



Celebrating 50 years



**2022/23
ANNUAL REPORT**



1972-2022

Celebrating 50 years
Playgroup
WA (Inc)



CONTENTS

Celebrating 50 years

President's Report 2023	4
CEO'S Report 2023	5
Playgroup WA's 50 th celebrations	6
Community Playgroups	10
- Regional	11
- Enhanced Transition to School project	13
- First 1000 Days at Playgroup	14
- Intergenerational Activities Service	15
Facilitated Playgroups and Programs	16
- PlayConnect and PlayConnect+	16
- Multicultural Playgroup	17
- Supporting Aboriginal Communities	18
- Mother-Baby Nurture	20
Grants Support	21
Other Projects	21
Marketing and Communications	22
Member Survey 2022	24
Thank you	25
Financial Report	26

President's Report 2023



Welcome to our 2022/23 Annual Report.

What a year!

With 2022 marking our 50th birthday celebrations, we have had multiple opportunities to celebrate and reflect on the Playgroup WA journey. Connecting with our founders, and many past and present board, staff and supporters of playgroups has been truly inspiring and energises us to continue serving Western Australian families, children and communities long into the future.

Looking to the future, with new staff and board members, we have held a number of strategic review meetings this past year. We feel privileged to be part of an organisation that continues to be well positioned to leverage the valuable work we have done over many years, and to support the current and emerging needs across Western Australia. We look forward to finalising this work and presenting an updated strategic overview to our members and broader stakeholders in late 2023.

In the context of the disruption and uncertainty of the last few years, once again we are delighted to see playgroups playing a vital role in resilience building within families and communities. They truly are pillars of connection and stability within our communities. The Playgroup WA team are steadfast in supporting members and delivering our programs, we remain financially strong, and are well positioned to continue to grow our reach and impact.

On behalf of the board, we hope you enjoy reading this year's Annual Report. A huge thank you to David and the team, our playgroup families, and all who contribute to the vitality of playgroups across Western Australia.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leanne Gordon". The script is fluid and cursive.

Leanne Gordon
President



CEO's Report 2023

It's been a big year at Playgroup WA. We had the excitement and joy of our 50th anniversary celebrations; a 'changing of the guard' as stalwarts such as Penny Chellew and Chris Hawkes retired; the energy and enthusiasm of new staff and, most importantly, a 15% increase in community playgroup membership.

Whilst the membership increase has undoubtedly been helped by the reduced impact of COVID, it is also true that our Lotterywest funded pilot project, the First 1000 Days at Playgroup, significantly increased the number of sessions and families in North-West Perth and South-West regional areas. We firmly believe that offering families earlier support and encouragement to connect within their local communities when they need it most is an essential part of the future of playgroup. We are actively planning how far we can extend this approach. We are also encouraged that there is increasing national and international recognition about the importance of community level activity and relationships to child and family wellbeing.

The optimism from membership growth has also been supported by increased Australian Government funding as we transitioned to the new PlayConnect+ model in January 2023 and planned for expanding Community Playgroup support. This expansion is most obviously evident by the employment of a Playgroup Development Officer in Geraldton for the first time. We will also be delivering more Mother-Baby Nurture groups than ever before.

There has been plenty of work undertaken to achieve these outcomes with the Enhanced Transition to School team particularly busy reviving and establishing playgroups in schools that were the most impacted by COVID and the Marketing team coping magnificently with the 50th anniversary celebrations and a return to public events. There are many more examples of the challenges and successes that the team has overcome during the past year, and I encourage you to read our Annual Report in detail to really appreciate the depth and variety of the work we undertake.

As always, everyone at Playgroup WA acknowledges the work and commitment of the people that make local playgroups work. We know how important you are, the difference you are making and what a privilege it is to support you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Zarb".

David Zarb
CEO



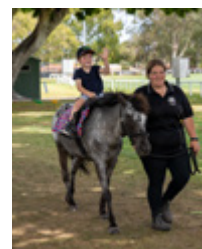


Celebrating 50 years of Playgroup WA

Playgroup WA's 50th birthday was celebrated in style in the second half of 2022. At this time, COVID restrictions had eased and community events were welcomed back into the community.

The key highlights were Playgroup WA's 50th Birthday Fun Day at Wanneroo Showgrounds, 50th Anniversary Cocktail Party at Fraser's Kings Park, and the launching of both a history book, *50 Years of Playgroup in Western Australia*, by Lucy Hair, and historical video, *The Spirit of Playgroup*, filmed by Perth Video Productions.

In addition to this, playgroups were supported to host their own celebrations with their playgroup community.



50th Birthday Fun Day

On 22 November 2022, a large family-friendly, public event was held at Wanneroo Showgrounds to celebrate 50 years of Playgroup WA with members and the wider community. This was the first large scale event that we have been able to hold in three years. The turn-out and feedback was very positive, with approximately 4000 adults and children in attendance. Playgroup WA was grateful for the support and sponsorship of this event by the City of Wanneroo. More than 20 community organisations, including WA Museum, Perth Zoo and Ngala, participated by providing a fun activity for children and information for families. There was stage entertainment, animal farm, pony rides, face painting and a variety of physical activities.

Feedback from the event evaluation survey was

very positive, with a strong interest in Playgroup WA holding the event again.

Quotes from attendees:

"I was so impressed; I am still telling all my family & friends about how good it was! So much entertainment for the little ones, giant bubbles, animal petting farm, jungle sports, drumming, stage singing & dancing, free yoghurt and great food trucks"

"Meeting other parents as we are new to WA and learning so much about other organisations was so useful"

50th Anniversary Cocktail Party

On Friday evening, 21 October 2022, Playgroup WA's 50th Anniversary Cocktail Party was celebrated with some 150 special guests at Fraser's, Kings Park. Attendees included playgroup committee members, historical members, past staff, State and Federal ministers, professionals from government and community sector organisations, and Playgroup WA board and staff, including staff who had travelled from regional and remote communities.

The event was MC'd by Nadia Mitsopoulos (ABC Perth), who also conducted a radio interview with CEO David Zarb on ABC 720 in the lead up to the event. Presentations were made, starting with an inspiring Welcome to Country by Shaun Nannup, followed by Playgroup WA President Leanne Gordon and CEO David Zarb. We heard memorable ministerial addresses from Hon Dr Anne Aly, Australian Minister for Early Childhood Education and Hon Simone McGurk, WA Minister for Community Services. We also heard from Lucy Hair (author of Playgroup WA's book which was launched) and Cynthia Dixon, one of Playgroup WA's first Presidents.

Special mention and gifts were given to several historical members and to recently retired long-serving staff members, Penny Chellew and Chris Hawkes. The "playgroup pioneers" acknowledged on the night were:

- Cynthia Dixon – Former President 1973-1974 and original member of Playgroup Association of WA
- Eversley Mortlock – First Editor of Interaction and original member of Playgroup Association of WA
- Glenda Parks – First Secretary and original member of Playgroup Association of WA
- Penny Hudson – Interaction Illustrator 1978-2004
- Jude Rowohlt – Interaction Typist
- Pam Harris – Life Member
- Del Sterpini – Playgroup WA staff member and administrator 1982-1995

Playgroup WA is inspired and grateful to those named here and to all involved in the Playgroup Movement of the 1970s and to everyone's work since then in support of playgroups.

Playgroup WA was delighted to receive and share special birthday video messages on the big screen by Professor Fiona Stanley, Maggie Dent, The Wiggles and Play School. These messages were also shared on Playgroup WA's social media.



The celebrations included the launch of historical book 50 Years of Playgroup in Western Australia, by Lucy Hair, and the video The Spirit of Playgroup. At the event, Playgroup WA's history was displayed on a series of timeline boards, representing key milestones for each decade.

It was a wonderful event with a great atmosphere in the room and an opportunity for people past and present to come together and celebrate the past 50 years and all that has been achieved.



Book: 50 Years of Playgroup in Western Australia

Playgroup WA commissioned Lucy Hair, a local professional historian, to research and write a timeline history and then a book on Playgroup WA's history, covering the key milestones and themes. To do this, she reviewed Playgroup WA archive materials including the Minutes of annual meetings and annual reports from the 1970s to now, followed by interviewing a range of people who were strongly involved in the Playgroup Movement in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Photos and old films were also found in the archives and converted into digital files, both for record keeping purposes, as well as to include in the history book and also in the video.

The 56-page book is called *50 Years of Playgroup in Western Australia*. An online PDF version is available on the Playgroup WA website and was distributed to Playgroup WA's subscribers and stakeholders via email, as well as hard copies printed and distributed at Playgroup WA's 50th celebrations. A copy was posted to all member playgroups. *50 Years of Playgroup in Western Australia* details the Playgroup Movement in the 1970s and how the organisation developed and grew over the next five decades. It's a great historical resource.

This book was launched at Playgroup WA's 50th Anniversary Cocktail Party by the Hon Dr Anne Aly, Minister for Early Childhood Education, following which author historian, Lucy Hair, spoke on the experience of researching and writing the history. All guests received a printed copy of the book.

Video: The Spirit of Playgroup

Playgroup WA hired Perth Video Productions to produce a video on the spirit of playgroup, featuring interviews with past and present members and staff, as well as featuring historical video footage found in the Playgroup WA archives.

The Spirit of Playgroup video was presented at Playgroup WA's 50th Anniversary Cocktail Party in October 2022 and is available on the Playgroup WA website and YouTube channel. It was shared on Playgroup WA's social media channels and emailed to subscribers and stakeholders.

This video features testimonials from the following people on their experiences with playgroup and Playgroup WA:

- Mayor Emma Cole, City of Vincent
- Nadia Mitsopoulos, ABC Radio Presenter
- Leanne Gordon, President, Playgroup WA
- David Zarb, CEO, Playgroup WA
- Del Sterpini, former Administrator of Playgroup Association of WA (1980s and 90s)
- Cynthia Dixon, former President of Playgroup Association of WA (1970s)
- Eversley Mortlock, former Editor of Interaction (1970s)
- Marisa Galvin, current Committee member, Mt Hawthorn Playgroup
- Penny Chellew, former staff member, Playgroup WA (1989-2022)

It is an inspiring account of the meaning and purpose of playgroup which has benefited so many families throughout the past 50 years.

Supporting Playgroups to Celebrate Locally

Playgroup WA supported playgroups across WA to hold their own events through providing online promotion, resources and sending promotional materials to the playgroup. In 2022, this was in support of 50th celebrations. It was well-received and similar support continued in 2023. During the 2022/23 period, more than 50 playgroups, including regional groups, completed the marketing request form to gain assistance to promote their playgroup, and feedback from these groups was very positive.

“

We all had lots of fun celebrating 50 years. Thanks for your support Playgroup WA!



“

I love that I have a regular activity in our local community that isn't costly and my child enjoys so much!



Community Playgroups

Community playgroups, which are managed and led by the families that use them, constitute the largest category of playgroup in Western Australia. This type of playgroup is very diverse, spanning from small to large multi-session groups throughout metropolitan, rural and remote communities. Importantly, community playgroups continue to be economically viable, easily accessible, and affordable channels of play and social support within local communities.

Playgroup WA plays a pivotal role in providing comprehensive support to these community playgroups. This support encompasses the provision of guidance and resources aimed at assisting in the establishment, operation, and sustainability of local playgroups throughout Western Australia.

There appears to be a noticeable recovery from the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic in this reporting period. Family memberships and participation in playgroup sessions have had a positive increase, underscoring the significance of social connections in fostering family networks and connection, and enjoyable play experiences.

Playgroup Development Officers continued their support for both existing and emerging playgroups across the State. This support occurred through various activities, including playgroup visits, in both the metropolitan and regional areas; interactive play events; informative presentations in collaboration with child health clinics and selected high schools; and attendance at Early Years Networks and other early years focused meetings.

Advocacy on behalf of playgroups remained a key priority. This encompassed engagement with Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and other relevant service providers. One aim was to address challenges related to fees and venue availability. Encouragingly, these efforts yielded positive outcomes in some LGA's. Some playgroups were granted fee waivers for a specified period, while others benefitted from reduced venue fees. Enhancements to outdoor play spaces and the acquisition of local grants further exemplified the positive impact of this.

Additional resources have been developed to assist community playgroup committees navigate the Lotterywest Toys and Equipment Grants program. This includes hints and tips when applying for a grant and accompanying webinar. Playgroups are also linked to their local Development Officer to assist with streamlining the application and approval processes.

A comprehensive guide on incorporated playgroups is in the final stages of development along with an accompanying webinar. These are due to be released late 2023.

Smaller "Playgroup Fun in the Park" events were organised this year, in lieu of the traditional large-scale World's Biggest Playgroup Day. Playgroups were encouraged to actively participate by hosting their own stalls to promote their activities or collaborating on a roster basis for stall management. Development Officers collaborated with the playgroups to design engaging activities and distribute informative flyers, resulting in a highly successful outcome. More on this is in the Events section of this Annual Report.



Regional WA Community Playgroups

In the wake of the COVID pandemic, Southwest community groups have exhibited great resilience, leading to notable positive changes within their communities. Given the geographical limitations of the region, a significant number of these communities rallied together to provide support for playgroups, ensuring families had a place to connect during a period when accessing support was more challenging. This has fostered stronger relationships between playgroups and their respective Local Government Authorities.

This increased collaboration has allowed families to shift their focus to enhancing playgroup experiences, leading to a surge in innovative approaches to benefit families.

Efforts are directed not only towards enhancing physical playgroup spaces, but also fostering a more inclusive and positive atmosphere. The Southwest Development Officer has played a pivotal role by helping playgroups plan effectively and develop strategies for greater inclusivity, aiming to engage all



members more actively. The influx of new families has sparked enthusiasm for updating playgroup spaces, leveraging not only Lotterywest Toys and Equipment Grants but also exploring additional grants and community support avenues.

While some playgroups are still in the process of recovery, there is a sense of enthusiasm and determination to get back on track and continue building thriving playgroup communities.

The Perth-based Development Team also extends support to playgroups across other parts of the State, including visits, ongoing communication, and the provision of additional resources. This coordinated approach assists playgroups in upholding a strong presence within their specific regional communities. Throughout the reporting period many regions were visited including the Wheatbelt, Goldfields, Esperance, and Midwest.

Within this period, recruitment was finalised for a newly created part-time Development Officer position in the Midwest. This position commenced in July 2023 and will further bolster our ongoing support for the regions.





Enhanced Transition to School Project

The ETTS Project is a partnership between Playgroup WA, the Department of Education (DoE), the Association of Independent Schools WA (AISWA), and Catholic Education WA (CEWA) to enhance transition to school across the school sector through developing relationships between playgroups and schools, establishing and maintaining playgroups on or near school sites, and enhancing the home learning environment through the provision of evidence-informed information and activities to families. It is a state-wide project.

Playgroup at a local school provides an accessible, low-cost opportunity to develop relationships with other families and schools and have a wide range of experiences outside the immediate family and home before the child starts attending school. The school sector and playgroups on school sites were significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic and restrictions since 2020. Since eased restrictions in late 2022 and particularly early 2023, there has been significantly increasing demand for new and renewed playgroups in schools across the State. The release

of 2021 AEDC and ABS Census results allowed for the most current analysis of combined population and child development data. This helped inform ETTS planning and prioritising over 2022/23.

The ETTS Project was able to successfully build relationships between playgroups and schools; establish and maintain new parent-led playgroups and re-start recessed groups on school sites; and provide evidenced-based information and resources to enhance home learning environments. The outcomes demonstrated, including feedback from schools, and especially families, indicated playgroups are instrumental in meeting the fundamental need for play opportunities for children's development and wellbeing and have a vital role in providing social support and maintaining mental health and wellbeing for parents and caregivers. This power of playgroups in connecting very young children, families and schools leads to successful school transition.

“

I love meeting new people and have gained some amazing friends. My son has the opportunity to play and grow!

First 1000 Days at Playgroup Project

Playgroup WA's First 1000 Days at Playgroup pilot project, funded by Lotterywest, commenced in July 2021 in two pilot sites, the North West Metropolitan Perth region and the South West region. The project's main aim was to engage meaningfully with families in the first 1000 days (conception to two years) by providing opportunities for connection and community.

Over the two-year period, the project employed a part-time project manager and three place-based project officers to facilitate relationships with families and local community playgroups. This involved sharing information and resources about the first 1000 days, fostering connections with local health and support services, and helping to transition peer support groups to mainstream playgroups.

A total of 86 new First 1000 Days playgroups were established across the two pilot sites, resulting in 384 new playgroup sessions, benefiting 1927 families. Sixty-eight of these groups subsequently became registered members of Playgroup WA.

Through community engagement, parents identified specific parenting information needs, fostering increased confidence and social connections. Local service providers and community businesses were enlisted to deliver 168 parent education workshops across the two pilot regions, addressing subjects

such as infant first aid, sleep and settling, introducing solids, post-partum support, baby massage, and home and car safety.

The project not only met its objectives but exceeded expectations by establishing strong community connections, providing valuable support to families in their first 1000 days, and sustaining many community playgroups. The success of this initiative demonstrates the importance of targeted community engagement and collaboration with local services to build resilient and connected communities.

The external evaluation has shown the project has created a range of outcomes for families and playgroups. For families, the project has contributed to increased social connectedness and decreased stress in the first 1000 days. These outcomes link, through research, to positive longer-term impacts for children and families, justifying the investment in preventative activities that support the first 1000 days. For playgroups, the project has shown to contribute to sustainability through volunteers and membership. Especially with younger cohorts, a pragmatic response to shifting demographics at playgroups more broadly.

Playgroup WA is currently reviewing options to take the First 1000 Days at Playgroup approach to other communities.



“

I enjoy seeing the children and watching them play, singing with the children and doing the actions with them. It is good for the children to feel comfortable around the elderly.

Intergenerational Activities Service

Playgroup WA's Intergenerational Activities Service, funded by the WA Department for Communities, continues to bring seniors and families with young children together at playgroups and events, while also promoting the benefits of intergenerational activities. These activities help to bridge the gap between the generations, foster understanding and respect for both older people and young families and rebuild a sense of community. As of 30 June 2023, Playgroup WA collaborated with 32 service providers and organisations across Western Australia.

Intergenerational playgroup sessions are jointly managed by families and participating seniors service staff, creating intimate settings for authentic connections. They tend to be small, intimate playgroups, providing opportunities to develop genuine friendships and relationships across the generations. Families find these playgroups especially meaningful, enabling children and their carers to build relationships with community elders.

Despite continued COVID pandemic challenges, especially in residential and community aged care settings, Playgroup WA adapted by focusing on active seniors within the community and supporting member playgroups to run intergenerational activities.

During the year, Playgroup WA assisted and supported the establishment of nine intergenerational playgroups in metropolitan settings, providing hands-on support with five of the groups. Playgroup WA facilitated intergenerational playgroups at Bethanie Peel, Brightwater Inglewood, Elderbloom Barrisdale Lodge, Silverchain Everglades, and West Swan Senior Day Centre.

Interest from families and service providers in intergenerational activities continues and we look forward to building more connections over the next year.





Facilitated Playgroups and Programs

PlayConnect Program

The PlayConnect program under the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism Package ended on December 30, 2022.

PlayConnect playgroups were held at four locations in Perth: Forreestfield, Willetton, Westminster, and Whitfords. These weekly sessions provided adaptable play opportunities that matched children's development stages and specific needs. These gatherings were valuable for peer interactions and social support for attending parents and adults, with facilitators also providing families with helpful information and resources.

PlayConnect+ Program

PlayConnect+ commenced 1 January 2023 and is delivered by Playgroup WA as part of a consortium led by Autism Queensland. It is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services as part of the National Early Childhood Program (NECP).

PlayConnect+ is designed for children aged 0-8 years with disabilities and/or developmental concerns, as well as their families, caregivers, and siblings. No formal diagnosis or assessments are necessary to attend.

The PlayConnect+ approach involves a dual-facilitator model, situated across six locations, including four in the Perth metropolitan area, as well as Bunbury and Geraldton. Additionally, a trial for a school holiday playgroup catering to children aged 5-8 was conducted, and plans are underway to initiate two online playgroups for isolated families. The first semester of 2023 included developing and recruiting for the additional regional locations and sourcing a new metropolitan location in Seville Grove.

The program's primary goal is to enhance children's readiness for educational environments, offering them opportunities to interact with peers who share similar disabilities or developmental concerns, along with their siblings, in a supportive and family-centred setting. During these sessions, a range of play opportunities are offered. These opportunities are planned by facilitators considering the individual needs of participating children. Importantly, these sessions also serve as a valuable platform for parents and other attending adults to establish peer connections and receive essential social support and links to local support services.

Multicultural Playgroup

Our Multicultural Supported Playgroups in Brabham and Ellenbrook are funded by the Swan Alliance through the Department of Social Services' Communities for Children Midland program. The playgroup at Malvern Springs Community Centre in Ellenbrook, saw the participation of 31 families during the 2022-23 reporting period. The other playgroup, initially held at Brabham Primary School, shifted its location to the Brabham Pavilion due to space constraints. Over the same reporting period, the Brabham playgroup engaged 21 families. Both groups represent a diverse array of cultures and include speakers of various languages other than English (16 different languages in total).

These playgroups continue to provide opportunities for parents to interact with their children through play, fostering developmental gains across various domains including social and emotional skills, which play a crucial role in facilitating a smooth transition for children into school. Feedback from parents also emphasised that their involvement in these playgroups expanded their knowledge of the role that play assumes in their children's learning.

The sense of connection and community forged within the playgroups is evidenced by the lasting friendships formed, with families upholding these relationships outside the playgroup sessions.

The funding for these valuable playgroups is secured until July 2024.



“

Playgroup has been a safe place for my child to run around and play and meet other kids his age. I enjoyed the safe environment and meeting other parents. I've gained new friends, the ladies have been incredibly open and caring and full of wonderful advice about parenting and life in general.





Supporting Aboriginal Communities

Playgroup WA continued its long-standing operation of supported playgroups tailored for Aboriginal families residing in regional and remote regions of Western Australia. Currently, Playgroup WA is funded to oversee the facilitation of playgroups across various regional locations within Western Australia, as well as in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. This initiative is made possible through funding received from the National Indigenous Australian's Agency (NIAA) under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

The overarching goal of this program is to strengthen participation in early childhood development activities, enhance school readiness, cultivate stronger family engagement with schools, and bolster parenting confidence in nurturing children's development. Moreover, the program actively seeks to stimulate employment and training prospects for local Aboriginal people.

Our Aboriginal staff travelled to Perth for professional development opportunities and to celebrate our 50th Birthday celebrations at Frasers in Kings Park.

Supported Playgroups for Aboriginal Communities in Regional WA

Aboriginal playgroups continue to operate in Pingelly, Albany, Quairading, and Laverton. A new playgroup commenced in Mt Margaret in February 2022.

Notably, both Albany and Quairading relocated to new venues during this reporting period. Playgroup WA provides employment for 10 Aboriginal staff members within the five regional WA sites.

Collaborative partnerships with Great Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation in Albany and Pakaanu Aboriginal Corporation in Laverton continue, with the shared aim of local-level management of these groups and the potential to seek funding in their own right in the future.

Playgroup WA has fostered valuable partnerships with schools and a range of service providers. These collaborations have been instrumental in assisting families to effectively nurture their children's health and overall wellbeing and encourage a successful transition to school.

As part of our overall strategy, we are actively working towards strengthening connections with local child health nurses and allied health services to facilitate their involvement in playgroups and make playgroup a 'one stop shop' to allow ease of engagement for families and service providers. Furthermore, we are orchestrating follow-up services, such as ear health and speech pathology, as appropriate, to ensure comprehensive assistance for children's development.

Another significant aspect of our strategy is to focus on school readiness. To support families with children

entering kindergarten, we have been actively collaborating with local schools. Our joint efforts have centred around organising transition to school activities, designed to ease the transition process for both children and their families. By engaging in these activities, families can gain valuable insights and access resources that will contribute to a smooth and successful transition to kindergarten.

Ngaanyatjarra Lands

Playgroup WA continues to operate a five day a week playgroup in Warburton that continues to thrive and is held in high regard throughout the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (Lands). In early 2023, visits were conducted to the Lands communities, Mantamaru, Irrunytju, Papulankutja, Wanarn, and Warakurna, in order to gauge their interest in re-establishing or initiating playgroups. Currently, Warakurna, Wanarn, and Irrunytju have taken positive steps forward in this direction with recruitment of local part-time staff and sourcing of appropriate venues. Collaboration with the local schools and Community Development Advisors have enabled this to occur with playgroups due to commence in the second half of 2023.

Across the playgroups in the Lands, concerted efforts have been made to secure Heart Beats training for all communities in collaboration with the Royal Life Saving Society WA. Additionally, collaboration with a local media company is underway to film reading sessions in both English and the local language at all playgroups. This initiative aims to preserve language and culture, addressing language barriers effectively.

Playgroup WA has allocated a full-time staff member to Warburton and part-time staff in the other communities. These teams, comprised of community-supported individuals, integrate local language, knowledge, and culture to complement the resilience and strength of playgroups. The staff's proficiency in English, Ngaanyatjarra, Pintupi, Pitjantjara, and Anangu languages has proved pivotal in maintaining the preservation of local languages within literacy and other playgroup activities.

“

It's a fun, safe and sociable experience for the kids and us & important to feel a part of something in the community!



Mother- Baby Nurture

Playgroup WA continues to deliver perinatal and infant mental health services through Mother-Baby Nurture (MBN), a 10-week group program for vulnerable infants and their mothers in the first six-months postpartum. The program aims to strengthen the developing attachment relationship and alleviate symptoms of maternal postnatal depression and anxiety. Family wellbeing is assisted through the provision of information about other local supports and services, and referrals as required.

Louise Miles became the program coordinator this year and brings with her many years' experience working with the MBN team, in addition to her background as a music therapist in the public health system. Louise also holds a Master of Perinatal and Infant Health and is keen to continue promoting the MBN program to support vulnerable mothers and their infants in the community.

This year, Playgroup WA delivered 23 cycles of the MBN program across six metropolitan sites, servicing the needs of 137 vulnerable families. Sixteen continue to be funded by the North Metropolitan Health Service (Yokine, Gosnells, Fremantle and Baldivis) and eight (Ellenbrook and Midland) were funded by a community partnership agreement with the Swan Alliance, made up of Mission Australia, Ngala and Anglicare as part of the Department of Social Services Communities for Children. The Midland MBN group was also delivered in partnership with Midland Women's Health Care Place.

We were grateful that in-person groups are becoming the norm again but have continued to offer hybrid sessions as required to meet the needs of participants. One site (Yokine) experienced low referrals during Term 3, 2022, likely due to the wave of COVID infections experienced across the state and high absenteeism and staff turnover in the tertiary health services where the bulk of referrals originate. The MBN team also experienced similar staffing challenges, and to ensure continuity of service delivery at Ellenbrook, two staff were deployed to run a program there. The team also increased activity in education and advocacy with trusted referrers, as well as recruitment of new staff to the program. Three new metro staff were trained in late November 2022.

Beginning in July 2022, a new group was piloted at the ISHAR center in Mirrabooka, resulting from a new partnership agreement between Playgroup WA and ISHAR, with funding support from The Smith Family Communities for Children site. At this location, Playgroup WA delivered four 10-week cycles of MBN and our facilitators participated in ongoing evaluation and adaptation of the program to fit the needs of women and infants from CALD backgrounds. All members of the team benefitted from team discussions about the implementation of this program, especially as CALD families often attend other programs. This program will continue being delivered "in-house" by ISHAR staff.





Grants Support

Throughout the year, Playgroup WA continued to assist playgroups to access a wide variety of grants by acting as an auspice on funding applications. In addition to this, Playgroup WA continued to administrate the Lotterywest Toys and Equipment grants for playgroups.

Lotterywest Toys and Equipment Grants

Playgroup WA's Lotterywest grants program has remained an invaluable component of our playgroup support, as evidenced by 102 registrations and the submission of 76 applications in this reporting period. These applications vary widely in scale, ranging from the smallest grant of \$840 to the largest, of almost \$15,000. Consequently, playgroups have been assisted to acquire resources that encourage play and connection, and provide storage, organisation, and furniture that enhance the playgroup experience for current members and encourage new members.

Among the 76 applications, 41 were based in the metropolitan area, while 35 were spread across various regional locations. In total, \$400,738.33 was either directly paid to playgroups or utilised for Playgroup WA to procure items on their behalf. This process has also fostered enhanced collaboration between Playgroup WA's staff and playgroup committee members. Throughout the process, from registration to financial acquittals, committee members have closely interacted with Development Officers, administration staff, and finance personnel.

Additional resources were also developed to streamline the process for playgroup applicants.

As this recent grant program approaches its midpoint, playgroups have conveyed considerable appreciation for the assistance it has provided. The positive impact of this support is evident through the expressions of gratitude and feedback from participating playgroups.

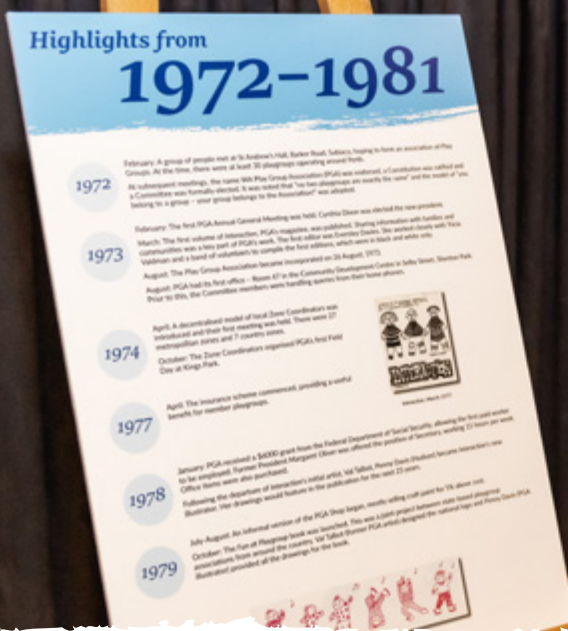
Other Projects

Playgroup WA received funding from the Early Years Partnership (EYP), a collaborative initiative involving the State Government and the Minderoo Foundation, for the Brain Box project. This project aimed to enhance and modernise the previous Brain Box concept, ensuring that it provided accessible, engaging, and evidence-based information on early brain development. The Programs Manager, ETTS Project Manager and others worked collaboratively with the Marketing team on this project.

This project is due to be completed late 2023 and once this project is complete, the resources created will be hosted on the Playgroup WA website for the community sector to access. This will enable consistent, evidence-based messaging throughout the sector.



Big thanks for providing the grant money to bring in new toys. The kids couldn't be happier!



Marketing & Communications

Member Communications, Social Media and Website



35,000

**e-News
Subscribers**

Open rate increased
from average of
24%
to average of 29%



3,285

**Instagram
Followers**

↑ 911



20,408

**Facebook
Followers**

↑ 854

Throughout the year, Playgroup WA regularly communicated with its members and the public via social media channels, website and e-newsletters. The Marketing team continued to support Playgroup WA's programs and projects with event coordination, flyers, promotional materials and social media/website promotions.

Playgroup WA's monthly e-newsletter and direct emails were sent to a subscriber database of approximately 35,000 and the open-rate increased from an average of 24% the previous year to an average of 29% per campaign this year.

The Playgroup WA website had a total of 242,824 page views throughout the year. The homepage, Find a Playgroup page, Celebrating NAIDOC Week and Play Ideas resources continued to have a strong interest as the top ranking pages.

Playgroup WA's Facebook page grew to have 20,408 followers, compared to 19,554 followers the previous year. Instagram followers grew from 2,374 to 3,285.

The Facebook group for Committee Members grew to 570 members compared with 498 the previous year, with good engagement, discussion and sharing of ideas in this closed group.

The Facebook group Playgroup at Home WA, previously launched in March 2020 when COVID restrictions first commenced, continued as an online group in which playgroups and partner community organisations can share their ideas, free events and playgroup vacancies with WA families. This year, group membership remained steady at 4,860, similar to previous years.

The Playgroup WA Resource Kit website is a comprehensive resource on how to run a playgroup for playgroup committees and others interested in supporting playgroups, such as local government, aged care centres and schools. This website had 10,979 total views throughout the year, with the top visited pages being the homepage, Templates and Checklists page, Welcome message, Managing a Community Playgroup and How to Start a Playgroup page.

Early Bird Campaign

Playgroup WA's promotion strategy comprises a mix of online, print, email, events and in-person promotion (including partnerships and community development) throughout the year. One of the highlights is the Early Bird Promotion (February and March 2023). This annual campaign to encourage members to join/renew playgroup includes supporting playgroups to promote the campaign in their local communities. Playgroup WA ran an advertising campaign consisting of direct email marketing, social media advertising and radio advertising. The campaign was successful, with a year-on-year increase in website metrics (including sessions, users and goal completions) while the campaign was running. At the end of the campaign, membership numbers were higher when compared to the same time in the previous year.

Events

In addition to 50th celebration events, Playgroup WA hosted four smaller community events in March 2023, in Mandurah (Madora Bay), Glen Forrest, Ellenbrook and Inglewood (Intergenerational event). This event series was named Playgroup Fun in the Park. Each event had 200-400 attendees. These smaller, local events enabled playgroups in the event areas to attend and engage with their local

community. The events gave families an opportunity to meet each other and find out more about playgroups and other services in their local area. All four events had a combination of play activities provided by Playgroup WA, some paid activities and local playgroups in attendance. The feedback received was positive from attendees, playgroups and community organisations.

Playgroup WA development officers also attended a range of other events throughout the year, including in October 2022, having an exhibition stand at the Local Government Convention and at Children's Week events. For the Local Government Convention, Playgroup WA's Supporting Community Playgroups Resource for Local Governments publication was updated and distributed.

Member Discounts

New Member discounts for Playgroup WA members were introduced in 2022 and continued for 2023. This is provided through Neat Ideas, with a dedicated Playgroup WA branded website for members to log in and gain access to a wide range of discounts on attractions, retail items and more. This opportunity continued to be promoted to members through our website, newsletters and flyers distributed to playgroups.

Playgroup WA's marketing and communications featured highly in the 2022 Member Survey.

Top 4 Playgroup WA Membership Benefits:

1. Competitions
2. Monthly Newsletter
3. Events
4. Play Ideas



Member Survey 2022

The Playgroup WA Annual Member Survey was distributed in November 2022 and received 518 responses. The demographics and responses were consistent with previous years.

Demographics of Respondents



92% were mothers



39% were employed part-time



58% had a 2 or 3 year old



64% were aged 30-39 years



50% were not in paid employment



50% had a 0 or 1 year old

Top reason to join a playgroup:



To enable my child to play with other children

"Playgroup is the highlight of our week"

"Super fun way to meet other parents and kids"

Top 2 benefits of going to playgroup for parents:



1) Building new friendships with people in my community (77%)



2) Spending special time and having fun with my children (73%)

"Very helpful and valued service to playgroups"

Top 3 benefits of going to playgroup for children:



Increased social skills from interacting with other children & adults (90%)



Turn taking/sharing skills (61%)



Increased physical activity skills (60%)

Top 3 benefits of being a playgroup committee member/leader:



- 1) Great way to meet others
- 2) Stimulating
- 3) Rewarding

Committee members were satisfied with the support received from Playgroup WA, especially for help with running a playgroup, promotional materials, grant application assistance, and play ideas and information.



69% of respondents said they paid \$150 or less per year to attend playgroup

Thank you

Thank you to our funders, partners, sponsors and advertisers for their continued support over the past year, enabling Playgroup WA to support and promote important messages to families with young children throughout Western Australia. Playgroup WA is continuing to seek partnerships and advertisers that are aligned with Playgroup WA's values and support the achievement of our strategic objectives.

Thank you to our valued funders:

Australian Government Department of Social Services

National Indigenous Australians Agency

WA Department of Communities

WA Department of Education

Lotterywest

WA Mental Health Commission

WA North Metropolitan Health Service

Autism Queensland

Swan Alliance

Playgroup Australia

Minderoo

ISHAR and The Smith Family Mirrabooka

Thank you to our valued supporters and partners:

Great Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation, Albany

Pakaanu Aboriginal Corporation Laverton

City of Wanneroo

Meerilinga

Midland Women's Health Care Place

Parenting Connection

Radiance Network

Royal Life Saving Society WA

Wanslea

...and thank you to all our advertisers, service providers, volunteers and supporters.



DIRECTORS:

ROBERT CAMPBELL RCA, CA
VIRAL PATEL RCA, CA
ALASTAIR ABBOTT RCA, CA
CHASSEY DAVIDS RCA, CA

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR:

SANTO CASILLI FCPA PFIIA

Playgroup WA (Inc.)

ABN: 14 415 755 273

Abridged audit report

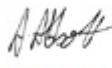
For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Scope

I have audited the abridged financial report of Playgroup WA (Inc.) for the year ended 30 June 2023 as set out on the following page in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the information reported in the abridged financial report of Playgroup WA (Inc.) is consistent with the annual general purpose financial report from which it is derived and upon which we expressed an unqualified audit opinion in our report to the members. For a better understanding of the entity's financial position and performance, as represented by the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year, and the scope of our audit, this report should be read in conjunction with the annual general purpose financial report and our audit report.

DocuSigned by:

A8F8BD4DE37245F...

Alastair Abbott CA

Registered Company Auditor No. 486826
Australian Audit Pty Ltd
Level 8, 251 St Georges Tce PERTH, WA 6000

DATE: 20 November 2023

Playgroup WA (Inc.)

ABN: 14 415 755 273

Abridged financial report for the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022		2023	2022
	\$	\$		\$	\$
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
AS AT 30 JUNE 2023			FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023		
CURRENT ASSETS					
Cash assets	2,013,619	1,894,723	Grants	3,060,486	2,422,144
Receivables and prepayment	319,226	45,104	Client contributions	206,932	205,724
Investments	166,877	153,884	Investment income	32,038	(12,019)
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,499,722	2,093,711	Other income	24,160	23,091
NON CURRENT ASSETS			Employment expenses	(2,480,057)	(2,093,606)
Plant and Equipment	25,278	32,875	Program expenses	(271,757)	(225,026)
Property	1,600,000	1,600,000	Administration expenses	(281,450)	(198,051)
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	1,625,278	1,632,875	Property expenses	(80,020)	(98,015)
TOTAL ASSETS	4,125,000	3,726,586	Promotional expense	(96,864)	(46,035)
CURRENT LIABILITIES			Depreciation	(20,776)	(17,692)
Payables and other liabilities	980,416	879,906	Surplus from operating activities	92,692	(39,485)
Provisions	275,384	69,640			
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,255,800	949,546	Other comprehensive income	-	-
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			Total comprehensive income for the year	92,692	(39,485)
Provisions	14,596	15,129			
TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	14,596	15,129	STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS		
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,270,396	964,675	FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023		
NET ASSETS	2,854,605	2,761,912	Cash flows from Operating Activities		
EQUITY			Receipts from operations	3,078,585	2,629,313
Retained Earnings	928,097	1,086,963	Payments to suppliers and employees	(2,949,360)	(2,334,739)
Capital Reserves	633,018	633,018	Net cash used in operating activities	129,225	294,574
Asset Revaluation Reserve	956,595	956,595	Cash flows from Investing Activities		
ETTS Funding Reserve *	32,542	30,343	Acquisition of property, plant and equipment	(13,179)	-
FTD Funding Reserve *	56,113	44,711	Interest received	15,843	161
Intergen Funding Reserve *	13,444	10,282	Payments for investments	(12,993)	
			Net cash used in investing activities	(10,329)	161
Playconnect Plus Reserve	169,265	-	Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Regions Funding Reserve	12,000	-	Receipts from capital grants	-	-
Lands Funding Reserve	53,530	-			
TOTAL EQUITY	2,854,604	2,761,912	Net cash generated by financing activities	-	-
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY					
Beginning Retained Earnings	1,086,963	830,802	Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	118,896	294,735
Profit/(Loss) for the year	92,692	(39,485)	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	1,894,723	1,599,988
Transfers (to) from reserves	(251,558)	295,645	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	2,013,619	1,894,723
Closing Retained Earnings	928,097	1,086,963			

NOTES

The Abridged Financial Report has been derived from the audited general purpose financial report that is prepared in accordance with note 1 to that report.

* The balance of these reserves are the funds committed from surplus of this financial year to be used in the next financial year



Playgroup WA

Tel: 08 9228 8088 or 1800 171 882

Web: www.playgroupwa.com.au

Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm



1972-2022

Celebrating 50 years
Playgroup
WA (Inc)