

2017: Our year in review



2017 was an amazing year for Plumtree. We supported 636 families, held 28 workshops on preparing for the NDIS, and received industry accolades for our innovative programs including Now & Next.

Plumtree is your bridge to the NDIS

With the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rolling out across NSW, there's a lot of concern about how current supports will be affected and the changes to come. Plumtree has the resources and experience to guide you, step by step, for a smooth transition to the NDIS.



In 2016-17 before our transition, we held a range of workshops to inform families about the scheme and how to prepare for the changes.

Understanding the NDIS

The introductory workshop *NDIS: The Basics* explained the individualised funding model on which the scheme is based, discussed eligibility and the importance of focusing on outcomes for children and families. The workshop was also provided in Vietnamese, Arabic and Mandarin.

"Understanding that the NDIS is focused on outcomes was the biggest message I took away from this workshop."

NDIS First Plan Ready

6 Steps to NDIS: First Plan Ready is a practical workshop that helped parents gather relevant information about their child and family to present at their NDIS planning meeting. Families used an e-book developed by Plumtree to complete the six steps to being First Plan ready. The workshop was also provided in Vietnamese and Mandarin. Staff held one-on-one e-book sessions with families who couldn't attend the workshop.

Implementing plans

In-depth workshops focused on self-managing a plan using individual funding, plan management, and recruiting staff through an online platform that links families with the right disability support worker.

A representative from the National Disability Insurance Agency delivered an advanced workshop to families on planning.

"I was so worried about my first planning meeting with the NDIS, but feeling in control now that I have been through the 6 Steps workshop. Writing everything down and talking to other parents has been really practical."

NDIS for Aboriginal families

In partnership with First People's Network, two NDIS information sessions were held for Aboriginal families. Highlights were a guest speaker whose daughter is an NDIS participant, and the resources shared to help Aboriginal families understand the NDIS.

Our Board

Plumtree is supported by a dedicated board with diverse experience, united by their commitment to children and families.

"I strongly believe we have achieved our vision to provide a centre of excellence. In this past year the Board have invested significantly to help families and Plumtree get ready for the NDIS."
Nick Walter,
Chair of Board

Not every child who comes to Plumtree will need an NDIS plan. We can help each family to find the supports that are right for them. For more information see www.plumtree.org.au.

Family-centred practice

We know that each family is unique, and parents know their child's needs and abilities best. Plumtree works in partnership with families to provide the right supports and positive outcomes. Family-centred practice is the gold standard in early childhood intervention services.

Planning plays a part

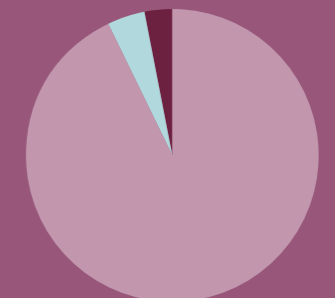
Once you have an NDIS plan you can start to break this down into achievable steps. You decide the goals that reflect your family's concerns and priorities. Plumtree has also developed Pictability, a new approach that helps families set a positive vision for their child and family. Visually based, it identifies new possibilities through a fun, creative experience.

"Not having a set of goals is like going for a drive but not knowing your destination – you want to know where you are going."

Sylvana Mahmic CEO Plumtree

You make the difference

Families spend the most time with their child and can make a big difference during everyday activities and routines. Children also thrive in natural learning environments, such as the home and childcare, where they are a part of the community.



TIME WITH YOUR CHILD (Mahoney 2011)

Parent 94%

Special Educator 4%

Therapist 3%

"Plumtree helped me to trust my own knowledge about Lin's needs. I realised that I didn't need to spend lots of money to make a difference ... I could do a lot myself."



142

FAMILIES ATTENDED THE BASICS WORKSHOP

244

FAMILIES COMPLETED FIRST PLAN READY SESSION

88

FAMILIES ATTENDED IN DEPTH WORKSHOPS

19

ABORIGINAL FAMILIES ATTENDED

493

WORKSHOP PARTICIPIANTS IN 2017

Now & Next

A Plumtree innovation has attracted industry acclaim, interest from local and overseas organisations, and received major government funding for expansion.



Plumtree is passionate about finding new ways to improve the lives of children and families.

Beginning as one-on-one sessions with parents, our Now & Next program launched as a group format last year to help families achieve positive outcomes through a peer leadership approach. A first of its kind in Australia and developed in-house, the evidence-based program won the 2017 ECIA NSW/ACT Excellence Award and was a finalist in the NSW Disability Industry Innovation Awards.

Families taking the lead

Over eight weekly sessions run by parent peer facilitators, families learn about setting and achieving goals. Now & Next also provides valuable opportunities for families to connect, inform, support and motivate each other to see new opportunities for their child now and in the future.

Participants have been inspired and transformed by the experience. "The program has been invaluable," says a mother. "I have renewed energy in helping Leon and gained skills to help him achieve his goals. We as a group have achieved and learnt so much from each other."

"I came along to the program thinking about what funding we could get from government agencies and who could fix my child. What I soon understood was that there is a lot that we can do as a family and that can really make a difference."

Now & Next alumni continue to connect, encourage and help each other through private social media and meetings. A major outcome of their first conference was the development of the Parent-Professional Relationships Statement, which was lauded as "a powerful and inspiring statement" by the Centre for Welfare Reform.

The interactive sessions enable parents to share their stories, learn from each other and build a network of support.



Alumni employed as peer facilitators

When a father suggested during the pilot program that parents should deliver Now & Next, it got us thinking. We embraced this opportunity to meet the needs of families using the particular insights that they offer each other.

Plumtree has trained and employed 10 Now & Next Alumni as peer facilitators, who do a range of paid work including running groups, workshops, project management, and helping families with vision-setting and planning.

"The Now & Next program was energising, it gave me frameworks to follow and be guided by," says Melo Kalemkeridis. Becoming a peer facilitator has reignited his desire to help people. Having a lived experience shared with families attending the program enables a deeper connection and helps establish rapport, he says. "Often it feels like we're having a conversation, not training."

Stacey Touma found Now & Next life-changing.

"I became a more confident and empowered parent." Becoming a peer facilitator enabled her to re-join the workforce in a field she's passionate about. "Plumtree provides great flexibility and understands that our family comes first, so I've been able to manage work and look after three children."

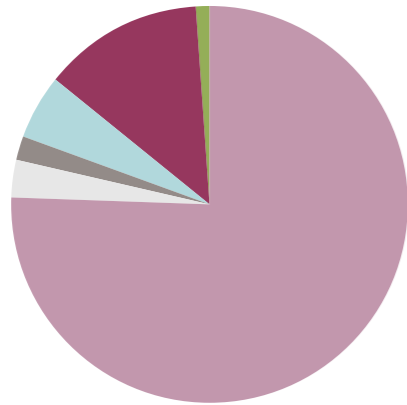
"I love being able to meet families and support them. A critical part of the program is helping families to see how important their role as a parent is – they can do so much for their child."

184

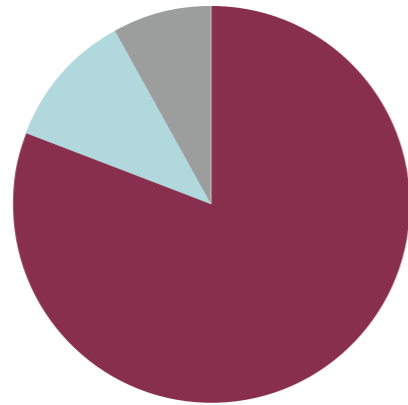
FAMILIES ATTENDED THE PROGRAM IN 2017

Our year at a glance

Plumtree would like to thank all our volunteers, supporters, champions and donors, who help us be the best we can be, every day.



Income



Expenditure



Staff



Children



Events



Workshops

In 2016–17 our income was a total of \$3,591,307 comprising:

- ADHC – 75%
- Community Services – 3%
- DEC ISP – 2%
- DEC ECEC Preschool – 5%
- FaCHSIA – 13%
- Other Grants – 1%

Plumtree is a non-government, registered charity funded by the Department of Family and Community Services (ADHC and Community Services) Department of Education (DEC ISP) and FaHCSIA.

In 2016–17 our expenditure was \$3,478,731 comprising:

- Employee Costs – 81%
- Service Delivery Costs – 11%
- Administration + Occupancy Costs – 8%

Financial records for the 2016-17 period were audited by Chartered Accountants Meoli and Co and are available by request from Plumtree.

- 68** total staff
- 17** speech pathologists
- 11** occupational therapists
- 8** teachers
- 7** family workers
- 3** physiotherapists
- 7** teacher assistants
- 3** office support staff
- 10** peer facilitators
- 2** managers

Our passionate and culturally diverse team share a commitment to helping families achieve their goals. Plumtree staff speak Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Turkish, Portuguese, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, Hindi, Urdu, Bosnian, French and Malay.

636 children and their families supported by Plumtree

21% increase in the past year

82% of these families received individual visits, mostly in their home.

All staff members keep the needs of the whole family at the centre of their practice and siblings are welcome in our programs.

“When you come to Plumtree you become a part of our community, meet other families, learn together and build new friendships.”

452 families attended an event

176 children attended one of our playgroups

Our annual family activities include Mother’s Day Photo Shoot, Father’s Day Drumming workshop, Naidoc Week celebration, End of Year Party, The Shack weekends, Sibs Fun Days and many more.

“I wanted to give Plumtree a heartfelt thank you for organising the weekend at Shoalhaven Heads with our daughter and the rest of the family. Not taking holidays has been a problem and last weekend showed me how much the family needs time together.”

60 workshops and courses provided

852 participants attended a workshop or course.

Families are the key decision makers for their child throughout the early years and schooling. We create opportunities to share knowledge and skills amongst all families and staff.

“Coming along to the workshops helped me learn more about my child’s development. I could see that there was a lot that I could do to help my child once I knew how.”



Plumtree is a not-for-profit organisation that provides support for children aged birth to 8 years old with a developmental delay or disability. Our vision is a society where children with developmental delay and their families are supported to have a full life in the community.

At Plumtree, we believe that every child has a right to participate in family and community life. Our purpose is to empower families to make this happen.

Our passionate, culturally diverse team of specialists work from the heart in a caring environment where families no longer feel isolated, but instead feel respected and informed.

We offer a range of tailored, family and community focussed services including Education, Therapy, Information and Training.

We also create innovative, research based approaches and resources to assist families to take control of their own learning to achieve positive outcomes.

Visit our webpage and join the Plumtree mailing list or Facebook page to find out about our services, workshops and events www.plumtree.org.au.



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