



**Playgroup**  
WA (Inc)

# 2020/21

## ANNUAL REPORT



A group of children and adults are holding a large rainbow flag in a playgroup setting. The children are wearing colorful clothing, and the adults are wearing casual attire. The background shows a playgroup environment with wooden floors and a white wall.

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# President's Report 2021

*"Together we can do so much"*  
Helen Keller

Introducing our Annual Report for the year provides, as it always does, an opportunity to showcase the thousands of WA children and families who come together every week in playgroups across our state. As we read the stories and see the smiling faces of children at play it elicits a feeling that life is as usual, although we know that despite our fortunate position here in Western Australia, we have experienced another year marked by uncertainty and upheaval due to the continuing COVID-19 situation around Australia and the world.

Within this context, we express our enormous gratitude to all those who play a role in the world of playgroup. The team at Playgroup WA bring care and commitment to everything they do to support our playgroup families. Our playgroup families bring energy and joy every week to their local communities. During uncertain and difficult times, this is what makes a difference.

Our vision of children and families thriving within their local communities continues as a strong guiding light for the work of Playgroup WA. Our efforts continue to be directed toward ensuring access and support for all families, whilst striving to find ways to broaden engagement and connection, and to enhance community life through playgroup. In support of our strategic direction, we were thrilled to have received funding from Lotterywest this year to pilot our First 1000 Days at Playgroup project. This was a pivotal part of our strategic plan developed in 2019 and we could never have foreseen the added need for family and social support post-COVID.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank David and the team for their ongoing dedication and support in all the work we do.

As always, our biggest thanks go to you, our playgroup families for keeping community alive and strong.

Leanne Gordon  
President



# CEO's Report 2021

As I reflect on what I wrote in this report 12 months ago, it would be easy to say little has changed. Ongoing COVID-19 interstate and international travel restrictions continue to impact WA families and businesses, and there have been some short lockdowns in WA. The impact on playgroups also continues to be complex.

At 30 June 2021, there were more than 1600 additional families registered as members, compared to the same time in 2020. There were also more playgroups and more playgroup sessions than at the same time in 2020.

However, some playgroups were unable to resume in 2020 as their venues continued to be unavailable for a range of reasons. An annual focus of Playgroup WA work is assisting with playgroup committee handovers. The inability of some playgroups to resume made last year's handovers difficult. As families left to move on to school, new families had not had an opportunity to join, and those who did join had little opportunity to experience playgroup before needing to undertake leadership roles. The result of this scenario was that some playgroups were effectively starting afresh at the start of 2021 and understandably requiring additional support.

Amidst the extra support we provided, we were also undertaking an overhaul of our online resources to develop our Playgroup WA Resource Kit, and we produced an amazing film showcasing the work of the Mother-Baby Nurture groups and more broadly raising awareness of perinatal mental health issues.

As many of you will know, in recent years we have been exploring opportunities for playgroups to become neighbourhood focal points for supporting families to raise children from pregnancy to 2 years of age. We are excited and grateful that Lotterywest has given us the chance to test our ideas in the North-West Metropolitan and South-West regional areas. The First 1000 Days at Playgroup project has the potential to have a significant impact on playgroups and support for new parents for many years to come.

Throughout the uncertain times, the additional worries and the successes, Playgroup WA, our Board and staff members have remained flexible, committed and passionate. We are also well aware and proud to work with so many local playgroups that volunteer their time and energy to make their local communities better places for children and families.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Zarb". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Zarb  
CEO

# Playgroup WA Strategic Plan

## Our Vision

Children and families thriving within their local communities

## Our Purpose

Through playgroup, we build enduring local community capacity to support children and families

**Our Position** as an enduring and independent organisation enables us to leverage the collective social and physical infrastructure of playgroups in Western Australia thus providing a unique and substantial opportunity to drive community-led support for families in the first 1000 days of children's development and beyond.

## We believe:

The first 1000 days are the most critical development window for children

In connecting families and children to their local community

Playgroup provides a great opportunity to enhance community life

Families know and understand what their community needs

## We will continue to:

- Increase playgroup access and support for all families, including Aboriginal families from multicultural backgrounds and families in regional and remote areas
- Value the diversity of genuine community-led and controlled playgroups and continue to provide and evolve targeted support services for families

## We will strive to:

- Embed the first 1000 day agenda in the support we provide
- Innovate to broaden engagement opportunities for families
- Improve access to services and information for families via playgroup
- Connect playgroups with other resources and services in their communities
- Enhance the social and physical assets embedded in playgroups
- Leverage the unique playgroup structure to support communities



# First 1000 Days

at  Playgroup  
WA (Inc)

We were very pleased to receive notice in April 2021 that Lotterywest was going to support piloting the concept of playgroups being local focal points for supporting families in the first 1000 days from conception. It is something we explained at our 2019 AGM and we are excited at what we can do over the next few years.

Using a growing body of research which shows the first 1000 days in a child's life (from conception to two years of age) is a significant and important stage of development, the First 1000 Days at Playgroup project aims to address the opportunities and challenges of this critical child development period in local communities and neighbourhoods through the existing social and physical infrastructure of playgroups. The initial two-year pilot project commences with sites in North-West Metropolitan Perth and South-West regional WA (in partnership with the regional based Radiance Network).

The importance of family connection, peer support and community engagement has always been considered paramount to the development of all children. The ongoing experience of the COVID pandemic has further revealed the fragility of many family and social support systems, particularly with many families reliant on family and friends living interstate and overseas.

The team of experienced place-based Community Engagement Officers look forward to engaging with existing playgroups to establish peer support groups for pregnant families and promoting the benefits of social connection during the First 1000 Days. They aim to embed the importance of this period in local community life and will work directly with communities from the two pilot sites to focus on the project's targeted outcomes:

1. Improve the social conditions in which families live by:
  - Establishing opportunities for enduring local peer support during pregnancy
  - Connecting pregnant families with local playgroups
  - Creating opportunities for fathers to connect during pregnancy
  - Support an explicit neighbourhood approach to welcoming and supporting families in the First 1000 Days
2. Increase the number of families feeling supported, confident and informed by:
  - Improving access to appropriate support agencies and information
  - Increasing utilisation of playgroup venues as key service delivery locations
  - Leveraging playgroups to enhance referral pathways between support agencies and families
  - Enhancing opportunities for early identification of needs
  - Encouraging increased service options for families.

# Membership Survey Results



**81%**

parents told us that social interaction and making new friends for both them & their kids was the best thing about playgroup

"Playgroup has been particularly helpful when COVID was such a hard time for all us mums not being able to socialise. It's what we all needed!"

**\$ Affordable**

Average cost of attending playgroup is \$100 a year

Main benefits parents saw from their child going to playgroup

Share & take turns

Improved social skills

Increased vocabulary

Increased physical activity

Imaginative & pretend play opportunities

Development of fine motor skills



**94%**

of parents saw their child's social skills

**improve**  
since going to playgroup



**72%**

playgroup gave parents the opportunity to spend quality time with their child

"I have found a wonderful group which has allowed me & my 4 year old to make friendships with local mums and children"

**Top 3 playgroup qualities:**



**Great venue**



**Friendly**

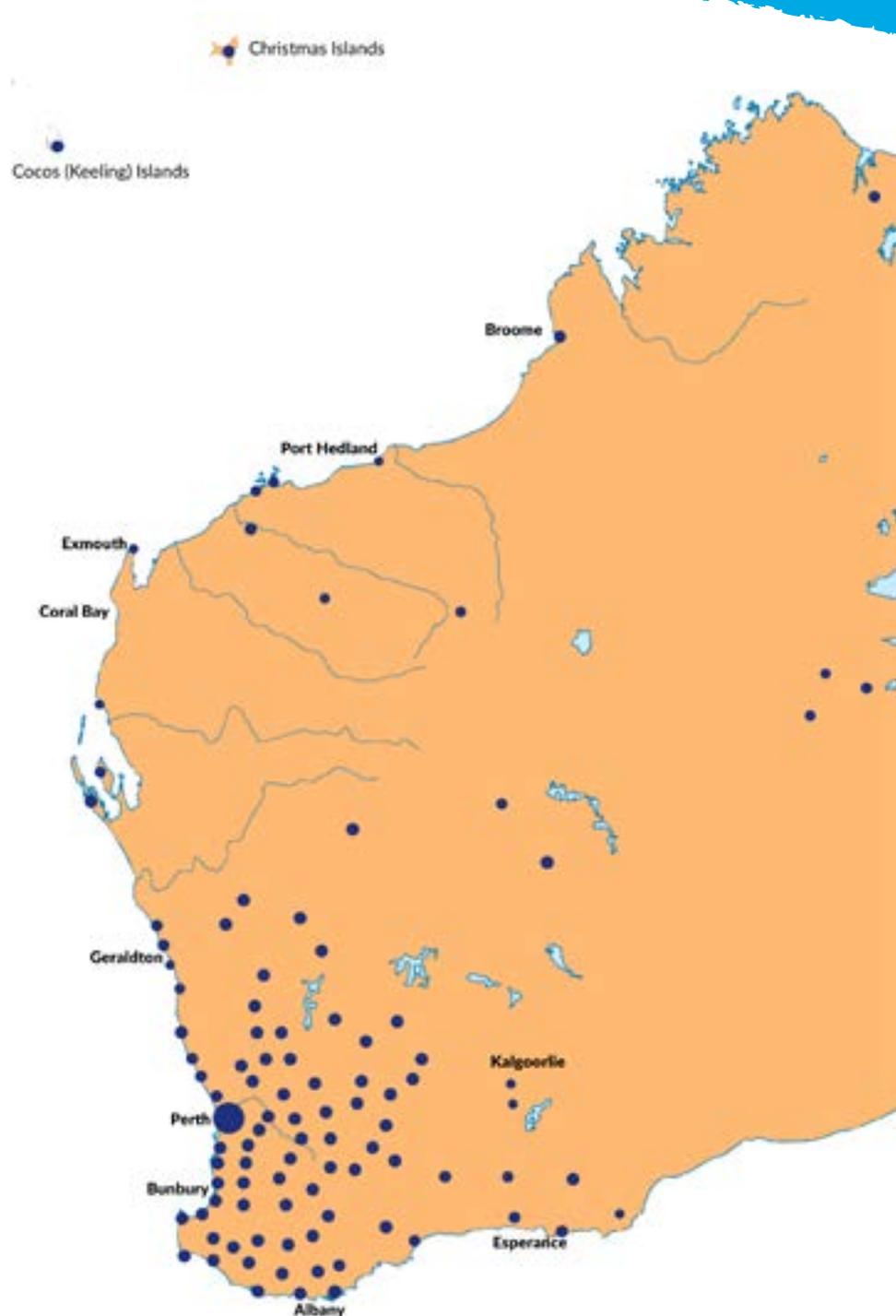


**Safe & supportive**

# Thank you to all our playgroups

Playgroup WA's playgroups and support services span across many communities in Western Australia, as shown in this map. We support community playgroups, intergenerational playgroups and playgroups in schools. We deliver supported playgroups for Aboriginal families, multicultural families, and children with autism or developmental delays, as well as postnatal support groups.

Thank you to all the Western Australian families involved in running playgroups in your communities. You are amazing!





## Community Playgroups

Community playgroups, led and driven by families with young children, remain the largest group of playgroups in WA. Community playgroups are varied, ranging from quite small groups to large multi-session groups. They meet a diverse range of needs and interests and continue to be cost effective, accessible and provide affordable play and social support resources in communities across Western Australia. Playgroup WA's role in supporting community playgroups includes the provision of advice and resources to assist families to establish and operate their own playgroups. This support is partially funded through our family membership fees, along with funding from Playgroup Australia, under the Department of Social Services Child and Parent Support Program.

Despite the challenges faced across the sector in 2020, community playgroups demonstrated their value as community connectors, providing important opportunities for families, including families experiencing social isolation, to connect on a regular basis, to develop social and peer support networks, and to play. Community playgroups were among the first groups to resume operations as we emerged from restrictions in the first half of 2020 and have continued to provide this vital community resource. Over the past year, Playgroup WA's Development Officers continued to contact and visit playgroups across the state, providing information and support in a range of ways including advice on playgroup management issues, links to useful resources and supporting playgroups to be welcoming environments for families to enjoy together. Staff worked with playgroups across the state to assist and support

them in re-starting and re-organising, following the disruptive start to the 2020 year that many playgroups experienced. Despite the disruptions caused by COVID-19 in the early part of 2020, approximately 75 percent of playgroups were able to return to weekly operations through the second half of 2020. While we had reports of some playgroups experiencing an increase in interest and membership, many playgroups experienced membership losses as a result of COVID-19 during 2020, placing additional pressures on playgroup committees and operations.

Playgroups also experienced disruption to the usual transfer of knowledge from outgoing to incoming committees and this has impacted on the level of confidence around managing playgroups evident within some sections of the community playgroup sector. In response to this, Playgroup WA Development Officers prioritised contact with all playgroups in early 2021 to provide the additional support required for some groups to gain a better understanding of tasks, expectations, roles and responsibilities in managing their playgroups. Communications with our member playgroups included information focused on specific management issues that were identified as presenting challenges for playgroups. We also supported playgroups across the state to promote their playgroups, including assisting with open days and direct promotion through social media, local newspaper promotions and the provision of resources.

## Regional WA Community Playgroup Work

The Playgroup WA Development Team has continued to engage with regional communities across the state, supporting community playgroups including playgroups in schools, intergenerational play activities and supported playgroups for Aboriginal families. Playgroup WA's Bunbury office provides a strong presence in the South-West and Peel areas, maintaining a comprehensive network of partnerships with community organisations and other local services for the benefit of playgroups.

Support for playgroups in other parts of the state is provided through the Perth-based Development Team with a schedule of visits, and regular emails, phone calls and other resources provided to assist playgroups in maintaining a strong presence in their regional communities. Approximately 33 percent of Lotterywest grants dispersed over the year were to playgroups in regional areas, providing them with funds for the purchase of toys and equipment. Development Officers worked closely with these playgroups in helping them to develop their applications and guiding them through the process.

A number of regional visits were undertaken over the course of the year to provide support to playgroups in regional Western Australia. Visits were made to the Goldfields, Great Southern, Mid-West, Peel and Wheatbelt areas to support playgroup in those areas and to enable Playgroup WA staff to provide more direct hands-on assistance in working with playgroup committees and meeting with other relevant local stakeholders.

We also worked with playgroups in Mid-West communities who experienced loss and damage as a result of Cyclone Seroja. Playgroup WA is also active in the regional communities of Pingelly, Quairading, Albany, Laverton, and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands through our Aboriginal Playgroup Program.

*"Playgroup is the highlight of our week! Living rural there are limited options for things to do outside the home and playgroup is the perfect morning out."*



## Enhanced Transition to School Project

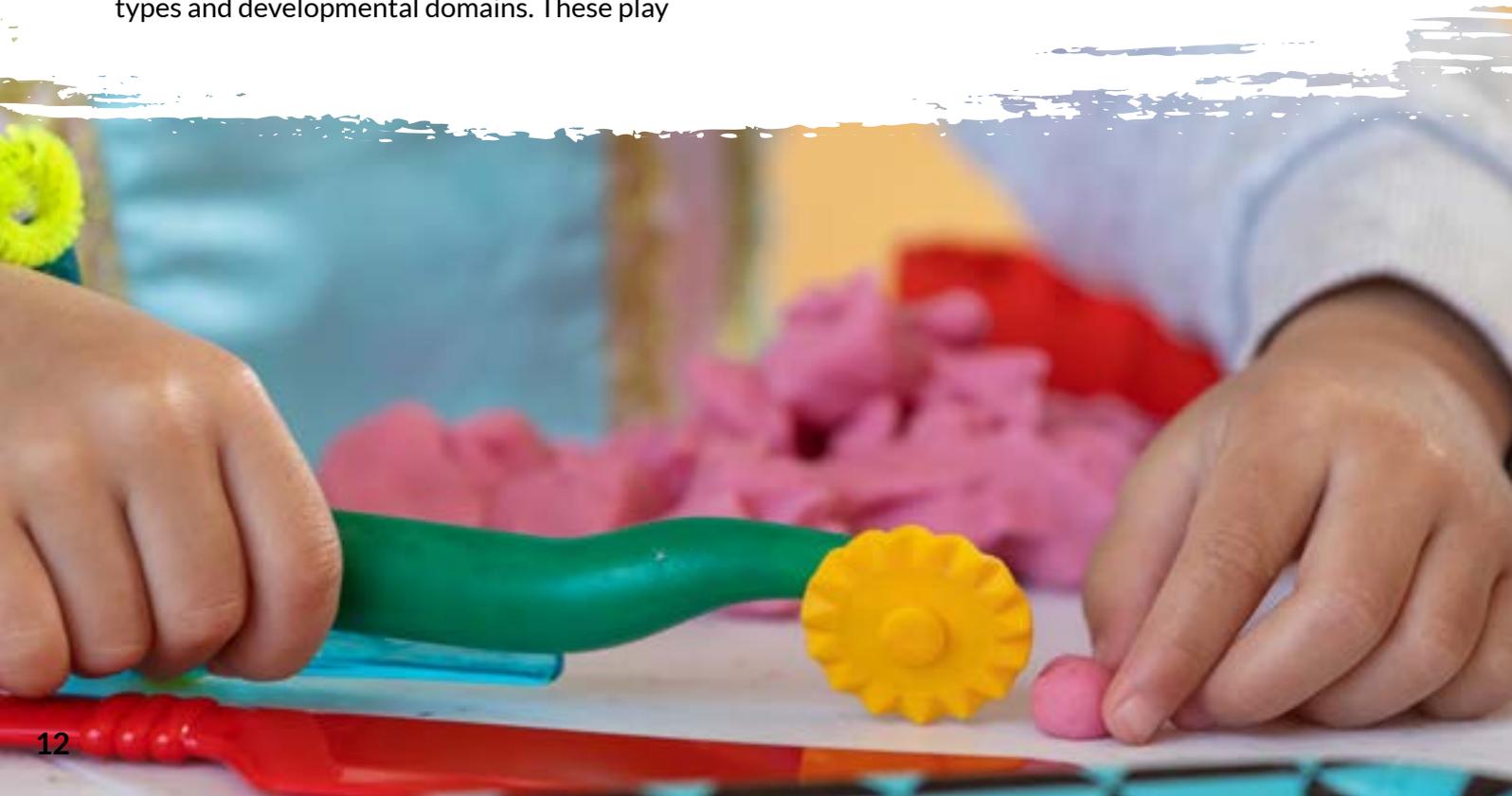
The Enhanced Transition to School (ETTS) Project is part of a state-wide strategy to improve educational outcomes through enhanced transition to starting school. This is achieved by strengthening relationships between playgroups and schools, including establishing and developing community led playgroups on school sites, and providing evidence-informed information and resources to enhance home learning environments. The project was initiated in 2014 by the WA Steering Committee on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education and Care with funding from the Australian Government and has been delivered by Playgroup WA across the State school sector in partnership with the Department of Education, the Association of Independent Schools, and Catholic Education WA. The Enhanced Transition to School Project came under a new contract with the WA Department of Education in 2020.

At the end of 2020, 31 school-based playgroups were still in recess after COVID-19 closures. Much of this year has been focused on liaising with schools and families of playgroups set up prior to the pandemic to ascertain their status and provide support and encouragement to re-start or renew. We have also started new playgroups in schools and assisted several existing community playgroups with venue issues to move on to school sites. We have continued to facilitate linkages between schools and existing local community playgroups. We continued to promote and demonstrate our range of play resources which are tailored for babies, toddlers, 3-6 year olds, and for playgroups with multi-age groups, addressing different play types and developmental domains. These play

activities were promoted and demonstrated during playgroup visits and events, through our marketing channels, evidence informed blogs related to child development and skills for school, and with relevant professional groups. Our Play Ideas page is the most visited page on the Playgroup WA website, after the Find a Playgroup page.

Whilst the year was marked by disruption and uncertainty due to the impact of a global pandemic and subsequent restrictions on in-person gatherings and activities, including occasional short lockdowns, this project continued to be a successful universal strategy for increasing family access to low-cost playgroup experiences, connecting family run playgroups to schools, increasing parent engagement, and enhancing home learning environments.

*"Playgroup has been amazing for making connections with other local families and has meant that my son started school with a group of kids he already knew"*



# Supported Playgroups

Playgroup WA operates a number of supported playgroups both in the metropolitan area and regional WA. The playgroups are based around a similar model and aim to provide opportunities for families that might experience barriers to community participation or to engage in a regular playgroup program. Through these programs paid facilitators coordinate the playgroup activities including welcoming families and helping them to feel included and informed; planning and implementing culturally and developmentally appropriate activities and experiences; and linking families to other services and support in the local community including:

- welcoming families and helping them to feel included and informed
- planning and implementing culturally and developmentally appropriate activities and experiences
- linking families to other services and support in the local community including parenting and early intervention support
- supporting enhanced school readiness for children and families

## PlayConnect Program

The PlayConnect program is a component of the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism Package (HCWA).

PlayConnect playgroups welcome families with children under school age with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or with needs related to ASD developmental delays in communication and social skills and/or behavioural and sensory issues. A formal diagnosis of ASD is not required to attend a PlayConnect playgroup. Siblings and extended family are also welcomed to participate.

PlayConnect playgroups meet at four locations throughout the Perth metropolitan area, Forresterfield, Willetton, Westminster and Whitfords. Each group is facilitated by experienced and skilled staff. Sessions run for up to two hours each week during school terms. The sessions consist of flexible play opportunities that are developmentally appropriate and suit the needs of the children attending. Importantly they also facilitate much valued peer and

social support for parents and other adults attending. Facilitators also provide families with quality information and links to Autism support services, including up to date information on how to get an NDIS plan.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has meant a few missed sessions due to lockdowns, facilitators have stayed connected with families via video conferencing and social media and continued to provide support to families who were unable to meet in person. Attendance was also impacted by many families trying to catch up on missed specialist appointments and getting used to a new normal.

## Multicultural Playgroup

Playgroup WA continues to receive funding from the Swan Alliance to facilitate a playgroup for multicultural families in the Ellenbrook and surrounding areas as part of the Department of Social Services' Communities for Children Midland program.

During the 2020-21 year, 24 families were welcomed at playgroup. Participants came from many different cultures and nationalities with at least 10 different languages spoken other than English. The playgroup continued to provide opportunities for parents to engage with their children in play to support developmental outcomes in a range of areas including social and emotional skills, critical in helping children transition to school. All parents reported that coming to playgroup increased their knowledge about the importance of play for their children to learn and grow.

The sense of belonging and connection to community was demonstrated when friendships formed at playgroup continued outside of the playgroup setting, with families participating in community activities and events together. The playgroup's funding has been extended for a further 12 months from July 2021.

# Supporting Aboriginal Communities

Playgroup WA continued to operate supported playgroups for Aboriginal families living in regional and remote Western Australia through funding from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy. The program aims to increase participation in early childhood development activities, enhance school readiness and families' engagement with schools, and enhance parenting confidence in supporting children's development. The program also aims to encourage employment and training opportunities for local Aboriginal families. Playgroup WA is currently funded to facilitate playgroups in various regional WA locations as well as in two communities in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

## Supported Playgroups for Aboriginal Communities in Regional WA

Aboriginal playgroups continued to operate in Pingelly, Albany, and Laverton with a new playgroup being established in Quairading in late 2020 following a request from that community. Partnerships with Great Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation in Albany and Pakaanu Aboriginal Corporation in Laverton continued with the longer-term view of supporting those organisations to assume responsibility for managing the groups at the local level in the future.

The program was funded through the National Indigenous Australians Agency's Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) aimed at enhancing child development, school readiness and engagement with school, as well as enhancing the capacity of parents and other caregivers to support their children's learning and development. Playgroup WA has worked in partnership with schools and other services, including health and allied health services, in helping families to support their children's health and wellbeing. Where possible these services have been invited and encouraged to connect with families at playgroup sessions, enabling opportunities to observe children's development in a natural play setting as well as being able to connect with parents and caregivers within the context of a safe and supported environment.

A secondary key element of the IAS program was to continue to provide employment opportunities for local Aboriginal community members. Over the past year, we have provided employment for nine Aboriginal staff members within the five regional WA sites.

Staff have also worked with the Mount Margaret Remote Community School with a view to establishing a supported playgroup in that community in the second half of 2021.

## Ngaanyatjarra Lands

Playgroups continued to operate in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities of Warburton and Blackstone. Playgroup WA employs a full-time staff member at Warburton, where we have continued to offer five playgroup sessions each week.

A key outcome for the Warburton group has been the continued strong partnership and collaboration with the Warburton school and local health services. This included jointly hosting a regular Mums and Bubs session at the playgroup to help engage with and support young parents in the community. Nutrition and cooking workshops were also conducted by health services during playgroup sessions. Two playgroup sessions a week have been provided in Blackstone community from late 2020. Similar outcomes have been achieved in the Blackstone Community with strengthened connections to and collaboration with the school as well as collaboration with other services including NPY Women's Council and health services.

We are continuing to work towards the employment of local Aboriginal staff in Warburton and Blackstone communities. Other progress in the Lands has included working towards the establishment of new playgroup sessions in Wingellina, including the employment of local Aboriginal staff and we expect to have playgroup operational in that community in the second half of 2021. Discussions have also been ongoing with the Jameson school around the employment of two Aboriginal staff members to run playgroup sessions in that community.





## Intergenerational Activities Service

The Intergenerational Activities Service, through funding from the WA Department of Communities, continues to bring seniors and families with young children together to interact through play at playgroups and events and promote the benefits of intergenerational activities. These activities help to bridge the gap between the generations, understand and respect for both older people and young families, and rebuild a sense of community. As of 30 June 2021, Playgroup WA worked with and supported 45 service providers and organisations and 6 member-playgroups throughout Western Australia.

At an Intergenerational Playgroup, families work alongside the staff of the hosting senior service to manage the playgroup. They tend to be small, intimate playgroups, providing opportunities to develop genuine friendships and relationships across the generations. Families without extended family particularly appreciate the opportunity for their children to develop relationships with community elders. COVID-19 continued to impact on the capacity of intergenerational playgroups in residential and community aged care settings with groups not able to operate until around April 2021.

While the majority of groups were not able to resume, Playgroup WA provided assistance with the establishment of four new intergenerational playgroups in both metropolitan and regional settings and provided hands-on support to two groups to assist them in restarting. Playgroup WA facilitated an Intergenerational Playgroup at Murdoch Gardens Care Community for three months to assist the group to become a self-managed community playgroup.

Interest from families and service providers in intergenerational activities remains strong and we look forward to being able to resume building these connections when more services reopen to the community.

# Mother-Baby Nurture

Playgroup WA continues to deliver perinatal and infant mental health service 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 as well as alleviate symptoms of maternal postnatal depression and anxiety. Vital connections are nurtured between mother and baby as well as with other mothers in the group, thereby reducing social isolation. Family wellbeing is also supported through the provision of information about other local supports and services, as well as referrals as required.

This year Playgroup WA delivered 24, 10-week cycles of MBN across six metropolitan sites servicing the needs of 132 vulnerable families. Sixteen were funded by the North Metropolitan Health Service (North Perth, Gosnells, Fremantle and Baldivis) and eight (Ellenbrook and Midland) were funded by 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 delivered in partnership with Midland Women's Health Care Place.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, many new WA families have felt isolated, unable to seek support from their extended family, based interstate or overseas. Now more than ever, MBN groups are meeting a desperate need, as evidenced by long waitlists and higher reported rates of postnatal depression and anxiety. Playgroup

WA has provided the State government with a business case for expansion to include regional and remote WA. Through recurrent lockdown experiences, we have discovered that live online groups provide benefit to new and isolated families. As well as offering more in-person groups across the State, we would like to offer an online presence for those families isolated in their home.

In November for Perinatal Anxiety & Depression (PANDA) Awareness Week, a grant was made available thanks to the King Edward Women & Newborn Health Service. To celebrate 10 years of the MBN service, Playgroup WA hosted a birthday picnic for the 1000+ families that have been touched by the program over the past decade. We also invited the families to engage in a live story-booth experience on the day, to share their personal story of crisis and recovery with a new baby. Eight families stepped forward and with the dedicated support of videographer Rae Fallon, their unique stories have been captured and are now available online.

These stories also form part of the 23-minute short-film documentary titled "The Mother-Baby Nurture Story". The film is available to partners and service providers to offer a richer insight into the purpose and outcomes of the Mother-Baby Nurture group service. The film was launched in July 2021.





## Grants & Projects

The Disabilities Inclusion project (Playgroups are for Everyone), through Department of Communities ILC grant, was launched at Mount Hawthorn Playgroup on 9 November 2020, attended by Member for Perth John Carey and City of Vincent Mayor, Emma Cole. The purpose of the project was for the playgroup community to have raised awareness and understanding of disability in the critical years of early childhood and parenting, including access to a range of online resources. The materials produced are on the Playgroup WA website's Inclusive Playgroups page, including five short films, three information sheets, a poster, blog article and links to external resources. As part of this project, the poster and information sheets were posted to all our playgroups across WA. The videos and other information were shared on Playgroup WA social media and emailed to our database. The evaluation survey showed that individuals and playgroups are now more aware and informed on disabilities and are more actively encouraging inclusion at playgroup. This project has helped people to be more confident in being inclusive, showing that it isn't difficult and giving people clear ways for how to do this. A comment from the survey:

"I found them [the resources] very useful. I think a lot of people want to be inclusive but are unsure how to approach the situation if they are not familiar with the disability. Any information that can help people feel more comfortable is a good thing"

Playgroup WA has supported two research projects. As a participating organisation, Playgroup WA has worked with Curtin University on a research project entitled Young children in digital society: An online tool for service provision. We assisted with finding families to participate in this research.

Playgroup WA also supported the Healthy Conversations at Playgroup research project. Working with Telethon Kids Institute, we helped to find playgroups interested in participating in this program, which involves a peer facilitator attending playgroups to have conversations with parents focused on child health and wellbeing topics. Both these projects will continue into the following year.

### Lotterywest Grants

Supported by Lotterywest, Playgroup WA continued to offer financial support to community playgroups across the state. Funding of between \$500 and \$15,000 was available to support community playgroups to purchase toys and equipment. Between July 2020 and June 2021, Playgroup WA awarded funding to 35 playgroups to the value of \$227,471.52. Thirty three percent were playgroups in regional WA. Playgroup WA has valued the additional opportunity for engagement with community playgroups as a result of administering the Lotterywest Grant funding. Our Development Officers have worked alongside each playgroup in helping them to develop their proposals, based on the playgroup's specific needs, aspirations and context of the group. Development Officers provided information and advice about a range of elements of their application including advising on developmentally appropriate toys and equipment and suppliers.

The three-year contract finished as of June 30, 2021. Feedback from grant recipients has been very positive and we are hopeful of being able to continue the program with a new grant from Lotterywest in the near future.

# Marketing & Communications

## Member Communications, Social Media and Website

Throughout the year, Playgroup WA regularly communicated with our members and the public via our social media channels, website and e-newsletters. The level of engagement grew in all these areas. Our monthly e-newsletter and direct emails were sent to a subscriber database that grew to almost 36,000 people, compared to 33,000 the previous year.

Playgroup WA's Facebook page grew to have 18,272 followers, compared to 15,952 followers the previous year. Instagram followers grew from 1,973 to 2,374. The Facebook group for Committee Members grew to 355 members compared with 242 the previous year, with an increase in engagement, discussion and sharing of ideas in this closed group.

The Facebook group Playgroup at Home WA was previously launched in March 2020 as an online place for WA families with children aged 0-5 years to connect, interact and share activity ideas that can be done at home. This group evolved to become a place for playgroups to share their ideas, events and vacancies for new members. This year, group membership grew to 4,900, up from 4,500 members at the end of last financial year.

The new-look website homepage design and matching internal pages went live in January 2021. In May 2021, the top navigation menu was updated, which involved establishing a clearer web journey and updated content, focused on the user experience.

The Playgroup WA website received a 4.55 percent increase in unique views compared to the previous financial year, with a total of 308,917 views for the year. The top three pages visited were the Homepage, Find A Playgroup page and the Play Ideas page. There was a 37 percent increase in visits to the Find A Playgroup page, compared to the previous year.

The Playgroup WA Resource Kit was developed as a new mini website to replace the Playgroup WA Manual document. This comprehensive resource on how to run a playgroup is for playgroups and others interested in supporting playgroups, such as local government, aged care centres and schools.

The Playgroup WA Annual Member Survey was distributed in October 2020. A summary of the results are on page 8.

## Campaigns & Promotions

Playgroup WA celebrated National Playgroup Week 2021 in the last week of March. All playgroups were invited to consider holding an open day. There were 25 playgroups in total who registered, these groups received marketing support and promotional items, with the Perth metro playgroups receiving yoghurt pouches delivered by Brownes Dairy. An evaluation survey found that 90 percent of respondents gained new playgroup members as a result of their open day and all respondents were happy with the number of people who attended.

Throughout National Playgroup Week 2021, Playgroup WA ran a Join Your Local Playgroup promotion. This included paid boosted Facebook posts to our target demographic, local newspaper advertising, podcast advertising and other online social media promotion. All advertising focused on the benefits of playgroup and encouraged people to visit the 'Find a Playgroup' page to join their local playgroup. The result included an increase in visits and enquiries to the Find a Playgroup webpage. The number of families attending playgroup increased by 18 percent from April 2021 to May 2021.

The Early Bird Promotion is our annual campaign to encourage members to join/renew playgroup. Anyone who renewed their membership or joined Playgroup WA by the closing date went in the draw to win prizes. This year there were two major prizes: Wiggles Concert including a Meet & Greet



year. In addition, there were weekly prizes drawn in February and March 2021, including Little Land Perth, Swan Valley Cuddly Animal Farm and AQWA.

This was promoted on our website, in newsletters and on social media, including paid Facebook advertising to extend reach beyond our existing followers.

### **COVID-19 Impact & Communications**

WA was in Phase 4 of COVID-19 restrictions for most of the financial year, moving into Phase 5 in late June 2021. During Phase 4 restrictions playgroups were allowed to operate following the 2 square metre capacity rule, social distancing and incorporating suitable hygiene practices. Mandatory contact registrations were introduced at community venues where playgroups meet in December 2020. There were a few short lockdowns which impacted playgroups in the Perth, Peel and South-West regions. The one with the greatest impact on playgroups was the first two weeks of Term 1, 2021. Many playgroups were unable to open in the first week of the playgroup year and many continued to remain closed for the second week due to additional restrictions. Playgroups could open and return to previous restrictions from week 3 in mid-February 2021.

When COVID-19 restrictions changed in WA, Playgroup WA sent regular updates via email and in newsletters, updated COVID-19 information on our website and provided links to Government websites. We also published a blog on tips for playgroups to help find new members on our website and shared in Committee Connect in July 2020 to support playgroups resuming after the COVID-19 shutdown, with ideas on finding new members and ways to welcome past members back. The blog article continues to be shared to support playgroups looking to connect with more families.

### **Events**

Playgroup WA did not hold large-scale events this year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, which were not compatible with large numbers of young children and families. Instead of holding large-scale events, we supported smaller events, such as supporting playgroups to have their own open days during National Playgroup Week (March 2021) and we supported Mother-Baby Nurture's 10th year anniversary event and the launch of the Playgroups are for Everyone project, both in November 2020. We hope to continue to support smaller community events and eventually return to hosting large-scale events in the future.

# Digital Statistics



18,272 Facebook followers



Unique views to the Playgroup WA website compared to previous year



Total of 308,917 views to the Playgroup WA website for the year



36,000 people subscribed to the eNewsletter

# 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.

- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Playgroup Australia
- Swan Alliance
- WA Department of Communities
- WA Department of Education
- WA Mental Health Commission
- WA North Metropolitan Health Service

## Thank you to our valued supporters and partners

- Goodstart Early Learning
- Great Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation, Albany
- Meerilinga
- Midland Women's Health Care Place
- Pakaanu Aboriginal Corporation Laverton
- Parenting Connection
- Radiance Network
- Royal Life Saving Society WA
- St John Ambulance
- Telethon Speech & Hearing
- Wanslea

And Brownes Dairy for their continued support.

...plus all our advertisers

**DIRECTORS:**

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

**AUSTRALIAN  
AUDIT** 

**Playgroup WA (Inc.)**  
ABN: 14 415 755 273

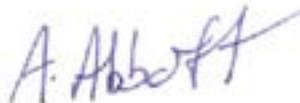
**Abridged audit report**  
For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

**Scope**

I have audited the abridged financial report of Playgroup WA (Inc.) for the year ended 30 June 2021 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.



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

DATE: 29 October 2021

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**Playgroup WA (Inc.)**  
ABN: 14 415 755 273

**Abridged financial report for the year ended 30 June 2021**

	2021	2020		2021	2020
	\$	\$		\$	\$
<b>STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION</b>			<b>STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>		
AS AT 30 JUNE 2021			FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash assets	1,599,968	861,806	Grants	2,572,692	2,245,804
Receivables	35,638	52,353	Client contributions	195,824	112,782
Investments	288,566	280,105	Investment income	34,669	228
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>1,924,192</b>	<b>1,174,264</b>	Other income	18,356	125,893
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>			<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Plant and Equipment	50,567	9,305	Employment expenses	(1,764,102)	(1,806,012)
Property	1,800,000	1,800,000	Program expenses	(213,078)	(269,319)
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>1,850,567</b>	<b>1,809,305</b>	Administration expenses	(171,096)	(150,147)
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>3,574,759</b>	<b>2,783,569</b>	Property expenses	(90,033)	(57,180)
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Payables	757,700	504,014	Promotional expense	(28,682)	(30,438)
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>757,700</b>	<b>504,014</b>	Depreciation	(8,705)	(8,705)
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provisions	15,663	26,003	Surplus from operating activities	547,845	164,906
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>15,663</b>	<b>26,003</b>	Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>773,363</b>	<b>530,017</b>	<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>547,845</b>	<b>164,906</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>2,801,396</b>	<b>2,253,552</b>	<b>STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS</b>		
<b>EQUITY</b>			FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021		
Retained Earnings	830,805	602,288	Cash flows from Operating Activities		
Capital Reserves	633,015	633,015	Receipts from operations	2,837,880	2,459,807
Asset Revaluation Reserve	956,595	956,595	Payments to suppliers and employees	(2,052,107)	(2,480,406)
ETTS Funding Reserve *	41,689	61,654	<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>	<b>785,773</b>	<b>(20,599)</b>
FTD Funding Reserve *	332,805	-	Cash flows from Investing Activities		
Intergen Funding Reserve *	6,487	-	Acquisition of property, plant and equipment	(47,967)	(10,000)
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>2,801,396</b>	<b>2,253,552</b>	Interest received	376	1,156
<b>STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY</b>			<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(47,591)</b>	<b>(8,844)</b>
Beginning Retained Earnings	602,288	499,035	Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Profit(Loss) for the year	547,845	164,906	Receipts from capital grants	-	-
Transfers (to) from reserves	(319,328)	(61,653)	<b>Net cash generated by financing activities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Closing Retained Earnings	830,805	602,288	<b>Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>738,182</b>	<b>(29,443)</b>
			Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	861,806	891,249
			Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	1,599,988	861,806

**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**

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



**Playgroup**  
WA (Inc)