

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025



every child **thriving**  
**aracy**





## About ARACY

ARACY's purpose is clear: to champion all Australian children and young people to thrive. As their needs grow and change, so too must the support systems surrounding them. We back good practices and best policies to prevent disease and provide the best conditions for their holistic health. Our team stands at the frontline of this mission, bringing together the latest evidence, practitioners and policymakers to develop child-centered strategies that make a real difference.

## Acknowledgment of Country

ARACY acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their enduring connection to the lands, waters, and skies. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In solidarity, ARACY supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the need for truth-telling about the history and impact of colonisation. We treasure the rich and diverse cultures and customs of First Nations people - valued knowledge holders, leaders and partners in creating the conditions for all our children to thrive.

*"Set an imagination agenda for our classrooms, remove the limited thinking around our disadvantage, stop looking at us as a problem to fix, set us free to be the solution and give us the stage to light up the world" - Imagination Declaration (2019)*



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# Our Year at a Glance

## July 2024

- 3 Jul BaptistCare Workshop
- 23 Jul Intergenerational Cohort Consortium (webinar)

## August 2024

- 6 Aug Hands Up Mallee, Mildura (workshop)
- 13 Aug ECIA Roundtable
- 20 Aug Child Rights Framing in Australia

## September 2024

- 4 Sept DCJ SWS CoP Workshop (online)
- 11 Sept Maximising the Middle Practitioner Training
- 17 Sept ECA Conference
- 24 Sept AI in Education Webinar
- 25 Sept Webinar The Early Years Catalyst - Built to win

## October 2024

- 8 Oct ARACY Website Launched
- 8 Oct WA Launch of the Australian Youth & Child Wellbeing Atlas
- 10 Oct Parliament House: Youth Justice & Digital Divide Event
- 18 Oct Maximising the Middle Practitioner Training
- 18 Oct Child Unlimited Roundtable
- 21 Oct Hosted Act for Children Roundtable "Lessons from Scotland"
- 23 Oct Pathways to Stability: understanding and Preventing Youth Homelessness
- 25 Oct UNSW Forum: Universal ECEC & Families in Poverty
- 29 Oct ACMS "12 Months On" Event

## November 2024

- 12 Nov GenV Advisory Committee #3
- 19 Nov NELLC Meeting
- 20 Nov Future Healthy Countdown Launch
- 21 Nov Intergenerational Fairness Coalition Summit
- 22 Nov Maximising the Middle Practitioner Training
- 26 Nov ECIA Roundtable
- 26 Nov PCRG Meeting #1
- 28 Nov DSS CfC Working Group Workshop

## December 2024

- 2 Dec SEED Futures Primary Prevention Working Group
- 3 Dec Future Healthy Countdown 2030 Webinar
- 3 Dec National Child and Family Hubs Network Webinar: "Bringing the Elements Together"
- 4 Dec Hosted Act for Children Roundtable "Can we make children's rights real?"

## January 2025

- 14 Jan Free TAFE Submission
- 23 Jan Future Healthy Countdown 2030 Strategy Meeting
- 28 Jan Maximising the Middle Planning Workshop (Sydney)



## **February 2025**

- 7 Feb 10th Council on Early Childhood Development
- 10 Feb Future Generations Private Members Bill Launch (Parliament House)
- 10 Feb CRCS Workshop
- 11 Feb End Child Poverty Campaign Leadership Group Meeting
- 14 Feb Young & Wise Report Launch feat. National Children's Commissioner
- 17 Feb Meeting with Fearless Women
- 18 Feb ECIA Roundtable (IDAC)
- 18 Feb Helsinki TCA Masterclass
- 20 Feb CfC Working Group Meeting
- 26 Feb Minderoo Kickoff Meetings (Perth)
- 26 Feb Elevate Diverse Voices (Minderoo)
- 27 Feb Parent Engagement Masterclass (International Schools QLD)
- 27 Feb ISQ Mastering Parent Engagement Program

## **March 2025**

- 4 Mar Parent Networks Project Kickoff
- 12 Mar Young and Wise Roundtable - Social Media & Mental Health
- 17 Mar End Child Poverty Strategy Day
- 19 Mar WA Children's Funder's Alliance launched
- 20 Mar DSS CfC Workshop #2
- 26 Mar Young and Wise Roundtable - Budget & Election Priorities

## **April 2025**

- 9 Apr 1st Young and Wise Ambassador Meeting
- 10 Apr PCRG Meeting #2
- 29 Apr Presented Young and Wise to the Preventative Health Conference
- 30 Apr FHC 2030 Steering Group Meeting

## **May 2025**

- 1 May Young and Wise Roundtable - Nutrition
- 1 May Micah Projects TCA Workshop
- 2 May PlayMatters Workshop (Brisbane)
- 7 May CRCS Evaluation Workshop
- 13 May ECIA Meeting (IDAC)
- 14 May Young and Wise Roundtable - Sexual Education & Contraception
- 15 May Webinar launch of UNICEF + ARACY's Building a Secure Future report
- 22 May Northcott Workshop (North Sydney)
- 23 May QLD Engagement (KS & MC)
- 28 May Northcott Workshop (Western Sydney)

## **June 2025**

- 17 Jun Early Years Policy Summit + TQKP Phase 3 Launch
- 19 Jun Shaping Futures Symposium: Status of Children & Young People in Australia
- 24 Jun Showcasing The Nest webinar
- 26 Jun Justice Reform Initiative's 18<sup>th</sup> Reintegration Puzzle Conference
- 25 Jun Northcott Training (Gillieston Heights & Speers Point)

# Year in review

## A message from our Chair Shamal Dass



In last year's message, I reflected on the evolution of ARACY to fulfil our aspiration, an Australia where 'all children and young people are loved and thriving'. This evolution has continued this year, whilst facing into the challenges that necessarily accompany systems change initiatives.

But it is this focus on our children and young people that provides us with the north star as we face into these challenges.

In terms of our most visible initiatives, we continued to strengthen our convening muscle as we commence the next phase of **Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership** (TQKP) and made progress in fully resourcing the **Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children** (IDAC). In Western Australia, we now have the **WA Children's Funders Alliance** (WA-CFA) which anchors us locally - aligning the effort across community, services and philanthropy.


We also launched **Young & Wise**, which brings together insight from consultations with children and young people over the last five years. It has given us the platform to amplify what young people say about how systems manifest in their lives - what helps, what gets in the way, and where small, practical changes would make the biggest difference. These critical insights (alongside **The Nest** framework) are the foundations of our conversations in all the places of power where impactful decisions can, and should, be made.

There are too many partners and collaborators to thank individually, but I want to convey the deep gratitude of those individuals across **community, governments, philanthropy, academia, and the for-purpose** sector for their trust and teamwork. In addition, the Board thanks CEO **Prue Warrilow** for her leadership, alongside executive convenors **Simon Factor** (IDAC), **Michael Hogan** (TQKP) and **Megan Enders** (WA-CFA) for their commitment and care. And just as importantly, all those across ARACY, IDAC and TQKP who do the work every day.

Finally, I would like to personally thank the Board for their guidance and support, especially Deputy Chair **Dr Jenny Proimos**, who has supported me significantly. I welcome **James Waddell** to the Board, and it is with mixed emotions, that we say farewell to **Professor Stephen Zubrick** who will be stepping off the Board in December after many years of contribution. His towering intellect is only surpassed by his integrity and generosity - he will be missed.

As we look forward to 2026, the Board and the team remain focused on further enhancing our capability and capacity to deliver - whilst activities like strategic planning and coalition building are important, the only thing that matters at the end of the day will be lasting, positive outcomes in the lives of children and their families, in the communities in which they live.



A close-up photograph of a young child with curly blonde hair and green eyes, holding a small yellow flower in their right hand. The child is wearing a pink and white patterned sweater. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The lighting is bright and natural, highlighting the child's features and the texture of their hair and clothing.

**The only thing that matters at the end of the day will be lasting, positive outcomes in the lives of children and their families, in the communities in which they live.**

”

# Year in review

## A message from our CEO Prue Warrilow

At ARACY, our purpose is simple: to champion every Australian child and young person to thrive. We do this by connecting, convening, collaborating, catalysing, incubating, learning, and amplifying. Our new charitable status as a health promotion charity strengthens this work, giving us a clear framework to focus on prevention, resilience, and wellbeing.

Using The Nest wellbeing framework, we take a strengths-based approach to physical and mental health, translating knowledge into practice, fostering innovation, and advocating for systems that truly support all children and young people. Through this work, we aim to grow public understanding of effective prevention practices and ensure every child can live to their fullest potential

In 2025 ARACY released the landmark Young & Wise Report – the largest national summary of children's and young people's voices, combining 117 reports, five years' of consultations and the views of more than 10,000 participants from children to young adults. This report used The Nest to set a new benchmark for understanding what young Australians need to thrive today. Building on that foundation, ARACY continued the momentum with a new series of Young & Wise Roundtables, in close collaboration with the Australian Government's Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and funded through the Health Peak and Advisory Bodies Program. More than 60 diverse young people from across Australia took part in these Roundtables, diving deep into five critical issues – social media and mental health, alcohol and other drugs, nutrition, sex education and the national budget – to sharpen priorities for government, the sector and ARACY's own work.

ARACY co-hosted the Early Years Summit in Brisbane, uniting educators, policymakers and sector leaders to tackle challenges, share evidence and sharpen strategies for early childhood wellbeing. Addresses by Minister for Early Childhood Education Jess Walsh and Minister for Social Services Tanya Plibersek were highlights – signalling new leadership for children as the Summit showcased innovative practice, proven approaches and collaboration to give every child a strong start.

Our Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP) has smoothly transitioned into its statewide Phase Three, with a 2030 vision where every young Queenslanders is thriving, every family is supported, every community is empowered, and systemic barriers are reduced.

The Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children (IDAC) has continued to grow as a vital platform for strategic investment in children's futures. Bringing together leaders, funders, and decision-makers, IDAC explores how targeted investments can generate long-term impact for children and young people. Through IDAC, ARACY helps shape a shared vision for more effective funding, stronger outcomes, and a collective commitment to children's wellbeing.



**Through partnerships  
across Australia, we are  
strengthening our shared  
commitment to children  
and young people.**







This year also saw the launch of our Western Australian venture, reconnecting with our roots through the WA Children's Funders Alliance (WA CFA). Proudly part of the ARACY family, and led by Megan Enders, this initiative brings WA philanthropic partners together to focus on IDAC and WA-specific priorities, strengthening the shared commitment to children and young people across the state. We continue to grow our collaborations across Australia, partnering with UNICEF, Act for Children Alliance, Intergenerational Fairness Coalition, Future Healthy Countdown 2030, The Wellbeing and Prevention Coalition in Mental Health, End Child Poverty, the Australian Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas, and many others.

In 2025, ARACY showcased our systemic public health approach to juvenile justice at the Justice Reform Initiative Conference in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), highlighting how addressing underlying drivers can reduce young people's contact with the criminal legal system.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our funding partners, without whom our work would not be possible, and to the ARACY board for their guidance and support. Most importantly, my gratitude goes to the ARACY enterprise team—National, TQKP, IDAC, WA CFA—whose dedication and focus on children and young people make everything we do possible.

Together, we are ensuring that every Australian child and young person has the opportunity to thrive.

# Overview of ARACY

## ARACY's Purpose and Vision for Australian Children

ARACY's purpose is to ensure that all Australian children have the conditions they need to thrive, supporting their health, wellbeing, and the prevention of disease and sub-optimal mental health. Promoting health and wellbeing involves a combination of individual, social, and political action to create an environment where all children can flourish. This holistic approach is embodied in The Nest, Australia's wellbeing framework for children and young people.

The Nest provides a comprehensive way of thinking about the whole child in the context of their everyday lives. Originally informed by the voices of over 4,000 children, young people, and experts, The Nest was developed by ARACY in partnership with 150 organisations between 2010 and 2012. It is regularly updated to reflect insights from practitioners, children, and their families, ensuring its ongoing relevance.

The Nest shows that for children to thrive, their needs must be met across six key, interlocking domains:



**Being Valued, Loved, and Safe**



**Having Material Basics**



**Being Healthy (physically, mentally, and emotionally)**



**Learning (both inside and outside the classroom)**



**Participating (in decisions, groups, and the community)**



**Having a Positive Sense of Identity and Culture**

Wellbeing can be understood as a child or young person having everything they need to thrive and reach their full potential. It encompasses every aspect of a child's life, recognising that these areas are linked and interdependent.

### **Our Aspiration**

All children and young people are valued, loved, and thriving.

### **Our Intent**

We drive change by bringing together people and knowledge to improve the lives of children and young people in Australia.



## Our Values

### Connectedness:

ARACY is a connecting organisation. We build genuine partnerships and recognise that true collaboration involves giving something up for the greater good. We work for systems change and collective impact.

### Equity:

ARACY believes every child and young person is entitled to a good life and the opportunity to thrive. We are committed to building a society that understands and respects fairness and equity, values children for both their present contributions and future potential, and targets support to the least advantaged.

### Inclusion:

ARACY is an inclusive organisation, valuing the breadth and depth of all people and ideas, regardless of ethnicity, religion, age, political affiliation, gender, sexuality, or other characteristics. We work towards greater social inclusion.

### Integrity:

ARACY is an independent, non-partisan organisation. We advocate solely for the interests of children and young people, presenting evidence even when it challenges common perceptions, and managing resources with honesty and responsibility.

### Respect:

ARACY respectfully engages with and advocates for all children, young people, and their families. We listen to children and young people, involve them in solutions, and act on what they say. We respect and prioritise the knowledge, practices, and cultures of First Nations peoples, amplifying their voices and solutions to enhance the wellbeing and health of their children.

# Our Impact

69,000

new website users



52

newsletters

12,743

subscribers



11

webinars

5,132

registrations

14,500

recording views



10,150

followers

226,726

Social media reach



13 reports

& submissions

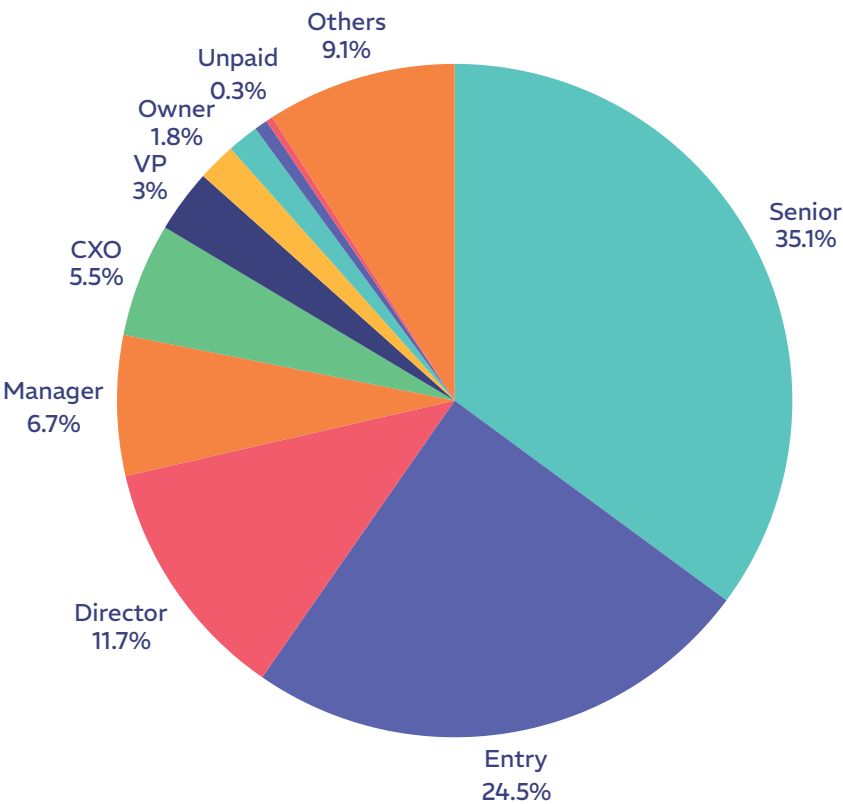
14354

page views





## Follower demographics

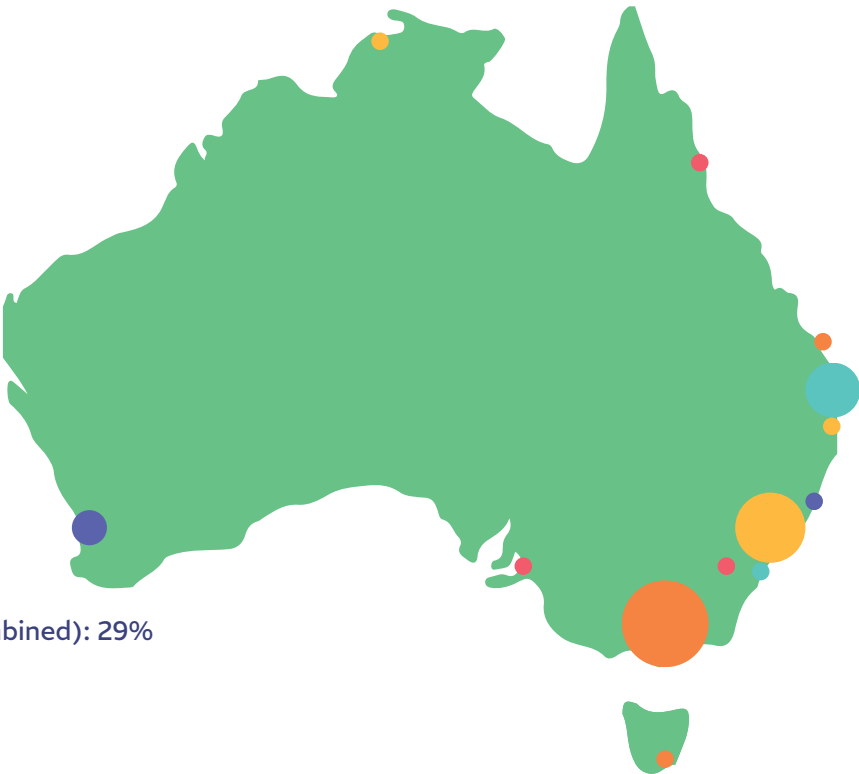


### Seniority

- Entry/Junior (Assistants, Officers, Coordinators, Students)
- Mid-level (Advisors, Specialists, Project Leads, Managers)
- Senior (Directors, Heads, Executives, CEOs, Partners, Founders)

## Location

- Greater Melbourne Area: 18.2%
- Greater Sydney Area: 16.4%
- Greater Brisbane Area: 15.2%
- Greater Perth Area: 6.6%
- Greater Adelaide Area: 4.7%
- Canberra Area: 4.2%
- Gold Coast: 1.7%
- Greater Newcastle Area: 1.2%
- Sunshine Coast: 1.1%
- Greater Hobart Area: 1.1%
- Other (all remaining locations combined): 29%



# ARACY Board and Staff

(As at 30 June 2025)



**Shamal Dass**  
Chair



**Anne Cregan**  
Director  
(to June 2025)



**Jessica Oostenbroek**  
Director



**Dr Jenny Proimos**  
Director



**Dr Norman Swan**  
Director



**Karen Thorpe**  
Director



**Stephen Zubrick**  
Director



**James Waddell**  
Director

## ARACY Research Committee

Professor Sharon Bessell Distinguished

Professor Lyn Kemp

Professor Gerry Redmond

Dr David Roy

Professor Helen Skouteris

## Staff

Amara Bains

Barbara Barker

Harriet Daly

Nicole Deen

Liz Depers

Roslyn Dundas

Diana Harris

Josephine Horne

Dilini Jayasinghe

Bernie Morris

Kristy Noble

Lauren Renshaw

Kirrin Sampson

Thivya Supramaniam

Annmarie Thomas

Melissa Toms

Adam Valvasori

Prue Warrilow

Technical Lead, Insights & Learning

Research Manager

Executive Assistant/Office Manager

Lead, Capacity Building

Policy and Engagement Officer (to June 2025)

Acting CEO (to September 2024)

Lead, Operations

Administrative Assistant

Intern

Lead, Knowledge Translation (to October 2024)

Policy and Projects Officer (to April 2025)

Research and Policy Officer

Programming and Partnerships

Project and Policy Officer

Program Officer

Communications Officer

Lead, Advocacy

Chief Executive Officer





## Management Board

Jane Yacopetti	Simone Jackson	Prue Warrilow
Lucille Chalmers	Dr Katrina Lines	Geoff Woolcock
Andrew Chesterman	Sara Parrott	Jessica Oostenbroek

## Staff

Tahlia Arnold	Executive/Administrative Officer
Eleni Bourboulas	Partnership Officer
Naomi Brown	Senior Partnership Officer
Rowena Cann	Lead Portfolio Convenor
Michelle Cole	Principle Partnership Manager
Vicki Crombie	Project Officer - Enabling Workforces & Organisations (to January 2025)
Kamila Davidson	Senior Partnership Officer
Anita Egginton	Partnership Officer
Helen Fogarty	Senior Partnership Officer
Kerry Graham	Lead Portfolio Convenor
Michael Hogan	Executive Convenor
Roger Meany	Lead Portfolio Convenor
Sophie Morson	Principle Partnership Manager
Giselle Olive	Principle Partnership Manager
Jacinta Perry	Principle Partnership Manager
Angela Timbs	Senior Partnership Officer



## The Investment Dialogue Executive Group

The Treasurer, the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP  
The Minister for Social Services, The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP  
Professor Kristy Muir, CEO of the Paul Ramsay Foundation  
Matthew Cox, CEO of the Bryan Foundation  
April Lawrie, Chair of the Investment Dialogue First Nations Leadership Council  
Catherine Liddle, Chair of the Investment Dialogue Community Leadership Council

## Staff

Sarah Engelmann	Lead, Projects and Evaluation
Simon Factor	Executive Convenor
Stephanie Heggen	Lead, Projects (to September 2024)
Kylie Mayne	Executive Officer
Tyler Miscannon	Lead, Investments & Philanthropic Engagement (to October 2024)
Daniel Munter	Lead, Engagement (to September 2024)
Christina Rosato	Lead, Strategy and Policy
Stevie Wright	Policy and Projects Officer (to September 2024)

# Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership

This year (July 2024 – June 2025) marked a period of significant, measured progress for the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP). The work to date across our focus initiatives has laid foundations upon which we successfully delivered every activity critical to activate the partnership, leading to early but strong signals of system change. Building on these strong foundations, we successfully delivered every activity critical to activating the partnership, leading to early but strong signals of system change we can begin to leverage change across the whole system. Together with our partners, we are reshaping how Queensland's systems understand and respond to the needs of children, young people, and families.

Across the state, TQKP is emerging as a catalyst for change, engaging with people and organisations across health, early learning, education, family support, mental health, disability, child protection, youth services, housing, justice and more.

Our collective efforts are driving new ways of working that prioritise prevention, elevate First Nations voices, and translate the science of child development into everyday practice. At the heart of this work is community. By strengthening the foundations of community-led change, TQKP is supporting local leaders, caregivers, and cultural knowledge holders to build capability, confidence, and collective ownership in child and young person development. Through strategic support and co-designed approaches, communities are embedding wellbeing into daily life, and it's happening everywhere, from playgroups, to schools, to local councils.

## From concept to practice

In the past 12 months, TQKP has supported leaders to connect, collaborate, and “play and learn” together. These cross-sector connections are laying the groundwork for more coordinated responses to children's developmental needs.

**“We're seeing cross-sector engagement grow—housing, health, early years, schools, family support. And we're seeing First Nations voices centred in ways that wouldn't have happened without the support and backing of something like TQKP.”**

Collaborator, tertiary research sector.

These relationships are accelerating progress. What may once have taken years we are now being told is advancing in months—now advancing in months, thanks to trust, shared language, and a unified commitment to children's wellbeing.

## Looking ahead

Every milestone achieved this year reflects TQKP's ways of working: to connect, learn, and catalyse. Our work is about more than organisational change; it is about giving every child in Queensland the chance to thrive.

As we move into our next phase, with generous investment from a growing group of philanthropic partners, we carry both responsibility and hope. We know that systems change is long-term and complex. It requires deep collaboration, trust, and a willingness to adapt. Most importantly, it requires us to remain grounded in the voices and lived experiences of children, young people, families, communities and the dedicated professionals who support them.

**“What took years to progress before is now happening in months—and TQKP's role in aligning partners and messaging is central to that.”**

Collaborator, community not-for-profit sector

We are proud of what we have collectively achieved in 2024-25 and even more excited about the opportunities ahead. Together, with our partners and Queensland communities, we will continue to drive meaningful, lasting impact for Queensland's children and young people in 2025 and beyond.

## Key highlights 2024–25

- Catalyst for change:
  - Engaged partners across health, early learning, education, family support, justice, housing, child protection, disability, and more.
  - In June 2025, we launched our new, bold five-year Impact Strategy setting the agenda for our next chapter
- Place-based leadership:
  - Developed the Queensland Place-based Model and secured \$1.5 million to advance equity through community-led partnerships.
- Embedding neuroscience:
  - Integrated neuroscience into curricula at the University of the Sunshine Coast and TAFE Queensland
- Saw the Enabling Workforces and Organisations Toolkit inform curricular reviews and extend its influence into workplaces and communities well beyond the project's initial scope, including youth justice early action groups in Townsville and Mt Isa Building leadership and shared language:
  - Brought together 21 CEOs and leaders joined [SW2] in the Framing Champions Leadership Group.
  - Independent evaluation confirmed framing strategies are embedding into practice.
  - Framing for Change Learning Hub launched with 1,100+ visits.
- Thriving Kids in Disasters (TKiD):
  - Phase 1 Report released and Action & Investment Plan launched.
  - 400+ people, including 200 children, engaged in co-design activities.
  - Established the TKiD Leadership Alliance with 40+ representatives.
- Stories of change: Partners report greater confidence, access, legitimacy, and momentum through TQKP connections.
- Strategic system tools: Developed co-designed frameworks, visual tools, and roadmaps guiding smarter investment and long-term system change.





# Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children

The Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children (IDAC) is a flagship partnership that brings together philanthropy, government and community. It exists to drive intergenerational change by working differently to align effort and investment, listen deeply to communities and back solutions that support children and families to thrive.

IDAC's work begins in pre-conception, the early years of life and continues through the middle years and beyond. This long-term approach reflects IDAC's 10-year commitment to generational change, ensuring that children and families are supported at every stage of life.

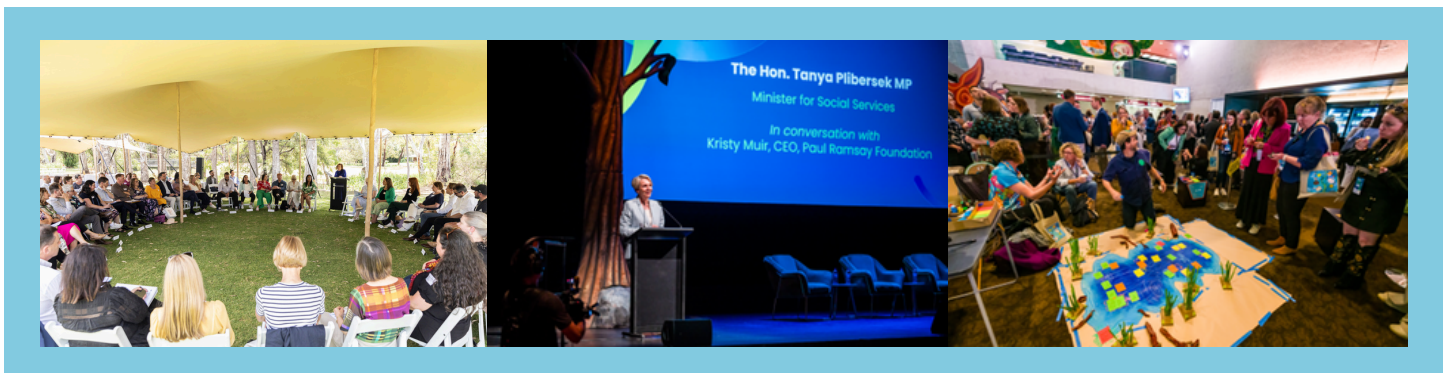
## A year of momentum and turning point

The 2024/25 year was an important phase in IDAC's journey, with experiences that lifted a collective ambition and deepened commitment to the Dialogue's purpose. The 2024 Annual Dialogue event was hosted on Kurna Country in Adelaide with support from the Paul Ramsay Foundation. The event was centred around community voices and deep listening. IDAC partners endorsed the Strategic Framework including three portfolios of work: Early Years, Place and Young People. Ten partnership agreements were finalised, which included commitments to partner with 50 communities by 2030, develop integrated early childhood development approaches, scope a portfolio of work for young people and collaborate on projects under the \$100 million Outcomes Fund.

Governance was established and strengthened through the Strategy Group and the Community and First Nations Leadership Councils, and new working groups began to take shape.

Partners also agreed on the importance of seeing children and families as whole, not fragments of separate systems. Community voices reminded partners that lasting change requires listening better, funding differently, and remaining accountable to kids, families and communities.

Momentum for the early years portfolio was further built through the National Early Years Policy Summit in Brisbane in June 2025, supported by IDAC philanthropic partners. Staged alongside the Out of the Box children's festival, the Summit brought more than six hundred participants together at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. Ministers Tanya Plibersek (Social Services) and Jess Walsh (Early Childhood Education and Youth) joined international experts, researchers, practitioners, Elders, artists and parents. The Summit elevated early years reform to the national stage and combined evidence, creativity and lived experience in powerful ways.





### **Translating ambition into delivery**

March 2025 marked a defining moment when the Albanese Government, in partnership with IDAC, announced a record \$100 million co-investment to expand integrated early years services. The Government committed up to \$50 million through the Building Early Education Fund, matched by up to \$50 million in-principal funding from IDAC philanthropic partners.

As one of the largest government and philanthropy co-investments in Australian history, this demonstrated that IDAC is a trusted vehicle for reform and represented the translation of dialogue into delivery.

Throughout 2025, Deputy Secretaries from six Commonwealth agencies have met monthly with senior philanthropic and community members of IDAC to provide consistent oversight and direction. Four new philanthropic partners joined the Dialogue, growing IDAC's reach and opportunity for the expanding work with communities.

### **Looking Ahead**

The task ahead is to ensure that this momentous year is translated into delivery. In 2025/26, IDAC will focus on:

- Moving into delivery, including deepening partnerships and engaging with the first partner communities.
- Designing a co-investment framework for the \$100 million early years co-investment and building the broader early years opportunities.
- Collaborating to identify opportunities for enhancing the Outcomes Fund to ensure the Fund is testing new and innovative approaches.
- Strategically aligning efforts of partners across identified focus areas to develop a portfolio for young people.
- Commissioning partners to undertake the evaluation of IDAC over three years and document the oral history of IDAC.
- Strengthening strategic communications and development of the IDAC narrative.
- Formalising and strengthening engagement with states and territories, recognising the critical levers they hold for improving outcomes for children and young people.

# WA Children's Funders Alliance



## WA Children's Funders Alliance for brighter futures

Launched in early 2025, the Western Australian Children's Funders Alliance builds on two years of informal collaboration between key philanthropic organisations. Now formalised, the Alliance provides a unique space for funders to share insights, align investments, and unlock greater impact for children and families across WA.

Its membership brings together nationally focused organisations with a strong WA presence – including the **Minderoo Foundation** and **Philanthropy Australia** – alongside leading WA-based funders such as the **Stan Perron Charitable Foundation**, **Lotterywest**, **Channel 7 Telethon Trust**, **Fogarty Foundation**, **Fremantle Foundation**, and the **Sisters of St John of God**. Meeting six times a year, members compare focus areas, explore partnerships, and co-invest in initiatives that improve outcomes for children.

Three members – **Minderoo Foundation**, **Stan Perron Charitable Foundation** and **Fogarty Foundation** – are also part of the national **Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children** (IDAC), reinforcing strong alignment between state and national efforts. The Alliance actively supports IDAC's vision and principles, while tailoring its work to the unique opportunities and challenges facing children and families in WA.

In 2025, the Alliance's first major co-funding partnership supported **Ngala's Virtual Residential Parenting Service Pilot**, a two-year collaboration led by **Minderoo Foundation** and **Stan Perron Charitable Foundation**. This innovative program uses digital technology to deliver parenting education and personalised support to some of WA's most vulnerable families – particularly those in remote and isolated communities. By removing barriers of distance, the pilot is ensuring that high-quality, culturally sensitive parenting support reaches families wherever they live.

The Alliance is guided by a WA-based Executive Convenor within ARACY, ensuring strong local leadership and deep connection to community needs.







**practitioners  
trained**



**workshops**

The Projects team facilitated 38 workshops in 2024-2025, training a combined total of 543 practitioners in The Common Approach. 15 workshops were facilitated in-person, located in NSW, Queensland, Victoria and the ACT. 23 online workshops were also held, training practitioners located across the country, including in WA, western NSW, western QLD and across the eastern seaboard.

ARACY has launched a new and updated website, complete with an ARACY online store and a new version of the online eLearning module. Two highlights of our training include collaborating with Northcott, a leading disability service provider, and Capital Region Community Services (CRCS), a community hub located in Belconnen, ACT.



# Northcott Case Study

Between April and June 2025, the Projects team provided training on The Nest and The Common Approach to 210 practitioners at Northcott, a leading Disability service provider in NSW. The Common Approach eLearning was provided before a series of 7 in-person workshops in metropolitan and regional centres. For those who could not attend the in-person workshops, 2 half-day online workshops were facilitated in July. In total, 197 Northcott practitioners completed both the eLearning and a workshop.

Workshops were facilitated by our Common Approach facilitators: Nicole Deen (Lead Projects), Annmarie Thomas (Common Approach Program Manager), and Barbara Barker (Research Manager). They focused first upon building foundational knowledge of The Nest, its interconnected Wellbeing Domains, and its alignment with Australia's Disability Strategy (2021-2031) and the Early Years Strategy (2024-2034). Theory was related back to participants daily practice through a series of interactive activities, ensuring that the content was highly relevant and easy to implement.

It was exciting to see the language of The Common Approach being used widely within Northcott. Training was provided across the state to practitioners and managers of different roles, facilitating a consistent and thorough implementation of The Nest and The Common Approach within Northcott.

Practitioners outlined that the most useful aspects of the workshop were collaboration, relevant and practical activities, and knowledge of The Nest and the Wellbeing Wheel. They enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with practitioners across their organisations, and appreciated the interactive and hands-on approach. Activities such as identifying the interconnectedness of the domains of The Nest, and identifying support services according to the domains of The Nest, were emphasised as being especially useful. Finally, understanding and engagement with The Nest and the Wellbeing Wheel were identified as useful and relevant.

Ultimately, 197 Northcott practitioners completed The Common Approach training (both the eLearning module and a workshop). The Projects team is excited to continue working with Northcott to facilitate a Community of Practice, to further deepen understanding and implementation of The Nest and The Common Approach.

**"The discussions and how the facilitators made the knowledge practically relevant."**

Northcott training participant, Campbelltown 2024



# Listening to children in the middle years



## maximising the **middle**

Maximising the Middle, in partnership with Uniting ACT.NSW and Stronger Smarter Institute, works with schools and organisations in Western Sydney in two key sites to empower middle years young people to make positive change in their communities.

This multi-year Initiative builds capability among key adults to support middle years young people, and create pathways and funding for youth-led local change projects. Maximising the Middle continues to grow the “changemakers’ alliance” supporting middle years young people to take agency and lead change, and at the end of 2024-25 the project is moving into its second phase.

ARACY has conducted a research project with Western Sydney University to support the Initiative, engaging with middle years young people, parents and key stakeholders in the two sites on this cohort's strengths and needs, and what changes they would like to see in their community.

Also, in 2024-25, ARACY developed a framework and resource for children aged 6-12 to describe what a child-friendly community means to them, and how child-friendly they feel their community is. This project formed part of our ongoing work for the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, and the framework will be used in Communities for Children sites around the country.

In 2025-26 ARACY will be supporting its adoption and implementation by service organisations working in Communities for Children sites.







# act FOR CHILDREN

In 2024–25, ARACY proudly supported the Act for Children alliance, a national movement advocating for urgent action to improve the lives of children across Australia. The alliance highlights the importance of investing in early childhood development, education, mental health, and family support, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Through this partnership, ARACY contributed evidence-based insights, sector expertise, and advocacy guidance, helping to amplify the alliance's messages to policymakers, practitioners, and the broader community. ARACY's research and frameworks, including The Nest Wellbeing Framework, informed the alliance's resources, supporting clear, actionable messaging around prevention, equity, and child wellbeing.

The alliance achieved significant engagement across government, community, and philanthropic sectors, with events, roundtables, and briefings bringing together more than 1,000 leaders and stakeholders. ARACY's involvement ensured that children's voices, evidence, and lived experiences remained central to discussions, reinforcing the need for systemic investment in child and family wellbeing.

By supporting the Act for Children alliance, ARACY continues to champion prevention, equity, and strong early years foundations, helping to shape policies and practices that will make a lasting difference for children and families across Australia.



*The Act for Children was initiated and led by Anne Hollonds, then National Children's Commissioner.*





# Early Years Summit: Shaping Australia's Future for Every Child

In 2025, **ARACY** co-sponsored the **Early Years Summit** in Brisbane with the **Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership** (TQKP), in partnership with the **Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children** (IDAC). The Summit brought together policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and community leaders to advance a high-quality, equitable, and joined-up early years system.

## Ministerial Contributions

**Minister for Early Childhood Education, Senator the Hon. Dr Jess Walsh**, outlined four pillars of universal early learning — workforce, affordability, access, and quality — highlighting reforms such as a 15% educator pay rise and expanded services in underserved communities. She stressed that *"universal doesn't mean uniform."*

**Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek**, reinforced the Government's commitment to linking universal systems through the Early Years Strategy, including maternal and child health investment, parental leave, and \$200 million in place-based partnerships. She emphasised the importance of community-led, seamless, local approaches.

## Inspiring Voices

**Dame Quentin Bryce** opened the Summit with a call to ensure every child has the best start in life. ARACY founder **Professor Fiona Stanley AC** inspired delegates to lead with evidence, compassion, and urgency, alongside panellists **Aunty Rachel Atkinson** (SNAICC), **Leslie Lobel** (National Council on Early Child Development), and **Georgie Dent** (The Parenthood).

ARACY CEO, **Prue Warrilow**, highlighted how **The Nest** provides a national framework for child and youth wellbeing, and **Michael Hogan** (TQKP) spoke to the power of cross-sector collaboration for long-term impact.



## Key Priorities for Action

Across two days of discussion, delegates identified shared priorities to drive lasting reform:

1. **First Nations self-determination** – Make culturally safe, universal early years services for First Nations children a top priority.
2. **Supporting families and the workforce** – Strengthen supports for parents, caregivers, and the early years workforce.
3. **Community-led, place-based approaches** – Empower local communities to design and deliver flexible, responsive services.
4. **Data and evidence for impact** – Measure what matters and use data to guide improvement at all levels.
5. **Joined-up governance** – Align systems across governments to reflect the realities of children's and families' lives.
6. **Children and families at the centre** – Embed lived experience and children's voices in all policy and practice.
7. **Universal access with local flexibility** – Build a “universal, not uniform” system that meets diverse local needs.

## Towards a Joined-Up Early Years System

Delegates agreed that Australia has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create an early years system that works for all children and families. Achieving this vision will require a clear, long-term plan that is co-designed with communities, grounded in evidence, and supported by consistent monitoring, evaluation, and accountability.

ARACY remains committed to working with partners across government, community, research, and philanthropy to help realise this vision. Together, through shared leadership and collaboration, we can make Australia the best place in the world for every child to grow up.



Philanthropic partners of





# Young and Wise: Elevating the Voices of Young People

In 2025, ARACY proudly launched the Young and Wise report – a landmark piece of work amplifying the voices of young people across Australia. Developed in collaboration with our Young and Wise group, the report captures the perspectives, priorities, and lived experiences of young Australians, offering critical insights into what they need to thrive.

The Young and Wise initiative embodies ARACY's commitment to ensuring that children and young people are not only at the centre of our work but are active partners in shaping it. The report provides a road map for how government, service providers, and communities can meaningfully engage with young people in decision-making that affects their lives.



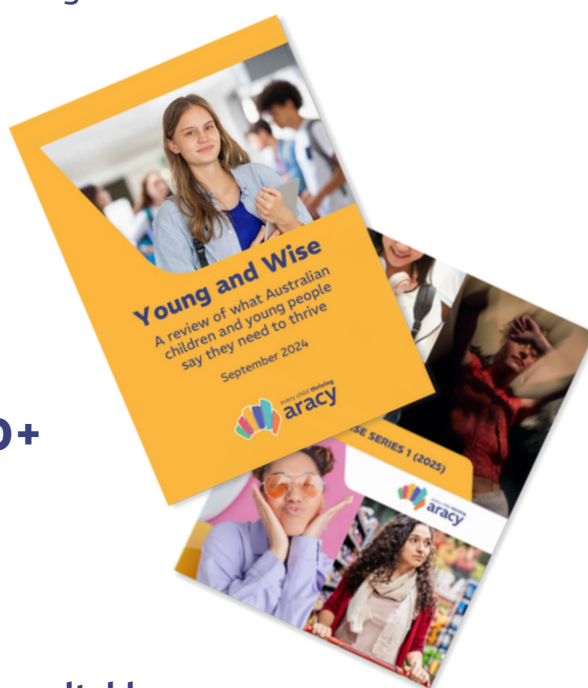
**117** reports



Covering **5** years



Including the voices **10,000+**  
children and young people



## Engaging Young Voices Through Young and Wise Roundtables

To build on the report's findings, ARACY hosted five Young & Wise Roundtables with a diverse mix of young people from across the country. These sessions brought together young people, policymakers, researchers, and sector leaders to explore how insights can inform real change.

Across nutrition, social media and mental health, alcohol and other drugs, and sex education and contraception, young people highlighted four cross-cutting needs:

**Access & Equity:** Cost, location, wait times, stigma, and lack of anonymity block safe, healthy choices.

**Curriculum & Wellbeing Education:** Make wellbeing learning consistent and high-quality so young people can make informed decisions, recognise risk, and seek support with confidence.

**Youth Voice & Co-design:** Young people want a real say in campaigns, services, policy, and classrooms—and for government to “skip the cringe.”

**Trust & Confidentiality:** Formal supports feel judgmental or generic; young people need safe, culturally respectful, and confidential pathways to care (online and in person).

Each conversation reinforced a simple truth: young people are experts in their own lives. We are embedding these findings across ARACY's advocacy, research, and systems work, co-designing practical advice, tools, and implementation support so policies and services better reflect lived experience and advance child and youth wellbeing.

"we don't know how to cope with some of the pain"



Chris, 17  
(Drugs & Alcohol)



Bronte 15  
(Social Media & Mental Health)

"I think mandatory school programs would be really helpful - like the other health sessions we already have"

"it's not just that [formal sex education] is bad, but it's actively doing harm."



Jay, 19  
(Sexual Health & Contraception)



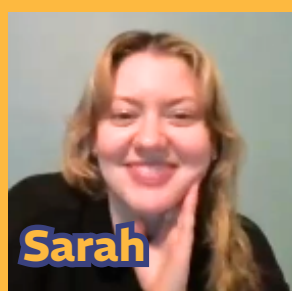
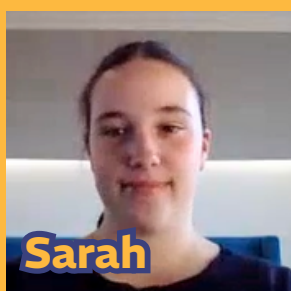
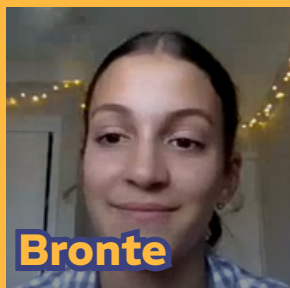
Jess, 16  
(Nutrition)

"So it'll literally be however many carbs I can get for however much money is the cheapest, so it'll always end up being something that's really unhealthy."

"I'm in leadership this year as the wellbeing school captain... I know a lot of people in my school, especially females, are struggling with body image and eating disorders. It's been a real big issue... I just think it's a really broad thing that can be put into so much — like budgeting for healthcare and stuff."

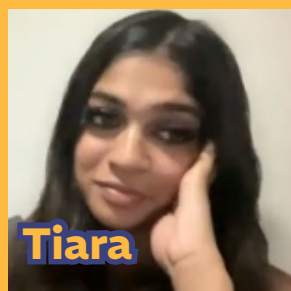
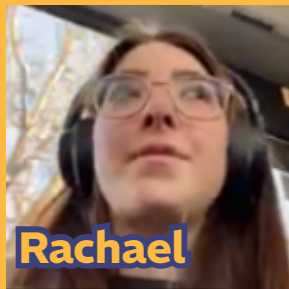
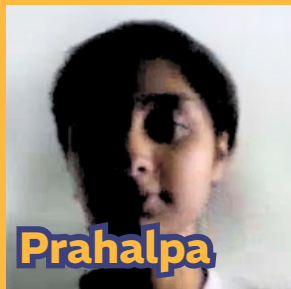
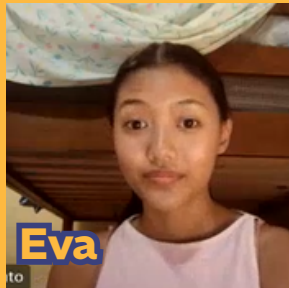
Paris, 18  
(Federal Budget)

## Thank You Young and Wise Series 1 Roundtable Participants!





## Thank You Young and Wise Series 1 Roundtable Participants!



# Webinar - Showcasing The Nest



Registrations



Recording views

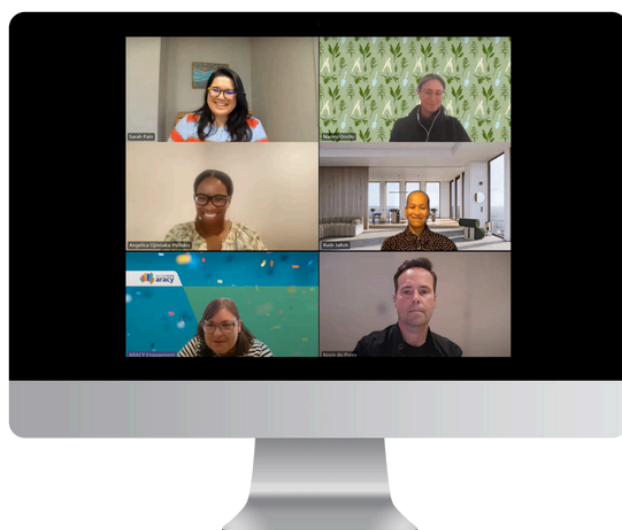
In June 2025 ARACY hosted the webinar **Showcasing The Nest**, our holistic framework for child and youth wellbeing, and its growing impact across communities and sectors in Australia. The session highlighted how organisations are using The Nest to better support children and young people to thrive by embedding wellbeing at the centre of policy, practice, and community initiatives.

An inspiring panel of practitioners shared their experiences applying The Nest in diverse contexts:

- **Naomi Orsillo**, Knowledge Broker, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation
- **Angelica Ojinnaka-Psillakis**, Project Manager, Future Healthy Countdown 2030, VicHealth
- **Sarah Pain**, Monitoring and Evaluation Lead, Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project
- **Kevin du Preez**, Executive Director, Monkey Baa Theatre Company
- **Ruth Jalloh (MA)**, Senior Manager, Commissioning and Service Excellence, Capital Region Community Services

Panellists highlighted practical ways The Nest is guiding organisations to focus on what matters most for children's development, wellbeing, and long-term outcomes. Discussions included using evidence-informed strategies, monitoring impact, and tailoring initiatives to local community needs.

The webinar reinforced the value of The Nest as a unifying framework that helps organisations across Australia translate theory into action, align programs with children's holistic needs, and strengthen cross-sector collaboration for lasting impact.



# Webinar - Young and Wise Launch



Registrations



Recording views

On Friday 14 February 2025 ARACY launched **Young & Wise**, our powerful new resource aiming to centre children and young people in decision making, with an online webinar.

The **Young and Wise report** calls on decision-makers to prioritise children and young people in policies affecting everything from education to mental health, climate action, and social connection. It demonstrates the need for sustained and dedicated leadership to elevate these issues to the national stage. The report reveals the insights of over **10,000 children and young people**, gathered **over five years** and **117 reports**, sharing what they need to thrive in Australia and this webinar gave a behind the scenes look at the key issues impacting children and young people as told by them.

The webinar included a dynamic panel discussion considering the what, why and how of consulting with children and young people featuring:

- **Anne Hollonds**, National Children's Commissioner
- **Prue Warrilow**, CEO of ARACY
- **Hannah Vardy**, Duty of Care Campaigner
- **Dr Kristy Noble**, ARACY Author

The webinar showcased how ARACY plans to continue amplifying youth voices through the growing Young and Wise advisory group, who provide advice to ARACY and influencing government policies impacting young Australians.





# 2024-25 Financial Year Highlights:

ARACY was established in 2002 for the charitable purpose of facilitating, coordinating and supporting the development of knowledge through research and advocacy, for the implementation of evidence based policies within Australia to improve the wellbeing and life chances of Australia's children and young people. ARACY does this through a national action agenda and measurement framework, The Nest.

ARACY adopted a new Constitution in May 2024. This change resulted in a new application to the ACNC for charitable status. We are pleased to report that effective from 1 July 2024 ARACY has been approved as a Health Promotion Charity focused on disease prevention and raising awareness of diseases through a wellbeing lens.

ARACY continues as it was established, a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee. The refreshed purpose of the company is to promote the Social Determinants of Health and the prevention and control of disease to enhance the wellbeing, welfare and life chances of children and young people.

In 2024–25, ARACY advanced major initiatives driving better outcomes for children and young people.

The Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP) completed phase two and prepared for phase three, securing new philanthropic investment and partnering widely to improve outcomes for Queensland families. The Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children (IDAC) launched its Strategic Framework and announced the landmark \$100 million Building Early Education Fund, a historic government–philanthropy co-investment.

In collaboration with the Minderoo Foundation, Western Sydney University, and Murdoch Children's Research Institute, ARACY expanded the MECSH sustained nurse home visiting program into Western Australia. We also worked with Capital Region Community Services, Northcott, and Uniting to deliver Common Approach training for practitioners.

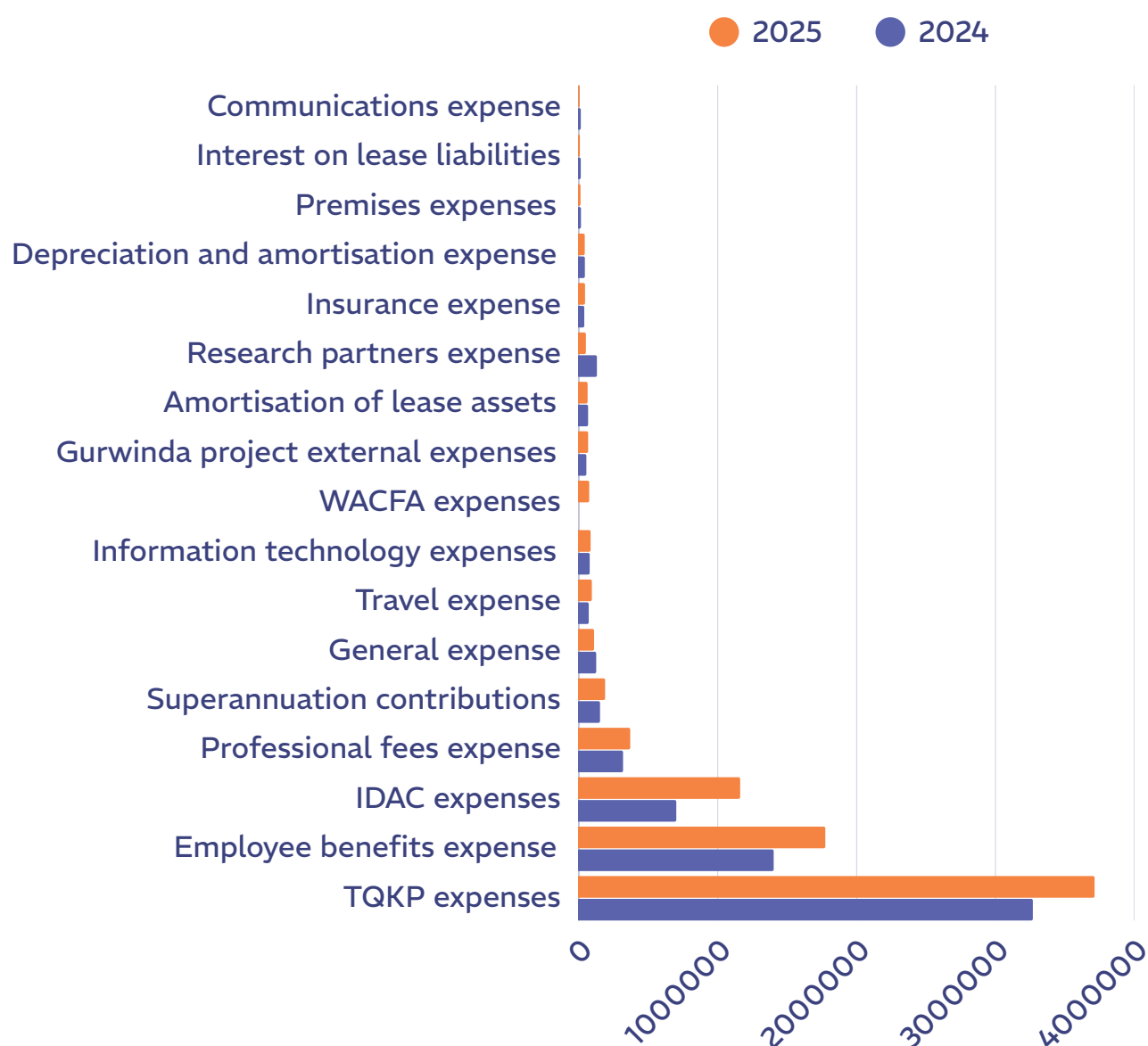
The Young & Wise youth reference group informed ARACY's advocacy and contributed to Commonwealth roundtables on mental health, social media, alcohol and other drugs, nutrition, and sexual health.

ARACY continued national collaborations including Act for Children, Thrive by Five, and the Intergenerational Fairness Coalition, contributing to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill. We also partnered with Minderoo and UNICEF Australia to refresh the Australian Children's Wellbeing Index and co-authored the Future Healthy Countdown 2030 MJA supplement focused on The Nest's Participating domain.

## Revenue

Source	2025	2024
Income from contracts	7,938,654	6,647, 211
Other income	132,679	134,115
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,071,333</b>	<b>6,781,326</b>

## Expenses



# Supporters

**ARACY gratefully acknowledges the support of our partners and supporters in allowing us to continue our work for children and young people in Australia to 30 June 2025.**

Allan and Gill Gray Foundation  
Bennelong Foundation  
Besen Family Foundation^  
BHP Foundation^  
CAGES Foundation^  
Canberra Region Community Services (CRCS)  
Catholic Schools Parents Australia  
Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service \*  
City of Greater Bendigo  
Coaxial Foundation^  
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing  
Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet^  
Commonwealth Department of Social Services ^  
Commonwealth Treasury Department^  
Deakin University  
Dusseldorp Forum^  
Early Childhood Australia  
Educator Impact  
Emerging Minds\*  
Eureka Benevolent Foundation^  
Equity Trustees^  
Eureka Benevolent Foundation^  
Fogarty Foundation^~  
Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education  
Foundations for Tomorrow  
Fremantle Foundation~  
Gilbert + Tobin (pro bono legal advice)  
Gold Coast Hospital Foundation^  
Griffith University\*  
Hand Heart Pocket\*^  
Hands up Mallee  
Health and Wellbeing Queensland\*  
Helping Hands Network Foundation\*  
Human Rights Commission Office of the National Children's Commissioner  
Independent Schools Queensland  
Lotterywest~  
Minderoo Foundation^  
Murdoch Children's Research Institute  
NSW Department of Communities and Justice  
National Indigenous Australian's Agency^  
Northcott  
NT Department of Health



Palix Foundation / Alberta Family Wellness Initiative\*^  
 Paul Ramsay Foundation\*^  
 Perpetual Trustees^  
 Philanthropy Australia^  
 Play Matters Australia^  
 Prevention United  
 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak\*  
 Queensland Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services\*  
 Queensland Department of Children Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs\* Queensland  
 Department of Communities, Arts & Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships\*  
 Queensland Family and Child Commission\*  
 Queensland Government Department of Education\*  
 Queensland Independent Schools Parent Network  
 Queensland Mental Health Commission\*  
 Queensland University of Technology\*  
 R.E. Ross Trust  
 RM Ansett Trust^  
 Sisters of St John~  
 Smart Justice for Young People Coalition (Victoria)  
 SNAICC  
 Social Ventures Australia  
 Stan Perron Charitable Foundation^~  
 State Library of Queensland\*  
 Stronger Smarter Institute  
 Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation^  
 telethon7~  
 The Berg Family Foundation^  
 The Bryan Foundation\*^  
 The Ian Potter Foundation\*^  
 The Jack Brockhoff Foundation  
 The John Villiers Trust\*^  
 The Phillips Foundation^  
 Tim Fairfax Family Foundation^  
 UNICEF Australia  
 Uniting Care Kippax, A Village for Every Child  
 Uniting NSW.ACT  
 University of Queensland, Queensland Brain Institute\*  
 University of Western Australia  
 VicHealth

\* *Partners who have supported the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership*

^ *Partners who have supported the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children*

~ *Partners who have supported WA Children's Funders Alliance*



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