations, we work.

**Cash flow**

As of 30th June 2023, Koorana held cash of \$1,305,653 compared to the same period last year of \$1,499,313.

**Equity**

As of 30th June 2023, Koorana retains equity balance of \$2,820,433 compared to the same period last year of \$2,527,045.

**In General**

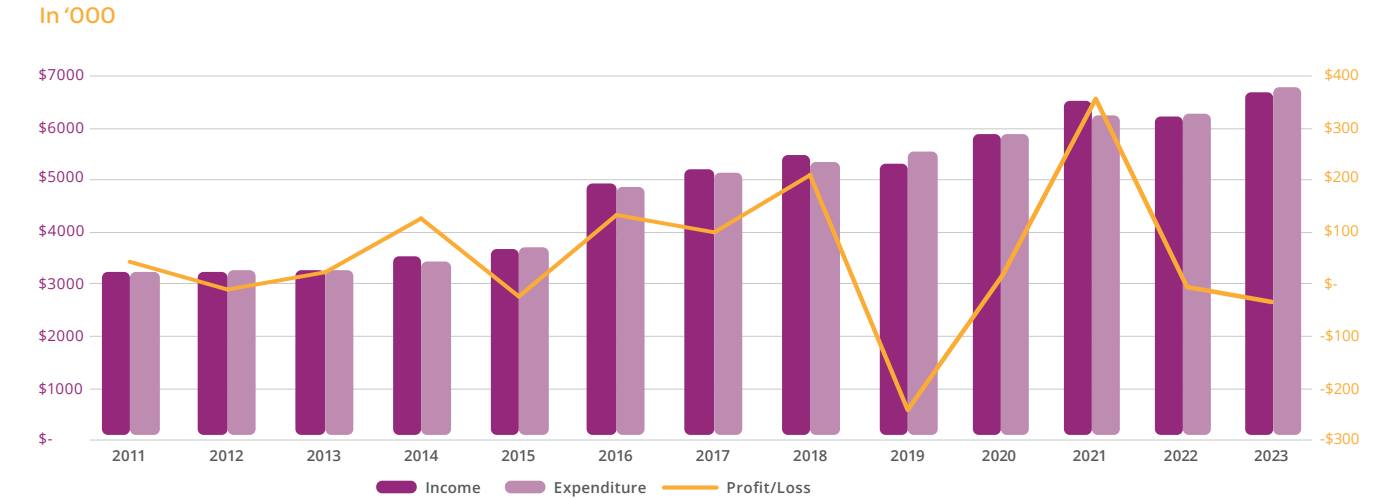
I believe Koorana’s consistent performance and service delivery this year would not be possible without the collaboration of our stakeholders. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the operational team of Koorana, led by the CEO Morgan A. Fitzpatrick for their hard work and support, all Board Members - for their commitment and vision, Stewart Brown - for their expert advice and finally our donors, sponsors and families.

The accounts for the period ending 30th June 2023 are herein presented for your perusal and acceptance, duly audited by Stewart Brown.

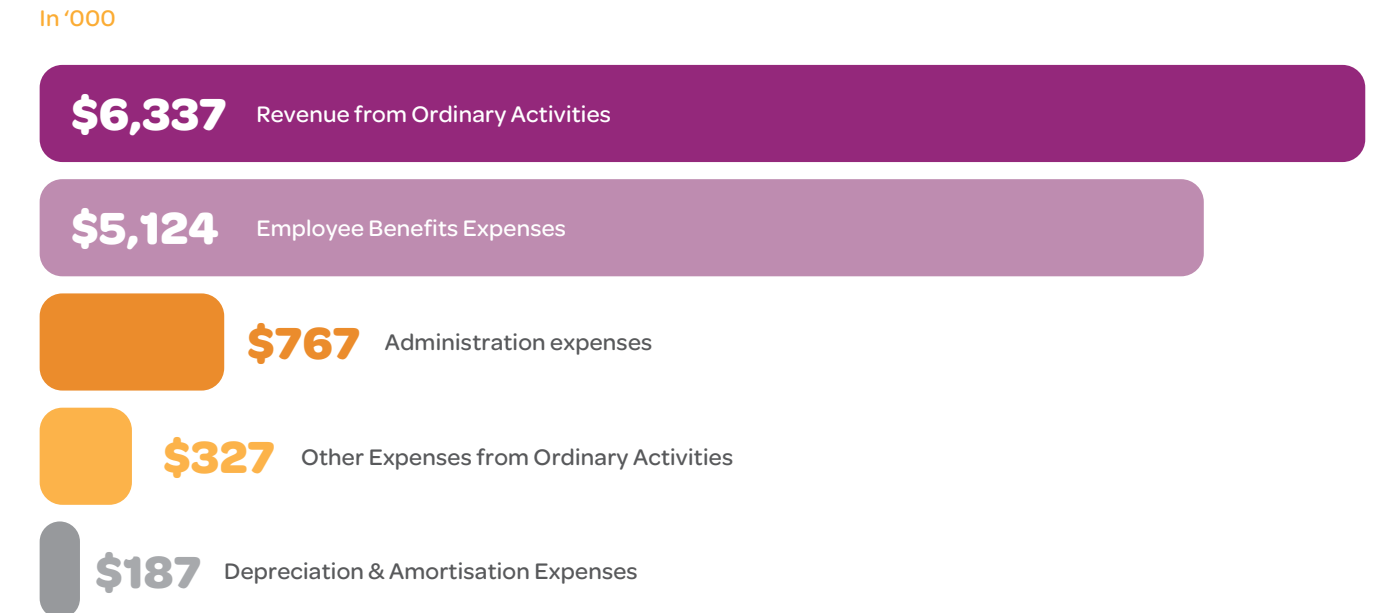
If you have any questions about the results or would like more information on anything mentioned above, please contact me or Morgan A. Fitzpatrick as CEO or send us an email at [accounts@koorana.org.au](mailto:accounts@koorana.org.au).

**Syed Ammar Hasan**  
Treasurer

**Year to year performance, 2011 to 2023**



**2023 Financial Highlights**



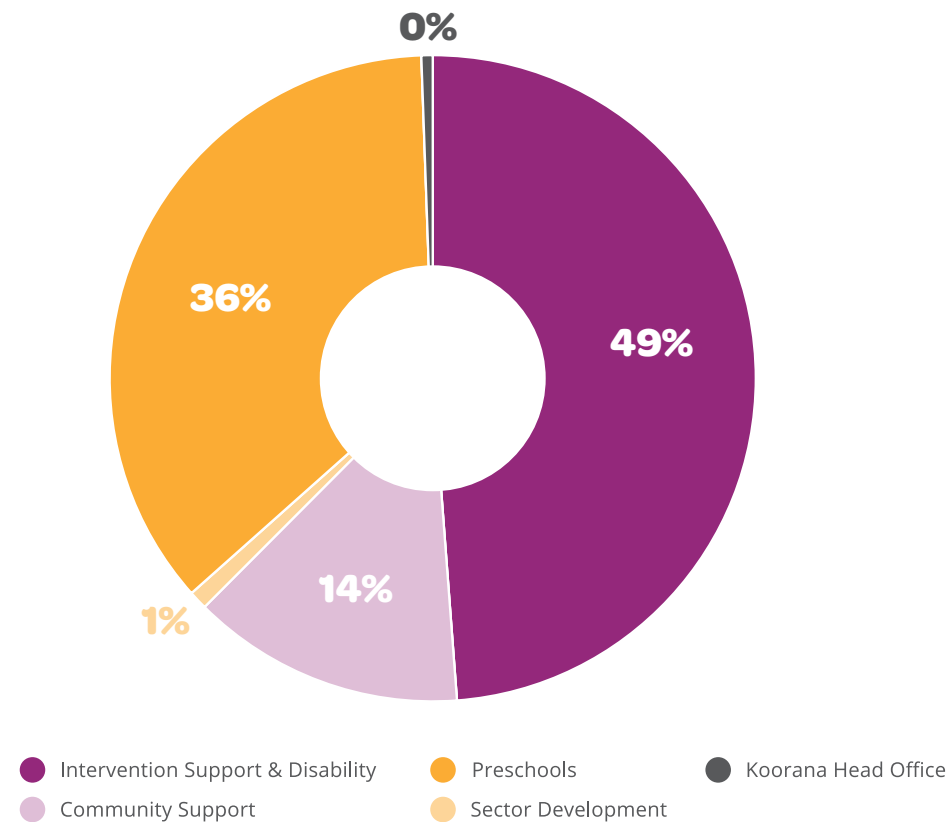


TREASURER'S REPORT  
Income

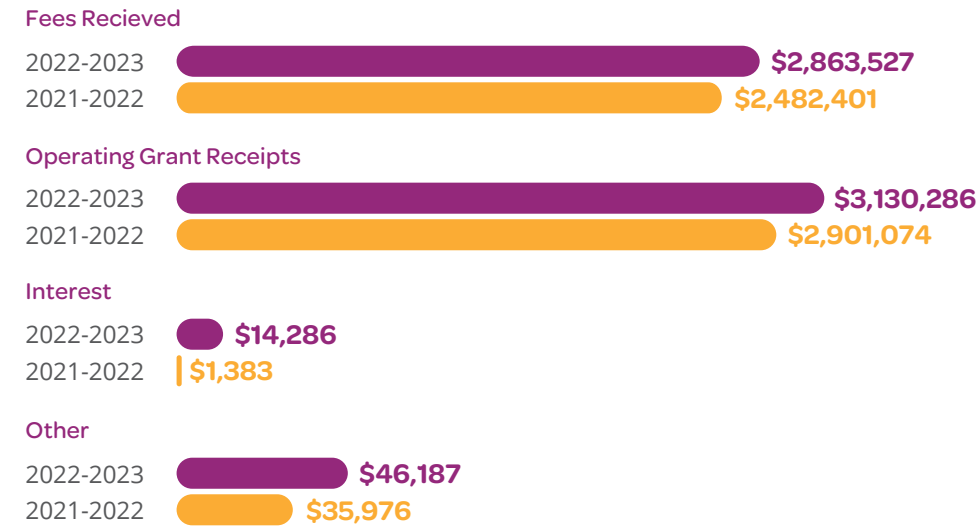
Overall Income Comparison



Income Breakdown



Summary Income Sources Comparison

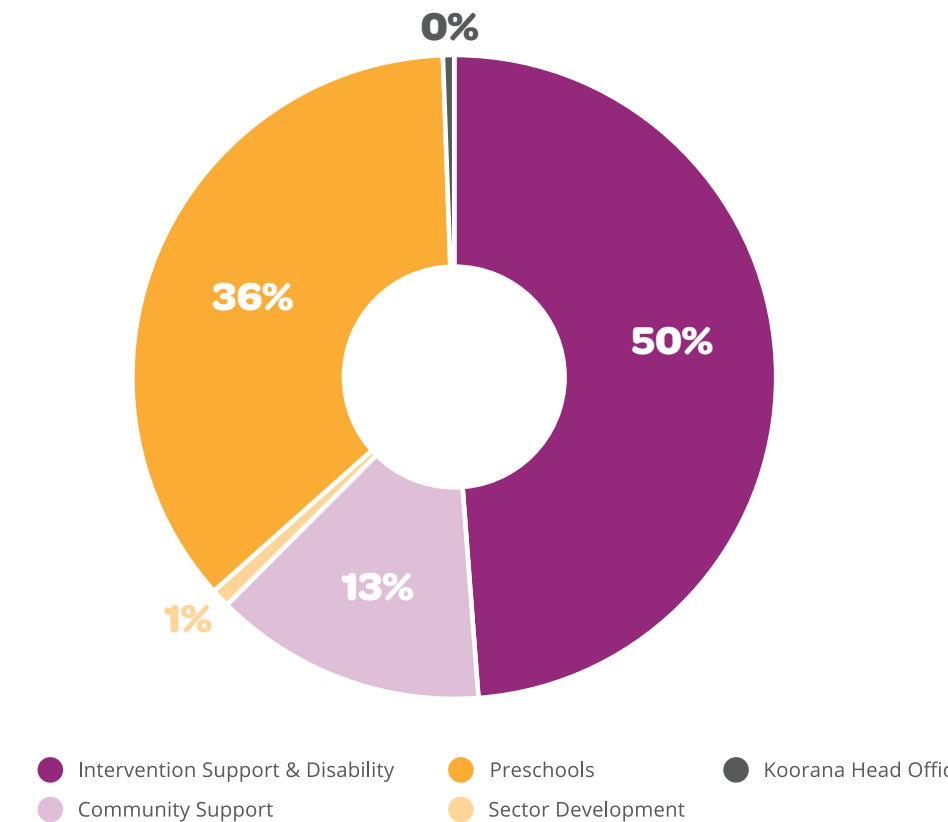


TREASURER'S REPORT  
Expenses

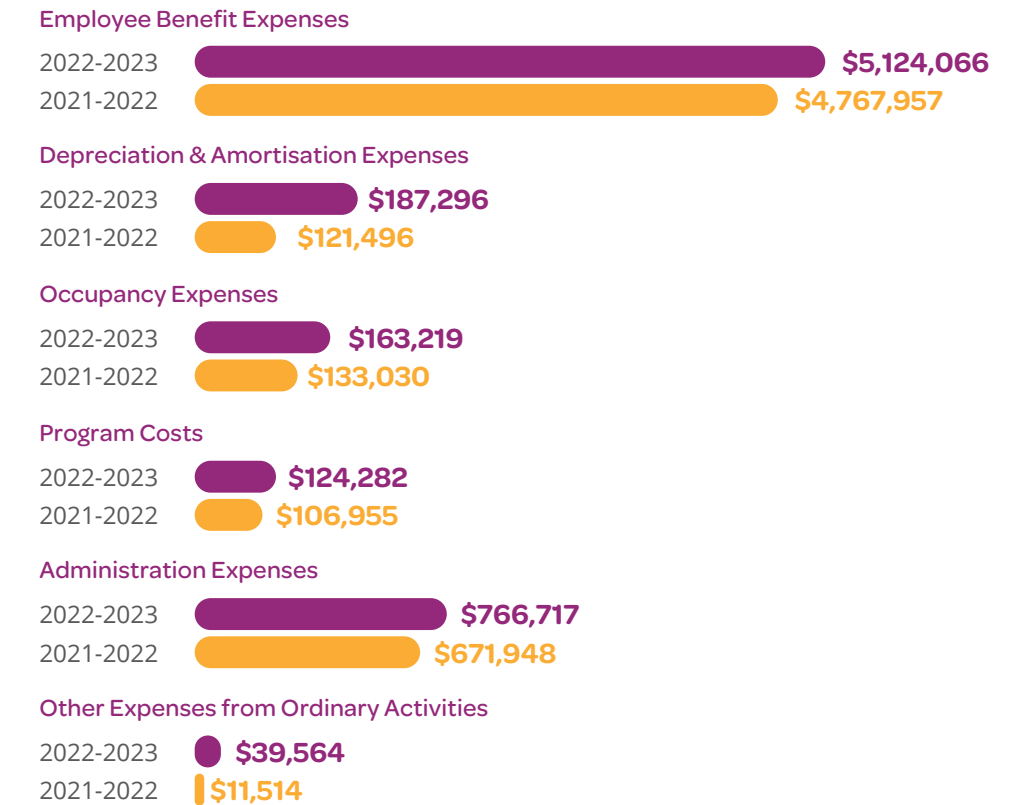
Overall Expenses Comparison



Expenses Breakdown



Summary Expenses Services Comparison





## LETTER FROM THE AUDITOR

### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Koorana Child and Family Services Ltd which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in funds and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the Directors' Declaration.

In our opinion the financial report of Koorana Child and Family Services Ltd is in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended, and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, which has been given to the Directors of the company, would be in the same terms if given to the Directors as at the time of this auditor's report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Directors' Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Directors of the company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Directors are responsible for overseeing the company's financial reporting process.

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at The Auditing and Assurance Standards Board and the website address is <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>

We communicate with the Directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

### Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

In addition, our audit report has also been prepared for the members of the Company in accordance with section 24(1) of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991. Accordingly, we have performed additional work beyond that which is performed in our capacity as auditors pursuant to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. These additional procedures included obtaining an understanding of the internal control structure for fundraising appeal activities and examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting compliance with the accounting and associated record keeping requirements for fundraising appeal activities pursuant to the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and Regulations.

It should be noted that the accounting records and data relied upon for reporting on fundraising appeal activities are not continuously audited and do not necessarily reflect after the event accounting adjustments and the normal year-end financial adjustments for such matters as accruals, prepayments, provisioning and valuations necessary for year-end financial report preparation.

The performance of our statutory audit included a review of internal controls for the purpose of determining the appropriate audit procedures to enable an opinion to be expressed on the financial report. This review is not a comprehensive review of all those systems or of the system taken as a whole and is not designed to uncover all weaknesses in those systems.

The audit opinion expressed in this report pursuant to the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 has been formed on the above basis.

### Auditor's opinion

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 24(1) of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 we report that, in our opinion:

- a) the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial result of fundraising appeal activities for the financial year ended 30 June 2023;
- b) the financial report has been properly drawn up, and the associated records have been properly kept for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and Regulations;
- c) money received as a result of fundraising appeal activities conducted during the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 has been properly accounted for and applied in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and Regulations; and
- d) at the date of this report there are reasonable grounds to believe that company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.



Stewart Brown  
Chartered Accountants

26 September 2023



S.J. Hutcheon  
Partner





## THANK YOU

Koorana would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge our generous funding bodies, partners and supporters. Your continued support of our work has enabled Koorana to support children and families through this past year. This list includes but is not limited to:

- > NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)
- > NSW Department of Education and Training (DET)
- > National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- > National Disability Services (NDS)
- > Our local Members of NSW State Parliament – Hon Sophie Costis, Ms Kylie Wilkinson and Hon Jihad Dib
- > Canterbury-Bankstown City Council
- > Canterbury League Club
- > Revesby Worker's Club
- > Colliers
- > Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network Partners
- > Western Sydney University
- > The Youth Partnership Early Childhood Early Intervention Partners
- > LifeStart & EACH
- > CCFI Interagency Partners
- > Belmore PCYC and Bankstown PCYC
- > Public Schools: Riverwood Public School, Bass Hill, Chullora, Panania North, Hampden Park, Hannans Road, Campsie, Earlwood, Belmore South, Narellen and Yandelora
- > Belmore South St Mel's Catholic School
- > Uncle Jimmy Smith
- > Lakemba Uniting Church
- > Canterbury Hospital
- > MTC Australia
- > Canterbury and Bankstown district
- > Early Childhood Health Centres
- > The various consultants who support Koorana on projects
- > Our suppliers

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**We would also like to thank the many parents, families and carers who have generously shared their skills to support our organisational activities.**



## GET INVOLVED

If you would like to support the important work that Koorana does there are many ways to get involved.

### > Make a Donation

#### Preschool capital appeal

Koorana is currently raising funds to help with the completion of our third preschool. This preschool will continue in our inclusive tradition and create opportunities for children in need. Please contact us if you are interested in supporting this project.

#### Early Intervention support for families who cannot access the NDIS

A small donation can make the difference in a child's life by giving access to much needed therapies. These therapies are hard to come by for families who do not qualify for the NDIS or have other challenges.

Please give via the donate button on our website at [www.koorana.org.au](http://www.koorana.org.au)

Koorana holds endorsement as a deductible gift recipient. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

### > Join the Board

If you would like to use your expertise to make a difference by volunteering on our Board please send your resume to [people@koorana.org.au](mailto:people@koorana.org.au) or call us.

### > Volunteer

By volunteering a few hours of your time, you can help to support your local community and make the world a more inclusive place for all children. Call us now to discover a world of possibility.

### > Fundraise for Koorana

Fundraising is a great way to support children in your local community, while having fun and meeting people.

Talk to Koorana about fundraising initiatives such as a fun social event or a fundraising page that can support children in need.

### > Remember us in Your Will

A gift to Koorana in your Will means that your generosity will be remembered and live on. Talk to us about how you would like your generous gift to be remembered.

### > Become a Partner

Koorana believes that working in partnership with businesses, the community and government can provide educational, therapeutic, and family support for all children. Partnering with Koorana can help improve staff engagement, boost morale, and support the community. Talk to us about how partnering with Koorana can help you.

### > More Information

For more information on how you can help Koorana continue to provide important early childhood services and programs in your local community, please call the Koorana office on **1300 566 726** or visit our website at [koorana.org.au](http://koorana.org.au)








**Koorana Child & Family Services Ltd**

Shop 5-6 / 721B Canterbury Road,  
Belmore NSW 2192

Call us **1300 566 726**  
Email us **enquiries@koorana.org.au**

 @koorana  
 @koorana\_child\_and\_family  
 koorana.org.au

