



Annual Report 2024



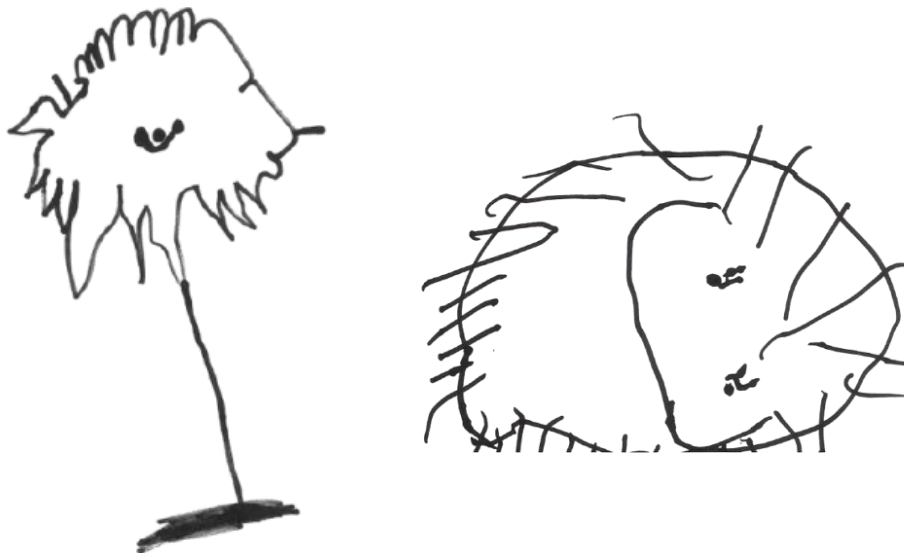
## **Acknowledgement of Country**

At Kensington Community Children's Co-operative, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we learn, play and grow – the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our community.

We recognise the enduring connection of First Nations peoples to Country, culture, and community, and we are committed to fostering an environment that honours this connection and supports reconciliation through education, respect, and inclusion.

We are grateful to share this land and commit to walking together toward a more just and equitable future for all children.



## Contents

2	Introduction & History
3	Message from the KCCC Board
5	KCCC Board
6	KCCC Strategic Plan: 2024-2026
8	KCCC Philosophy
10	Commitment to Child Safety
11	Growth
12	Quality
13	Workforce
15	Pedagogy and Practice
18	Community Connections
21	Governance – Sub-Committee Reports
22	KCCC Reconciliation Action Plan
24	2024 Financial Commentary





# Kensington Community Children's Co-Operative (KCCC)

## Introduction

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative (KCCC) is a not-for-profit, community-driven early childhood education and care service. We cater to children from 6 weeks of age through to school entry, offering both integrated and sessional kindergarten programs. Each year, KCCC proudly supports around 230 local families, with a passionate team of **76 educators and staff** committed to delivering high-quality care and learning experiences.

## History

KCCC was established in 1982 on Henry Street, Kensington, as a 35-place long-day care service. In response to increasing community demand, the City of Melbourne built a new, purpose-designed facility on Altona Street in 1996.

Over the years, KCCC has continued to grow in line with the needs of the local community. Most recently, in February 2024, we expanded our licenced capacity to 166 children per day, supported by our latest infrastructure grant - marking another important milestone in our ongoing commitment to accessible, high-quality early education and care.



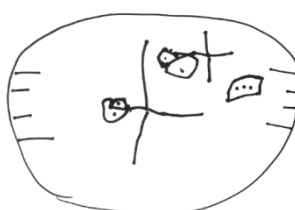
## Annual Report 2024

The Board and Management of Kensington Community Children's Co-operative is pleased to present the Annual Report for the 2024 calendar year. This report outlines the Co-operative's progress towards achieving the objectives of our strategic plan and the KCCC vision and aims for the future.

The purpose of the Annual Report is to:

- provide an overview of the Co-operative's operations relating to education & care
- communicate how the service is performing
- highlight key achievements
- highlight performance and statistics, and
- provide a summary of KCCC's financial performance and position as of 31 December 2024.

If you would like further information on any aspect of this report, please contact us at [info@kccc.org.au](mailto:info@kccc.org.au).



## Message from the KCCC Board

This year, we welcomed a large group of new members to the Board. While each of us will have our own stories and reflections on the experience, I believe one thing we share is a profound sense of privilege in representing and supporting the KCCC community. It has been incredibly rewarding to collaborate with such a dedicated group of educators and families at KCCC and to witness firsthand the incredible work underway at this service.

2024 has been a year of building for KCCC, with extensive efforts from the community meeting success in delivering on our strategic priorities. We believe KCCC is well placed to meet the challenges within our service and the broader sector and present a best-case model of successful early childhood education.

The recent Four Corners investigation into the childcare sector shone a light on many poor practices within the industry. We can be proud to report that issues exposed such as: avoidance of quality ratings, poor food offerings, and systematically non-compliant staffing ratios are not a concern at KCCC. We commit to continue delivering over and above regulatory requirements in these areas, as we have historically.

We were saddened earlier this year to receive the resignation of our General Manager, Kim Knersch. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Kim for her efforts over the last year and to assure the community we have been supporting KCCC's leadership team to keep her initiatives in motion. We are thrilled to announce that after a rigorous recruitment and selection process, Colleen Koch will be joining us in late June as the new General Manager. Colleen brings with her over 30 years of experience in the early childhood sector, with a strong background in leadership and hands on service delivery – and has a particular passion for staff wellbeing. We would like to extend a huge thank you to Oliver Leigh for acting in the role during the search. The Board are looking forward to working with Colleen to keep ensuring KCCC maintains its high-quality early childhood standards, and ongoing financial sustainability.

We are now well engaged with the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. Progress achieved over the last year in each area includes:

**Growth:** Our community has embraced the new spaces enabled by last year's significant building works. We again thank our families and educators for responding so flexibly to these disruptions and we believe that maintaining a more stable physical environment over



this last year has been of value as we settled into the new spaces.

We have subsequently been successful in a follow-up grant to improve the amenities for both staff and children. We have now seen upgrades commence in the Western corridor, Yarragum and Gumnut Rooms. These will be completed, with minimal disruption for children, before the second half of the year.

We have also explored opportunities to uplift our common areas, reception and the yard. We would like to especially thank Rorie Clarke for his efforts in



developing a fresh landscape design proposal that formed the basis for a major grant application. While this application was unfortunately unsuccessful, we intend to reapply later this year and leverage the design to direct a series of smaller, self-funded interventions in the playground space.

**Quality:** First and foremost, the educators and staff have continued to deliver excellent early childhood education programs for our children. KCCC continues to be ranked "Exceeding" in the National Quality Standards – and a mock assessment organised by management demonstrated that we will continue to hold that ranking



into the future. The Board and Senior Management have placed the highest priority on delivering to the “Exceeding” standard, and our Pedagogy Practice Leader Kitty Clarke and team of wonderful educators have taken that priority and focused on it every day to create such a wonderful service.

**Workforce and Culture:** A focus for 2024 has been ensuring that KCCC is positioned to pass on the Worker Retention Payment to our staff in full. This will ensure a significant wage increase over 2025 and 2026, with the amount calculated against the sector award. Although funded by a government grant in the short term, KCCC will need to meet this commitment in later years without a sharp increase in fees. We also commit to continue our practice of paying staff above the award rate, both to attract and reward excellence in our KCCC educators.



**Governance:** The incoming Board inherited a strong foundation for the development of strategic and governance excellence. Key action items had been identified and scheduled, and a subcommittee has been established to engage with these items and ensure the fulfilment of our Strategic Plan as we approach 2026.

**Financial Sustainability:** As the cost of living crisis continued through 2024, we implemented a number of initiatives to maximise attendance and utilisation while doing our best to limit fee increases. These initiatives focused on ensuring children were placed in the rooms most relevant for their level of development, facilitating the most appropriate staffing arrangements and freeing up space to welcome new families to the service.

**Community:** Events like our room breakfasts, kindergarten graduations and JJ Holland BBQs are central to our efforts in bringing families together to

sustain KCCC as a community. To support these efforts and empower members to contribute to our events schedule we are establishing a subcommittee to focus on community engagement and capacity building.



These achievements would not have occurred without the support and energy of many, including:

- Our outgoing Directors who have served KCCC over the last year. We especially acknowledge Sam Buckley, who has capped his three years on the Board with a substantial contribution as Chair over 2024. We would also like to thank Jackie Moss, Lily Laskaris and Larissa Taylor for their invaluable contributions during their tenure as Directors of KCCC.
- Our members, and their families or friends, who have lent their efforts to the service over the last year. Whether as part of the ‘Better Together’ fundraising team, or at working bees, or as visitors and volunteers within rooms sharing your stories and experiences with the children. We thank you for your passion for KCCC.
- Our educators especially, but in fact all our staff at KCCC. You continue to demonstrate a commitment to creating a nurturing and enriching environment for our children, an environment where they can explore and flourish in ways that could not be realised without your efforts. We want you to know that this is not just recognised but deeply appreciated.

We look forward to working with you through the new year.

The KCCC Board

## KCCC Board

KCCC is a parent-managed service whose parents are members. The members appoint the Board of Directors of the co-operative. The Board has a governance role and sets the mission, vision and strategic plan for the service.

The Board also appoints the General Manager, who is responsible for the management of the service. We thank the following people who held positions on the KCCC Board during 2024.



Emily Mischlewski  
Chair (interim)



Rebecca Zimmet  
Secretary



Stephanie Martin  
Treasurer



Jordan Lloyd  
Assistant Treasurer



Jane Fan  
Director



Gary Beck  
Director



Sam Buckley  
Chair (outgoing)



Larissa Taylor  
Director (outgoing)



Jackie Moss  
Director (retired)



Lily Laskaris  
Director (retired)

## KCCC Strategic Plan: 2024-2026

### Our purpose

Our purpose is to empower children to be lifelong learners connected to community and culture.

### Our values

Our values reflect our commitment to excellence in all that we do:

- **Learning** – we pursue the highest quality outcomes for children and their families
- **Community** – we care about our community and invest to build connection, participation and belonging
- **Inclusion** – we are intentionally diverse, culturally intelligent and act with fairness and respect
- **Collaboration** – we work as a team and with others to be greater than the sum of our parts
- **Innovation** – we encourage creativity and strive for continuous improvement and excellence



### Our strategic direction

We are committed to providing the highest quality early childhood education and care with and for our community. That means stretching ourselves to meet the expanding needs of children, families and community stakeholders within the expectations and requirements of an evolving sector. Our strategy outlines KCCC's commitment to proactively grow and adapt to ensure we remain a meaningful and valued part of the Kensington community for many years to come.

### Our strategic priorities

Through 2025 and 2026, KCCC will continue working to achieve five strategic priorities:

- **Growth** – advance and sustain our provision and capacity to meet community needs into the future
- **Quality** – be recognised as a high-quality service known for its innovative and adaptive pedagogy
- **Workforce** – establish a reputation as an employer of choice in the sector
- **Community** – further strengthen our collaborative relationships with families and community
- **Governance** – better align our governance and operations with sector standards and best practice

### Progress underway

Advancement of the strategic plan requires holistic effort from the KCCC community. But there are some key callouts to share as we acknowledge progress on each priority.

- **Growth** – Successfully targeted grant opportunities to shape and enable our prospective capital works plan.
- **Quality** – Ran mock assessment in preparation for securing an 'exceeding' rating in all quality areas.
- **Workforce** – Redefinition of Team Leaders role and initiation of professional development program with a focus on culture building.
- **Community** – The continuation of our volunteer incursion program and the repeated success of community fundraising efforts.
- **Governance** – Intensive review and revision of KCCC operational policies and the establishment of a rolling review framework.





### Progress throughout 2024

We are committed to providing the highest quality early childhood education and care with and for our community. That means stretching ourselves to meet the expanding needs of children, families and community stakeholders within the expectations and requirements of an evolving sector. Our strategy outlines KCCC's commitment to proactively grow and adapt to ensure we remain a meaningful and valued part of the Kensington community for many years to come.



## KCCC Philosophy

Our philosophy is a reminder of the commitment and values that we share in our service, a recognition of what drives our work and how we can ensure that our pedagogy and practice are thoughtful, responsive and creative.

KCCC embraces excellence and contemporary practices and fosters collaboration between and with children, families and the community. We are committed to providing contexts that develop a culture of lifelong learning so every child can maximise their full potential.



Through our philosophy we commit to:

- **Continue learning about and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives:**

We acknowledge that all Australian children have a right to know and value the history and current context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the stories of the land on which they live. We genuinely commit to discussing Aboriginal people's history, culture, and spiritual connection to the land.

- **Respect children as active participants, capable and competent rights holders**

We seek to understand each child's identity and heritage and support their wellbeing by being culturally responsive. Each child has had unique and diverse experiences, and we welcome their questions, thoughts, theories, and ideas to create wonder, motivate learning and stimulate the imagination.

- **Ensuring learning is intentional and visible**

Play is a critical and essential context for young children's learning. We recognise our professional responsibility to ensure that all children have opportunities to engage in learning experiences designed with intentionality. We uphold each child's right to agency and balance this with experiences that develop self-regulation skills.

- **Making collaborative relationships with families fundamental to our work**

Children are born connected with family, community and culture and the relationships they develop in the early years are formative and crucial to their sense of belonging. We listen to our community as a catalyst for learning and seek to honor the social and cultural events that are important to them.

- **Respect families' diverse perspectives and aspirations for their children**

Educators honour every family and consider their perspectives, culture, language, traditions, and lifestyles. We seek ways to develop learning communities to build shared understandings of each other's expectations and to build on the strength of each other's knowledge.





- **Foster a sense of belonging to community**

We advocate for children to be visible, vocal, and active in the local community and actively seek to foster community connections. We listen to our community as a catalyst for learning and seek to honor the social and cultural events that are important to them.

- **Educators collaborate with children to create the curriculum**

Careful thought and consideration are given to the importance of the physical, social, and temporal environments. Learning environments are essential to our stakeholders, and we commit to ensuring that these learning contexts for children, families and staff are contemporary and relevant.



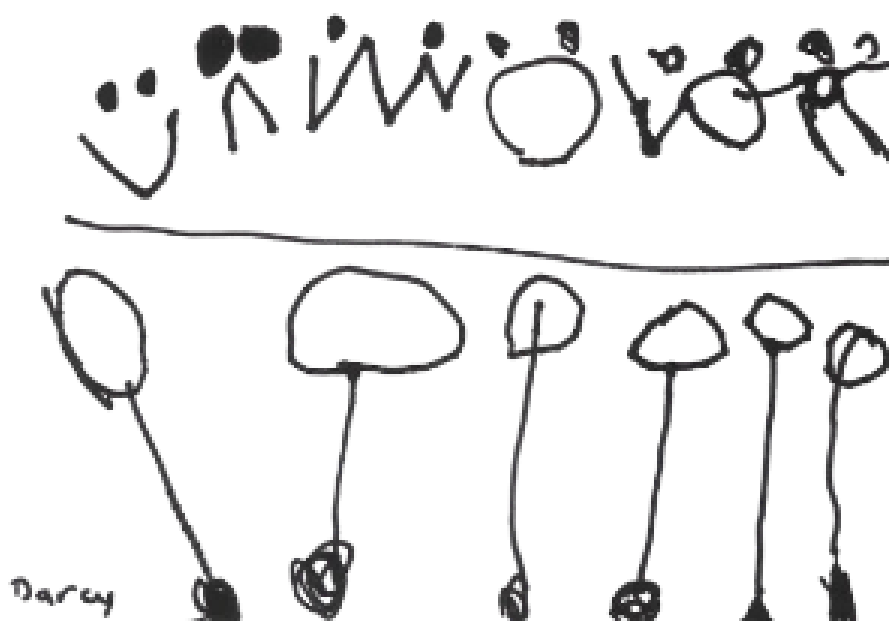
- **Sustainable ways of caring for people and the world**

We seek to promote three dimensions of sustainability; environmental, social, and economic. We utilise sustainable practices in our quest for children to develop a deep connection and appreciation for the natural environment.



- **Build a culture of learning, respect and teamwork**

Our staff are integral and essential to the quality of the programs we offer, and we acknowledge their professionalism. We encourage collaborative leadership that goes beyond formal leadership positions to include leadership by children and educators; we seek to cultivate mutually responsive relationships.





## Commitment to Child Safety

- KCCC is committed to being a child safe organisation. We defend childhood as a valuable stage of life in its own right, which we honour, celebrate and treasure. We seek to understand each child's identity and heritage and support their wellbeing by being culturally responsive.
- We are committed to the rights of all children to feel safe and be safe at all times, to always acting in the best interest of each child and we have zero tolerance of child abuse.
- We are committed to ensuring our team are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour; acceptable responses; warm, trusting and reciprocal interactions when working with children and families.
- We actively manage the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury and harm.
- We commit to creating a culture of child safety at KCCC and in the community, with children, families, educators and teachers. We will continue to work on understanding and implementing the Child Safe Standards to achieve better outcomes for children.



### Victorian Child Safe Standards

**Standard 1:** Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

**Standard 2:** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

**Standard 3:** Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

**Standard 4:** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

**Standard 5:** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

**Standard 6:** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

**Standard 7:** Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

**Standard 8:** Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

**Standard 9:** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

**Standard 10:** Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

**Standard 11:** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.



## Growth

In 2024, we began to see the benefits of the hard work and flexibility demonstrated by our community during the second half of 2023, when we underwent extensive building works. Thanks to this collective effort and resilience, we were able to welcome **58 new families** from the local community into our service – marking a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

The arrival of these new families brought a welcome surge in enrolments, which created the need to expand our educational team. We were fortunate to welcome several passionate and experienced new educators, whose diverse skill sets and fresh perspectives have strengthened our team. Their contributions have supported our ability to maintain educator-to-child ratios and continue delivering high-quality early learning experiences in every room, every day.

This period of growth also allowed us to make meaningful progress on our waitlist, which would have otherwise remained largely untouched due to previous space limitations. Most notably, we were able to offer placements to **all 3- and 4-year-old children** on our waitlist – a result we are particularly proud of. It reflects our strong commitment to supporting families in our local area and ensuring that every child has access to consistent, high-quality early education during their most formative years.

To help us manage our growing footprint and evolving operational needs, we successfully secured several key grants throughout the year:

- **Minor Infrastructure Grant** – This grant will fund the installation of an additional staff toilet, improving the practicality and functionality of our facilities as our staffing needs expand.
- **IT Grant** – This enabled the purchase of two new laptops, which are now used by educators for programming, documentation, and reflective practice. These tools enhance our ability to deliver responsive, evidence-informed learning experiences across all age groups.

In addition to physical and staffing growth, we've also taken steps to strengthen our internal systems, improve onboarding for new team members, and a restructure of our communication with families by creating our newsletter, Early Childhood Matters.

These enhancements ensure that as we expand, we remain aligned with our core values of collaboration, inclusion, and continuous improvement.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on nurturing the warm, connected, and community-driven environment that defines KCCC. We're proud of our journey so far and excited to build on this momentum in the years to come.





## Quality

At KCCC, child-centered decision making is at the heart of our commitment to quality. Grounded in a culture of continuous improvement, we strive to ensure the best possible outcomes for all children in our care. In 2024, we took deliberate and strategic steps to strengthen our quality practices and further embed reflection, collaboration, and accountability across the service.



A significant development was the formation of the **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Leadership Committee**, established under the guidance of General Manager **Kim Knersch** and the KCCC Leadership Team. This committee represents a whole-of-service approach to quality, with one representative from each educational program at KCCC ensuring that every learning environment has a voice in shaping service-wide improvements.

The QIP Leadership Committee was guided by the development of a tailored resource – the **Quality Improvement Plan Continuous Improvement Guide**. This guide was designed to support educators and leaders in identifying and documenting actions for improvement in a consistent and meaningful way. A key aim of the committee is to support educators in understanding the fundamentals of the **National Quality Framework (NQF)** and to encourage reflection on daily practices at a deeper level. The guide serves as both a practical tool and a shared framework to ensure alignment with the NQF and KCCC's philosophy and values.



Using this guide, the committee worked collaboratively to map current practices, reflect on opportunities for growth, and set clear, achievable goals across all seven Quality Areas of the NQF. This has enabled a more cohesive and transparent approach to quality improvement planning and ensures that each program contributes to and is supported in achieving service-wide priorities.

While the development of the guide and formation of the QIP Leadership Committee mark significant progress, this is just the beginning. We are committed to deepening our culture of self-reflection and continuous improvement to ensure that every decision we make continues to support the wellbeing, learning, and development of all children at KCCC.





## Workforce



At KCCC, our workforce is the heart of the service. In 2024, our team comprised 76 dedicated full-time, part-time and casual staff, spanning roles from Certificate III trainees to experienced Early Childhood Teachers. Our workforce also includes passionate kitchen staff and a knowledgeable administration and leadership team who support with providing a smooth operation of the service.

With a median staff tenure of 5.64 years and our longest-serving team member reaching 28 years in 2024, we believe this longevity is a key factor in what makes KCCC such a special place for children, families and staff alike. Our team is a blend of experienced professionals and “homegrown” talent — those who have come through our traineeship programs or joined us after completing student placements. This mix of experience and fresh perspectives fosters continuous improvement and innovation across the service.

Our multicultural team reflects the diverse community we serve. This cultural richness helps us create a culturally safe and inclusive environment for all children and families, embedding a wide range of perspectives and life experiences into our programs and practice. We draw on our team’s knowledge and backgrounds to deliver dynamic, engaging and responsive learning experiences.

### Workforce Development and Leadership

One of our key workforce goals in 2024 was to strengthen leadership capacity across all roles. At KCCC, we believe **leadership is not a title — it’s a mindset**. Every employee, regardless of their role, is encouraged to develop strong leadership qualities that contribute to the collective success of our service. To support this, we engaged a range of external consultants and professionals to lead professional development opportunities across the year, including:

- March PD Day with Kerrie O’Neill – Child Safety, First aid, CPR and compliance training
- Staggered Workshops with Victoria (Child Psychologist) and Trudy (Speech Pathologist) throughout the year
- October Leadership PD with Cathryn Hydon – Exploring the key principles of early years leadership

These sessions supported professional growth, collaboration, and critical reflection, helping staff build confidence and capacity in their roles.



## Upskilling and Professional Achievement

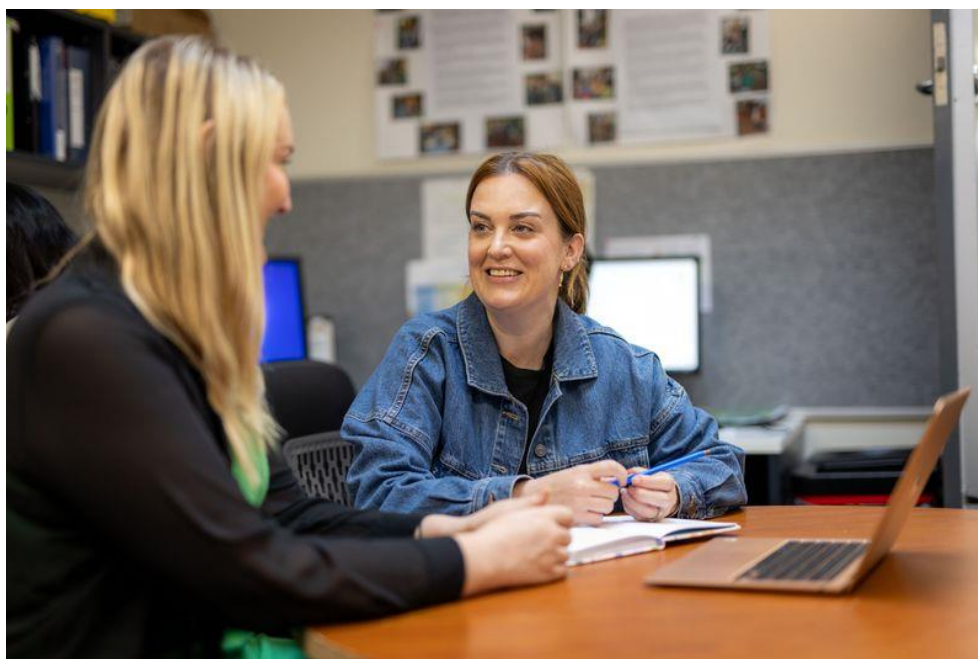
We're proud to celebrate the professional milestones achieved by our team in 2024. Several staff members successfully completed qualifications, strengthening the capacity of our workforce:

- Devi – Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (9 Dec 2024)
- Manli – Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (31 Mar 2024)
- Rowshan – Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (12 Dec 2024)
- Sherina – Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (14 July 2024)

- Sidney – Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (12 Dec 2024)
- Agnes L – Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (6 Oct 2024)

These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our educators and the supportive learning environment KCCC fosters. We look forward to continuing this journey of professional growth into the coming year.

We place great emphasis on fostering a culturally safe environment, a commitment upheld by our multicultural team.



## Pedagogy and Practice

KCCC, our pedagogy is grounded in the belief that children are capable, competent learners with unique strengths and ideas. Throughout 2024, our educators worked collaboratively to create inclusive and engaging environments that reflected the diverse needs of our community. Guided by the *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)*, *National Quality Standards (NQS)*, and our evolving *Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)*, we focused on building strong relationships, intentional teaching practices, and meaningful connections with families and children.



### Relationship-Driven Pedagogy and Transitions

The year began with a focus on building secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children and families. Carefully planned orientation processes, the use of social stories, and warm communication helped children transition into new environments with confidence. Recognising that each child responds differently to change, our educators implemented personalised strategies to support their emotional wellbeing and a strong sense of belonging.

"Once children begin to form relationships, learn new routines and feel a sense of belonging in the new setting, drop-offs become less anxiety-provoking and more positive for all involved." *Kitty*

### Strengthening Families as Partners

KCCC places a strong emphasis on family engagement. Throughout the year, families were invited to participate in Information Nights, Excursions, National Simultaneous Storytime, and a wide range of cultural events including Lunar New Year, Diwali, and Morning Tea for Culture. Platforms such as Storypark were actively used to share learning, encourage feedback and foster two-way communication. Families volunteered their time and skill sharing parts of their culture, identity and interests within educational programs, reading stories and contributing at KCCC's Working Bee.

"Inviting families to share your culture, interests and skills are ways to foster connection and help to strengthen children's sense of being and belonging here at our service." *Oliver*





## Community Engagement and Excursions

KCCC's renowned excursion Program flourished, offering children opportunities to connect with their local and broader community. Excursions to The Venny, Scienceworks, Koorie Heritage Trust, and Melbourne Museum provided rich provocations that supported learning across identity, sustainability, and belonging.

"Children build a sense of belonging in their community where they learn, grow and play. Also, they build their respectful relationships through participating in excursions together."

*Naya, Kindergarten Teacher*



## Cultural Competency and Inclusion

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives has been a priority, with children engaging in activities such as Acknowledgment of Country creation, learning songs like *Blackfella/Whitefella*, and participating in NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events.

"Helping children learn about diversity from a place of curiosity and respect guides decision making, ensuring all children feel represented in their educational programs." *Pauline, Kindergarten Teacher*

## Empowering Children Through Voice and Safety

Programs such as *Body Safety Superstars* and fundraising for Bravehearts Day highlighted our commitment to child safety and advocacy. These initiatives empowered children to identify trusted adults, understand personal boundaries, and build emotional literacy.

"I am the Boss of my Body, when someone is too close, you can say stop I don't like it!" *Ay/a, 5YO*

## Educator Professional Development

Ongoing professional development remains a cornerstone of KCCC's commitment to quality early childhood education. In 2024, educators participated in a wide variety of training opportunities, through School Readiness Funding allocations, that enhanced their knowledge, skills, and leadership capacity. These included:

- Teacher Talk workshops with speech pathologist Trudy Van Meggelen
- Baby Sign Language training for under-3 educators
- Respectful Relationships and Anti-Bias Education workshops
- Leadership Masterclass with Catharine Hydon on "Powerful Professionalism"
- Sleep Smart Training and "Sharing Sensitive News" seminars

Educators also engaged in reflective communities of practice through our RAP and QIP leadership teams and mentored numerous student placements from universities across Melbourne.



## Documentation and Visible Learning

Children's learning was documented through Storypark, room displays, and collaborative projects that highlighted interests in sustainability, identity, and inquiry. Educators engage in consistent learning and development conversations with families throughout the year to communicate children's progress and wellbeing here at KCCC. Children are consulted in their learning environment and considered in the design of our emergent curriculum, children's voices and ideas help to guide program decision-making to ensure their rights and autonomy is valued within our space.

"When learning is intentional and reflective of our children, their families and community, it resonates and becomes holistic in nature." *Kitty*

## School Readiness and Positive Transitions

Kindergarten teams worked collaboratively with families, local schools, and allied health professionals to support children's transitions to school. Transition Learning and Development Statements were thoughtfully completed for all Kindergarten-leavers. Kindergarten programs also organised local excursions with foundation school groups during Term 4 to support children's transitions to school.

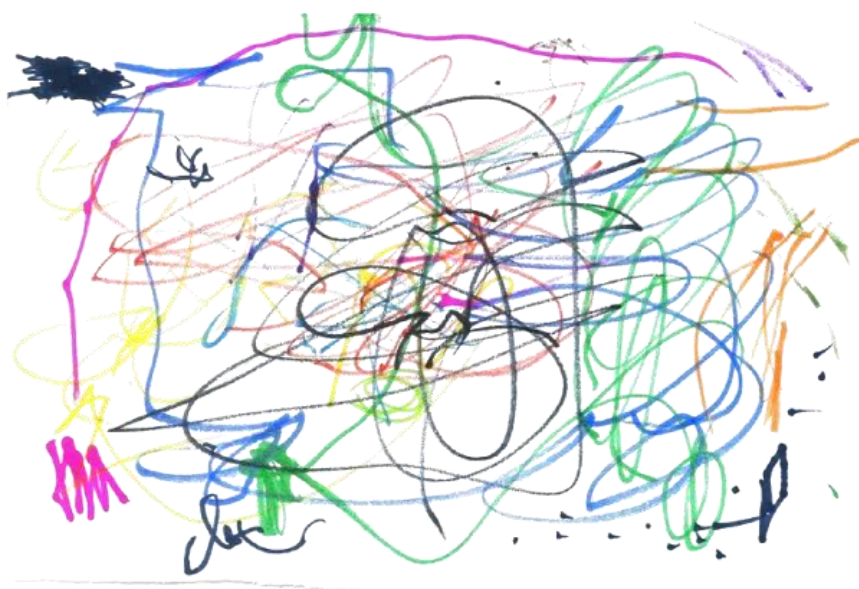
"These statements offered valuable insights into each child's development, learning progress, and readiness for the next phase of their education."  
*Ray, Kindergarten Teacher*



## Sustainability and Environmental Awareness

Children engaged in composting, gardening, and recycling initiatives supported by our Compost Concierge, Dave Goodman. Fundraisers such as the introduction of the "Can-Do" recycling initiative saw children actively contribute ideas and vote on how to allocate funds, empowering their sense of agency and citizenship whilst developing a love of simple sustainable practices. We are thrilled to watch this initiative evolve in the coming educational year ahead.

"Supporting children's learning of sustainable ways to care for the environment is a key component of KCCC's philosophy. They simply love connecting with nature and getting into the garden" *Cheryl, Educator*



## Community Connections

At KCCC, building strong connections with our local community is at the heart of our philosophy. These connections are formed in many meaningful ways—through excursions and incursions inspired by children’s interests, community partnerships, family engagement initiatives, and shared celebrations.

These experiences do more than enrich learning — they create authentic, real-world opportunities that strengthen children’s understanding of the world around them. Most importantly, they foster a sense of belonging and connection for every child and family that’s part of our service.

### Excursions and Incursions

After several years of lockdowns and restrictions, 2024 marked a welcome return to uninterrupted community engagement. With greater freedom to explore, our educators were able to extend learning well beyond our walls from beginning to end – supporting children’s development through experiences across both local and citywide locations.

#### Local excursions

- JJ Holland Park
- Women’s Peace Garden
- Newell’s Paddock Wetlands
- Kensington Food Forest
- Kensington/Flemington Library
- Skinny Park
- The Venny (4-Year-Old Kindergarten)
- Kensington Neighbourhood House
- Kensington Primary School
- Holy Rosary Primary School



#### Excursions beyond Kensington

- Marvel Stadium
- Federation Square
- National Gallery of Victoria
- The Ian Potter Centre
- ACMI
- East Melbourne Fire Brigade
- Koorie Heritage Trust
- Birrarung Marr
- Melbourne Museum & Carlton Gardens
- Scienceworks
- Fire Services Museum, East Melbourne





### On-site incursions included

- Footscray station, Melbourne Fire Brigade Visit
- Greek Dance and Culture
- Dental Health Visits
- Musical Minds Music Education

These experiences not only supported curriculum learning but helped children build confidence, curiosity, and connection with the broader community.

### Sustained Community Partnerships

With 27 years of operation, KCCC has nurtured many long-standing partnerships across our local and professional community. These partnerships enrich our service, support educator development, and create opportunities for children to experience a wide range of ideas and initiatives.

In 2024, we continued to work with a number of valued organisations in areas such as sustainability, school readiness, and tertiary student placements:

- **The University of Melbourne** – Student Placement Partnership
- **Australian Catholic University** – Student Placement Partnership
- **Deakin University** – Student Placement Partnership
- **Victoria University** – Student Placement Partnership
- **Simonds Catholic College** – Work Placement Program
- **City of Melbourne** – Compost Concierge Sustainability Program
- **The Venny** – Community Partner
- **Kensington Neighbourhood House** – Community Engagement Partner

These connections support continuous improvement and innovation across our service.

### Family and Community Engagement

Our parent-led committees continue to play a vital role in bringing the KCCC community together. Their ideas, skillsets, and generous efforts help us enhance our facilities, raise funds, and organise meaningful community events.



## Fundraising and community events in 2024 included:

- KCCC's "Can Do" Initiative
- Family Photo Fundraiser
- Halloween Boo-Gie
- Tea Towel Fundraiser
- Tony's Pies Fundraiser
- Second-Hand Book Sale
- Morning Tea for Culture – \$585 raised for Aboriginal Children in Care
- Teddy Bear Picnic
- Mother's Day & Father's Day Celebrations
- Footy Colours Day

These events contribute directly to our ability to improve resources, upgrade environments, and continue offering high-quality experiences for children and families.

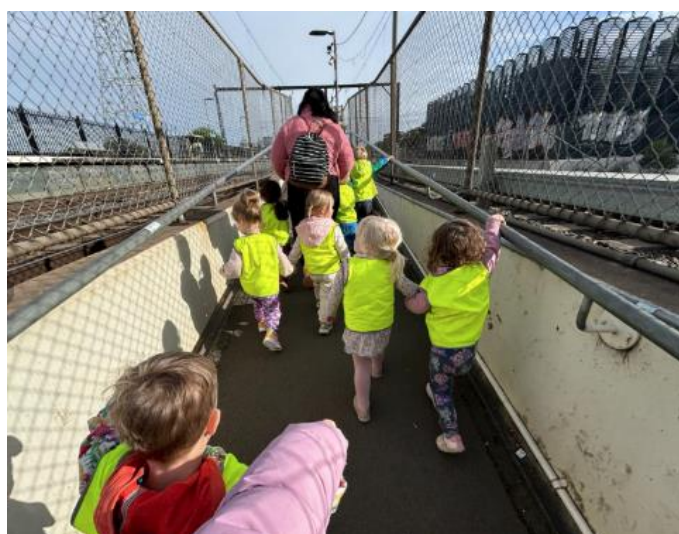


## Celebrating together

Celebrating together as a community is a cornerstone of the KCCC experience. In 2024, we hosted a number of events designed to bring families together, foster connections, and share important learning moments:

- Welcome Event – 29 January
- Parent Information Evening – 31 January
- Working Bee – 10 February
- Body Safety Superstars Parent Session
- End-of-Year Family Celebration

These shared experiences help strengthen our relationships with families and ensure every member of our community feels welcome, valued, and involved.





## Governance – Sub-Committee Reports

### Better Together Sub-Committee

KCCC's fundraising activities and community events are an important part of our centre's culture and identity, whilst also raising funds that can be used to enhance the programs and resources of our centre. Over the past year, the 'Better Together' Fundraising and Events Committee has been working hard behind the scenes to organise and lead a series of successful initiatives that have significantly benefited our centre. Their efforts included organising a popular pie drive, a well-attended book fair, and a Bunnings sausage sizzle that not only raised essential funds but also strengthened community ties. The highlight of the year was the Halloween Boo-gie, an afternoon filled with spooky fun, music and games that brought together many of our families from the KCCC community. The associated online auction resulted in a substantial contribution to our fundraising goals. We extend our heartfelt thanks to every committee member for their unwavering commitment and to all the families who participated and supported these events.

### Risk and Compliance Sub-Committee

Building on the progress achieved in 2024, the Risk and Compliance Sub-Committee welcomed two new members in 2025 – Director Jane Fan and Operations Manager Oliver Leigh.

Significant work was undertaken to assess the adequacy of the KCCC's insurance policies. A gap assessment and benchmarking exercise was performed which identified some areas for improvement which have since been actioned. In addition, we progressed the update and improvement of KCCC's risk appetite statement and risk management framework which will guide KCCC's future progress towards achieving its strategic plan.

At the Board level, Governance training and assessments were performed by an independent third party, with a number of recommended actions accepted by the Board. Among these were the review and update of key policy documents and development of a Governance Action Plan.

Given the importance placed on the Governance Action Plan – a dedicated subcommittee has been formed to prioritise and implement agreed actions. The goal of this is to drive continual improvement in KCCC's overall governance and risk management framework.

### Capital Works Sub-Committee

In 2023 we secured a significant 'Building Blocks' grant from the Victorian Government, allowing for an upgrade to our centre and the expansion of kindergarten places. This increased attendance has not been without its challenges however. Both staff and children's amenities were identified as areas needing complementary work.

We are pleased to report success in a follow-up grant application to improve and expand the amenities for both staff and children across the centre. By the time of publication you will have seen upgrades commence to the staff toilets located in the western corridor between KCCC and MCH. Upgrades to the toilet and change rooms within Yarragum and Gumnut rooms will shortly follow. These interventions will be completed, with minimal disruption for children, before the second half of 2025.

We have also explored opportunities to uplift our common areas, reception and make further improvements to the yard. Rorie Clarke led efforts to develop an exciting design proposal, reimagining the possibilities for educational play and discovery within our outdoor space. This proposal formed the basis for a major grant application, which was unfortunately unsuccessful. However, we intend to build upon this experience and reapply later this year should a similar grants program open as anticipated. We will also look to leverage the design in steering a series of smaller, self-funded interventions in the playground.





## KCCC Reconciliation Action Plan

Ongoing commitment to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives continued to shape our programs, practices, and everyday conversations with children in 2024. This work is not incidental — it is deliberate, evolving, and central to who we are as a community.

We believe that early education plays a vital role in shaping a child's understanding of the world and their place within it. In 2024, our educators continued to embed cultural diversity, equity, and respect meaningfully into our programs, ensuring that every child feels seen, valued, and connected to their community.

We recognise that young children are capable, curious learners who develop empathy and identity through relationships and experiences. By intentionally embedding diverse cultural perspectives into our curriculum — including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures — we create opportunities for children to engage in different ways of knowing, being, and belonging. This includes storytelling, music, language, art, food, and shared celebrations that reflect the richness of our local and global communities.

As part of our ongoing work, we acknowledge the unceded lands of the **Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation**, on which we learn and play. We continue to foster respectful relationships with Aboriginal communities and incorporate First Nations perspectives in authentic, age-appropriate ways that reflect children's questions, interests, and lived experiences.

Cultural responsiveness is not a one-off event — it is a daily practice of listening, learning, and evolving.

Educators engage in professional learning, reflective conversations, and collaborative planning to ensure that inclusion and respect are not just taught but modelled and lived. Families are active partners in this work, enriching our programs with their unique knowledge, languages, and traditions.

Through these practices, KCCC remains committed to cultivating a community where diversity is embraced, every child's cultural identity is honoured, and all children grow up with a deep respect for others and the world around them.

### Our Commitment to Cultural Inclusion

We are committed to nurturing a learning environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel genuinely welcomed, valued, and respected as integral members of our community.

By fostering ongoing relationships built on listening, dialogue, and mutual respect, we aim to create meaningful opportunities for cultural knowledge to be shared, understood, and embedded within our practice.

We will continue to ensure that First Nations voices, languages, and perspectives are authentically reflected across our programs.

Caring for Country remains a core value at KCCC — deeply woven into our curriculum, everyday interactions, and sustainability practices. This commitment continues to shape the direction of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and guide our future learning



## Embedding Aboriginal Culture – 2024 Highlights

### NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week Celebrations

- Held Morning Tea for Culture with family participation to raise awareness and funds for Aboriginal children in care (raised \$585 for VACC)
- Organised the **Rainbow Serpent Incursion** with Reptile Encounters to educate children on the cultural significance of native animals in Aboriginal culture
- Children learned to sing and performed the Reconciliation Week choir song Black Fella/White Fella by the Wurrumpi Band

### Excursions to Cultural Spaces

- Children attended a guided experience at the **Koorie Heritage Trust**, promoting firsthand learning about Aboriginal history and cultural practices
- Visits to the **Melbourne Museum** and **National Gallery of Victoria** exploring Aboriginal exhibitions across the year

### Curriculum and Storytelling

- Educators used **social stories and narratives** connected to Aboriginal perspectives during transitions and daily routines, contributing to children's awareness and respect for Indigenous heritage. Children created meaningful acknowledgements to country and opened daily group times with this respectful ritual

### Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Engagement

- Educators participated in **monthly RAP meetings** to guide practice and reflection on embedding Indigenous perspectives across programs
- **Kristine Willems**, a guest speaker, was invited to a RAP meeting to further develop educator knowledge and understanding of complexities faced in remote communities of Australia.

### Cultural Representation in Art and Displays

- Children's artworks reflecting Indigenous symbols and stories were displayed around the service, including decorations for the **KCCC Giving Tree** initiative in December

### Continuous Truth-telling and Historical Acknowledgment

- Ongoing incorporation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, language, and stories in everyday educational programs as part of the commitment to truth-telling

### Educator Professional Learning and Cultural Responsiveness

- Discussions and reflective practices during all-staff meetings and RAP sessions supported educators in embedding Aboriginal perspectives intentionally and respectfully across the service.
- KCCC Educators continue to display interest in deepening their cultural understanding and learning ways to respectfully embed first peoples culture into our curriculum.





## 2024 Financial Commentary

The financial result for Kensington Community Children's Co-operative (KCCC) in 2024 was a **\$292k surplus** (2023: \$519k surplus). After adjusting for the Victorian State Government's Building Blocks grants and related depreciation expense (as detailed below), the **operating result was a \$203k surplus** (2023: \$21k deficit). Operating revenue increased due to higher licenced places, increased kinder funding and a mid-year fee increase. Expenses increased with the increased numbers of children attending, however total operating expenses were 96.4% of operating revenue (2023: 100%) due to staff not receiving expected pay increases under the PCS and VECTEA agreements.

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2024 \$'k	2023 \$'k	Change %
Operating revenue	5,716	5,101	10.8%
Expenses	(5,513)	(5,122)	7.1%
<b>Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>(21)</b>	
<i>Non-operating revenue and expenditure included in financial statements</i>			
ECEC Workforce grant – revenue	18	-	
Building Blocks grant – revenue	149	540	
Building Blocks grant – depreciation	(78)	-	
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) per financial statements</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>519</b>	

### Accounting treatment of grants

#### *Building Blocks grant – accounting treatment*

In 2022, KCCC applied and was successful in receiving a \$600k Victorian State Government Building Blocks grant through the 'Free Kinder' initiative, which is part of the 'Best Start, Best Life' reforms. These grants were provided to services to modify and expand their existing operations and increase the number of licenced places to accommodate the increase in 'Free Kinder' hours in the coming years. As part of the grant conditions, KCCC had to contribute \$75k to the works and commit to an increase of 22 licenced places.

Throughout 2023, a number of rooms were reconfigured to maximise child/educator ratios and provide flexibility across the service, and the outdoor spaces were also reconfigured to ensure alignment with the increased number of places. Overall, KCCC achieved an increase of 26 licenced places taking the service to 166 licenced places.

The relevant accounting standards require the grant to be recognised as revenue in the annual financial statements as the grant milestones are completed.

This resulted in \$540k of the grant being recognised in 2023, with the remaining \$60k of the grant recognised

in 2024. This revenue has been excluded from the operating result as depicted in the 'Operating Surplus/(Deficit)' in the table above.

However, the relevant accounting standards require the cost of the building works to be classified as an asset (leasehold improvements) on the balance sheet, and is to be depreciated over 10 years. The depreciation expense of \$78k per year will be excluded from the operating result for the 10 years from 2024.

KCCC has also been awarded a further Building Blocks grant of \$127k to upgrade staff and children's toilets – these works are being completed in 2025. In the 2024 year, we received \$89k of this grant.

#### *ECEC Workforce grant – accounting treatment*

In 2024, KCCC was also awarded an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Workforce professional development grant of \$18k to assist with educator retention and upskilling. This is recognised as Revenue from operations (Grants – Other) in the financial statements. As this grant will be expended in 2025, this has been excluded from operating revenue in 2024 for management reporting purposes.

## Revenue from operations

In 2024, revenue from parent fees and Government funding increased by 13.6%. The increase is mostly attributable to the increase in licenced places by 18.6%, from 140 at the start of 2023 to 166 by February 2024. Occupancy in 2024 was lower than in 2023 (92.2% v 95.4%) which is why the revenue has not increased proportionally to the increase in places.

Overall, operating revenue increased by 12%. While interest income was \$10.5k higher in 2024 due to a higher amount invested in a term deposit, Inclusion Support Subsidy funding was lower by \$24.5k and Wage Subsidies were lower by \$23.3k. This revenue is dependent on the eligibility of children and staff for each type of funding and will vary from year to year.

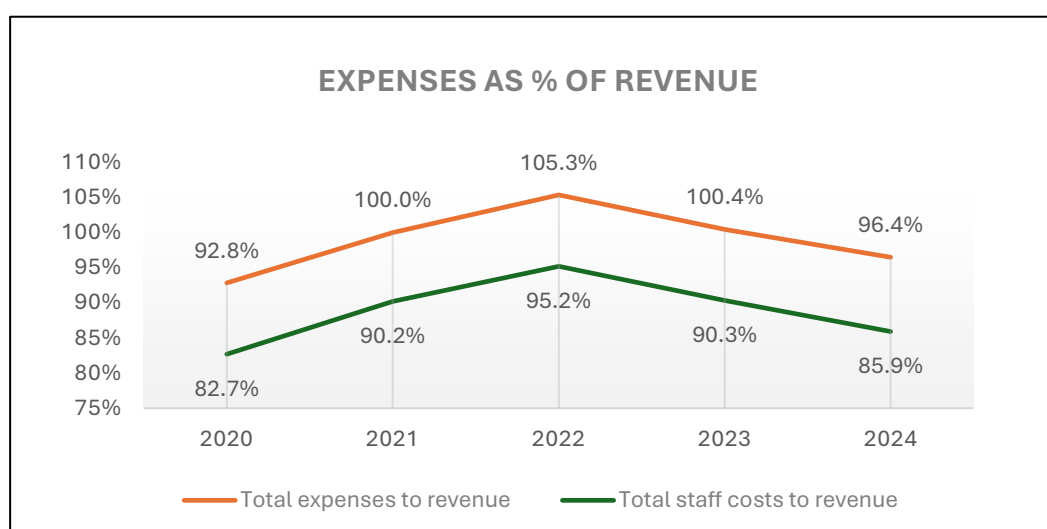
## Expenses from operations

Expenses increased across labour (staff costs), operating and children's expenses. Labour is the service's largest expense, increasing 6.6%, attributable to an increase in staffing to align with the expansion of licenced places. Staff costs as a percentage of revenue decreased to 86% (2023: 90%). Kinder teachers and educators employed under the VECTEA and PCS enterprise agreements did not receive pay increases in 2024, as both agreements expired in this period and are still being renegotiated. It is likely that any wage increases under these agreements in 2025 will be funded by increased kinder funding (for VECTEA) and

the Worker Retention Grant for those staff employed under the PCS, if the Worker Retention Grant application is successful.

Operating and children's expenses increased due to the increase in licenced places and inflationary pressures. Thanks to the support provided by the City of Melbourne (CoM) in relation to property rental, cleaning, water and maintenance services, we have been fortunate to have lower operating costs than we may otherwise face in prior years. CoM have passed on the cost of maintenance to KCCC in 2024, which totalled \$10.3k. CoM has indicated that KCCC will be responsible for the cost of cleaning and water from January 2025. This increase in operating costs in future periods will be tightly managed to minimise the increase in fees to families.

The chart below presents expenditure as a percentage of operating revenue from both a total and staff only perspective. The percentage increase experienced in 2022 was driven by increased labour levels due to staff utilising leave after the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst the lower percentages in 2020 was due to the significant COVID-19 Government funding received. The percentages in 2024 are driven by proportionally lower staff costs, mostly due to staff not receiving wage increases under the VECTEA and PCS enterprise agreements.



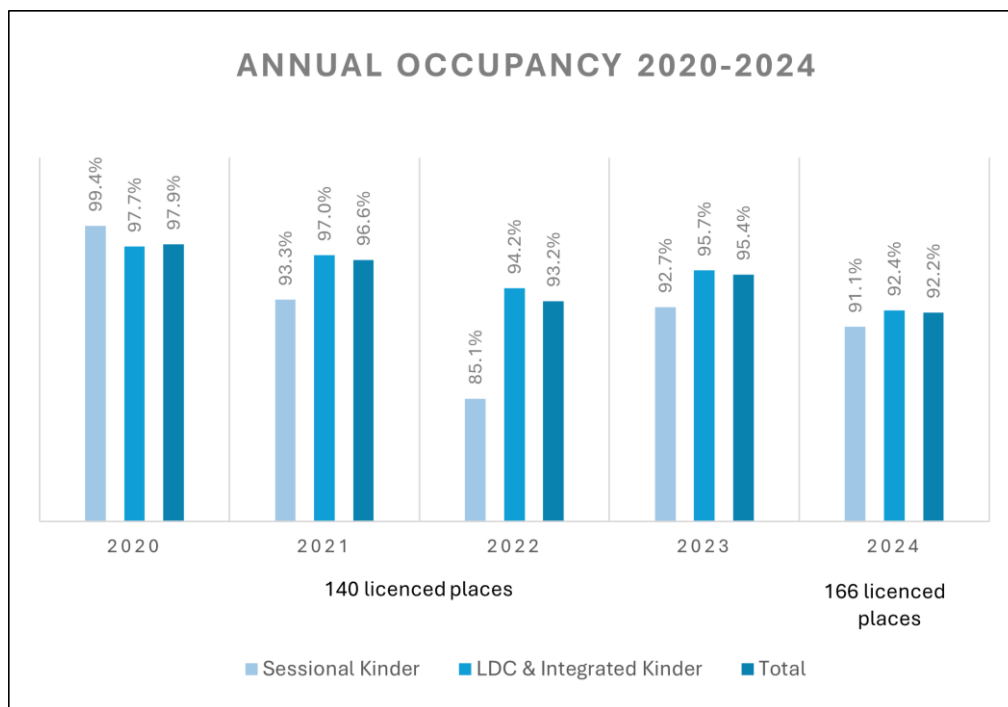


## Occupancy

During 2024, average occupancy was at 92.2% across all programs at KCCC, which was a 3.1% decrease on 2023. This is largely due to the uncertain timing of the increased licenced places becoming available, which occurred from February 2024. We were unable to maximise integrated kinder places until the building works had been completed and approved, by which time there were no families on the kindergarten waiting list. In May 2024, we initiated a room swap between the Banksia and Boronia rooms, which meant additional places were available for families requiring long daycare only in the 1-3 age group. Several factors have impacted occupancy levels over the last few years, including a

significant number of families leaving the area during the pandemic, the introduction of the state government's 'Free Kinder' initiative coupled with the impact of flexible working post pandemic, which has changed how families manage their care requirements.

As a not-for-profit service that seeks to achieve a break-even result, high occupancy levels that maximise revenue are critical to the service remaining financially stable. High occupancy also ensures we are making available to our families as many places as possible and serving our community's needs for early childhood care and education to our maximum capacity.



*Note: the number of licenced places was increased to 166 from 1 February 2024*

## Long Term Financial Viability

Pleasingly, KCCC is in a strong financial position. Given this, there are future plans to further reinvest and continue to provide benefits for children, families, staff and the centre. Long-term planning is based on continuing to deliver annual breakeven or surplus results whilst utilising the retained earnings for reinvestment. The impact of reinvestment has reduced current assets and increased non-current assets, which impacts the Current Ratio calculation. This ratio shows the service's ability to repay short-term obligations and the ability to absorb sudden operational changes such as the impact of staff coverage post COVID. As the service is in a reinvestment phase, the target metric is to maintain a ratio greater than 1.5.

The chart below shows KCCC's current ratio decreased in 2023 due to post COVID staff coverage in 2022 and reinvestment in 2023. However, in 2024, the current ratio continues to be strong at 2.02.

