

2024: Our year in review



**In 2024 we increased
support for families
without NDIS funding**

Supporting families for over 35 years

Plumtree is a trusted community organisation that partners with all families to learn new skills, build a network of support and thrive

During 2023–2024 we increased services for families waiting for NDIS funding and families not connected to the scheme. Our preschool enhanced inclusive activities, and we began responding to changes proposed by the independent NDIS Review.

Support for all families

As a community organisation, Plumtree has always supported young families through free playgroups, workshops and parent education programs. As demand rose in 2024, we provided free therapy sessions for families waiting for NDIS funding, and our Parents as Peer Leaders project exceeded projections in empowering families not connected to the scheme. Plumtree's free programs attracted a record number of participants.

We became a founding member of the Early Childhood Best Practice Network and the Child and Family Supports Alliance NSW to help guide the NDIS's transformation with our expertise on Foundational Supports.

Plumtree Preschool

At Plumtree Preschool, children of all abilities and cultural backgrounds learn together. Our high staff-to-child ratio let us provide more individual support to extend each child's skills, love of learning and curiosity.

We welcomed two multicultural inclusion workers to translate and read books to children in Mongolian, communicate with parents and assist educators. Major projects included knowledge and culture sharing with a First Nations artist at Soul Reign. Plumtree volunteer and artist Bridget Kelley worked with the preschool children to create a mural for our front entrance, to be installed later in the year.



361

SESSIONS FOR
FREE PROGRAMS

732

FAMILIES AT
FREE PROGRAMS

80

CHILDREN ENROLLED
IN PRESCHOOL



NDIS services

Every family of a child with a disability and delay begins at a different place, but all will benefit with a clear vision for the future.

A welcome visit connects new families at Plumtree to a peer worker with lived experience in raising a child with a disability. Together, they use Pictability, our visioning tool that identifies strengths and goals. Our NDIS team then works in partnership with families to achieve their goals and bring positive change.

We launched School & Life, a program focusing on school transition and support at school, home and in the community.

See our [Events](#) calendar to register and learn about our workshops, playgroups and events

Our board

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

The board is proud of the team's passion and dedication in helping families to thrive in the past year. As Foundational Supports become a focus of changes to the NDIS, Plumtree is well placed to advise with our history of supporting families and children through community approaches.

Nick Walter,
Chair of Board

Your family at the centre

Family-centred practice is the gold standard in early childhood intervention services. We understand 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

Planning plays a part

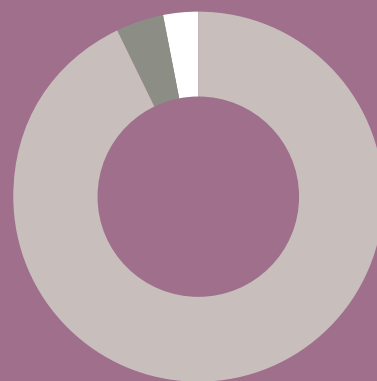
Pictability is an innovative approach for setting goals and a positive vision for children and families. Visually based, it identifies new possibilities through a fun, creative experience. You decide the goals that reflect your family's concerns and priorities.

"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."

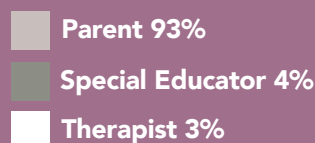
Sylvana Mahmic CEO Plumtree

You make the difference

Families spend the most time with their child and are already making a big difference during everyday activities and routines. Children 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)



"Professionals are a resource. Most of a child's learning happens with their family and carers between therapy sessions."

142

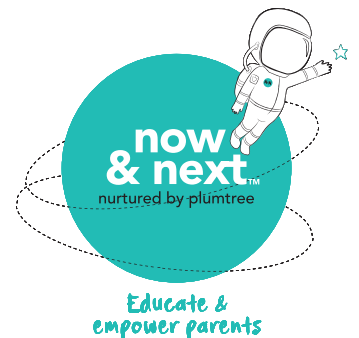
NDIS PARTICIPANT
FAMILIES SUPPORTED

38%

CALD FAMILIES
SUPPORTED

Now & Next: by parents, for parents

Our evidence-based program was delivered via the Parents as Peer Leaders Project (PPLP) to also support families without NDIS funding



Families of children with developmental concerns connected with our trained parent peer workers, learned new skills and accessed codesigned resources through Now & Next to take charge of their child's development and achieve positive family outcomes.

Unfunded families are more isolated and experience greater challenges in navigating supports. Our parent peer workers provided individualised guidance, resources and an invitation to participate in the capacity-building Now & Next program at no cost. Despite facing greater challenges than NDIS families, PPLP participants achieved significant gains in hope, empowerment and wellbeing after completing Now & Next. They also developed and achieved goals for their child, family and themselves.

PPLP exceeded objectives and demonstrated the positive impact of a peer-led approach in empowering NDIS funded and non-funded families—a valuable model for future foundational support initiatives.

The value of peer support

We continued to train and accredit parent leaders who became more confident in guiding their families. Some graduates went on to inspire and support others in their community.

Now & Next's impact extends overseas. Groups were held in New Zealand, Finland, Canada, Singapore and Albania. Plumtree CEO Sylvana Mahmic presented a keynote about the program, the value of engaging families in peer networks and building good family-professional partnerships at the Singapore Early Intervention Conference.

Read our [Now & Next](#) and [PPLP](#) blogs to learn more and download reports.



1.2k

N&N PARTICIPANTS
SINCE 2015

1008

PPLP
PARTICIPANTS

36

FAMILY LEADERSHIP
GRADUATES IN 2024

Sharing expertise with communities

Our collaborations with professionals and families deliver valuable insights and skills to promote inclusion and participation



Enhancing inclusive libraries

Libraries as Community Connectors provides online inclusion training and resources for library staff and professionals to better welcome families. Refunded to June 2025, the project introduced online mentoring workshops on supporting children with sensory processing challenges and Q&As with parent peer workers for inclusion insights and sharing information.

Team members attended events such as the ALIA National Conference and were invited to speak at the Public Libraries Victoria webinar. A video was produced of participants discussing the benefits of completing the online learning and positive outcomes for their team.

Promoting community participation

Peer-led and co-designed, Community & Me aimed to enhance participation in art, sport and recreational activities for families of children with developmental delay and disability from birth to 14 years. Two national family surveys attracted 289 responses, where parents and carers shared their children's current and desired participation in these activities, barriers to inclusion and how communities can be more welcoming.

To our knowledge, the questions were unprecedented on a national level. At the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) 2024 National General Assembly, councillors acknowledged the survey's

potential to guide future inclusion plans.

As a part of the National Family Survey, PhotoVoice was designed to enable children with disability or developmental delay to express their likes and dislikes in the community through photography. Parents who did the activity in a PhotoVoice workshop with their child reported increased engagement, bonding and many other positive outcomes.

An Inclusion Visioning Kit for organisations to access and enhance their inclusive services was trialled by young people with disabilities in an initial user experience study. The positive feedback and insights received will guide further development. More PhotoVoice workshops are planned.

727

ONLINE COURSE
PARTICIPANTS

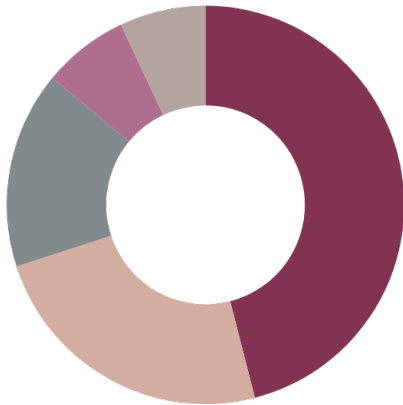
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CHILDREN INCLUDED IN
SURVEY

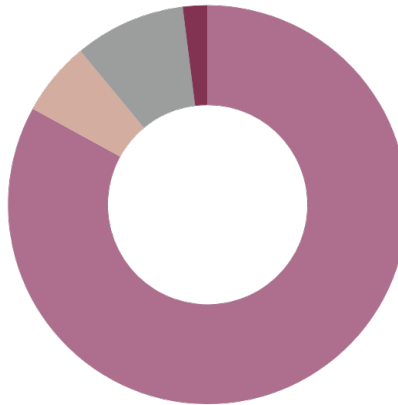
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PHOTOVOICE
PARTICIPANTS

Our year at a glance



Income



Expenditure



Staff

In 2023–2024 our income was a total of \$3,599,352 comprising:

- NDIS revenue – 46%
- ILC grant funding – 24%
- Preschool funding – 16%
- Start Strong Pathways – 7%
- Other grants & revenue – 7%

Plumtree is a non-government, registered charity.

In 2023–2024 our expenditure was \$3,677,610 comprising:

- Employee costs – 83%
- Service delivery costs – 6%
- Admin/occupancy costs – 9%
- Project expenses – 2%

Financials for the 2023–2024 period were audited by Chartered Accountants Meoli and Co and are available from Plumtree by request.

52 total staff

10 speech pathologists

9 occupational therapists

5 teachers

4 physiotherapists

6 educators

3 behaviour specialists

5 peer workers

1 therapy aides

8 office support staff

1 project managers

Our passionate and culturally diverse team share a commitment to helping families achieve their goals.

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



Service snapshot

1,018 children and their families supported by Plumtree including:

142 NDIS families

80 preschool children

796 participants in

- » **Playgroups**
- » **Workshops & courses**
- » **Sponsored Now & Next**
- » **Peer groups**

2,771 attendances over 361 sessions. Some free programs, such as courses, Sponsored Now & Next and Music Together comprised multiple sessions.

Our team also connected with hundreds of families at The Magic Yellow Bus playgroup.



Workshops & playgroups

Child development: toilet independence, school readiness, learning and play

Let's Talk About...: on advocacy, supporting children and building relationships

Explorers Play: a playgroup for babies and children under 3 years

Music Together: a playgroup for communication, interaction and musical fun

Magic Yellow Bus partnership: Plumtree team supporting families at Inner West mobile playgroup

PhotoVoice: Connecting with your child through photography and having fun!



Courses & support groups

Circle of security: strengthening child-parent relationships

Tuning into kids: guiding children's emotional development

Now & Next: skills for lasting positive outcomes for the entire family

MyTime and Vietnamese MyTime: an informal gathering to unwind, socialise and share information

The above are just some examples of our programs. Learn more on our [Events](#) calendar.



Plumtree is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation that helps families thrive.

Trusted for over 30 years, we provide free centre-based playgroups and online parent education workshops. We also provide therapies and support for children aged birth to 8 years with a disability or developmental delay and their families. At Plumtree Preschool, children of all abilities and cultural backgrounds learn together and begin to understand the value of inclusive communities.

Our award-winning, evidence-based programs and resources help families take control of their own learning and achieve positive outcomes.

Plumtree's passionate, culturally diverse team of specialists work from the heart in a caring environment where families feel respected and informed.

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



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