

Gowrie



LADY GOWRIE TASMANIA  
*annual report*  
2019-20

# our vision

Our role in achieving this vision is to be a champion for improved outcomes for children, their families and those who work with and support them every day.

To support this, our work is informed by our commitment that:

- Families are supported;
- Children reach their full potential and are at the centre of all practice;
- Early and middle childhood education and care services are valued and supported;
- Qualified and experienced early and middle childhood educators are vital;
- Ongoing professional learning and development enhances practice;
- Quality matters; and
- The community benefits.



## Acknowledgement to Country

Lady Gowrie Tasmania acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Australia and pays our respect to the longest living cultures and Elders both past and present. We acknowledge and celebrate the resilience and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures today and acknowledge and respect their deep connection and relationship with Country and Community and commit to working together for a united Australia that values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all.



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**ANNE BEACH**  
Chair Board of Directors

After the busyness of 2018-19, which featured among other things Lady Gowrie Tasmania's 80th birthday celebrations, 2020-21 initially had a quieter script, but proved to be quite the opposite!

As a community focused service provider, the onset of the coronavirus pandemic threw many challenges our way, with the need to constantly rework our financial, operating and safety plans to keep the doors open to provide accessible services to those that needed it most. As the situation changed week by week, this was an uncertain and testing period for us and put extreme pressure on our team.

However, as we have returned to our normal program of services, we have been able to take a few moments to reflect and, despite the changes, the coronavirus experience has had many positive outcomes for us. This has included seeing individuals from across the organisation shine and work together bringing ideas, commitment, flexibility and resilience; we've strengthened our communication channels and engagement with our families, stakeholders, across our sector and with the various levels of government; and to help us capture what we've learnt, individuals from across the organisation have come together to help plan for our future. Hearing from our

team and learning from their experience is critical to helping us to operate effectively in the 'new normal' and to support the individuals that make up our organisation and the services we provide to support children across our community.

This engagement has also been valuable to support the development of our next Strategic Plan, which we have been working on with the Senior Leadership Team and is currently being developed to commence in the New Year.

At a Board level, we continued with our business as usual work as much as possible in 2019-20, meeting via video link during the restricted period when the mitigation efforts were underway to reduce the risk of spread of the coronavirus. This has seen our work continue in overseeing risk management systems and audit activities, continuing our rolling policy review, monitoring challenges and opportunities in the sector and continuing to provide governance and financial oversight.

Early in the year we had a few changes to the composition of the Board farewelling two of our team, Bobby Court and Belinda Beltz, and welcoming two new faces in Sharyn Gill and Chris Smith. All have provided excellent support and contributions to our efforts to provide support, direction, decision making and corporate governance for the organisation.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our Senior Leadership Team, in particular our CEO Ros Cornish, and the resilience and dedication by people across our organisation that kept coming to work despite the uncertainty. Despite the challenges, we are wrapping up the year in good shape, both financially and as a connected and focused organisation.

Thank you to everyone that has been part of our journey in 2019-20, and all the years of hard work prior to that. These collective efforts have helped build Lady Gowrie Tasmania into the strong, diverse, resilient and robust organisation that it is today, and provided the foundation for us to be able to close out the year in a positive way.

*"...individuals from across the organisation have come together to help plan for our future."*



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Many thanks to the voluntary Board of Directors. They contribute individually and collectively to Lady Gowrie Tasmania's work in multiple ways and bring a range of complementary skills across disciplines that are relevant to the work of the organisation.

**Anne Beach (Chair)**

**Barbara Mawson (Deputy Chair)**

**Belinda Beltz (Resigned February 2020)**

**Bobby Court (Resigned March 2020)**

**Andrew Freshney (Appointed November 2019)**

**Sharyn Gill (Appointed March 2020)**

**Kane Ingham**

**Andrew Saward**

**Chris Smith (Appointed March 2020)**

**Angie Somann-Crawford**

**June Wansong**



**ROS CORNISH**  
Chief Executive Officer

The 2019-20 reporting period has certainly provided highs and lows for the organisation. The first eight months proved to be very positive with many achievements. The latter half of the reporting period certainly presented significant challenges for the organisation due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Through the changes and disruption, the impact on our people, children and their families has been significant. Lady Gowrie Tasmania held firm continuing to provide services and remained agile in the constant changes in government policy and practice – things we could not control.

The intense focus on ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of others was paramount as the organisation worked to ensure compliance with the increased Worksafe Tasmania requirements. Thank you to General Manager, Annette Barwick, for her strong leadership in ensuring the organisation policies and procedures reflected the requirements and importantly, the implementation process was adhered to.

The circumstances that caused the discontinuity presented opportunity about how we worked. The use of technology was increased across the organisation and this will be central to the rebuild of the programs and services as modification to future work practices are undertaken.

The resilience of the organisation and its people from the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic has been one of the highlights of my 26 years with the organisation. Individuals and teams undertook roles and responsibilities that normally would not be their task. During the most critical period staff took leave or reduced their hours to minimise the financial impact of the downturn. The way our people responded and managed has been one of the outstanding positives that has come from the pandemic.

Despite the period March to June being a challenge the months prior was business as usual with strategies and initiatives progressed.

**Registered Training Organisation** – the approval of Lady Gowrie Tasmania as a Registered Training Organisation by the Australia Skills Quality Authority was welcomed after a lengthy application process. This approval meant the partnership with Gowrie South Australia (as the RTO and Lady Gowrie Tasmania a sub-agent) ceased after a long and positive relationship. The leadership and commitment of Annette Barwick and Kerrie Hansen was exceptional and clearly achieved the desired outcome.

**Research** – the research partnership with Queensland University of Technology resulted in three education and care services participating in action research on topics that were identified through a consultative process. A memorandum of understanding between Lady Gowrie Tasmania and the University of Tasmania to support shared research agenda was signed with collaboration already being undertaken.

This partnership promises to be advantageous to both parties particularly in respect of linking qualification pathways, practicums and of course, action research.

**Gowrie Australia** – this consortium comprised of membership from each state-based Gowrie organisation continued to be a strong network. The continued joint publication of “Reflections” showcased best practice pedagogy from each Gowrie organisation, as well as the broader sector. As well as the CEO’s being in regular contact, other program areas also met using technology to share practices and systems.

**Representation** – employees have been active participants in many organisations and groups and thus ensured the early and middle childhood issues remained at the forefront of debate and discussion. The participation validates the respect and reputation of the organisation by government and other agencies. These include:

- Department of Health – Move Well Eat Well
- Department of Education – Stakeholder Reference Group
- Department of Education – Early Learning Initiatives Steering Committee
- Department of Education – B4 Leaders Coalition
- Australian Government – Early Childhood Education & Care Advisory Group
- Early Childhood Australia – National and State

**Upgrades** – major remedial repairs were undertaken to address the ongoing roof issues that resulted in flooding at the Battery Point Education and Care Service. The Campbell Street Education and Care Service kitchen upgrade was undertaken along with two new kitchen/servery areas at the Battery Point site. The Richmond, Acton and Gordon Square Education and Care Services were successful in minor upgrade grant applications to the Department of Education for playground revitalisation.

**New Initiatives** – the South Hobart Outside School Hours Care and the Norwood Outside School Hours Care programs were extended to include Vacation Care and Before School Care, respectively. This extension of service provision was in response to community demand.

The Alanvale Education and Care Service was successful in the application to deliver the Department of Education funded Working Together program. This initiative provides 400 hours of free education and care for three to four year old children who have not accessed any form of early learning. The success of this program resulted in the initial 10 places being extended with an additional 3



places. Acknowledgement of the staff teams, particularly the Program Leader Jann Williams and the Early Childhood Teacher Yasmin McPherson, for the way they have embraced this program and supported not only the children, but also their families. Lady Gowrie Tasmania Services have implemented the Be You program. This program has a focus on mental health and wellbeing for young children. This program has been invaluable in supporting children during the pandemic.

**Reconciliation Action Plan** – was launched at last year’s Annual General Meeting and since then the working group, in collaboration with the respective teams, have worked to undertake the agreed actions of the plan and provide subsequent reports to Reconciliation Australia. It has been pleasing to note that children are active participants in the process evident by the activities undertaken not only during Reconciliation Week but imbedded in the programs provided.

**Integrated Family Support** – contracted by the State Government the program received referrals from the Strong Families Safe Children Advice and Referral Line to provide support allocated on a weekly basis. Many of the families allocated have multiple and complex needs and required intense long-term support. The program has maintained full or close to full capacity throughout the year with 28 families and 67 children and young people supported.

Families supported were impacted by:

- Family violence
- Alcohol and/or other drugs
- Mental health
- Diagnosed disability
- Disengaged from learning
- Incarceration
- Involved with child safety
- Emotional support

The Lady Gowrie Tasmania Family Support Service continued to be a strong advocate for vulnerable children and families to ensure that their needs have been met. In doing so, the program has liaised and worked in collaboration with many specialist agencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for those children and families supported.

The program successfully completed the annual quality assessment undertaken by the funding body and has been active in the continuous improvement process.

**Child and Family Wellbeing Program** – this program is funded by Lady Gowrie Tasmania to provide confidential, no cost support to both families and staff through face to face contact, telephone support with advice and/or referral options, active case management and provision of or access to resources.

Not surprisingly, the demand from both families and staff in the last half of 2020 identified the coronavirus pandemic as the leading factor that required support and was the focus of the work undertaken. Information sessions are a key part of the program and while some of the planned sessions were cancelled due to the coronavirus, sessions on the following topics were provided:

- Fussy Eating
- Anxiety
- Behaviour
- Cyber Safety

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on individuals and families will continue long term and for this reason the Child and Family Wellbeing Program is a vital support mechanism to support our people.

**Marketing and Communication** – throughout the coronavirus pandemic regular communiques were provided to our key stakeholders, particularly families and our people. These were highly valued and have resulted in a commitment to continue on a regular basis. Together with the regular social media updates and newsletters, these have provided information on health/hygiene, experiences for children to undertake at home and government updates on financial support available to families. Continual improvements have been undertaken to provide consistency in branding and the quality of all communications and publications.

**Advocacy** – through representation on many groups the organisation has continued to advocate on matters in the best interest of the child. This has been achieved through submissions and responses, participation in consultations, Children's Services newsletters and regular social media content undertaken by the Marketing and Communication Manager, and through television interviews and articles in the printed press.

The coronavirus pandemic resulted in the need to strongly advocate at all levels of government for support for the education and care sector broadly. Being a member of the Australian Government Early Childhood Education and Care Reference Group was advantageous in contributing to the decision making and subsequent range of support mechanisms. Similarly, at a state level, advocacy resulted in all the organisations' landlords providing a level of rent relief. This support was highly appreciated and contributed to ensuring the organisation survived the initial impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

**Our People** – the organisation placed a strong focus on developing our people through professional development and learning. Many staff have been engaged in a qualification pathway to either gain a formal qualification or upgrade an existing qualification. Employee numbers increased until the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in early March reduced demand for services, resulting in the loss of many of the organisation's casual employee pool. Despite this, overall, the organisation's employee numbers exceeded that of previous years. Many employees reached key milestones of 10, 15 and 20 years plus years of continuous service to Lady Gowrie Tasmania and they are congratulated on their commitment and loyalty.

The second wage increment of the current Enterprise Agreement was implemented in December 2019 that validated the above award entitlements and conditions. Many employees took advantage of the organisation's charity status and accessed the salary packaging initiative that provided further benefit to our people.

The Employee Engagement Forum has been another conduit for ideas that supported the continuous improvement of current services and programs along with new initiatives aligned to the organisation's purpose.

**Scholarship Program** – the organisation sponsored a University of Tasmania Early Childhood Education Scholarship awarded to a Tasmanian student commencing the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood). The scholarship is for up to four years as recipients are required to achieve a minimum credit result in all units studied each semester.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES  
RECRUITED 2019-2020  
73

10+ YEARS OF SERVICE  
64 Employees

15+ YEARS OF SERVICE  
23 Employees

20+ YEARS OF SERVICE  
7 Employees

TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES  
546

In 2019 the organisation established the Helen Stephen Memorial Scholarship in memory of the much loved and respected Lady Gowrie Tasmania Kindergarten Teacher who passed away suddenly in August 2019. Not only was Helen a long term past employee but she was an iconic early childhood teacher who had a positive influence on many children, families and early childhood professionals. Her pedagogy and practice were recognised by many tertiary and vocational institutions with their students engaging in the observation and demonstration of best practice.

This annual scholarship is awarded to a Lady Gowrie Tasmania educator who has committed to undertake a qualification to an approved Early Childhood Degree level. The inaugural recipient was Jodie Hayes, Co-Manager at the Lady Gowrie Tasmania Acton Education and Care Service and the 2020 recipient will be announced at the November 2020 Annual General Meeting.

**Organisation Structure** – a review of the structure was undertaken in February 2020 to determine the current and future needs of the organisation. The recommendations in the report were not implemented immediately due to the uncertainty of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic but have since been undertaken. The structure provides underpinning for key roles and increased opportunity for career pathways for employees.

**Governance** - the organisation is fortunate to have an exceptional, high quality Board with a diversity of





backgrounds. As CEO, I have been fortunate to work in collaboration with the Board as they have continued to be proactive in ensuring it has a line sight into the business without wading into operational issues. A continued high degree of openness and trust, together with a shared deep sense of purpose has supported the work of the organisation. Thank you to each of the Directors for their commitment to the organisation.

The relationship between the CEO and the Chair of the Board is critical to good governance. The Chair has been the sounding board and safe place to discuss matters that has made the relationship so valuable – so thank you sincerely Anne for your support and collegiality.

**Leadership** – the Senior Leadership Team has continued to provide strong and focused leadership in their respective program areas, as well as collectively to support the organisation to achieve its goals. For many years, Kathy Cripps and Annette Barwick have undertaken their roles with diligence, commitment and passion. By comparison, Sam Wesson, Chief Financial Officer, was the newest member of the team but in a short time became an integral member of the Senior Leadership Team, not only providing timely financial data and expert advice, but as a much valued member of the team. On a personal note, I thank each of them for their support and guidance over the past year.

To program leaders and managers – thank you for your continued support of the organisation – its people, children, families and clients. This year more than ever has been such a challenge and the resilience of our people has been second to none.

**In summary** – the coronavirus pandemic has put much into perspective and has reshaped our world. We need to protect and nurture children to grow up to be strong and resilient, not vulnerable, to allow them to create the future. We need to recognise good fortune and the reasons to be grateful. We need to take care of our mental health and find a support team, in the workplace and at home. These are just some of what makes Lady Gowrie Tasmania a special organisation. It is not about profit or returns on investment – it is about our people!

*"...the pandemic has put much into perspective and has reshaped our world."*

# year in review

The Strategic Plan 2017-2020 has four key goals:

## 1 Champion Quality

Lady Gowrie Tasmania will be an agile and innovative organisation

## 2 Advocate for Children

Lady Gowrie Tasmania will be a courageous advocate for the interests of children and those who support them

## 3 Stability and Sustainability

Lady Gowrie Tasmania will be robust, responsible and sustainable

## 4 Our People

Lady Gowrie Tasmania will continue to invest in its people and culture



## ANNETTE BARWICK

General Manager,  
Professional Development and Support

The Professional Development and Support Program consisted of the following program areas:

- Inclusion Support Agency
- In Home Care Support Agency
- Gowrie Training & Consultancy (inclusive of the Registered Training Organisation)

**Inclusion Agency Tasmania (IAT)** - an Australian Government funded program continued to focus on coaching support, building educator understanding, skills and knowledge of all areas of 'inclusive practice' to the education and care sector statewide.

The IAT continued to meet with early intervention services including NDIS/ECEI (Early Childhood Early Intervention), private therapists and early intervention teachers to support the inclusion and active participation of children with additional needs within education and care services. Children presenting with challenging behaviors continued to be an area of additional need where services request support from the IAT.

**In Home Care (IHC) Support Agency** - an Australian Government funded program supported families to access Government subsidised child care in the family home and is targeted to assist parents or carers who are unable to

access other mainstream child care options, such as those who work non-standard hours, are geographically isolated or have families with challenging and complex needs. 30 families were in receipt of IHC in the reporting period.

**Gowrie Training & Consultancy** - this program is the commercial arm of the organisation providing accredited and non-accredited training and support to the education and care sector plus allied professionals on a fee for service basis. The program was successful in grant income of almost \$90,000 to provide a range of programs. The funding providers included:

- Department of Education (AEDC)
- Mental Health Council
- Calvary Community Grant
- Lady Gowrie Tasmania Children's Services

The program is also subcontracted by Early Childhood Australia (Tasmanian Branch) to manage the Early Years and School Age Care Workforce Project. The funding for this project was provided by the Department of Education and Care Unit with additional workforce projects funded through the Department of State Growth, Skills Tasmania.

Despite the impact of the coronavirus pandemic the program successfully provided:

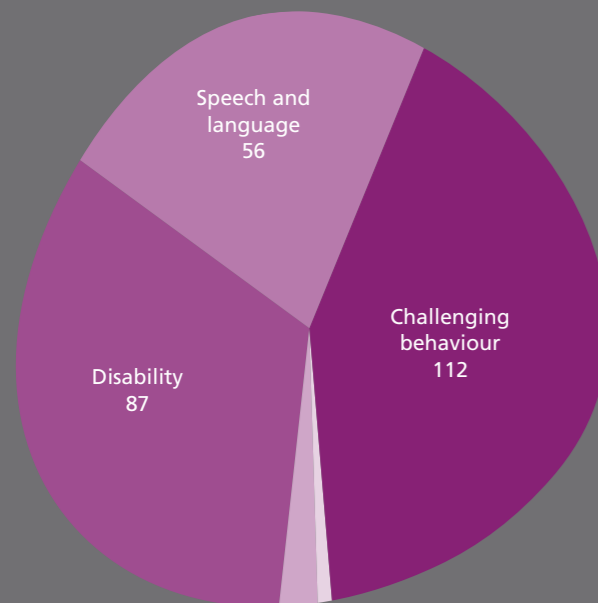
- 22 workshops for children
- 26 workshops for educators
- 9 one-off events for 604 participants
- 6 Little Scientist events
- 7 Let's Count events
- Marte Meo Training (2 days)
- 2 Sensory/Communication workshops
- 3 Action Research Projects
- 2 Outdoor Design Projects

In terms of the Registered Training Organisation, over the reporting period there have been 105 learners enrolled in education and care qualifications or skills sets with:

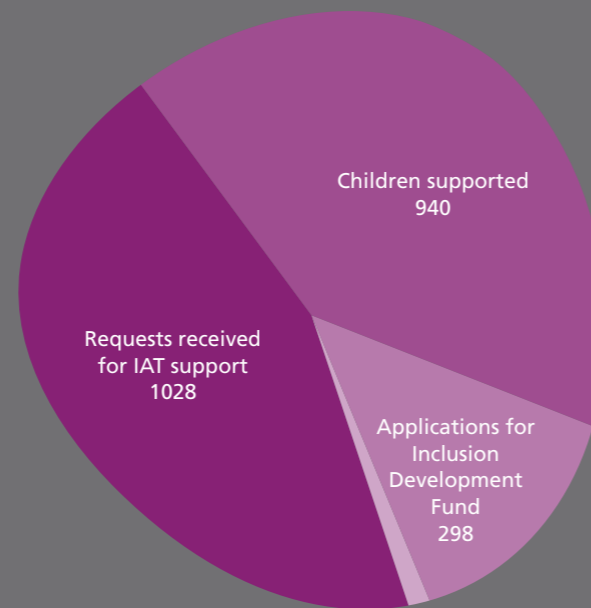
- 21 Certificate 111 completed
- 5 Diploma completed
- 14 Skills Sets completed

The staff within this program continued to work diligently to identify opportunities for funding that supports children, their families and those who work with them. The competitive environment, further challenged by the uncertainty of the ongoing impact of coronavirus, has resulted in the sector reluctant to invest in professional development and learning. This provides an ongoing challenge for the program.

### New Referrals:



### Support Provided:



*"to identify opportunities...that support children, their families and those who work with them."*





## KATHY CRIPPS

General Manager, Children's Services

It should come as no surprise that the last twelve months within Children's Services have been unique, challenging and like no other.

The later part of 2019 saw continued commitment to our people, who remain our best resource, by maintaining a strong focus on pedagogy and practice, including wellbeing programs, ensuring educators were equipped with the tools to support children's programs, and ongoing professional development including Be You, an initiative that supports young children's mental health and wellbeing.

The programs co-located on school sites have worked in partnership with the individual school community to foster an integrated approach to education and care. The provision of 'wrap around care' on school sites supports families to balance work and family responsibilities.

Service Managers have encouraged educators to undertake a qualification pathway or upgrade their qualifications, with Lady Gowrie Tasmania providing financial support.

It is pleasing to note the number of employees who have achieved significant years of service with the organisation. All are to be congratulated for their commitment in delivering quality programs for children.

As acknowledged at last year's Annual General Meeting, many within the organisation were saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Helen Stephen in August 2019. Lady Gowrie Tasmania lost a valued colleague, mentor, and friend; however, her influence is firmly embedded and continued to resonate with many within Children's Services today as she was true to the organisation's mantra - 'Children First'.

Challenges continued to present themselves throughout the latter part of the reporting period, with the coronavirus pandemic profoundly effecting and challenging the way in which Lady Gowrie Tasmania provided its support and services to children and families, as well as continuing to engage with the wider community. In the early stages of the pandemic a significant decrease in service utilisation resulted in the need for careful and fiscal management of programs.

With many children remaining at home, children of essential workers continued to access services. The organisation responded to mandatory requirements regarding social distancing and heightened hygiene practices, as well as adapting to new methods of interaction and engagement. One such example was utilising Storypark which provided ideas and inspiration through web links to various play-based activities for the home. The recording of live group times encouraged children's active participation and interaction from isolation, was also a significant achievement.

Despite the significant challenges that the coronavirus pandemic presented, it enabled reflection which led to new ways in which childhood professionals undertook their practice. Many of these strategies remain in place and through continuous improvement will guide future services and programs.

The Lady Gowrie Tasmania Children's Services program played a significant role in supporting children and families through one of the 17 long day care services, 1 family day care scheme, 1 preschool program and 31 outside school hours care programs.

This is evidenced that during the reporting period Lady Gowrie Tasmania supported:

- 4580 children
- 3395 families

These figures are comprised of:

Long Day Care

- 2433 children
- 1961 families

Outside School Hours Care

- 2147 children
- 1434 families.

The centralised waitlist data remained positive with high number of monthly contacts.

Period	Children Placed	Remain Waitlisted	Average Applications per Month
2018/2019	544	445	79
2019/2020	493	408	84

The data provided is slightly less than the previous reporting period due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic from beginning of March until the end of June 2020.

The Children's Services programs are proud of the way they responded to the challenges of the past year. Managers demonstrated strong leadership, educators remained committed and services continued to provide quality programs and children and families were supported in an uncertain environment. The programs did indeed survive and will continue to thrive.

*"The programs did indeed survive and will continue to thrive."*







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*'Children First'*