

Annual Report

2024 – 2025



play
AUSTRALIA



Angourie, NSW

Play Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

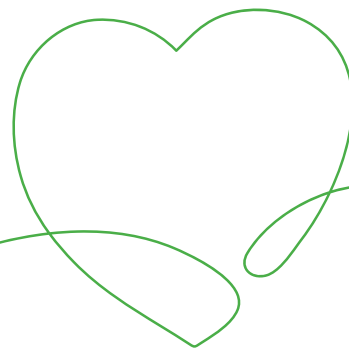
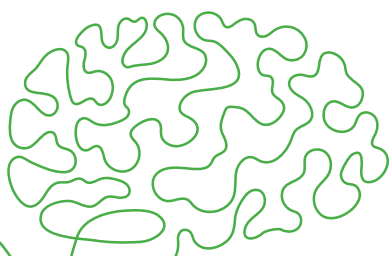
We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and present who have lived, worked and played on this land for over 60,000 years.



Bungle Bungles, WA

Contents

About Play Australia	4
Our Values	5
Our People	6
Chairperson Report	7
CEO Report	8
Major Projects and Highlights 24/25	
Workforce Development – Certificate in Playwork Practice	9
State of Play Report	10
IPA Asia Pacific Conference	11
National Position Paper – Risky Play for Younger Children	12
Professional Learning and Development	13
Our Partners and Collaborators	14
Financials	15



Our Vision

Australia is a country where every child thrives through equitable access to the health and wellbeing benefits of play within their community.

Our Mission

"Building A Healthy Australia through Play."

To build healthier, fairer communities by equipping our members and stakeholders with the knowledge, skills, and networks needed to advocate for and implement the power of play as a vital tool for prevention, equity, and community-led action.



Play Australia was formed in 1913 by a committed group of individuals who wanted to ensure all children had safe and interesting places to play.

Today, we are the peak national advocacy organisation for play in Australia drawing a cross sectoral membership of individuals, organisations, local government and businesses that share our mission and vision. We are bipartisan and work across Federal, State and Local Government as well as with Australian communities, NGOs and business to achieve our mission.

At Play Australia, everything we do is guided by one unwavering mission: to champion the right to play for every Australian. Play is enshrined as a human right in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and we recognise all human rights are indivisible from each other, with play intersecting across all areas of health, wellbeing and social inclusion in the UNCRC.

We are champions for play, driving knowledge, policy and cultural change. We empower and support communities to foster locally-led solutions, using rights based approaches, that advance physical, mental, and social wellbeing, leading to healthier, more connected communities.

Our Values

Our work is guided by 10 core values:

Collaboration: We work across sectors and systems for collective impact.

Evidence-based: We promote practices and policies grounded in research.

Empowerment: We enable members to become agents of change.

Community-led: We empower members to lead and co-design local solutions

Sustainability: We support long-term impact through education and advocacy.

Inclusivity: We welcome and represent diverse voices and experiences.

Dignity: We believe all people deserve to be treated with respect and are entitled to basic protections and freedom enshrined in our Human Rights Conventions.

Equity: We prioritise reducing inequities, ensuring all Australians benefit from play.

Prevention: We focus on solutions that improve health and wellbeing for all, through the proven benefits of play.

Integrity: We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards, and we will align our actions to our values, being accountable, responsible and transparent in our work and relationships.

“Our values inform our decision making, and we work to translate them into action every day.”

Robyn Monro Miller, AM
CEO, Play Australia



Board 2024/5

Carly Goodrich (VIC) President
Don Wark (QLD) Treasurer
Kylie Brannelly (QLD) Vice President
Kerry Logan (WA)
Andrew Reedy (WA)
Kim Moroney (NSW)
David Kutcher (Vic)



Phillip Jaffe, Member, UNCRC Committee (far right) meeting with Play Aus Board and members, July 2025



Staff

Robyn Monro Miller AM
Chief Executive Officer

Peter Curry
Special Projects

Patricia Gooley
Membership Services (March 2025-)

Joanne Thorne
Administration support (- January 2025)



Patricia, Peter & Robyn at IPA Asia Pacific Conference, June 2025

Specialist Support

Michelle Buckland Graphic Designer, Just Dandy
Paul Keogh IT Support, Leisure IT
Renan San Jose Accountant, Take Care of Books
Mick Collopy Database and website, Audienceware
Eric Townsend Auditor

Chairperson's Report 2024–2025

It is my pleasure to present this report on behalf of Play Australia for the 2024-2025 financial year—a period that has once again demonstrated the remarkable impact a small but dedicated organisation can achieve.

Our vision remains at the heart of everything we do: ensuring that every child in Australia has access to quality play opportunities. This vision guides our advocacy, informs our partnerships, and drives our commitment to championing children's right to play across the nation.

With just 1.2 EFT, Play Australia continues to punch well above its weight. Our small team has stretched every dollar to deliver programs, resources, and advocacy that reach communities nationwide. While our achievements are detailed throughout this report, I want to acknowledge the reality we face: financial struggle remains an ongoing challenge. Our team's ability to maximise limited resources is testament to their passion, creativity, and unwavering dedication to our cause.

At the helm, our CEO's invigorating energy, thought leadership, and professional vitality are matched only by her globally recognised respect. She remains the catalyst for our organisation's meaningful change, driving the forward momentum necessary to shape the national conversation for play. We celebrate and thank you, Robyn, our fearless leader.

I extend our deepest gratitude to the Victorian Government for their continued support, which has provided opportunities to deliver professional development and to produce the State of Play Report. This report was prepared and researched to provide current perspectives on play provision in Australia and will shape the future work we undertake to drive our mission. We also thank Covermore Insurers for their partnership and the collective of stakeholders who join us in our journey.

Most importantly, we recognise our members - both the organisations and individuals - whose commitment and engagement strengthen our collective voice for play.

This year has brought numerous successes documented in the following pages—from policy submissions and community engagement to resource development and stakeholder collaboration, and our growing reach of play advocates. Each achievement represents countless hours of strategic thinking and hard work from our team.



Our vision remains at the heart of everything we do: ensuring that every child in Australia has access to quality play opportunities.

The undisputed highlight of 2024-2025 was Play Australia's hosting of the Asia Pacific IPA Conference. This incredibly successful event brought together play advocates, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from across the Asia Pacific region. The conference showcased Australian innovation in play provision, fostered international connections, and elevated critical conversations about children's play rights. The positive feedback from delegates and the lasting partnerships formed demonstrate the conference's significant impact on advancing play advocacy throughout the Asia Pacific region and the importance of Play Australia's leading role.

As we look ahead, we do so with optimism tempered by realism. The challenges facing children's play opportunities—from urban planning pressures to screen time concerns—require sustained attention and resources. With the support of government, partners, and our membership community, Play Australia will continue advocating tirelessly for every child's right to play.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to another remarkable year. Your support makes our work possible and elevates play as a priority for our nation's agenda.

Carly Goodrich
Chairperson, Play Australia

CEO Report 2024–2025

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with pride at what Play Australia has achieved through collaboration, commitment, and a shared vision for elevating the importance of play across Australia.

A Year of Milestones

This year has been transformative for Play Australia. Through our partnership with Play Wales, we successfully brought playwork qualifications to Australia for the first time, creating pathways for professionals to develop specialised skills in supporting children's play. This achievement represents a significant step forward in increasing knowledge and application of a playwork approach across sectors, ensuring Australian children have access to quality play experiences across a range of environments.

The release of our first State of Play Report marked another defining moment. This groundbreaking report has given us vital evidence and insights into the current landscape of play in Australia, providing a foundation for advocacy and policy development that will serve us for years to come.

Our hosting of the IPA Asia Pacific Conference brought together play advocates, practitioners, and researchers from across the region, positioning Australia as a key player in the international play movement. The connections forged and knowledge shared during this event continue to ripple through our work.

Collaboration at the Core

The theme of collaboration has been woven throughout everything we've accomplished this year. We've strengthened partnerships with organisations across sectors, recognising that advancing play requires voices from education, health, urban planning, and community development working in unison. These partnerships have amplified our reach and increased the profile of play in conversations at local, state, and national levels.

Our international work has also continued to flourish, connecting us with play advocates globally. As a founding member over 60 years ago of the International Play Association (IPA World) we have ensured Australian perspectives contribute to worldwide discussions about children's rights and play provision through our work.

The People Behind the Progress

None of this would have been possible without the steadfast leadership of our Board, expertly guided by our Chair Carly Goodrich, and her predecessor Ali Coster. The Board's strategic vision and unwavering trust and support have been instrumental in navigating opportunities and challenges alike. They personally inspire me to be audacious in my approach to any challenge, and in doing so makes the role so much more rewarding.

I am privileged to work alongside a small but remarkably effective team. Peter Curry's continued dedication and expertise have been invaluable, and we were delighted to welcome Patricia Gooley to the team in a part time role in March as Manager, Membership Services. Patricia has brought fresh energy and perspective to our work, and together this lean team has achieved outcomes that organisations many times our size would be proud of. We also benefit from the significant expertise of contractors Paul Keogh, Michelle Buckland, Renan and Igor from Take Care of Books, and the team at Audienceware.

To our members: you are the heart of Play Australia. Your passion, advocacy, and commitment to children's right to play inspire everything we do. Thank you for your continued support, for championing play in your communities, and for believing in the power of this work.

Looking Ahead

As we move forward, we do so with momentum, with partnerships that strengthen our impact, and with a growing recognition that play is not a luxury but a fundamental right and necessity for all children. The foundations we've built in 2024-2025 position us well for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Together, we are changing the landscape of play in Australia.

Robyn Monro Miller AM
Chief Executive Officer, Play Australia



**The theme
of collaboration
has been woven
throughout
everything we've
accomplished
this year.**

Major Projects 2024-2025

Workforce Development – Certificate in Playwork Practice

Commencing in June 2024, Play Australia has been working with Play Wales to bring the Internationally renowned Playwork Practitioners course to Australia.

Play Wales are the world leaders in Playwork, and we were keen to partner with them to ensure the training we offered was international best practice. Martin King-Sheard from Play Wales delivered

the training, and we are bringing Play Wales trainers to Australia over the next 3 years while we skill up the Australian Playwork sector to be able to deliver this training.

Play Wales collaborated closely with Play Australia on this training project and in the 2024/5 financial year we trained over 106 practitioners in the playwork approach across the two Foundation and Senior Practitioner courses.

The training is cross-sectoral with a wide range of professionals joining in from playworkers to educators, social workers, teachers, occupational therapists and play space designers. A hybrid model of delivery has been used with sessions online preceding the face to face delivery.

Participants in 2024/5 were represented from 7 states and territories with delivery of the face to face component of training in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane. Our partners in providing venues for the 2 day training events, to whom we are most grateful, were Educated by Nature, Reverse Garbage, The Venny, and agleby South State School (via Australian Institute if Play) .

The intention of this collaboration has always been to upskill practitioners in the playwork approach but also to support the development of a sustainable model of playwork training delivery in Australia. Play Wales will ultimately share the training materials under a licensing agreement and provide tutor support to those delivering the courses in Australia. This model seeks to both upskill and enable the sector in Australia to develop and deliver training, based on the Welsh model, that is bespoke to the needs of the Australian play sector.



Martin King-Sheard

State of Play 2025 Report

In May 2025, Play Australia released the State of Play 2025, a 12 month project which was the first report of its kind to be undertaken in Australia about play for children and young people.



The report, authored by Robyn Monro Miller for Play Australia with funding support from Sport and Recreation Victoria, brings together comprehensive insights on the current conditions impacting children's play across the nation.

The report's methodology was extensive. Play Australia conducted a nationwide survey capturing feedback from 618 children aged 8-12 years old, alongside incorporation of parents and caregiver's perceptions gathered from the RCH 2024 poll. Significantly, 32 representatives from across Australia participated in confidential stakeholder interviews, chosen based on their work in organisations that intersect with play. Additional data was gathered from 10 parent interviews and desktop reviews of international and Australian policy frameworks.

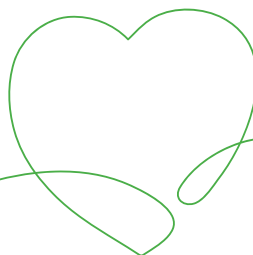
The findings revealed concerning trends. 48% of children reported not having enough time to play or hang out with friends, while one in four children reported needing improvement in the opportunities

they had to play outside. The report also found that one in two children reported not being allowed to play outside on their own or with friends.

From this consultation emerged six key themes: Recognition of Play in Government Policy and Planning, Play as a Public Health Strategy, The Role of Play in the Australian Education System, Access to Places to Play, Parental Perceptions of Play, and Investment in Play.

The report developed 31 recommendations for action that will support the development of play initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people and included eight inspiring case studies from across Australia showcasing innovative grassroots play initiatives. The report serves as a catalyst for informed policymaking and advocacy for children's right to play.

The findings revealed concerning trends. 48% of children reported not having enough time to play or hang out with friends



IPA Asia Pacific Conference on Play: Melbourne, June 25-27 2025

The inaugural IPA Asia Pacific Play Conference took place at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre from June 25-27, 2025, marking a groundbreaking moment for play advocacy across the region as delegates from 7 countries in the region participated in the 3 day event.

Hosted by Play Australia with conference management by Smart Connection Consultancy, this landmark event brought together over 250 government representatives, NGOs, educators, urban planners, health professionals, designers, and play advocates from across the Asia Pacific.

Titled **“Play: Protecting, Preserving, Promoting,”** the conference featured more than 30 speakers and attracted delegations from Singapore, Japan, India, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong (and a guest from Scotland!).

The event was structured around three key themes: Urban Planning & Design, Education & The Arts, Health & Wellbeing, and tackling contemporary challenges including climate change, public health, technology's impact, and urban design.

What set this conference apart was its innovative format. Each session was structured around a “provocation”—designed to encourage critical discussion and reflection about the intersection of play in various environments. Participants could switch between streams and choose from four provocations per session, with each featuring a play provocateur alongside experienced panellists.

The conference provided opportunities for delegates to listen to different perspectives, ask questions of play provocateurs, and share their learnings, creating foundations for strong networks at local, regional, national, and global levels. It served as a dynamic platform for thought leadership and empowerment in advocacy and engagement related to play, emphasising cross-sector collaboration. The event aimed to inspire participants through innovative approaches and evidence-based practices demonstrating play's multifaceted benefits, ultimately contributing to setting an agenda for future play advocacy and collaborations throughout the Asia Pacific region.

The conference was sponsored by Play Co, Vic Health and Coverforce Insurance Brokers- three organisations who are strong supporters of play.



Play Australia's National Position Statement on Risky Play for Younger Children

Play Australia released a landmark position statement in June 2025 that challenges Australia's current narrative around risky play for young children. The Risky Play Position Statement for Young Australian Children has united professionals from medical, educational, and playground design disciplines representing government and not-for-profit sectors across Australia in providing an authoritative voice to advocate for risky play in children's lives.

The statement, authored by Associate Professor Rachel Jones, Dr Helen Little, Dr Sue Elliott, and Dr Karen Tonge, with collaboration from over 30 experts across multiple disciplines, and partially funded through Forest Hill Grants, addresses a critical gap in Australian play provision. The Position Statement intentionally focuses on children aged birth to 8 years, recognising that the first eight years of life is a critical time for overall child development including the development of risk literacy skills, risk management skills and a healthy appetite for risk.

Central to the position statement is a specific definition of risky play that moves beyond vague descriptions. Risky play is defined as play that is exploratory and challenging with often unpredictable outcomes, is child-initiated and physically engages all the senses leading to positive learning and development outcomes. The statement identifies eight categories of risky play: play with heights, play with speed, play with dangerous tools and materials, play near dangerous elements, rough and tumble play, play away from immediate supervision of adults, play with impact, and vicarious play.

The position statement tackles three major misperceptions head-on. First, it addressed the belief that risky play is dangerous and leads to injury, clarifying that current research suggests that injury related to risky play is minimal, and even if risky play does result in minor injury, this type of play is acceptable. Second, it distinguished between risky play and unsafe play, emphasising that well-managed risky play is not unsafe—rather, unsafe play involves hazards where children's health and wellbeing are potentially at risk. Third, regarding regulations, the statement highlighted that new Standards for play spaces and equipment recognise risk-taking as an essential part of children's play and state that play spaces should be assessed through a benefit-risk lens rather than a risk-only lens.

The statement provides six key recommendations, including sharing a consistent definition of risky play, promoting risky play in all spaces and places, reconceptualising risky play through a benefit-risk approach, building knowledge and skills among adults, instigating advocacy and action, and prioritising policy shifts at national, state, and local government levels. The statement was launched at The Venny, Fitzroy, as a side event to the 2025 IPA Asia Pacific Conference, attracting 256,000 hits of social media in the first 2 weeks.



Play Australia's Professional Learning and Development: Building Capacity Across the Play Sector

Play Australia's professional learning offerings deliberately target cross-sectoral participation, recognising that quality play provision requires collaboration among early childhood educators, schoolteachers, local government planners, landscape architects, health professionals, and community advocates.

By creating learning environments where these diverse professionals can connect, Play Australia fosters the integrated approaches needed to address the complex challenges outlined in the State of Play 2025 report.

In 24/ 25 Play Australia refined and increased capacity to deliver a comprehensive professional learning and development framework that reaches practitioners, designers, educators, and advocates across Australia through multiple delivery modes including online courses, webinars, workshops, and member-exclusive learning opportunities.

Using Thinkific as a learning management system, Play Australia commenced offering an Online Learning Series featuring recorded webinars and self-paced courses covering playground design, risk-benefit assessment and inclusive play spaces, designed for educators, designers and community leaders. These digital resources provide flexibility for professionals to build skills anytime, anywhere– a particularly valuable offering for practitioners in rural and remote areas who may not have access to face-to-face training opportunities.

"An introduction of Playwork Principles in OSHC" was developed as a new self- paced learning module for the OSHC sector, however it has been used by a range of other people interested in playwork. Junior Adventures Group (JAG) was our first customer for the online course purchasing 400 enrolments.

For those preferring hands-on learning, Play Australia offered four sessions of a two-day Playspace Development Workshop to master play space design and maintenance in 24/25. This intensive workshop skilled up a total of 48 professionals from local government, design, and community sectors to develop practical skills in creating high-quality play environments.



Rural City of Wangaratta played host to a Playspace course in May 2025

Through this multi-faceted professional learning framework, Play Australia systematically builds knowledge, skills, and professional networks across Australia's play sector, ensuring practitioners remain current with evidence-based practices and connected to a national movement advocating for children's right to play.

Our Partners & Collaborators



Our thanks to the organisations who have worked with us this year and provided inspiration, support and resources to deliver on our mission.

"Individually we are one drop. Together we are an ocean."

- Ryonsuke Satoro



Financials

PLAY AUSTRALIA (IPA AUSTRALIA) INC

ABN 54 015 468 405

Statement Of Profit Or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30th June 2025

	Notes	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Revenue and other income			
Grant Income	2	32,165	123,147
Membership Income and Campaigns	2	71,400	72,398
Other Revenue	2	191,218	143,352
Interest Received	2	606	1,366
Total Revenue		295,389	340,263
Less expenses			
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(193)	(129)
Employee benefits expense		(196,931)	(255,693)
Other expenses		(80,996)	(74,202)
Total		(278,120)	(330,024)
Operating surplus (deficit)		17,269	10,239
Other comprehensive income for the year		0	0
Total comprehensive income		17,269	10,239

The above statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

PLAY AUSTRALIA (IPA AUSTRALIA) INC

ABN 54 015 468 405

Statement Of Financial Position
as at 30th June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4	69,042	34,983
Trade Receivables and other receivables	5	32,766	36,044
Other Current Assets		1,203	415
Total Current Assets		103,011	71,442
Liabilities			
Non-Current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	6	0	193
Total non-current assets		0	193
Total Assets		103,011	71,635
Current Liabilities			
Payables	7	59,283	47,897
Provisions	8	11,253	8,532
Other liabilities	9	0	0
Total Current Liabilities		70,536	56,429
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provisions	8	0	0
Total Non-Current Liabilities		0	0
Total Liabilities		70,536	56,429
Net Assets		32,475	15,206
Equity			
Accumulated Surplus		32,475	15,206
Total Equity		32,475	15,206

The above statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.





www.playaustralia.org.au