



Playgroup
Victoria

ANNUAL REPORT 2017 - 2018





CHAIR AND CEO REPORT



FELICITY DUNN
Chairperson



DANNY SCHWARZ
CEO

This year more than 1,500 community playgroups have held over 3,500 playgroup sessions each week in Victoria. More than 500 Supported Playgroup's were also held each week. Some 35,000 parents and 45,000 children were involved.

Research shows that children who attend playgroup are 1.76 times less likely to start school with a developmental vulnerability. Playgroup provides the foundational learning that equips children for the years to come. Playgroup is also good for the mental health and well-being of parents and carers.

We strive to connect with more of you, to enrich the childhood and parental experience for all. In addition to supporting playgroups throughout the State, Playgroup Victoria has been running and developing projects and funded initiatives. These include:

- + *Girls 'n' boys come out to play* - A program about respectful relationships and gender equality. After a successful year, *Girls 'n' boys come out to play* has received another year of funding. This means children and parents will continue to benefit from these fun and educational workshops. Next year the program will change its name to *ALL come out to play!*, showcasing the inclusive nature of the program.
- + *Me and My Dad Playgroup, Ballarat*- A community playgroup, co-located at Sebastopol Primary School. *Me and My Dad Playgroup* was featured in a wide range of media reports highlighting the importance of men participating in playgroup. The playgroup won the Victorian NAPCAN award as part of the National Child Protection Week.
- + *Playgroup Development team*- They continue to grow and facilitate Communities of Practice, for Department of Education and Training funded Supported Playgroup Facilitators. They now run 12 of these across Victoria's 79 Local Government Areas.
- + *Maternal and Child Health Transition Project*- This project will share key messages with first time parents about playgroup. We will share information through a new MCH App, and of course through the expertise of the Maternal Child and Health Nurses who have a close relationship with the first time parents.
- + *Rural and regional engagement* - We have increased our involvement with regional and remote areas of Victoria. This has included a road trip in the North West, a Messy Play Day in Bright and participation in *Play in the Park* in Bairnsdale.
- + *PlayConnect* and *MyTime* programs - These unique programs were delivered to more than 500 children and families throughout Victoria. *PlayConnect* received a grant with Playgroup Australia as part the **Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Grant** to assist families moving to the NDIS.



Kew Neighbourhood House Playgroup is chock-full of play spaces that foster creativity and imagination | Photo by Sinead Halliday

This year we have conducted a Membership and Engagement Strategic Review. The aim was to identify any barriers and improve access, ensuring that all children and families can participate in their local playgroup.

We have developed a new and improved model that enables access and supports participation. Playgroup Victoria wants to engage with the playgroup community, and for the community members to engage with each other. Children, families, carers and professionals are all part of the community and are valued.

Playgroup Consultants are here to help and will assist with on-ground support. They offer ongoing professional support and engagement, including the Communities of Practice for DET funded Supported Playgroup Facilitators.

We want to connect with the playgroup community, creating an environment where families, children, professionals and organisations can see value in engaging with us. You will find a detailed overview of the new Membership Model in this report. We are looking forward to launching it later this year.

None of this would be possible without the support from Federal and State Governments, Philanthropic Trusts - Gandel Philanthropy, The Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and The Ross Trust. It is with our committed staff, volunteers and Board of Governance members, to whom we say thank you and congratulations for an exceptional year.

We look forward to engaging with the playgroup community in a meaningful way. Parenthood does not follow a straight path but moves and shifts. Playgroup is a place where parents can relax, share and give their children the best possible start in life.



MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

For over 40 years Playgroup Victoria (PG) has been operating as the peak body for playgroups. Membership peaked with the baby boomers in the 1970-80's during the exciting dawning of the Playgroup phenomenon. The modern world has changed the way that we now connect with families. As such, our Membership Model has had to change.

Over 10 months Playgroup Victoria has conducted a Membership and Engagement Strategic Review. The technological landscape we live in demands highly functioning online capacity. As such, we are in the final stages of an IT platform upgrade to improve outreach and usability.




The new model is designed to engage with our stakeholders. These stakeholders include:

- Children and families
- Playgroup Leaders
- Professionals
- Local Government
- Service organisations who run playgroups (These service organisations meet the needs of families that need or seek support, including those from CALD, refugee and asylum seeker communities)

Families will always have the option to buy a Playgroup Victoria Membership and this is encouraged as it has many benefits. The new model allows families to interact and connect, without formally purchasing a standard 12-month membership. The new model supports families to:

- Select a membership that best suits their needs and lifestyle. The pricing is based on the understanding that raising a family increases financial pressure.
- Register and connect to their playgroup at no cost.
- Receive Insurance. Once registered, the playgroup will be automatically covered.
- Playgroup leaders will be able to manage their playgroup online. Leaders will be able to invite families to register and become connected to their playgroup through their online portal.

Below you can see our new membership types:

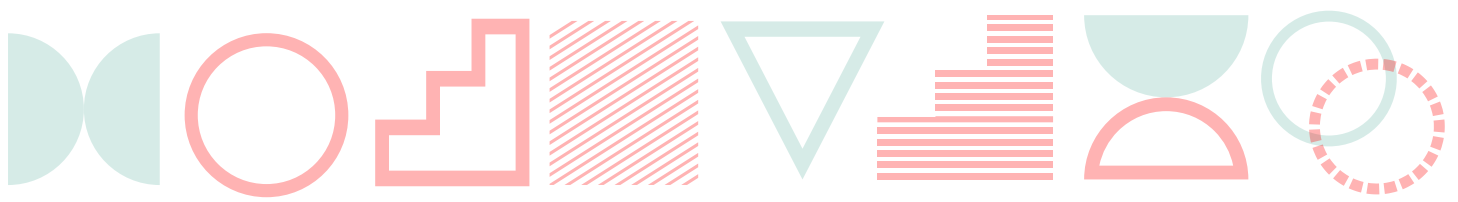
 <p>For Playgroup Leaders</p>	 <p>For Attending Families</p>	 <p>For Organisations, Agencies and Councils</p>
<p>Playgroup Registration</p> <p>\$50</p> <p>To register a playgroup + receive a free family membership</p>	<p>Family Membership</p> <p>\$25 for 6 months</p> <p>\$40 for 1 year</p>	<p>Professional Affiliation</p> <p>FREE</p> <p>to any professional association</p>



MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

CATEGORY

	Subscribe	Playgroup Registration	Family Registration	Family Membership	Professional Affiliation
COST	Free	\$50	Free	12 month - \$40 6 month - \$25 *Available discounts for those that need: 12 month - \$20 6 month - \$10	Free
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + E-Playgroup news + Professional newsletter + Wonderful World of Playgroups Facebook Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Public Liability and Property Insurance + Playgroup Leader - includes Family Membership + Advertise on Find-a-Playgroup + Playgroup Online Toolkit + Discounted Conference tickets + Training for Playgroup Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Login to change details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Playgroup Online Toolkit + Event discounts + Shopping card + Personal accident and injury insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Playgroup Online Toolkit + Conference discounted tickets + Playgroup Development Consultants + Advocacy + Professional resources and training



RISK AND AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	Note	2018 \$	2017 \$
Income			
Conference fees		-	336
Contributions members		292,673	369,967
DGR revenue		-	207
Fee and charge - Roster Playgroup		10,427	11,586
Fee and charges - Play Day		7,480	6,136
Fees and charges		-	1,150
Grants - Philanthropic		153,582	80,337
Grants - Commonwealth operating		885,626	821,103
Grants - Local operating - MVCC		-	15,000
Grants - My Time		434,688	433,504
Grants - Playgroup Australia		367,955	320,638
Grants - Ross Trust		-	4,998
Grants - State DEECD - Program & advocacy		199,887	160,050
Grants - State DEECD - Great Start		50,000	50,000
Grants - State MCH First Time Parents		100,000	-
Interest		26,191	20,180
Other income		21,964	52,693
Profit / loss on sale of assets		10,000	6,368
Sales - Registration		23,281	23,040
Sales - Advertising		6,520	10,193
Sales - Products		498	1,729
Wage subsidies received		-	4,036
Total Income		2,590,772	2,393,251
Expenditure			
Depreciation and amortisation		43,561	68,945
Employment expenses		1,710,277	1,708,272
Insurance		46,741	62,422
Meeting expenses		3,839	3,586
Operating expenses		732,545	681,175
Travel and accommodation		13,932	17,177
Vehicle expenses		15,290	21,291
Impairment expense	8	38,706	39,983
Total Expenditure	4	2,604,891	2,602,851
Surplus (deficit) for the period		(14,119)	(209,600)
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the period		(14,119)	(209,600)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2018

	Note	2018 \$	2017 \$
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	236,575	377,348
Financial assets	5	500,000	600,000
Trade & other receivables		18,141	111,338
Other current assets	6	45,228	44,995
Total Current Assets		799,944	1,133,681
Non Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	7	45,694	44,567
Intangible assets	8	84,086	94,776
Total Non Current Assets		129,780	139,343
Total Assets		929,724	1,273,024
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	152,550	356,384
Grants and income in advance	10	179,022	342,213
Short term provisions	9	167,107	138,994
Total Current Liabilities		498,679	837,591
Non Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	3,303	9,458
Long term provisions	9	30,347	14,461
Total Non Current Liabilities		33,650	23,919
Total Liabilities		532,329	861,510
Net Assets		397,395	411,514
Equity			
Reserves		70,915	70,915
Retained earnings		326,480	340,599
Total Equity		397,395	411,514

TREASURER'S REPORT 2017-18

Summary

For the financial year 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, a deficit of (\$14,119) was recorded, compared to a deficit of (\$209,600) for the previous year. Revenue increased by \$197,000 or 8% to A\$2,590,000 from June 2017 and expenses were materially unchanged. This drove the reduced accounting deficit. The FY18 deficit in large part resulted from write downs to our CRM. Total expense remained consistent with the previous year as a result of a close focus on reducing service delivery operating expenses.

Playgroup Victoria remains a viable operating entity with \$236,575 held in cash and cash equivalents and financial assets. While the Association is dependent on continued funding from government grants and approximately 79% of revenue is sourced from Federal and State government grants, management and the Board continue to pursue revenue diversification.

The decrease in membership contributions has informed a large part of the membership and engagement Strategic review. A new Membership model has been endorsed by the Board with an expected launch prior to the end of calendar 2018.

As outlined last year the organisation is upgrading the IT infrastructure, Website and CRM platform. This will allow better operational efficiency and greater insights into our membership to allow us to better deliver services. Included in the FY18 operating expenses is an amortisation of (\$32,984) as the final write off of the current CRM which will be decommissioned prior to the end of calendar 2018.

The equity position of the organisation at year end was \$397,395 compared to \$411,514 at the end of the prior year (a decrease of \$14,119 due to the net deficit).

Conclusion

On behalf of the Board, I confirm that the financial statements present a true and fair view of the financial position of Playgroup Victoria Incorporated as at 30 June 2018 and that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Playgroup Victoria Incorporated can continue pay its debts as and when they fall due.

For full set of the financial Statements please contact Playgroup Victoria on 1800 171 882 or pgvic@playgroup.org.au

Antony Elliot - Treasurer





DET-FUNDED INITIATIVES

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICE

During 2017 and 2018 Playgroup Victoria partnered with the *Municipal Association of Victoria* and the *Victorian Maternal and Child Health Service* for an exciting two-year project. The aim of the project is to increase social support for first time parents. Through community connections and continued access, we endeavour to assist first time parents as they transition into their next chapter. We want to guide them into a baby playgroup where they will receive ongoing support and information. This is a crucial time of development for the young child and it is a period where parents require extra support. The vision of the project is to fulfil their specific needs.

Playgroup Victoria recognises that:

- + MCH nurses are a vital partner in the process of transition from first time parent group to playgroup
- + Flexible place based approaches are required to support these transitions
- + MCH nurses require playgroup specific resources to support the transition process

The MCH workforce recognises the benefits of playgroup participation. Many first-time parents report challenges and barriers to connecting to their local playgroups. These include structural, amenity, and practical challenges as well as personal, familial and community barriers.

The project aims to create a sustainable approach that supports MCH nurses to increase access to and participation in playgroup for first-time parents. This will include identifying opportunities and barriers for participation in community playgroups. It will also improve the transition into playgroup for first time parents, through the MCH service. It will incorporate place-based solutions and best practice strategies that can be scaled-up to support families to transition to playgroup. The project will see Playgroup Victoria work with local MCH nurses to ensure that the approaches used to increase family participation in playgroup are place-based and practical.

Eight Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected to participate in a consultation process and over 30 nurses from the eight sites have been interviewed. Through this consultation with the MCH workforce and their allied health colleagues, Playgroup Victoria has been planning and developing a range of tools and resources that communicate key messaging about the importance of developing a support system for both parent and child. A significant outcome of working closely with the DET MCH team has been the utilisation of their IT platform, enabling Playgroup Victoria to integrate messaging into this mobile phone application. This App currently provides information about play and playgroup. We are exploring ways to ensure the messaging in the App is aligned with our strategic objective of introducing baby playgroup as the first immediate transition from the first-time parent group. The project is now exploring what these messages will be and how they will be delivered. The eight LGA sites participating in the pilot will be trialling the new tools and resources during this second year of the project. Thereafter, we will be able to determine how effective these transitional tools have been.

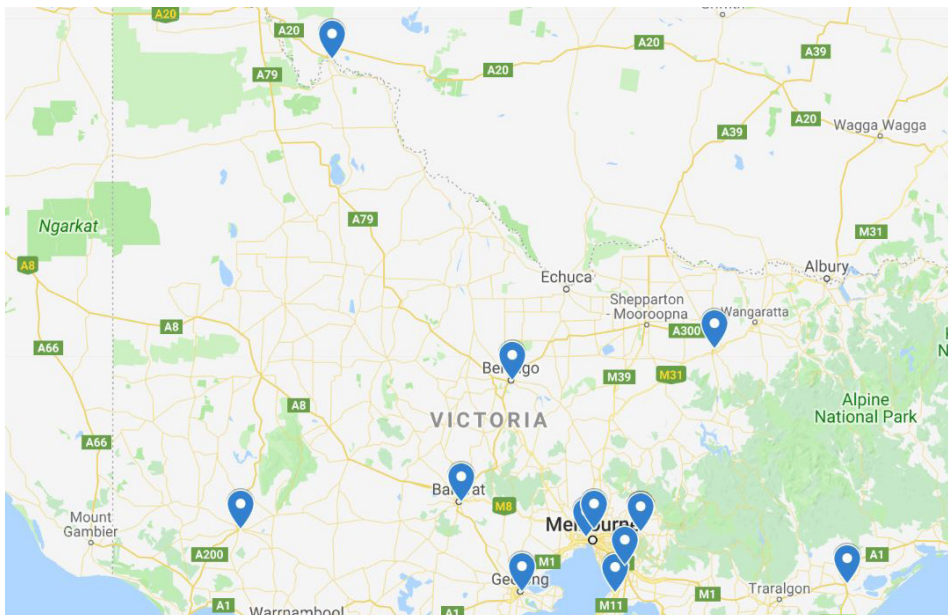




Participants from North and East Metro Community of Practice

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Playgroup Victoria has taken on a new role leading Communities of Practice across Victoria for the Department of Education and Training (DET) funded supported playgroup facilitators. Communities of Practice provide opportunities for facilitators to network, share practice and enhance playgroup experiences for children and families.



Facilitators from 79 local government areas are now engaged in 12 Communities of Practice across Victoria.

[Click on map to view locations involved](#)

A highlight of the Communities of Practice sessions has been the sharing of play ideas to support the delivery of *Smalltalk* parenting messages, underpinned by the Victorian Early Learning and Development Framework (VEYLF).



Listening and Talking



Warm and Gentle

[Click the links above to see examples of these documents](#)

“Sharing successes, problem solving challenges and opportunities for support”

- Communities of Practice participant



GREAT START GRANTS

The \$50,000 Great Start Community Playgroup Grant Fund has been provided by the Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education – The Honorable Jenny Mikakos.

Earlier in the year, newly established community playgroups were invited to make an application to Playgroup Victoria for a grant to support their playgroup to get off to a great start.

In 2018 priority was given to new community playgroups being set up by parents who are transitioning from first-time parents groups, promoted via the Maternal and Child Health state-wide workforce.

Successful applicants will receive:

- Mentoring from the Playgroup Victoria team
- A \$650 voucher to purchase equipment from Modern Teaching Aids
- Registration with Playgroup Victoria
- Access to Playgroup Victoria online resources

50 new community playgroups have now received their letter from the minister's office to inform them of their successful application under the Great Start Grant.

Mentoring from a member of the Playgroup Victoria team will commence over the coming weeks. Playgroup staff will support these groups in the critical early stages of set-up. Parent run community playgroups provide a playgroup experience that benefits children and families.



THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

PLAYGROUP NAME	SUBURB	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA
Lucas Community Playgroup	Lucas	City of Ballarat
Lumen Christi Primary School Playgroup	Delacombe	City of Ballarat
Me & My Dad Playgroup	Sebastopol	City of Ballarat
Warrenheip Playgroup	Warrenheip	City of Ballarat
Cardigan Village Playgroup	Cardigan village	City of Ballarat
St. Alipius Parish School Playgroup	Ballarat East	City of Ballarat
Little Munchkins Playgroup	Wendouree	City of Ballarat
Hallam Primary Playgroup	Hallam	City of Casey
Selandra Pram Posse Playgroup	Clyde North	City of Casey
Kiddie Cloud at Fairhaven	Cranbourne West	City of Casey
Let's Play Playgroup	Clyde North	City of Casey
Indian Playgroup	Reservoir	City of Darebin
Honey Baby Playgroup	Bundoora	City of Darebin
Play and Talk	West Preston	City of Darebin
McKinnon Playgroup	McKinnon	City of Glen Eira
Princes Highway Playgroup	Dandenong	City of Greater Dandenong
Play Date Mummy's	Altona Meadows	City of Hobsons Bay
Seaholme Beach Playgroup	Seaholme	City of Hobsons Bay
Meadow Heights Primary School	Meadow Heights	City of Hume
The Basin Playgroup	The Basin	City of Knox
St. Luke's Community Playgroup	Wantirna	City of Knox
Alexander Magit Playgroup	Ferntree Gully	City of Knox
Billoopark playgroup	Wantirna	City of Knox
Aintree Playgroup	Aintree	City of Melton
Mount Waverley North Playgroup	Mount Waverley	City of Monash
Essex Heights Playgroup	Mt Waverley	City of Monash
Flemington Primary School	Flemington	City of Moonee Valley
Albert Park Playgroup	Middle Park	City of Port Phillip
Hispanitos (Spanish/Hispanic playgroup)	St Kilda	City of Port Phillip
South Morang Playgroup	South Morang	City of Whittlesea
FTM Doreen Playgroup	Doreen	City of Whittlesea
Russian playgroup	Manna Lakes	City of Wyndham
Haddon Community Playgroup	Haddon	Golden Plains Shire
Natimuk Intergenerational Playgroup	Natimuk	Rural City of Horsham
Watchem Playgroup	Watchem	Shire of Buloke
Cardinia Lakes ELC Playgroup	Pakenham	Shire of Cardinia
Casterton Playgroup	Casterton	Shire of Glenelg
Jeparit Playgroup	Jeparit	Shire of Hindmarsh
Macedon Ranges Multiples Playgroup	Gisborne	Shire of Macedon Ranges
SPICE: Intergenerational Playgroup Macedon Rangers	Kyneton	Shire of Macedon Ranges
Lancefield Playgroup Music Morning	Lancefield	Shire of Macedon Ranges
Bacchus Marsh Playgroup Inc - Playgroupies session	Bacchus Marsh	Shire of Moorabool
Mumma's of Little Marshians	Darley	Shire of Moorabool
Koroit Playgroup	Koroit	Shire of Moyne
Little Quackers Playgroup	Cudgewa	Shire of Towong
Silvan Primary Playgroup	Silvan	Shire of Yarra Ranges
Jan Juc Playgroup - Tiny Tots	Jan Juc	Surf Coast Shire
Torquay Playgroup	Torquay	Surf Coast Shire
Torquay North Playgroup	Torquay	Surf Coast Shire



PROJECTS

GIRLS 'N' BOYS COME OUT TO PLAY

Funding for the *Girls 'n' boys come out to play* program was awarded to Drummond Street Services and Playgroup Victoria. There were 170 applicants for the Community Partnerships for Primary Prevention grants. *Girls 'n' boys come out to play* program was among the 34 applicants.

The CPPP grants, awarded by the Premiers Office (Vic), later managed by The Department of Health and Human Services (Vic), were designed to support partnerships between local community organisations, that coordinate and drive family violence prevention activities. It was established following the release of *Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to end family violence and all forms of violence against women*.

The Playgroup Victoria platform has enabled the program to reach a diverse array of families across Australia, through Playgroup's universal accessibility.

The program adhered to the Playgroup Principles - it had to be fun, developmental, educational, nurturing and supportive, capacity building, relational and safe. All of these principles relate to, and are congruent, with the intention of this partnership project. We were able to deliver a primary prevention program that focused on respectful relationships and gender equality, rather than spotlighting family violence.

We worked with well-known musician Amanda Testro from Hullabaloo Music, to ensure the workshops were fun and empowering for children of all abilities and cultural backgrounds.

PROJECT AIM

- + CHALLENGE gender stereotypes, particularly around stereotypical roles of girls and boys, and mothers and fathers
- + STRENGTHEN attitudes around positive, equal and respectful relationships for boys, girls, men, women
- + PROMOTE women's independence and decision-making (in families, communities and workplaces)





One of the goals of the program is to help parents rethink their natural biases, giving kids choices and promoting gender equality and respect.

THE RESULTING PROGRAM

The program was a one hour workshop that begins by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land. Musical story begins. A family is introduced and we are invited to go on a series of adventures. The family goes to the beach, visits mum at the hospital, helps-out with some sick babies, changes some nappies, does some funky dancing and then travels home for dinner. Child and adult participation are actively encouraged.

The most obvious gender message is expressed in the fun rap song called, *I love being me*. This song celebrates individuality irrespective of gender. The lyrics say: "It don't matter if you're boy or girl- it don't matter if your hair won't curl- it don't matter if you're short or tall - it don't matter if you walk or crawl, it don't even matter if you need to pee - the only thing that matters is I LOVE BEING ME."

Other messages that were also woven into the content:

- + Girls deserve the same opportunities as boys.
- + Gender stereotypes are harmful for ALL kids. Girls need to be encouraged to take risks and say no as needed, and boys need to be vulnerable and seek help as needed.
- + Modelling respectful relationships at home is key
- + Gender equality can help us solve bigger societal problems like family violence and mental ill health

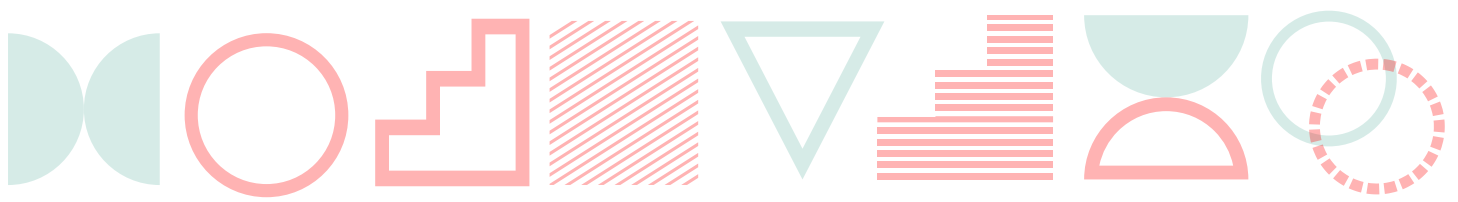
There are illustrations featured throughout the sessions. The imagery presents a variety of gender roles compared to those usually seen in main stream media and literature. For instance, the narrative follows a family where dad is the main carer and mum works as a doctor at the hospital. The boy is allowed to show his vulnerability when he falls sick and the girl is encouraged to take risks as they ride their bikes.

The music and pictures make the sessions inclusive, and invite participants who are culturally and linguistically diverse to join in.

In the funding application, the reach of the project was projected to be 300 parents and their pre-school-aged children. By the end of 2017, with more than 6 months remaining, the program had already reached 224 parents and their pre-school children. By the completion of the 12-month project, the reach was 531 parents and pre-school children across 35 sessions. Program delivery spread across metro Melbourne as well as rural locations Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers, Stawell, Horsham, Wycheproof, Bendigo, Mt Beauty and Wodonga.

Participants were invited to fill out a simple evaluation form after the sessions. This provided us with a variety of feedback about the songs activities and key messages of the program. Feedback came from parents, as well as the facilitators running the program.

A copy of the Final Report is available upon request. Due to the success of the program a further 12 month funding was successful via the *Free From Violence Fund* to 30 June 2019.



EVENTS

LIBRARY WEEK

In 2017, Playgroup Victoria introduced bilingual story time to celebrate the diversity of culture and languages throughout our local communities. We invited volunteers to join us and read at story time sessions across Victoria. The story time centred around *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, which was read in English and two other languages at each event. We then invited families to join us for arts and crafts, where we made caterpillars and butterflies which the families could take home as a keepsake.

Each volunteer received a hamper of thanks from Playgroup Victoria, full of things from our partner Crayola.



Join us to celebrate the beauty of reading, language and culture!
Come along to one of our special events during #PlaygroupLibraryWeek

<p>Monday 17/07 at 12:30pm</p>		<p>Bilingual Story time and crafts "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" Doncaster Library</p>
<p>Tuesday 18/07 at 2:00pm</p>		<p>Author Jeannette Rowe reads "Whose Animals?" Cranbourne Library</p>
<p>Wednesday 19/07 at 11:00am</p>		<p>Author Tony Wilson reads "The Cow Tripped over the Moon" Richmond Library</p>
<p>Thursday 20/07 at 10:00am</p>		<p>Bilingual Story time and crafts "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" Broadmeadows Library</p>
<p>Friday 21/07 at 10:30am</p>		<p>Bilingual Story time and crafts "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" Coburg Library</p>

*Dates and times are subject to change. Please contact the libraries directly for further details.



OBJECTIVES:

- + Promote literacy and reading
- + Promote community engagement
- + Encourage playgroups to visit local libraries during their playgroup sessions
- + Celebrate the diversity of cultures and languages in Victoria
- + Allow cross-exposure to other cultures, even for families who are culturally diverse; by having different languages organised at the same time
- + Increasing engagement on social media
- + Promoting playgroup for families who walk-in to the event not knowing who we are



REGIONAL ROADTRIPS

Many major playgroup events are held in the metropolitan area, such is the nature of amenities and offerings in the city. We always try to extend opportunities to regional and remote areas of Victoria. As 2017 drew to a close, we decided that take more major events to regional and remote areas in 2018.

In January 2018 Playgroup Victoria's CEO Danny Schwarz went on a road trip to Bendigo and surrounding areas, meeting locals, asking what more Playgroup Victoria can do to help their playgroup community. **[Read more about Danny's tour on our blog here.](#)**

In May, after much planning and preparation, we packed the playgroup van and drove to Bright in North East Victoria. Here is a recap of the event:

The weather bureau was warning locals to prepare for a cold blast on the eve of our Messy Play May Day in North East Victoria's high country. The weather did not dampen spirits and the indoors beckoned us in to have fun! People travelled from Springhurst, Yackandandah, Beechworth, Milawa, Falls Creek and surrounding townships to take part in the event. The hall quickly warmed up as kids raced around, overwhelmed by the choice of activities laid out before them. They were joyous! They could choose to play with bugs in the mud, play dough, foam, slime or they could even splash about in bubbly warm water. It was sensory overload and the children could not have been happier.

On the other side of the hall was a make-believe land with soft toy animals, a slide, tee-pees, mats, building blocks, a parachute and more! Binoculars were handed out and the children were encouraged to look for hidden treasures as part of our scavenger hunt. The kids decorated their binoculars and created colourful leaf art which they could take home. It was a day full of happiness, creativity, freedom and fun! **[Read more about Messy Play May on our blog.](#)**



CELEBRATING PLAYGROUP

AWARDS

This year, we decided to bring together three of our most special events: The Playgroup Conference, Playgroup Awards and the Play Extravaganza. The theme across the three events was 'Embracing Diversity.' The events showcased innovative ideas, learning, community and celebrated Playgroup.

The 2017 awards night took place at *Sealife Melbourne Aquarium*. There were nine categories that highlighted the many and varied playgroups across Victoria.

THE MINISTER'S AWARD

**Woodend
Playgroup**



**The Big
Playgroup
Meetup**

COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP OF THE YEAR (1-4 SESSIONS) FINALISTS

Metro Active Dads Playgroup
Fam Love Jam Band
Rainbow Families Playgroup
Arts Tarts and our Little Hearts

THE WINNER IS: FAM LOVE JAM BAND

COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP OF THE YEAR (1 - 4 SESSIONS) REGIONAL/RURAL FINALISTS

Dimboola Playgroup
Bright Wild Things Bush Playgroup
Boisdale Community Playgroup
Possums of Yinnar Playgroup

THE WINNER IS: DIMBOOLA PLAYGROUP

COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP OF THE YEAR (5+ SESSIONS) FINALISTS

St Andrew's Playgroup Bacchus Marsh
Woodend Playgroup
New Gisbourne Playgroup
Concord Playgroup

THE WINNER IS: ST ANDREW'S PLAYGROUP BACCHUS MARSH

COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP LEADER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

Lara Wallis - Active Dads Playgroup
Elizabeth Kovco - Boisdale Community Playgroup
Jarrod Paine - Kiewa Wild Things
Merryn Steer - Bright Wild Things Bush Playgroup

THE WINNER IS: LARA WALLIS



SUPPORTED PLAYGROUP OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

Zoe Support Australia
 Little Frogs Playgroup
 Yarrabah Supported Playgroup
 Come and Play Multicultural Supported Playgroup

THE WINNER IS: ZOE SUPPORT AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTED PLAYGROUP FACILITATOR / COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

Thomastown Library Supported Playgroup - Belinda Lyons
 Zoe Support Australia - Libbie McBain
 Balla Balla Playgroup- Tracy Symons
 Shire of Campaspe Supported Playgroups- Tracy Woods

THE WINNER IS: BELINDA LYONS

PLAYGROUP AGENCY OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

City of Greater Dandenong
 Knox City Council
 Craig Family Centre
 Kingston City Council

THE WINNER IS: CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG

PLAYGROUP CHAMPION

Sue Wells

City of Greater Geelong

PLAYGROUP OF THE YEAR

**Inner North
 Rainbow Families**

Supporting families who are at serious risk of stress due to the current political climate and activities.



Kew Neighbourhood House Playgroup is chock-full of play spaces that foster creativity and imagination | Photo by Sinead Halliday

PLAYGROUP OF THE MONTH

Each month we feature a playgroup who has shown great enthusiasm, dedication, creativity, resilience, kindness, purpose, potential and overall care for their community and families.

[Discover some of these wonderful groups on our blog.](#)

PLAYGROUP OF THE MONTH WINNERS:

June 2017 **Avondale Heights Grandparents Playgroup** | [Generational Gifts](#)

July 2017 **Bubup Fresh Mum's Playgroup** | [Kindly Caring](#)

August 2017 **Dimboola Playgroup** | [No Matter the Weather](#)

September 2017 **Bright Wild Things Playgroup** | [Reconnecting with the great outdoors](#)

October 2017 **Belgrave Lake Park Cottage Playgroup** | [A Playgroup among the Gumtrees](#)

November 2017 **Gumnuts Playgroup** | [The Natural Goodness at Gumnuts](#)

December 2017 **Playbox Playgroup Box Hill Institute** | [Learning through the ages](#)

January 2018 **Pacific Playgroup** | [Home is carried within](#)

February 2018 **Inner North Rainbow Families** | [All the Colours](#)

March 2018 **Sophia Mundi Steiner playgroup** | [Moments of Wonder, learning as they go](#)

April 2018 **The Merri Creek Bush Playgroup** | [Lifelong Connections form at Bush Playgroup](#)

May 2018 **Whittlesea Playgroup** | [Restoring the Human Connection](#)

June 2018 **The Kew Neighbourhood House** | [Carefully Crafted](#)

PLAYGROUP IN FOCUS

Playgroups are not always easy to find. There might be one right around the corner that you do not know about. We teamed up with *Mamma Knows Melbourne* to explore the playgroup community, uncovering local gems in the metropolitan area.

Discover more on the Mamma Knows websites:

Mamma Knows West

Mamma Knows East

Mamma Knows North

Mamma Knows South



Photos by Mamma Knows East





PLAYGROUP IN THE MEDIA



Wednesday June 14, 2017

Channel 7 Melbourne

Playgroup Victoria's CEO, Danny Schwarz, spoke about a very important issue: alarm systems installed in child safety seats. **Watch the story here (view at 11:45mins)**



July, 2017

ELC Primary Learning magazine

Article by Sinead Halliday on behalf of Playgroup Victoria. Imagery by Sylvia Dardha of Buddha Hands Playgroup. **Discover more at: www.victoriaschoolguides.starcommunity.com.au**



Saturday September 30, 2017

Herald Sun Newspaper

Playgroups benefit parents and kids by offering fun and friendship **Read more here**



Monday October 9, 2017

Life Matters, Radio National

Childcare Meets Aged Care. **Read more here**



Tuesday November 21, 2017

The Wimmera Mail-Times

Dimboola Playgroup named the Victorian Community Playgroup of the Year. **Read more here**



Tuesday December 5, 2017

Star Weekly, Sunbury & Macedon Ranges

Woodend Playgroup wins award for innovation and excellence. **Read more here**



Sunday Feb 4, 2018

Babytalk with Penny Johnson

Playgroups and why they're worth going out for!
Read more here



Friday February 9, 2018

Herald Sun Newspaper

Kindergarten children to learn about gender equality.
Read more here



Tuesday April 3, 2018

Life Matters, Radio National

Challenging gender stereotypes among kids. Live interviews recorded at playgroup's by Sinead Halliday on behalf of Playgroup Victoria.
Read more here



Monday April 30, 2018

The Courier, Ballarat

Quality time over pint of coffee and colouring books.
Read more here



Tuesday May 8, 2018

ABC Ballarat

Men-only playgroup pushes aside gender stereotypes to provide support for dads.
Read more here



Sunday May 13, 2018

Weekend Sunrise

Me and My Dad Playgroup.
Read more here



Tuesday June 20, 2017

School Guide Victoria

Subtle Growth - article written by Sinead Halliday on behalf of Playgroup Victoria.
Read more here



Friday June 29, 2018

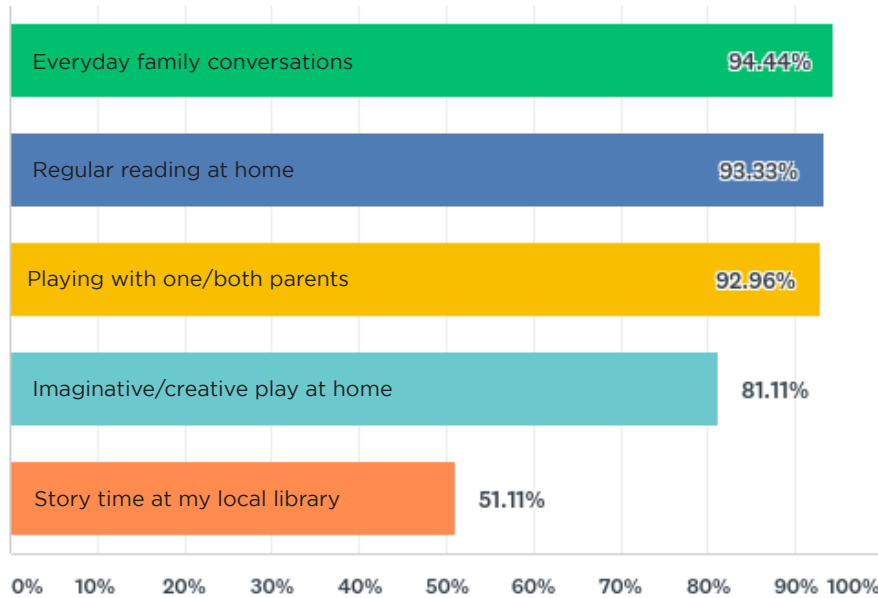
This Glorious Mess Podcast, Mamamia

Dad's Only Playgroup.
Read more here



WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAID

We asked our members what early learning opportunities their children participate in:

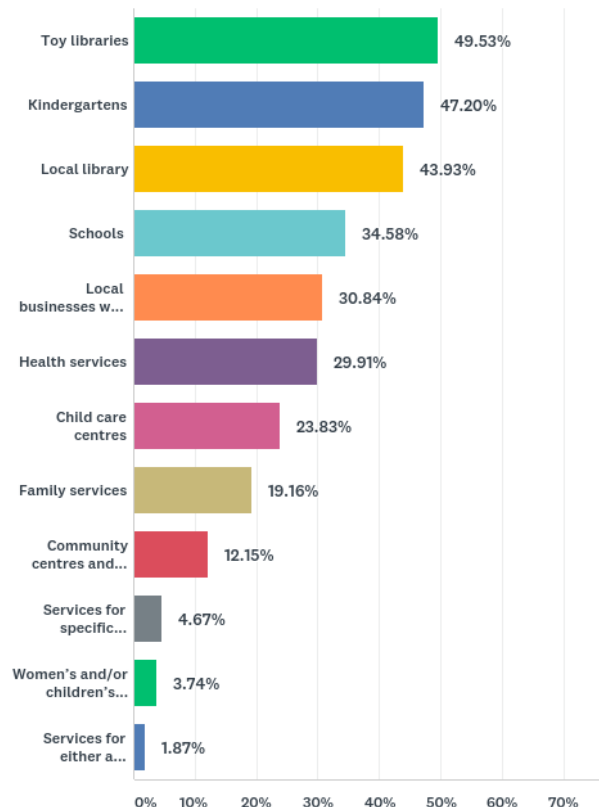


“Turning up to playgroup was the best decision I’ve made as a parent.”
 - Hannah Young from Dimboola Playgroup



Thank you Playgroup Vic for your Wild Things set up guide! We have just had our first successful Bush Playgroup. Run through our existing playgroup “The Basin Playgroup”. Heaps of fun! I highly recommend other playgroups give it a go.

We asked members which of the following resources/services/business had they heard about at playgroup:



Source: all data collected from annual member survey conducted in November 2017

“In our nature playgroup the children connect to the natural world through sensory exploration, digging and finding worms, harvesting herbs to make pot pourri, learning how to grow plants and gain a respect and care towards all living creatures. Parents too feel revitalised and gain a sense of well-being.”

- Vicky Stock, Sophia Mundi Nature Playgroup



91 %

of parents agree that attending playgroup has helped to provide them with a sense of friendship, community and/or connectedness

85 %

of playgroup Victoria members agreed that they benefit from attending playgroup

97 %

of parents agree that they feel that they have an active role to play in their children's learning

88 %

of parents agree that attending playgroup has assisted them in their parenting role

91 %

of parents agreed that attending playgroup has assisted their child's development

“There is no replacement for connecting face to face, allowing children to develop social skills and interactions in a supportive environment. Friendships begin through cups of tea and sharing picnics, whilst children explore and discover themselves, each other and the world around them.”

- Playgroup Co-Leader, Emma from Belgrave Lake Park Cottage Playgroup



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