

# Annual Highlights

## 2024-2025



**Regional Early Education and Development Inc. (REED)**

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## Chairperson Address

It is such a privilege to be involved in an organisation such as REED Inc., striving to deliver equity and excellence in early education and care across regional WA. Over the last twelve months, our focus has been on review, growth and sustainability of our organisation. The many processes we undertook to consolidate and continually improve what we do and how we do it have provided evidence of how important and valued our service is, how committed our staff and Board are and the great interest our stakeholders have in ensuring REED 's success.

The key initiatives we undertook last year to review and refocus involved parallel processes that delivered external reviews focused on:

1. REED's governance processes;
2. Our organisational culture and leadership capabilities at Board and Senior Management Team level;
3. Our [Strategic Plan](#);
4. Our ICT capabilities; and
5. Our annual staff and stakeholder survey.

Like our last Strategic Plan, our renewed 2025-2027 Plan is a document we use daily to guide our work. We continually ask how what we do delivers on our purpose of:

**“Strengthening equitable access to unleash lifelong learners in regional WA”**

The questions we ask are:

- How are we strengthening? What do we do well, what do we need to do differently?



*Wendy Newman, Chairperson*

- What does equitable look like? Are we staying true to this?
- Are we unleashing? Are we taking an active approach to maximising learning?  
What does life long learning look like? Are we staying true to this?

Such reviews really help us focus on what is important and how to best deliver it. We are really proud of our Strategic Plan, which reiterates our values and priorities. It is a working plan that we have already actioned by:

- Rolling out our new values across the organisation
- Reviewing our Board and Committee structure
- Revising our Senior Management Team Structure
- Developing an Investment Plan that will enable us to manage and invest in our resources and maximise our income sources over time
- Continuing to review and invest in our Workforce Management Plan which has been invaluable in helping

us address the challenges of recruiting, onboarding, developing and retaining staff

- Continually measuring how we are progressing against our compliance requirements and performance targets we have set ourselves.

We won't stop our review processes and each year will focus on two or three areas to review and refine. I sincerely thank the Board and Senior Staff on their commitment to continuous improvement of what we do and how we do it.

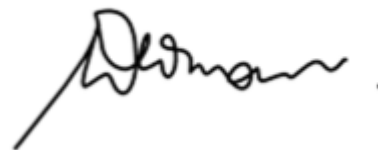
This year we reshaped the General Manager position to that of CEO in recognition of Kylie Helgeson's role and the need for the Board to move from a management to oversight focus. I would like to acknowledge Kylie and her team for bravely taking on renewal processes to continue to build REED's capability and footprint. We have taken on four new services during this reporting period, with more currently in progress. Across our organisation, Cluster Managers, Centre Team Leaders, on the floor staff, Admin, Corporate Services, and valued contractors all remain committed to being the best we can be. A sincere thank you for all that you do, and I look forward to catching up at our annual Educators Conference to acknowledge excellence across the REED family.

I would also like to sincerely thank my Board colleagues for their continued commitment to improvement and excellence. This year we said goodbye to Scott Wildgoose who has been a critical support in developing our Risk and Safety and ICT systems and ensuring strong connections to our important partners in local government, and Danelle Smith who made an impact

with her valuable contributions as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee.

We welcomed Jacquie McBurnie and Judy Snell to the Board who both bring regional knowledge and expertise, Jackie in local government, and Judy in financial management and business development. I sincerely thank ongoing Board members, Deputy and Chair of People and Capability Committee Jacquie Hutchinson, Chair of Finance and Safety and Quality Committee Suzanne Woods, Chair of Risk and Audit Lucy King, and members Penny Major and Yvette Harrison, as well as our external Committee members Lisa Judson, Jennifer Graffin, Marcelle Saratsis and Helen Creed. Regional communities benefit because of your commitment to REED.

Finally, a big shout out to our key partners, parents, local governments and communities who support what we do. We do not take for granted the considerable social capital that exists in our communities that makes the 'REED model' work. Neither do we take for granted the importance of state and local governments who have both placed high value on the importance of early childhood education and care and continue to support us as we explore new ways to pursue our focus on equity, access and excellence. It's a model that is attracting attention across the nation.



Wendy Newman  
Chair REED Inc.

## CEO Address

REED's leadership team has undergone significant enhancements as we continue to strengthen our capacity to support, children, families and staff across our services.

I am honoured to step into the Chief Executive Officer, building on my experience as General Manager to guide REED's strategic direction. Steven Sizer, who has demonstrated exceptional leadership as Operations Manager, has now taken on the role of General Manager, ensuring our operations remain in capable hands. I am also delighted to welcome Leah Bie as our new Operations Manager, whose expertise will further enhance our service delivery and support our teams.

Over the past year, REED has continued to grow, extending our reach to support more children, families and communities across regional Western Australia. I am proud to have welcomed several new services, including Boyup Brook, Walpole, Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe, reflecting our ongoing commitment to expanding high quality early learning opportunities in regional areas. Each new service strengthens our ability to provide accessible, safe and nurturing environments for children while supporting families and educators in these communities.

**'I am proud to have welcomed several new services, including Boyup Brook, Walpole, Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe'**

In light of the recent reports of child abuse in the media, I want to take this opportunity



*Kylie Helgesen, CEO*

to reassure our families, staff and community that REED remains firmly committed to the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care. At REED, the safety and wellbeing of children is our highest priority. We are unwavering in our commitment to child safety and have a zero tolerance for child abuse in any form.

To ensure strong safeguarding measures across all services, REED has appointed a dedicated Child Safety Officer (CSO) who works closely with every part of the organisation. The CSO provides guidance, conducts regular visits and shares ongoing professional development opportunities to strengthen awareness and practice.

Every new employee undergoes a comprehensive induction program, which includes mandatory Child Safety and Child Protection training. This training is updated annually to ensure staff remain equipped and vigilant in their responsibilities to protect children.

Some of the key practices currently in place include regular CSO visits to services, monthly meetings of the Child Safety Committee to review and strengthen safeguarding practices and the completion of Child Safe National Principles training by all service and support staff.

In addition to these measures, REED is advancing further initiatives, including the development of a Whistleblower Policy to ensure staff and families feel safe to raise concerns, the introduction of a Right to Report Policy and Procedure reinforcing every individual's responsibility to act on concerns and the rollout of a Child Abuse Hotline to provide a clear and immediate reporting pathway.

Through these actions, REED continues to build a culture of safety, accountability and trust, ensuring that every child in our care is protected, valued and heard. I want to sincerely thank our dedicated staff and management for their ongoing commitment and hard work during this period of growth and expansion. Your steadfast support and collaboration are essential to the success of these changes and together, we are well placed to continue delivering excellence across all REED services.

Over the past year, REED has continued to grow and evolve and we are deeply grateful to the many individuals and organisations who make our work possible. To our funders, supporters, State and Federal Governments, local shires, communities and the families who entrust us with their children's early education and care—thank you. Your confidence in our mission and your ongoing support are central to our achievements. Even in the face of challenges, such as staffing pressures, we

remain steadfast in our commitment to building a sustainable and thriving future for REED and the communities we serve.

As we look ahead, we are inspired by the opportunities to expand our services, introduce new initiatives and innovate in early childhood education. With the dedication of our staff and the collaboration of our valued partners, we will continue to strengthen our organisation, enhance the experiences of children and make a lasting impact across regional Western Australia. We are excited for another year of growth, partnership and positive change.

Kylie Helgesen  
Chief Executive Officer



## Board Members

REED is governed by a Board of dedicated volunteers. Our Board supports the management and operations teams by providing oversight and generously sharing their expertise and passion.



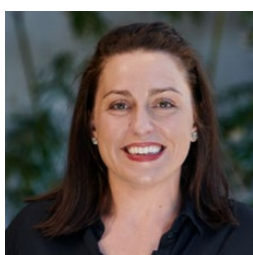
### WENDY NEWMAN

- CHAIRPERSON -  
B.ED; M COMMERCE;  
GAICD / APPOINTED 2020  
/ TERM 1: 3 YEARS / TERM  
2: 3 YEARS



### DR JACQUE HUTCHINSON

- DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON –  
DIP. TEACHING, BACHELOR  
EDUCATION, MASTER  
EDUCATION, PHD  
(MANAGEMENT) / APPOINTED  
2021 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS / TERM  
2: 3 YEARS



### 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 / TERM 2: 3  
YEARS



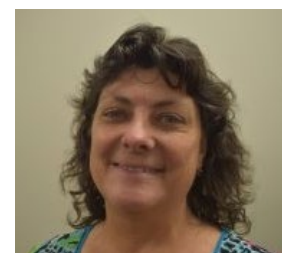
### JACKIE MCBURNEY

- BOARD MEMBER -  
MASTER EDUCATION, B.  
EDUCATION / APPOINTED  
2025 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS



### YVETTE HARRISON

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



### SUZANNE WOODS

- BOARD MEMBER –  
DIP TEACH; B.ED; GAICD /  
APPOINTED 2019 / TERM  
1: 3 YEARS / TERM 2: 3  
YEARS



### PENNY MAJOR

- BOARD MEMBER -  
MASTER EDUCATION, B.  
SOCIAL SCIENCES, G.CERT  
EDUCATIONAL  
LEADERSHIP / APPOINTED  
2024 / TERM 1: 3 YEARS



### JUDY SNELL

- BOARD MEMBER -  
BBA ACCOUNTING AND  
BUSINESS LAW /  
APPOINTED 2025 / TERM  
1: 3 YEARS

## Our People

At REED, we recognise that our staff are our most valuable asset. Our commitment to creating a supportive and positive work environment that encourages growth, development, and well-being remains unwavering. Our management team is dedicated to providing our staff with the necessary tools and resources to excel in their roles.

Operational Workforce Plan: The Board approved the 2025-2028 Operational Workforce Plan which focuses on addressing current and future workforce needs, driven by REED's growth and expansion. Key areas of focus include:

- Succession planning at all levels
- Developing fit-for-purpose JDF and JBF for all positions
- Maintaining a workforce plan to guide forward planning
- Strengthening the Traineeship 'grow our own' program
- Employee psychosocial safety and wellbeing
- Collection and use of employee feedback



The plan acknowledges challenges such as workforce shortages, low award wages, and regional location difficulties. Strategies to address these challenges include:

- Seeking funding to support wages and trainee positions
- Developing a housing strategy to attract and retain staff
- Implementing employee retention and attraction initiatives

The plan aims to support REED's growth and expansion while ensuring the organization can deliver high-quality early childhood education and development services.

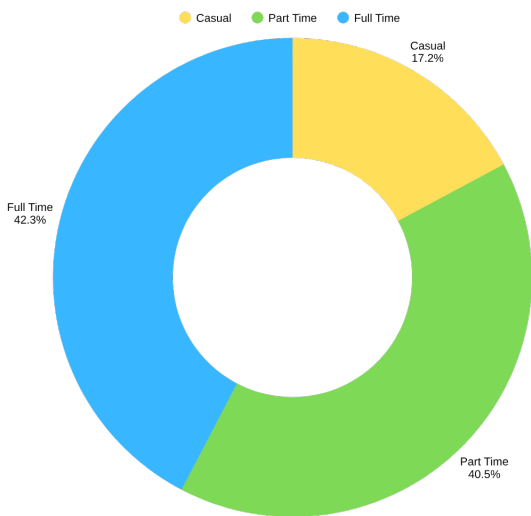
- Succession Planning: A significant development in our succession planning has been the appointment of a new General Manager and two additional Assistant Operations Managers (AOM) positions. REED now have three Assistant Operations Managers who oversee three service zones. Cluster Managers report directly to the AOM's. This structure has been designed to support the services at a management level enhancing our ability to deliver high-quality care and education. Additionally, REED have appointed a Work Health and Safety Officer to oversee our safety initiatives.
- Professional Development: Our traineeship program continues to thrive, with 28 trainees and 9 independent students working towards their Certificate III. We have 5 trainees and 7 independent students working towards their Diplomas. One of our exemplary trainees, Haylee Elliott, has made remarkable

progress. Haylee has not only completed her Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care but has also taken on additional responsibilities, including mentoring younger staff members. Haylee shared, “I like working for REED because everyone is supportive, and they help each other grow and learn. REED gives me opportunities to become a better educator and helps make a difference in the service communities.”



As of the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2025, our employment type breakdown is as follows. There were 69 fulltime, 66 part time and 28 casual employees. We continue to prioritise creating a work environment that supports various employment arrangements, which includes several staff who have requested and been granted transitioning from casual to permanent employment and staff transitioning from permanent full time to part time. These arrangements ensure that our staff can balance their work and personal responsibilities effectively.

### Employment type breakdown

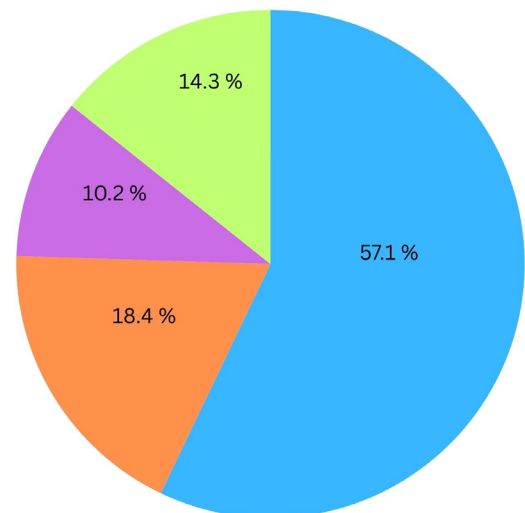


Celebrating Staff – REED developed a Staff Survey and Action Plan in 2024 which was based on communication with staff from all levels. The Action Plan includes 12 short term, 16 medium term and 5 long term actions. The management team are working through this Action Plan and have already made good progress with positive results.

### REED Trainee & Students

#### Enrolled and Working Towards

- Trainee Certificate III
- Independant Student Certificate III
- Trainee Diploma
- Independant Student Diploma



## Assessment & Rating

Regional Early Education & Development is committed to providing high quality early childhood education and care across regional Western Australia. All REED services focus on creating safe, engaging and inclusive environments where children can thrive, supported by experienced and qualified educators, strong connections with families and communities.

This financial year, six of our services underwent Assessment and Rating with the Education and Care Regulatory Unit (ECRU). We are proud to report that all six services have achieved an overall rating of Meeting the National Quality Standard (NQS):

**REED Bruce Rock**  
Meeting NQS (August 2024)

**REED Corrigin**  
Meeting NQS (June 2025)

**REED Darkan**  
Meeting NQS (August 2024)

**REED Dowerin**  
Meeting NQS (November 2024)

**REED Quairading**  
Meeting NQS (April 2025)

**REED Wundowie**  
Meeting NQS (March 2025)

These ratings reflect the skill and commitment of our educators and Cluster Managers, who consistently strive to improve quality while encouraging meaningful relationships with children and families.

### Looking Ahead

While services are still progressing through the A&R process REED are committed to ensuring that all services continue to strive for quality for regional children. With the support of the Quality Assurance Officer, Child Safety Officer, and Central Operations support team, educators in services are ready to strengthen strong practices that drive continuous improvement. Together, these efforts will create successful outcomes across REED and provide a solid foundation for services to strive towards Exceeding NQS in the future.



## Geographical Expansion

In 2025 REED has welcomed four new services, located in Boyup Brook, Hopetoun, Ravensthorpe and Walpole. Each of these services come with rich community foundations and strong connections with local families. Merging with REED ensures children continue to have access to quality early learning close to home under a sustainable business model.



The mergers were made possible through a Department of Communities grant to expand the existing REED Cluster Model to the Goldfields-Esperance, Great Southern and South-West regions of Western Australia.

These services now benefit from access to shared resources, professional development and ongoing operational support, allowing educators to focus on what matters most—creating engaging,

safe, and meaningful learning experiences for children.

We're excited to have Boyup Brook, Hopetoun, Ravensthorpe and Walpole as part of the REED family and look forward to celebrating their continued growth and successes in the future.



## Professional Development Support

This year REED has been supported by Child Australia, through their delivery of ECEC support, Empowering Regional Services WA program which has been funded through the State Government Department of Communities. All REED locations have been supported with in service visits focusing on specific professional development for Educators working directly with children. This support has been invaluable for the progression of increased quality for regional Western Australian ECEC services.

## Annual Conference

The 2025 Annual Educator Conference was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of January at the Esplanade Hotel Fremantle. The event brought together educators, the support team and child safety specialists from across the organisation. The theme for 2025, “Safeguarding Children,” highlighted REED’s commitment to preventative child safety, being at the centre of our early learning practice.

Guided by Master of Ceremonies Lisa Woodbrook, the conference opened with a welcome from CEO Kylie Helgesen, followed by a ‘Welcome to Country’ by Emeritus Professor Simon Forrest and an official opening by Minister Sabine Winton. To get the energy flowing, Akwaaba African Drumming took the stage, and the audience was soon drumming and dancing along, creating a sense of energy, connection and anticipation for the two days ahead.

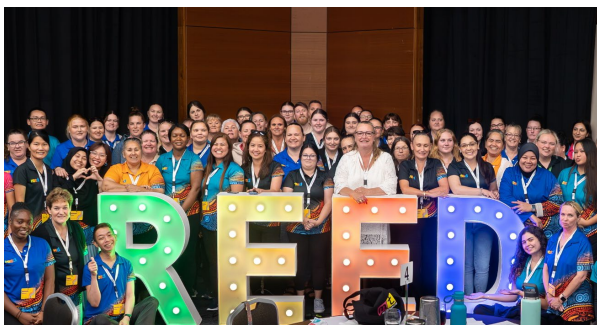
The first day included a presentation by Rhonda Livingstone from ACECQA, who provided educators with practical insights on prioritising child safety in educational programs and practices. This was followed by a keynote and workshop on the impacts of trauma, led by Connie Borg and Fiona Rudkin from Child Australia. As the day ended, REED Chairperson Wendy Newman and Deputy Chairperson Jacquie Hutchinson launched REED’s values, a key moment that reinforced the organisation’s commitment to child safety.

As the sun set, the evening festivities began with a dazzling 1920s theme with many wearing costumes that added to the night’s flair. The night included an awards ceremony celebrating the achievements of REED educators and the support team. Followed by dinner and dancing the night away, a chance to strengthen connections through team building and celebration.



Day Two continued with Kelly Oldfield, Children’s Behaviour and Development Specialist, who explored meaningful interactions with children. Her session inspired deep reflections on how we communicate and connect with the children in our care. Andrea Musulin, Director of Child Focused Safety Service, then discussed education and empowering children based on CSO Principle 2. Esmee Ng from Health Empower Australia delivered an insightful session on educator well-being, emphasizing that while child safeguarding is crucial, it’s equally important for educators to take care of

themselves. To close the conference on a fun and light-hearted note, Daniel Burton from Educated by Nature wrapped up the event with a keynote and workshop on “Saying Yes to Risk.” He encouraged educators to step outside their comfort zones and embrace risk taking in both their professional and personal lives. His session had everyone laughing, moving and reflecting on the value of taking chances.



The conference concluded with closing remarks from CEO Kylie Helgesen, reaffirming REED’s commitment to safeguarding children while also supporting the professional development and wellbeing of educators.

The 2025 conference provided an invaluable platform for learning, collaboration and reflection. The wealth of knowledge shared, the connections made and the renewed commitment to safeguarding children left every REED team member excited to return to their centres with the tools and inspiration needed to uphold the highest standards of safety and care in their work with children and their families.

## Award Winners 2025

Jill Cameron Educator of the Year Award  
Nicole Bush, Boddington

Helen Creed Excellence Award  
Jill Cameron, REED Founding Project Manager

Outstanding Role Model Award  
Nicole Derksen, Central Support

Outstanding Achievement Award  
Sheillah Jepkorir, Central Support

Trainee of the Year Award  
Shianne Vincent, Cunderdin

Community Connection Award  
Bernadette Bryan, Dowerin

Child Safe Champion Award  
Margi Smolders, Central Support

Outstanding Mentor Award  
Nicholas Mazzoni, Central Support

Inclusivity Champion Award  
Veramae Aumada, Bruce Rock

Quiet Achiever Award  
Trish Fernihough, Central Support



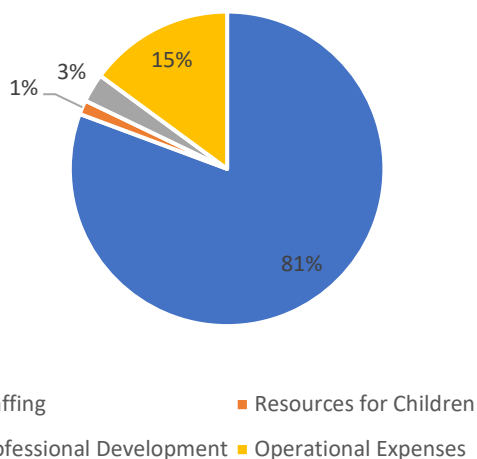
## Overview of Financials

REED is building a sustainable financial foundation from which to continue delivering quality services across our community.

The 2024-2025 financial year result was a deficit of \$379,349 compared to the surplus of \$960,000 in the previous year. This deficit is one off and due to a self-identified and reported award entitlement, back paid to staff impacted. The total of this back payment was \$939,584.

In FY25 75% of the income achieved was through Federal grants and Government funded Child Care Subsidy contributions. 20% of income was received from parents' out-of-pocket fees which have decreased by 3% compared to the FY24 figure of 23%.

Expenses

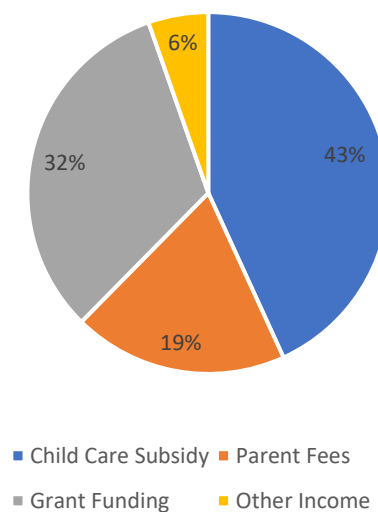


This year was another challenging time as REED experienced ongoing workforce

issues which intermittently affected REED's ability to deliver services to the necessary capacity. To foster the wellbeing of our workforce, REED continued initiatives including the above award wages, professional development opportunities and attraction and retention incentives.

Staffing costs overall accounted for 81% of REED's total expenditure, which is 3% more than the previous financial year. Professional development expenditure rose in FY25 by an additional 3%.

Income



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

REED continues in a strong growth phase as more services seek to 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.