



Stronger Together

Annual Report 2025



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Cover image: Sam Forster, *Untitled (detail)*, 2024. Pencil, ink on paper. Courtesy of the artist and Arts Project Australia.

Noah's Ark Inc. acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

01

Welcome & Strategic Overview



Our Vision, Mission & Values

At Noah's Ark, we believe in building a future where every child can belong, learn and thrive.

Our mission is to support children with disabilities and developmental delays—and their families—to achieve meaningful outcomes through inclusive, evidence-based services.

We are Stronger Together. This theme reflects our belief in the power of collaboration—with families, educators, communities and each other.

Our work is shaped by our values:

- **Respect**
We listen, collaborate and value every voice.
- **Kindness**
We lead with empathy, compassion and care.
- **Optimism**
We focus on strengths and believe in potential.
- **Quality**
We strive for excellence and continuous improvement.

These values guide our everyday actions and reflect our personality:

- **Friendly**
- **Sincere**
- **Open-minded**
- **Reliable**

Together, we make a lasting difference.

Year in Review

92%

of surveyed families said they were happy overall with our services

96,323

Total hours of support

Number of children supported by program

3,901

Everyday Learning and Therapy

879

Preschool Field Officer Program

238

Kindergarten Inclusion Support



Noah's Ark have been part of our family for 11 years. We value and trust Noah's Ark. It has been amazing with our daughter and family.

— Noah's Ark Family

President's Report



Leadership in Early Intervention, inclusive practice, and family-centred support remain central to Noah's Ark's identity.

Our organisation continues to make a significant impact supporting the lives of children with disabilities and additional needs, their families, and the communities in which we all live and learn.

The past year has brought opportunities and challenges.

The operating environment remains complex, with uncertainty around Foundational Supports and ongoing changes in NDIS policy and funding.

Despite these pressures and complexities, Noah's Ark's response has been one of agility, innovation and integrity. All the while we remain focused on our mission.

Our ongoing advocacy for the introduction of targeted Foundational Supports, as recommended in the NDIS Review, includes the following key messages:

- These supports must recognise the role of the whole family and support inclusion in community settings; and
- A return to a more family and community-oriented model of service is essential.

We remain active in consultations about future services and believe any new approach must incorporate the Key Worker model, which Noah's Ark pioneered.

This year we were honoured to participate in the Victorian Department of Education's Disability Inclusion Research initiative alongside Deloitte and the Australian Council for Educational Research. This has reaffirmed our commitment to inclusive children's services and highlighted the expertise within our organisation.

We are also continuing our commitment to bridging the gap between policy, research and practice through introducing the Embedded Learning Support approach to Australia, which is an evidence-based model that supports children with disabilities in early learning settings.

Our rural and regional teams continue to strengthen local partnerships through their work with schools and preschools. This enhances our impact alongside programs such as Strengthening Parent Support, as well as Communities for Children.

As a Board we remain focused on effective governance and strategic oversight.

I acknowledge our Chief Executive Officer John Forster for his visionary leadership across 25 years and thank our new Chief Operating Officer Penny Callaghan and the Corporate Services Team for their growing contributions.

To all Noah's Ark staff—thank you. Your professionalism, empathy and dedication are the foundation of our work.

We look to the future with optimism and a renewed commitment to building a more inclusive society where every child can thrive. Thank you for your support.

Vikki Morris

Noah's Ark President

“

To all Noah's Ark staff—thank you. Your professionalism, empathy & dedication are the foundation of our work.

CEO's Report



Our purpose is clear: to shape a future in which every child can belong and learn, and every family feels supported to raise a child.

As we navigate change, and proudly continue our legacy, we do so with our purpose in mind.

We remain a key contributor to the development of services for children with disabilities and developmental delays across Victoria, NSW and the ACT.

Since our founding in 1971 as a toy library for children with disabilities, we have grown to provide a comprehensive approach to support children and families, employing over 300 skilled staff working with more than 3,900 clients annually.

At the heart of our work is the Key Worker model, where our team of Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Teachers and Psychologists deliver family-centred and routines-based therapy.

By embedding therapeutic goals into everyday home and community activities we empower families to naturally integrate developmental learning and achieve meaningful outcomes.

● **330**
skilled staff employed

● **3,901**
clients supported annually

We use tools including the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure and annual surveys to ensure continuous improvement and regularly receive very positive feedback.

Inclusion remains central to our mission.

Alongside the Key Worker model, which includes working in Early Childhood Education and Care, our Preschool Field Officers enable children with complex needs to engage alongside peers in mainstream kindergartens. Our Inclusion Coaching and Meaningful Inclusion professional development series provide evidence-based strategies to embed inclusive practice.

Innovation continues with the Embedded Learning Support pilot developed with Massey University and the University of Florida, alongside resources such as the Child Agency Toolkit and My Child's Choices workshops, which place children at the centre of decisions and support the development of independence. These initiatives reinforce our leadership in shaping inclusive approaches at state and national levels.

We have continued engagement with First Nations communities and support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The 2024–25 year has been one of continued investment in our people, systems, and structures.

We prioritised both workforce development through our biennial

Staff Forum and staff wellbeing by introducing a broad range of benefits and a new Enterprise Agreement to ensure a skilled, engaged workforce.

Our contribution to the design of Foundational Supports demonstrate our commitment to inclusion, family capability and community partnership.

We remain a strong advocate for families and high-quality services for all children, evidenced by contributing to consultations on the changes to the NDIS, as well as the development of Foundational Supports and inclusive educational programs and policy.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, families and partners who make this possible and I thank the Board for its leadership and support at this important time.

John Forster
Noah's Ark Chief Executive Officer

“
The 2024–25 year has been one of continued investment in our people, systems, and structures.”

Strengthening Relationships From the Start

Just as the crucial topic of attachment remained a focus across the year past, so too did a vision for future learning opportunities for Early Childhood Intervention professionals.

According to Noah's Ark board member and Developmental Psychologist Dr Tim Moore (2024), developing a secure attachment to a responsive caregiver is central to the development, wellbeing and participation of children.

Noah's Ark Senior Manager Services Dr Stacey Alexander said children with a disability or developmental delay were significantly less likely to develop a secure attachment than children without a disability and are almost twice as likely to develop a disorganised attachment.

Additionally, Alexander et al. (2018) found the majority of Early Childhood Professionals did not learn about attachment in their undergraduate training, and many were not confident to address attachment concerns in their work.

Alexander et al., (2022) then explored how these professionals could support the attachment security of children with a disability or developmental delay within the context of best practice.

● The results?

Many practical strategies that Early Childhood Intervention professionals—from any discipline or level of experience—could use within their Key Worker role.

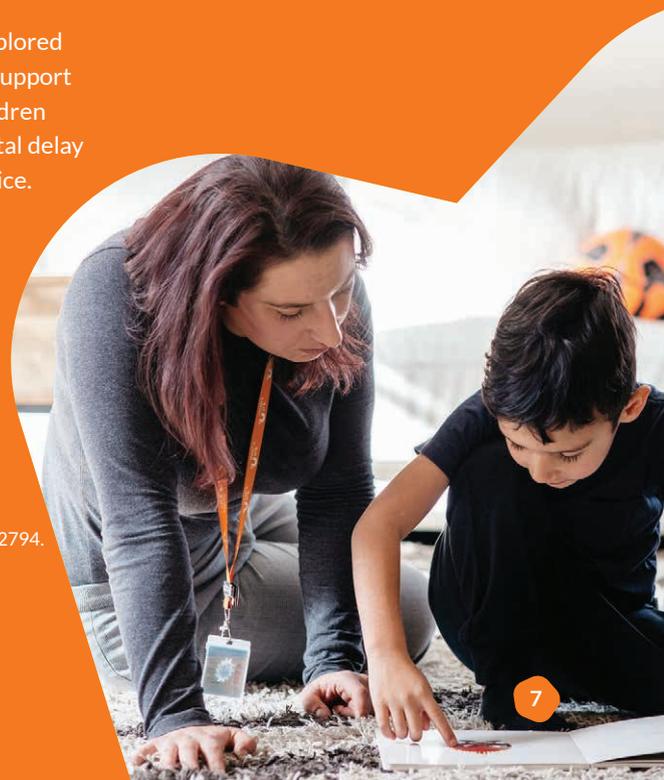
● Stay tuned.

Publication of a book to support professionals to understand the what, why and how of attachment-focused ECI is due in early 2026 and there are plans to develop online training too.

Alexander, Stacey & Frederico, Margarita & Long, Maureen. (2018). Attachment and Children with Disabilities: Knowledge and Views of Early Intervention Professionals. *Children Australia*, 43, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cha.2018.38>.

Alexander, Stacey & Frederico, Margarita & Long, Maureen. (2022). Improving Attachment Security in Early Childhood Intervention: A Framework From Constructivist Grounded Theory. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 45, 105381512211427. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10538151221142794>.

Moore, T.G. (2024). Core Care Conditions for Children and Families: Implications for policy and practice. CCCH Working Paper No. 6. Parkville, Victoria: Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute. <https://doi.org/10.25374/MCRI.26065597>.





02

Stronger Together: Our Purpose in Action



What we do & How we do it

We support children with disabilities and developmental delays—and their families—to build skills, confidence and connection.

Our services include:

- Therapy
- Early Childhood Intervention
- Inclusion support
- Professional development for educators

We work in homes, early learning settings and communities, using the Key Worker model to embed goals into everyday routines. Families are at the centre of everything we do, and our approach is practical, inclusive and evidence-based.

Together, we help children thrive and communities grow stronger.

Year in Review



19 Teams

Across VIC, NSW & ACT

96,323

Total hours of support

3.4 Years

Average years spent with Noah's Ark

- **Bundoora**
Clients: 99
Support Hours: 3,589
- **Casey/Cardinia**
Clients: 879
Support Hours: 2,206
- **Craigieburn**
Clients: 7
Support Hours: 304
- **Frankston**
Clients: 54
Support Hours: 3,164
- **Geelong**
Clients: 141
Support Hours: 7,040
- **Heidelberg & Outer East**
Clients: 184
Support Hours: 7,791
- **Horsham**
Clients: 26
Support Hours: 1,466
- **Inner East & South**
Clients: 133
Support Hours: 8,110
- **Maidstone**
Clients: 141
Support Hours: 5,330
- **Melton**
Clients: 57
Support Hours: 2,718
- **Middle Murray**
Clients: 108
Support Hours: 6,537
- **Morwell**
Clients: 63
Support Hours: 2,458
- **Springvale**
Clients: 97
Support Hours: 4,319
- **Wyndham**
Clients: 132
Support Hours: 4,906
- **ACT**
Clients: 52
Support Hours: 3,065
- **Albury-Wangaratta**
Clients: 187
Support Hours: 7,038
- **Bairnsdale**
Clients: 99
Support Hours: 4,069
- **Ballarat**
Clients: 30
Support Hours: 1,294
- **Bendigo**
Clients: 207
Support Hours: 9,649

Best Practice at Heart of all That Matters

Vital.

When we consider this sole word, it conjures meanings of something that is essential, and yet alive and bursting with energy—just like a beating heart is vital.

It's also the word Noah's Ark Senior Manager, Services, Dr Stacey Alexander selected to describe the Noah's Ark Practice Principles.

"Best practice is a non-negotiable—for us the Practice Principles are more important than anything else," Dr Alexander said.

"We are not here to make a profit, we are here to provide high-quality services to families and so those best-practice principles are central to everything that we do.

"The entire organisation is geared around helping our staff to provide best-practice services."

In 17 years with Noah's Ark, Dr Alexander has also spent more than a decade presenting nationally and internationally at early childhood conferences on the Key Worker role and, for the past eight years, on how Early Childhood Intervention professionals can improve the attachment security of children with a disability or developmental delay.

She was also the lead author of the Key Worker book and online course.

"To me, Noah's Ark's dedication to providing best practice for families is the reason why most of us are working here," she said.

"It comes before anything we do, and it's been something we have continued to work on to improve our services and to consult heavily with families around their experience of our services so that we can keep making them better and better."

It's this consultation with families that is a driving force of all the work that happens at Noah's Ark and it's where the Noah's Ark Key Worker project has its roots.

"The primary practice principle that has always united the work at Noah's Ark has been around family-centred practice," Dr Alexander said.

"It's always about putting families at the very centre of things—so, the most important thing in a child's life—and us doing what we can to enhance their experience, confidence and capacity in supporting their children."

Magic in Everyday Tools

There was a little bit of magic about when Amelia Redman discovered the natural beauty in the everyday—and her Speech Pathology 'bag of tricks' was nowhere to be seen.

Relatively new to Noah's Ark at the time, the Albury-based Speech Pathologist was shadowing a colleague to an in-home session, watching them collaborate with a family to use resources already in that environment.

"This is when it hit me—the magic wasn't in what I brought into the environment—it was in what was already there," she said.

"It was empowering for the child and their family.

"If you're anything like me, you've probably walked into a session, feeling fully prepared with your carefully packed 'bag of tricks'—all the tools you're confident will keep the child engaged. It's comforting, right?"

You've got everything you could possibly need, and you're ready to dive in."

But what if you don't need those tools and toys? What if the best tools are already there, in a home or preschool, already part of their routines and environments?

"I'll be honest: adapting to new environments without our usual kit can feel a little unsettling," Amelia said.

Here's the good news: what families already have often is more than enough to support and enhance a child's engagement and participation in the session.

"It also focuses on not only a strengths-based approach and uses a child's interests—and we know that children learn when they're interested and motivated," she said.

"I reflected on the beauty of this approach: its naturalness. The child didn't need to adjust to anything new

or unfamiliar, and the family already had access to what was being used in the session. This 'bagless' approach, combined with an evidence-based, routines-based framework, empowers the family and supports the transfer of skills into their everyday environment.

"In this approach, the family becomes the primary teacher for their child, and the therapeutic process shifts from being about what I bring into the home to how we use the child's everyday environment to promote learning and skill development."

What Does it Mean to be a Key Worker?

When people are thinking about starting the Noah's Ark Key Worker online course, they often ask—what does the term Key Worker mean?

The Key Worker model involves one professional becoming the primary point of contact for a family adapting to having a child with a disability or developmental delay.

When thinking about how to describe this role in a nutshell, it's valuable to consider the work of Dr Stacey Alexander.

Stacey was the original author of the online course and spent time researching the role and the meaning in the Australian context.

She said: "The Key Worker model involves support to the family; using the skills and knowledge from the Key Worker's own discipline, their transdisciplinary skills, the skills of their team and their capacity to provide consultation support to children's services."

One way to think of the Key Worker is as the conduit from the team to the family and child.

This person takes the lead role in supporting the child and family with strategies to work on that will enhance the child's potential. The Key Worker is the main or primary therapist who works with the family. This does not mean that the family will not see other people or members of the team, but having a primary therapist ensures a continuity of support.

Our own research into the role at Noah's Ark (Alexander & Forster, 2012) informs us that: "The Transdisciplinary Key Worker model extends the role of the ECI professional to become both the primary contact for the family and the main person working with the family on extending the child's learning opportunities."

To be in a Key Worker role, a worker needs to draw on their own professional background as a core element to the role. But some of the other skills that are discussed in the online course that support therapists and teachers to become a Key Worker include:

- Considering how to provide emotional support to the child and the family;
- Looking at how we deliver information and advice which enables families to navigate services, understand professional terminology and access resources;
- What tools we use to identify and address both family and child needs;
- Support to develop an understanding of the role of advocacy and how we can support both families and children to develop advocacy skills; and
- What to consider when offering support in service co-ordination.

The Key Worker is a linking piece in the puzzle of working in a family-centred way with families.

One way to think of the Key Worker is as the conduit from the team to the family and child.

03

Supporting Families, Educators & Communities

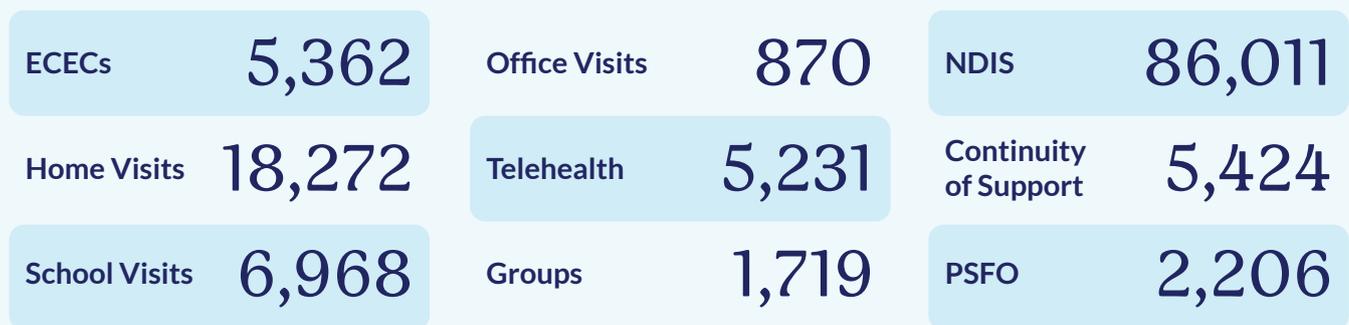


Our Impact

Who we work with



Hours of support breakdown



“ Our son wouldn’t be able to say what he is feeling without the support from all of our Key Workers throughout our time. He loves the care and guidance that is offered with every visit.

– Noah’s Ark Family

“ My child has built a very strong relationship with his worker and that has helped my child have the confidence to try new things and push limits in a comfortable way.

– Noah’s Ark Family

External contracts

As of start of Term 3 2025

Contract Type	Number of Contracts	Services Supported	Total Revenue
Supported Playgroup	1	1	\$679
School Readiness Funding	4	8	\$35,786
School	11	11	\$264,551
Other	1	1	\$28,245
	17	21	\$329,261

Language support



Family survey results

Q12. What are the three things you value most about the services provided by Noah's Ark?



Best Practice Casts a Strong Reflection

Educators

Kindergarten teachers at the coalface of supporting children and families are ideally placed to make a positive impact on inclusion.

But who builds the capacity of these teachers so they can achieve goals, plus build their skills and confidence so that this ongoing connection with families—and inclusion—remains front and centre?

Enter Noah's Ark Preschool Field Officers (PSFOs), who are beneficiaries of the organisation's commitment to using evidence-based coaching and mentoring frameworks.

Noah's Ark Operations Manager Inclusion, Sarah Denholm said capacity-building Early Childhood teachers to support inclusion in their services is always front and centre for the PSFO team and all Noah's Ark staff.

"We recognise it is the teachers and educators who are working day-in and day-out with the children and have the ongoing connections with the family—they are in a key role to have a positive impact on inclusion," Sarah said.

"So, our support is geared towards the teachers feeling as confident and skilled as possible to do this important work."

Sarah said there were a range of frameworks in use with one of these being supporting the learning and development of all staff, including Noah's Ark PSFOs and allied health professionals, to develop coaching skills to then build the capacity of teachers working with children and families.

"Noah's Ark has built internal structures and processes to offer evidence-based supports to develop coaching skills in the form of workshops, one-to-one support from practice coaches, mentoring and peer group case discussions as well as practice reflection," she said.

"It is part of our culture at Noah's Ark to be deeply committed to continual improvement to build the capacity of our staff, who then go out and build the capacity of the Early Childhood education and care teams they are supporting."

Sarah said this includes many opportunities for staff to participate in planned opportunities to pause and engage in reflective practice and consider what's working well and what they might like to try differently.

Voice of Family

Families

In Bendigo, we're proud to partner with Communities for Children to amplify family voices. We've worked with Karen and Aboriginal families through playgroups, yarn sessions and cultural training. Families share their stories in a Lived Experience Project, helping shape future services. This work builds trust, celebrates diversity and ensures families feel heard and supported in their communities.

Parentzone Gippsland

Families/Communities

Parentzone Gippsland runs two weekly playgroups at our Morwell office, using Smalltalk strategies to support parents of children aged 0–5. Families learn new ways to connect with their children through play. The space is welcoming and practical, and feedback from families and Anglicare staff has been overwhelmingly positive. It's a great example of collaboration that benefits everyone involved.

Play Connect+ at Wyndham

Families/Communities

Play Connect+ is now running weekly at our Wyndham office. This supported playgroup offers families a safe and inclusive space to connect and play. Staff are helping families access the program and build relationships with local services. It's a simple but powerful way to promote inclusion and strengthen community ties.

MyTime at Heidelberg

Families/Communities

Down Syndrome Victoria hosts MyTime at our Heidelberg Heights office each Tuesday during school terms. Four families attend each week to share experiences and support. MyTime is open to parents and carers of children under 18 who need extra care. It's a relaxed and welcoming space where families connect, learn and feel understood.

Njernda Aboriginal Co-op

Families/Communities

Our Echuca team has partnered with Njernda Aboriginal Co-op to provide speech therapy at their medical clinic and childcare centre. Over 40 children received support through 32 visits, including assessments, therapy and coaching for families and educators. We're proud to continue this work with Rural Workforce Agency Victoria funding and to show respect through visible commitments like the Uluru Statement posters in our offices.

Bendigo Team LCMS Training

Communities

Noah's Ark Bendigo joined Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Service (LCMS) for cultural competency training. Staff learned about local communities, including Karen families, and how to work respectfully across cultures. The training strengthened our relationship with LCMS and helped our team better support families in Bendigo. It was a valuable and practical learning experience.

Strengthening Parent Support Program

Families

“This is such a powerful program as it can link parents and caregivers together with others who understand the parenting journey they are on.”

Strengthening Parent Support Program (SPSP) Gippsland Team Leader, Stephanie Collins' passion for the benefits of this program are clear.

“For participants, the highlight is sharing and receiving support around experiences from other parents who are walking in similar footsteps,” she said.

SPSP is a free program, funded by the Victorian Government and provided by Noah's Ark in the Gippsland region. The program offers peer support groups, individualised support and education-information sessions in an informal setting for families to gather.

And while Noah's Ark has been delivering the program for two decades, Stephanie explained it was constantly evolving to match the changing needs of families and society.

“It is constantly evolving to match the needs of families, and we can make changes based around their feedback—we work hard to adapt to support their engagement,” Stephanie said.

“We aim to provide a place that is relaxed and supportive surrounded by like-minded people who understand.”

Parents and caregivers with a child or children aged under 18 also don't need an NDIS plan to attend, a factor which Operations Manager Services, Michelle Kenny explained complemented Noah's Ark's therapeutic services model.

“This program brings a different connection to community alongside our therapeutic services,” Michelle said.

“We have received feedback continuously over the years from families that it is so vital they don't feel alone.”

Noah's Ark facilitates the program in the Local Government Areas of Bass Coast, South Gippsland, Baw Baw and Latrobe Valley.

A new coordinator, Vanessa Darling, who has extensive experience in Early Childhood development, was appointed to the program in mid-2025.

“We're excited to see the direction that the new facilitator takes the Strengthening Parent Support Program to continue to shape its success,” Stephanie said.

The program offers peer support groups, individualised support and education-information sessions in an informal setting for families to gather.

Embedding Respect & Learning Through our Reconciliation Action Plan

Communities

Embedding the work of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group into everyday practice remained a strong focus throughout 2024–25.

We prioritised internal communications and team-based learning, with regular updates in the staff newsletter and activities that encouraged reflection and growth.

Targeted learning events were introduced, including team discussions around National Sorry Day 2025. We also shared a curated list of children's books to help Noah's Ark Professionals bring respectful and inclusive stories into their work with families.

Leadership of the RAP Working Group transitioned in 2024, with Michelle Kenny stepping into the role following Michele Totterdell's retirement. Michele's long-standing commitment laid a strong foundation, and Michelle continues to guide the group with energy and purpose.

We've made steady progress towards the goals of our second Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, launched in 2023. This includes building and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities across all sites, celebrating National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Children's Day, and developing tools to deepen understanding and show respect.

This work reflects our ongoing commitment to reconciliation and to being a good ally in our services, workplaces and communities.



04

Our People & Culture



Our People & Culture

At Noah's Ark, our people are the heart of our impact. Every day, our team brings empathy, expertise and energy to support children and families across Victoria, NSW and the ACT.

In 2025, we welcomed 59 new team members and celebrated 260 service anniversaries. We continued to invest in professional development, with 93 staff participating in coaching, mentoring and training, including our biennial Staff Forum. Our wellbeing initiatives supported connection and resilience, and our commitment to inclusion grew through cultural learning and RAP Working Group activities.

This year also marked a shift in how we support our people. We finalised bargaining for a new Enterprise Agreement to reflect our values and strengthen our employee experience.

We launched an online knowledge base to guide employees and people leaders through key HR topics and curated a refreshed suite of competitive employee benefits.

We also began shaping a new approach to performance and development—one that's strengths-based, future-focused and aligned with our purpose. And we've started the journey to replace our legacy HR and payroll systems with modern, fit-for-purpose technology.

Looking ahead, we're focused on supporting our people to embrace the opportunities presented by Thriving Kids and foundational supports.

We're also continuing to embed a speak-up culture to support both child safety and psychological safety. This means creating space for honest conversations, listening with care, and acting with integrity.

Together, we're building a workplace that's kind, inclusive and ready for the future.

Staff at Noah's Ark in 2025

59

New team members

93

Staff in coaching, mentoring & training

260

Service anniversaries celebrated



Celebrating service milestones at the 2025 Staff Forum in Melbourne

Staff overview

as at 30 June 2025

330

Total staff

184.3

Full-Time Equivalent

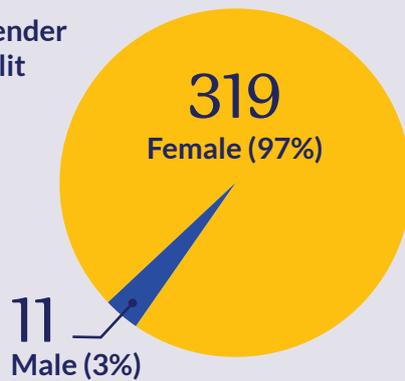
40.4 years

Average age

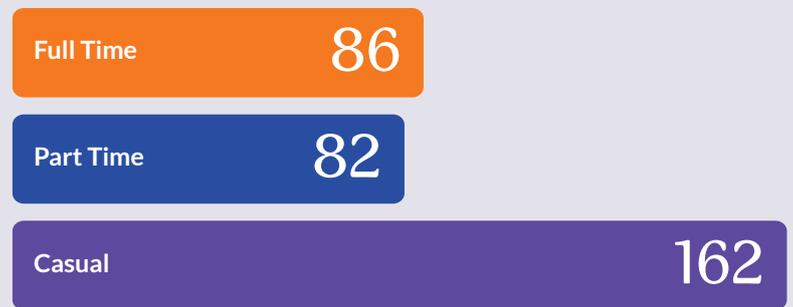
4.1 years

Average tenure

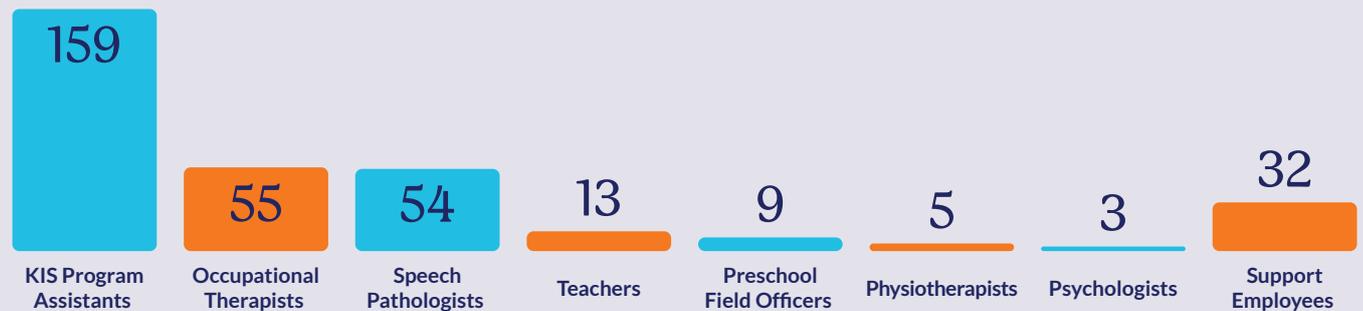
Gender split



Employment type



Breakdown by role/function



Staff wellbeing survey top results

Enthusiasm about Noah's Ark's mission	99%	Team members have my back	95%
Knowing what supports I can access	97%	Being surrounded by people who share my values	95%
Flexibility and wellbeing	97%	Technology and supports	95%
Understanding what is expected of me	95%	Challenging staff to grow	89%

John Celebrates 25 Years of Making a Difference, the Noah's Ark Way

If there was one thing Noah's Ark Chief Executive Officer John Forster could tell his younger self, it would be to "keep in perspective the nature of change".

Marking 25 years as CEO in 2025, John said it was this perspective of change you don't necessarily consider when you're in the thick of research, policy making and advocating for the inclusion of children with disabilities.

"This is because when I got involved in inclusion in 1990, that meant for the first 90 years of the 20th century children with disabilities were excluded (from the community)," he said.

"So we are actually not very far into the process, but when you're in the middle of it you don't see it like that, you're just busy doing it."

John's story with Noah's Ark began well before he became its leader. He was drawn to the organisation initially as a parent seeking a service, he said was not only progressive, but had a family-orientated approach.

Noah's Ark was founded by families, for families.

John had also previously worked with homeless youth and could see that supporting children in their early childhood was so important. It was some of these experiences which have helped inform John's 25 years at the helm.

He emphasised 'the guiding story', describing two pillars upon which the organisation was based.

The first of these was the focus on collaborating with the whole family. "The second pillar," he said, "was that Noah's Ark thought about children with disabilities' inclusion within the community.

"And that still drives all the work we do and is consistent with what the founders did, although it has adapted as the context and environment has changed around us."

Around the time John made the move to Noah's Ark, he said there was a spark of international interest in Early Childhood, driven by then US President Bill Clinton, who John said had commissioned a significant piece of research called From Neurons to Neighbourhoods.

"I was really interested in being part of that (movement) because I could see it was going to lead to some important thinking about children and so I joined Noah's Ark—and part of my interest was that Noah's Ark had this quite developed inclusion program called Play Works," he said.

"Noah's Ark had also been involved from the very get-go in the inclusion of children with disabilities through providing toys and equipment into childcare centres.





If you're going to make a difference you need to try to understand how to make the greatest difference.

"I came because there was this group of people involved in inclusion but also this group of awesome people who knew all about children's development in a unique way because they were working with children who had atypical development. It's definitely been a journey."

Throughout John's dedication to Noah's Ark, he has also acted as a leader in Early Childhood Intervention, having served as National President of Early Childhood Intervention Australia.

"The last thing I did was work on a joint statement around inclusion between Early Childhood Australia and Early Childhood Intervention Australia, which was bringing the Early Childhood fields and Early Childhood disability fields together to have a common vision," he said.

"This was big because they had always been parallel systems."

John has somehow found the time to act as a founding Director of Professionals and Researchers in Early Childhood Intervention (PRECI), alongside advising government as a member of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council and the Victorian Government NDIS Implementation Taskforce.

The research behind, and introduction of, the Key Worker model was a significant move forward—in 2012, Dr Stacey Alexander and John published their research and resource guide on the Key Worker role, with information still relevant and in use today.

"This was really taking the principle and putting it into practical application, and it got national recognition," he said.

And of course, 'making a difference' has always been his driving force.

"I've really been interested in 'what does best practice look like' and in terms of having best practice you need to create a policy context which supports that," he said.

"If you're going to make a difference you need to try to understand how to make the greatest difference.

"It has been fantastic to work internationally and nationally. I've been able to work with absolutely fabulous and committed people, and I am very grateful for that.

"The amazing thing about Noah's Ark is it still has this real integrity about it and real commitment, and there's a group of people who have been in the organisation for a long time who are really committed to its values.

"If I was going to say what I was proudest of, it would be that: to be part of an organisation which has grown like it has. It's really been very amazing."

John, together we thank you for guiding and steering Noah's Ark through the past 25 years.

Acknowledgements

Major Service Milestones

This year, we proudly celebrate team members who reached major service milestones—an incredible reflection of their dedication and impact.

Every milestone, whether listed or not, is deeply valued and contributes to the heart of Noah's Ark.

● 5 years

Bettina Barber
Joanna Broadley
Emma Creelman
Donna Filby
Stephanie Goode
Jen Grant
Lisa Lodge
Dhruti Patel
Amelia Sandlant
Francesca Smerdon
Danica Smith
Christina Solomons
Maddison Tognolini
Rebecca Turnbull
Valerie Villarosa
Isabella Whitty

● 10 years

Caitlin Devereaux
Lauren Falconer
Geraldine Gladman
Rachael Hunter
Julie McKail
Stephanie Milesi
Kate Parsisson

● 15 years

Laura Madaffari

● 25 years

John Forster

Thank you to all
who continue to
grow with us.

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this year's annual report.

Stacey Alexander
Karlie Baker
Cait Brennan
Penny Callaghan
Stephanie Collins
Jacqueline Ellis
Jo English
John Forster
Jen Grant
Suwani Kannangara
Michelle Kenny

Lisa Lodge
Amanda Lonergan
Laura Madaffari
Kylie Matuszewicz
Vikki Morris
Amelia Redman
Sue Reynolds
Carmen Shevlin
Jane Tinkler
Marcie Weiss
Ross Williamson

05

Innovation & Improvement



Measuring Quality

At Noah's Ark, we want families to see real progress—not just in reports, but in everyday life. That's why we use the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure, a tool which helps us understand how well therapy is working from the family's point of view.

Families tell us what matters most—like getting dressed, joining in at playgroup, or communicating with others. We then measure how well their child is doing in those areas and how satisfied the family feels. We check in again after therapy to see what's changed.

On average, families saw a change score of 3.13 for performance and 3.05 for satisfaction. A score of 2 or more means the family has noticed a meaningful improvement—and two-thirds of all goals reached that level.

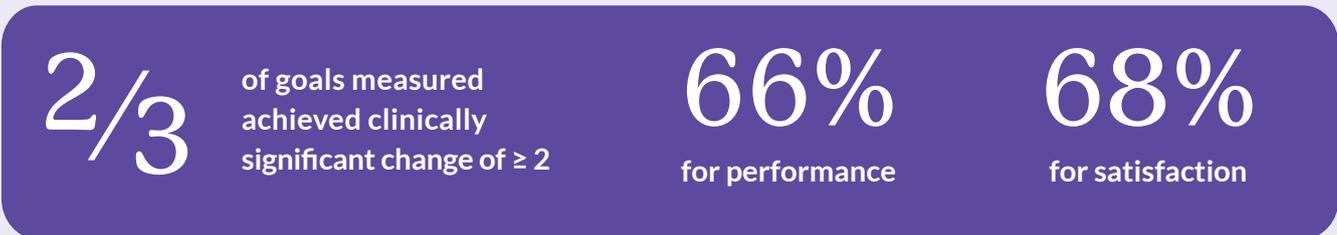
We've used this measure since 2011, making 2025 our 14th year of consistent outcome measurement. This year, we measured 6,704 individual goals across 1,784 service plans.

These results show our approach is working. Families are seeing progress in the things that matter most to them, and we're proud to keep learning, improving and delivering high-quality support.

Quality & Impact Measurement

6,704 Individual client goals were measured

1,784 Service plans



Championing Children's Rights & Agency

Noah's Ark continues to lead the way in promoting children's rights and agency. Over the past year, we've built on this work through new partnerships, sector engagement and resource development.

In November 2024, we presented a webinar with PRECI, sharing our insights into child agency in early childhood intervention. In June 2025, we spoke at the OT Australia Conference about what children want from therapy and how well we're listening. The strong interest in both events shows growing recognition across the sector that children's voices matter.

We also supported PRECI's resource development, offering feedback as part of an advisory group alongside Curtin University students. This collaboration helped shape tools that reflect real experiences and practical needs.

A major milestone was securing a \$237,826 grant from the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. This funding is helping us adapt our Child Agency Toolkit training for external audiences, with 32 fully funded courses available to NDIS providers in 2025 and 2026.

The grant also supports new resources for families and young people. We're developing a parent workbook and workshop series, with 40 sessions planned for delivery across 2025–26. A suite of online tools will be available on our website to help children and young people (aged 0–18) understand their rights and take part in decisions about their therapy and supports.

One of the most rewarding parts of this work has been co-designing resources with children and families. Their input has shaped what we create and how we deliver it, ensuring the content is clear, engaging and genuinely useful.

We're proud to keep learning from children and families and to keep advocating for their voices to be heard.

A major milestone was securing a

\$237,826

grant from the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.



Scan the QR code to find out more

Family Voices at the Heart of Our Impact

Each year, we invite families to share their experience of Noah's Ark services through our Family Outcomes Survey. In 2024–25, 140 families responded. Key findings included:

- 92% satisfaction rating.
- Strong value placed on the Key Worker role and relationship.
- Suggestions to create more opportunities for families to connect.

Governance Framework

Operating with integrity, transparency and in the best interests of children and families is at the forefront of Noah's Ark's work. This one of the driving forces of the Governance Framework.

And through this shines the organisation's commitment to high standards of governance, accountability and ethical practice to build better futures for children with disabilities and additional needs.

Noah's Ark Inc, as a not-for-profit, incorporated association, is governed by a volunteer Board of Management who bring a breadth of expertise across disability, early childhood, law, finance and community services.

The Board provides strategic direction, oversight and stewardship to ensure the organisation achieves its purpose and remains responsive to community needs.

The Board also works closely with the Chief Executive Officer and the management team to guide the direction and uphold the mission of Noah's Ark.

Noah's Ark is committed to:

- **Child safety and safeguarding:** Upholding the rights, safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people in everything the organisation does including complying with the Child Safe Standards and ensuring robust safeguarding policies and practices are in place.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Meeting obligations under relevant legislation, including the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic), the NDIS Practice Standards and Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) governance standards.
- **Ethical Leadership:** Ensuring decisions are guided by the organisation's values and mission and reflect the trust placed in Noah's Ark by families, partners and the broader community.
- **Financial Responsibility:** Managing resources effectively and transparently, with a focus on long-term sustainability and impact.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Listening to and involving families, staff, government and sector partners in shaping our services and strategy.

The governance approach is reviewed regularly to reflect evolving best practices.

Noah's Ark maintains robust systems for monitoring service quality, including family feedback mechanisms and evidence-based performance measures such as the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure. These tools inform ongoing efforts to improve outcomes for children and families.

The Noah's Ark's Enterprise Agreement supports continuous improvement through strategic planning, business objectives and fostering a learning culture. Flexible work arrangements are permitted under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), ensuring mutual benefit and legal compliance.

Noah's Ark is committed to building a skilled and responsive workforce through initiatives such as our graduate program, student placements, targeted professional development and best practice mentoring and coaching, ensuring staff are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of communities.

Noah's Ark acknowledges its history of innovation, including pioneering the Key Worker model and continues to contribute to national policy development through submissions and engagement with sector reforms such as the NDIS review.

06

Governance & Accountability



Board of Management



Vikki Morris
President

Vikki brings over 30 years experience in the technology sector across Australia and the US. She leads strategic partnerships at Splunk, a Cisco company, and is passionate about ensuring children with disabilities receive high-quality, joyful care. Vikki is also a proud Noah's Ark parent.



Campbell Thomson
Vice President

Campbell is a barrister with 30 years experience in native title, criminal and environmental law. He brings deep legal insight and a strong commitment to social justice.



Malcolm McNab
Treasurer

Malcolm is a Chartered Accountant and CFA Charterholder with 20 years experience in finance, strategy and capital markets. He holds an Executive MBA and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Robyn Briggs
Secretary

Robyn has a background in marketing and product management across Australia and the UK. She holds a Bachelor of Business (Communications) and is a Noah's Ark parent.



Fintan Magee
Board Member

Fintan is an experienced insurance broker and principal of Magee Risk Advisory. He co-founded Gallivan, Magee & Associates, later acquired by Steadfast Group.



Dr Tim Moore
Board Member

Tim is a developmental psychologist at the Centre for Community Child Health. His research has shaped early childhood policy and practice nationally and internationally.

Acknowledgement of Dr Tim Moore, Ph.D., M.A.P.S

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr Tim Moore for his remarkable contribution to Noah's Ark. Since joining the Board in 1988, Tim has been instrumental in shaping our vision and championing best practice in early childhood intervention. His expertise, leadership, and unwavering commitment have created an enduring legacy that continues to benefit children, families, and communities.

Tim resigned from the Board in May 2025.

Tim's dedication has helped position Noah's Ark as a leader in early childhood intervention and inclusion, and his influence will be felt for years to come. We thank Tim for his outstanding service and wish him every success in the future.

Reflection from Dr Tim Moore:

"Serving on the Noah's Ark Board has been both a pleasure and a privilege. Over nearly three (four?) decades, I have seen the organisation grow enormously both

in size and in professionalism, all the while maintaining a high standard of service to children and families. Noah's Ark is rightly considered a leader in the early childhood intervention and inclusion sectors, and an exemplary organisation in its support for staff and its training program. I am grateful for the commitment of my fellow Board members to providing Noah's Ark with a sound financial and management structure that have enabled it to weather difficult times. I wish Noah's Ark and all who sail in her the very best in dealing with more challenging times ahead."

Board of Management



Nancy Black
Board Member

Nancy is a theatre professional and Artistic Director of Black Hole Theatre. She has a long history with Noah's Ark and advocacy for inclusive communities.



Geoff Webster
Board Member

Geoff is a chartered accountant and Director of Webster Corporate Finance. He is a former Board President and a committed supporter of Noah's Ark.



Carolyn Wilson
Board Member

Carolyn is a teacher and Wellbeing Learning Specialist with over 30 years in education. She is a strong advocate for inclusive learning environments.



Dr Zoe McCallum
Board Member

Zoe is a Consultant Paediatrician at the Royal Children's Hospital, specialising in neurodevelopment and disability. She is passionate about helping children and families reach their goals.



Sonia Sharp
Board Member

Sonia is a Principal Consultant at Bendelta and former Deputy Secretary for Schools and Early Years in Victoria. She brings decades of leadership in education and child services.

Executive Leadership Team



John Forster
Chief Executive Officer

John has led Noah's Ark since 2000, championing inclusive, evidence-based services for children and families. He is a national leader in early childhood intervention and a passionate advocate, informed by personal experience as a parent.



Penny Callaghan
Chief Operating Officer

Penny joined Noah's Ark in 2024, bringing 30 years experience in not-for-profit leadership. She oversees operations to ensure efficient, high-quality service delivery.



Dr Stacey Alexander
Senior Manager Services

Stacey is a psychologist with over 17 years at Noah's Ark. She leads service development and staff wellbeing initiatives, and completed a PhD focused on attachment and early intervention.

Financial Summary

Profit and Loss as at 30 June 2025

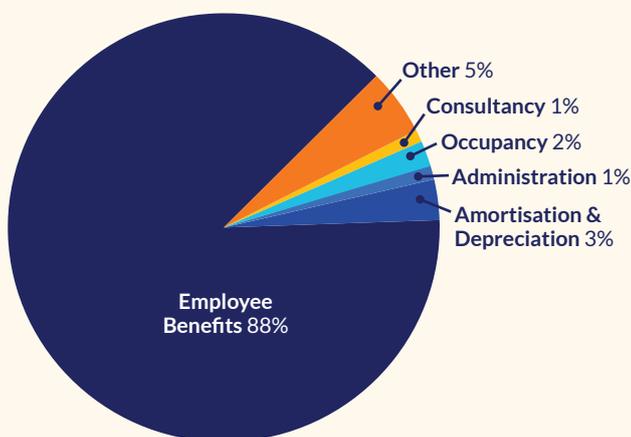
Income	2025	2024
Program Fees	11,954,422	11,695,830
Operating Grants	6,775,880	6,113,305
Training	104,751	131,032
Investment Income	571,124	535,459
Other	84,385	12,994
	\$19,490,562	\$18,488,620
Expenses		
Employee Benefits	18,840,544	17,563,652
Amortisation and Depreciation Expense	629,518	765,668
Administration Expense	199,638	338,960
Occupancy Expense	344,009	240,909
Consultancy Expense	85,150	94,968
Other Expense	1,181,960	1,223,039
	\$21,280,819	\$20,227,196
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	-\$1,790,257	-\$1,738,576
Gains on Investments	1,282,466	961,961
Comprehensive Income/(Loss)	-\$507,791	-\$776,615

In FY25, Noah's Ark reported total income of \$20.773m reflecting a year of diversified revenue streams and strategic financial management. The largest contributor again was the NDIS, generating \$11.474m, underscoring the focus on delivering high-quality services under the NDIS framework. Department of Education grants provided a further \$6.217m, reinforcing the importance of public sector partnerships in inclusive education. Other income sources included Training to the Early Childhood Sector, Classroom supports in schools and ongoing projects.

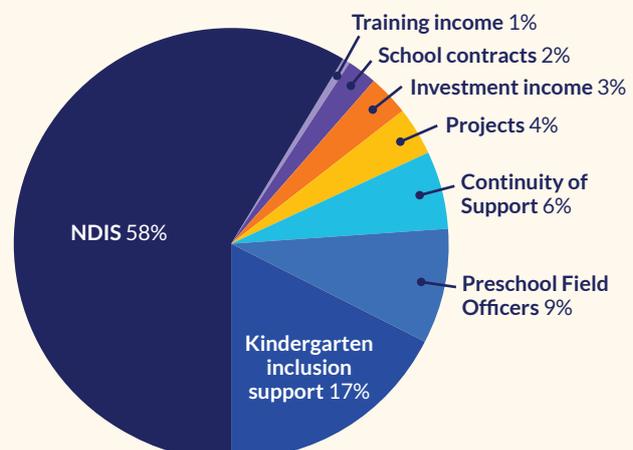
Total expenses for the year amounted to \$19.490m with the largest share allocated to Employee Benefits at \$18.840m, reflecting Noah's Ark's deep investment in its most critical asset: its people.

The organisation recorded an operating deficit of \$1.790m, reflecting ongoing financial pressures facing the sector, rising costs and funding constraints. The result demonstrates while core operations remain under pressure, the organisation is prudently managing its broader financial position by leveraging investment income and reserves to support long-term sustainability.

Breakdown of expenses



Revenue by service type



Financial Summary

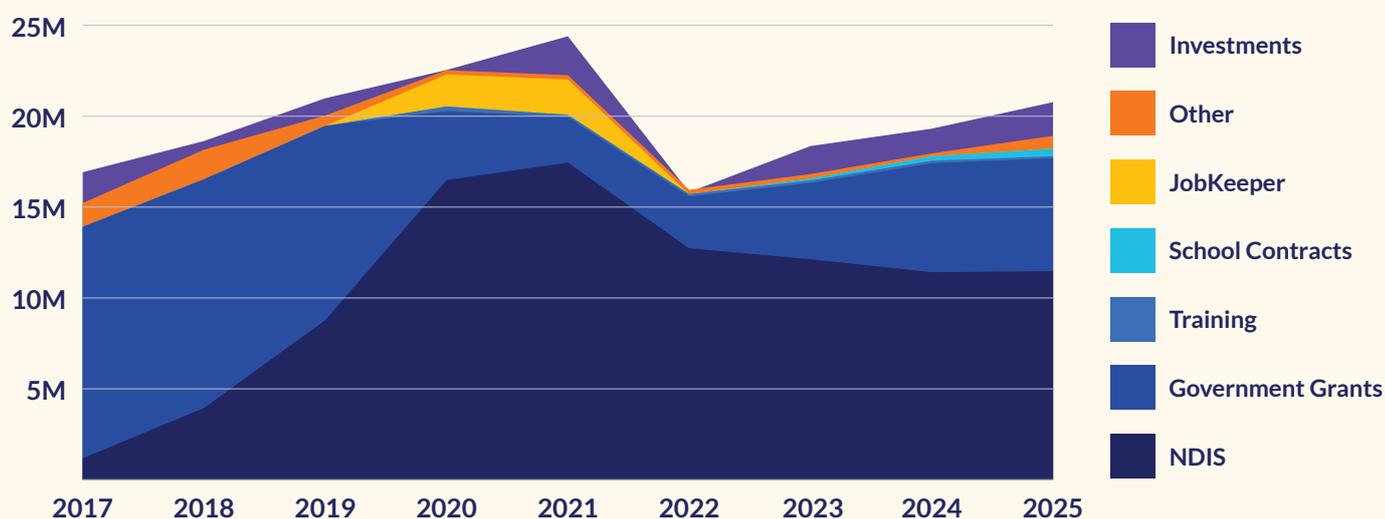
Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2025

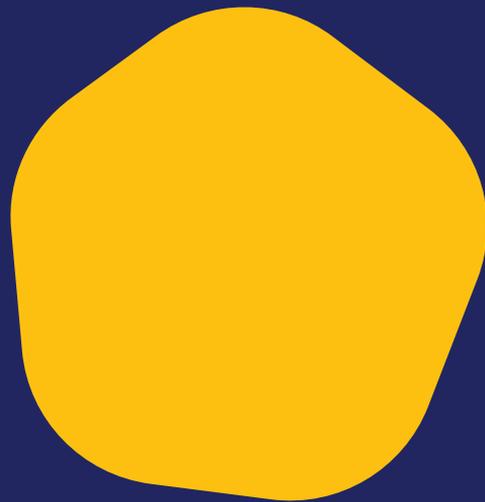
Current Assets	2025	2024
Cash/Cash Equivalents	1,632,410	930,934
Trade and Other Receivables	2,836,913	1,652,913
Other Assets	179,361	227,580
Non Current Assets		
Financial Assets	17,445,155	17,574,982
ROU Assets	1,898,607	2,372,663
Property Plant and Equipment	697,741	504,975
	\$24,690,187	\$23,264,047
Current Liabilities		
Trade and Other Payables	3,118,588	1,003,545
Provisions	2,698,710	2,438,269
Lease Liabilities	391,967	438,248
Non Current Liabilities		
Provisions	782,779	788,113
Lease Liabilities	1,815,967	2,205,905
	\$8,808,011	\$6,874,080
Total Equity	\$15,882,176	\$16,389,967

This financial year reflects continued investment in services and infrastructure, with a focus on sustaining program delivery despite financial pressures. The increase in income and assets demonstrates resilience, while the rise in liabilities and ongoing deficits highlights the importance of strategic financial management in the year ahead.

The revenue profile to 2025 (see graph below) reflects several key trends over recent years. NDIS funding experienced rapid growth from 2017 to 2020, peaking in 2021 before gradually declining and stabilising at a strong level. Government grants decreased after 2019 with the introduction of the NDIS but have slowly increased again since 2022. JobKeeper provided a temporary boost during 2020 and 2021, cushioning the impact of the pandemic. Training and school contracts have delivered modest yet steady contributions, while investment income has fluctuated, with a notable dip in 2022 before rebounding. Other income streams remained relatively stable, with a slight increase in 2025, supporting overall revenue resilience.

Revenue over time





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