



2021: Our year in review



In 2021, Plumtree's services successfully supported families with and without NDIS funding. Our community projects were well received by parents, professionals and researchers.

Creating a bright future

Therapy is just a part of what we do. Plumtree's preschool, free parent education programs and playgroups support all children and their families to thrive.

Plumtree's services in 2020–2021 delivered positive outcomes for all family members.

Free programs

Our workshops and courses in English and other languages included parent coaching, toilet training and transition to school. Workshops on getting the most from the NDIS covered topics such as activating and implementing a plan, self-managed funding and renewing a plan.

Our Music Together Online playgroup, run by early childhood music specialist Dr Amanda Niland, encouraged children to communicate, get creative and explore musical instruments, dance and song.

"I now know what to do for the NDIS review meeting to get the best possible outcome for my son."

Plumtree Preschool

At Plumtree Preschool, children of all abilities and cultural backgrounds learned together and began to understand the value of inclusive communities. Twenty places and a 1:4 staff-to-child ratio let us provide more individual support to extend a child's skills, love of learning and curiosity.

The preschool was open during the COVID lockdown, but we also provided a [play-based online program](#) for children who stayed home, and sent out packages of fun activities. They helped to continue learning and engagement with our educators, and made the children's transition back to preschool easier.



172

SESSIONS FOR
FREE PROGRAMS

490

PARTICIPANTS FOR
FREE SESSIONS

35

CHILDREN ENROLLED
IN PRESCHOOL



NDIS services

Every family of a child with a disability and delay begins at a different place, but they need a vision for the future. When they start at Plumtree, a welcome visit connected them to a peer worker with lived experience. Parents and peer workers used Pictability, a fun visioning tool developed in-house, to immediately create goals for the entire family and plan practical steps to achieve them.

"When we were first asked to think of a vision for our child, we didn't know what it meant or where to start. Pictability was ingenious and helped us with visioning and setting goals in a very natural way."

Our Board

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

The Plumtree board congratulates the team for their dedication and continuing to work with families online to deliver great outcomes. It's been a challenging year and we are proud of your achievements.
Nick Walter,
Chair of Board

See our [calendar](#) to find out about and register for workshops, playgroups and events.

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

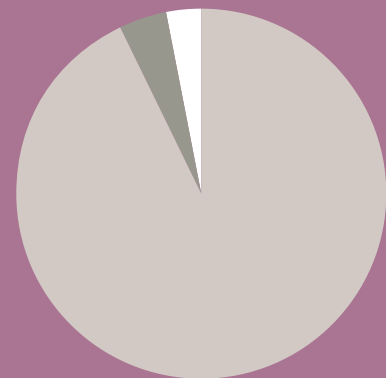
Pictability is an innovative approach for setting goals and a positive vision for children and families. Visually based, it identifies new possibilities through a fun, creative experience. You decide the goals that reflect your family's concerns and priorities.

"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."

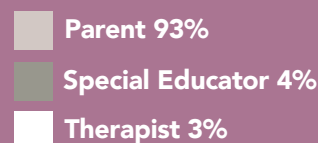
Sylvana Mahmic CEO Plumtree

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."

183

PICTABILITY SESSIONS
DELIVERED

33%

CALD FAMILIES IN
FREE SESSIONS

Now & Next: growth and impact

Plumtree's innovative program continues to transform the lives of families in Australia and overseas



A first of its kind in Australia and evidence-based, Now & Next helps parents achieve positive outcomes for the whole family. In 2021, the Australian Government funded the award-winning program for families not connected to the NDIS.

Run by parents with training and lived experience in disability, Now & Next shows that peer networks and peer workers are a new resource for the future.

The program's potential extends beyond supporting children with disability or developmental delay: its strategies and positive approach can transform families of children who are not eligible for NDIS funding.

An ILC grant enabled a [free Now & Next program](#) to inform and empower these families towards leading a good life and better wellbeing.

Nurturing leadership

Now & Next nurtures new generations of leaders. Beyond guiding their families, alumni have

gone on to establish organisations or work in government to champion people with disability.

44 Now & Next facilitators have been trained since 2015. During 2021, we developed a new program for parents who wanted to learn family leadership skills but not become facilitators.

Positive outcomes

The program continues to thrive, with eight groups held for NDIS-funded families in 2021. Read our [blog](#) to find out more and download the 2020 Global Benchmark Analysis presentation by peer worker and research analyst Mogi Bayasgalan.



668

N&N PARTICIPANTS
SINCE 2015

22

2021 PARENT LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

56

FREE NOW & NEXT
PARTICIPANTS

Sharing expertise with communities

Our collaborations with professionals and families deliver valuable insights and skills



Exploring family leadership

Therapists are important, but families are ultimately in charge of building a good life. Plumtree hosted an IIDL workshop for peer workers, other professionals and families of children with disability or developmental delay on [activating family leadership during early childhood years](#).

Messages of hope upon diagnosis and connection to a peer-led service can be life-changing for families. Peer supports nurture leadership values, and are accessible regardless of NDIS funding. They complement therapists and other professional services by establishing an authentic connection to help in areas such as emotional support and sharing practical information.

Guiding meaningful play

Plumtree developed About Play, a six-episode webinar series on engaging with children during play for positive developmental and learning outcomes. Each episode focuses on a play experience that children enjoy at home and in early childhood education settings. During the experiences, a panel of early childhood teachers explain the learnings that are happening.

The [About Play videos](#) are on YouTube and have received over 7,000 views.

Plumtree Children's Services supported playgroups have been funded through the NSW Department of Education's Start Strong Pathways program.

Enhancing inclusive libraries

Libraries in over ten Local Government Areas are participating in the ongoing [Libraries as Community Connectors](#) pilot. Feedback has been positive and several LGAs enrolled a third group of staff after experiencing the program's benefits.

An online course launched for participants and additional learning modules are under development. Acclaimed author and illustrator Donna Rawlins was commissioned for a children's book to be distributed to libraries. The team is working with several libraries to move their early childhood programs online and provide mentoring by Plumtree's parent peer workers and therapists.

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PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED
IIDL WORKSHOP

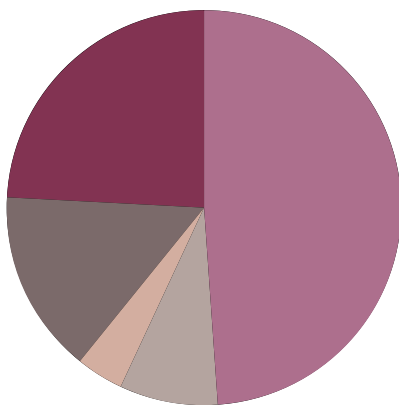
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PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED
WEBINAR SERIES

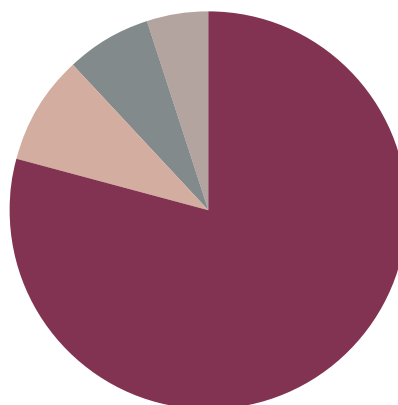
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LIBRARY STAFF
ENROLLED IN PILOT

Our year at a glance



Income



Expenditure



Staff

In 2020–21 our income was a total of \$4,854,703 comprising:

- NDIS income – 49%
- Community services – 8%
- DEC ECEC preschool – 4%
- Other grants & revenue – 15%
- JobKeeper & cash flow boost payments – 24%

Plumtree is a non-government, registered charity. This was our third full year of operation under the NDIS.

In 2020–21 our expenditure was \$4,111,461 comprising:

- Employee costs – 80%
- Service delivery costs – 9%
- Admin costs – 7%
- Project expenses – 5%

Financial records for the 2020–21 period were audited by Chartered Accountants Meoli and Co and are available by request from Plumtree.

75 total staff

13 speech pathologists

12 occupational therapists

2 teachers

1 family worker

3 physiotherapists

6 educators

6 behaviour specialists

12 peer workers

8 therapy aides

2 office support staff

6 managers

4 project managers

Our passionate and culturally diverse team share a commitment to helping families achieve their goals. Plumtree staff speak 14 languages.

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



Children



Parents & carers



Free programs

305 children and their families supported by Plumtree

217 NDIS

21 playgroups

35 Plumtree Preschool

15 The Nest

17 other

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

eBook resource

Our community of professionals, peer workers and families are working on a 'Resources for supporting your child' eBook series. View [the first volume](#), which collects the About Play videos with new material.

490 family members or carers attended our free programs

1,413 total attendances*

Families are the key decision makers for their child. We create opportunities to share knowledge and skill amongst all families and staff. During the past year, workshops were held face-to-face and online.

60 free programs held for families*

172 sessions included:

- » Workshops
- » Free Now & Next
- » Family conference
- » Courses
- » Support groups
- » Music Together

Working and learning together

The best outcomes are achieved when families and professionals work together. To improve our services, we introduced an evidence-based survey system at the beginning and end of our sessions. Feedback from the short surveys helps us deliver higher quality programs, and enables families to get the most from their time with us.

From a snapshot of 521 NDIS sessions, over 83% of families gave high scores for all criteria with averages of:

- » Relationship with therapist – 9.7 (out of 10)
- » Goals and topics worked on – 9.6 (out of 10)
- » Therapist's approach and methods – 9.6 (out of 10)
- » Overall – 9.5 (out of 10)

*Some programs, such as courses, Free Now & Next and Music Together comprised multiple sessions.



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

Trusted for over 30 years, we provide therapies and support for children aged birth to 8 years with a disability or developmental delay and their families. Our free online and centre-based playgroups and parent educational programs support all 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.



**Phone: 02 9572 8840
Fax: 02 9011 7077
Email: info@plumtree.org.au**

**Yabsley Ave Jarvie Park
Marrickville NSW 2204
Plumtree Children's Services
ABN 62 664 994 050 • CFN 11220.**