



Northern Schools Early Years Cluster

Annual Report
2021





Acknowledgement of Country

The Northern Schools Early Years Cluster acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we deliver our services, the Wurundjeri People, and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

The NSEYC acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's deep connection to Country. We are committed to listen and learn with our community, and do our part to work towards Reconciliation.




Message from CEO and Chair

2021 has been another year of opportunities as well as challenges for the early childhood sector, with the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our kindergarten teams have once again demonstrated their commitment and resilience in the face of restrictions, COVID-19 cases, and low levels of face-to-face kindergarten attendance, finding ways to continue to deliver programs and keep children and families connected to learning.

Given this context, we are especially proud of the achievements of the organisation this year, where we have met the targets of our strategic plan (some of which are outlined in more detail later in this report). Some highlights include:

- **Implementing School Readiness Plans across each of our kindergartens**, with the aim of improving support for children in the areas of Wellbeing and Communication, including the Access to Early Learning program.
- **Four services assessed as Exceeding the National Quality Standard** - a credit to the teams at Glenroy Central, Will Will Rook, York Street and Upfield Kindergartens, and the management team.
- **Roll out of 3-year-old kindergarten and capital works.** We introduced new 3-year-old programs at several of our kindergartens in preparation for full roll-out from 2022. We also commenced upgrades and expansions at 10 of our services, creating higher quality and more accessible learning environments where children can explore, create, wonder and learn. This would have been an amazing achievement at any time, however all this has been accomplished while we were continuing to navigate the changing platform due to COVID-19. A credit to all involved.
- **Continuing our growth trajectory**, with the establishment of Rothschild Road and Holy Child Kindergartens to meet our purpose for children to love a life of learning and living.

“ Reflecting on the year that has been and all that we have achieved (despite the many challenges) makes us incredibly proud to lead this organisation.



- **In partnership with Moreland City Council, finalising the new Glenroy Hub Children's Centre**, a long day care centre located within the Glenroy Community Hub open from February 2022. We know that the first 1000 days of a child's life are when the foundations are laid for lifelong health, wellbeing, learning and achievement. This is when the risk and protective factors in a child's life have the greatest impact. This window of time in a child's development is especially important in communities such as Glenroy where there are high levels of vulnerability and disadvantage. That's why, back in 2019, we jumped at the chance to submit an Expression of Interest for the Glenroy Hub Children's Centre, and to take the NSEYC model of integrated service delivery to these younger years where we know we can make a positive difference in children's lives from when they are just 6 weeks of age.
- **Remaining connected and engaged as an organisation** during the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Relationships and working in partnership are key values of the NSEYC, as we understand that a multidisciplinary approach supports the best outcomes for children. We have continued to take an active and collaborative approach to working with our allied health partners, Councils, local community and agencies

Reflecting on the year that has been and all that we have achieved (despite the many challenges) makes us incredibly proud to lead this organisation. We thank every single educator, staff and board member for their contributions to these achievements and dedication to the work that we all do for children and families.



Local MP Mary-Ann Thomas, Willowbank PS Principal and AP, DET representatives, NSEYC staff / board members and kindergarten parents celebrating the official opening of Rothschild Road Kindergarten.

In 2022 we will continue to focus on supporting ongoing quality improvement across our organisation. We will see our partnerships strengthen through our integrated approach, establishing a Wellbeing team for the NSEYC and working with our stakeholders on projects such as 'From the Word Grow', a Glenroy Community Hub Healthy Eating Project.

We will be implementing our 'Peer to Peer' learning program as part of our multidisciplinary approach to collaboration and shared learning for educators. We will also finalise our current infrastructure projects and develop the new site at Holy Child Kindergarten as well as some new projects across our kindergarten facilities to support our 3-year-old kindergarten programs and continue our commitment to "Love a life of learning and living". Exciting times are ahead!



Valerie Karaitiana
Chair



Sigi Hyett
CEO

OUR PURPOSE

To love a
life of learning
and living

WE VALUE TRUST

We demonstrate honesty, integrity, reliability, social justice in our programs and practice.

RELATIONSHIPS

We acknowledge each person's intrinsic value, being considerate, authentic and courteous.

RESPECT

We are welcoming, connected and inclusive of our communities.

LEARNING

We strengthen the capabilities of each individual in our communities.

STRATEGIC GOALS

GROWTH STRATEGY

To pursue opportunities to meet our purpose

COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Strengthening communities

CHILDREN'S STRATEGY

A quality children's service

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

To operate a financially and environmentally sustainable enterprise

TEAM STRATEGY

Strengthen our workforce

Our purpose, values and strategic goals

The NSEYC Board and Management recognise that good governance enables the NSEYC to operate in a manner that meets ethical, legal and business expectations and at the same time fulfil its commitments to funding bodies, staff who work at the services, and most importantly, children and families.

In 2019, together with our community, we reviewed our purpose and values and developed our strategic goals for the following three years, which continue to guide our efforts.

Having this framework in place has enabled the organisation to adapt and respond to the challenges of the last two years while still working towards our agreed goals.

The organisation's sole purpose is to improve outcomes for the children, families and community by strengthening a love of learning and living.

Our core values of trust, respect, relationships and learning are underpinned by a strong commitment to integrity, respect for and compliance with the law, an emphasis on best practice and a caring spirit.

Our model

The Northern Schools Early Years Cluster was formed by members of the Broadmeadows Primary Schools Principal Network in 2011, with 5 kindergartens co-located on school sites. The vision of this group of Principals and early years staff was to develop an Early Years Management organisation to support local families and meet changing community needs, providing a platform to implement Government reforms such as the introduction of Universal Access to 15 hours of kindergarten and to improve outcomes for children and families.

This vision has strengthened community connections between schools, early years services and the local community through a Kindergarten to Year 6 model (or in some cases, birth to Year 6) that assists children to reach their full potential by providing integrated service delivery, quality education and smooth transitions for children entering into their formal school year.

Primary school principals take an active role in the governance and oversight of the kindergartens via the NSEYC Executive Group, working closely with the Early Years Management team to plan for future infrastructure and service requirements based on the needs of the local community.

Our unique model provides improved access and aims to increase kindergarten attendance and participation. The growth of the organisation has been steady over the past 10 years, expanding its platform from five kindergartens to 11 in 2021, with a further expansion to move to 14 services in 2022, including the delivery of long day care.

Our board & executive group

We recognise that having a central body with a robust governance structure and expertise in managing kindergarten services is essential to our ongoing operations and delivery of quality education and care. The Board oversees the strategic direction of the organisation. It comprises representatives from local government, the community sector, and school leaders. School Principals are also part of an Executive Group that supports networking, collaboration and information-sharing between sites, and continuity of learning for children between kindergartens and schools.

The Board, Executive and Management teams work in partnership to create attractive employment opportunities, support effective collaboration between kindergartens and primary schools, promote the benefits of kindergarten within the local area, and provide coordinated professional support and development for continuous improvement.



Our management team

During 2021 our management and administration team has continued to implement and consolidate improvements to our systems and processes, facilitated continuous quality improvement and best practice compliance with regulations, and supported the implementation of school readiness plans. Some key achievements include:

- Supporting 4 of our kindergartens through the Assessment and Rating process, and working together to achieve a rating of 'Exceeding' against the National Quality Standards
- Delivering coaching, mentoring and community of practice programs to support quality improvement across all services, facilitated by early childhood experts Heather Barnes, Catharine Hydon and Gilda Howard
- Supporting our kindergartens and schools to participate in the Continuity of Learning program to strengthen the partnerships between early childhood and primary teachers that enable children from vulnerable or disadvantaged settings to achieve successful transition to school
- Supporting implementation of School Readiness Plans, including the establishment of the Access to Early Learning Program. The NSEYC was the first non-council EYM to deliver this program, and has contributed a case study to support implementation across the state
- Continuing to support delivery of 'Loving Learning from Home' during restrictions and periods of low attendance at kindergarten, to ensure continuity of learning for children
- Identifying areas and services to expand the NSEYC platform and meet service provision for the future, including a new service in Gisborne (Rothschild Road Kindergarten), Dallas (Holy Child Kindergarten) and new three-year-old programs across existing services
- Securing Building Blocks grant funding to support further facility upgrades and expansions to indoor and outdoor learning environments, and increase capacity to deliver 3-year-old programs across all kindergartens, as well as to purchase inclusive furniture and resources and improved IT infrastructure
- Implementing the Head Start traineeship program at 3 of our services
- Recruiting new teachers and educators to support delivery of additional programs and new services from 2022.
- Developing the NSEYC workforce, including supporting existing staff to upskill and upgrade qualifications (7 staff have completed / are completing their Bachelor of Early Childhood) and establishing a partnership with the Deakin University graduate program
- Developing and implementing our communication and engagement strategy, including establishing new methods of connecting and engaging with the community through social media, newsletters, community events etc., to promote the NSEYC model and services.

Paul Kenna, Belle Vue Park Primary School
Teresa DeMercurio, Bethal Primary School
Leanne Lewis, Broadmeadows Primary School
Val Karaitiana, Dallas Brooks Community Primary School
Roger Pell, Fawkner Primary School
Joanne Money, Glenroy Central Primary School
Pam Streete, Glenroy West Primary School
Anthony Potesta, Meadows Primary School
Maria Giordano, Moreland Primary School

Executive Principal Group

Valerie Karaitiana, Chair, Principal Executive
Suzie Mansell, Secretary
Leanne Giardina, Treasurer
Lynne Gunning, Member
Pam Streete, Member, Principal Executive
Sylvia Dickson, Member
Kathy Townley, Member
Felix Ohle, Member

Board Members

Sigi Hyett, CEO
Elicia Napoli, Operations Manager
Bec Howell, Communications and Engagement Manager
Linda Hyett, Teaching and Learning Facilitator
Natascha Tjendana, Finance Manager
Kerrie O'Neill, Project Coordinator (contract)
Linda Burns, Accounts Officer
Kirti Crute, Enrolment Officer
Amira Mourad, Administration Officer

Management & administration

Our kindergartens

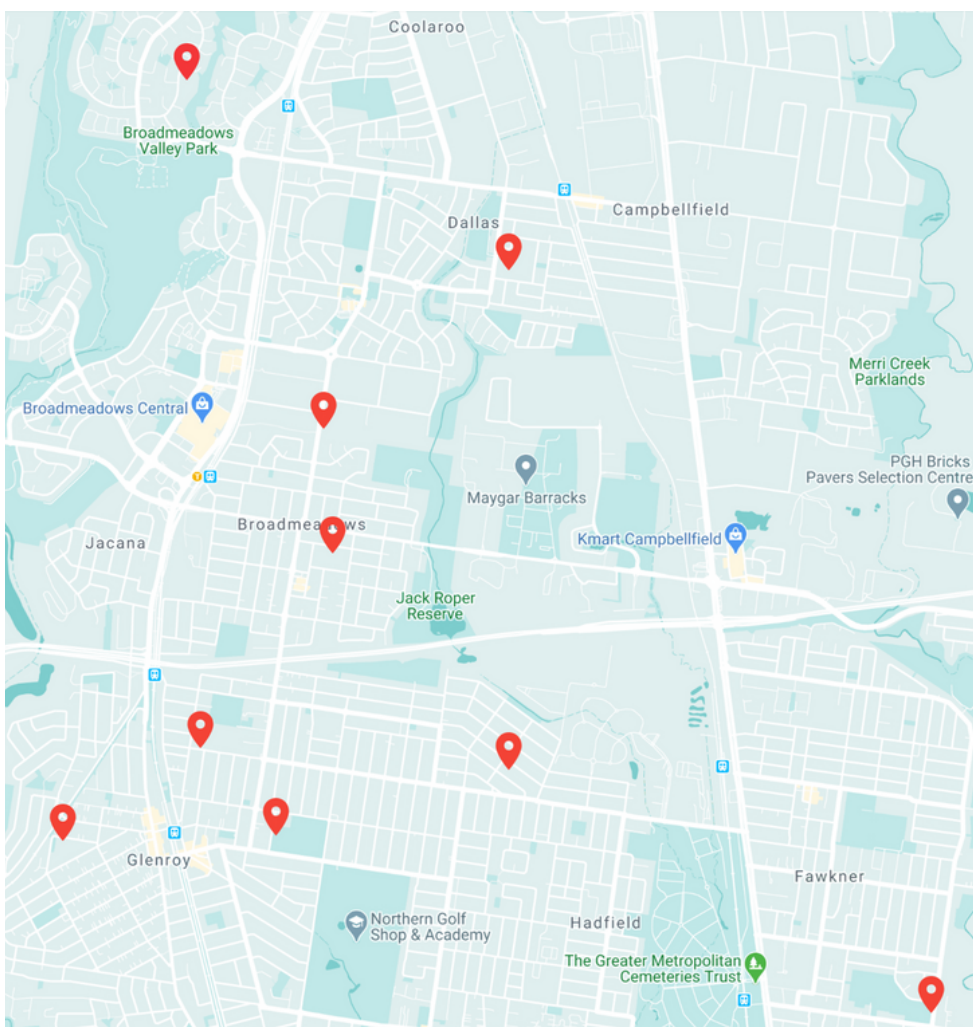
Our vision is to provide an effective kindergarten program that provides a flexible learning environment, where children will find varied opportunities in which they can:

- learn social behaviours that benefit both the individual and the group,
- develop critical thinking, explore, create and learn to solve problems,
- discover, collect, and classify information about the world,
- build and clarify concepts, extend present knowledge and experience,
- learn about words, explore usage and meanings for effective communication with others,
- and above all, have fun!

Ten of our eleven kindergartens (as at 2021) are co-located on school sites enabling the kindergarten programs to be integrated with the schools, providing a K-6 model at each site.

Each kindergarten team comprises at least one Bachelor-qualified Early Childhood Teacher and at least one qualified early childhood educator. We value ongoing professional learning and collaboration for our teams, where the sharing of knowledge and skills strengthens educators' capabilities, and ultimately provides better outcomes for children, families, staff and community.

In preparation for delivery of funded 3-year-old kindergarten from 2022, we introduced new 3-year-old programs at four of our kindergarten services in 2021, bringing the total of 3-year-old programs up to 8 across the NSEYC. This will further increase once we have completed expansions to some of our facilities through the Building Blocks initiative in preparation for funded 3-year-old kindergarten in 2022.



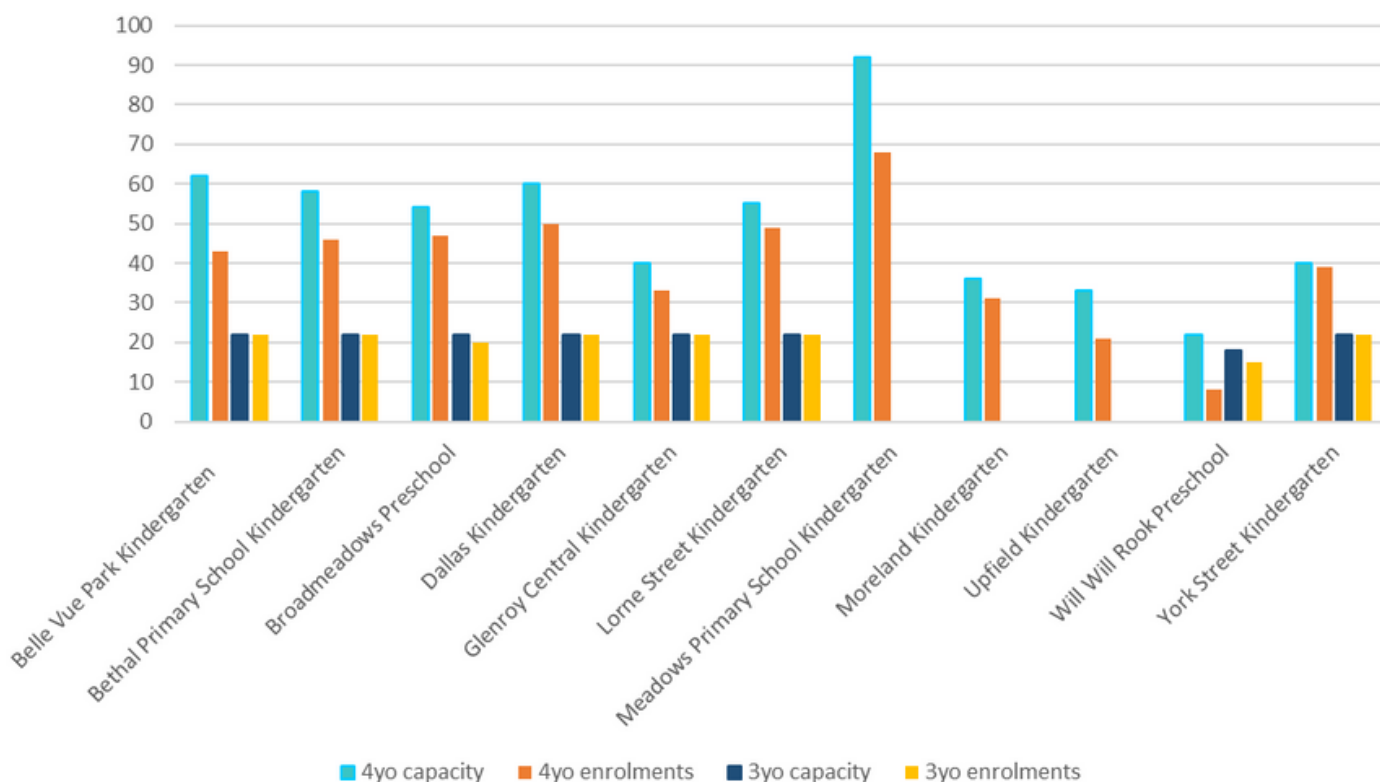
Map of NSEYC
kindergartens
as at 2021



In 2021 we provided kindergarten programs for over 582 children across the following services:

- **Belle Vue Park Kindergarten** – 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten. Located in the grounds of Bell Vue Park Primary School, Morell St, Glenroy, VIC 3046
- **Bethal Primary School Kindergarten** – 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten. Located in the grounds of Bethal Primary School, 26-52 El Dorado Crescent, Meadow Heights, VIC 3056
- **Broadmeadows Preschool** – 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten. Located in the grounds of Broadmeadows Primary School, 62-79 Blair St, Broadmeadows
- **Dallas Kindergarten @ Dallas Brooks Community Primary School** – 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten. Located within the school at 24-36 King St, Dallas, VIC 3047
- **Glenroy Central Kindergarten** – 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten. Located in the grounds of Glenroy Central Primary School, 10 Logan St, Glenroy, VIC 3046.
- **Lorne Street Kindergarten** – 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten. Located in the grounds of Fawkner Primary School, 40 Lorne St, Fawkner VIC 3060
- **Meadows Primary School Kindergarten** – 4-year-old kindergarten. Located in the grounds of Meadows Primary School, 41 Gerbert Street, Broadmeadows, VIC 3047
- **Moreland Kindergarten** – 4-year-old kindergarten. Located in the grounds of Moreland Primary School, 157-163 Moreland Rd, Coburg, VIC 3058.
- **Upfield Kindergarten @ Dallas Brooks Community Primary School** – 4-year-old kindergarten. Located within the grounds of the school at 24-36 King St Dallas, VIC 3047
- **Will Will Rook Preschool** – integrated 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten (a first for the NSEYC). Located at our bush kindergarten site, 208A Hilton St, Glenroy VIC 3046
- **York Street Kindergarten at Glenroy West Primary School** – 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten. Located in the grounds of Glenroy West Primary School, 60 William St, Glenroy VIC 3046.

2021 enrolments as at end of year





The NSEYC End-of-Year Celebration 2021, held at the Melbourne Zoo

Our people

Our dedicated team are committed to providing opportunities for all children to learn, thrive and reach their full potential. This shared common purpose is crucial to the overall NSEYC culture.

Our teams have developed a shared understanding of our purpose both within their own immediate working group and of our whole organisation. This has enabled our everyday work to be aligned to our purpose, as well as the National Quality Standards, creating a strong sense of connectedness across the organisation.

The values of the whole organisation are demonstrated within our teams daily. Trust, respect, and strong relationships provide ongoing opportunities for learning.

In 2021, our teams continued to expand their knowledge, skills, and capabilities through professional learning, as part of the School Readiness Plans and the NSEYC professional learning calendar.

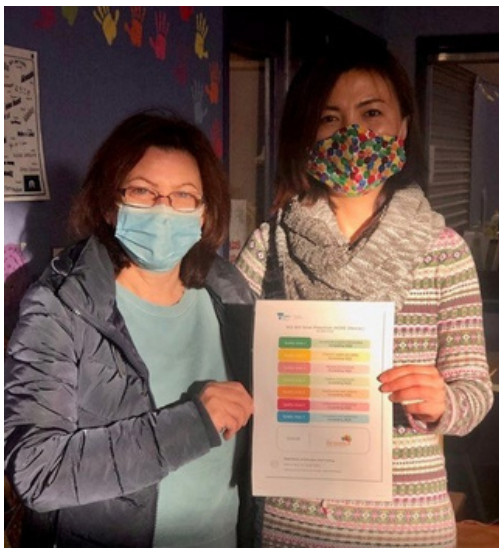
In support of our K-6 model, several of our kindergartens also partnered with their co-located primary school teaching colleagues to participate in the 3-day Continuity of Early Learning course, which focuses on strengthening the partnerships with the biggest impact on children's transition to school – those between schools, early childhood services and parents.

The NSEYC conducts a quarterly Culture Diagnostic survey as a way of monitoring staff engagement and culture. The NSEYC's purpose – 'To love a life of learning and living' – was assessed as the greatest strength by staff in 2021. Our staff also highlighted the statement that "All staff feedback is given to support the learning and development of the individual".

The overall culture diagnostic result of 82.98 in October 2021 demonstrates the strong culture that exists within the NSEYC, especially given the extraordinary environment that everyone found themselves both living and working within.

We are proud of our teams, both individually and collectively, for their responsiveness and for looking out for one another during these unprecedented times. The COVID lockdowns continued to create a unique environment for everyone, and those operating in the education sector were never far from the pressure placed on individuals, families and communities. It is times like this that NSEYC's purpose and values become a source of strength and resilience to keep going.

“ It is times like this that NSEYC's purpose and values become a source of strength and resilience to keep going.



Top left: Rosanna and Emily from Will Will Rook after receiving an 'Exceeding' rating

Top right: Elicia, Bec, Sigi, Linda and Kerrie at the NSEYC End-of-Year Celebration

Bottom: Educators from NSEYC's Hume services at one of our many online team meetings during COVID restrictions



Our community

The NSEYC services are situated within the northern suburbs of Melbourne, with our 11 kindergartens located across the municipalities of Hume and Moreland, in the suburbs of Glenroy, Fawkner, Coburg, Dallas, Meadow Heights and Broadmeadows. The communities we work within are vibrant and richly multicultural. Our families and children speak many languages, with the most predominant being Arabic, Punjabi, Turkish and Urdu, with an increasing number of Samoan and African families also moving into the area. These diverse cultures are also reflected amongst our teams and within our programs.

We are also lucky to have our Head Office and Will Will Rook Preschool located adjacent to culturally significant park land owned by the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Aboriginal Heritage Corporation, and are proud to run a bush kindergarten program from this sacred place.

There are high levels of vulnerability and disadvantage amongst our communities, which is why it is so important that we work with our communities and partners to provide the highest possible quality early learning experiences in these most formative years to empower children in their learning journey, and to support families as their first and most important educators and close the gap of disadvantage for children entering their formal school years.

This is especially true in light of the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. Although kindergartens largely remained open during 2021, most families were understandably anxious about sending their children to kindergarten due to the high risks of infection. As a result, children missed out on critical face-to-face learning opportunities and are now requiring additional support to catch-up. Many families moved out of the area during this time due to increasing house prices and other stressors, resulting in further disruption to children's lives and learning.

These issues further underscore the importance of working with our partners to deliver our integrated K-6 model (and in some cases 0-6 where we have our community hubs) and ensure that children and families receive timely support to address vulnerability.



The Lorne Street Kindergarten team at the official opening of their Community Pantry initiative

Our partnerships

Partnerships and collaboration are central to the governance and integrated service delivery model of the NSEYC. We could not achieve what we do without our partners; from our Board members, school principals, local councils and the Department of Education Training, through to on-the-ground professionals and support workers who work with our teams every day.

The NSEYC is unique in that we employ a collaborative governance model with strong oversight and involvement of local primary schools and other partners. The NSEYC Board includes local government and community sector representatives, as well as school principals.

At the organisational level, we work closely with the Hume/Moreland Area of the Department of Education and Training, and with Moreland and Hume City Councils. This includes representation on the following groups for each council:

- Moreland Children, Young People and Families Plan Governance Group; planning group for the Glenroy Community Hub; the Moreland Central Enrolment Reference Group; the Moreland Early Years Network Group; the Moreland Educational Leaders' Network Group; and the Moreland 'Ready, Set Prep' steering group.

- Hume Access to Early Learning Governance Group; Best Start Executive Group and Working Group; the Hume Early Years Partnership; the Hume Early Years Network Group; and the Hume Educational Leaders' Network Group.

Our kindergarten staff work in partnership with multi-disciplinary professionals and schools to support children and families to fully engage in early learning and improve their health and wellbeing. This includes Allied Health professionals from Merri Health and DPV, Kindergarten Inclusion Support workers, Preschool Field Officers, Child First, and primary school teaching and support staff.

We are continuing to strengthen links with other organisations such as community health services, early childhood intervention services, family services, refugee and migrant support services, neighbourhood houses and Aboriginal organisations.



The NSEYC management/admin team with some of our partners in the development of the Glenroy Community Hub



Achievements in 2021

2021 has been a year of adjusting to the new 'COVID normal', and embedding flexible program delivery as part of business-as-usual. It has also been a year of building works, with simultaneous projects happening across most of our services throughout the latter part of the year. Some key achievements against our strategic goals are outlined below.

Goal 1: Provide a quality children's service

Achieving four 'Exceeding' ratings against the National Quality Standard

Four of our kindergartens underwent Rating and Assessment against the National Quality Standards during 2021, and we are very proud that all four were rated as 'Exceeding'.

- Upfield Kindergarten (at Dallas Brooks Community Primary School) was rated as Exceeding in 5 out of 7 areas.
- Will Will Rook Preschool was rated as Exceeding in all 7 areas.
- York Street Kindergarten (at Glenroy West Primary School) was rated as Exceeding in all 7 areas.
- Glenroy Central Kindergarten (at Glenroy Central Primary School) was rated as Exceeding in all 7 areas.

This is a wonderful reflection of the high-quality learning that is provided at all of our kindergarten services, our commitment to supporting continuous critical reflection and improvement within our programs, and the dedication of our educators to providing the best start for children in our communities.

Implementation of School Readiness Plans

2021 was our second year of implementing School Readiness Plans across each of our kindergartens, with a continued aim of improving support for children in the areas of Wellbeing, Communication and Inclusion. This has included:

- The Access to Early Learning program, to provide a service and resources for families with complex needs and support their children to access and engage in the kindergarten program where they may have otherwise missed out (further outlined below).
- Employing additional educators to support children to participate in small group work focusing on strengthening their social and emotional skills and supporting their learning and development in all areas
- Community of Practice coaching sessions facilitated by Heather Barnes, Catharine Hydon and Gilda Howard (early childhood consultants), focused on children's wellbeing, consisting of inquiry projects and coaching to support practice enhancement, and provide feedback to educators about their program, practice and projects
- Tailored, collaborative sessions delivered by Allied Health speech pathologists and psychologists from DPV and Merri Health, focused on communication and wellbeing.

Delivering facility upgrades and new equipment through the Building Blocks initiatives

An important part of providing a quality children's service is ensuring that our learning environments are welcoming, inspiring, and support equity and agency for children. Many of our kindergarten facilities had not been upgraded in many years (or in some cases, ever), and were in grave need of renovation. During 2021 we have delivered or commenced work on a total of 10 infrastructure projects to expand and upgrade our facilities, using the Building Blocks grant funding we attracted in 2020.

This has been a huge effort on the part of many people, and we wish to wholeheartedly thank the architects (Gardiner Architects and Jeavons Landscape Architects), builders (ADMA, Modus, Brocor and Fleetwood) for delivering such great results, and above all our management, administration and kindergarten teams for their patience and flexibility in ensuring that our programs continued to be delivered throughout the construction works. At no point have we closed services due to building works (though at times this would have been a more straightforward option), as we were committed to ensuring that children did not miss out on vital early learning.

During 2021 we also attracted a further \$1,962,593 in funding for further upgrades at Belle Vue Park and Broadmeadows Kindergartens, and for a new modular kindergarten room at Glenroy Central Kindergarten. We have also played a key role in developing the new kindergarten at Holy Child Primary School, which will be constructed in early/mid 2022.

Goal 2: Operate a financially and environmentally sustainable enterprise

Committing to and attracting grants to upgrade infrastructure and improve learning environments

In addition to the considerable funding secured through the Building Blocks grants, we were successful in attracting \$10,000 per service (\$110,000 in total) and also committed to add \$400,00 from our reserves for new kindergarten equipment and resources through the Victorian Government's Inclusive Equipment grants. This has been used to purchase new furniture, sensory equipment and other resources to improve our learning environments, ensuring that they are suitable for 3 to 5-year-olds and supporting every child to fully participate in the kindergarten program. We also secured \$5,000 per service for the purchase of new iPads to support program documentation, information sharing and digital learning.



The Moreland Kindergarten outdoor play space has been upgraded through the Building Blocks initiative

Goal 3: Strengthen communities**Implementation of Access to Early Learning Program**

In 2021 the NSEYC became the first Early Years Management organisation to implement the Access to Early Learning program as part of our School Readiness Funding (AEL-SRF), in partnership with Hume and Moreland City Councils. AEL-SRF provides access to free kindergarten for eligible children, along with outreach support for their families by a qualified AEL facilitator. The AEL facilitator also fosters important connections and collaboration between the family, the early childhood education and care (ECEC) service and its educators, and other support services. As the lead agency for our AEL program we worked in partnership with the Hume City Council (which also has an AEL program) in establishing a governance group. The governance group comprises key partners from the NSEYC, representatives from the Hume and Moreland City Councils, the Department of Education, Child Protection, Child First and an Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Nurse. The governance group established processes to support the implementation of the program and provide strategic advice.

We appointed Leonie Burke to the role of AEL Facilitator, a highly experienced Early Childhood Teacher who has spent many years working in early learning settings supporting children and families with highly complex needs and circumstances. During 2021 Leonie worked with many families across our kindergartens providing tailored support and resources that promote kindergarten participation and in-home learning, as well as mentoring and professional learning for educators to enhance their engagement and support of vulnerable children and families.

Overall the program was very effective, however there were some challenges with implementation due to the rigid funding model (we were required to choose a set number of AEL places per kindergarten based on evidence of vulnerability in the community, however this did not always match up with where there is the greatest actual need). For 2022, Leonie's role will change to a more general Family Support Worker to enable more effective targeting to families and kindergartens with the greatest need.

Establishing a Reconciliation Action Plan Group

A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a formal statement of commitment to reconciliation. During 2021 we established a RAP Group to guide the development and lead the implementation of the plan, consisting of representatives from each NSEYC service. This approach helps to ensure that the RAP actively considers diverse perspectives, and represents the diversity of our community in holistically empowering and sustainable ways.



Leonie Burke, NSEYC's Access to Early Learning Facilitator

Goal 4: Strengthen our workforce

Bastow Continuity of Learning course

In support of our K-6 model, several of our kindergartens partnered with their co-located primary school teaching colleagues to participate in the 3-day Continuity of Early Learning course, which focuses on strengthening the partnerships with the biggest impact on children's transition to school – those between schools, early childhood services and parents.

With an emphasis on supporting children and families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage, this course, offered through the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership, explores evidence-based practices for leading continuity of learning and development, how teams can implement these practices in their context, and strategies to work together to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The course provided a wonderful opportunity to deepen the connections between early childhood and primary teaching teams, and further develop approaches to bring our K-6 model to its full fruition.



Supporting our people to stay connected, safe and well during COVID-19

Building on our efforts in 2020, during the various lockdowns in 2021 the NSEYC staff worked flexibly, delivering a combination of home-based and in-service learning for children. They used communication platforms such as Teams and Zoom to participate in online meetings and connect with colleagues, and to engage in professional learning. This enabled us to continue implementation of the School Readiness Plans and other initiatives (albeit in a different format).

The Management team also implemented regular check-ins with staff, delivered 'self-care packages' and other treats, held online All Staff forums and fun events, and implemented COVID-Safe plans for every kindergarten to operate safely when programs were delivered on-site.

Most importantly, our team members looked after each other, checking in on colleagues' wellbeing and sharing ideas for working and learning at home effectively throughout the restrictions. In 2022 we will be further expanding our online connection with families via the Storypark app.

Goal 5: Pursue growth opportunities to meet our purpose

Expansion of kindergarten facilities and programs

To support the rollout of funded kindergarten for 3-year-old children, we have delivered or commenced work on 7 facility expansions to create additional spaces or rooms to deliver these important programs. In addition, in 2021 we commenced delivery of 3-year-old kindergarten programs at an additional 4 kindergarten services, bringing the total of 3-year-old programs up to 8 across the NSEYC. This will further increase once we have completed expansions to some of our facilities. Additionally we commenced upgrades and refurbishments at the remainder of our services to meet contemporary practice and create environments where children can explore, wonder, create and learn. We view the environment as the third teacher and believe our children deserve the best possible learning spaces so they can thrive.

Developing the new Glenroy Hub Children's Centre and Rothschild's Road Kindergarten

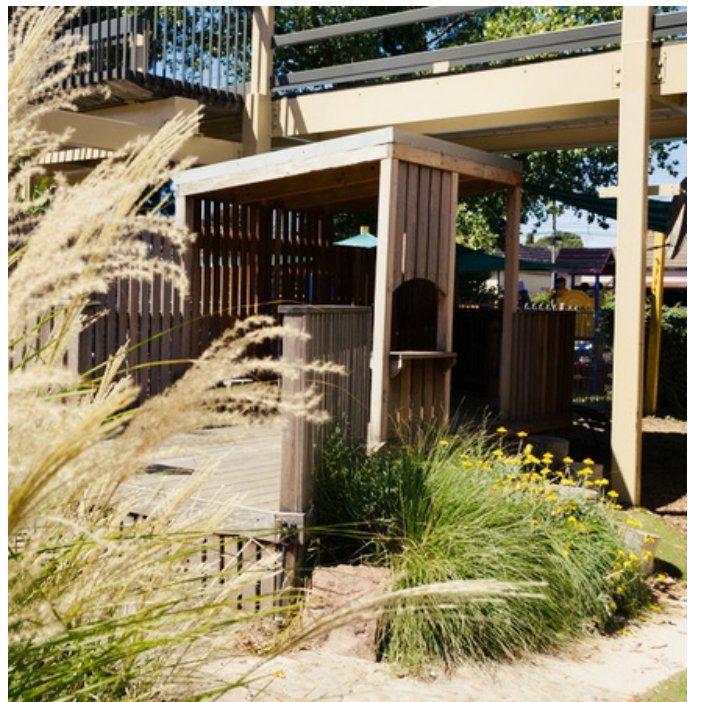
The growth of the NSEYC over the last few years has been strategic, with a focus on opportunities that will align with our model and enhance our ability to make a positive impact within communities. We were thrilled that in 2019 the NSEYC was selected by Moreland City Council as the operator for the Glenroy Hub Children's Centre, as part of the Glenroy Community Hub (open from February 2022). Once it is fully operational (from May 2022), the Hub will also offer other services and programs on site such as a library, Maternal and Child Health, a community garden, health services and more. This will see the NSEYC expand into the under three age group for the first time, offering education and care for children from 6 weeks until they start school.



The finished Glenroy Hub Children's Centre

We know that the first three years are when the foundations are laid for children's lifelong health, wellbeing and achievement. Our involvement in the hub will enable us to extend our model to these younger years where we know we can make an even greater impact on the outcomes for children in our community – particularly those who are vulnerable. 2021 saw significant progress in the development and construction of the Hub, and in our operational planning – including timetabling, recruitment, developing policies and procedures, sourcing furniture and resources etc. We feel privileged and excited to be part of such an important community facility.

In 2021 we were also selected by the DET as the successful operator for the new kindergarten located at Willowbank Primary School, Rothschild Road Kindergarten in Gisborne. The site is located in the Macedon Ranges Shire, which borders Hume City and was a logical extension of our current geographical scope. We are looking forward to building our relationship with Willowbank Primary School and the Macedon Ranges Shire Council.



2021 Financial Report notes

Net Profit / Surplus (A\$)

\$339,503

2020

\$31,219

2021

Total Expenditures

\$3,979,619

Increase by 9% on 2020 year
(compared to increase of 36% on prior
2019 year)

Expenses include:

IT Equipment & Support \$50K (compared to
\$21K in 2020 yr)

Equipment purchases \$36K

External Grants expended \$92K (compared
to \$210K in 2020 yr)

School readiness programs \$238K

Net Profit / Surplus (A\$)

Turnover now exceeds

\$6.4 million

(includes all grants)

Increase by

\$2.4 million

(increase of 62% on prior year and
42% on 2019 year)

Total increase of

\$3,838,164

in last three years (since 2018)

Representing 6th consecutive year
of growth over 20%

-Includes \$2.48M Building Block
Grant which has been fully
expended in 2021 year

Historical note:

\$249,369

Total Turnover in first year (2011)

Wages and on-costs

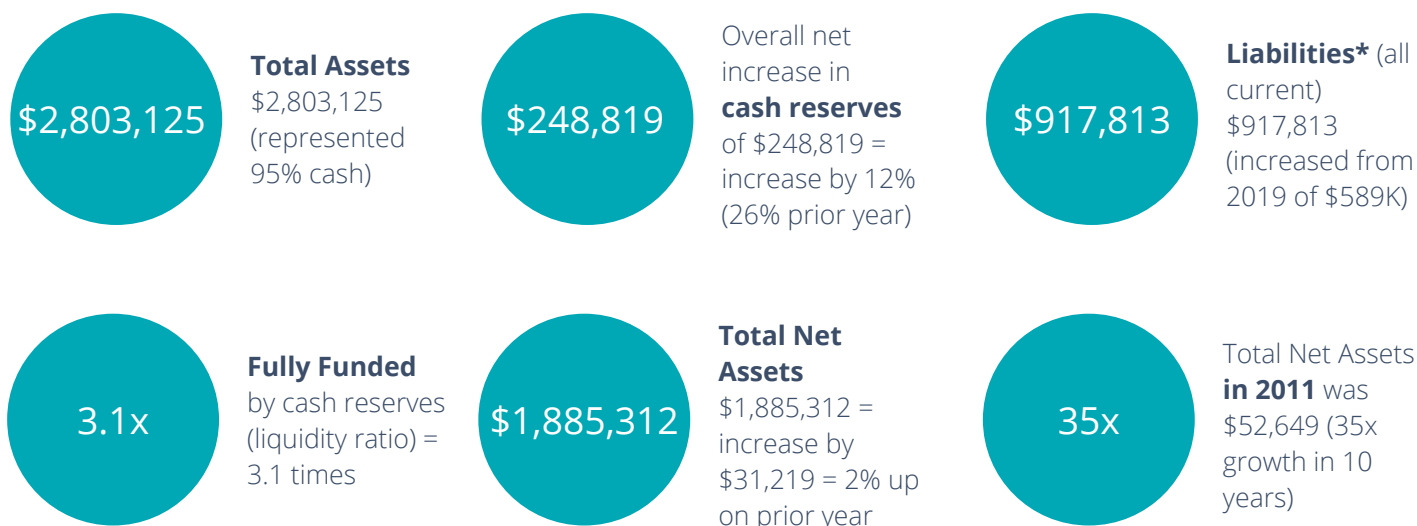
	2021	2020	2019	2018
Wages	\$2,553,767	\$2,293,551	\$1,819,524	\$1,526,190
AL & LSL	\$ 32,108	\$ 19,816	\$ 36,278	\$ 99,022
Relief Staff	\$ 145,623	\$ 141,435	\$ 231,362	\$ 256,373
Super	\$ 245,906	\$ 238,032	\$ 161,417	\$ 142,880
Work-cover	\$ 37,760	\$ 29,727	\$ 30,643	\$ 25,008
Total costs	\$3,015,164	\$2,722,561	\$2,279,224	\$2,049,473
As % of Turnover	76.0%	68.0%	81.38%	77.25%

Translates to \$3 out of every \$4 paid as wages/employment costs = "Service Delivery"

Increase by \$292,603 = 11% (commensurate with t/over increase of 9%)

Increasing emphasis on specialist programs

Balance Sheet (Statement of Financial Position)



* Liabilities includes:

Teaching Resources Committed Expenditures \$ 61K
 Grants Received but not yet expended \$124K
 Committed Construction Expenditures \$214K (Total \$399K)
 Note – Leave Entitlements Provision fully funded

The year ahead

2022 is set to be an exciting year, with our new kindergartens and long day care centre opening, many facility upgrades being finalised (as well as some new ones starting), and new programs rolling out.

Our key priorities for the year will be:

- Implementing School Readiness Plans, including the Community of Practice program and a new Wellbeing program to support 3 and 4-year-old children from families with complex needs to fully participate in high quality, universal early education and care
- Further embedding 'exceeding' themes of the National Quality Standard within our kindergarten programs and across the organisation, as part of a continuous effort to improve the quality of learning for children
- Implementation of our Language Enhancement program to support children's communication, language and literacy
- Implementing our Peer to Peer Learning program as part of our multidisciplinary approach to collaboration and shared learning
- Ongoing strengthening of our K-6 model, with the aim of supporting continuity of learning and a smooth transition to school for children, particularly those experiencing vulnerability or with developmental delays
- Managing the delivery of the Building Blocks facility extensions and upgrades and applying for further grants where required
- Establishing our new services and partnerships including the Glenroy Hub Children's Centre, Rothschild Road Kindergarten and Holy Child Kindergarten
- Continuing implementation of our Communication and Engagement Strategy to support the achievement of our strategic goals and promotion of the organisation.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the work of our teams, board members, school principals, architects, builders, landscapers and all of our stakeholders. We value the strong partnerships we have with our community and sector and acknowledge their commitment and role within our organisation. Thank you for your contribution to the NSEYC this year.

- Adma Group
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
- Belle Vue Park Primary School
- Bethal Primary School
- Broadmeadows Primary School
- Brocor Landscaping
- Catharine Hydon
- Dallas Brooks Community Primary School
- Department of Education and Training
- DVP Health
- Early Learning Association of Australia
- Enterprise Care
- FKA Children's Services
- Fawkner Primary School
- Fleetwood
- Gardiner Architects
- Gilda Howard
- Glenroy Central Primary School
- Glenroy West Primary School
- Heather Barnes
- Hume City Council
- Jeavons Architects
- Meadows Primary School
- Merri Health
- Michael Overman Accountancy
- Modus Landscaping
- Moreland Primary School
- Moreland City Council
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc
- Victorian School Building Authority



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