



*Gowrie*  
South Australia

# Annual Report

2017 - 2018



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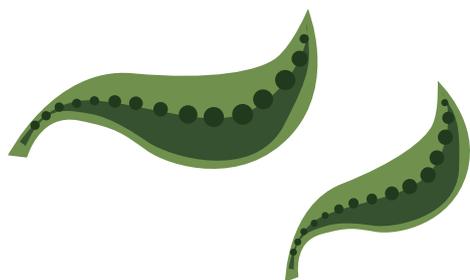


Illustrated elements used throughout this report are from the Gowrie SA Reconciliation artwork, by Karen L Briggs (Yorta Yorta).

### *The artist's story - Growing strong together*

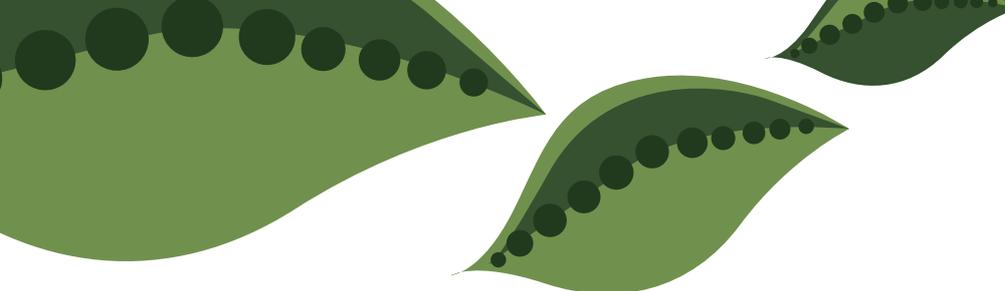
This is a story about the community of Gowrie SA growing strong together. The tree is used as a metaphor to show strength and growth, including the elements of land, water and air to reflect the Kaurna Nation as a natural living and growing symbol. The animals represent people from diverse family units; while the leaves and water offer a food source for some of the animals. The tree illustration portrays a place of shelter and nurture throughout the day and a place to sleep and shelter at night. As the tree grows, it offers wellbeing for the animals along with a place to be nurtured, while the branches represent partnership and development through training, networking and mentoring. The tree drinks from the water and is warmed by the sun; enabling the tree to grow and develop strong foundations through its roots. The seed pods represent new beginnings and relationships for families starting their journey with Gowrie SA. The Kangaroo at the centre of the illustration represents Gowrie SA looking at the tree for inspiration.

# Notes



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## Gowrie SA Board - Chair report

Gowrie SA has had another successful year. The growth of the federally funded Inclusion Agency Program has meant our organisation staff team has now reached approximately 85 people. This growth has been managed in an incremental way which has ensured that it has gone smoothly. In this way, the Gowrie SA philosophy and culture have been maintained.

Our CEO, Kaye Colmer has needed some personal leave this year. Her 20 year leadership and the stability and strength of our staff team has meant that we have the people and structures in place to enable Kaye to take the time needed for her recovery. We wish her a speedy return to full health. Lynne Rutherford has taken on the role of Acting Chief Executive Officer, and Leanne Coveney has been the Acting Program Leader for the Inclusion Agency. I thank all our senior staff for their management during this time, enabling the continuation of our high quality programs.

In 2017 Eleanor Forndran, our Children's Program Leader at Underdale, requested and was granted 12 months leave without pay as her husband was given a work contract interstate. That contract was renewed and Eleanor has regrettably resigned her Gowrie position. Krystal Kimble who has been working as Underdale's Acting Children's Program Leader has accepted the position on a continuing basis.

Gowrie SA continues to be active in the broader early childhood sector. We were invited to participate in the externally commissioned review of the School of Education at UniSA. We are now also actively working with UniSA Occupational Therapy Program staff and students, and continue our ongoing work with students from UniSA's Early Childhood program. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with Flinders University regarding their Early Childhood student placements. We continue to build external relationships in Whyalla, and with many stakeholders through the Inclusion Agency and Fee for Service work.

During the course of the year, two abstracts were accepted, and staff presented at the University of South Australia's Inclusive Education Summit in 2017. One presentation focused on working with children with special rights – 'Creating a Culture of Inclusion: the power of one child's voice bringing richness to learning for all'; and the other focused on inclusion – 'Inclusive Practices vs 1:1 support'. Two abstracts were submitted for the October Early Childhood Australia conference and one was accepted. The Inclusion Agency Program Leader and a Team Leader will present on an innovative approach to gaining child feedback.

The commitments we made as part of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) continue. The resource called 'Elder-in-Residence Program 2011-2017' which was made in consultation with Auntie Leonie Brodie was launched on 24th January 2018. This event was well attended and staff, families and community members said how much they enjoyed it.

We also launched our Stretch RAP in March 2018. This was a wonderful occasion with Aboriginal artists and speeches by Karen Mundine from Reconciliation Australia and Mark Waters from Reconciliation South Australia.

Gowrie SA educators in the infant and toddler programs continued their involvement in the 0-3 Collaborative Childhood Research Project, as part of the state-wide project. We have presented our research to this group. The research explored the 100 languages of children and how these link with the enactment of children's

rights in our Centre. Our kindergarten staff also concluded their research into children's use of a Risk-Benefit Analysis tool as part of the Margaret Trembath Scholarship, with the research funded by Early Childhood Australia.

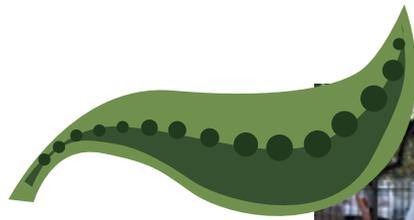
To enact our commitment to continuous children's program improvement, the Board has approved the addition of a preschool teacher/assistant program leader position in the Thebarton Children's Programs, and an additional part-time preschool teacher in the Underdale Children's Programs. These appointments

will align our kindergarten programs staffing with that in other Government preschool programs. These appointments also provide our educators who are studying toward degree qualifications with further internal career pathways.

As part of Board responsibilities, we have reviewed privacy and data breach policies, Board recruitment; risk management; and records and archive management. We have also reviewed our branding and materials with the assistance of local design agency Quisk so that our publications, including those online, look current. We will launch the new branding by the end of 2018.

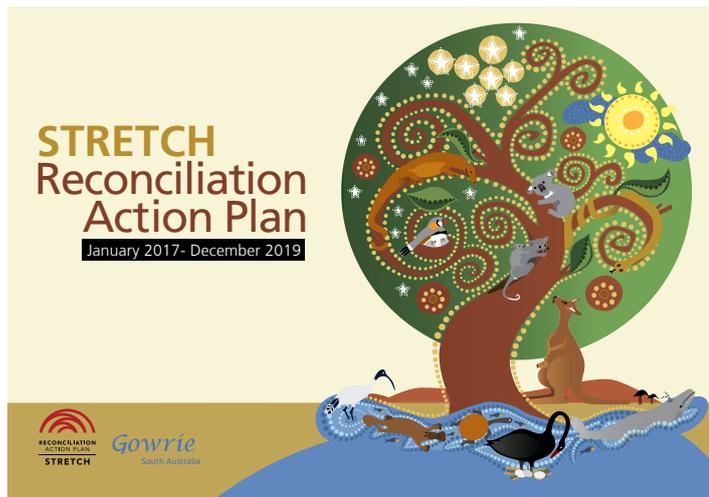
Additional Gowrie SA programs such as the Inclusion Agency and Parenting Programs usually rely on government funding, and therefore are always dependent on current political policy direction. The Board and senior Gowrie SA staff are exploring future opportunities. One includes the possibility of becoming a National Disability Insurance Scheme program provider, while another is setting up another child centre. Currently we have a waiting list of over 300 families. We have yet to decide on a firm direction.

**We launched our Stretch RAP in March 2018. This was a wonderful occasion with Aboriginal performers and speeches by Karen Mundine from Reconciliation Australia and Mark Waters from Reconciliation SA.**



I would like to thank many people in particular for their contribution to Gowrie SA. First to our children and their parents who contribute in so many ways every day to our rich learning environments. I thank our Board members, who volunteer their time every 4-6 weeks during the evening to consider and decide on the strategic direction of Gowrie SA. We appreciate their time and commitment to this important role. This year we welcomed Debbie Smith and Emily Parfitt to our Board. Sadly we farewell Ariel Bastian who is moving interstate and we thank her for her contribution to the Board. I would also like to express my most sincere thanks to all our Gowrie SA staff who work hard to provide interesting and excellent programs. I recognise and appreciate their dedication to Gowrie SA and the early childhood sector, and their high level of skill. Special thanks to Leanne Coveney who has taken on leadership of our Inclusion Agency in unexpected circumstances. I also want to thank our substantive Chief Executive Officer Dr Kaye Colmer for her ongoing commitment and rich contribution to our work. Finally, I would like to thank our acting Chief Executive Ms Lynne Rutherford who has stepped into the role smoothly. As a complex organisation, the Gowrie requires great expertise and commitment from the leader and those qualities are very evident in Lynne's work.

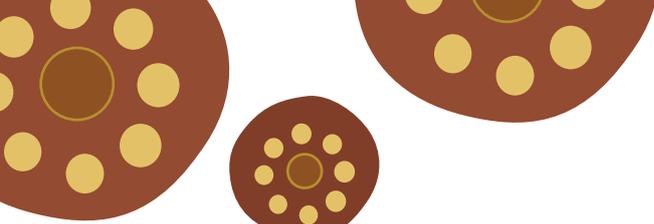
**Dr Victoria Whitington**



Above: The Gowrie SA Stretch Reconciliation Plan booklet, with illustration and layout by artist Karen Briggs (Yorta Yorta).



Photographs from the Gowrie SA Stretch RAP launch event in March 2018:  
Top: The Tal-kin-jeri Ngarrindjeri dance group with Uncle Moogy  
Middle: Dusty Feet Mob, a dance group from Whyalla  
Bottom: Uncle Eddie Peters, Torres Strait Islander dancer and musician



## CEO report

Thank you to all our stakeholders including families, staff and community members for attending the AGM and for working with us over the past year. Gowrie SA has a strong reputation and a proud history and you are all a part of this. It has been another busy year for the Gowrie. Our programs have all continued both despite and because of funding changes and they are going well.

The Inclusion Program has grown to now be at full strength. We have created an Assistant Program Leader role, appointed an additional Team Leader and created a Senior Inclusion Professional role to ensure the work of the Inclusion Agency goes well.

Our Professional Learning Program has felt the impact of the removal of the subsidy for professional development within the sector. This year has been one of consolidation, trimming expenses and re-building while continuing to establish ourselves as a high quality, responsive fee for service provider.

The Parenting Program has been comprised of several smaller grant funded offerings or offered as fee for service.

As a Registered Training Organisation, we have continued to offer the Advanced Diploma in Community Sector Management and the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care. We have made the decision to wind back our operations in this area due to changed funding conditions and subsequently declining enrolments.

The Children's Programs continue to thrive. Enrolments have maintained a steady utilisation and the number of children accessing our kindergartens has increased this year. Our Children's Program Leaders have settled into their roles well. Despite the many staff who are accessing maternity leave we are delighted that there is now a strong core of staff who have been with the organisation in excess of 10 years.

With the growth of our whole organisation staff team to around 85 people, we have found offering staff meetings on two nights has allowed us to create focused and useful discussions and learning opportunities. Our internal professional learning opportunities are planned in advance, although we also allow for any spontaneous and relevant events as they arise. This year staff professional learning has included monthly staff meetings and twice yearly closure days. These have included a focus on the Reconciliation Action Plan, internal research outcomes, intentional teaching, and sustainability. We also heard from Klynton Wanganeen regarding the importance of a treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We must acknowledge the opportunities we have had to work with Uncle Ivan who has supported our staff learning through engaging story-telling and professional learning as well as

working with the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. Additional professional learning opportunities have occurred through the Nepurla groups which have focused on updating our comprehensive induction process; sustainability; engaging environments; leadership learning; and the implementation of the 0-3 advisory group and kindy advisory group.

Within the national realm our staff continue to contribute to the Gowrie Australia *Reflections* publications, with articles written on inclusion and reconciliation. We participated in a knowledge management research project. We have also been involved on a management group, including representatives from Flinders University, Early Childhood Early Intervention Australia SA branch, and the Special Education Resource Unit to investigate implementation of the Pyramid model in South Australia. The Model aligns well with our understandings of social and emotional support for children.

Kaye completed her PhD in 2016 and from her research commenced offering Leadership Masterclasses. These were offered through the Community Children's Centres SA association with financial support offered to community based service Directors or Assistant Directors for a subsidised enrolment. The Leadership Masterclass is a series of 10 classes across 12 months, which support leadership learning and enactment.

The Board are committed to offering our educators above-Award conditions through the renewal of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, along with other incentives to retain our staff in the Children's Programs. The negotiation process occurred earlier this year and we are hoping endorsement by Fair Work Australia will occur soon.

Some staff and families participated in a Sunday Reconciliation Walk which was a little damp but very enjoyable. This year we hired a venue for morning tea afterwards which was enjoyed by those who came along. Uncle Ivan led the walk and gave us information about Kurna history around the River Torrens.

As part of our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan commitments, some staff attended the annual Apology and Reconciliation Week Breakfasts. Other events were planned internally and externally to celebrate significant days and events throughout the year.

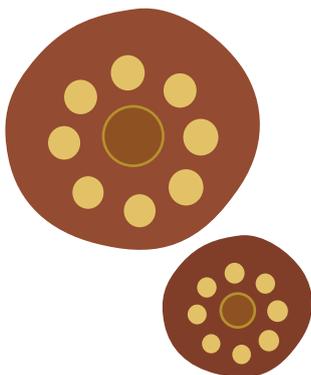
Gowrie SA has maintained its ongoing commitment to sustainability and is reducing the amount of landfill, plastic usage and food wastage while increasing recycling and re-use and repurposing of materials when possible. We are also involving staff, children and families in this important learning, which is translating into actions which are being talked about and undertaken within personal lives too.

This year we reviewed and subsequently changed our insurance provider. As part of this process an external organisational insurance risk audit was conducted with no risks noted that are not covered by appropriate policies.

Other events of note included some of our staff attending the State election forum to hear potential candidates speak about their plans for early childhood policies. The transition to the new Child Care subsidy also occurred. This was a major change and there was considerable work within the Children's Programs to support families, and within the Inclusion Agency to support services. We also offered to support the sector navigate these changes through the Professional Learning Program. As part of the transition, key Board members have now had to register for a Proda account.

Lastly, I would like to make some acknowledgments. Firstly I wish to acknowledge the work of our voluntary Board members. They commit to attending meetings every 4-6 weeks and focus on the bigger picture decisions required by an organisation of this size. I thank Victoria Whittington who has the role of chair, Cat Peacock as our financial advisor, Yasmin Harman-Smith as our Deputy Chair, as well as Nareen Carter, Emily Parfitt, Dr Anne Glover, Liam Connelly, Ariel Bastian and Debbie Smith for their valuable contributions. I also cannot finish without acknowledging our hard working staff team. They are led by a dedicated group of Program leaders who go above and beyond to ensure the smooth running and high quality of each of our Programs. Thank you to Mary Scales, Pam Murphy, Krystal Kimble, Lyndsay Healy and Leanne Coveney for all your work over this past year. I also thank each of our staff who contribute to our Programs. They help to make this such a vibrant and interesting place in which to work and we could not run without them. Finally to our stakeholders and most importantly the children and families that we work with, we learn every day from you all and you give our work such meaning, and we truly appreciate this.

**Kaye Colmer, CEO and  
Lynne Rutherford, Acting CEO**

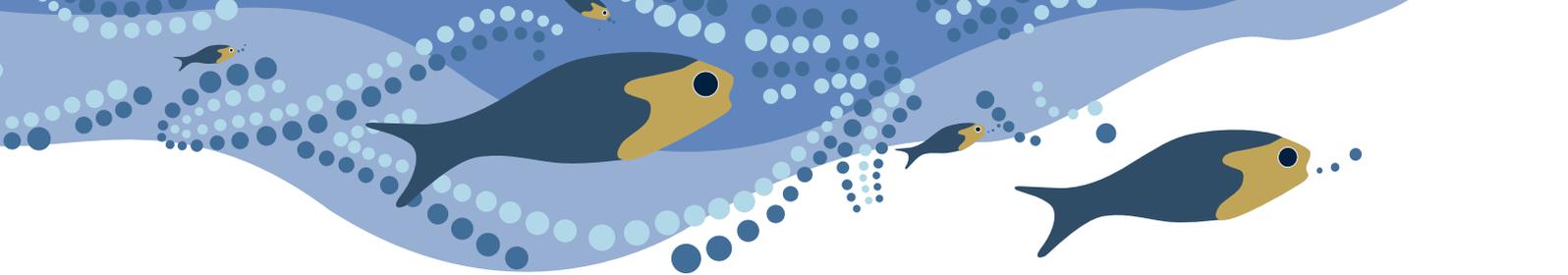


*We must acknowledge the opportunities we have had to work with Uncle Ivan who has supported our staff learning through engaging story-telling and professional learning as well as working with the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.*



Top: Staff engage in group reflections and discussion at our staff closure day which was held at Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute.

Middle and bottom: Karna history walk along the River Torrens (Karrawirra Parri) led by Uncle Ivan Tiwi-Copley.



# Professional Learning Program

## Fee for Service

This year the Professional Learning Program had a year of change and consolidation. Our team needed to navigate a different climate within the sector without the Long Day Care Professional Development Program. This has required a new approach and different skills as we work closely with Directors to ensure they are able to access timely and affordable professional learning opportunities.

The team has moved offices and is now based in the Thebarton Children's Programs. This move has provided opportunities to develop stronger relationships and understanding of the children's programs and has become a stronger part of this larger community of learners. We continue to release a six monthly calendar in both web and hard copy version. In working with the sector we have focussed on our marketing strategies and responsiveness. We surveyed the sector to gain feedback about our calendar, how services made decisions about professional learning and what services were looking for. This has enabled us to make some significant changes.

**We are endeavouring to provide full day offerings wherever possible and we have made a decision to offer the majority of our sessions once a year. We have also enlisted a range of guest speakers and collaborations in order to broaden our expertise including the following:**

- Dr Sandra Cheeseman
- Briony Brooks (Clare Warden Associate)
- Heather Ward
- Catherine McCluskey
- Jane Lemon
- Anne-Marie Shin
- Sally Heinrich
- Alex Shain – Reconciliation Australia
- Education and Standards Board
- Louisa Matwiejczyk

## Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

Within the RTO we had cohorts of students for both the Advanced Diploma in Community Sector Management and the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care. We continue to gain favourable feedback about the quality of our qualifications and we are proud of our commitment to the students. We continue to auspice for Gowrie Tasmania in their qualifications and will do so until the end of the next financial year. We have reviewed the Diploma course with the sector and implemented changes to

ensure its currency and integrity. We have also introduced a foundation skills assessment for any student who receives Work ready funding. At this stage we do not have plans for a new cohort of students in the current climate.

## Collaborations

We have continued to collaborate with the Teacher's Registration Board through a mentoring project with another group of Early Childhood Teachers (ECT) transitioning to full registration. We have been invited to an early childhood reference group to specifically look at the challenges Teachers working within Long day care face in this transition. This collaboration has also included developing promotion pathways by linking our professional learning to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership teaching standards and promotion through 'the Buzz' their e-newsletter.

We have been fortunate to work with Department for Education over the last twelve months on the Re-Imagining Childhood Birth-three project. We have provided executive officer in-kind support at the management group level as well as Kaye Colmer/ Lynne Rutherford being involved on the management group. This project had six sites participate in the fifteen month project. The focus was on realising the rights of children birth to three. Throughout this year special guests were provided to the group including Megan Mitchell, Dr Sandra Cheeseman, Dr Pam Winter and Paola Stozzi from Reggio Emilia. In April we were successful in receiving funding from the Collaborative Childhood project to appoint a project officer to work on this project and we appointed Cathy Cameron. With this came the opportunity for a phase two, with the original sites invited to express interest in continuing and an expression of interest going out for new sites. We now have fourteen in total in phase two of the project.

We have collaborated with Briony Brooks to provide a project for Out of School Care Services. This project has been supported by the Department for Education and has provided professional learning opportunities for the twelve sites involved. Sites participated in an introduction session on Floorbooking, two mentoring sessions on Quality Area one and in November, 2018 they will have the opportunity to come back for a networking session with the other sites to share their learning and programming development.

We have been fortunate to work with the Community Children's Centres and they have subsidised participation of services in the Teachers Registration Project, the Directors Masterclass and a Cultural Competence session for directors. We look forward to continued ways of working together in the future. The Leadership Masterclass has been offered for directors as a year project, sharing Kaye's thesis findings and the application for Centre Directors.



Educator engaged in a Little Scientists Water workshop experiment

We finalised a series of online modules in partnership with the Department for Education. These modules are a significant piece of work aimed at educators working within occasional care settings to support them in their learning.

Our commitment to reconciliation continued this year and we were able to offer a significant amount of support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services. This included professional learning totalling \$6,327 for mentoring, calendar and in-service sessions at locations including; Ceduna, Whyalla, Coober Pedy, Port Adelaide, Largs Bay and Salisbury. We have been fortunate to work with Uncle Ivan Tiwi-Copley in reviewing professional learning cultural sessions and we were also able to attend the 10th anniversary of the apology events. Professional learning team members were able to participate in both the launch of Auntie Leonie's Elder in Residence Resource as well as our Stretch RAP launch. We welcomed Alex Shain from Reconciliation Australia who provided a session for the sector on Narragunnawali.

We have worked with the Education and Standards board to present What's new in the NQF and also developed a session for school principals to increase their knowledge of their obligations for the OSHC settings on their sites.

### Other achievements over the past year have included:

- Uncle Ivan Tiwi Copley – Closure day guest speaker.
- We held a successful conference Bringing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art into your Curriculum in June, 2018. We had keynote presentations from Uncle Ivan Tiwi-Copley and practical sessions by Vicki Hartman, Sasha Hill and Uncle Eddie Peters. This conference was held at Tauondi College and catered by Red Centre Enterprises.
- Gowrie Australia 'Reflections' articles shared within our centre and throughout the sector.
- We have regular representation at the following; Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS), Quality Improvement Group (QIG), Community Children's Centres South Australia (CCCSA), Early Education for Sustainability South Australia (EESSA), Adelaide Network of Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange (REAIE).
- Professional learning for facilitators included RAN-ECE foundation update, Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange network meetings, STEM train the trainer by the Frobel Institute.
- A programming expo with several presenters from the field showcasing their programming for others.
- Mentoring sites through the transition period to the new Child Care Subsidy.
- We received an award from KESAB for sharing our waste experiences to inspire others through the professional learning program.



Participants learning Ngarrindjeri basket weaving at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art conference

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the professional learning team for their ongoing passion and commitment for learning, for being responsive and adaptable in a changing climate and for working hard to ensure that professional learning offered by Gowrie SA continues to be of high quality.

**Mary Scales**  
Professional Learning Program Leader





Jason Brodie with Gowrie SA children planting a native plant at the launch of Auntie Leonie's 'Elder-in-Residence' resource at Underdale.

*Sustainable practices continue to be strengthened across the organisation and in our work with children. The children's programs have focused on reusing and repurposing resources across the organisation as well as ethical purchasing of resources using a procurement checklist developed by the organisation's sustainability Nepurula group.*

## Children's Programs

The 2017-2018 financial year has been another year full of learning, challenges, successes and celebrations. Educators in the children's programs continue to engage in building strong relationships with children and families and continue to refine transition processes with the largest number of children starting with us at the beginning of the school year. Both centres are engaging with the transition scripts learnt about in previous closure days with Dr. Robyn Dolby. A Powerpoint presentation and documentation has been created to support families and new staff's understanding of the concepts used in this process.

This year, Program Leaders have engaged with families in quarterly events to continue to build further engagement and relationships. Term 1 saw new families undertake a review of the service's transition procedure and Settling Children into the Centre policy based on their experiences. In Term 2, an unprecedented number of families attended a toilet training information session with an Occupational Therapist.

Congratulations to Krystal who joined the Underdale children's program as the Program Leader in August 2017. This has impacted on the Assistant Children's Program Leader role. The Board has approved a proposal to introduce a new position to the Thebarton children's programs where a second kindergarten teacher will be recruited for the Wisteria kindergarten in order to provide a similar staffing arrangement to that which happens in other preschool programs. We are looking for an experienced preschool teacher who can also fulfil a dual role as the Assistant Children's Program Leader.

The kindergartens have finalised their practitioner research project undertaken through the Margaret Trembath Research Scholarship. This successful project explored children's ability to use a benefit risk assessment tool to manage risk and challenge in natural learning environments. A final report has been submitted, with the research to be presented at an upcoming Early Childhood Australia SA branch meeting. The key recommendations from the research will be used for provoking further learning over the next 12 months.

The Children's Programs were successful in obtaining a position within the 'Re-imagining Childhood: The Rights of Children Birth-3 years' research project. The 15 month project commenced April 2017, and finished July 2018. Our research involved the infant and toddler rooms across both sites and focused on how listening to children's Hundred Languages can support children's rights. We began by exploring the *100 Languages of Children* poem by Loris Malaguzzi and used video footage to support educators to reflect on which type of language they were privileging. We were able to share our research at the Re-imagining Childhood conference in November 2017 and at the end of the project in July 2018. We are excited that this project is being continued over the next twelve months and that our Expression of Interest to continue in the project was accepted.

Reconciliation and Kurna language learning continues to be a high priority in the children's programs. Our 'Elder in Residence' resource detailing our learning with Auntie Leonie Brodie was launched at our Underdale site in January 2018, with members of Auntie Leonie's family in attendance to celebrate her remarkable achievements. This resource has become a vital tool for educators to continue to embed an approach to a Reconciliation curriculum into our everyday programs.

A relationship has been built with Kura Yerlo Children's Centre. The children have been enjoying visits to one another's services to engage in shared play and cultural experiences. Gowrie SA's Stretch RAP was launched in March 2018 with a celebratory twilight event. Thank you to all of the staff, children, families and artists who helped to make this a wonderful occasion.

Sustainable practices continue to be strengthened across the organisation and in our work with children. The children's programs have focused on reusing and repurposing resources across the organisation as well as ethical purchasing of resources using a procurement checklist developed by the organisation's sustainability Nepurla group. We have started to explore the link between Reconciliation and sustainability which will provide a focus for our learning over the next 12 months.

Our kindergarten programs across both sites have developed strong connections with our community. A transition partnership has been established with Flinders Park Primary school, where children visit each other at both sites. This supports children with the transition to school experience. We are excited to extend on this partnership with use of the school's STEM facilities.

The kindergartens have continued their connections with the Saint Hilarion Aged Care facility with monthly visits to engage in gardening and cooking experiences with the residents. We look forward to hosting our first visit from the residents in 2019.

Gowrie SA has a proud history of offering above award salaries and conditions to educators in our children's programs to maximise retention and provide continuity for children and families. In December 2017 we saw the commencement of negotiations to renew our Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. We engaged an external consultant to oversee this process for the first time to ensure a timely outcome. The draft agreement has been voted on and is currently at the Fairwork Commission awaiting final approval.

Educators have continually engaged in professional learning, including presentation of research and publications. Three staff have completed the Advanced Diploma in Community Sector Management with a further one staff member currently completing this qualification. Another four staff are studying the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood). Two staff are engaging in a leadership masterclass which is exploring the learning from Kaye's PhD.

This year Nepurla groups have been reviewed with some continuing groups and two new groups introduced in response to identified areas of learning. The newly formed Infant and Toddler Advisory Group has explored facets of practice specific to the 0-3 years age grouping, including a focus on environments, primary care giving and physical activity. The Learning Environments group has employed strategies of critical reflection to critique the development of physical environments for children that are responsive to their interests and development. Learning for Leaders has continued exploring dilemma stories and undertaking a leadership module to nurture future leaders in the children's programs.

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Children at Thebarton taking part in an activity marking clay tiles and writing their own messages on gum leaves to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the National Apology.

Above: For NAIDOC week 2018, to celebrate the theme 'Because of her, we can', children created paintings and messages of thanks, which were then gifted to Aboriginal staff at Gowrie SA.

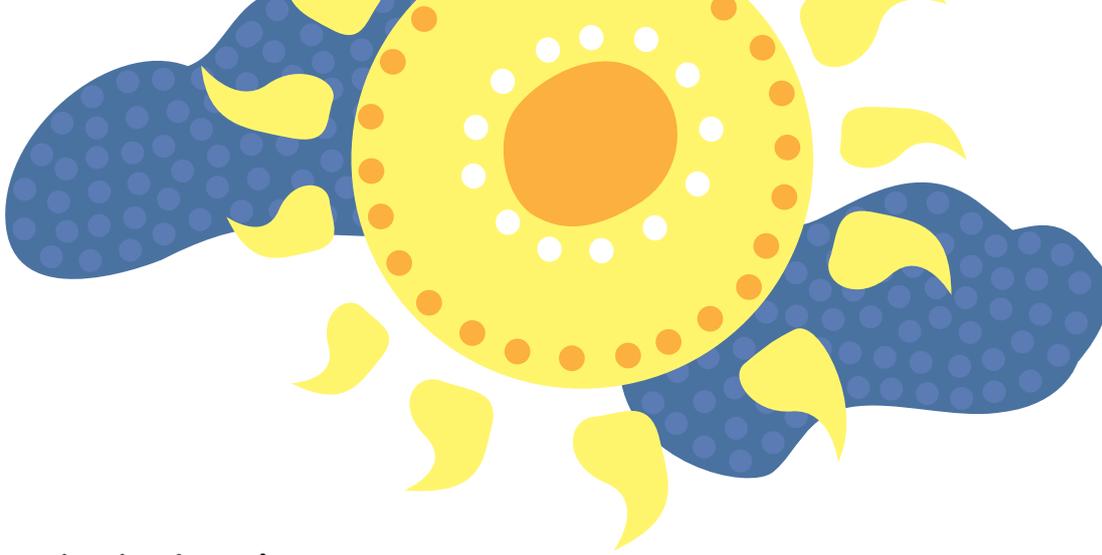
The children's programs have maintained a consistent utilisation which has allowed both sites to carry out capital works and set aside provisions for planned capital upgrades to be completed in 2018/2019, such as staff room renovations and improvements in the children's environments.

Gowrie SA staff's ongoing presence on a number of organisations and committees continues to ensure we act as a voice of advocacy in the early childhood space, and maintain ongoing connections with stakeholders and the community. Membership includes attendance at the South Australian National Quality Agenda Stakeholder Advisory group, Early Childhood Advisory group for the University of South Australia, Community Children's Centres of South Australia and Flinders University Partnership meetings.

Our sincere thanks go to the educators in our programs whose attitudes to lifelong learning enable the ongoing continuous improvement within our programs. It is rewarding to see all staff rise to the challenge of meeting the high expectations that Gowrie SA has for children's care and education. The continued dedication and commitment by educators contributes towards high quality outcomes for children and families in our service.

**Lyndsay Healy**  
Thebarton Children's Program Leader

**Krystal Kimble**  
Underdale Children's Program Leader



## Inclusion Agency

The Australian Department of Education and Training, funds the Inclusion Support Programme. Gowrie SA is the contracted Inclusion Agency in South Australia. The 2017–2018 financial year is the second year of a three year contract. The Guidelines of the program support eligible mainstream services (including Long Day Care, Out of School Hours Care and Family Day Care) to receive advice and support from Inclusion Professionals employed by the Inclusion Agency across a range of cohorts.

This includes:

- children with disability including those undergoing assessment for disability;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- children from a refugee or humanitarian background;
- children with serious medical condition/s;
- children presenting with language and speech delays; and
- children presenting with disruptive behaviour.

Inclusion Professionals during the 2017–2018 financial year have visited educators and children at many of the 798 eligible services 3339 times (this is an increase from 1985 in the first year). When working with services Inclusion Professionals provide advice and support regarding including children alongside their peers in a mainstream service (i.e. services set up for all children to access). When recommended by a therapist the service is also able to access our Specialist Equipment library. This enables children to be further supported to access the same options and opportunities as others. As at June 30, 2018 there were 153 pieces of Specialist Equipment on loan.

The second year of the Inclusion Agency has seen opportunities to further implement and extend on the commitments made in the tender process. Naturally, the first year included a strong focus on recruitment of staff and introduction of our work to the sector.

However, the second year has seen:

- the embedding of hub groups in the metropolitan area and implementation in regional areas
- a continued focus on ensuring our priority system results in support being delivered to services where there is greatest need
- building the knowledge of educators to develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan.

The Portal access barriers, particularly with Auskey, have stabilised during the second year of the program due to a combination of services developing further understanding of the required procedure and the Inclusion Agency staff gaining further knowledge to support services. We have active engagement from 537 out of the 798 eligible services. We have employed an Inclusion Professional – Communications and Engagement to continue to increase the number of services actively engaged.

Feedback has been sought from services regarding the work of the Inclusion Agency and various projects have been undertaken to upskill our multi-disciplinary team to learn from each other and deliver consistent outcomes to services. A positive example of the feedback provided has been a service which indicated that they found the “support provided by the Inclusion Agency has been responsive to our skill level, it has increased our awareness of alternative resources for children and educators”. Given the aim of the program is to support services to increase their inclusive capacity and capability this feedback is reflective of the goals we have implemented within the Inclusion team.

The work of Inclusion Professionals is primarily off site and with several regional offices the challenge of remaining connected with the broader team whilst overseeing the work being done by Inclusion Professionals has required some additional planning and thought. The well-developed structure of primary teams which has been a core part of the Children's programs for many years has also flowed into the Inclusion Agency, allowing each Team Leader to provide specific feedback and direction to their primary team members to ensure we are delivering on program intent. During this year we have introduced an additional Team Leader with a Speech Pathology background and created an Assistant Program Leader role. There have been additional leadership development opportunities as a result of staffing coverage and acting positions during the CEO's leave.

***“Support provided by the Inclusion Agency has been responsive to our skill level, it has increased our awareness of alternative resources for children and educators.”***



**This year we have supported 2240 children – compared to 1250 in the first year of the program.**

**Since the beginning of the program Inclusion Professionals have worked with Educators to support:**

- 443 children with a diagnosed disability or high medical needs
- 100 services to work with culturally and linguistically diverse families
- 350 services to work with children with disruptive behaviours
- 295 services to work with children with language and speech delays
- 72 services to work with children from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background

Inclusion Professionals have grown to 38 full and part time staff based in Metropolitan Adelaide and three Regional sites. We continue to work closely with staff to embed understanding of Gowrie SA philosophies and values as well as growth of knowledge in critical reflection and cultural respect and safety. In the second year of the program we have been able to purposefully recruit staff who offer a broad skill base and diversity of background in order to build the capacity of both Inclusion Professionals and services. We have deliberately recruited some Inclusion Professionals with specialty backgrounds to allow capacity building through a consultancy methodology.

This year has seen full roll out of the Customer Management System with support from our IT staff. This simplified the reporting procedures and has allowed a streamlined and mobile ability to record notes and information regarding our work with services. The system this year has had increased functionality to ensure timely and effective follow up of issues or complaints is achievable.

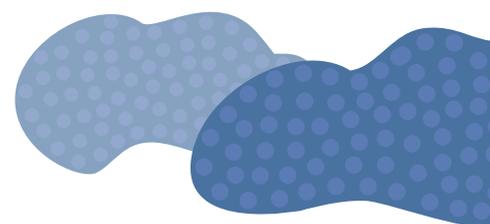
Our meetings with our State Office representatives have continued and there has been increased communication from the Department in the lead up to the transition from the Child Care Benefit to the Child Care Subsidy System. The Federal Government has begun planning for an Outcomes Measurement Research project facilitated by Kathy Cologon. All Inclusion Agencies nationally will be participating in data collection from services regarding service outcomes due to their involvement with the Inclusion Agency.

Above left: Presentation at an event to engage and inform services about the program.  
Above: Inclusion Professionals with Uncle Ivan Tiwi-Copley.

We have begun some data collection regarding an innovative project to capture children's feedback within the Inclusion program. This will be presented at the ECA conference and will continue to inform direction of the Inclusion Agency in the coming year.

We would like to acknowledge the efforts and work of our Inclusion Agency staff team. Without them this work would be impossible and we appreciate the energy and creativity they have applied to this rewarding work. In particular we thank our Leadership team – Cecilia Ebert, Natalie Gentle and Kate Westley, who have supported Leanne in her role while she has been acting in Lynne's role during the year.

**Lynne Rutherford, Inclusion Program Leader and Leanne Coveney Acting Inclusion Program Leader**



# Parenting Programs

## Parenting Programs – Whyalla

The project in Whyalla, funded through the Department of Social Services has enabled us to deliver a number of innovative and evidence based parenting support activities.

We successfully relocated our service activities from Nunyara Aboriginal Health Service site to the Bunyarra Baptist Church playgroup building space, centrally located in Whyalla. We have a dedicated office and child and family friendly space to utilise for delivering our program activities.

A formal partnership with Wynbring Jida Child Care Centre has ensured that qualified early childhood educators are available to co-deliver our program activities.

We deliver two weekly supported playgroups providing opportunities for parents to explore attachment concepts with knowledgeable staff and to strengthen the building of positive relationships between parents and their child/ren.

We have established a new monthly 'pop up' playgroup, 'Out and About in Whyalla' with a seasonal program of fun activities for children 0-5 years. This pop-up playgroup happens on the first Wednesday of every month with a different focus each time and includes creative stimulating activities for parent and child/ren to enjoy together. The 'Out and About' program supports exploring Whyalla, discovering family-friendly and safe places to enjoy that may never have been visited before. It has become very popular with the community.

The Circle of Security Parenting groups (CoS-P) continue to be offered free with two groups delivered each year. This involves a collaborative arrangement with Mission Australia who provide a trained facilitator to work in partnership with the Gowrie SA Whyalla-based staff member.

A new Gowrie SA program in Whyalla called 'Encircle' has been introduced and offered for parents who have participated in a CoS-P program. This program supports the application of the Circle of Security concepts through revisiting key ideas and practicing in a playgroup setting with their child. It aims to help make sense of the course ideas in practical ways. The program is free and is held over 8 weekly sessions from the Bunyarra play space, twice per year.

The Whyalla-based staff are members of a number of early childhood interagency committees targeting families with pre-school children. Staff have also have attended community events in an effort to promote our services and support referral pathways. For example, they recently took part in the Whyalla HOPE collective; a community activity in a closed off street, that invited the community as a celebration of belonging, to chalk in words and pictures their dreams for Whyalla.

I visited Whyalla several times over the year to meet with staff, to provide support to the programs, offer supervision and mentoring. We have also networked with local agencies to explore future opportunities for collaboration and partnerships to meet identified needs.



## Circle of Security® Parenting™ (CoS-P)

The Circle of Security Parenting groups (CoS-P) continue to be offered as a fee for service with a group planned once per term. Competition with many agencies across the metropolitan area who also offer the program has impacted the demand resulting in only two programs being delivered this year.

## Through the Looking Glass program (TtLG)

Formalised agreements have supported the delivery of the evidence-based TtLG parenting program through an agency in Shepparton, Victoria. Relevant training was delivered to staff in November 2017 with ongoing support and supervision and implementation provided from March 2018. The program is being delivered to a multicultural audience which will provide new learning experiences for Gowrie SA.

## Fatherhood Support Project

A range of activities focusing on fathers/male caregivers and their children includes a weekly co-facilitated playgroup, fortnightly family activity sessions on Sundays, and the delivery of CoS-P specifically targeting fathers/male caregivers offered each term. Referrals for these activities are forthcoming from other agencies. These programs are funded under the Communities for Children – Facilitating Partnership model by UnitingSA Port Adelaide.

**Pam Murphy**  
Parenting Program Leader



## Finance report

The 2017-2018 financial year has been another successful one for Gowrie SA, resulting in a net profit and a small increase to overall reserves from the previous year.

Our Inclusion Agency remained in surplus for a second year, which was required for the final year due to the allocation of the grant funding. This program is now running a full complement of staff. We were pleased that the Department of Education and Training approved the carryover of surplus funds to the current year, when they will be fully expended.

The Professional Learning Program achieved a modest surplus due to concentrating on decreasing expenditure. There has been less engagement from the sector due to the loss of the Long Day Care Professional Development Programme funds (LDCPDP). As services plan for professional learning and make commitments in their budgets, we anticipate that engagement will increase. The Registered Training Organisation is currently at a break-even level and the future viability of this program is anticipated to be challenging.

Our Parenting Programs continued with twice yearly Circle of Security Parenting (COS-P) as Fee for Service and the fee is covering the costs. We have some additional small grant funded programs which are offered in conjunction with other agencies.

Our Children's Program continues to experience consistently above budgeted utilisation and our kindergarten programs were well utilised. Both Child Centres achieved a modest surplus.

As in prior years, the Children's Program surplus from 2017 was dedicated to capital projects. Work undertaken in the 2017-2018 year at Thebarton included updated cabinetry, internal painting and varnishing of woodwork, whitegood purchases and garden refurbishment. Underdale works included whitegood purchases, a new shade sail, upgrades to garden area, upgrading of undercroft area. This year's surplus will be set aside to carry out internal and external capital works at both sites and the creation of additional preschool teacher roles.

Overall Gowrie SA is demonstrating sound financial management and is making considered and productive financial decisions for our future.

**Catherine Peacock**  
Gowrie SA Board, Financial Advisor

*The 2017-2018 financial year has been another successful one for Gowrie SA, resulting in a net profit and a small increase to overall reserves from the previous year.*

## Board Members 2017-18

Dr Victoria Whittington  
Dr Yasmin Harman-Smith  
Dr Anne Glover  
Ms Catherine Peacock  
Mr Liam Connelly  
Ms Ariel Bastian  
Ms Nareen Carter  
Ms Emily Parfitt  
Ms Debbie Smith  
Dr Kaye Colmer

## Submissions

Colmer, K & Rutherford, L: *Early Childhood Education and Care – Future Directions for Australia*

Colmer, K & Rutherford, L: *Response to consultation to inform Lillian de Lissa Chair, Early Childhood (Research)*

## Research

Margaret Trembath Scholarship – ‘Children are capable decision makers in natural learning environments: The use of benefit-risk assessments for strengthening children’s capacity to manage risk associated with nature-based learning’.

‘Re-imagining childhood: The rights of children Birth – 3 years’

## Conference presentations

### The Inclusive Education Summit 2017:

- Rutherford, L & Coveney, L - Inclusive Practices vs 1:1 Support
- Lipitkas, C & Healy, L - Creating a Culture of Inclusion: The power of one child’s voice bringing richness to learning for all

### Reimagining Childhood conference:

- Kimble, K, Scales, M & Healy, L - Infants and toddlers right to have all languages heard in an early childhood setting

## Publications

Anderson-Tanner, Maria (Inclusion Professional): *Connections to culture in early childhood education: The power of story and embodying reconciliation*, Gowrie Australia Reflections, Issue 12, 2017.

Gollan, S, Stacey, K, Rutherford, L & Healy L (Cultural Respect Training Consultants, Beyond & Program Leaders): *Cultural respect and safety training: Gowrie SA*, Gowrie Australia Reflections, Issue 3, 2018.

Colmer, K: *Leadership of professional learning - essential for innovation and change*, book chapter in *Pedagogies for Children’s Perspectives*.

## Professional relationships

- Beyond... (Cultural Respect Training Consultants)
- Department of Education and Training (Commonwealth)
- Department for Education (State)
- Department of Human Services
- Department for Industry and Skills
- Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)
- University of South Australia
- Flinders University
- Lady Gowrie Tasmania
- Gowrie Australia
- Teachers Registration Board – Early Childhood Reference Group
- Kura Yerlo Children’s Centre
- Early Childhood Australia – South Australia Branch (ECA)
- Catholic Education
- Uni SA Early Childhood Advisory Group
- OSHC Quality Improvement Group
- Community Children’s Centre SA (CCCCSA)
- Australian Community Children’s Services (ACCS)
- Dignity for Disability
- Wynbring Jida Child Care Centre
- Reconciliation Australia
- Reconciliation South Australia
- Uniting SA Port Adelaide
- Uniting Care Wesley - Bowden
- Dr Sarah Blunden
- Turkindi the Aboriginal Information Network SA
- Keep South Australia Beautiful (KESAB)
- Technical and Further Education (TAFE) SA
- Bunyarra Clinic / Baptist Care (Whyalla)
- Early Childhood Intervention South Australia
- SITA Environmental Solutions
- Early Education for Sustainability South Australia (EESA)
- Tauondi College
- Mulgunya Hostel
- 0-3 Collaborative Research Project Management Group
- Pyramid Model Australia
- St Hilarion Aged Care
- Flinders Park Primary School – transition partnership
- Underdale High School – cross age teaching
- Red Centre Enterprises
- Uncle Moogy Sumner
- Natural Resources Management (NRM) Education
- Supply Nation
- Print Junction
- Intervac unit - Department for Education
- Community Business Bureau
- Family Day Care – Department for Education
- First Peoples Disability Network
- Child Development Unit
- Feros Care

## Projects and Groups

### Kindergarten Advisory Group

Lyndsay Healy, Krystal Kimble, Kaye Colmer, Rob Lister, Christina Lipitkas, Morgyn Davis, Kate Stone, Emma-Lea Makin and Mary Scales

### Margaret Trembath Scholarship Research Project

Kate Stone, Christina Lipitkas, Rob Lister, Kaye Colmer, Lynne Rutherford, Lyndsay Healy and Eleanor Forndran

### Sustainability Committee

Natalie Gentle, Krystal Kimble, Jess Shaw, Sammy Springbett and Allie Holmes

### Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Kaye Colmer, Mary Scales, Lynne Rutherford, Rachel Lovell, Tahlia Wanganeen, Lyndsay Healy, Cathy Cameron, Christina Lipitkas, Natalie Gentle, Gloria Lalor-Mundine, Renee Kemble, Tiffany Schroeder and Esther Fidock

### New Employee Group

Tahlia Wanganeen, Leanne Coveney, Amy Arcangeli, Jadranka Juric and Krystal Kimble

### Infant Toddler Advisory Group

Rosemary Thomson, Sylvia Gray, Emily Harris, Melissa Bowman, Lynne Rutherford and Cecilia Ebert

### Learning Environments Group

Mary Scales, Cathy Cameron, Kate Jeffery, Justin McArthur, Michelle Walsh, Melissa Von Senden, Chloe Cameron and Donna Stephens

## Completed Qualifications

### Advanced Diploma in Community Sector Management:

Natasha Binder, Natalie Gentle, Abbie Wang, Saowalak Shusiri, Michelle Walsh, Shannon Vennix, Tae Viri-Brown, Toby Bradbrook

### Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care:

Ebony Bowen

## Currently Studying

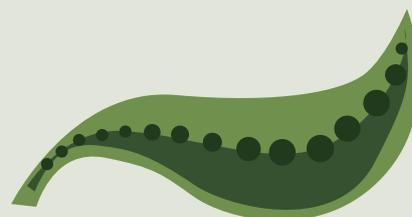
**Doctoral candidate:** Lynne Rutherford

### Bachelor of Early Childhood Education:

Donna Stephens, Kate Harding, Tiffany Schroeder, Melissa Clausen, Jade McCorquodale

### Master of Disability, Policy and Practice:

Leanne Coveney





*Gowrie*  
South Australia