



Regional Early Education
and Development Inc

Annual Report



2022-2023





Regional Early Education & Development Inc.

PO Box 390, Narrogin WA 6312

08 6832 3825

admin@reedwa.org.au

www.reedwa.org.au

ABN 361 0151 6994



Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) has a critical role in children's development and important economic and social benefits for families and communities.

Regional Early Education and Development Inc. (REED) is committed to making sure that the best quality early childhood education and care services are provided for regional Western Australian children, families and communities.

REED's services include early education and care centres, family day care, in-venue care, outside school hours and vacation care.

REED welcomes all children, families and educators and celebrates diversity.

REED acknowledges the Aboriginal owners and custodians of the land on which we live and work. We recognise the spiritual relationship Aboriginal people have with Country and pay deep respect to Elders past and present.

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REED has been a great success and asset to our regional and remote communities bringing a supportive model to ensure high quality early childhood education and care is available in the regions.

— Sandra Carr MLC



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CHAIRPERSON

A note from Helen Creed



As part of developing our second strategic plan, in 2021, we identified two major challenges in achieving our objectives- financial viability and attracting and retaining staff. Reflecting back at this year's AGM, I think it would be true to say that the impact of both issues has been even more profound than we envisaged. And they are very much interconnected.

Our financial viability depends on enrolling sufficient children to meet all our costs and to do that we need to attract and retain staff in our centres. So, we have made the decision to spend significant resources on attraction and retention incentives, staff accommodation, recruitment companies and the like as we compete not only with large services in urban areas and similarly qualified staff in education settings but burgeoning wages in other sectors of the economy particularly in the regions.

Throughout what has been a difficult year REED has maintained our focus on delivering a range of high quality services across the regions. We have continued to merge additional centres in with REED, we have provided exciting professional

development opportunities for our staff, we have been increasingly recognised as a major player in regional children's services and we have enhanced our efforts in advocating for the needs of children and families in regional communities.

As you know, one of my guiding tenets is Encourage Effort; Celebrate Success. In that context I wanted to specifically mention our nomination as a finalist in the WA RISE Business Awards in the Not For Profit category. When you consider that Foodbank which won the award and the other finalists- Guide Dogs WA, Lifeline and St Pat's in Fremantle have all been around as organisations for many, many years, it underlines REED's achievement since our launch in March 2018.

Early childhood issues and particularly the importance of early childhood education and care, has been elevated as an area of significant concern to Federal and State politicians and the broader corporate sector. REED was delighted to have Dr Anne Aly, Federal Minister for Early Childhood Education as both our dinner speaker at the Educator's Conference in January

and the reader of Katie Stewart's book – Where Do the Stars Go- as part of our fifth anniversary celebrations. We also welcomed the creation of a new Ministerial Portfolio of Early Childhood Education by the WA Government in December and the appointment of Minister Sabine Winton to this role. Ongoing advocacy by REED will be important to ensure that these positive developments translate into real benefits for both young children and their families as well as the early childhood education and care workforce across our regions.

At an AGM, it is important to recognise the many people who have made a contribution to REED. As well as thanking my fellow Board members, our staff and in particular Kylie Helgesen and our Senior Management Team and others who work with us such as the external members of our Board Committees, I particularly wanted to take the opportunity to acknowledge several people who were absolutely key to our establishment and initial success who are no longer involved as closely with REED.

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Throughout what has been a difficult year REED has maintained our focus on delivering a range of high quality services across the regions.

Firstly, the original project team led by Jill Cameron and Michael White. I remember at our first strategic planning session that Michael used the analogy that we were continuing to build the plane as we were flying it and have reflected many times how apt a description that was. Jill will continue to be a significant presence with the awarding of the Educator of the Year Award named in her honour that is presented at our Educator's Conference.

Secondly, there are two WA Members of Parliament, who particularly stand out. Minister Simone McGurk who launched REED in March 2018 and was a great advocate for REED to receive the covid funding when the pandemic started and we were still in the process of merging with a number of services, who changed portfolios last December; and Mia Davies, the Member of Parliament representing many of the towns in which REED services are based, who stepped down as Leader of the National Party and Opposition Leader earlier this year.

My thanks to all of you for the contribution that you are making to our ongoing success. As I have said on many occasions, I am very conscious that in my role as Chair, I both value, and draw on, the support that I receive from all of you and I sincerely appreciate it.

GENERAL MANAGER

Message from Kylie Helgesen



With the continued staffing shortages across Australia, the 2022-2023 year was exposed to significant changes for the early education and care industry sector that Regional Early Education and Development (REED) was not exempt from. The Senior Management team and the Board would like to express our sincere gratitude to our families, staff and communities for their ongoing support and commitment to REED.

There have been several key initiatives from our Strategic Plan implemented and embedded this year including REED is now one of the largest not-for-profit childcare providers, and is the only exclusively regional provider with 25 ECEC services. This expansion throughout the unprecedented impact of the pandemic and without any metropolitan based services to cross-subsidise operations has been a key achievement for REED.

As part of REED's 2021-2024 strategic plan, REED sought to achieve a higher level of First Nations Childrens participation in REED services. Given REED's experience in this sector, we were aware of several known barrier's to First Nations child participation in ECEC. REED's strategy was to focus on overcoming the known barriers, whilst continuing to listen closely to parent feedback and adapt where necessary when additional barriers were identified.

At this projects core, was the employment of a First Nations person, local to the area with a strong connection to community. The role of the Indigenous Community Liaison Officer (ICLO) is to engage with prospective parents, directly or through community groups. Assisting them with gathering information for enrolments and Child Care Subsidy applications, which can be complex if parents do not have access to technology, recruit to employ First Nations Trainee Educators and work closely with the current staff to identify potential training opportunities for cultural competencies and overall cultural safety.

I am excited to announce REED has employed its first Human Resources Coordinator. This milestone marks a significant step in our commitment to supporting and nurturing our staff. Our HR Coordinator will play a pivotal role in ensuring our employee's well-being, professional development, and the smooth functioning of our organisation. I look forward to the positive impact he will bring to REED as we continue to grow.

With our Educators wellbeing and health, a top priority and clear focus, the third annual REED Educator conference was held in January, and it was a fantastic start to the year. Highlights include the team-building exercises that saw our Educators

let loose on the streets of Fremantle, a creative cubby building workshop, a room full of laughter as we enjoyed a Kids' Yoga class, a relaxing paint-and-sip, and of course the memorable awards night where our Educators dressed up and danced the night away. Congratulations to all of our award winners.

Finally, we would like to thank all of our funders, partners, supporters and friends of REED. Together we have helped to shape many children's lives and we look forward to the continuation of this journey together and the new exciting initiatives we embark on in the coming year.

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As part of REED's 2021-2024 strategic plan, REED sought to achieve a higher level of First Nations Childrens participation in REED.

About



REED BACKGROUND

Regional Early Education & Development Inc. (REED) is a not for profit organisation and registered charity, passionate about the sustainability, viability and future of regional Early Childhood Education & Care Services in Western Australia. Regionally based ECEC services have a number of added complexities to their service delivery and financial viability and we believe children in regional Western Australia must have access to high quality early learning and development services equal to those available in the metropolitan area.

Launched in early 2018 with just 4 services formally Narrogin Regional Child Care Services, REED is now the approved provider of 25 ECEC services including long day care, outside school hours care and a family day care scheme. Regional Early Education & Development Inc. is the fifth largest not for profit ECEC provider and the only solely regionally based provider in Western Australia. Over that last 5 years, REED has experienced a rapid growth period, successfully merging 20 ECEC services. Originally scoped for the Wheatbelt region, REED is now in the Mid-West, Southwest and Peel regions.

Our Vision

By working together we will assist country towns to ensure:

- Children thrive and flourish because of high quality services
- Families have access to, and confidence in, the early learning and development services REED provides for their children
- Vibrant communities where families want to live, work and raise their children

Our Mission

We will provide high-quality early learning and development services for children and families.

We will work with local communities to help them strengthen and grow through meeting the needs of families.

Our Values



QUALITY It is our responsibility to provide the highest quality of service that we can to the young children whose well-being is the focus of our work.



PARTNERSHIP “It takes a village to raise a child”. We believe we will only be successful when we work in partnership with families and the community.



RESPECT AND INCLUSION We respect the knowledge and skills of many diverse people who help us provide the best possible service for young children and we actively work to include all children and families in our services.



INTEGRITY We apply the highest standards of accountability in our management of the public funds and private contributions that support our not-for-profit organisation.



INNOVATION AND CURIOSITY We believe we will only evolve and improve quality if we continually flex and pursue new opportunities for excellence and sustainability. This will be driven by an open curiosity and willingness to be innovative in our services.

Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024

Our strategic plan plays a vital role in setting our annual goals and drives new initiatives and review of all practices. In June 2021 when developing the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, the REED Board reviewed the history and purpose of REED, reaffirming our Vision and Mission. The Board looked at REED's significant achievements and developed 4 core areas for focus. The full 2021-2024 Strategic Plan is available on our website.



WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE

Over the next three years we will meet these challenges and deliver high quality services by acting in four key areas.

DELIVERING A RANGE OF HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES

Ensuring all our services meet or exceed national standards.

Understanding the needs of each community and providing the appropriate service.

Broadening the range of services that we offer to meet the needs of children and families.

Implementing strategies to retain and attract high quality staff, including access to professional development and career path opportunities.

ENSURING OUR ORGANISATION IS SUSTAINABLE

Increasing the utilisation of our service by attracting families from all the groups which make up our community.

Building a strong reputation in our community.

Delivering an operational surplus each year with a business model which balances our income and expenditure.

Establishing ethically responsible partnerships with corporate partners.

Having effective mechanisms to identify and manage risk.



BUILDING OUR ORGANISATION

Successfully merging ECEC services into the organisation as they are ready.

Working with communities which currently do not have ECEC services to open new services where possible.

Building a single culture based on shared purpose and common values.

Our Board and management team operating with exemplary governance policies and systems to lead and support our services.

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Working in collaboration with parents and carers.

Implementing a strategy to engage Aboriginal children and families.

Implementing a strategy to engage vulnerable children and families in our services.

Using the feedback from children and families to improve our services.

Actively engaging local government in our services.

Implementing a communication plan which builds our reputation and informs our partners.

REED LOCATION MAP



OUR SERVICES

Our 25 ECEC services were divided into 5 Clusters this year to include the Mid-West, adding to Central, South, North and East. Mingenew Early Learning and Northampton Child Care Association merged to become REED-Mingenew and REED-Northampton.

This year REED provided care to 747 enrolled children across our services. Utilisation peaked at 70% with an average of 55% which was once again influenced by the critical workforce deficit experienced nationally. Despite the many workforce challenges, our passionate Educators continued to provide quality early learning and development.

FY23 saw REED Mingenew, Perenjori, Brookton, and Wundowie receive much needed upgraded to furniture and resources, all receiving full fit outs. Northampton underwent considerable internal renovations to provide a safe, calm and purposeful environment, while Bruce Rock had upgrades to their landscaping and overall outdoor spaces.





Madison Boothey
Cluster Manager

CENTRAL

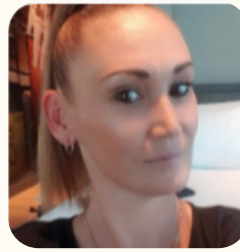
Boddington
Corrigin
Hyden
Pingelly
Quairading
Wickepin



Tania Darby-Gethin
Cluster Manager

EAST

Bruce Rock
Merredin
Mukinbudin
Narembeen
Yilgarn



Nicole Derksen
Cluster Manager

MIDWEST

Dalwalinu
Kalbarri
Mingenew
Northampton
Perenjori



Melissa Elliott,
Sr Cluster Manager

NORTH

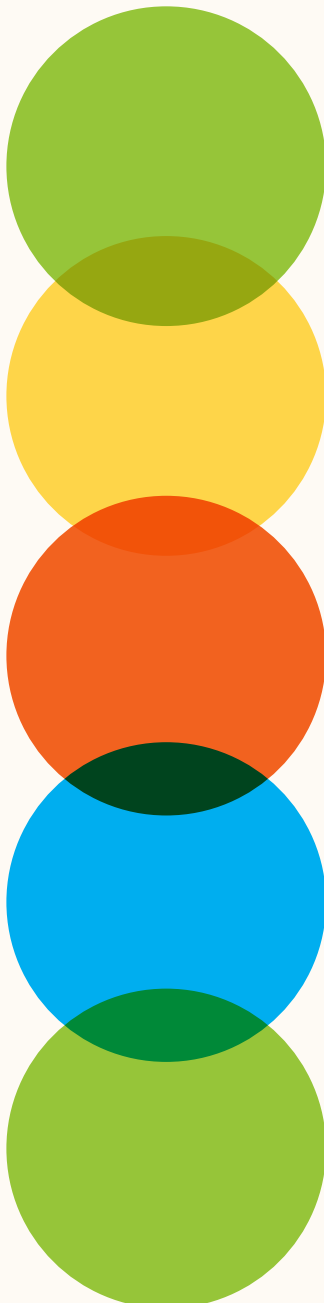
Brookton
Cunderdin
Dowerin
Wundowie



Tracey Foster
Cluster Manager

SOUTH

Darkan
FDC
Nannup
Narrogin
NOSHC



REED KALBARRI

With a Licence for 14 Children, 'Kalbarri Occasional Childcare' became 'REED Kalbarri' on the 26th July 2023. This service is part of our Mid-West Cluster and currently has 26 children enrolled and 4 Educators

REED PERENJORI

REED-Perenjori, formerly known as Perenjori Early Childhood Centre, merged with REED on 30th June 2022. The service currently offers long day care, and afterschool care with 19 licenced places and 17 children enrolled. We currently have 2 educators working at this service.

REED NORTHAMPTON

Northampton Child Care Association merged with REED on the 26th July 2022. They are licenced to accommodate 20 children and currently have 12 children enrolled with 1 permanent Educator employed at the service. Our Northampton service is part of our Mid-West Cluster.

REED MINGENEW

REED Mingeneew, previously 'Mingeneew Education & Care' is another service that is part of our Mid-West cluster. We are currently licensed for 11 children. There are 21 children enrolled and we have 3 Educators working at the service. REED took over operations of this service on the 4th July 2022.

REED BODDINGTON

Previously known as 'Boddington Early Learning Centre', REED Boddington is one of our newest centres with a merger date of the 17th July 2023 and is quickly becoming one of our busiest with 63 Children enrolled, licenced for 36 children and hosts a team of 8 Educators. Boddington is part of our Central cluster.

BOARD MEMBERS



WENDY NEWMAN - DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON-B.ED; M COMMERCE; GAICD / APPOINTED 2020 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS

Wendy Newman currently runs Quintessence Consulting and is a Non-Executive Director. In addition to her position with REED Inc., she is Deputy Chair of WA Country Health Service, Board member of Directions Workforce Solutions Inc and a member of the RDA Wheatbelt Inc Board, where she Chairs Lumen, the Wheatbelt Regional University Centre. Wendy holds a Masters of Commerce (Management), a Bachelor of Education and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Her skill lay in individual, community and organisational development and her passions are designing and advocating for service reform that meets regional and remote needs.



DANELLE SMITH - TREASURER- MIF MACC CA / APPOINTED 2023 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS

Born in Canada Danelle has gained many qualifications from around the world including her master's in international finance, master's in accounting and a Graduate Diploma of Chartered Accounting. Danelle has a wealth of experience gained from working with NM Rothschild & Sons in their Equity Capital Markets Division in London and is now working as a Senior Manager in the Business Advisory Division at RSM in Moora, Australia.



LUCY KING - BOARD MEMBER - BARRISTER & SOLICITOR OF THE SUPREME COURT OF WA, BACHELOR OF LAWS, B.A POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES / APPOINTED 2020 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS

Lucy has been practicing Law since 2005 and has achieved experience in many different aspects of this and now specialises in Property and Commercial Law. Lucy is also a passionate advocate for women's participation in the workforce and the quality support systems required to enable them to do so.



DR JACQUIE HUTCHISON - BOARD MEMBER - DIP. TEACHING, BACHELOR EDUCATION, MASTER EDUCATION, PHD (MANAGEMENT) / APPOINTED 2021 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS

Jacque is currently an Assistant Professor at the UWA Business school and has worked in education throughout her working life. Some of Jacquie's interests have been Indigenous education, women's employment and economic well-being, organisational conflict and participative decision-making. Jacquie is a regular facilitator in the ASPIRE program delivering leadership development to regionally based students.



YVETTE HARRISON - BOARD MEMBER - B.EDUCATION / APPOINTED 2019 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS / TERM 2: 3 YEARS

Yvette has worked as a teacher, Principal and Public Servant with the Department of Education for over 30 years. Yvette has taken on roles as a Committee Member of a disability advocacy organisation and a Committee Member of several Early Years Networks across the Wheatbelt. She is currently the Executive Officer for the Wheatbelt Human Services Managers Forum South and the Coordinator of Regional Services within the Wheatbelt Education Region.



SUZANNE WOODS - DIP TEACH; B.ED; GAICD / APPOINTED 2019 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS / TERM 2: 3 YEARS

Suzanne is an educator and Farmer who has resides in Regional WA and has extensive experience in regional development and Agribusiness along with teaching and school leadership skills. Suzanne has many board roles for many organisations. Suzanne was awarded the Victoria Plains Citizens of the Year in 2000 and the WA Rural Women's Development Award in 2003.



MARK MORRISSEY - BOARD MEMBER - ADJUNCT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, BACHELOR NURSING SCIENCE / APPOINTED 2018 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS / TERM 2: 3 YEARS

Mark has worked Child health for many years and has provided a wide range of services to all different aspects of Child Health and Development along with public health and mental health. Mark is the Executive Director for Community Child and Adolescent Health in Western Australia.



SCOTT WILDGOOSE - BOARD MEMBER APPOINTED 2020 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS

Scott's role within REED is the Executive Manager Corporate Services at the Shire of Narembeem. Scott is a father of one that understands the importance of Early Years Education and Development and is a passionate advocate for the needs of children and the benefits of early years education.

OUR PEOPLE

KEY FACTS ABOUT REEDS WORKFORCE

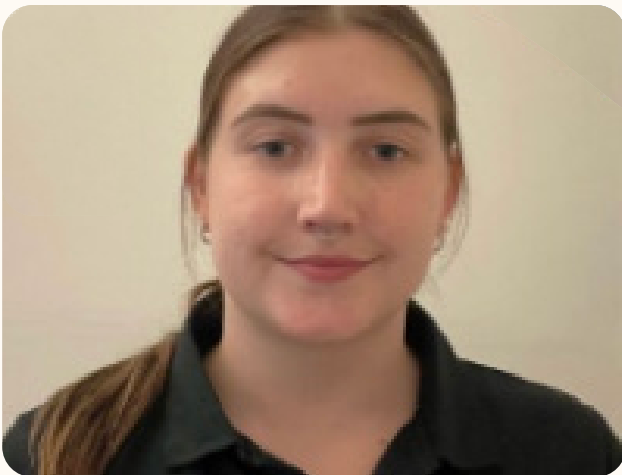
REED HAS A DIVERSE WORKFORCE and a number of our employees have joined the REED family from all corners of the globe and include countries such as: Kenya, India, Vietnam, Philippines, Spain, Zambia, Italy, Malaysia, South Africa, Germany and Ecuador. Our Visa Sponsorship program is an important part of REEDS recruitment strategies, especially given the shortage of diploma qualified educators nationwide.

This program has allowed REED to continue to operate and deliver quality ECEC services for the parents and communities in our regional locations.

REED has almost an equal spread of full time, parttime and casual employees with the majority, **42% BEING PART TIME EMPLOYEES**. This is mostly due to staff juggling other commitments including studies.

14% (17/124) of our REED staff are between the ages of 16 and 19. They are our future Team Leaders and Cluster Managers so their training and development is an important part of REEDS succession planning.

Finally, we have 18 employee trainees, 12 Certificate 3 and 6 Diploma. These trainees are also a critical part of REEDS expansion and retention strategy.

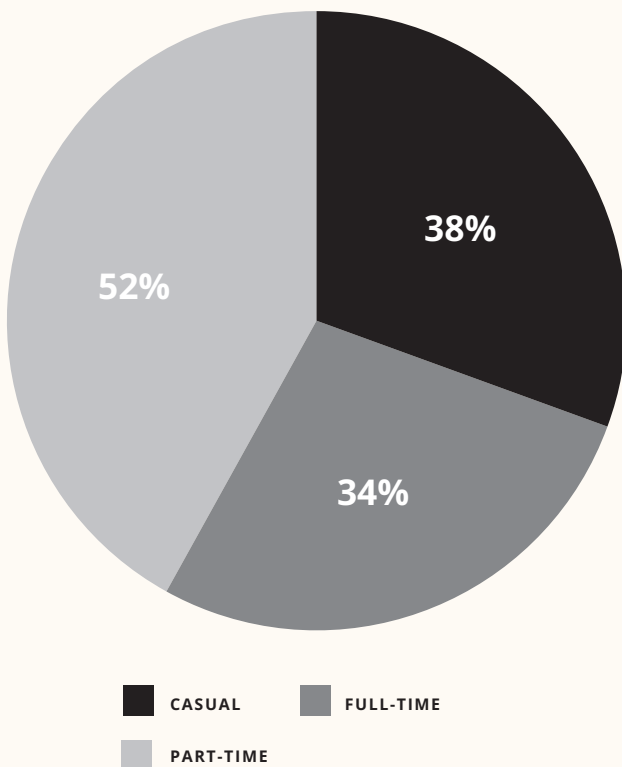


MADISON BOOTHEY **Leader/Director at Narrogin**

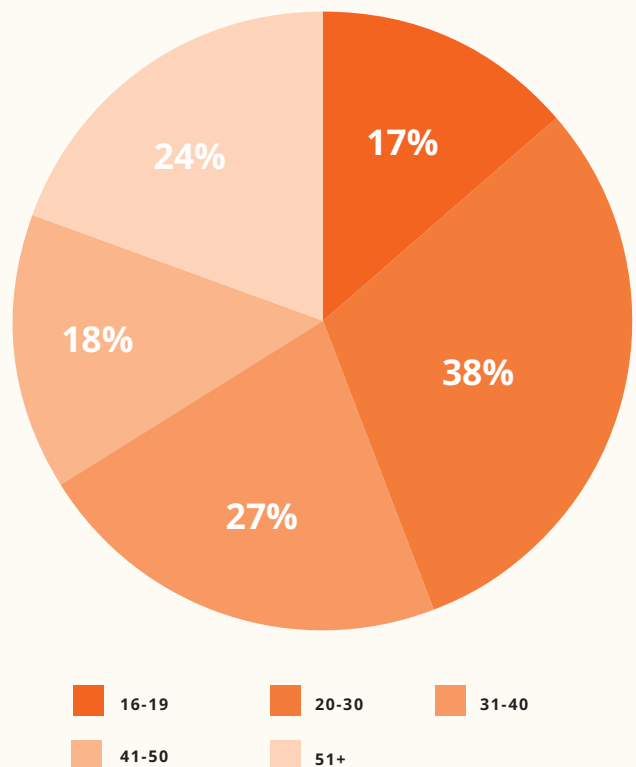
Growing up on a farm 15 minutes outside of Narrogin, Madison Boothey started working with REED in 2018 after completing her Cert 3 and Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care. Starting as a Casual Assistant Madison quickly progressed to Room Leader, then to Team Leader and then Leader/Director at Narrogin. Madison has now progressed further in REED and is a Cluster Manager for our Central Services.



**REED EMPLOYEE
TYPE BREAKDOWN**



**AGE
RANGE**





STEVEN SIZER
Operations Manager

Steven came to REED with extensive business and management experience in a busy retail environment. Steven's journey with REED during a high growth phase has seen him working in a number of roles. Steven has become a passionate advocate for regional ECEC and volunteers his knowledge and experience to Carewest, a peak body for NFP children's services in Western Australia as the Executive Member, representing regional not for profit ECEC services.

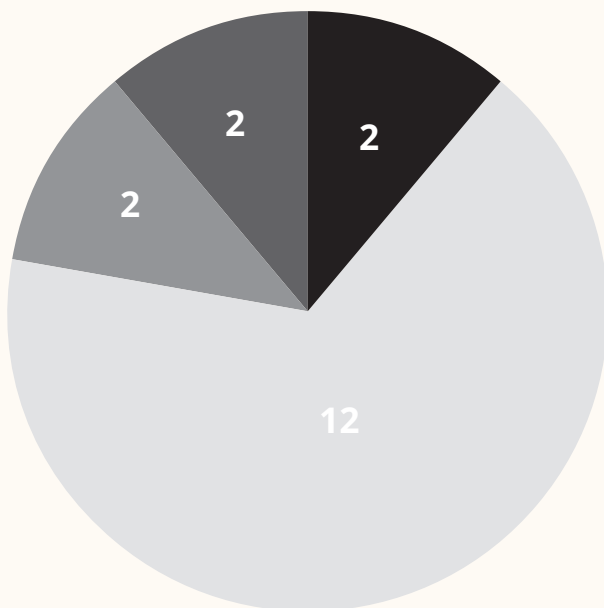


LINDA BELL
Corporate Services Manager

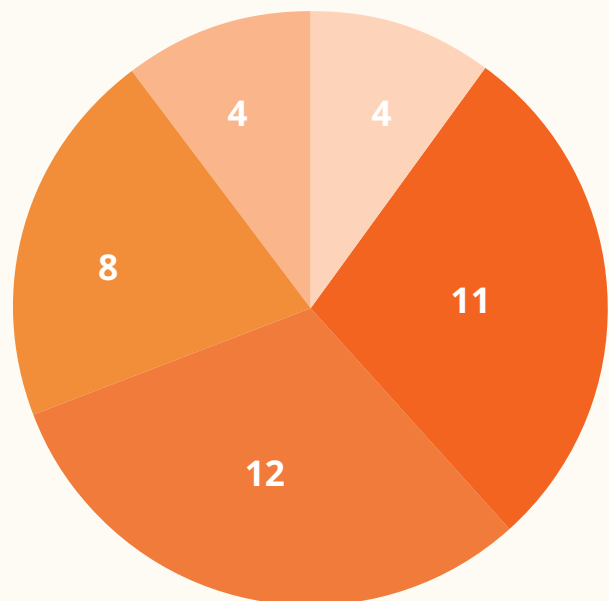
Linda is a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Secretary with extensive experience in the not-for-profit and commercial sectors, most recently in education. She has also worked for the Corporate Regulator and several ASX-listed companies in Director, Chief Financial Officer, and Company Secretarial roles. Linda brings a wealth of experience to REED and strongly supports the provision of an early education experience to WA's regional children.

TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM

GRADUATES IN 2022



ENROLLED AND WORKING TOWARDS



Benefits

- Monthly in service visits from Lecturer
- Weekly zoom sessions after hours
- Same or similar units / group study
- Paid study time
- Zero course or resource fees
- Study and work
- SR Tafe VET promotion with Secondary Schools

From the concept of REED, providing training and career opportunities for people living in regional WA has always been part of our ethos. This is why REED began a traineeship program in collaboration with South Regional TAFE and The Apprenticeship Community to provide an opportunity to learn and study whilst working and earning money in the sector.

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My experience at REED has been pretty amazing! The educators have been very supportive and are always there to guide me and show me right from wrong which is so helpful, and I love that. The work at TAFE is pretty hard but it is easier to get through when you have lecturers always available to help you.

Nicole Taylor Indigenous Trainee – REED – Narrogin

Our students come from a diverse range of backgrounds and many need flexibility to help them juggle their work life and study commitments with family lives. Each student also has the added assistance of weekly afterhours Blackboard Collaborations and MS Team Study Sessions. Our students are also monitored on a quarterly basis allowing us to offer any additional help or support that they may need.

This training collaboration is delivering exemplary results for our valued staff members, which will ultimately benefit the children and communities in regional Western Australia.

ICLO PROGRAM



Aboriginal child participation has been underrepresented in ECEC for many years. In 2021 REED looked into the barriers faced by our indigenous communities in accessing regular ECEC programs for children. Aboriginal families reported no representation of their children or culture in the services, difficulties in accessing the required documentation and complexities in applying for child care subsidy. The Board committed funds from the surplus \$79,534 to initiate a pilot program to recruit an Indigenous Community Liaison Officer (ICLO).

The ICLO successfully engaged with prospective Aboriginal parents, assisted with complex enrolment and subsidy processes and collaborated with staff to identify training opportunities for cultural competency and safety. The initiative, piloted in Narrogin, increased Aboriginal children's enrolment from 1 to 8, during the process and we welcomed 3 additional Aboriginal Trainees. The appointment of the right local Aboriginal person to the ICLO and community connection was key to the success.

Fostering cultural safety became a priority, funding was sought to roll out this initiative and was marked by the introduction of **"Acknowledgment to Country"** at all services and the establishment of Yarning Circles across 14 sites.

- **Promote ECEC amongst Aboriginal Community**
- **Reduce barriers in accessing care e.g. Transport**
- **Assist with enrolling and complex applications**
- **Promote culturally safe practices and environment**
- **Incorporate Aboriginal culture into programs with educators**
- **Links connecting service to community**
- **Implement Yarning circles**
- **Resource creation, selection, and mentoring for educators**

REED NARROGIN YC OPEN DAY

"Our focus has been to remove or overcome known barriers and respond quickly to ongoing feedback from the families accessing our services". Mr Sizer said.

"Providing a culturally safe and inviting environment has started with the employment of First Nations trainees from within our community, our acknowledgement of country — now on display across all REED services — and yarning circles, which are now in 14 REED locations".

"We continue to listen and adapt to changing needs, such as transportation to and from childcare". *

*<https://www.narroginobserver.com.au/news/narrogin-observer/narrogin-reed-opens-yarning-circle-and-trials-transport-program-to-encourage-aboriginal-family-participation--c-8124496>



REED is using funding from the Commonwealth Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) to create a welcoming and culturally safe environment for First Nations children and families, while also providing employment opportunities for local First Nations community members, who have come on board as trainees – something the provider says has been instrumental in seeing participation rates increase.*

Linda Bonney joined REED in December 2022 in the role of Indigenous Community Liaison Officer (ICLO).

“My lineage connections are from Wongutha, Mirning, Nadju and Wudjari through my mothers line and Scottish, English through my fathers line”.

“I am keen to see Aboriginal culture visible” the development of relationships, made possible by connecting with people and country”.

“Noongar language displayed around the centre allows for the familiarity of the language to be a part of everyday”.

“Yarning Circles provide an opportunity for a shared space where people can sit and share stories and experiences”.



*<https://thesector.com.au/2022/08/31/reed-launches-yarning-circle-to-build-connections-with-first-nations-communities/>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is the cornerstone of delivering quality early childhood education & care to children in an ECEC setting. REED in its foundations, have committed to providing high quality PD for educators working in Regional WA, providing the same opportunities as their city based counterparts.

At REED we believe that every child deserves the same level of early education and care regardless of where they live. Regional service staff have historically not had the same opportunities for professional development as those situated in the metro area. REED is committed to providing all of our educators with high quality professional development, as an investment in our staff is an investment into the children of our communities.

At REED, we know that quality early childhood education and care starts with passionate, experienced and knowledgeable educators. That's why REED invests considerably in annual professional development, training and mentoring for educators. FY23 saw another year gilded with further learning opportunities through online/web based learning, face to face in service visits, multi-located face to face off site training and our annual two day conference in January.



REED ANNUAL EDUCATOR CONFERENCE 2023



Our Annual Educator Conference was held on the 12th and 13th January, once again at the Rydges in Fremantle. This year's two-day event was MCed by Hans Bohem and was attended by more than 100 Educators from across REED. The conference was officially opened by the Western Australia Commissioner for Children and Young People, Ms Jacqueline McGowan-Jones and the day began with Adventure Quest team building exercise that saw our team scurry around the Fremantle Foreshore. A fitting end, day one closed with expressionist painting by Cabernet and Canvas.

Day two started with a kids yoga session, and the crowd favourite for this year was Cubbies and Identity, Cubby building with Daniel Burton, Educated by Nature. Our closing presenter, Rebecca Flanagan with her session on music, movement and storytelling was also a hit! The jam-packed two days had a balance of fun, learning and team building. Once again, a huge thank you to our sponsors for 2023, Modern Teaching Aids, Darren West MLC, Sandra Carr MLC and Mia Davies MLA.

"I want to express my gratitude for this amazing conference and congratulate everyone behind the scenes on the high level of organisation and professionalism which made it possible to gather so many different experts and develop all the activities with success. I felt very proud of being part of this conference this year. I love the activities each day, were very dynamic and not boring at all. A lot of acknowledgement from important people who nurture our expectations."

"The activities that both taught us but got us up and moving, the scavenger hunt, the paint and sip and the yoga were the favourites. I also really enjoyed us all getting together for the awards music and drinks at the end of night one."

"A chance to talk to colleagues from other centres, to learn and discover all the amazing work they are doing in their communities."

"The vast learning that we were offered!"

"Meeting other REED staff members tapping into the imaginative and creative opportunities to share with children."

120 attendees

The below photo was from Cosmic Yoga, practical children's yoga to show our Educators what can be taught in a creative, loving, and non-competitive way, encouraging teamwork and helps children find inner peace and a sense of self-worth. It is fun, active, and calming. Through physical practice, yoga nurtures flexibility and freedom of movement and helps to build healthy bodies and minds. It gives children a chance to explore being in their bodies and discover the spectrum of amazing things we can do: stretch, jump, be quiet/loud, balance, twist, bend, rest, be alone and in a group, focus, get strong and flexible, sing, play, relax.



(Pictured above) The Adventure Quest challenge saw the merging of team building and technology into a fun outdoor "Adventure" around Fremantle. Using an interactive app that operates on GPS technology and image recognition functionality, our team will need to unlock a variety of challenges on their quest using team building.



The below photo is about making painting accessible for everyone and to have fun whilst doing it! This step-by-step class showed how to replicate a designated painting so that anyone can master works from Van Gogh or Monet alike!





AWARDS EVENING

Following day one of the conference, we held our third annual Awards Night with guest speaker Dr Anne Ally, Minister for Early Childhood Education.

Our awards night is an opportunity to celebrate the success of our services and team for the previous year. This year's award winners were celebrated alongside the 21 Trainee's that successfully completed a qualification in ECEC in 2022. We also paid thanks to Jill Cameron, whom was instrumental to the inception of REED through her unwavering dedication, passion and determination.



Jill Cameron Educator of the Year Award

Paige Keatley – REED Mingenew

Trainee of the Year Award

Chloe Hobbs – REED Narrogin

Shining Star Award

Narisa Yarran – REED Yilgarn

Exceptional Leadership Award

Tania Darby Gethin – East Cluster Manager

Bright Future Award

Crystal Sherwood – REED Narembeen

Outstanding Achievement Award

Paula Coker – Central Admin



Strategic Goals



DELIVERING A RANGE OF HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES

Ensuring all our services meet or exceed national standards.

Understanding the needs of each community and providing the appropriate service.

Broadening the range of services that we offer to meet the needs of children and families.

Implementing strategies to retain and attract high quality staff, including access to professional development and career path opportunities.

PINGELLY FIT OUT

REED in collaboration with the Shire of Pingelly identified the need for extended ECEC service in the growing community of Pingelly. Having operated ECEC through REED-Mobile in Pingelly since 2018, the collaboration project looked at the expansion of approved places and operational days. The current service is only approved for 15 children and limits afterschool care under current regulation. The Shire identified the repurposing of the unused community bowling club, to be potentially refurbished and fit out to open a long day care with a minimum of 19 places.

REED sought and were approved for significant capital funding from the Commonwealth Community Childcare Fund Restricted stream for capital works. In collaboration with the Shire, the building has seen partial refurbishment including the addition of a dedicated cot room, new paint and flooring. The service also received a full fit out of new child specific and age appropriate furniture and resources inside with a new outdoor area currently under construction with sand pit, bike path and new play structure. The total cost of fit out is in excess of \$280,000 and is due to open in late 2023.

NEW DALWALLINU CENTRE

The Shire of Dalwallinu is nearing completion of their new purpose built community hub for child focused organisations. REED-Dalwallinu has joined the Dalwallinu Playgroup and Dalwallinu Toy Library as the new occupants of this purpose built facility. Replacing the old ELC building, the fit for purpose build is larger to extend approved places meeting the current and future need for ECEC in the vibrant community of Dalwallinu. The attention to detail in the design of the building is outstanding and ultra-modern. The children are loving the new outdoor area and are having the time of their lives on the bike track, while our Educators are very thankful for the immaculate and state-of-the-art amenities. The passion and determination of The Shire of Dalwallinu has played a vital and pivotal role in providing the children and families in the community, with a high-quality service where children will thrive and flourish.



EXPANSION OF PLACES

The Regional ECEC demand continues to grow. FY23 saw REED Merredin extend approved places from 28 to 36 and REED-Cunderdin from 19 to 27. Current applications are pending for Mingenew to extend from 11 to 17. The additional approved places will help with the current demand for ECEC services in these regional communities.

RATING AND ASSESSMENT

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority is the national regulator for the ECEC sector. The WA state regulator is the Education and Care Regulatory Unit (ECRU), whom are responsible for the assessment and rating of services in Western Australia.

An assessment and rating is completed approximately every 3 years and provides a service with a rating generally working towards, meeting or exceeding. To determine the rating, an officer from ECRU attends a site visit to assess practices, documentation and compliance in all Seven Quality Areas. In FY 23, (8) REED services underwent a assessment and rating in 2023.

REED-Nannup – Working Towards National Standard

Great Beginnings Family Day Care – Working Towards National Standard

REED-Yilgarn – Meeting National Standard

REED-Hyden - Meeting National Standard

REED-Dalwallinu – Meeting National Standard

REED-Perenjori – Meeting National Standard

REED-Mingenew - Meeting National Standard

Narrogin Outside School Hours Care – Meeting National Standard

ABOVE AWARD WAGES

In late 2022, REED was in a position to be able to offer above award wages to certificate 3 and diploma qualified Educators, recognising their work as professionals. In addition, in 2023, REED also implemented longevity allowances, which has a tiered hourly allowance recognising Educator's commitment at 3, 5 and 10 years. REED is very proud to have delivered on this strategic development initiative more than a year ahead of schedule. Whilst this initial increase has been nominal, we continue to work hard to provide ongoing additional above award rates in the future.



INTERIM ATTRACTION AND RETENTION INITIATIVE

Recognising the significant impact of this critical workforce shortage, the REED Board approved an interim attraction and retention package to attract diploma qualified Educators to the regions. For our most critical and remote locations, a package of up to \$12,900 has been allocated for Team Leader and Diploma Qualified Educator roles. This includes relocation costs, sign on bonus and 12 months of fortnightly travel or accommodation allowances depending on where they are able to secure housing. In addition, where possible, REED is leasing houses for up to 12 months, to ensure we have housing available for Educators once recruited. We continue to work with local Shires and community to secure housing options because, as you would be aware, rental accommodation is very limited in regional WA. Through this initiative, REED has leased 4 properties and is in lease discussions with another. Two of these rental properties have now been filled with new Educators. This is a significant and necessary investment to house new educators accepting positions in the regions. REED has taken the foresight to secure rentals when they become available, even if they are vacant for a few months. In addition to leasing properties, our REED admin team have assisted at least 4 educators to find and secure rental accommodation in the regions.

CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

The Committee is united on goals, purpose, and commitment to implementing the ten principles of a Child Safe Organisation in an effective way to ensure accountability. The core upcoming focus is on the creation and sustainable implementation of a Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct, which will be the key drivers and reference in the Committee's work in practice and policy/procedure review.

The CSO Committee meets via videoconference on the first Monday of each month, with a commitment to quarterly in-person workshops.

The National CSO Principles collectively show that a child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies, and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people. A child safe organisation consciously and systematically:

- **Creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are the centre of thought, values, and actions**
- **Places emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of children**
- **Creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people**
- **Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm**
- **Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions**

The purpose of the Child Safe Organisation Committee is to champion and role model the ten CSO principles and lead the effective and sustainable implementation in REED services.

Empowered with strong, child-focused processes, the Committee advocates for children's interests, drawing on input from REED and community stakeholders, with a proactive approach to reviewing and improving organizational policies, practices, and safety.

As a Child Safe Organisation, the safety and wellbeing of children is our top priority, and we are committed to making decisions that put children first. We believe in fostering a culture where concerns are recognised and addressed promptly and appropriately, and all staff members are empowered to report any issues they may encounter.

The Child Safe Organisation Committee comprises a diverse group of REED employees, each with their unique perspectives, backgrounds, ideas, and experience. With the support of senior management, the committee is equipped to achieve its current and future objectives.



ENSURING OUR ORGANISATION IS SUSTAINABLE

Increasing the utilisation of our services by attracting families from all groups which make up our community.

Building a strong reputation in our community.

Delivering an operational surplus each year with a business model that balances our income and expenditure.

Establishing partnerships with corporate partners.

Having effective mechanisms to identify and to manage risk.

UPDATES TO WEBSITE

This year REED has continued with upgrades to our website. Easy navigation and simplification of content to ensure our website is user friendly. This saw a completely revamped careers page with a focus on recruitment, staff benefits and easy navigation for prospective employees. The feedback page has been simplified making it easier and time efficient for those seeking to provide feedback online. An intranet was also added this year for Board and Board Committee members to centrally access meeting agenda's papers and links. Future upgrades planned for the website for FY24 include the addition of a page for policies and a central blog which will be linked to all REED services, highlighting the fantastic work happening in our regions. www.reedwa.org.au

MONEY RECEIVED THROUGH GRANTS

REED was supported in FY23 with a number of grants, both local and national. Our thanks extends to all those who have supported REED in our journey.

**Commonwealth Community Childcare
Fund Sustainability**

**Commonwealth Community Childcare
Fund Community**

**Commonwealth Community Childcare
Fund Special Circumstances**

Shire of Yilgarn

Shire of Merredin

Woolworths Landcare

ROLE IN ACCC PRODUCTIVITY REQUIREMENT

In the past year REED has participated and engaged with the Federal Government ACCC enquiry into ECEC operations and fees. The scope of the enquiry will examine and consider matters including: costs and availability of labour, the use of land and related costs, finance and administrative costs, regulatory compliance costs, the costs of consumables and the process charged since 2018 and how these have changed following changes in education and care policy settings. The ACCC will examine how costs and prices differ, type of provider and size of service, age and characteristics of the child in care, geographic location, level of competition and the quality rating of the childcare services provided. An outcome is to be delivered to Government in December 2023.

ATTENDANCE IN EDUCATION AND CARE WAGES RALLY

On the 7th September 2022, the United Workers Union called for a strike in protest of the wages and working conditions in the Early Childhood Education & Care industry. REED management and Board members along with more than 50 centres and 1000 Educators across Western Australia packed the steps of James Street amphitheatre. This action is part of a national initiative urging the federal government to boost funding, so qualified staff can be paid wages on par with schoolteachers, whose salaries are up to \$30,000 higher. Educators made it clear they want three issues addressed. First is pay, many educators are leaving the sector as they feel undervalued, Secondly, is to see early education as education, just like we see in schools and finally to put children before profit.

EY STRATEGY – HELENS INVITE TO CANBERRA

The Government hosted a National Early Years Summit at Australian Parliament House on the 17 February 2023, which Chairperson Helen Creed was honoured to attend. The Strategy helped the Commonwealth create a more integrated, holistic approach to the early years and better support the education, wellbeing and development of Australia's children. It sought to support improved coordination between Commonwealth programs, funding and frameworks impacting early childhood development. The Summit brought together parents, community organisations and representatives from across government, non-government, academic and business sectors to discuss the development of the Commonwealth Early Years Strategy.

The Summit covered key topics including the vision and priorities for the Early Years Strategy, as well as how we make sure the voices of the children and families are at the centre of the Strategy.



BUILDING OUR ORGANISATION

Successfully merging ECEC services into the organisation as they are ready.

Working with communities that currently do not have ECEC services to open new services where possible.

Developing an inclusive organisational culture based on shared purpose and common values.

Our Board and management team operating with exemplary governance policies and systems to lean and support our services.

RISE AWARD FINALIST

Through a submission to the RISE business awards for the Not-For-Profit category, REED was nominated as one of five finalists in a very strong and deserving field of businesses for this award. It was an honour to be nominated and proves that REED stands as a testament to the impact that has been achieved with determination, imagination, and collaboration, converging to reshape the future of regional ECEC services. We would also like to give a big Congratulations to Foodbank WA on their win.

EAP RESET & ROLLOUT

This year we have engaged a new employee assistance program provider. The new provider provides 24/7 coverage, free appointments and multiple contact methods to make access even easier.

The EAP is a confidential and voluntary service that provides employees with access to professional counselling, resources and referrals for a range of personal and work-related issues. EAP can provide several benefits to REED.

HR COORDINATOR

REED has appointed their first Human Resources Coordinator to the management team. Iosefo Tapusoa has over 15 years' experience in Industrial Relations, Organisational development, leadership training and development across multiple industries. Iosefo also holds a Bachelor of Law from the University of Auckland. Iosefo will work as part of the senior management team. This role will primarily focus on recruitment. Changes to advertising and updates to our website to make it more user friendly for potential job seekers, reviewing current policies and dealing with staff disputes.



QA OFFICER ROLE

REED has appointed their first Quality Assurance Officer Margi Smolders, to enhance and embrace high quality ECEC in all of our REED services, supporting Cluster Managers and Team Leaders. Margi's experience is wide and varied, most recently working in supervisory roles in Long Day Care, Out of School Hours Care and Family Day Care. Margi has also spent two years in Halls Creek, in the East Kimberley regions working with an Aboriginal Early Childhood Education and Care service. Having visited a number of our services already and talking to our Educators it is heartening to hear Margi is already making a difference out in the field.

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Working in collaboration with parents and carers. Implementing a strategy to engage Aboriginal children and families. Implementing a strategy to engage vulnerable children and families in our services. Using feedback from children and families to improve our services. Actively engaging local government in our services. Implementing a communication plan which builds our reputation and informs partners.

ICLO/RED OCHRE

To assist with our Indigenous Community Liaison Officer rollout in 14 REED services, funded by CCCF – Community grant program, REED engaged Indigenous Consulting firm Red Ochre Consulting. The Red Ochre team were engaged to identify and facilitate the recruitment of Indigenous Community Liaison Officers for our nominated services. The ICLO initiative was created to increase Aboriginal Child Participation into ECEC services and work towards alleviating barriers and engage families. After visiting numerous parts of regional WA Red Ochre were successful in recruiting ICLO's for a number of REED services.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS

REED is very appreciative and grateful of the support and the relationships that have been built with the Shires our Services currently reside in. These Shires not only recognise the importance of early learning and development for children, and the need for families to have access to and confidence in the service provided, but the economic and social benefits for the broader community.

Grants are an essential source of funding for not-for-profit organisations. This helps ensure we can provide upgrades to outdated furniture, gardens and resources. REED would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following Shires who have provided funding this past year, Dallwallinu, Pingelly, Mingenew, Merriden and Yilgarn. These Shires are committed to supporting REED to deliver our valuable services to benefit their local communities.

CAREWEST MEMBERSHIP AND RRR EXEC TEAM

REED's Operations Manager, Steven Sizer, was elected to the role of Regional and Remote Representative on the Carewest executive committee this year. Using his extensive network and contacts/platform, Steven has been able to assist Carewest members, particularly those regional and remote that are facing the same sector issues.

Carewest is a peak body in Western Australia for not-for-profit children's services. Carewest provides strong advocacy at a local, state and federal level for the rights of children, families and employees in ECEC, promotes standards of quality in ECEC and acts as a resource for networking and information exchange for members. For more information on Carewest or to become a member please visit carewest.org.au

REPORTS/GROUP SUBMISSIONS SUMMARY

REED Management and Board have participated in the below State and National working groups to influence positive outcomes for the ECEC industry. Submissions are available in full on our website.

- **ACECQA National workforce strategy**
- **Combined submissions to state and national governments**
- **Thrive by Five WA Alliance campaign**
- **WA ECEC workforce strategy**



OVERVIEW OF FINANCIALS

Although still a relatively new organisation, REED is building a strong financial foundation from which to deliver quality services across our community.

The 2022-2023 financial year result was a loss of \$61,000 compared to surpluses made in previous years. Income streams are parent fees and grants from government for the delivery of early learning and care services to children.

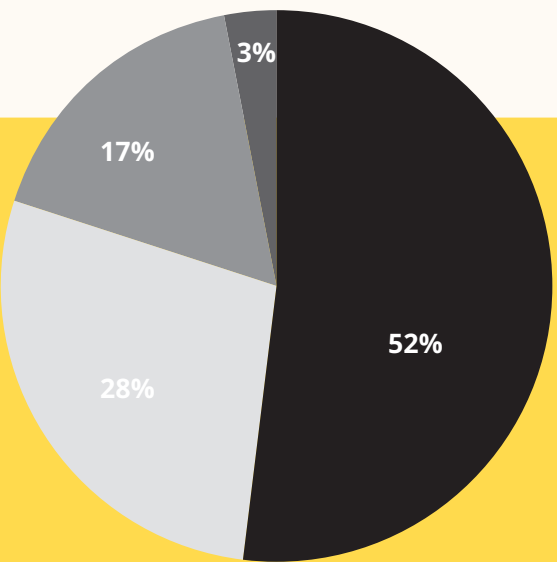
In common with many other businesses, this year REED experienced workforce issues which affected REED's ability to deliver services to full capacity. To foster the wellbeing of our workforce, REED implemented new initiatives including above award wages, professional development

opportunities and attraction and retention incentives. Staffing costs overall account for 78% of REED's total expenditure.

In addition, REED invested in resources for the children to improve the quality of the service offered.

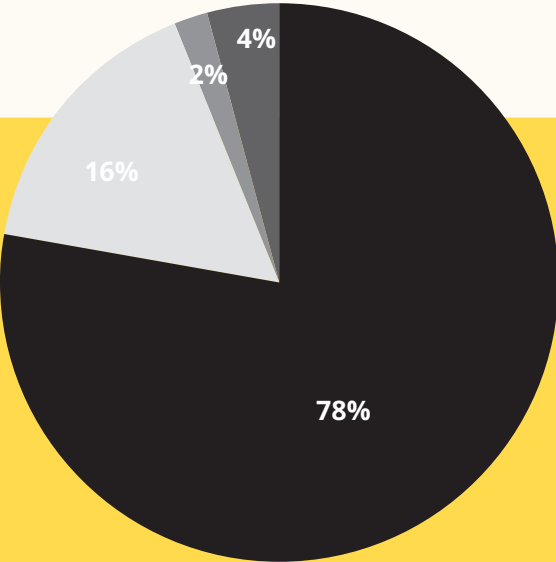
REED continues to grow as more services merge with the organisation and is well placed to continue its mission to provide high-quality early learning and care services for children and families.

INCOME



- CHILD CARE SUBSIDY
- PARENTS FEES
- GRANT FUNDING
- OTHER INCOME

EXPENDITURE



- STAFFING
- OPERATIONAL
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN



Regional Early Education
and Development Inc