



LearningforLife
AUTISM CENTRE INC



ANNUAL REPORT 2022|23

OUR VISION, PURPOSE, MISSION & VALUES

OUR VISION

A world where all autistic and neurodivergent people can thrive and live the life they choose.

OUR PURPOSE

Support autistic and other neurodivergent children to develop skills that promote independence and choice.

OUR MISSION

- Provide children with high quality services underpinned by Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) regardless of their financial or social circumstances.
- Conduct research that informs our service delivery.
- Build awareness and understanding of autism, neurodiversity, and best practice ABA.

OUR VALUES



Trust



Respect



Equity



Joy



Kindness

Language use

We acknowledge there are many perspectives and personal preferences regarding the language used to identify people and their abilities and disabilities. We endeavour to show sensitivity and adaptation to the unique needs of individuals to present their identity in a way that is meaningful for them. In some of our communication it is difficult to reflect all preferences for identification; however, our commitment in personal communications is to respect individual preference. We acknowledge there may be a difference for people in using the terms 'child with autism' or 'autistic child' and our language is adaptive and flexible, always with the intention of inclusivity.

We use both language conventions interchangeably and therefore refer to both autistic children and children with autism throughout this report.

CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR	2
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT	3
OUR IMPACT	4
THE FAMILIES WE SUPPORT	5
OUR ACHIEVEMENTS	7
L4LIFE STAFF	10
GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP	12
2022/23 FINANCIALS	13
FINANCIAL REPORT	14
FUNDRAISING IN ACTION	15
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS	16
FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES	17

Acknowledgement of Country

The Learning for Life Autism Centre Inc. acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Diversity and Inclusion

We support diversity and inclusion, and we have zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment because of neurodiversity, race, colour, age, religion, sex, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, veteran, military or marital status, genetic information or any other protected status. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and have zero tolerance for child abuse.

The Learning for Life Autism Centre Inc. is a registered NDIS provider. Provider Number 4-GQXRBAH.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



As we approach the significant milestone of our 20th Anniversary in 2024, we are taking a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey of The Learning for Life Autism Centre Inc. (L4Life). It's a time to take stock of the achievements that define our organisation and the collective growth experienced by every child, family, school, institution, staff member, and Village collaborator throughout our two decades of shared efforts. With gratitude, we shift our focus towards the next chapter in the unfolding story of L4Life.

Over these two decades, L4Life has witnessed substantial growth, program development, innovation, research, collaborations, events, significant funds raised and connections within our Village. We have navigated the ever-evolving landscape of disability, education, health, mental health and charity spaces, adapting and learning just as the children and families we serve learn to navigate the challenges they face.

Much like parents, the Founders of L4Life have, over the past decade, aspired to see the organisation achieve independence while staying true to the vision, mission, purpose and values that we have developed. We've encountered the entry of the NDIS, faced the challenges of the pandemic and now grapple with the repercussions of a cost of living crisis and workforce shortages. These current circumstances impact both our business and the charitable arm of our work, as we continue to support vulnerable members of the community.

In the early days of L4Life, funding for autistic individuals and their specific learning needs was virtually non-existent. We turned to fundraising to subsidise therapy for families unable to afford the necessary support. Today, with the advent of the NDIS, there is greater access to services, yet the need for our charitable work remains. Our advocacy work includes supporting families to access NDIS plans and funds tailored to their needs. The ongoing reform of the NDIS and other systems is a positive step, though finding the balance between allocated funds and fair compensation for service providers remains a challenge.

The use of an Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) framework within our programs has undergone significant evolution

in recent decades. Similar to parenting and teaching practices, ABA based instruction at its highest level has been shaped by ethical considerations, the rights of the child and those with disabilities. Best practices more than ever emphasise nuanced factors such as consent/assent, individualised therapy/instruction, strength-based and neuroaffirming approaches and cultural sensitivity as we serve increasingly diverse communities. At L4Life nothing is generic, no one size fits all. The ABA field is actively working towards enhanced quality control and regulation to ensure public trust in qualified and experienced practitioners. We welcome these changes.

Our program expansion into Specialist Behaviour Support caters for children who are at risk of being ostracised from their families, schools and/or society. Working with these young people, over many years, through trusting relationships and trauma informed practices, our specialist clinicians aim to help them develop skills to keep them safe, included in mainstream society and minimise their exposure to the justice system.

Anyone touched by the stories of our children and families shares in their triumphs and challenges and understands that success looks different for everyone – it is not just about assessment or academic scores, but about building characteristics like prosocial and proactive behaviour that can lead to young people accessing their hidden potential so they can thrive and live their best lives, the way they choose.

I would like to particularly pay my respects to the hard working and dedicated Staff and Board at L4Life. Their commitment to helping the L4Life children and families fulfil their goals and aspirations is tremendous. Enormous thanks to all in our Village for your ongoing support and commitment to our shared journey. We look forward to celebrating our milestone year in 2024 with you all.

Mary Muirhead OAM
Chair and Co-Founder
The Learning for Life Autism Centre

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Just as success for the children and families we support takes on a rich tapestry of forms that accommodates their unique journeys and goals, success at L4Life unfolds in myriad ways. Our impact is measured not only by our financial outcomes, but by the tangible improvements in the lives of those we serve as well as the depth of our community engagement and collaborative partnerships, built on a foundation of trust and respect. Our success is not merely a destination but an ongoing journey that prioritises joy, equity, and kindness.



While we earnestly address the financial deficit reported for the year ending 30 June 2023 by tackling these challenges strategically and objectively, it is equally crucial to pause and celebrate the noteworthy growth and development evident across the majority of services we provide and the positive impact that this has on the autistic community.

Our progress in the Early Intervention Full-Service Model faced notable setbacks primarily due to workforce shortages, constraining our ability to provide additional therapy hours. However, we have broadened our recruitment strategies, instilling optimism that our growth targets for FY24 will result in an expansion of this foundational model. On a positive note, we are delighted to announce growth in various areas, including our School-Age Consultancy service, Secret Agent Society social skills groups, Speech Pathology service, Inclusion Works program, and Specialist Behaviour Support service.

Our Specialist Behaviour Support service has grown from supporting two students to five. While this does not seem a large number, it is important to acknowledge the complexities that can present in this cohort, which can prevent these students from accessing essential services and participating fully in their communities – necessitating an elevated level of care and diligence. (See page 8).

The research conducted at L4Life underscores the perpetual curiosity exhibited by our entire team as we analyse and evaluate our practices and seek continuous improvement. The clinical delivery phase of our Inclusion Works research project is set to conclude by the end of 2024, bringing us closer to furnishing evidence on the most effective educator training for successful inclusion in schools. (See page 7).

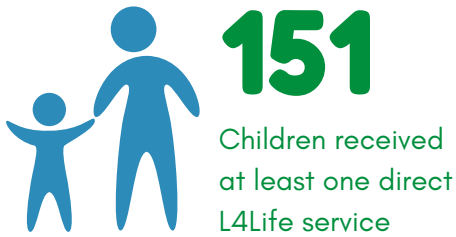
Balancing the administrative and funding challenges of being a registered NDIS provider can be challenging. NDIS funding has presented opportunities for families to have access to a wider range of services but the corresponding requirements on service providers has put a financial strain on operations. We have experienced compounded award wage increases over the past several years without a corresponding change to the NDIS price guide for our services. This has contributed significantly to our financial deficit as reported on pages 13 and 14. With this in mind, it is important to note that the L4Life Board and management team review our strategic priorities on a frequent and consistent basis to ensure that our services are sustainable for the long-term future.

At L4Life we address every decision we make based on what is best for each child and family to whom we provide service. This allows for a wide-angle lens to open further possibilities while delivering our core services. I am, as always, grateful to each and every person in our L4Life Village who supports our vision and purpose and our amazing and passionate staff who bring our mission to life.

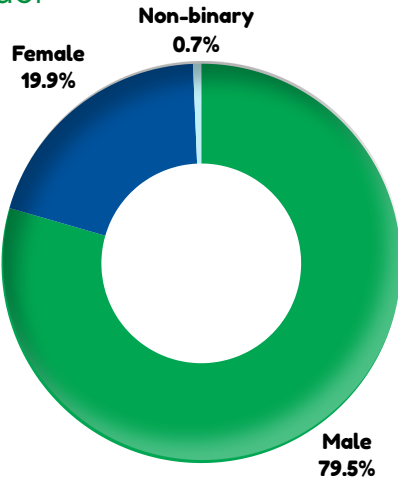
Pam Roy
Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder
The Learning for Life Autism Centre

OUR IMPACT

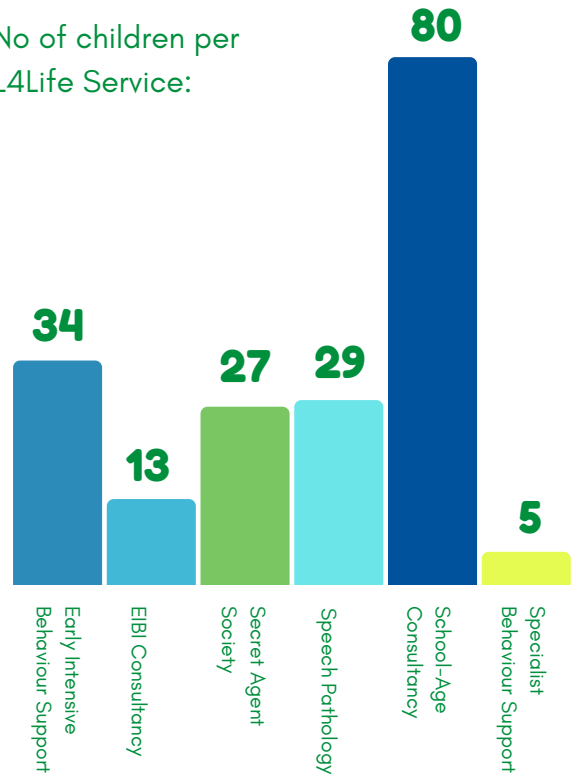
OUR LEARNERS



Gender



No of children per L4Life Service:



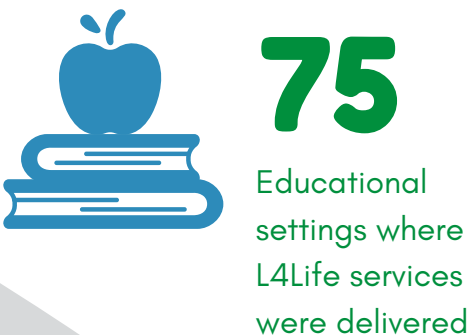
OUR FAMILIES



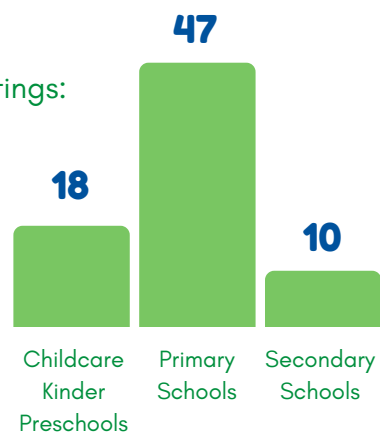
49

EIBI families speak a Language Other than English at home

EDUCATION SERVICES



Breakdown of educational settings:



THE FAMILIES WE SUPPORT

L4Life was created as a not-for-profit organisation in 2004, as a way to address the inequity that existed in access to best practice early intervention programs based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) for children with Autism in Victoria.

Since that time our program offerings have grown to incorporate services for autistic and neurodivergent children from pre-school to those up to 18 years of age, as well as training for families, carers and educators to help support these young people throughout their learning journey.

The families we support face a variety of barriers to access learning services, including cultural, financial, language, systemic, health and emotional. A prominent barrier is that of funding: families who cannot access NDIS funding, inadequate plans to support a child's needs, delays in receiving funding or difficulty navigating the application process can make a difference between a child receiving or not receiving support.

Our Fair Access Subsidies were established to help families overcome these barriers and have allowed us to provide supports to those who need them most. Two of our families, who have been able to access our therapy as a result of our subsidies, share their stories to highlight the importance of funding subsidies and accessibility to therapy.

When Alice's son Wesley (5 ½) was diagnosed with Autism at 3 ½ she began researching the available supports and therapies. She found L4Life after research into ABA and connecting with two former families through an online forum. "The two families I talked to encouraged me to seek the support of L4Life and shared their amazing experiences," she says. "From our first meeting with the Clinical Director, Emma - who came to meet us at home - and her wanting to know not just about my son, but our family story, I had an immediate positive vibe of strong support, knowledge in the field and professionalism. Emma made me feel not alone as a mum straight away, but she also engaged directly with Wesley and he responded so positively which I never saw before. Their thorough and detailed induction to the centre made the transition even easier."

Wesley commenced Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) immediately, working with Hannah and Cassie. Alice admits it wasn't all plain sailing, Wesley didn't engage at first. He was non-verbal and in his own world, says Alice, which made it difficult to engage with his therapists. However, through L4Life's child-led approach and programs tailored specifically for Wesley, they started to see developments and now, after two-and-a-half years of EIBI, having overcome so many developmental delays, Wesley is confidently holding conversations with therapists and staff at the centre and in his everyday life.

Wesley commences school next year and L4Life will support Wesley and his family in this transition. Alice says the move is bittersweet, "After 3 years, it's hard to leave, the team make you part of the family, where you will always be welcome," says Alice. Alice, however, won't be too far away, as her younger 3 ½ year old son, Daniel, has also commenced at L4Life. Having two children requiring additional learning support can be overwhelming, but Alice comes to L4Life with a confidence in Daniel's support team. This is a different experience, she says, and Daniel needs some different programs which L4Life has tailored specifically for his learning. She is confident with the individual focus of the program to meet Daniel's learning needs, and she has already seen a positive impact.

The individual focus and flexibility of the program have really suited our family.

Alice, L4Life parent

"The individual focus and flexibility of the program have really suited our family," says Alice. Alice has family in the midst of the war in Ukraine, causing upheaval, financial pressures and extreme emotional stress. But she says: "the team were extremely supportive and flexible to pause our therapy when we had to deal with other matters." Being away from her family, Alice appreciates the support and community she has received from L4Life – it gives her strength and comforts her parents knowing someone is supporting their family when they cannot.

This support extends to financial support that the family has required while applying for NDIS funding and a review. "L4Life subsidised our program until our funding was approved," she says. "This kind of support makes you feel like someone has your back." It also allows for program continuity, which is vital to the learning of a child.

L4Life partner with you on your journey. We meet with the therapist team every week to share our frustrations, challenges and also our wins.

Poornima, L4Life Parent

Poornima has a similar story – a family in India and having to navigate an unfamiliar system and the cultural barriers to understanding autism. But, unlike Alice's family, Poornima was unable to access NDIS funding.

Poornima's son Likhil was diagnosed with autism at the age of 6 – a late diagnosis due to the interruptions of COVID, moving and limited access to medical professionals. Poornima also admits she was in denial for some time, but her son's inability to communicate verbally and some basic speech therapy in his kinder years in Australia gave her the push to seek ABA therapy, as recommended by her speech therapist. "L4Life not only looked at the therapy they could provide, but recommended the schools for Likhil to support his learning further."

"Within a few weeks [of starting at L4Life] we saw extreme changes in our son," she says. "He is now in the first stages of verbalising and it gives me so much joy to hear him say the words 'milk' and 'seatbelt'." Poornima also says Likhil is much happier and his behaviour at home has settled. She is also learning more about his diagnosis and how to support him at home.

"L4Life partner with you on your journey. We meet with the therapist every week to share our frustrations, challenges and also our wins." She says. "They want to know your story – the CEO, Pam, even met with us to find out more about us and how they can help our family."

This help extended to the L4Life Fair Access Subsidy. As a PhD student from India and with a husband in contract work, Poornima and her family were unable to fund the therapy or receive NDIS funding. L4Life was able to subsidise some therapy hours so that Likhil could receive the ABA support he needs.

"My aim is to complete my PhD and find work so I can continue to pay for all the therapy that my son requires," says Poornima.

We thank both of our families for sharing their stories. By sharing stories, we create opportunities to understand others better.

There is still a major need for funding to support access to important early intervention for families and we continue to seek funds to grow our Fair Access subsidies on offer.



*For privacy, some names and images have been changed

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Research

At L4Life we use the knowledge and evidence gained through research to continually evaluate and update our services and approaches to supporting both autistic children and their families.

We are constantly evaluating what we do, whether that be the individual services we provide to particular children or the way in which we train therapy assistants and encourage our staff to seek out or initiate research opportunities. This ensures that we can confidently say that we are always providing evidence-informed services.

Our Inclusion Works Research Project is now in its second year of the three-year data collection phase. Clinical staff attend these schools once per week to work with teachers across the school to train, review and implement effective inclusive education strategies to students with additional support needs.

The program will be run in three new schools in 2024. We will continue to collect data from the six participating schools up to three years after each 12-month program has been delivered.

It is always exciting to start running the Inclusion Works program in a new school and the support provided tends to be viewed as a welcome addition by the staff. By the end of the program, the goal is to move from school staff being led by the L4Life Consultants to them using the L4Life Consultants as sounding boards to individualise strategies to each classroom and different students. The ultimate objective is to build the skills of the school staff to continue to design and implement the appropriate strategies for their school context long after the Inclusion Works program concludes.

The data from this evaluation goes on to inform our private Inclusion Works program, on offer to all schools within the Greater Melbourne area.

Over the course of a year, L4Life Head of Allied Health, Sarah Wood, and Speech Pathologist/Clinical Consultant, Nilushi Goonetilleke, collaborated on a research study providing first-hand experiences of the diagnosis and early intervention process in Australia of migrant Chinese parents of autistic children.

The study, undertaken in collaboration with Autism Partnership, La Trobe University (Head Researcher: Dr. Jodie Smith), L4Life, Positive Partnerships and a Chinese advisory group including Chinese parents of autistic children will have implications in the provision and presentation of information surrounding early intervention to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families.

The study found Chinese parents of autistic children face unique challenges when navigating autism services, including language and cultural barriers making it challenging for them to make informed decisions for their child's needs. Despite the challenges, parents utilised informal networks and educated themselves in Early Intervention to find effective support. According to the study, parents had a more positive experience when they were able to find support within the Chinese community; access quality Early Intervention services; and genuinely connect with professionals who considered the wellbeing and individual needs of both the child and their family.

It is hoped that these findings will encourage NDIS providers and other autism support services to review their provision and presentation of information tailored to CALD families, with consideration to the identified cultural and language barriers outlined. Such clarification will help CALD families find the appropriate support, understand a diagnosis and its implications, access NDIS and Medicare funding and feel confident and comfortable in seeking clarification.

“The [CALD] study presented a great opportunity to reflect on our practices as clinicians; the results will inform changes made to engagement with families from different CALD backgrounds to ensure we bolster their ability to access resources and services”

Nilushi Goonetilleke, Speech Pathologist

Specialist Behaviour Supports

This year marked the first full year providing Specialist Behaviour Support under our NDIS registration, with five of our allied health team now NDIS registered behaviour support practitioners. Behaviour support practitioners must be registered with the NDIS to provide Specialist Behaviour Support and are the only practitioners considered suitable by the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commissioner to undertake functional behaviour assessments and develop behaviour support plans.

While our staff's clinical skills and experience compliment this area well, navigating state and federal legislation and processes has been a steep learning curve. Provision of this specialised service also requires additional mentoring, planning, risk assessment and nuanced professional development for our practitioners. For example, in recent months our staff have taken part in workshops relating to:

- trauma-informed positive behaviour support in education;
- a comprehensive and compassionate approach for addressing problem behaviour;
- delivering psychological risk management interventions; and
- predicting, assessing and responding to behaviours of concern

We have worked with five Specialist Behaviour Support clients this financial year. Many of these children have not received early intervention and engage in behaviours of concern that place their safety, or that of those who are around them, at risk. In many cases these children are being excluded from school and other community activities because there are insufficient resources to support them. A subset of these children have very complex home-lives (eg. living in residential or kinship care and have experienced abuse) and a trauma-informed approach is especially crucial for these children with a focus on building trust and establishing safety as a first priority and key to success.

The goal of behaviour support in the NDIS is to improve quality of life outcomes for people with disability and to eliminate restrictive practices. We work with clients, their care teams and educators to provide consistent, trauma-informed, support and to develop their skills (communication, understanding of expectations/boundaries, emotion regulation) to help eliminate any restrictive practices being implemented.

Claire Birrell is one of our registered Behaviour Support Practitioners and says that it is a huge responsibility that the team takes very seriously. "Whilst this work brings many challenges, it is also very rewarding to see these children develop key skills and utilise learned strategies such as taking a breath or break in place of a potentially harmful behaviour and to see children who have previously been excluded from multiple education settings attend school with success, make friends and be a valued member of their community. It is a privilege to support this group of students and to show their community that they can learn to participate safely in all the environments that can so easily be taken for granted," she says.

As we move into our 20th year, we will continue to be driven by our core values of respect, kindness, trust, equity and joy. We advocate for the necessity that these children are able to trust their caregivers and educators to treat them with kindness and respect, to have equitable access to their community and education and to feel joyful as often as possible! We will continue to develop and grow to meet the needs of the autistic and neurodivergent community.

"We need to understand what this group of children are trying to communicate through their behaviour so we can then teach them safe alternatives. If we don't do that this group of students are at risk of serious segregation into adulthood because it won't be considered safe for them to spend time in the community."

Sarah Wood, Head of Allied Health

Leornian - rolling out our data app

In our journey to continually evaluate, develop and grow, we look not only at our therapy, but the way in which we report and provide ancillary services and support. The Salesforce collaboration to develop a data collection app grew from the need to move our paper data management system to an electronic format. Other digital data systems lacked the ability to customise the process for individual clients, and didn't meet NDIS reporting requirements.

We were lucky to be able to work with Mike Burnside (developer of award winning app ASDetect, which aids in the early detection of Autism) and Mike de Hennin (regional vice-president of the public sector of Salesforce) to solve this challenge.

Mike and Mike have volunteered over hundreds of hours of their time to work with L4Life staff to develop an app to replace the reams of paper involved in the collection and analysis of data for an individualised ABA program. Approximately 150 hours per year per client is spent on data management in the paper system (not including collecting data).

The project's mantra was that the app, Leornian (from old English 'to learn') had to be 'better than paper' - faster and more efficient. We currently have collected more than 60,000 data points over 1,368 sessions and have 39 therapy assistants using Leornian.

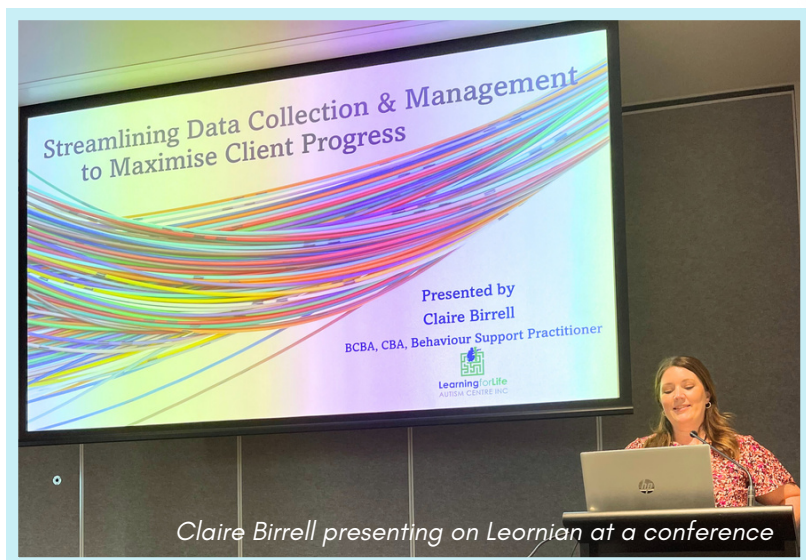
We have already enjoyed many benefits of moving our data collection and reporting to an electronic platform, with the biggest change being the ability to automatically analyse data across session, program, time etc. Leornian automatically graphs data so we can see the cumulation of learnt skills which is very helpful to assess progress for programming, parent overviews and NDIS reporting.

We are currently rolling out a carer portal so that parents can access their child's program and progress at any time and are putting the final touches on behaviours of concern data collection and analysis section.

We thank Mike and Mike for being the change makers we needed to deliver high quality ABA programs backed by top quality resources, as well as the generous donors who made it possible for us to purchase iPads, keyboards and portable chargers for each of our early intervention programs using Leornian.

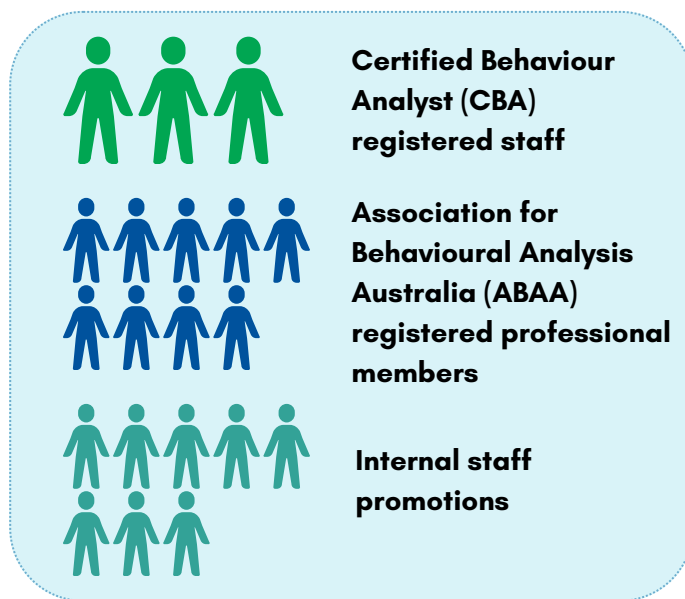
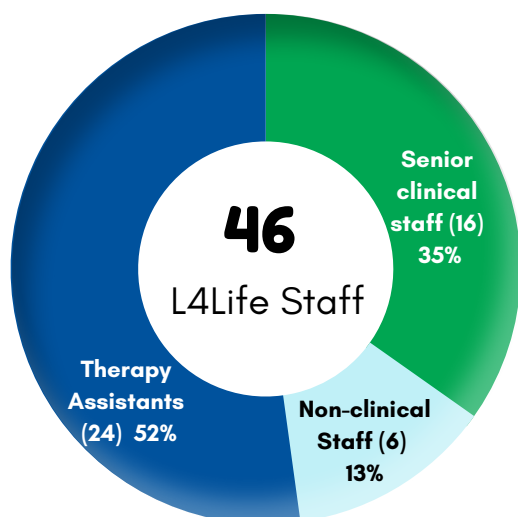


Mike de Hennin and Mike Burnside



Claire Birrell presenting on Leornian at a conference

L4LIFE STAFF



STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to the following staff on their promotions in FY23:

- Claire Birrell from Early Childhood Clinical Consultant to Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) Team Lead
- Jo Moxey from Co-Supervisor to Early Childhood Clinical Consultant
- Alana McGrellis from Senior Therapy Assistant (TA) to Co-supervisor
- Cassie Dods from Senior TA to Co-supervisor
- Jasmine Lim promotion from TA to Senior TA and Clinical Intern
- Michelle Francis from TA to Clinical Intern
- Grace Molloy from TA to Clinical Intern
- Caitlyn Frazzica to Senior TA



Congratulations to newly registered members in FY23:

Certified Behavioural Analyst registered staff:

- Claire Birrell
- Elisha Mont
- Jo Moxey

Association for Behavioural Analysis Australia (ABAA) professional members (newly registered):

- Sarah Wood
- Emma Miller
- Emma Davies
- Hannah Yates
- Tiffany Poljakovic
- Jodi Harris
- Erin Delaney

NDIS Behaviour Support Practitioner registration:

- Samantha Boyle

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



Pam Roy
CEO



Emma Miller
CLINICAL DIRECTOR



Victoria Crane
GENERAL MANAGER OPERATIONS

SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING OUR STAFF

From our inception, we have trained our therapists using ABA-based theory and practice. This has been developed into our own ABA-based Certificate Training curriculum, which is comprehensive and includes evaluating performance-based objectives relevant to the implementation of behavioural intervention for children with autism. Most of our senior clinical staff initially joined our team as Therapy Assistants, undertook this training and have progressed through the organisation to established careers in the L4Life clinical setting. Our staff are encouraged to seek opportunities to further their training and education, which in turn, has allowed us to grow our offerings.

I love the therapy training L4Life offers as it makes me feel confident and prepared to run all sorts of programs during sessions. The training classes give me a better understanding on why we do what we do in session. The teaching staff are always open to answering our questions and give us a strong basis of theoretical knowledge to understand why and how the programs and interventions work.

Nikita Leonides, Therapy Assistant

CLINICAL STAFF MEMBER - JO MOXEY

Jo is one of our L4Life staff members who has gained CBA registration and a promotion in the 22/23 FY. Jo has completed her Masters of Education and 1500 hours of fieldwork to receive this certification. She has also undertaken an additional 500 hours and will undertake the BCBA exam to become a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA).

Jo commenced with L4Life while undertaking her double Arts degree in Psychology and Criminology in 2018 and in this time has developed a passion for working with children in the behavioural space. She attributes the influence of her peers and supervisors Claire, Elisha and Tiff for steering her towards Behavioural Analysis.



"I initially worked alongside Elisha and Claire, assisting with programming for clients at home and in kinder, as well as parent and allied health meetings. I am now working independently, developing intervention plans and programs, undertaking staff training and analysing data taken from sessions to assist a child in reaching their learning goals. I'm grateful the team encouraged me to take these next steps in achieving this goal and undertaking my Masters."

GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

BOARD RENEWAL

Best practice governance leads to board changes that promote fresh ideas, diversity and ongoing sustainability. We welcomed five new Board Members at our AGM in 2022. Tom Gleisner, Co-Founder and Patron, resigned as part of the broader succession plans. We thank him for his foresight, drive and compassion in helping to guide L4Life. Tom will stay on as Patron, Event MC and continue to support the families, staff and Village of L4Life. We have benefitted from the Observership program for a third year. After a year as an Observer, Dr Matt Harvey (from McKinsey and Co) joined our Board in November 2022. We welcomed Natalie Gibbs (from Cancer Council Australia) as an observer in February 2023.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mary Muirhead OAM
CHAIR



Melanie Larkey
TREASURER



Pam Roy
CEO/DIRECTOR



Dr Amanda Sampson
DIRECTOR



Dr Chris Das
DIRECTOR



Melanie Cook
DIRECTOR



Dr Matt Harvey
DIRECTOR



Natasha Gupta
DIRECTOR



Sian Stephens
DIRECTOR



Tom Gleisner AO
DIRECTOR (to Nov '22)



Natalie Gibbs
BOARD OBSERVER



Victoria Crane
SECRETARY

Patrons

Tom Gleisner AO
Dr Amanda Sampson

SUB-COMMITTEES

Risk, Finance and Governance

Chair: Melanie Larkey

Research

Chair: Dr Amanda Sampson

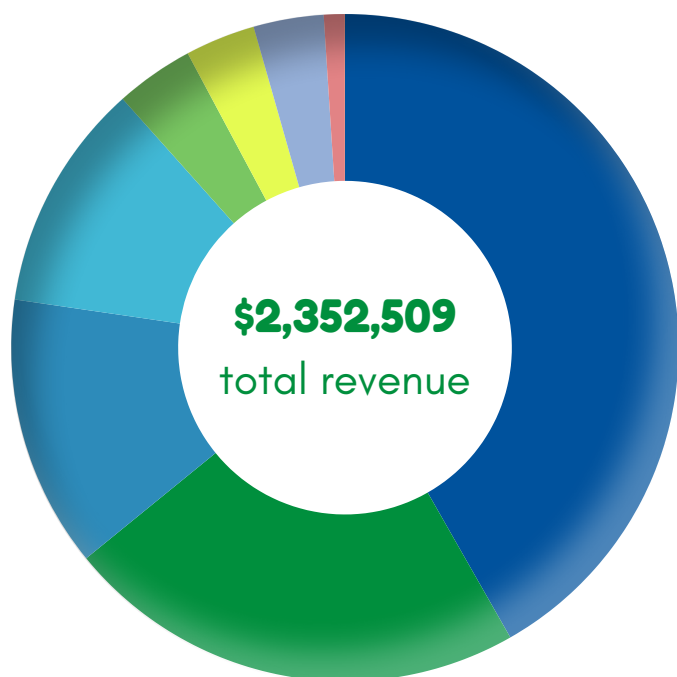
Best Practice

Chair: Emma Miller

Fundraising, Communications and Relationships

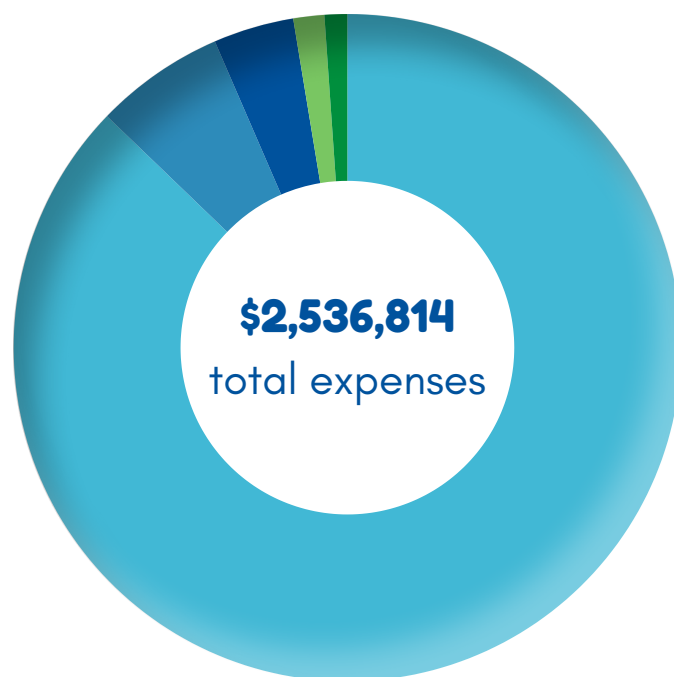
Chair: Mary Muirhead OAM

2022\23 FINANCIALS



REVENUE

EIBI Full Service Model income (net of subsidies)	\$982,658 (41.8%)
Allied health and consultancy services	\$526,073 (22.4%)
Donations	\$309,369 (13.2%)
Grants and grant funded clinical services	\$261,281 (11.1%)
Community endowment contributions	\$89,245 (3.8%)
Fundraising events	\$79,873 (3.4%)
Bequest	\$79,278 (3.4%)
Interest Income	\$24,282 (1%)
Workshops and training	\$450 (0.02%)



EXPENSES

Employee related costs	\$2,211,977 (87.2%)
Other operating costs	\$160,525 (6.3%)
Depreciation and amortisation	\$98,303 (3.9%)
Occupancy costs	\$37,399 (1.5%)
Grant and fundraising costs	\$28,610 (1.1%)

FINANCIAL REPORT

L4Life achieved total revenues of \$2,352,509 and a comprehensive result of \$184,305 in deficit for the financial year ending 30 June 2023.

This year we saw revenues from operating activities increase 12% from the previous financial year. A significant factor in this increase was growth in our Allied Health and Consultancy services, which includes our School-Age Consultancy, Speech Pathology, Inclusion Works Program, and Specialist Behaviour Support, as well as an increase in grants received to support our clinical services. The Inclusion Works Program delivered to two schools was supported by multi-year grants which continue to fund the clinical delivery phase of our research project. (See page 7)

We provided early intervention services to 34 families – delivered in each child's community including their family homes, childcares, and kindergartens. However, revenues relating to our core Early Intervention Full Service model decreased by 12% from last year. Along with other service providers in the disability field, L4Life is experiencing workforce shortages and therefore strategies for longer term staff recruitment, progression and retention are a key priority.

Staff salaries and related employee costs, which include award allowances along with training and professional development, make up the largest component of our total expenses and continue to rise annually in line with Fair Work award increases. L4Life continues to absorb the increases which are not matched by a corresponding increase in the NDIS price guide for our services. With the impending release of the NDIS Review, we are hopeful that this issue will be remedied in the coming year.

Staff shortages, Fair Work Award increases and limitations placed on us by the NDIS price guide all contributed to our financial deficit for FY23. The deficit reported was in line with budget and is underpinned by strong cash reserves on our balance sheet.

With equity being a core value of L4Life, the concept of Fair Access continues to ripple throughout our entire organisation. Fair Access has traditionally been

quantified by the specific funds directed towards fee relief subsidies in our Early Intervention program. The number of families supported in our direct fee subsidies increased by 66% from the previous year. While these subsidies are critical to ensuring continuity of service for our pre-school aged children, we also see Fair Access as an opportunity to enhance ancillary services that enable our families to best support their child and to better access their community, education system and related government supports that go above and beyond what the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funds and which we do not charge for. We currently support a cohort of children, students, and families whose individual circumstances are increasing in complexity, and whose needs have grown exponentially – these ancillary supports go beyond our traditional therapy but can be as important as direct service delivery. L4Life has received a multi-year capacity grant for the employment of a Social Worker to work with our clinical team in the delivery of these wrap-around supports. Over the coming year, this will allow our senior clinical staff to support additional families.

Fundraising and donor support continue to play a critical role in the growth and sustainability of L4Life and have been an integral part of our mission to provide children and their families with high quality services regardless of their financial and social circumstances.

We were also fortunate to receive additional funds related to the Bequest from the Estate of Basil D. Waugh. The funds received over FY22 and FY23 have been invested in a term deposit and contributed to an increase in our interest income in FY23.

Although the combined direct fundraising and donations increased by 19% from last year, we anticipate a decline in future years due to the impact of cost of living pressures on our community. Our current cash reserves therefore provide us with a much needed safety net enabling us to carefully navigate our future.

The L4Life Board and Senior Management continues to take a measured and responsible approach to strategic changes where necessary to ensure our ability to deliver best practice services to our children and families.

FUNDRAISING IN ACTION

Our fundraising events bring our Village together providing the opportunity to connect and reflect on what we do, why we do it and who we support in an encouraging and celebratory environment. In the 2022-23 financial year, our key fundraising events included:

IN-CONVERSATION - OCTOBER 2022

L4Life Patron, Tom Gleisner AO, hosted our In Conversation event in October 2022, alongside comedian and actor Kitty Flanagan. Kitty and Tom took guests through their hilarious career highlights. The event brought together the L4Life Village in support of our children and families to raise funds for our Fair Access Subsidies.

RUN MELBOURNE - JULY 2022

A shout out to the L4Life Run Melbourne team for 2022 who participated in the half marathon, 10 km and 5km events to raise money for our cause.

Liss & Mila, Vic, Sean, Chris, Rory & Jamie, Vincent, Danny, Rebecca & Cathy, Karen, James, Jamieson & Joshua, Erin, Nilushi, Marilyn, Celeste, Mary, Gillian, Peter, and Jane Stewart and her beautiful crew of It's The Little Things Community volunteers - Grant, Andrew, Sophie, Keshan, Michelle, Nicole, Niranga, Philipa, Sandie and Tony.

KWIZ FOR THE KIDZ - MAY 2023

Over 160 L4Life Villagers joined us for another successful Kwiz for the Kidz trivia night in May. Kwiz Master, Tom Gleisner AO and partner in crime, Santo Cilauro were joined by Katie Weston's musical prowess. Guests heard the heartwarming story of Carly and Jayden and the impact L4Life has had on Jayden and his family. We also attempted trivia platform Kahoot.it which tested everyone's technical skills. We fought for some great Auction prizes, including tickets to two of the most hard to get events: The Toyota AFL Grandfinal and Melbourne Theatre Company's (MTC) opening night of Bloom; as well as some great accommodation offers in Port Fairy and Noosa. We were able to select our raffle prizes from television shows Have You Been Paying Attention?, Thank God You're Here and the Front Bar, which were coupled with wonderful hampers from The It Kit and a chocolate subscription from Bean Bar You.

CHARITY DRIVE DAYS - 2022

Charity Drive Days is a registered charity whose founders are passionate about spirited driving and supporting charities in need. We have been fortunate to be a recipient of money raised through this charity for a number of years and were privileged to be a beneficiary once again in 2022, receiving \$80,000 from the charity.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

As a not-for-profit charity, we rely heavily on the donations of our Village in the forms of grants, events, campaigns, regular giving, sponsorship, bequests and community fundraising. This financial support in kind enables us to provide the best services to support autistic and neurodivergent children live the life they choose. We are proud of the Village we have built and are also grateful for their continued support.

FAIR ACCESS FUNDING PARTNERS (\$5,000+ IN FY2023)

The Estate of Basil Waugh
Dr Amanda Sampson and Dr Lyndon Hale
Charity Drive Days
The Baker Foundation
The Samuel Nissen Charitable Foundation
5 Point Foundation
The Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation
The Laby Foundation
Ducas Paul Foundation
Pressroom Philanthropy
Mary Muirhead and Tom Gleisner
Pallet Logistics P/L
Green Acres Golf Club
Anonymous
Tom and Evelyn Snow
Morena Buffon and Santo Cilauro
The John & Betty Laidlaw Legacy
Lesley McMullin Foundation
The William Angliss (Vic) Charitable Fund
The Willink Family and the BP Foundation
Star 21
Werribee Mazda
James Wood
Ann Marie & Rob Herten
H&L Hecht Trust
Perpetual Foundation - WEMAC Endowment

BRIGHTER FUTURE PARTNERS

Thank you to our regular giving donors as well as our community fundraisers.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE PARTNERS

We are grateful to our business and in-kind service partners for supporting us throughout the year:

D F Kidsons
Artifishal Studios
Red IT
Kartini Digital
Johnson Winter Slattery
Justice Connect
Wilson Pateras
Salesforce (with Michael De Hennin and Mike Burnside)
Bendigo Community Bank (Canterbury, Ashburton, Surrey Hills and Balwyn)
Boutique Legal
Angela Scaffidi (Senate SHJ)
Antony Woodley

CELEBRITY EVENT & CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS

Tom Gleisner AO, Kitty Flanagan, Santo Cilauro, Katie Weston, Joshua Batten, Lindsay Field



FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

It takes a village to raise a child, which is why we work with a network of individuals and organisations to ensure the children we support receive the best support possible.

We call this the L4Life Village. Our Village includes families, carers, therapists, health professionals, psychologists, schools, aides, educators, classmates, private donors, philanthropic organisations, volunteers and the NDIS. All working towards one goal: a world where all autistic and neurodivergent people can thrive and live the life they choose.

You can join our Village by donating, working with us, volunteering or partnering with us.

ONE TIME DONATION

Your one time donation will assist us to continue to provide high-quality ABA -based services to help autistic children and their families live the life they choose, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

REGULAR GIVING

Regular giving provides a predictable stream of funding, enabling us to plan for larger scale programs and subsidies.

You can help us create brighter futures by giving to our Brighter Futures Regular Giving Program.

GIFT IN WILL

Individual donors can choose to support L4Life by leaving a legacy bequest in their will. There are a number of different ways in which you can leave a bequest.

WORKPLACE GIVING

You can ask your employer to deduct an amount from your pre-tax pay, or check if they are one of the many who will match your donation via Good2Give.

SPONSORSHIP

Sponsor an event, program, activity, building or centre to help us expand the reach of L4Life, so more children and families can benefit from our services.

PARTICIPATE IN OUR EVENTS

Sign up to participate in one of our annual events and help us raise funds and friends.

You might also like to volunteer to help organise these events. Find out more about our volunteer program.

BECOME A COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER

Join the L4Life Village to raise funds through your own events.





LearningforLife
AUTISM CENTRE INC

25 – 27 High Street South, Kew, Victoria 3101

PO Box 7118 Hawthorn North 3122

Phone (03) 9853 4607

Email: admin@learningforlife.com.au

Website: www.learningforlife.com.au

ABN 47 260 122 955

The Learning for Life Autism Centre Inc. is a registered NDIS provider. Provider Number 4-GQXRBAH.

