



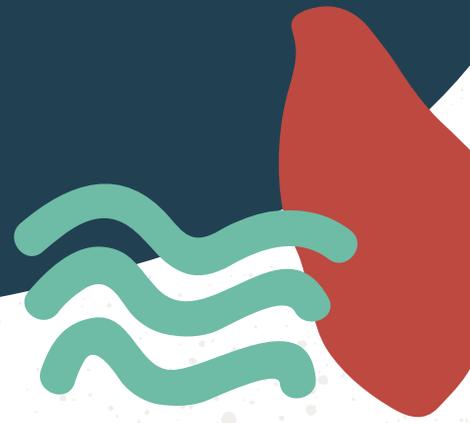
## Annual Report 2018-2019



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Gowrie SA is on Kaurana land and we acknowledge and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first Nations people of Australia and that they are the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waterways throughout our country.

# Chairperson Report



This year I begin my report by reflecting on Gowrie SA as an organisation. Our CEO Dr Kaye Colmer was on leave for approximately 12 months during 2018-2019, with Ms Lynne Rutherford acting in the role. Our senior leadership team were able to seamlessly work together to keep the organisation operating smoothly, with all staff contributing to ensure ongoing quality and performance. The structures and leadership built over many years served us in good stead. The Board enjoyed stability over this period with only one change of membership with Mr Liam Connelly (May 2019) retiring and Mrs Alicia Pike appointed June 2019, followed by Nanette Allen in July 2019. I would like to extend particular thanks to all those who stepped up during this period to ensure Gowrie SA's stability and continuing high level performance.

The Board was able to support Kaye's gradual return to work through the creation of a position, Executive – Gowrie SA Leadership Development, which provided additional leadership resources, enabling an internal review of the Inclusion Agency program and leadership mentoring to the children's program directors and the senior leadership team of the inclusion program. Kaye resumed her role as CEO in mid-June 2019.

Organisational development work continued with new corporate rebranding completed which resulted in a new logo, corporate design colours and a consistent look to our promotional materials. The website was also updated to a contemporary, inviting appearance and improved access. Furthermore, the social media plan was improved to extend Gowrie SA's presence in the sector and beyond. We have had very positive feedback on the rebrand.

A position of Aboriginal Cultural Practitioner was explored during the year with a proposal which has resulted in Melissa Von Senden extending her role in the children's programs to work across the Gowrie. We held another successful Reconciliation week event, with Eddie Peters sharing aspects of Torres Strait Islander culture, including song, dance, history and musical instruments, with Ivan Copley also taking us on a tour of the Aboriginal artefacts in the museum. There were around 41 families and staff, and almost as many children who attended.

*We have been pleased to continue to offer a free Circle of Security Parenting (CoS-P) course for Gowrie families twice per year, which is always well attended.*

A pedagogical leadership mentoring project was undertaken with Dr Kaye Colmer working with Lyndsay Healy and Krystal Kimble, our Children's Program directors, to deepen their understanding of their responsibilities in leading pedagogy. This work has produced several changes, with the directors becoming more visible and available to participate in pedagogical conversations with teachers and educators. A pedagogical leadership process has been developed and a program resource for staff. In the ongoing development of the children's programs, the Board agreed to increase the number of early childhood teachers working in our kindergarten rooms. This resulted in two additional full-time teachers at Thebarton and a 0.5 teacher position at Underdale. The improvements in documentation, learning and in planning for children's learning have been evident and there has been more opportunity for collaborative dialogue among the team.

Staff continued to implement the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, with a major achievement being the formation of an Aboriginal Reference Group. Members of this group include Uncle Ivan Tiwu Copley, Uncle Eddie Peters, Nicole Gollan (Adelaide City Council), Rodney Welch (Port Adelaide City Council) as well as Dennis Stokes (Tandanya). This group meets monthly contributing to our ongoing learning and offering feedback about our work and initiatives. The Stretch RAP expires at the end of 2019 and the RAP working Group (RWG) has been organising feedback on our performance from the Aboriginal Reference Group, staff, families and children to inform the new Stretch RAP.

There are many challenges currently facing the child care sector, not least the proliferation of new centres being built in close proximity to existing ones.



This situation vastly increases competition for enrolments and potentially threatens the viability of both existing and new services. In addition, centres have struggled to invest in staff professional development after an overall adjustment to the national direct professional development funding to services from 2014 to 2017. In rebuilding the sector-wide professional development program, there remains limited engagement from significant parts of the child care sector. Gowrie SA, however, has a small but strong cohort of long-standing relationships with centres that continue to participate in ongoing professional development to promote staff learning. The Professional Learning Program Leader, Mary Scales has explored multiple options and several senior staff have been recruited as developers and presenters of professional development sessions. Focus groups have been conducted with the sector to gather information about professional learning needs and free breakfast sessions have been offered to generate interest and enrolments. These measures have provided a rich range of options for the sector which have been well received; however attendance numbers per session remain below expectations. The Responding to Abuse and Neglect training has continued to be in high demand, bringing income to complement the professional development work. Despite the current economic climate for children's services the Professional Development Program continues to be an important core program for Gowrie SA and it remains a priority for the Board to find solutions for its continuation.

Regarding the offering of qualifications, funding opportunities to offer the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care and the Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management qualifications under the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) have diminished significantly over the past few years. There is currently little likelihood of levels of funding which would be sustainable to enable future work. A decision has been taken to cease offering these qualifications, and to wind back the work of the RTO once the third party agreement with Lady Gowrie Tasmania (LGT) has ended. The Memorandum of Understanding with

LGT is expected to end in the latter part of 2019. It is hoped that in retaining a minimal offering of stand-alone units the continuation of the RTO work in a minimal form can be achieved.

Our parenting program in Whyalla continues to provide a valuable service to families. Several local partnerships facilitate this work. In particular, the relationship with Wynbring Jida child care centre has been a successful longer-term arrangement that has enhanced our ability to provide services in Whyalla while making the service more accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

In a related area, we have been pleased to continue to offer a free Circle of Security Parenting (CoS-P) course for Gowrie families twice per year, which is always well attended. During the year, the Board took the decision to discontinue our involvement in the Fatherhood project. This was not an easy decision but became necessary as funding had not been indexed for four years and costs had begun to exceed funding available. We were proud of what we had achieved in this project and were disappointed not to be able to continue this work.

In preparation for the new two-year contract for the Inclusion Agency (IA) an internal review of IA systems and procedures has been undertaken. This review invited feedback from all the inclusion staff and was reassuring overall as we realised that our systems have been effective. Ongoing work arising from the review involves the leadership team working together to deepen leadership capabilities. There is a focus on developing a model to facilitate multi-disciplinary teamwork as well as adjusting aspects of service delivery to facilitate continuing improvement and engagement of services with the Inclusion Support Program.



In closing I would like to thank our families and children for their rich contributions to our programs. My sincere thanks to our staff who give 110 percent to make sure that the Gowrie performs to its usual high level. As mentioned previously Lynne Rutherford took on the Acting Chief Executive position for over 12 months. Thank you to Lynne for your leadership in that role. We are in your debt. Finally, I wish to thank Kaye for your work as chief executive and for the valuable leadership development project work accomplished in the first half of this year.

**Victoria Whittington**

*Assoc Professor of Education,  
Chairperson*



# CEO Report

We seem to note this every year but the time just goes too quickly and the busier we are the faster it goes. This year has been no exception.

We were very grateful to receive news that our contract through the federal Department of Education and Training to operate as the Inclusion Agency for South Australia under the Inclusion Support Program has been extended by two years. As you can imagine, it can be difficult to retain staff under contract conditions and we appreciate that the majority of Inclusion Agency staff remained with this program as we awaited news. We commenced as the Inclusion Agency just prior to July 2016 and this work will now continue until the end of June 2021.

Another achievement was the formalising of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) for our children's program educators, with endorsement by the Fair Work Commission. As you will know, this sector remains underpaid for the amazing work they do with our youngest generation and the EBA allows us to provide above Award conditions to support staff retention and achieve some parity with our other programs. We hope to do a more thorough review of the EBA with our children's program educators prior to its next renewal in four years.

The transition to the new Child Care Subsidy went reasonably smoothly given this was the first major change in some years. We continue to develop our work on social justice policies and cultural protocols documents to strengthen our reach in our programs to ensure we are inclusive of all families and staff. We currently have several major documents under review

for renewal in 2020, including our Reconciliation Action Plan, Strategic Plan and our organisation philosophy.

Our professional learning program staff continue to work hard and in a new way to generate interest in our calendar offerings as well as in-service opportunities for the education and care sector. We are indebted to the services that continue to use us regularly. We are grateful to our facilitators and program leader for the different ideas being generated for new sessions and new ways of marketing our work to the education and care sector.

The Department for Education in South Australia approved funding so Gowrie SA could provide a project officer to support the second phase of the 0-3 collaborative research project. We also volunteered senior staff time on the management group and have enjoyed seeing the results of the research undertaken by selected sites through this project.

Unfortunately, our parenting programs continue to reduce in the absence of funding, but it is worth noting that the Circle of Security is still appreciated by the public. We are also now offering the Circle of Security Parenting program internally for staff and families at no cost. Our Whyalla program is well established now and in its fifth year, having built a loyal following among the local families, and we are working in collaboration with staff from Wynbring Jida Child Care Centre which has been very rewarding.

As part of our gratitude to our hard-working team, each year we hold two events for staff. These are often dinners, but every now and then we find the time to prepare something a little special. Toward the end of 2018, Lynne and Lyndsay created the second Amazing Race for staff, held in the Port Adelaide area. This was a great success with many laughs and quite a bit of competitiveness, and was talked about for many months afterwards.

A team of senior staff planned the professional development and learning focus for 2019, including for staff meetings and closure days. The strategic plan and building on our learning from 2018 were used to guide this. We are now at a point of reviewing the effectiveness of these in preparation for planning for 2020. Learning topics included understanding concepts of dominant culture; what kinds of experiences children should have in our programs; educator roles in a play based curriculum; considerations of educator intentionality and child learning



processes; understanding our image/s of children; interpreting children's behaviour; and understanding concepts of voice, treaty, truth.

We have continued to support Nepurla project groups. Current groups include explorations of sustainability, and leadership. We have also added discussion groups which involve a range of staff exploring a particular and relevant topic for a specific period of time. Topics so far have included leadership theories, overall theories driving our work, and professional dialogue. These are resulting in Gowrie SA position papers to support the learning of all our staff.

We continue to present our work to a wider audience in various ways. We have been more active on social media, sharing our work around Reconciliation, professional learning and inclusion. Lynne and Natalie presented to an audience of 50 people at the Early Childhood Australia conference in 2018. The presentation focused on the opportunity being provided to children with a disability to give feedback on their inclusion and was well received. Several of our staff have also written articles, listed later in the AGM report.

Our work continues in our engagement with the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan. This has included participation in the national RAP workplace barometer survey which is aimed at measuring the impact having a Reconciliation Action Plan has on organisations. In the recent survey data, there were 19,938 people participating voluntarily and they came from a broad range of organisations and sectors, all in



different places in their reconciliation journey. The good news is out of 47 questions and responses it showed that for the majority of the questions, Gowrie SA rated ahead of other organisations nationally. This means that the work we are doing through the Reconciliation Action Plan is having a positive impact on our learning, our knowledge, our values and our commitment to reconciliation. The survey results also help us in planning our new Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan for 2020 as it shows areas for improvement in understanding and attitudes across the organisation. During the year three professional development meetings and one closure day were dedicated to our RAP work.

As with any growing organisation, we look to take opportunities to develop new initiatives or build on existing ones. We have used surplus funds to create an opportunity for one of our Aboriginal staff (Mel Von Sendon) to work additional hours as a Cultural Practitioner. Mel will work in all our programs to embed knowledge of Aboriginal practices and learning as well as support and resource staff for important cultural celebrations. We have also employed additional preschool teachers in our children's program. As you can imagine in an organisation of this size and age, work will continue over the coming years to improve our staffing arrangements and practices, as well

as committing to the maintenance required to make our facilities safe, and look and feel appealing.

In conclusion, we would like to thank our wonderful and dedicated staff team, as well as our children, families, clients and stakeholders. I extend particular thanks to our centre directors Lyndsay Healy and Krystal Kimble who work everyday to lead our programs via a constant cycle of improvement. I thank Leanne Coveney who stepped up as Acting Program Leader for the Inclusion Agency and did a wonderful job. Thanks also to Mary Scales who is leading our Professional Learning Program through challenging times with a smile; and to Pam Murphy who has established our programs so well in Whyalla. Lastly, my personal and professional thanks to Lynne Rutherford for her work in guiding the organisation through the 2018-19 year. I would like to also acknowledge Victoria Whittington in her role as Chair and each of the Board members for their continuing work to support the Gowrie. Next year, we will be celebrating 80 years and we look forward to continuing our journey with you all.

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**Kaye Colmer**  
CEO

# Financial Report 2018-2019

The 2018-2019 financial year has been another financially stable year for Gowrie SA with the majority of program areas returning a small surplus. However due to the nature of grant funding, employee expenses increased this financial year and will revert to previous levels in 2019/20. Retained earnings remain steady.

Our Inclusion Agency expended most of the grant funding, with a small underspend. This program is now running a full complement of staff. The Department of Education and Training has received six monthly financial reports in line with contract requirements and the funds are acquitted annually.

The Professional Learning Program achieved a modest surplus due to an increase in bookings specifically for Responding to Abuse and Neglect Training. We have been able to be responsive to this demand, adding extra sessions each week and on weekends. While we anticipated that engagement from the education and care sector for the fee for service program would increase, this has not been to the extent we had hoped for. Our team has worked hard over the year to be creative with new ideas, new sessions and marketing. We are monitoring the program closely.

Our Parenting Programs continued to offer quarterly Circle of Security Parenting (COS-P) as Fee for Service and the fee is just covering costs.

Unfortunately the Fatherhood project has returned a loss due to salary increases, which were not offset by increased funding. Gowrie SA has now ended its involvement in this program.

Our Children's Program faces increased competition from new corporate child care centres which are opening at a rapid rate. We have been fortunate that our children's program continues to experience consistently above budgeted utilisation and our kindergarten program at both sites were again well-utilised this year. Both Child Centres achieved a modest surplus, allowing them to undertake capital works including garden refurbishments, outdoor painting, and internal building modifications. As part of our quality improvement plan, both sites now employ additional preschool teachers, which has an impact on expenses.

This year, the Board made the decision to engage investment managers to ensure a better return on invested monies. This decision has improved our overall return rates from 1.87-1.98% to 5.44%. Overall Gowrie SA is demonstrating sound financial management and is making considered financial decisions for our future, focused on quality improvements and addressing sector competitiveness.

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**Catherine Peacock**

*Board Financial Advisor*





# Professional Learning

## Fee for Service

The past twelve months have provided a challenging climate for the Professional Learning Program. There have been a growing number of both local and interstate competitors in our sector. In addition to this there has been a growth in new centres opening which is impacting on the utilisation of existing services creating budget limitations. As a team we have been working on promotion strategies and developing sector relationships, as well as brand awareness through our rebrand and launch of our new website. We have also been accessing professional learning sessions about selling and marketing to upskill our team.

We released our calendar twice this financial year with a wide variety of options for sessions. We held consultation meetings and spoke to stakeholder groups to develop each calendar. We held some free sessions this year including four Leadership Learning Breakfasts. These breakfasts were on topics including the exceeding themes, Quality area 1 and self-assessment, critical reflection and making the most of your budget. The breakfast series had an average of ten participants at each session and many wanted to attend more than one event. We also held some free observation planning tours. These were aimed at service leaders who participated in an observation tour and then sat down with one of our facilitators to plan out their professional learning needs for the year. These events had a mix of private and not-for-profit services attending and participants held roles as directors, assistant directors or educational leaders.

## Guest Speakers

We had a range of guest speakers in order to broaden our professional development offerings including:

- Dr Sandra Cheeseman - Senior Lecturer, Macquarie University
- Catherine McClusky - School of Education, University of SA
- Debbie Atkins - Occupational Therapist
- Thomas Mayor - Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Briony Brooks - Clare Warden Associate
- Alex Shain - Reconciliation Australia

## 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 contributed to the review of the Teachers Registration Board and Act. Our sessions now identify links to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) teaching standards where appropriate.

We have been fortunate to continue our work with the Department for Education over the last twelve months on the Re-imagining Childhood Birth-3 Years project. We have provided executive officer in-kind support at the management group level as well as Kaye Colmer and Lynne Rutherford being voluntary members of the Management group. Phase two of this project had thirteen sites participate in a twelve month project. The project focus was on realising the rights of children birth to three. We received funding through the Department for Education which enabled us to appoint Cathy Cameron as a Project Officer.

Through this role she was able to offer:

- Leadership in pedagogical approaches based on the Reggio Emilia education principles.
- Collaborative service mentoring and support.
- Geographically based hub groups.
- Online resourcing and learning.
- Documentation and reporting.
- All administrative support.

This project culminated in a final event where each of the thirteen sites shared a pedagogical documentation piece on a banner and shared their learning during their research. This year we have been fortunate to have guest speakers for the project including Professor Carla Rinaldi, Dr Sandra Cheeseman, Karen Winderlich, Jane Lemon, Dr Jamie Huff-Sisson and Professor Marty Lash. These speakers all provided insightful provocations for the thinking and research in the individual sites.

## School of Food and Fun (SCOFFED)

We entered into a collaboration to provide Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) educators the opportunity to learn how to successfully facilitate a cooking class for a larger group of children in an OSHC setting. These sessions are now in the trial stage where educators attend SCOFFED and participate in the cooking class which includes safety, cooking skills, nutritional information and preparation skills. Gowrie SA has contributed intellectual property to a handbook each educator will receive. This handbook makes the links to the National Quality Framework and My Time, Our Place. We look forward to this program being launched fully and the opportunity it provides to build capacity of OSHC educators.

## Little Scientists

We continue to be a Network Partner for the Frobel Institute through Little Scientists and have offered 11 sessions on topics such as air, water, mathematics, optics and the human body. The average number of participants in these sessions is 12 and we have also facilitated 3 of these sessions as in-centre requests.

We have been fortunate to work with Community Children's Centres South Australia (CCCSA) and this group have subsidised participation of services in the Teachers Registration Project supporting early childhood teachers in the transition to full registration. We also held our first two day Leadership Retreat in February. This retreat was initiated by a request that came through the CCCSA network. We had twelve participants from a variety of services that explored a combination of leadership concepts, visioning, mindfulness, wellness and professional goal setting. This received very positive feedback and we have had requests for another retreat. We look forward to exploring ways of working together with CCCSA in the future.

Our commitment to reconciliation continued this year and we were able to offer professional development sessions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and individuals. This included professional learning for mentoring, calendar and in-service sessions at locations including Port Adelaide, Christies Beach, Salisbury and Whyalla. We were very fortunate to welcome Thomas Mayor to Adelaide to speak about the Uluru Statement from the Heart, both for our AGM last year and also to provide a session for the sector which was attended by 53 people. This session gained a great deal of traction and interest from participants both outside and within our sector. We also welcomed Shona Reid from Reconciliation South Australia who was a guest in our session for the sector on Narragunnawali.

Professional learning team members were able to participate in the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, Reconciliation Week breakfast events as well as our annual Reconciliation walk involving Uncle Eddie Peters and Uncle Ivan Copley.

Other achievements over the past year have included:

- 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), Turkindi Indigenous network.
- Delivering RAN-ECE sessions for University of SA Students, as well as continuing this with Flinders University students.
- An annual programming expo with several presenters from the field showcasing their programming for others.
- Sector session with Dr Sandra Cheeseman attended by forty participants.
- Diversifying the offerings for the sector by engaging other disciplines such as Allied Health in new session development.
- Being invited to the launch of the Banksia Park Kindergarten Reconciliation Action Plan. This team started their journey by participating in our cultural learning sessions.
- Hosting two students from Taoundi College.
- Participation in the University of SA marketing clinic.
- Launching our new branding materials, website and templates for advertising flyers.
- Professional learning for facilitators included STEM train the trainer by the Frobel Institute, Everyone's a Salesperson session, and upgrading of TAE qualifications.
- Moving to Mailchimp for our bulk email platform.

## Registered Training Organisation

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 who completed their studies. A graduation ceremony was held for the students on February 6th, 2019. At the ceremony we had the following numbers of students graduating:

- 15 Advanced Diploma in Community Sector Management students.
- 13 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care students.

We were fortunate to have Lynne Rutherford (Gowrie SA) and Sharna Deugarde (student) as our two guest speakers for the event and Uncle Ivan Copley provided the Welcome to Country. This event was attended by friends and families of the graduates and our RTO facilitators. We continue our third party arrangements with Gowrie Tasmania. We have reviewed the Advanced Diploma course with the sector. At this stage we do not have plans for a new cohort of students in the current climate and we will only offer stand-alone units when there is sufficient demand.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the professional learning team for their flexibility and dedication to learning and for being responsive and adaptable in a complex climate. This team has worked consistently to ensure that professional learning offered by Gowrie SA continues to be responsive to the sector and of a high quality.

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### Mary Scales

*Professional Learning  
Program Leader*





# Children's Program

The Children's Program has again enjoyed a very successful year of growth and development. Both sites were able to maintain high utilisation across the year and steady enrolments within the kindergarten rooms.

A decision was taken to engage an additional teaching position in each of the kindergarten rooms. While recruitment was an initial challenge, the introduction of a second kindergarten teacher position for each kindergarten room has had a positive impact on the program being offered to children and the quality of the learning environments.

The infant and toddler rooms were accepted to participate in the second wave of the South Australian Collaborative 'Re-imagining Childhood: The Rights of Children Birth-3 Years' research project from July 2018 until July 2019. This research project saw the infant and toddler rooms across both sites explore the research question 'how do children learn from one another?' From this research we have explored more deeply the importance of understanding the social context of children's learning and the capacities that each individual child brings to the learning community that enrich the opportunities of learning from and with one another. Educator learning through the project has also supported us to understand the value of gaining a range of perspectives on children's learning to ensure we are documenting and planning for the whole child. This includes all educators documenting for all children in each room and the launching of a new initiative in July 2019 of collaborative team planning meetings. We took great pride in presenting our research at the end of the project to the other research groups.

Directors had previously identified a need to strengthen planning for musical opportunities for children across all rooms. During terms one and two we engaged with Mary (MT), a music teacher who visited each room once per fortnight to mentor educators in providing an appropriate music curriculum for children from 6 weeks to school age. During this time, educators engaged with the children during the fortnightly workshops and then continued to offer experiences around the concepts of tempo, beat, rhythm, pitch, melody, harmony and dynamics.

*The kindergarten program across both sites have continued to develop strong connections with community.*



MT has developed a parent resource and teacher resource to support educators to embed the learning from this project long term. The teacher resource will evolve over time as we continue to add other songs and experiences we learn about.

As part of ongoing leadership development, both Directors have participated in an internal project to focus on developing a systematic approach to pedagogical leadership. This project has supported the children's program to make some significant changes with the Directors having a more visible role in the pedagogical leadership of each service. Part of this work included development of a core program cycle that all rooms and educators

follow to offer consistency when noticing, planning, implementing and evaluating children's learning. Directors have written a companion document that unpacks the various elements of the core program cycle, making clear links between theory and practice.

Reconciliation and Kurna language learning continues to be a high priority in the children's program. A relationship has been built with Major Sumner (Uncle Moogy) who attends at least once per term to share Aboriginal culture. Our relationship with Kura Yerlo Children's Centre continues to develop with regular excursions and connection through letter writing to one another. Sustainable environmental practices continue to be strengthened across the organisation and in our work with children. We continue to focus on all four pillars of sustainability - Economic, Environmental, Social/Cultural, and Political. One educator and Director have joined the Early Education for Sustainability South Australia (EESSA) committee.

The kindergarten program across both sites have continued to develop strong connections with community. The transition partnership with Flinders Park Primary school continues, with children visiting each other at both sites. This supports children with the transition to school experience.





The rebranding of Gowrie SA also saw new signage installed across both services.

Gowrie SA staff's ongoing presence on a number of organisations and committees continues to ensure we maintain ongoing connections with stakeholders and the community. Membership includes attendance at the Early Childhood Advisory group for the University of South Australia, Community Children's Centres of South Australia, Early Education for Sustainability South Australia and the Thriving Neighbourhoods Collective.

Our sincere gratitude goes to the teachers and educators in our programs whose attitudes to lifelong learning enable the ongoing continuous improvement within our programs. The continued dedication and commitment by all our staff contributes towards high quality outcomes for children and families in our service. We are also thankful for the wonderful children and families who attend our program, with the relationships with our children and families forming the core of our work. The ongoing feedback we receive helps us to continue to improve the quality of our program and learning environments.

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**Lyndsay Healy**

*Director, Thebarton*

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**Krystal Kimble**

*Director, Underdale*

The partnership has also extended to the use of the school's STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) facilities. The kindergartens have continued their connections with Saint Hilarion Aged Care with monthly visits to engage in gardening and cooking experiences with the residents.

Educators have continually engaged in professional learning, including presentation of research and publications as well as monthly staff meetings. Four educators are studying the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood).

Thebarton and Underdale have undergone capital works this financial year. Underdale upgraded the front garden and the Acacia garden.

A wall was constructed to create two separate office spaces; one for the Director and a programming space for educators. Walls were removed in the Correa room to create a more open space and a verandah was built in the Melaleuca garden to create more undercover space. Thebarton undertook a significant renovation to the staff room, creating a beautiful retreat space for staff and a much needed update to the staff bathrooms. The external facade of both the main building and the Mallee Cottage were painted. A new solar inverter was installed on the main building and minor works in the children's gardens were undertaken.





# Inclusion Agency

The Australian Department of Education and Training funds the national Inclusion Support Program. Gowrie SA is the contracted Inclusion Agency in South Australia. This year concluded the 3 year funding period which was initially offered under our funding contract. With the contract extended for a further 2 years until 2021, there were many preparations regarding staffing. The modified contract conditions have resulted in a review of all positions and a refocus on ensuring all staff in the program are first and foremost Inclusion Professionals, with an in-depth knowledge of key operational objectives and the ability to contribute to services' development of a Strategic Inclusion Plan. We have undertaken further purposeful recruitment of staff who offer a broad skill base and diversity of background in order to build the capacity of both Inclusion Professionals and services.

The Guidelines of the program enable eligible mainstream services (including Long Day Care, Out of School Hours Care and Family Day Care) to receive advice and support from Inclusion Professionals to support children across a range of cohorts to experience inclusive mainstream services. In order for a service to have continued support from the Inclusion Agency, services need to have an active Strategic Inclusion Plan and this has been the focus of our work in the last 12 months. We have reviewed our internal processes including the Inclusion Agency Manual and all documents related to operational consistency. The focus of this has been to maximise outcomes related to reportable service support. The Strategic Inclusion Plan is a plan for

inclusion within a service and covers a variety of cohorts of children – including children with disabilities or undergoing assessment, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children from refugee or humanitarian backgrounds, children with language and speech delays, children with challenging behaviour or children with high medical needs.

When working with services, Inclusion Professionals provide advice and support regarding including children alongside their typically developing peers.

*The total number of services across South Australia is currently 814; of those, 626 (70%) are engaged with us.*



When recommended by a therapist, the service is also able to access support from our Specialist Equipment Library. This enables children to be further supported to access the same options and opportunities as others. The Library is well stocked with popular pieces of specialised equipment and the funding enables us to add additional pieces as required.

The total number of services across South Australia is currently 814; of those, 626 (70%) are engaged with us. Inclusion Professionals have undertaken 5317 service visits this year speaking with educators at services to build capacity for inclusion. This compares with 3339 in the 2017-2018 year and 1985 in the

2016-2017 year. When working with services the Inclusion Professionals are focused on assisting services to understand barriers, to develop a service Strategic Inclusion Plan and to achieve outcomes which enact change regarding the inclusion needs identified. When this works well, all children in the service environment experience practices that help them feel included with their peers.

The Department of Education and Training implemented a survey regarding the Inclusion Support Program and collected a baseline data set for July – October 2018. This data collection had a goal of getting responses from at least 70% of services nationally. The Government stated their intention to repeat the survey beginning July 2019. The purpose of the survey is to consult with services regarding the strengths and opportunities for improvement related to the Inclusion Support Program. The findings of the survey will contribute to the evaluation of the Child Care Package and is led by the Australia Institute of Family Studies.



This year has seen the opportunity to finalise and implement the Inclusion Aware certification process. Inclusion awareness is a component of inclusive practice which refers to the consistent and considered thought given to environments, resources and planning to ensure services are ready and able to welcome children (and families) with a range of needs, abilities, interests and backgrounds. As the Inclusion Agency for South Australia, Gowrie SA aims to recognise services that have strong inclusion awareness. The Inclusion Aware project is having steady outcomes, with 10 services having been through the process in the 2018-2019 financial year and 9 receiving their Inclusion Aware Certification. This project is anticipated to grow in the year coming with 10 services booked in during the next 2 months.

The Inclusion Aware project has enabled us to celebrate the great work being done by services to support children's inclusion through intentional educator practices in addition to well planned programs and environments. We have been able to observe diversity in how inclusion looks between different services. This is influenced by the unique community of children, educators and families that make up each service, as well as the wider community within which they belong.



Inclusion Aware supports both services and the Inclusion Agency to develop greater awareness of the many unique and diverse ways that inclusion can work.

The year has seen our reach to services increase with the presentation of Interest HUB groups and Expos. Services were invited to a large Expo in September 2018 where Mark Le-Messurier spoke. Mark is a teacher, counsellor and coach to young people and their parents and has authored nine publications focused on explicit teaching of social skills. He spoke to approximately 60 people from services all over South Australia about social skills. Services then participated in sessions about social skills, visuals and positive behaviour. A second Expo series was conducted in February 2019 in conjunction with ACECQA (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority), with sessions held at Whyalla, and 3 metropolitan locations (North, South and Central). Approximately 240 people from 130 services attended these Expos where the link between the Strategic Inclusion Plan and services' Quality Improvement Plan was explored.

The work of the Inclusion Professionals is primarily off-site and with several regional staff members, the challenge of remaining connected with the broader team whilst overseeing the work being done by the Inclusion Professionals remains an area of continual growth and development. We continue to work closely with all staff to embed understanding of Gowrie philosophy and values as well as growth of knowledge in critical reflection and cultural respect and safety.

This year has seen an update of all Inclusion Agency resources and branding in line with Gowrie branding. Additionally, our systems and processes have been reviewed for efficiency and consistency. Inclusion Agency staff and leadership have been involved with a project to evaluate the leadership and strategic planning within the Inclusion Agency. This has allowed the Program Leader to focus on a combination of strategic and operational directions.

We thank all our staff involved in the work of the Inclusion Agency. Each staff member contributes to a valuable program that is offered across the South Australian community and we are proud of the work we do in collaboration with education and care services to improve the inclusion of all children accessing our services. We would like to acknowledge the work of our three Team Leaders, metropolitan Inclusion Professionals and supportive administration team. With additional thanks to Inclusion Professionals who work regionally or travel regionally from Adelaide for the contributions they make to services that find it more difficult to access resources. Your commitment to inclusion, social justice and building capacity weaves the goals of the Inclusion Agency through the broader goals of Gowrie SA.

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**Leanne Coveney**  
*Inclusion Agency,  
Acting Program Leader*

# Parenting Programs

## Parenting Programs – Whyalla

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

Our service activities have been relocated to Bunyarra Baptist Church playgroup building space, which includes a dedicated office and child and family friendly space to utilise for both organising and delivering our program activities.

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

We continue to deliver two weekly playgroups providing opportunity for parents to explore attachment concepts in a supported environment and to strengthen building positive relationships between parent and child/ren.

In addition, a new playgroup has been introduced and is held once a week as a collaboration with Wynbring Jida offered from their early childhood care and education site, co-located with Nunyara Aboriginal Health Services. This playgroup has a strong focus on Aboriginal culture with activities, songs and stories supporting children to learn and grow.

The innovative monthly 'pop up' playgroup, 'out and about in Whyalla' has a seasonal program of fun activities for children 0-5 years and is held the first Wednesday of every month with a different focus each month. Children and their parents enjoy creative stimulating activities

at the same time as discovering child and family friendly and safe places across the Whyalla area that they may not have visited before. These sessions are very popular with the community.

The Circle of Security Parenting groups (CoS-P) continue to be offered free to Whyalla families, with a group delivered twice per year. A collaborative arrangement with Mission Australia enables a trained facilitator to work in partnership with the Gowrie staff member.

Parents who have participated in a CoS-P program who would like further support with application of the Circle of Security concepts through revisiting and practicing key ideas in a playgroup setting with their child are offered a free, weekly session over 6 weeks. These are offered from the Bunyarra play space, twice per year.

Four professional training sessions on attachment / CoS concepts were delivered by Gowrie to the Whyalla early childhood community to support building capacity within the workforce. Additional on-site mentoring was also provided for Wynbring Jida staff.

The Whyalla based staff are members on a number of early childhood interagency committees targeting families with preschool children and attend community events in an effort to promote our services and support referral pathways.

I visited Whyalla several times this year to meet with staff, to provide support to the programs, offer supervision and mentoring and to network with local agencies to explore future opportunities for collaboration and partnerships to support new initiatives to meet identified needs.

## Adelaide-Based Parenting Programs 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 program scheduled to meet demand.

## Through the Looking Glass Program (TiLG)

The TiLG parenting program has been delivered in Shepparton Victoria under a licensing arrangement. The program was delivered to a multicultural audience.

## Fatherhood Support Project

A range of activities that focused on fathers/male caregivers and their children in the western suburbs included a weekly co-facilitated playgroup, fortnightly weekend family activity session on Sundays and the delivery of CoS-P specifically targeting fathers/male caregivers and offered each term. Funding for this program ceased on 30th June 2019.

**Pam Murphy**

*Parenting Programs Leader*







## Board Members 2018-2019

**Dr Victoria Whittington**  
(Chair)

**Dr Yasmin Harman-Smith**  
(Deputy Chair)

**Dr Anne Glover**

**Ms Catherine Peacock**  
(Financial Advisor)

**Mr Liam Connelly**  
(retired May 2019)

**Ms Nareen Carter**

**Ms Emily Parfitt**

**Ms Debbie Smith**

**Ms Alicia Pike**  
(appointed June 2019)

**Dr Kaye Colmer**  
(CEO)

## Meetings with Stakeholders and Key People

Lynne met with Minister John Gardner on October 2nd. The meeting was short but had a positive tone. We discussed Gowrie SA programs (current and past) as well as the work we have and are undertaking with the Department for Education.

Lynne and Leanne meet regularly with Department of Education and Training State Office representatives to discuss the work of the Inclusion Agency.

Senior staff continue to attend monthly stakeholder meetings, including Australian Community Children's Services, Community Children's Centres SA, Family Day Care, and Department for Education Intervac program.

Lynne attended meetings with the Teacher's Registration Board to review the Professional Standards for Teachers as to how they could be more inclusive of teaching practices with children under five years.

Lynne and Lyndsay attended the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) Board meet and greet held in Adelaide.

Lynne met with Nicole Gollan from Adelaide City Council to discuss opportunities to work together in the future and talk about our respective Reconciliation Action Plans.

Lynne and Mary met with a representative from the Office of the Children's Commissioner to discuss the rollout of a preschool digital challenge project and how Gowrie SA could advise on and support this. This was rolled out in August 2019.

Kate Ellis, Member for Adelaide, visited Thebarton Children's programs during Early Learning Matters Week 2018.

Amanda Rishworth, Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development visited Gowrie SA on Friday, March 22nd 2019 and met with Kaye and Lynne about issues impacting on early childhood education and then enjoyed a tour of the programs.

We had visits by the new West Torrens City Council Mayor, Michael Coxon, and the new Thebarton Ward councillor, Dominic Mugavin.

Kaye and Lynne met with Alisa Willis, the Director of the Early Intervention Research Directorate (EIRD) under the Department for Child Protection.

Lynne and Kaye met with Alison Cusack, Senior Policy Planner with the Adelaide City Council regarding planning for new CBD services.

Lynne and Mary met with Renee Andrew from SAHMRI to discuss our respective Reconciliation Action Plans and share ideas.

## Other Initiatives and Events

Gowrie SA hosted a social justice roundtable. The roundtable was held with visiting scholar Professor Nóirín Hayes to talk about her work in social justice in Ireland. The meeting was arranged in collaboration with Dr Gerry Mulhearn who chaired the event. Noirin Hayes co-edited a book, 'In Search of Social Justice: John Bennett's Lifetime Contribution to Early Childhood Policy and Practice' (Routledge, 2018) which celebrated the work of John Bennett. We convened a group of senior policy makers from health, education, child protection, the children's commissioner, teachers, parent representatives, and Australian Children's Community Services. We are keen to continue these meetings to see if we can generate interest in the vital area of social justice in our communities.

We agreed to host the launch of a book, *The Sociology of Early Childhood*, written by Dr Yarrow Andrew and Jennifer Fane.



We hosted students through UniSA resulting in the following projects: 'Inclusion Professionals' perceptions of beneficial strategies offered to education staff in supporting children with disabilities in early childhood programs', Honours Student; 'Enhance and diversify Gowrie SA Inclusion Professionals' understandings of play, through the lens of occupational therapy, so as to promote children's inclusion and development', 4th year Occupational Therapy Students.

## Articles by Staff

'One up, two down – how we stay connected with children' by Sylvia Gray, Team Leader Infant-Toddler room and Lynne Rutherford, Deputy CEO, Gowrie SA.

'Language is powerful – a reflection on labelling' by Natalie Gentle, Inclusion Agency Team Leader, BECE; Lynne Rutherford, Acting CEO, Gowrie SA, M.ED; and Kerra-Lee Shearer, Inclusion Agency Inclusion Professional – Behaviour Specialist, B.Psy.

## Consultation Submissions

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training inquiry into the status of the teaching profession.

Enhancing Teacher Registration in South Australia.

Review of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

National Quality Framework (NQF) Review 2019.

## Professional Relationships

- Department of Education and Training (Commonwealth)
- Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)

- Department for Education (State)
- Department of Human Services
- Department for Industry and Skills
- University of South Australia
- Flinders University
- Gowrie Australia
- Lady Gowrie Tasmania
- Teachers Registration Board - Early Childhood Reference Group
- Birth - 3 Collaborative Research Project Management Group
- Beyond (Cultural Respect Training Consultants)
- Reconciliation Australia
- Reconciliation South Australia
- Turkindi the Aboriginal Information Network SA
- Kura Yerlo Children's Centre
- Catholic Education
- Uni SA Early Childhood Advisory Group
- OSHC Quality Improvement Group
- Community Children's Centre SA (CCCCSA)
- Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS)
- Wynbring Jida Child Care Centre
- Uniting SA Port Adelaide
- Uniting Care Wesley - Bowden
- KESAB
- TAFE SA
- Bunyarra Clinic / Baptist Care (Whyalla)
- Early Education for Sustainability South Australia (EESSA)
- Taoundi College
- St Hilarion Aged Care
- Flinders Park Primary School - Transition Partnership
- Red Centre Enterprises
- Ivan Copley
- Eddie Peters
- Major Sumner (Uncle Moogy)
- NRM Education
- Supply Nation
- Junction Printing
- Intervac Unit - Department for Education
- Family Day Care - Department for Education

- Child Development Unit
- Feros Care
- Kudos
- Western Inclusion Network
- Thriving Neighbourhoods Western Collective
- Scoffed Cooking School

## Completed Qualifications

Master of Disability, Policy and Practice – Leanne Coveney

Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care – Keleigh Turner

Certificate IV TAE – Margaret Lovell, Cathy Cameron and Mary Scales

## Currently Studying

Doctoral candidate – Lynne Rutherford

Bachelor of Early Childhood Education – Kate Jeffery, Tiffany Schroder, Melissa Azemovic, Jade McCorquodale

## Projects and Groups

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group – Ivan Copley, Rodney Welch, Eddie Peters, Nicole Gollan, Kaye Colmer, Lynne Rutherford and Mary Scales.

Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group – Kaye Colmer, Mary Scales, Lynne Rutherford, Melissa Von Senden, Allie Holmes, Margaret Lovell (resigned), Lyndsay Healy, Christina Lipitkas, Natalie Gentle, Renee Kemble, Tiffany Schroeder, Krystal Kimble, Leanne Coveney, Sandra Greco, Emma Knight.

Collaborative Childhood Birth to Three Children's Rights Research Project – Krystal Kimble, Lyndsay Healy, Kate Wise, Renee Kemble, Sylvia Gray and Rosemary Mensforth.

Sustainability Committee – Krystal Kimble, Janet Temby, Madison Conway.

Work Health Safety Committee – Lyndsay Healy, Kate Westley, Shannon Vennix, Sharee Van Loggem, Nima Tahsili Fahadan, Justin McArthur.



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