



# Koorana Child & Family Services **Annual Report 2024**

All children. All abilities. All possibilities.





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### Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land we live and work and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise their continuing connection and care of Country, and the education they have provided to children for thousands of years.



## OUR VISION & MISSION

### > Our Vision

**All children of all abilities** have the opportunity to explore **all possibilities** in safe, supportive and inclusive environments.

### > Our Mission

We empower children and their families through the provision of high-quality services and a collaborative partnership with community supports.

### > Our Core Values



**Inclusion**



**Child and  
Family Centred**



**Collaboration**



**Continuous  
Improvement**



**Accountability**







## THE YEAR IN REVIEW - 2023-2024 FINANCIAL YEAR



**2048**

Children and young people supported



**100**

Postcodes

**1947**

Identified clients registered and attending **Supported Playgroups** across our eight locations

**284**

**Children in preschools** (including 93 children with high learning support needs)

**200+**

Families attended our **Family Fun Day Events**

**123**

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

**160**

Sessions delivered by **Start Strong Pathways**

**99**

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

**125**  
Parents

**170**  
Teachers

Received **capacity building support** under the CFC program

**578**

Children receiving **Speech Therapy**

**90**

Children receiving **Psychology**

**478**

Children receiving **Occupational Therapy**

**41**

Children receiving **Positive Behaviour Support**

**255**

Children receiving **Specialist Education**

**31**

Children receiving **Physiotherapy**



**425**

*NDIS Packages*



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



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**Together, we will continue to build on our successes and work towards a brighter future for all.**

**As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with pride in Koorana's achievements and the strides we have made in advancing our mission. The 2023-2024 Financial Year has been a period of significant growth, innovation, and transformation for our organisation, all driven by our unwavering commitment to the children and families we serve.**

### Strategic Review of Vision, Purpose, and Values

This year, our Board and staff came together to revisit and refine our vision, purpose, and values. This collaborative effort allowed us to reconnect with the core principles that guide our work and ensure they resonate with our current and future aspirations. It was a meaningful exercise that reaffirmed our shared commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for every child and family in our community. We are excited to present this renewed vision in this report, confident that it will inspire and guide us in the years to come.

### Constitutional Review

Recognising the need to align our governance framework with the evolving needs of our organisation, the Board and Executive Team undertook a comprehensive review of our Constitution. This critical update ensures that our governing documents are not only aligned with our current operations but are also robust enough to support our future growth. We look forward to presenting these revisions for approval at our upcoming Annual General Meeting.

### New Preschool Project

We are thrilled to report significant progress in our new preschool project. After receiving council approval in November, we have moved swiftly from concept to construction planning. Tendering is now complete, and we are set to commence construction in October 2024, with the aim of opening the preschool by Term 3, 2025. This project, generously funded by the NSW Government in partnership with Koorana Child & Family Services Ltd and private donors, marks a significant milestone in our efforts to expand and enhance our services. We extend our deepest gratitude to our funding partners, whose support has been instrumental in making this vision a reality.



## IT Transformation Project

In an increasingly digital world, our commitment to safeguarding client information and improving operational efficiency has never been more important. This year, we successfully implemented a new Client Information Management System in our preschools, laying the groundwork for a broader rollout across our other services. This transformation will not only enhance our ability to protect client privacy but also empower our team to deliver services more effectively and with greater ease.

## Sector Advocacy

Koorana has continued to play a leading role in advocating for best practices in early childhood intervention. Our CEO, Morgan A. Fitzpatrick, has been at the forefront of these efforts, championing the needs of children and families with developmental concerns. We are proud of her leadership within the Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network and her collaboration with key stakeholders through the Child and Family Supports Alliance (CaFSA). Morgan's appointments to the National Disability Services' NSW State Committee, the NDIS Children's Expert Advisory Group, and the NDIS Workforce Industry Reference Group are testaments to her dedication and the positive impact of her work. We are confident that her ongoing efforts will continue to drive meaningful change in our sector.

## Looking Ahead

As we anticipate the year ahead, our focus will be on building a more sustainable early intervention and allied health model, one that is resilient in the face of policy changes and market challenges. We aim to strengthen our financial foundation through strategic partnerships and philanthropic support, ensuring that we can continue to make a profound impact on the communities we serve. We are eager to collaborate with like-minded organisations and individuals who share our vision of a better future for all children.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Jacqui Myers, who admirably served as Acting CEO during Morgan's maternity leave. Her leadership ensured that Koorana continued to thrive during this period. I also want to express my deep appreciation to Morgan A. Fitzpatrick, our CEO, and the entire Koorana team for their hard work and dedication over the past year.

Their achievements are a source of immense pride for us all. I am also grateful to my fellow Directors for their unwavering support and commitment, particularly Rodney Timm, whose efforts have been crucial in advancing our preschool development.

Finally, I would like to thank the families who entrust us with the care of their children, as well as our sector stakeholders and partners for their continued support. Together, we will continue to build on our successes and work towards a brighter future for all.

## Sujeet Jena President



## CEO'S REPORT



**“**  
**This is a moment to celebrate the efforts of our team members who have worked hard to achieve these goals.**

**It is with great pleasure that I reflect on the 2023-2024 Financial Year and present this report to our stakeholders.**

The past year has been a year with much to celebrate. Our team saw several long-term projects reaching important milestones including the introduction of our Psychology and Positive Behaviour Support services, the change-over of our client management system for our preschools, and a new payroll system implemented. This is a moment to celebrate the efforts of our team members who have worked hard on these important projects.

In addition to the above, we have seen growth in our team, enabling critical service gaps for families to be met.

Koorana continues to be a leader in advocating for an improved service system that better meets child and family needs and is sustainable in the long run. We welcomed the findings of the NDIS Review and the Disability Royal Commission and have embraced new hope in the future of the service ecosystem for children with developmental concerns, delays or differences and their families. In the last year we have established new and valued sector relationships to further progress our advocacy through growth of the Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network to 20 not-for-profit providers of early childhood intervention and/or education, and the establishment of the Child and Family Supports Alliance (CaFSA) which is a collaborative body of leaders in NSW's mainstream and community services focused on the needs of this cohort. These groups have been actively involved in discussions with government around the future service system and published discussion papers to reflect their recommendations.

In addition to the above, I have accepted roles on the National Disability Services' NSW State Committee, NDIA's Children's Expert Advisory Group and the NDIA's Workforce Industry Reference Group. These formal roles provide an opportunity to help influence policy at both state and federal levels and I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in each area.

While we hold much hope for future service systems, especially with the opportunity to fill gaps in existing services with the introduction of 'foundational supports,' our viability continues to be a concern in the context of the decision to keep pricing static for the early childhood supports and therapy pricing in the NDIS. The systemic impacts of the fixed pricing and transactional funding model continues to have unintended consequences on the sustainability of registered providers who deliver best practice. These issues are yet to be resolved, and we continue to advocate for new ways forward which better enable quality services, but also ensure providers who work in alignment with best practice can remain sustainable.

## **In reflecting on our strategic plan, some of the highlights from the last year to celebrate include:**

### **1. Our People**

- › Continued implementation of our stakeholder feedback strategy with the latest results being:
  - Staff satisfaction average of 8.57/10 (True NPS of 47)
  - Client satisfaction average of 9.32/10 (True NPS of 76)
- › Full implementation of our new Payroll systems which enables streamlined employee experience.
- › Update to our professional development and training program to ensure all staff are holistically supported in their roles.
- › Establishment of our Diversity and Inclusion Group which is reviewing and guiding our organisational practices to ensure they remain inclusive, a core value of Koorana.
- › Establishment of our Green Sustainability Initiative to help Koorana identify and implement opportunities to improve our environmental sustainability.
- › A review of our Vision, Purpose and Values for the organisation to ensure they reflect our contemporary perspective.

### **2. Our Services**

- › 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.
- › A successful Assessment and Rating for our Philip Street preschool which holds a 'Meeting' rating and allows us to work now toward an 'Exceeding' rating.

### **3. Our Customers**

- › Further recruitment in our early intervention and allied health teams, including the appointment of two Psychologists and a Positive Behaviour Support Practitioner.
- › Council approval for our new preschool which will open in 2025.

### **4. Our Partners**

- › Development of our Reconciliation Action Plan in partnership with Reconciliation Action Australia.
- › My appointment on the National Disability Services' NSW State Committee.
- › My appointment to the NDIS' Children's Expert Advisory Group and the NDIS' Workforce Industry Reference Group.
- › Expansion of the Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network to include 19 member organisations. This group has successfully been working to advocate at both the NSW State and National levels for reforms and system improvements which will improve access and equity of services for families of children with disabilities and developmental delays.
- › Foundation of the Child and Family Supports Alliance (CaFSA) NSW which is a collaborative body of leaders in NSW's mainstream and community sector focused on supporting the design of foundational supports for children and families.
- › Establishing and rebuilding relationships locally with valued sector colleagues.
- › Commencing our fundraising initiatives to support ongoing philanthropic relationships for our new preschool and other initiatives.

### **5. Our Resilience**

- › Implementation of a new client information management system for our preschools.
- › A review of our finance policies and procedures to ensure they are fit-for-purpose.
- › Capital improvements to our preschools to improve the suitability of the learning environment for the students.



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

- The fundraising for, build and opening of our new preschool in Bass Hill which is proudly funded by the NSW Government in association with Koorana Child & Family Services Ltd and private donors.
- Implementation of new client management system for the remainders of the business 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.
- Implementation of a leadership development and succession planning program.
- Continued practice development for our services to ensure best practice and quality are continuously improved.
- Incorporation of new evidence-based models to our practices, including our integrated preschool framework.
- An update to our website to improve our stakeholder experience.
- The establishment of a Parent Advisory Group.
- Implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan and Child Safe Practices.
- Implementation of our new philanthropic fundraising strategy.

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, CaFSA and nationally with sector colleagues for improved use and access to best practice early intervention of all children and families.

As we close this year and look forward, I would like to particularly thank Jacqui Myers, our new Chief Operating Officer for her time acting in my role during my maternity leave. We have been very lucky to have her people-centred leadership in the organisation. And I personally am grateful for the time she and the Board afforded me to be with my daughter in her first few months of life.

I would also like to thank our staff team for their commitment, passion and family-focus; we could not achieve what we do without each of them.

Lastly, I would also like to thank our President, Sujeet Jena, for his leadership; Rodney Timm for his tireless support of our new preschool; and our other Directors who volunteer their time to sit on our Board and provide guidance and leadership.

Lastly, we could not do what we do without our stakeholders including our local Members of Parliament – Hon Sophie Cotsis MP, Ms Kylie Wilkinson, MP and Hon Jihad Dib MP; our funding partners including The Smith Family, Canterbury-Bankstown Council, Canterbury League Club, Vicinity Centres, Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club, Edified, Perpetual Impact; private donors and other community partners. I 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. This year we reviewed our vision, mission and values in collaboration with our team.

Our vision is that **all children of all abilities** have the opportunity to explore **all possibilities in** safe, supportive and inclusive environments. Our purpose is to empower children and their families through the provision of high-quality services and a collaborative partnership with community supports.

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

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

This year, Koorana provided a broad range of therapeutic and educational services to children and young people between the ages of 0-18 years and their families.

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**Our vision is that children of all abilities have the opportunity to explore all possibilities in safe, supportive and inclusive environments.**

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

#### ➤ Inclusion:

We celebrate diversity, treat one another with respect, and demonstrate empathy and understanding for all.

#### ➤ Child and Family centred practice:

We put child and family's needs and wishes first and respect their right to self-determination.

#### ➤ Collaboration:

We work with families, partners and community collaboratively. Our teams work together, and we take a consultative approach to leadership.

#### ➤ Continuous Improvement:

We value and celebrate feedback. We provide this constructively. We believe in lifelong learning and seek to find new ways to improve our practice.

#### ➤ Accountability:

We value and celebrate feedback. We provide this constructively. We believe in lifelong learning and seek to find new ways to improve our practice.









# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

## > Preschools

Koorana operates two inclusive preschools within the Canterbury Bankstown local government area. Phillip Street Preschool (PSPS) is located in Roselands offering 40 places per day; 100 families overall with 2-day placements. Croydon Street Preschool (CSPS) is located in Lakemba offering 24 places, and 60 families overall with 2-day placements.

We cater to a culturally and linguistically diverse community. Our Preschools operate in alignment with the NSW Department of Education school terms. 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 inclusive 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 this financial year our Preschools enrolled the following children:

**284** Total children attending preschools

**170** Children attending Phillip Street

**114** Children attending Croydon Street

Our preschools operate within the NSW school calendar, with four terms in 10-week increments. Our opening hours are 8.15am to 3.45pm.

Our preschool community is a multicultural community, with the following backgrounds: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Lebanese, Serbian, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Myanmar, Somalia, and Turkey.

We have 15 children at Croydon St Preschool and 25 children at Phillip St Preschool with High Learning Support Needs (HLSN) and are accessing our therapeutic services.

**We celebrated many achievements during the 2023-2024 Financial Year and some of them are listed below:**

**Switching across from Story Park and QIKKIDS to OWNA**

At the end of 2023, we implemented a new childcare management system. We transitioned from Qikkids & Storypark to OWNA. The team has been working closely with the Systems Transformation project manager and Head of Early Childhood Education services to ensure the smooth transition throughout the process. We spent a considerable amount of time upskilling our team in using the new OWNA app both for administrative and documentation purpose.

We have also spent time supporting our families in downloading the new app into their devices and how to navigate through the system. We continue to resolve technical challenges as they arise.

As our preschools continue to aim to reduce the use of paper in their preschool, with the implementation of OWNA, we are seeing the trajectory of online enrolment forms, administrative forms, and some of our pedagogical related documentations.

The team continues to engage in various practice to find sustainable way in reusing paper and keeping the use of it to a minimum.







### ECO Kids Project and Environmental Initiatives

At Croydon Street Preschool (CSPS), the ECO Kids Project actively engaged families through hands-on activities. Children harvested vegetables from the garden, placing them in paper bags to take home and cook with. This project nurtured their understanding of the garden-to-plate process and encouraged family involvement in sustainable practices.

In our composting initiative, children took turns bringing a compost bag home to gather food scraps, which they later fed to our worms. This simple, practical activity helped instil responsibility and environmental awareness in the children while supporting our overall sustainability goals.

### Road Safety – ‘Make it Click Challenge’

At CSPS, we implemented the ‘Make it Click Challenge’ to promote road safety and proper car seat use. Our goal was to educate families about ensuring their children are in approved car seats in compliance with current regulations. By sharing important information from the Department of Transport, we aimed to increase awareness of car seat safety and enhance child protection during travel.

### The Street Library Initiative

Both Phillip Street Preschool (PSPS) and Croydon Street Preschool (CSPS) are excited to introduce new street libraries, proudly funded by the Canterbury Bankstown City Council. PSPS collaborated with an Aboriginal artist from Deadly Ed to design their library, while CSPS is working with a local school to decorate theirs.

These street libraries will be installed around October 2024, offering an opportunity for families and the community to engage with literacy in a fun and accessible way.

### Innovative Play Sessions and Sustainability

In collaboration with Reverse Garbage, Phillip Street Preschool (PSPS) has successfully integrated innovative play sessions focused on the principles of reuse, loose parts play, and creative invitations to play. This partnership has enriched our educational environment by promoting sustainability and imagination. Children explored a variety of repurposed materials, fostering their problem-solving skills and creativity.

Additionally, staff benefited from professional development sessions that equipped them with strategies to incorporate these concepts into their daily teaching practices.

### Assessment and Rating for PSPS

In March, Phillip Street Preschool (PSPS) underwent an assessment and rating process conducted by two assessors. This evaluation reviewed the preschool's performance across various areas, with a focus on continuous improvement. Thanks to significant preparation by the PSPS team, in collaboration with the Head of Early Childhood Education Services and the Corporate team, PSPS was proud to meet the National Quality Standards in all seven quality areas.

### Overcoming Challenges

While this has been an incredible year for our Preschools, the ongoing challenge of managing internal casual staff availability has continued from last year. While 2023 saw significant growth in our pool of internal casual educators, positively impacting both our staffing needs and financial budget, their availability remains inconsistent. Fluctuations in numbers at key times of the year have made it difficult to maintain stable staffing levels. We continue to actively assess availability and recruit as needed to ensure we can meet our staffing demands, promote staffing consistency, and deliver quality early childhood education services.

### The Preschool Intervention Review

This year, we have continued our commitment to refining our integrative approach within the preschool and early childhood intervention teams. Ongoing discussions between the Preschool Directors, the Preschool Intervention Team Leader, the Head of Early Childhood Education Services, and the Head of Early Intervention and Allied Health Services have helped assess and improve our practices.

A major step forward is the development of the Koorana Integrative Framework, currently in the drafting phase. This framework will clearly document and articulate our integrative approach, ensuring consistency and clarity in its application. We are also exploring potential collaborations with international researchers to enhance this framework, working closely with the CEO to identify suitable research models.

In addition to this, we have updated our intake process for children with High Learning Support Needs, ensuring a smooth and efficient experience for families and staff. We continue to collaborate with the Allied Health team, providing professional development sessions to our preschool staff on various topics, such as managing challenging behaviours and developing specific strategies to support children and families.



## EARLY INTERVENTION & ALLIED HEALTH

### > Intervention and Service Delivery

Koorana's Early Intervention and Allied Health (EIAH) team continues to advance in our commitment to best practice, driving even greater outcomes for children in South and South-West Sydney. Our diverse team of therapists and teachers remains dedicated to delivering high-quality, evidence-based educational and therapeutic support to children aged 0-18 and their families.

The Key Worker model training attended by the EIAH team at the beginning of the year challenged us to consider how, as a transdisciplinary team, we work together with the children and families we support to most effectively meet their goals. Our commitment to **family-centred** practice has deepened, recognising the central role of families and our ability as therapists and educators to meet essential child and family needs that may at first seem peripheral to therapy goals. We continue to prioritise work in **natural environments**, reaffirming that children learn best in real-world settings such as home, school, and the wider community.

Our **capacity-building** model has evolved, with an even stronger emphasis on empowering children and their supporters with the skills and knowledge to continue implementing therapeutic strategies beyond our sessions.

By incorporating **evidence-based** practice and refining our intervention plans, we are making more efficient use of both time and resources to achieve sustainable, meaningful outcomes.

The skills of our practitioners have grown significantly over the past year. Many of our therapists and teachers have undertaken advanced training, which they actively apply in their work and enthusiastically share with each other. The team has become more adept at integrating evidence-based approaches, ensuring our interventions remain at the forefront of best practice care. Collaboration within the EIAH team has also strengthened, with more frequent and structured opportunities for sharing knowledge and co-developing strategies.

Our Team Leaders have increased their focus on clinical supervision and feedback, helping individuals to refine their practice and advance in their professional capabilities. By fostering this growth, we are continually pushing the boundaries of best practice, ensuring that we are well-positioned to meet the evolving needs of the children and families we support.

### > Navigating Transitions and Challenges

The 2023-2024 Financial Year presented several significant challenges for the EIAH team. One of the primary hurdles was the lack of indexation in NDIS pricing for allied health services, which has made it increasingly difficult to manage inflationary costs while maintaining affordable, quality services. Compounding this issue, there has been a slower rate of referrals, due in part to delays in NDIS plan approvals for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), affecting the timely delivery of support to children in need. Providing therapy in school settings continues to be an increasing challenge, as more schools are reluctant to allow therapists access due to concerns about potential disruptions. This has made it difficult for us to maintain the level of support we aspire to offer children with disabilities in these environments.

The introduction of new services, such as Psychology and Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) last year, has also encountered difficulties in building up waitlists in the current context of slower referrals and access challenges. Additionally, we are finding that the inflexibility of our client information management system (Penelope) is increasingly limiting our ability to adapt our service model effectively, creating further strain on our operational flexibility. We have undergone a scoping and tendering process to replace this system in 2024-2025 Financial Year.

## > Empowering Growth: Achievements

Despite these challenges, Koorana achieved several important milestones in the last financial year. In November, we underwent a recertification audit for the NDIS to assess our compliance with the NDIS Practice Standards. The auditors were highly impressed with Koorana as an organisation, particularly with the services provided by the EIAH team and the robust policies and procedures that guide our work. We received a positive report, with only a few minor non-conformities, which have since been addressed.

We also successfully completed the second year of the “Foundations for Growth” program, funded by The Smith Family’s Communities for Children (CFC) initiative.

The program received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the schools and students we worked with. The Smith Family, as the funder and facilitating partner, was similarly impressed with the outcomes, and we have secured funding to continue the program for an additional two years, further extending our support for growth and development within the 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 journey.**

On 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, our Supported Playgroups and our Start Strong Pathways (SSP) 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 growing confidence to provide developmentally appropriate play activities for their children at home.

➤ **Emphasising Play as a way of learning:**

Through a multitude of engaging activities and experiences at all our Supported Playgroup and SSP sessions, families have gained a profound appreciation and understanding for the fundamental role of play in early childhood development, particularly in the first five years, which significantly impacts brain development.

➤ **Modelling Excellence:**

The Supported Playgroups and the SSP 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 Playgroups:**

Families have embraced a deep understanding of the crucial role that playgroups play in children's development and learning. Exposure to these settings has cultivated essential skills that will assist children to transition to school and in exploring the world around them.

➤ **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 offers a free and accessible introduction to early childhood education across eight locations in the Canterbury Bankstown area.

Through play-based experiences, we help children aged 0-6 years to develop new skills, enhance their wellbeing, and reach their early learning potential. Our facilitators create an inclusive environment where children can socialise, play, and thrive.

We also support parents and carers by strengthening family dynamics and helping them build lasting social connections. By enhancing the parent-child relationship, we aim to boost parental understanding, skills, and confidence in supporting their child's development and early learning.

In addition to fostering social support networks, our facilitators connect families with valuable information, advice, and referrals to both internal and external community services, providing a safe and welcoming space for growth and connection.

### Playgroup locations in the 2023-2024 Financial Year

#### Playgroup in the Park – Canterbury:

- Jubilee Reserve Lakemba
- St Mary Mackillop Canterbury
- Terry Lamb Reserve Belmore

#### Playgroup in the Park – Bankstown:

- Bankstown City Gardens
- Johnstone Reserve Revesby

#### Venue based playgroup – Canterbury:

- Lakemba Uniting Church Hall
- Riverwood Public School

#### Venue based playgroup – Bankstown

- Bankstown PCYC

### Playgroup in numbers in the 2023-2024 Financial Year

**1,947**

Identified clients registered and attending playgroups

**672**

Hours in total of playgroup time

**336**

Individual supported playgroup sessions

**42**

Weeks of face to face service delivery

**8**

Playgroup locations



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

- Jubilee Reserve Lakemba – 310 identified clients registered and attending
- St Mary Mackillop Canterbury – 151 identified clients registered and attending
- Terry Lamb Reserve Belmore – 224 identified clients registered and attending

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

- Bankstown City Gardens – 332 identified clients registered and attending
- Johnstone Reserve Revesby – 283 identified clients registered and attending

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

- Lakemba Uniting Church Hall – 246 identified clients registered and attending
- Riverwood Public School – 109 identified clients registered and attending

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

- Bankstown PCYC – 292 identified clients registered and attending





## Building Stronger Communities: Milestones and Partnerships in Supported Playgroups

In our ongoing pursuit of excellence, we extend our gratitude to the Canterbury Bankstown Council, who, through the Community Grants & 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.

In collaboration with the President, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and Principal, Bankstown Public School, the team identified and secured a new venue for playgroup, Bankstown Public School which will roll out in Term 4, 2024.

We have continued our collaboration with the Community Participation and Volunteer Manager from Canterbury Hospital to deliver monthly playgroup visits covering a range of key topics including child development awareness and screening check points, oral health and nutrition, sleep and settling, women's health and mental health awareness across the Canterbury district.

In collaboration with both Canterbury and Bankstown Child and Family Health Nursing, we have welcomed monthly Nurse visits to all eight of our supported playgroups.

The visits offer regular health and development checks for all children, to make sure they are on track to reach important milestones, support and information on a range of parenting topics such as sleeping and settling, feeding, development and behaviour and parental wellbeing. Our nurse visits, via referral can connect families with paediatricians, nutritionists, audiologists, and optometrists.

The Supported Playgroups Facebook page continues to grow with 2,200 local parent members across the Canterbury Bankstown district. This platform has been instrumental in ensuring our families remain connected with the Koorana Supported Playgroups program and its facilitators, other parents, friends, community groups and professionals.

Deadly Ed delivered five Aboriginal education and awareness sessions at playgroups across the Canterbury Bankstown local government areas. These sessions ensure the next generation of children are immersed in culture and awareness all year round.

We had a very successful Playgroup Family Fun Day with 513 clients joining us at Wiley Park, this is the highest attendance Koorana has received for their Family Fun days.



9.52

The supported playgroup team received an average score of 9.52 out of 10 in the **External Client Survey** results, March 2024.

## Overcoming Challenges

This year, Koorana faced two key challenges: keeping up with the rising community demand and addressing staffing needs. As our services became more recognised in the Canterbury Bankstown districts, the demand for our support grew significantly. Meeting these needs required careful planning and resource management to ensure we could continue delivering high-quality services to the community.

At the same time, staffing remained a central focus. Recruiting and retaining skilled professionals in a competitive environment was critical to our ability to meet this growing demand. Maintaining a strong and capable team is vital to sustaining our growth and providing exceptional care. Despite these challenges, our team responded with commitment and strategic solutions, enabling us to keep fulfilling our mission of supporting children, families, and communities.



**Join our Facebook community**









## > Start Strong Pathways

Koorana's Start Strong Pathways program (SSP) 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.

Our experienced Early Childhood Teachers are hosting and facilitating the SSP program to provide free playgroups for children prior to preschool enrolment to strengthen their engagement and promote the importance of early childhood education to families.

In the last financial year, SSP continues to support families with the Department of Educations (DoE) three core objectives for the program, which are to:

- Support educational engagement of children too young to receive a preschool education;
- Support pathways to preschool and;
- Promote the importance of early childhood education to parents and communities.

### **In 2024, the SSP program is hosting four Playgroups across the week:**

- > **Monday** - Lakemba SaCC, Alice Street Wiley Park, 0-5 year olds
- > **Tuesday** - Lebanese Muslim Association, Wangee Road Lakemba, 0-5 year olds
- > **Wednesday** - Campsie Proper (Project Australia) North Parade Campsie, 0-5 year olds
- > **Friday** - Lakemba SaCC, Alice Street Wiley Park, 0-3 year olds

The SSP program invites community professionals and experts to visit the playgroups to share resources and knowledge with families. In term one, SSP have organised the following experts to visit our playgroups:

- A community Paediatric Orthoptist sharing her knowledge on eye health;
- Nurse Educators from Tresillian providing handouts on developmental milestones;
- Local Health discussing nutrition and healthy eating.

The SSP program is guided by the Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Framework for Australia. We are guided by the Framework to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to five years and through transition to school. The program is unique and reflects the community. All children are active and informed members of the communities with knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples perspectives.

**The Frameworks expectations for all children's learning, development and wellbeing from birth to five years are reflected through the following five Learning Outcomes:**

- > Children have a strong sense of identity;
- > Children are connected with and contribute to their world;
- > Children have a strong sense of wellbeing;
- > Children are confident and involved learners;
- > Children are effective communicators.

The SSP program honours the above five outcomes in all the experiences we provide at all our playgroups.



## **Fostering Inclusivity and Family Partnerships: Celebrating Achievements**

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

### **Transition to School**

Host a five-week Transition to School program in Term 3 each year. We invite all families, including all equity children who engage in the SSP program across the week. Transition to school packs are provided to each family participating in the program and to all children transitioning to preschool/school. We facilitate ongoing discussions regarding readiness for school in each of our sessions.

### **Targeted playgroups**

Targeted mums and bubs playgroups for 0-3 years old (2 out of our 4 sessions) focusing on building families' confidence in nurturing young children's learning and development and connecting families with community professionals whilst attending a quality program on a weekly basis. This program will offer opportunities to the younger children to engage in an uninterrupted play and experiences, thus allowing families to see the values and benefit of learning through play.

### **Targeted information sessions**

Regular information sessions focusing on a variety of child development and family support topics, delivered by relevant professionals (e.g. Local health professional, Allied Health visit).

Many families often feel anxious about enrolling their child in an early childhood setting because they have limited knowledge of the support available to assist their child once they begin, especially when it comes to diagnosis or challenging behaviours. These information sessions assist families to develop their understanding on how to feel comfortable as their child attends an early childhood setting, and the understanding on how to support their child during the transition process between home and the early childhood environment.

### **Incursions**

Engage children and families in quarterly incursions which align with the EYLF and the SSP program. Each incursion is carefully planned and delivered based on the needs and interests of each group. Through these incursions, families can see firsthand the benefits of learning through play and give them ideas on how to promote learning through play in their home environment.

## **Overcoming Challenges and Strengthening the SSP Team**

In January 2024, we commenced a new playgroup in Campsie to increase our presence in the identified area. We collaborated with Prosper, who has been established in the area to support families from low-income backgrounds.

Our Campsie session offers new opportunities and a safe space for families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as for children with additional needs and those from low-income households.







*We are currently evaluating our funding options to continue our valuable SIBs Group which supports siblings of children with disabilities.*

### 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 financial year we continued to welcome new members to the CCFI Group, and the network had over 210 workers on the mailing list. Many 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.

During the last October school holidays, we had a successful community event called “Big Day Out” in Lakemba for children and their families. Around five hundred children and their parents attended the event and enjoyed a wide range of fun activities thanks to over 60 workers from local child and family services. These activities included arts and crafts, Zumba dancing and reptile shows. Families were also connected with a range of services, as well as with each other socially.

We continued to support the local child and family sector by providing information and training. Early this year, the CCFI Bengali Community Project working party presented the “Bangladeshi Culture, People and Needs” information session, in partnership with Canterbury Bankstown City Council. The session, jointly delivered by four local bilingual workers, was well attended by health professionals, child and family workers and community members.

Building on the successful delivery of the info session, the CCFI Bengali Community working party embarked on another major task, that is, to translate important information for parents such as getting ready for school, health checks and child protection into Bengali language.

The translation project then extended to a total of nine community languages used in the Canterbury Bankstown area, including Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese, Urdu, Indonesian and Nepalese.

This year, we continued to work with Bankstown Child and Family Interagency on the “Transition to School Project” to help parents prepare their children for the first year of schooling. In May, the CCFI “Transition to School” outreach event was held at Roselands Shopping Centre, which provided information and advice to families on enrolment, healthy eating and early intervention support.

Overall, the team at Koorana has risen to the various challenges 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 Hasam Family

Our journey with Koorana began just 7 months ago when we first learned about the organisation through word of mouth and online research. Amir joined Koorana's Supported playgroups after we saw how appealing and suitable it was for his needs. Since then, Koorana's Supported Playgroups has provided tremendous support. We have gained access to an Early Years Specialist through EACH, and in the future, we hope to enrol Amir in Koorana's preschool services.

Amir has made significant progress during his time with Koorana. He has become more confident in his speech and communication with family and friends, learned to play cooperatively with other children, and improved his ability to share. His fine motor skills have developed as well—he can now solve puzzles, use scissors, paint, and his coordination has become much better. His sensory awareness has also improved through messy play, where he engages with different textures and materials. His ability to focus has noticeably strengthened, but the most significant change has been his increase in confidence.

“  
**As a parent, seeing  
Amir's progress means  
everything to me.”**

Watching him grow in all aspects of childhood while having fun at the same time is incredibly fulfilling. I truly believe that children learn best through action and play, and Koorana playgroup provides all of that.

Amir loves attending playgroup because the teachers treat him with respect and enjoy playing with him. He especially loves the messy play, the variety of toys and games, and interacting with other kids. Everyone is so accepting of him, which makes the experience even more rewarding.”

Koorana is the first service I recommend to other parents. They offer playgroups every weekday, both in parks and indoors, which are free. The morning sessions ensure that by the time we get home, Amir is content and able to play independently. It's an incredible service.”

To any parents looking for support for their child, I would say this: the staff at Koorana playgroup treat you like family. They are easy to talk to, and I can express all of my concerns and feelings to them. They provide all the support you need and are there with you every step of the way.

There is nothing to regret about joining Koorana's playgroup services.

### > A Parent's Gratitude

I am truly grateful that both of my daughters are now in your care, attending Koorana Croydon St Preschool two days a week.

It's well known how highly recommended your preschool is. You provide facilities, systems, techniques, and an environment that are essential for every child, especially for children with disabilities.

“  
**Both of my daughters have  
intellectual disabilities, but I  
can already see how they are  
improving since they started  
attending Croydon St Preschool  
and receiving care from your  
dedicated teachers.”**

I wish you all the best and look forward to continuing this wonderful journey with you.

## > Aisha's Story

In 2023, Aisha began working with Angela, a Specialist Teacher, as part of her early intervention journey. Later that year, Janice, a Speech Pathologist, joined to deliver therapy sessions, contributing to Aisha's development until the end of 2023.

In February 2024, Amanda, an Occupational Therapist (OT), became part of Aisha's dedicated support team. Amanda's initial assessment highlighted Aisha's high energy levels and eagerness to explore, although she needed support in maintaining her focus. Amanda conducted fortnightly sessions with Aisha within her preschool long day care setting.

During these sessions, Amanda observed the needs for Aisha to guide her social interactions. Needs were identified where support is required for Aisha to learn how to engage more positively with her peers, reducing instances of pushing, snatching, and other challenging behaviors.

Despite some initial setbacks, including a withdrawal from the long day care, Aisha's family remained committed to finding the right environment for her growth and development. During this transitional period, Amanda continued to work with Aisha in community settings, such as the library and the park.

After thoughtful discussions with the OT Team Leader, Aisha was successfully enrolled at the end of Term 2 2024, in Koorana Phillip Street Preschool, known for its supportive, inclusive, and nurturing atmosphere.

The initial anxiety of the transition soon gave way to significant progress. Aisha's behaviors became more regulated, and she flourished under the care of the well-equipped, experienced preschool educators and the dedicated Koorana intervention team, which includes a Specialist Teacher, Occupational Therapist, Speech Pathologist, and Positive Behaviour Support practitioner.

**Aisha now receives fortnightly Specialist Teacher intervention at home and Speech Pathology sessions at preschool. Aisha's journey at Koorana Preschool will continue through FY2025, with ongoing support to ensure her continued sense of belonging, growth, and development.**









### > Meet the Walton Family

Our journey with Koorana began 8 months ago when I joined with my son, Jason, after hearing about the organisation through the Child and Family Support in Panania. Since then, Jason has attended playgroups at both Riverwood and Belmore, where he's been getting ready for preschool.

The activities at the playgroups have been a perfect fit for his preparation, and I'm proud to say that I've noticed remarkable improvements in his readiness for this next step.

Jason has always enjoyed the baby section, even though he's no longer a baby. His favourite activities include the water station, playdoh, and physical equipment—he's constantly exploring and growing through play. It's been incredible to see his excitement for learning and how much he benefits from the variety of activities offered.

"As a parent, seeing Jason's progress makes me feel incredibly proud. **More than that, I've found my "village" at Koorana. The staff are welcoming, supportive, and approachable, and I always feel like I belong.** It's a great feeling to have a community where people genuinely care and are there to help."

One of the most significant changes I've seen in Jason is his interest in a variety of activities. He used to run straight to the playground, but now he engages more deeply with different experiences, thanks to the diverse options Koorana offers.

“

**I would highly recommend Koorana to other parents. I've learned so much from the playgroups, and I believe they are the best place to support your child's development. If you're looking for support for your child, you absolutely have to visit one of Koorana's playgroups. It's a fantastic service and an experience I wouldn't want any parent to miss.”**



# LOOKING FORWARD FOR OUR SERVICES

## Preschools

**Third Preschool Development:** Advancing our mission with the development of our third preschool.

Excursions – Getting out into the community. With the preschools goal of getting out into the community, we have had special red Koorana t-shirts made for the children to wear on the excursions to local playgrounds and Lakemba Library nearby,

The health and development grant helped increase the number of children who complete the 4-year health check. This grant will also enable our preschools in helping families to get information they need to support their child's health, growth and development, and to seek help where needed, before their child starts school.

Both Koorana Preschools, PSPS and CSPA will be embarking on a 11-month research project with Jo Mavrigiannakis, in collaboration with the Head of Early Childhood Early Education and all preschool staff members.

This will commence in August 2024. The research project will be utilising two early childhood evidence-based tools: ECERS E (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale), and SSTEWS (Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing) tool to inform continuous improvement, continue to build capacity and enhance continuous improvement in our preschool practice.

## Early Intervention and Allied Health

We are finalising a restructure for the EIAH team that will ensure a successful program, we:

- continue to position Koorana as a preferred employer, with benefits including attractive remuneration, professional development support and opportunities for career progression.
- continue to champion best practice to achieve the best outcomes for families by developing and implementing practice standards, supporting our team with adequate supervision.
- are financially sustainable, with systems and processes that are efficient, a reliable stream of new referrals and a supervision structure that is effective for the Head of EIAH.

A significant part of these changes will be our incoming client information management system (CIMS), Nightingale – this will allow for flexibility in service provision, more equitable and efficient prioritisation and allocation processes, a greater oversight of cases and allocated funding for team members and a greater oversight of team member caseload and performance for team leaders.

### **Supported Playgroups**

At present, the team is busy preparing as we enter our recommissioning period, we are all hopeful of a new five-year contract starting from July 2025.

This time around, the Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Recommissioning involves the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) updating and combining the TEI and Family Connect and Support (FCS) programs into a single initiative with new draft specifications released that will see some big and exciting changes to the Supported Playgroups program. Watch this space!

### **Start Strong Pathways**

Koorana is in the process of developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and the SSP team will use strategies in the plan to support the implementation of reconciliation initiatives. At group we have our unique Acknowledgement to Country and First Nations activities are embedded into our program.

The SSP team will be participating in a Cultural Competence professional development in September 2024. This session will assist our team in building a respectful approach when engaging with children and families from a culturally diverse background.

We plan to organise incursions around building awareness and understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture (e.g. through Deadly Ed, Koori Curriculum, etc) at each of our sessions.





## WORKING GROUPS

**Our dedicated team members have implemented and started to actively participate in various working groups. These groups are leading our cultures 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 Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for Koorana to strengthen our connection to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, enhance our practices to ensure they are respectful and inclusive, and deepen our understanding of issues that impact reconciliation.

The group has begun working under the Reconciliation Australia Framework and has held multiple workshops to drive this process forward. We have met several times, finalised, and delivered the first draft of the RAP, and will now be working through the feedback provided by Reconciliation Australia and their partners to embed the reflection plan throughout all of Koorana.



### **Sustainability:**

#### **Fostering eco-conscious practices and a greener future**

The Sustainability team has grown in participants over the year, with a lot of passionate members that bring knowledge and wonderful ideas to the table. We currently have 11 members on the group.

We have developed regular bi-monthly newsletters that are posted out to all Koorana staff – each of our ECO newsletter is full of hot ECO tips and relevant sustainability related calendar events in the Sydney community.

The group has also initiated two ECO challenges. One being the 'Keep Cup' challenge, which had many Koorana community members sharing photos of them using reusable keep cups for their hot beverages. The other being – Share your ECO practices that you use at home! The prize was a range of ECO goodies, from straws, bees wax wraps, Chemical free laundry sheets and composting bags. It was wonderful to see many photos of what we are doing at home, which means that our vision is making an impact!

Moving forward, we are working on a clear Sustainability vision statement and framework, and with hopes to creating rippling effects of sustainability practices across our communities.



### **Work Health and Safety (WH&S):**

#### **Ensuring the well-being and safety of our team and community**

Koorana's Workplace Health & Safety Advisory Committee (WHSAC) has been established and is meeting at a bi-monthly minimum. The committee has representation from all teams and levels across the organisation.

The Committee is responsible for:

- Assisting with the identification and assessment of workplace health and safety risks, hazards, and opportunities for improvement;
- Recommending strategies, policies, and procedures to mitigate risks and hazards;
- Providing feedback on proposed policies and procedures;
- Reviewing Koorana emergency evacuation procedures to ensure they are appropriate and well understood;
- Promoting a culture of safety and well-being throughout the organisation; and
- Providing feedback, advice and support to management and employees regarding health and safety matters.



### **Diversity and Inclusion:**

#### **Championing diversity and equitable participation for all**

Koorana is an organisation that consists of diverse individuals who bring new perspectives and backgrounds to the table. Inclusion means that everyone in the diverse mix feels involved, valued, respected, treated fairly and embedded in their culture.

The working party has been responsible for being mindful of cultural differences, acknowledging celebrated cultural days, and establishing a sense of belonging. We openly discuss and collaborate action plans to better our work environment and avoid unconscious bias.

Some things we have worked on to date are:

- Acknowledgment of various cultural celebrations on our social media platforms and internal messaging;
- Decoration and signage in head office;
- Rewording of policy statement to make it more inclusive;
- Calendar planning for upcoming events; and
- Encouragement of whole organisation impute through surveys.



## 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.**

This financial year, we continue to reflect and demonstrate our ongoing commitments to child safety by reflecting on our Child Safe Action Plan. Koorana keeps growing its ability to implement Child Safe Standards and we collaborate with our stakeholders to create an environment that is safe for children and carers.

We are proud to share that we have released our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, and this has been published on the Koorana website in October 2023. This statement demonstrates Koorana's commitment in prioritising children's safety and having zero tolerance towards abuse and neglect of children. As part of our commitment to Child Safety, Koorana also has produced a child friendly version of the Commitment to Child Safety.

Our Child Safe assessments has shown that Koorana continues to have robust practices, processes, and systems in place to meet the Child Safe Standards. We continue to work towards practice improvements for Standard 3, 7 and 8 as our high priority areas of focus.

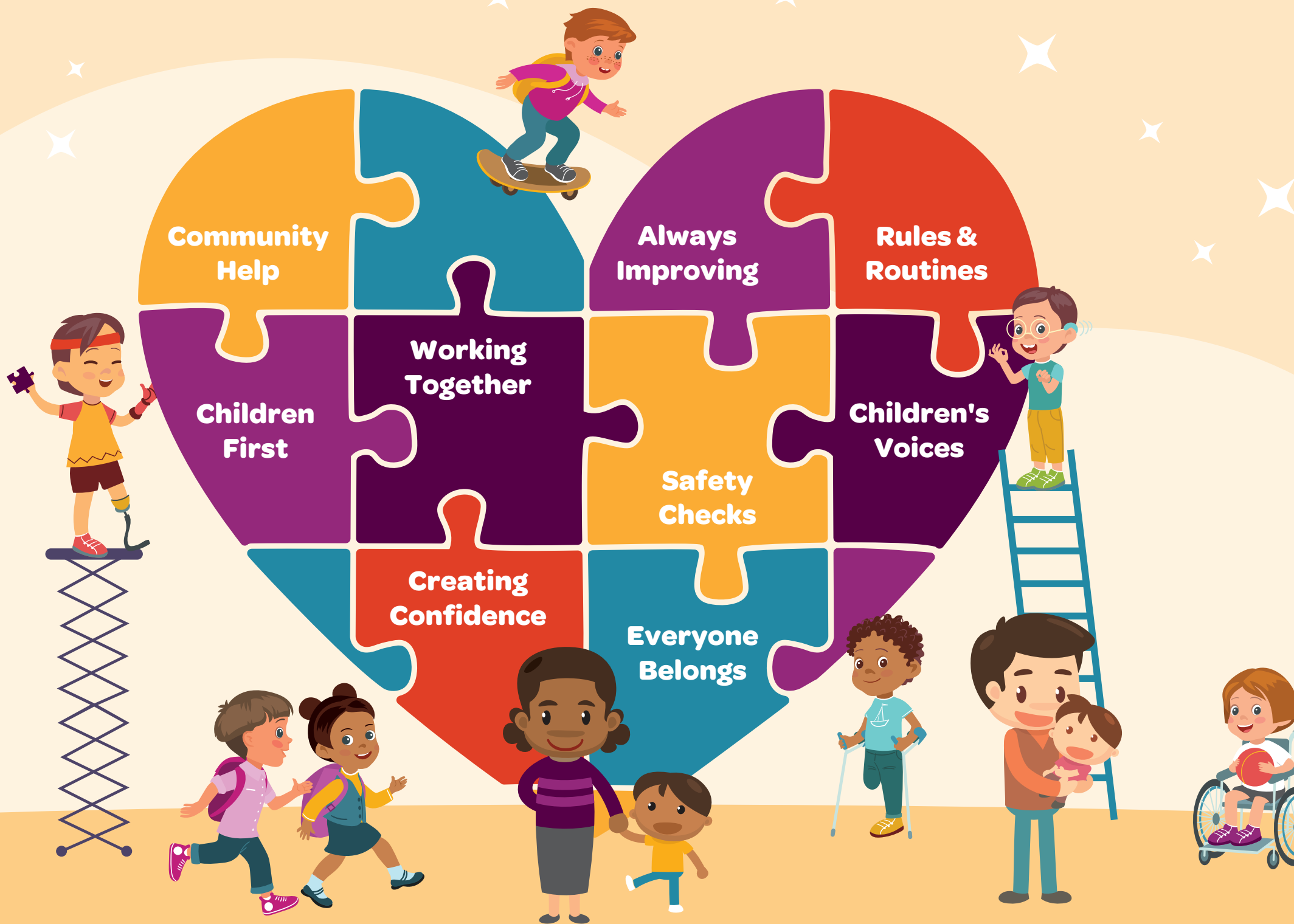
This year, we have conducted various initiatives, such as: reviewing the Preschool's Feedback, Complaints, and Grievance Policy to include a complaint handling system that is child focused (Standard 3). We continued to offer our team the opportunities to participate in child safe related professional development (Standard 7). We have updated our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy to include a section on Digital Safety (Standard 8).

Below are the professional development sessions that have been undertaken by our team to better equip them for their roles in maintaining a safe environment for children and young people:

- Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy & Procedure workshop conducted internally (September 2023).
- Positive Behaviour & Restrictive Practice session by Aspect (September 2023).
- Annual Child Protection Refresher Course (December 2023).
- Trauma Informed Training (January 2024).

Koorana will continue to improve our practices, policies, and procedures to create an environment where children and young people can flourish, knowing they are safe and valued.





**Community  
Help**

**Always  
Improving**

**Rules &  
Routines**

**Working  
Together**

**Safety  
Checks**

**Children's  
Voices**

**Children  
First**

**Creating  
Confidence**

**Everyone  
Belongs**



# MAKING AN IMPACT TOGETHER

## Meeting Family Needs: Koorana Family Fun Days

**Since COVID and with the cost-of-living crisis, our teams have observed increasing numbers of families attending playgroups. Families have expressed cost pressures which have led to a reduced ability to send their children to early learning centres or enrol in school holiday activities. Further, for those families who had children during the COVID period, they have missed some natural opportunities to form friendships with other parents and are seeking to grow their parenting network.**

This year, Koorana hosted two Family Fun Days. Held in September 2023 and January 2024 school holidays to respond to these family and community needs. At these events, we brought together around 200 families at each event for a day filled with fun, connection, and learning.

These days are designed to provide FREE activities for families during the school holidays to respond to the cost-of-living crisis. Further, we offer fun-filled activities and meaningful, play-based experiences that benefit both children and parents and allow opportunities for parents to connect with other families in the area.

In addition, our Family Fun Days provide a fantastic platform to showcase Koorana's Supported Playgroups, Preschools and Early Intervention and Allied Health (EIAH) services. This provides a soft entry point for families who might benefit from further supports.

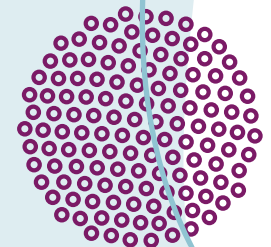
This year's events focused on play-based learning where children had the opportunity to engage in a wide range of experiences, from craft and sensory activities to dramatic play, helping to develop their fine and gross motor skills, attention spans, and sensory awareness.

We had special visitors, including face painters, entertainers, and an interactive reptile experience which added extra excitement for the children.

Our specialist teams were also on hand to facilitate activities and provide support to families, answering questions and offering advice on how to best support their children's development.

These events were not only very successful with the children but also allowed parents and carers to feel more connected and supported in their parenting role by meeting new families in the community and expanding their networks. We are incredibly grateful to the Canterbury Bankstown Council and the Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club Ltd for their valuable support in making these events possible. Through these Family Fun Days, Koorana has been able to respond to the current community needs.

We look forward to continuing these events and supporting even more families in the future.



## Launching the Building Brighter Futures Fundraising Campaign

**In the 2023–2024 Financial Year, Koorana kicked off the Building Brighter Futures fundraising campaign to support the construction of our new, inclusive Bass Hill Preschool. This vital project addresses the severe shortage of preschool places for children in New South Wales, especially for children with disabilities. Currently, only 7% of early childhood education enrolments are children with a disability, and in this suburb, only 26% of children under 4 attend early learning programs. These figures underscore a critical need in our community.**

Further, with the rising cost of living, many families find preschool unaffordable. That's why our Bass Hill Preschool will offer free or low-cost places to ensure every child, regardless of their background or abilities, can access quality early childhood education.

The community we have chosen, Bass Hill, is one of the most disadvantaged areas in the state. It was selected as families **are low socioeconomic** (20.3% of households make less than \$650 a week and 8.6% are unemployed), **new to Australia** (with over 44% born overseas), **may be experiencing cultural barriers** (69.8% do not speak English at home).

From our research, this Ward of the Canterbury Bankstown LGA has the lowest ratio of child care places to children in the entire LGA.

- Our new preschool will ensure **100 children a week** get access to **free or low-cost early childhood education**
- Further, we will save **25 places a week for children with disabilities.**

**Access to early learning for these children can be life changing** - not only does it improve their school readiness and social skills, but also confidence, wellbeing and long-term life outcomes across all domains. It's amazing the power of early learning, especially for children experiencing vulnerabilities.

Koorana operates two inclusive preschools in Lakemba and Roselands, and the Bass Hill Preschool will be our third.

While this project is proudly funded by the NSW Government in partnership with Koorana Child & Family Services Ltd and private donors, we need your help to make up our shortfall.

### What is next?

We are calling on the community to support our Building Brighter Futures capital fundraising campaign.

### We appreciate your support with:

- Donated goods and services;
- Corporate sponsorships;
- Private donations.

These vital components will allow us to create an inclusive, nurturing, and engaging environment where children of all abilities can thrive.

### Please join our community and our existing donors including:

- Edified
- Perpetual Impact Grants
- Dulux
- Private donors who donated to our 2024 Sydney Marathon Campaign who have already contributed to this amazing project!

Together, we can build brighter futures! You can help make this vision a reality for families in Bass Hill and surrounding communities.





## OUR PEOPLE

Koorana Staff as of June 2024

> 69

*Staff  
members*

32

Early Intervention  
and Allied Health  
practitioners

12

Staff members in  
Corporate Services

7

Board of Directors

4

Staff members in  
Client Access



17

Early Childhood  
Educators



12

Speech  
Pathologists



10

Specialist  
Teachers



9

Occupational  
Therapists



9

Casual  
Workers



2

Social  
Workers



2

Physiotherapists



2

Psychologists



2

Behaviour  
Support  
Practitioners

“

**Koorana is dedicated to being 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 voluntary 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, marketing, 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.



### **Stefan Lamour-Jansson**

**Non-executive Director**  
2024 - Present

Stefan joined the Koorana Board in 2024 as a Non-executive Director. Currently the Executive Officer of The Girls & Boys Brigade, a charity that supports disadvantaged children, youth, and their families through a range of educational, recreational, and vocational programs, Stefan brings a wealth of industry experience, and he is passionate about helping children and families suffering from disadvantage and poverty.



### **Laura McNally**

**Company Secretary**  
March 2023 - Present

Laura is a fully qualified company secretary and solicitor with solid training and practice in a variety of areas. She is committed to helping not-for-profit organisations comply with their legal duties and carrying out the governance role in the best interests of the organisation. Laura is a Fellow Member of the Governance Institute of Australia.



## TREASURER'S REPORT



“

**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 extreme privilege to deliver the report on the financials of Koorana Child & Family Services Ltd, for the year ending 30th June 2024.

The result for the year has been audited and signed off by our external auditor Stewart Brown on 30 September 2024 and it is publicly accessible via the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC). This report covers the financial accounts representing the annual transactions of all Koorana activities delivered through our sites located at Lakemba, Roselands, Belmore, Miranda and various community locations.

Koorana has continued on its reinvestment pathway this year with progression on developing our physical infrastructure at the Bass Hill Preschool site and in our information technology capabilities with key client systems implementations underway.

While the investments come with its inherent costs, Koorana's continued provision of sustainable high-quality services is paramount. Koorana has carefully assessed the implications of the investment strategy and has confirmed its committed to supporting the longevity of the services we provide to the community.

Koorana has closed the 2023-24 financial year with a deficit position of \$176,909. This deficit position has been impacted by \$95,772 for IT project investments and by internal resources supporting the Bass Hill project. Koorana's underlying operating position remains strong and will ensure that the organisation has capacity to reinvest to increase the volume and variety of services.

### Cash flow

As of 30th June 2024, Koorana held available cash of \$912,805 compared to the same period last year of \$1,305,653. The current year available cash includes surplus funds held against our non-current loan on redraw.

### Equity

As of 30th June 2024, Koorana retains equity balance of \$2,643,525 compared to the same period last year of \$2,820,433.

## In General

I believe, Koorana 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, StewartBrown Chartered Accountants - for their expert advice and finally our Donors, Sponsors and Families.

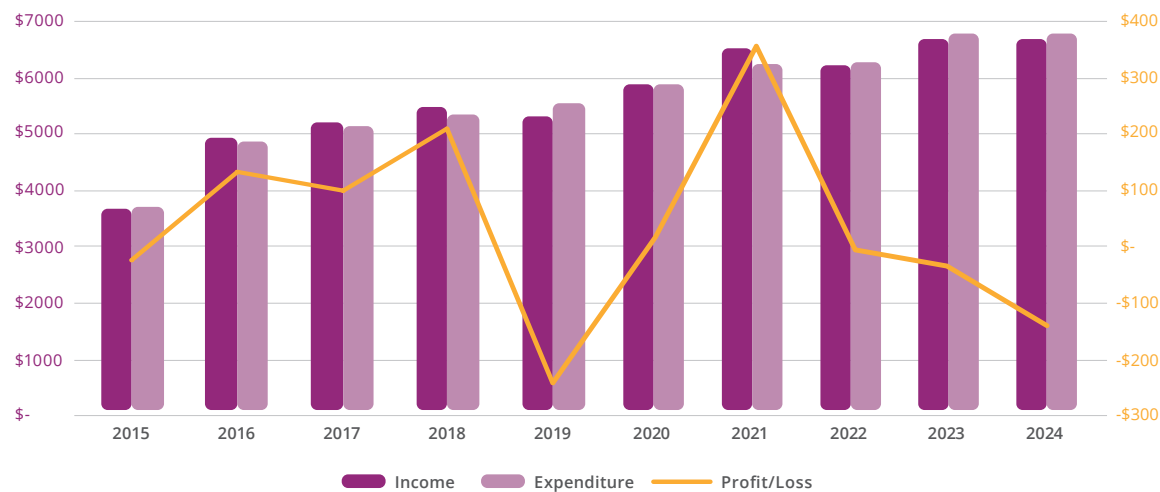
The accounts for the period ending 30th June 2024 are herein presented for your perusal and acceptance, duly audited by StewartBrown – Chartered Accountants.

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, 2015 to 2024

In '000



## 2024 Financial Highlights

In '000

**\$7,105** Revenue from Ordinary Activities

**\$5,940** Employee Benefits Expenses

**\$798** Other Expenses from Ordinary Activities

**\$327** Administration expenses

**\$217** Depreciation & Amortisation Expenses



# TREASURER'S REPORT

## Income

### Overall Income Comparison

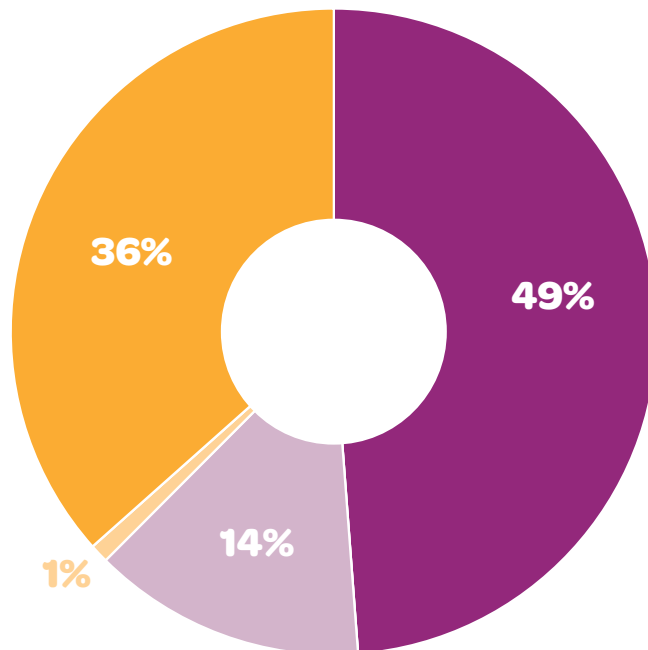
> **7,104,845**

2023-2024

**6,337,924**

2022-2023

### Income Breakdown



Intervention Support & Disability  
Community Support  
Preschools  
Sector Development

### Summary Income Sources Comparison

- > Total operating grants received in 2023-24 were \$3,413,231 compared to \$3,130,286 for the same period last year.
- > Total fees received in 2023-24 were \$3,338,562 compared to \$2,909,714 fees received for the same period last year.
- > Total interest received in 2023-24 was \$31,290 compared to \$14,286 for the same period last year.

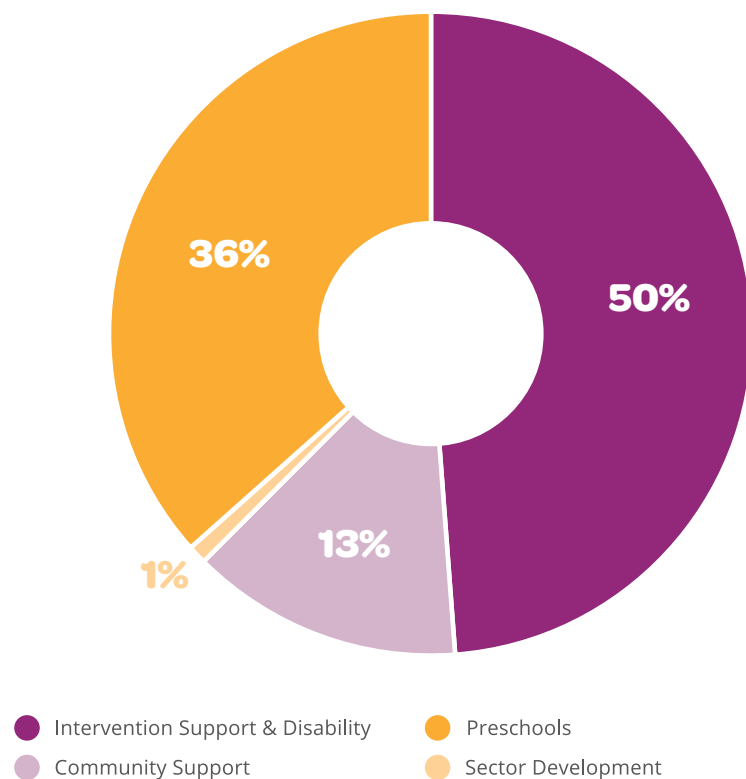
# TREASURER'S REPORT

## Expenses

### Overall Expenses Comparison



### Expenses Breakdown



### Summary Expenses Services Comparison

- Employee benefit expenses in 2023-24 were \$5,939,719 compared to \$5,220,008 in the same period last year.
- Depreciation & Amortisation expenses in 2023-24 were \$216,621 compared to \$187,296 for the same period last year.
- Occupancy expenses in 2023-24 were \$227,930 compared to \$347,747 for the same period last year.
- Program costs in 2023-24 were \$182,932 compared to \$67,349 for the same period last year.
- Administration expenses in 2023-24 were \$327,006 compared to \$311,767 for the same period last year.
- Finance cost expenses in 2023-24 were \$47,842 compared to \$33,873 for the same period last year.
- Other Supplies and services expenses in 2023-24 were \$339,704 compared to \$237,104 for the same period last year.



## 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 2024, 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 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 2024 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 Regulations 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 the requirements of the New South Wales Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the New South Wales Charitable Fundraising Regulations 2021

We have audited the financial report as required by Section 24 of the New South Wales Charitable Fundraising Act 1991. Our 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 New South Wales Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the New South Wales Charitable Fundraising Regulations 2021.

Because of the inherent limitations of any assurance engagement, it is possible that fraud, error or non-compliance may occur and not be detected. An audit is not designed to detect all instances of non-compliance with the requirements described in the above-mentioned Act and Regulations as an audit is not performed continuously throughout the period and the audit procedures performed in respect of compliance with these requirements are undertaken on a test basis. The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

### Opinion

In our opinion:

- a) The financial report of the company has been properly drawn up and associated records have been properly kept during the financial year ended 30 June 2024, in all material respects, in accordance with:
  - i. Sections 20(1), 22(1-2), 24(1) of the New South Wales Charitable Fundraising Act 1991; and
  - ii. Section 17 of the New South Wales Charitable Fundraising Regulations 2021.
- b) The money received as a result of fundraising appeals conducted by the company during the financial year ended 30 June 2024 has been properly accounted for and applied, in all material respects, in accordance with the above-mentioned Act and Regulations.



**Stewart Brown**  
Chartered Accountants

30 September 2024

**S.J. Hutcheon**  
Partner



## GET INVOLVED

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

### > MAKE A DONATION

#### Building Brighter Futures

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 or visit:

[Building Bright Futures](#) | [Koorana Child & Family Services](#)

#### Ensuring Strong Starts

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 but whose children require support. Please contact us if you are interested in supporting this project or visit: [Ensuring Strong Starts](#) | [Support Koorana's Causes](#)

#### Innovate for Outcomes

A donation to help support our sector advocacy or research projects will help to ensure children and families get the best quality supports possible. Please contact us if you are interested in supporting this project or visit: [Innovate for Outcomes](#) | [Support Koorana's Causes](#)

#### Meeting Family Needs

We are committed to supporting families in the cost of living crisis. Help us to ensure families can access free activities during school holidays for their children. Please contact us if you are interested in supporting this project or visit:

[Meet Family Needs](#) | [Support Koorana's Causes](#)

**Please give via the donate button on our website at  
Koorana Child & Family Services | Donate**

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

### > BECOME A CORPORATE 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.

[Become a Corporate Partner](#) | [Support Koorana's Causes](#)

### > VOLUNTEER

By volunteering a few hours of your time, you or your team 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.

[Volunteer](#) | [Koorana Child & Family Services](#)

### > 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.

### > 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.

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)



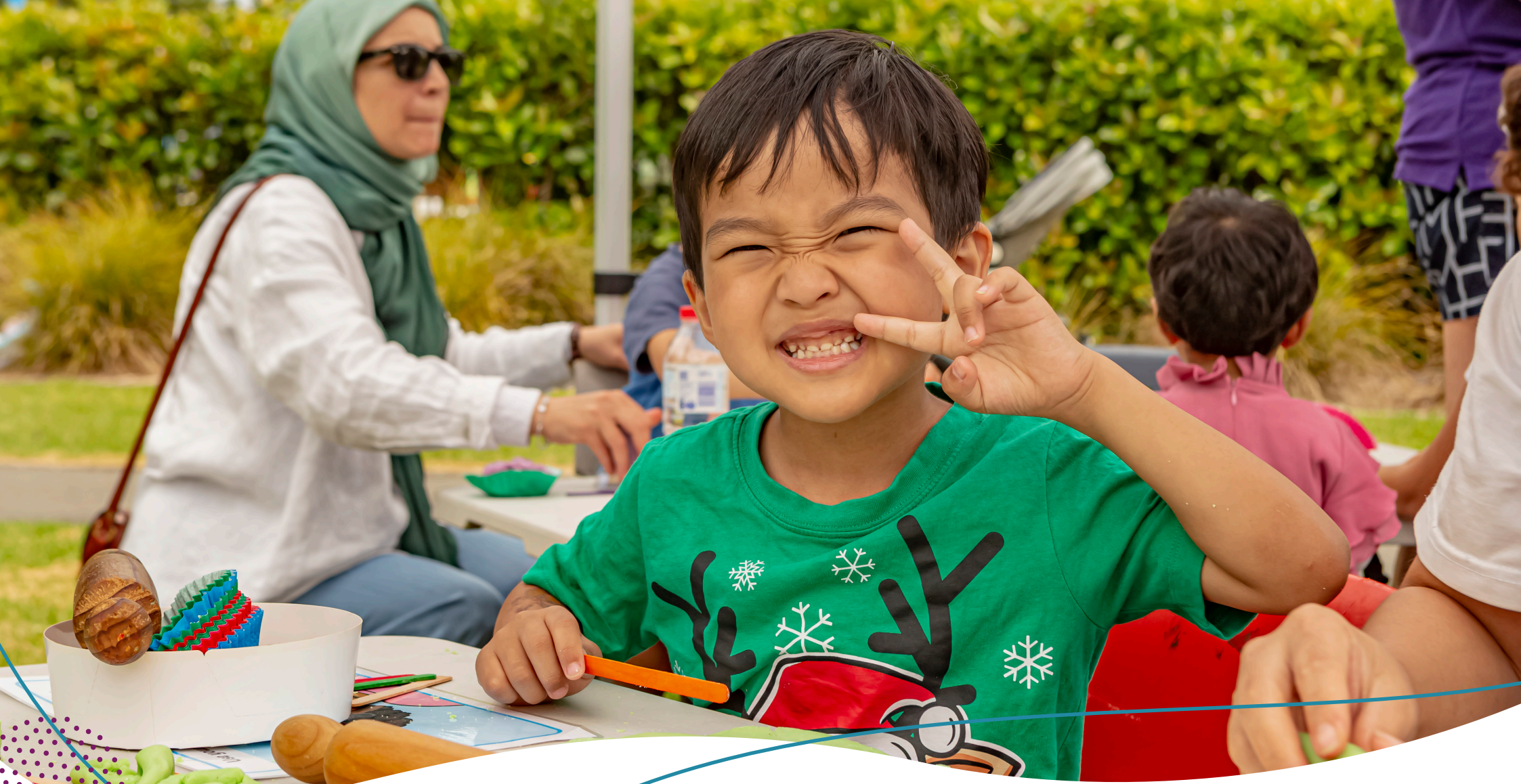
## THANK YOU

**Koorana would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge our generous funding bodies, partners, Parliamentarians 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 & Justice (DCJ)
- NSW Department of Education (DoE)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- The Smith Family
- Canterbury Bankstown City Council
- Canterbury League Club
- Revesby Worker's Club
- Canterbury Hurlstone RSL Club
- Vicinity Centres
- Edified
- Perpetual Impact Grants
- National Disability Services (NDS)
- Early Childhood Intervention *Best Practice Network* Partners
- Child and Family Supports Alliance (CaFSA NSW) Partners
- Western Sydney University
- The Youth Partnership
- Early Childhood Partners in the Community: LifeStart & EACH
- Canterbury Child and Family Interagency Partners
- Bankstown PCYC
- Public Schools: Riverwood Public School, Bass Hill, Chullora, Panania North, Hampden Park, Hannans Road, Campsie, Earlwood, Belmore South, Narellen, Yandelora, Tower St, Villawood East, Banksia Road, Lakemba and Padstow North
- 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
- Lakemba SaCc
- Lakemba Muslim Association (LMA)
- Prosper Campsie
- The various consultants who support Koorana on projects
- Our suppliers
- Our donors
- Our NSW Ministers – Hon Kate Washington, Hon Prue Carr, Hon Ryan Park – and Shadow Ministers – Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones, Hon Sarah Mitchell, and Hon Kellie Sloan
- Our federal Ministers – Hon Bill Shorten, Hon Jason Clare, Hon Anne Aly, Hon Amanda Rishworth, Hon Mark Butler – and Shadow Ministers – Hon Michael Sukkar, Hon Sarah Henderson, Hon Anne Ruston
- Our local NSW State Members of Parliament – Hon Sophie Costis, Ms Kylie Wilkinson, Hon Jihad Dib and Dr David Saliba – and Federal Members of Parliament – Hon Tony Burke, Hon Linda Burney and Hon Jason Clare

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





**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

