

# L4LIFE ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24



**Learning for Life**  
AUTISM CENTRE INC  
20 years

# ABOUT L4LIFE

The Learning for Life Autism Centre (L4Life) was created as a not-for-profit organisation in 2004, as a way to address the inequity that existed in access to best-practice early intervention programs based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) for children with autism in Victoria, Australia.

## OUR VISION

A world where all autistic and neurodivergent people can thrive and live the life they choose.

## OUR PURPOSE

Support autistic and other neurodivergent children to develop skills that promote independence and choice.

## OUR MISSION

- Provide children with high quality services underpinned by Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) regardless of their financial or social circumstances.
- Conduct research that informs our service delivery.
- Build awareness and understanding of autism, neurodiversity, and best practice ABA.

## OUR VALUES

**Trust** We value the individual  
**Respect** We foster relationships  
**Equity** We create opportunity  
**Joy** We celebrate learning  
**Kindness** We care



## LANGUAGE USE

We acknowledge there are many perspectives and personal preferences regarding the language used to identify people and their abilities and disabilities. We endeavour to show sensitivity and adaptation to the unique needs of individuals to present their identity in a way that is meaningful for them. In some of our communication it is difficult to reflect all preferences for identification; however, our commitment in personal communications is to respect individual preference. We acknowledge there may be a difference for people in using the terms 'child with autism' or 'autistic child' and our language is adaptive and flexible, always with the intention of inclusivity.

We use both language conventions interchangeably and therefore refer to both autistic children and children with autism throughout this report.

# CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR	2
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT	3
OUR IMPACT	4
THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT	5
YEAR IN REVIEW	6
L4LIFE STAFF	10
GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP	12
FINANCIALS	14
FINANCIAL REPORT	15
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS	16
FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES	17

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Learning for Life Autism Centre Inc. acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We support diversity and inclusion, and we have zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment because of neurodiversity, race, colour, age, religion, sex, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, veteran, military or marital status, genetic information or any other protected status. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and have zero tolerance for child abuse.



The Learning for Life Autism Centre Inc. is a registered NDIS provider.  
Provider Number 4050050613

# FROM OUR CHAIR

Mary Muirhead

## REFLECTING ON CHALLENGES, TRANSITIONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR 20TH YEAR

As L4Life marks its 20th anniversary, we find ourselves at a pivotal juncture—an opportunity to both reflect on our journey and set a hopeful course for the future. Much like a significant milestone in our personal lives, this moment calls for a mix of celebration and introspection. It's a chance to honour our achievements while addressing the challenges that shape our path forward.

The closing months of 2023 brought with them an undeniable reality: to thrive in an evolving disability and charity landscape, L4Life must adapt and innovate. The recently released NDIS Review Report, coupled with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and our own financial losses, made it clear that substantial change was not just necessary but urgent. We see this not as a challenge to fear but as an invitation to reimagine how we deliver high-quality, evidence-based, and accessible services to those who need them most.

Central to this evolution is embracing what we've termed "Chapter 2" of L4Life's story. This next chapter aligns with broader reforms in the NDIS system - designed to ensure sustainability and fairness across the sector. We welcome these changes, particularly the emphasis on rigorous standards that protect families and participants while maintaining value-for-money. However, like many others in the sector, we recognise the uncertainties and financial pressures that accompany these shifts. These are complex issues, but they are not insurmountable. With collaboration, resilience, and a shared commitment to our mission, we believe we can navigate this new landscape successfully.

One of our biggest challenges is the funding dilemma: NDIS-registered providers (only 10% of those using NDIS funding) are bound by price guidelines that haven't kept pace with rising costs like wages and inflation, increasing financial strain. These funding constraints have forced many reputable disability organisations to cease operations, reducing access to critical services for those in need. Yet, amidst this reality, we remain steadfast in our resolve to provide specialist behavioural support to vulnerable children and their families. While we have been compelled to rely more heavily on fundraising efforts to sustain our services, we are proud to be NDIS registered - a distinction that positions us to meet future reforms head-on and continue advocating for the needs of those we serve.



Amidst these organisational shifts, we faced our own significant leadership transitions. In June 2024, our co-founder and CEO, Pam Roy, stepped down after two decades of extraordinary service. Pam's vision and dedication have been the cornerstone of L4Life's mission, and her legacy will continue to inspire us. Likewise, we bid farewell to Victoria Crane, our General Manager of Operations, whose expertise and leadership were instrumental in securing our NDIS registration. While their departures marked the end of an era, we drew strength from the strong foundations they had established and ushered in a new chapter with the arrival of our new CEO, Nicci Godsman. Nicci's wealth of experience and passion for education and disability services have infused our team with renewed energy and optimism.

Moving forward, our focus remains on sustainability, innovation, and impact. With the unwavering support of our Board, senior management, and community, we are equipped to face the challenges ahead with confidence.

In August 2023, we conducted a comprehensive review of our fundraising and marketing strategies to ensure their alignment with our evolving goals. While the lingering effects of the pandemic stretched our resources, we embraced creative solutions to re-engage our Village - parents, families, staff, and donors - through intimate gatherings and strategic events. We are excited for our plans to celebrate our 20-year anniversary - a Major Giving Campaign and Comedy Gala. These initiatives reflect our commitment to fostering connection, joy, and shared purpose within our community.

At L4Life, we firmly believe that it takes a Village to raise not just a child, but an organisation dedicated to creating a world where all autistic and neurodivergent individuals can thrive. Together, we will continue to innovate, adapt, and grow, ensuring that every person we serve has the opportunity to live the life they choose. Thank you for being part of this journey—we are excited for the future and grateful for your steadfast belief in our mission.

**Mary Muirhead OAM**  
Chair and Co-Founder

### CHARTING A NEW COURSE: REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

My initial months with L4Life have filled me with excitement and optimism for our journey ahead. My commencement in June 2024 marked a significant moment as we embarked on a major change initiative to transform from a challenging financial loss position onto a strong path toward success in the ever-evolving landscape of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

My primary objectives, supported by the Board, centred on enhancing financial performance, operational efficiency and productivity, while empowering our dedicated team to disseminate knowledge and skills for future success. I was warmly welcomed by the team, whose enthusiasm and shared commitment to our mission made a lasting impression.

One of the immediate highlights of June was the heartfelt farewell to two remarkable individuals who have significantly contributed to L4Life's legacy: Pam Roy and Victoria Crane. I thank Pam for her unwavering dedication and visionary leadership, which have shaped our organisation and Victoria for her vital role in overseeing multiple facets of our operations.

In addition to farewells, June brought exciting news as we received grant funding to continue our Complex Behaviour initiative. Furthermore, we are incredibly grateful for the significant and generous donations we received in June from new and past supporters, which will aid in furthering our mission.

It has been a privilege to join a cohesive team with considerable longevity of tenure, demonstrating a deep commitment not only to L4Life but also to the families we serve. The team's passion for applying behavioural analysis techniques to educate and develop the autistic and neurodivergent children in our care is truly inspiring. It is this commitment that will be crucial as we move forward, addressing ongoing challenges and seizing new opportunities.



As we navigate the complexities of the NDIS environment and anticipate changes in that space in the coming year, my immediate focus will be on:

- Achieving financial stability by leading the responsible management and oversight of finances and resources, making informed decisions to prioritise long-term financial health and sustainability.
- Continuation and promotion of quality service offerings through increased efficiency and productivity to enhance service delivery, with a strategic emphasis on leveraging our permanent staff more effectively, thereby reducing reliance on casual team members.
- Workforce optimisation by implementing strategies to enhance the skills and productivity of our team.
- Promoting empowerment and accountability by providing team members with access and control over information and increasing decision-making points through delegations of authority.

For the next financial year, we will strive to re-establish ourselves in a way that meets the immediate needs of our clients while positioning us for sustainable growth. I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and confident that, with our collective effort, we can build on the positive insights gathered during my early time here.

**Nicci Godsman**  
CEO

# OUR IMPACT

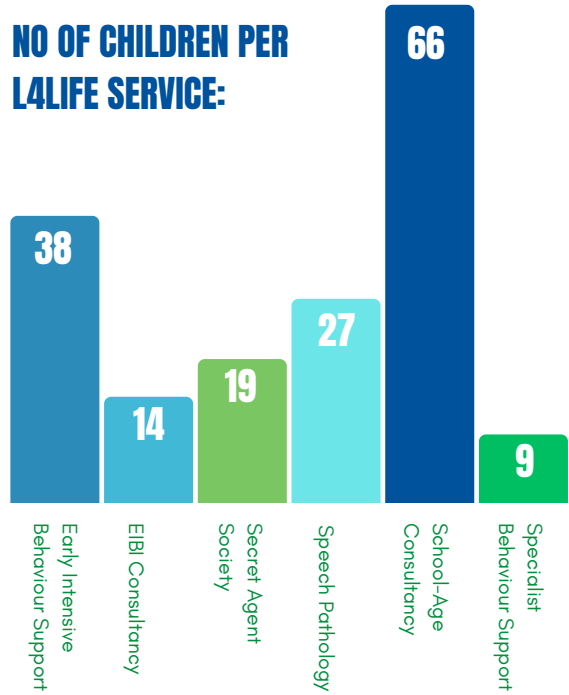
# 2023-24



# 142

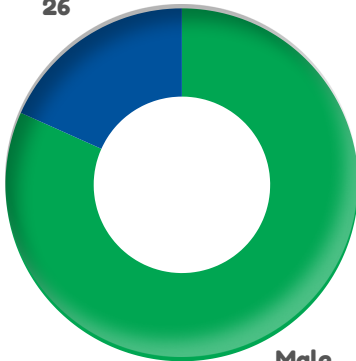
Children received at least one direct L4Life service

## NO OF CHILDREN PER L4LIFE SERVICE:



## GENDER:

Female  
26



Male  
116

## OUR FAMILIES



# 130

Families received a direct L4Life service



# 16

Families received a L4Life subsidy



# 39

L4Life families speak a Language Other than English at home

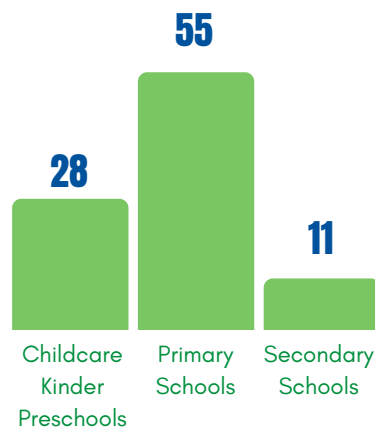
## EDUCATION SERVICES



# 89

Educational settings where L4Life services were delivered

## BREAKDOWN OF EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS:



# THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT

## BILLY'S STORY: DEVELOPING THE TOOLS FOR LIFE

"Billy's social and emotional wellbeing and development is a result of the stability and learning opportunities that L4Life provided to us as parents, which enabled us to provide a home environment that works for a child with multiple comorbidities."

Billy\*, who is autistic and has an intellectual disability, began his journey with L4Life through our Early Intervention service. His therapy focused on developing the skills to help him navigate social interactions, routines, and everyday challenges with greater confidence and independence.

L4Life worked not only with Billy, to achieve his goals, but also his parents – providing the tools and knowledge to support Billy at home. "They gave us the skills and ideas of how to be a parent to a special needs child," says Billy's mum, Stella\*.

"Most parenting books are geared towards neurotypical children," Stella reflects. "L4L filled that gap for first-time parents of a neurodivergent child and guided us through those early years, helping us establish a strong foundation of social and emotional skills Billy needs."

As a result, Stella says that Billy is described as a well-adjusted six year old by those who meet him. And, as he settles into the school system, she believes he has developed the social skills and tools to help him take on this new challenge with confidence.

While Stella praises L4Life's unwavering support – describing our staff as "unflappable" – she also highlights the challenges of navigating the NDIS and the lack of funding for Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) in the crucial transition to school years.

\*Names changed for privacy. Below photograph is stock image.



## OUR SERVICES

Our service offerings have varied significantly in response to staff changes, NDIS reforms and evolving client demand in the 2023/2024 financial year. This includes the cessation of speech pathology, the introduction of a Family Support Manager, and the reimagining of our Early Intervention offerings.

After a decade with L4Life, our speech pathologist, Nilushi Goonitelleke, left our services. Nilushi's unique expertise, combining an Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) foundation with her speech therapy specialisation, provided a distinct and invaluable service to our families and children with complex communication needs. Her departure in March marked the conclusion of this service at L4Life, which impacted some of our clients who had greatly benefited from her integrated approach.

While this was a difficult change for those families, it has opened the door for us to review and rebuild our Allied Health team. We are hopeful that in the 2024/2025 financial year, we will be able to expand our Allied Health services, ensuring that we continue to meet the diverse needs of the children and families we support.

Our Allied Health team continues to offer Specialist Behaviour Supports, Inclusion Works Consultancy, School-Age Consultancy and Secret Agent Society (Social Skills). While the Specialist Behaviour Supports client numbers increased by 80% this financial year (9 clients, up from 5 in the 2022/23 FY), the reallocation of Allied Health staff to increase our Behaviour Support services and our private Inclusion Works program saw a subsequent reduction in enrolments for our School-Age Consultancy and Secret Agent Society services - 17.5% drop and 29.5% drop respectively.

Conversely, our Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) service experienced growth of 12%, along with an increase in enrolments to our Early Intervention Consultancy. These two services have been further buoyed by the reconfiguration of our EIBI supervision.

model - which allows for greater flexibility of supervision to better match our families' and clients' individual needs - and the revised Early Intervention Consultancy service launched in 2024 (read more on page 7).

### Honouring Our Commitment to Holistic Family Support

In staying true to our foundation of supporting families beyond therapeutic services, we were fortunate to receive a grant that enabled us to introduce a dedicated Family Support Manager, ensuring that our families were well-supported throughout their L4Life journey.

Elizabeth Mannix, joined the team in November 2023 to provide support to families as they navigated through the various stages of their child's educational and developmental path. The role was introduced to help families navigate transitions—from home to kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, and beyond.

In collaboration with L4Life's clinical consultants, senior clinical staff, and our Allied Health team, Elizabeth developed a comprehensive database for our Clinical Consultants to draw upon as a resource to assist their clients to make informed decisions about services available to them.

Alongside the Family Support Manager, our General Manager of Operations, Victoria Crane, continued to guide families through the complexities of the NDIS process, assisting them in securing initial NDIS plans, managing changes in circumstances, and handling plan reviews. Victoria has been an invaluable resource, crafting letters of support and ensuring families feel prepared to navigate the ever-evolving NDIS landscape. With Victoria's departure, we are now focused on determining the future direction and placement of this role.



# YEAR IN REVIEW *cont.*

## Early Intervention Consultancy Model: Embracing Change and Meeting Evolving Needs

Since the inception of L4Life, our Early Intervention Consultancy (EI-C) program has been a cornerstone of our services, providing critical support to children and families. However, with shifts in the needs of our clients and changes in the NDIS framework, it became clear that the original program was no longer fully addressing the challenges faced by our families. This realisation presented an opportunity to reimagine the program and create a more responsive model that would better support families, particularly through the transition into the school environment.

Previously, our Early Intervention Program concluded when children transitioned into school, at which point they moved into our School-Age Consultancy program. However, families in this new phase were no longer able to access our Therapy Assistants. Feedback from parents, caregivers, and schools consistently highlighted the benefits of continuing support through the early school years, emphasising the need for Therapy Assistants to be available both at home and in school during this pivotal period.

Parents repeatedly shared that L4Life Therapy Assistants were instrumental in ensuring a smooth and successful transition into school. Moreover, we frequently received service enquiries from families whose children had just started school and were encountering difficulties, but we lacked a program to meet their specific needs at that time.

In 2024, the NDIS expanded the Early Intervention age range to 9 years old, providing us with the opportunity to develop a program that not only better serves our existing clients but also offers support to families who may not have accessed services earlier and are now facing challenges with the start of school.

We are excited to share that in June 2024, the revised Early Intervention Consultancy Program officially launched. By the end of that month, we had already received six enquiries and onboarded two students, underscoring the demand for this new offering.

Our program is now available to any child enrolled in school, up to the age of 9, including those who may not yet be actively attending school. Each family is supported by a dedicated Clinical Consultant who works collaboratively with both the school and the family to develop tailored strategies that foster a positive and productive learning environment. When necessary, Therapy Assistants are also provided, offering focused and sustained support both in school and at home.

This renewed approach allows us to more effectively navigate the crucial transition years and empowers us to extend our reach to families who need it most—strengthening the foundation for successful learning and development for our children.



# YEAR IN REVIEW *cont.*

## OUR RESEARCH

### **Inclusion Works: Building Capacity for Lasting Change**

Our Inclusion Works PhD program finalised its second year of data collection in 2023 at two schools and entered its third and final year of data collection in 2024, collaborating with three additional schools to continue the important work of fostering inclusive learning environments.

The project aims to evaluate whether teacher attitudes toward inclusive education and their implementation of inclusive practices improve after participating in the Inclusion Works program and whether these changes are maintained in the years following the program.

We thank those schools who have been involved in this project for their input, cooperation and feedback. We also thank Sarah Wood, Head of Allied Health for leading the project and Claire Birrell, Emma Davies and Sara Allen, the Clinical Consultants implementing the program.

The feedback received from participating schools has been positive, as shown below:

**“The specific feedback tailored to individual teachers and their classrooms has been invaluable, and we are already seeing positive changes across the school. It’s been empowering for our staff to approach this professional learning as a growth opportunity, with the support to try new ideas, reflect, and improve.”**

**“Emma has been fantastic in the classroom. She’s always positive, enthusiastic, and full of great ideas for supporting our students. Her specific feedback on areas of focus has really helped me improve my teaching.”**



**“Claire’s recommendations have not only transformed individual students’ experiences but have also influenced whole-class strategies. Her insights into environmental adjustments and universal strategies have significantly improved classroom culture and student engagement. Just yesterday, at our staff meeting, teachers who have worked with Claire were sharing their reflections and discussing how they’ll apply these strategies to set up their classrooms for success next year. Transformative!”**

These reflections highlight the lasting impact of the Inclusion Works program, not only on individual students but on entire school communities. It’s a testament to the power of building capacity within schools to create environments where every student can thrive.

The data and information collected through this evaluation constantly feeds back into the work the Allied Health team does across all L4Life services. It fosters conversations about how we can continue to ensure all programs we deliver are best practice.

As part of this project, follow up data will continue to be collected throughout 2025 and 2026 to monitor whether changes are sustained in the years following the Inclusion Works program.

This project was made possible through grants from Baker Foundation and 5Point Foundation. We thank them for their support.

# YEAR IN REVIEW *cont.*

## OUR FUNDRAISING

Our 20th anniversary milestone comes with a renewed focus on re-engaging with our community and developing a fundraising strategy that aligns with our vision. While maintaining a sustainable business model is a focus moving forward, as a not-for-profit and NDIS-registered provider, revenue streams beyond client fees are essential to our sustainability and ensuring that we can adapt to the current environment and our families' requirements.

Grants from philanthropic organisations continue to be a vital part of our operational support, funding essential areas such as assessments, staff development, research, our Family Support Manager role, and the creation of inclusive communication materials for families who speak languages other than English.

L4Life was founded on the belief that every autistic and neurodivergent child should have access to the necessary supports, regardless of their financial situation. Our subsidy program has long been a central component of our service offering, enabling families to commence or continue therapy when other funding sources are unavailable or temporarily paused. These subsidies are particularly crucial during the early intervention stage, where research consistently shows that early therapy can have the most significant impact on a child's development.

Despite financial challenges in the current economic climate and pressures on NDIS providers, we were able to subsidise 16 families across Early Intervention and Allied Health in the 2023/2024 financial year. Moving forward, our focus is on exploring new strategies to expand this important program.

The departure of our GM Fundraising & Relationships at the end of 2022 saw the responsibility for fundraising rest with the Fundraising, Communications, and Relationship Subcommittee and Marketing and Communications Manager. During this period, we developed a short-term fundraising strategy to maintain momentum and plan to leverage our 20th-year celebrations. We will be recommencing our search for a Philanthropy Manager in the 2024/2025 financial year.



The majority of our 2024 fundraising events were strategically planned for the latter half of the year, in celebration of our 20th anniversary. However, one of the highlights from the first half of the year was our continued involvement in Run Melbourne, which took place on 16 July 2023. We were thrilled to have 11 families join us for this event, raising over \$11,000 and placing us 14th amongst the top fundraisers taking part in this event. This marked our 15th year of participation in Run Melbourne, and while raising funds for our Centre is a key objective, it also serves as a wonderful opportunity to unite our L4Life community.

We were especially grateful to have both current and former families continue to support our cause. Among them were Clemmie and Sadie, both of whom have been long-term members of the L4Life family. Their participation was a testament to their ongoing commitment to supporting other neurodivergent children and families. Clemmie and Sadie, together with their families, raised a significant portion of the funds. We deeply appreciate their generosity and the heartfelt stories they shared with our wider community.

Sadie reflected on her involvement, saying:

**"Unfortunately, a lot of kids still don't have access to the assistance I've had, and so I want to fundraise to help change that! I believe that every neurodiverse child deserves the support they need to get through the ups and downs of life with a disability."**

Clemmie also shared her motivation: **"I'm fundraising for the Learning for Life Autism Centre, which has worked with me since my surgery and helped me so much. . . so other kids can benefit from the amazing therapy and support I've been so lucky to have. Love, Clemmie."**

These stories, and many more like them, underscore the impact our services have on the lives of families and highlight the power of community in making a lasting difference.

## A YEAR OF CHANGE

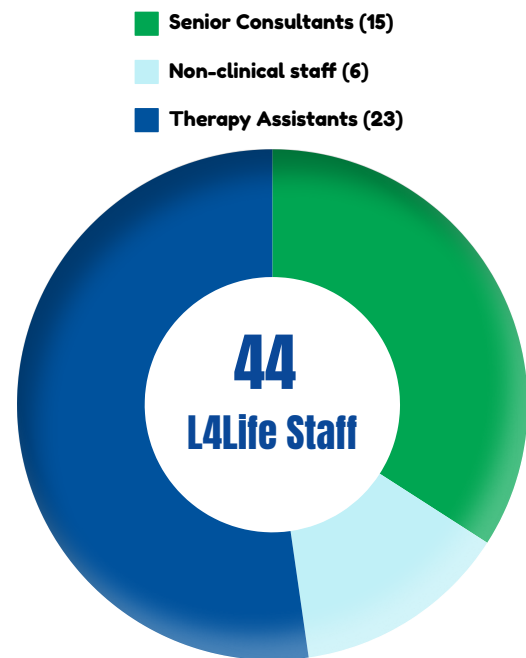
The 2023/2024 financial year brought notable changes to our leadership and clinical teams, marking a period of both review and transition. At the end of June, we farewelled our CEO, Pam Roy, and our General Manager of Operations, Victoria Crane, both of whom have made significant contributions to L4Life. Their leadership and dedication over the years have helped shape the organisation we are today.

On the clinical front, we said goodbye to two long-standing team members. Speech Pathologist Nilushi Goonitelleke (11 years of service) and psychologist Perri Ashton (10 years of service) who moved on to new opportunities. Their departures had a considerable impact on our Allied Health team, particularly in the areas of Psychology, Specialist Behaviour Supports, and Speech Pathology. Their expertise and dedication will be missed, and we are grateful for the contributions they made to our families and clients over the years.

Amidst these changes, we were fortunate to welcome Nicci Godsman as our new CEO in June, prior to Pam's departure. This timing allowed for a seamless transition of leadership, ensuring stability and continuity as we look ahead to the future. We extend our thanks to the Board for their invaluable support during this process, guiding us through these significant changes with care and vision.

As we reflect on this year of transformation, we are reminded of the strength and resilience of our organisation. While these transitions mark the end of one chapter, they also signal the beginning of an exciting new phase for L4Life, one that we are ready to embrace with optimism and purpose.

## STAFF BREAKDOWN



## STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

### Congratulations to the following staff on their promotions in the 2023/24 Financial Year:

- Cassie Dods and Alana McGrellis were both promoted to Provisional Early Childhood Clinical Consultants
- Hannah Yates and Sara Allen became registered Behaviour Support Practitioners
- Therapy Assistants Savannah Allen, Aaron Tomaselli and Jess Blair were promoted to Clinical Intern roles

## STRENGTHENING OUR WORKFORCE: THERAPY ASSISTANT RECRUITMENT

Therapy Assistants at L4Life play an important role in supporting the autistic and neurodivergent children we serve on their journey to develop lifelong skills that promote independence and choice. Working with children aged 2-8 across Melbourne in homes, kindergartens, and schools, they bring essential, hands-on support under the supervision of senior behaviour analysts and psychologists.

In addition, our Therapy Assistant pathway has been the bedrock of our workforce sustainability, providing a pipeline of skilled professionals who are trained, supported, and prepared to grow within L4Life. This pathway ensures we can continue delivering high-quality, evidence-based services while building a strong, capable team for the future.

In the 2023-2024 financial year, L4Life successfully onboarded 10 Therapy Assistants, primarily between July 2023 and January 2024, following a strategic recruitment campaign that diversified advertising, networking, and recruitment locations.

The campaign's success ensured therapy hours for our families were fully staffed, allowing onboarding to pause until the 2024-2025 financial year.

This proactive approach has strengthened our workforce, ensuring we meet the growing needs of the families we support.

## STAFF TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At L4Life, we recognise that professional development and training are essential to delivering high-quality, evidence-based services to the children and families we support. Our commitment to equipping staff with the knowledge and skills they need to excel is particularly evident in our focus on fostering Certified Behaviour Analysts and providing ongoing training opportunities. By investing in the development of our team, we not only enhance their expertise but also ensure the consistent application of best practices in Applied Behaviour Analysis, empowering them to create meaningful, lasting outcomes for those in our care.

Over 340 hours of training were undertaken by our Clinical staff in the 2023/24 Financial Year, including:

- Continuing Education Units for our Board Certified Behaviour Analysts, Certified Behaviour Analysts, and psychologists
- Cultural awareness and responsiveness training
- PART training (Predict, Assess, and Respond to Challenging/Aggressive Behaviour) as part of our Complex Behaviour Subsidy, funded by a grant.
- Attendance at the Association for Behavioural Analysis Australia (ABAA) Conference in Brisbane.
- Other targeted behaviour support training

### L4Life Staff at the ABAA Conference, Brisbane



# GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

## 2023-24

### GUIDING OUR VISION: THE L4LIFE BOARD

The L4Life Board continues to expand its breadth and diversity, drawing on a wide range of experiences, knowledge, and backgrounds. In recent years, succession planning has been a major focus, with a dedicated Working Party established to carefully manage this crucial area as long-tenured members gradually transition off the Board.

This year, we bid farewell to Pam Roy, who stepped down not only from her role as CEO but also as a long-serving Board Member. As Co-Founder of L4Life, Pam has been instrumental in shaping the Centre's direction, growth, and culture, bridging the connection between Board and operational teams. Pam's 20-year tenure on the Board was marked by her compassion, expertise, and unwavering commitment. While she will be deeply missed in her official capacities, Pam remains a valued part of the L4Life community, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude for her many contributions and her assistance with a seamless CEO transition.

We were also pleased to welcome Peter Royce as our fourth Board Observer. Peter brings extensive experience from the Community Services sector, including his leadership role as President of 300 Blankets, a non-profit supporting those at risk or experiencing homelessness. He joins with a commitment to contributing further to the sector and gaining deeper insights into governance and leadership. Peter succeeds Natalie Gibbs, who transitioned to Director in November 2023. We are fortunate to benefit from Natalie's expertise in fundraising, along with her pivotal role in shaping our Fundraising Strategy. The Observership Program has been a great benefit to L4Life and the Observers. We will be continuing this program in 2025.

Victoria Crane retired from her role as Board Secretary in November 2023 and we onboarded John Tran as our new Board Secretary. We thank them both for their commitment and service to L4Life in this important, behind-the-scenes role. Victoria did much to set up practices for the smooth running of the Board which John has taken on with attention to detail, diligence and pride.

### The L4Life Board for 2023/24



# GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP *cont.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Mary Muirhead OAM**  
CHAIR



**Melanie Larkey**  
TREASURER



**Pam Roy**  
CEO/DIRECTOR



**Dr Amanda Sampson**  
DIRECTOR



**Dr Chris Das**  
DIRECTOR



**Melanie Cook**  
DIRECTOR



**Dr Matt Harvey**  
DIRECTOR



**Natasha Gupta**  
DIRECTOR



**Sian Stephens**  
DIRECTOR



**Natalie Gibbs**  
DIRECTOR



**Peter Royce**  
BOARD OBSERVER

**Patrons:** Tom Gleisner AO; Dr Amanda Sampson

## SUB-COMMITTEES

### Risk, Finance and Governance

Chair: Melanie Larkey

### Research

Chair: Dr Amanda Sampson

### Best Practice

Chair: Emma Miller

### Fundraising, Communications and Relationships

Chair: Natalie Gibbs

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

The Executive Leadership Team at L4Life drives the strategic direction, operational excellence, and clinical integrity of the organisation, ensuring high-quality services for the children and families we support.



**Pam Roy**  
CEO\*



**Nicci Godzman**  
CEO (from June 2024)



**Emma Miller**  
CLINICAL DIRECTOR

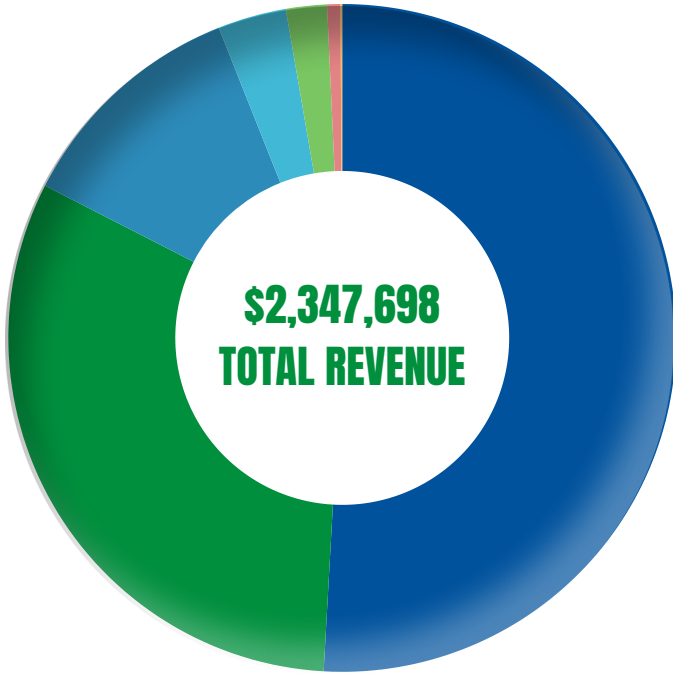


**Victoria Crane**  
GENERAL MANAGER  
OPERATIONS\*










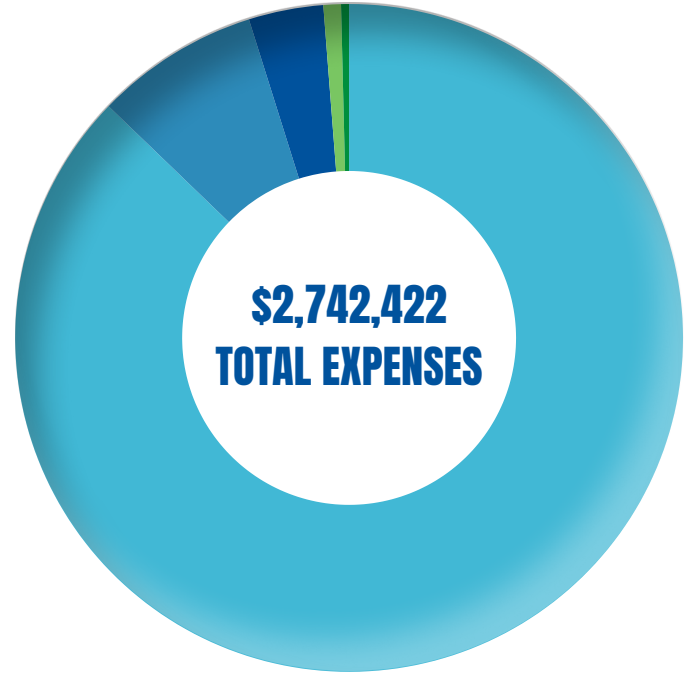
**Fleur Haberfield**  
MARKETING MANAGER

\*resigned 2024








## REVENUE

	EIBI Full Service Model income (net of subsidies)*	\$1,194,652
	Allied health and other related services*	\$742,967
	Donations	\$268,434
	Community Endowments	\$78,097
	Interest	\$46,487
	Fundraising Events	\$15,125
	Bequests	\$1,935



## EXPENSES

	Employee benefits expense	\$2,391,457
	Other expenses	\$217,948
	Depreciation and amortisation expense	\$99,193
	Occupancy costs	\$23,257
	Grant and fundraising costs	\$10,567

\*inclusive of tied grants income



After more than 10 years of invaluable pro-bono auditing services, we bid a heartfelt farewell to Rob Wernli and his team at DFK Kidsons. Their unwavering support, guidance, and generosity have been deeply appreciated, representing a significant investment of time and resources. We extend our sincerest gratitude to DFK Kidsons for their incredible contribution.

We are also delighted to welcome Pitcher Partners as our new auditors. Their generous pro-bono support and swift action to deliver this year's audited financial accounts have been remarkable. Pitcher Partners collaborated closely with our new CEO, Nicci Godsman, and our accounts team to review and refine our accounting practices, ensuring consistency and alignment with the latest Accounting Standards.

As part of this review, updates to our income recognition process were identified. Previously, grant income was held in a cash account on the balance sheet and recognised in our accounts as funds were drawn down to support specific programs. To comply with current Accounting Standards, we are required to recognise the full grant amount as income at the time of receipt. Consequently, adjustments were made to the prior year's revenue figures, and grant income is now reflected differently in our accounts. The impact of this adjustment revised the previously reported net loss for FY2023 from -\$184,305 to -\$79,139. For FY2024, the net result stands at \$394,724, a loss that is more than double the previous year's in real terms.

Our total reported income for FY2024 of \$2,347,698 reflects a 5% decline compared to FY2023, primarily due to fewer general donations.

Meanwhile, total expenses for FY2024 reached \$2,742,422, an 8% increase from the prior year, with staff costs accounting for 87% of this amount.

As highlighted by our Chair and CEO, these financial results underscore the ongoing challenges faced by our sector, particularly those driven by NDIS registration guidelines and the pressures of the current cost-of-living crisis. Without our charitable status, the generosity of our donors, and the prudent financial management of cash reserves by our board and management team, our future would be far more uncertain.

In response, our new CEO has been actively collaborating with the Board and senior management to address these challenges. Operational adjustments are already yielding promising results, enabling us to deliver EIBI services within the financial constraints of our clients' NDIS funding plans. At the same time, we remain committed to supporting families with insufficient NDIS funding or those awaiting renewals or increases. This year, we provided subsidies to 16 children – although this represents four fewer than last year, we also continue to maintain comprehensive records of the additional, self-funded efforts required to assist families in preparing and submitting reports to the NDIS. These efforts also include managing the administrative overhead involved in NDIS audits and related processes. We hope that our ongoing tracking of these activities will strengthen our advocacy with the government and other peak body agencies to seek improved support for service providers working tirelessly in this vital area.

Amidst these challenges, there are reasons for optimism. Income from our EIBI services increased by 22% compared to the previous year, driven by the delivery of services to 52 families—five more than last year. Additionally, the changes introduced in October 2023 to our clinical supervision fee structure are showing positive results. These changes have enabled a more effective and tailored supervision model whilst leveraging allowances within the NDIS pricing table to support sustainable service delivery.

Additionally, Allied Health experienced a steady growth, reflecting the meaningful impact of our partnerships with preschools, schools, and teachers. As our Board begins its next strategic planning cycle in 2025, the Allied Health sector represents a significant opportunity for growth, allowing us to extend our support to more children, parents, and educators in an increasingly complex environment.

In closing, I echo our Chair's sentiments of hope and optimism. Together, with careful financial stewardship, operational adjustments, and the continued generosity of our donors, we remain committed to delivering impactful services for the children and families who rely on us.

**Melanie Larkey**  
Treasurer

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

## 2023-24

As a not-for-profit charity, we rely heavily on the donations of our Village in the forms of grants, events, campaigns, regular giving, sponsorship, bequests and community fundraising. This financial support in kind enables us to provide the best services to support autistic and neurodivergent children live the life they choose. We are proud of the Village we have built and are also grateful for their continued support.

### FAIR ACCESS FUNDING PARTNERS

(\$5,000+ in FY2024)

The Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation  
The Baker Foundation  
The Samuel Nissen Charitable Foundation  
5 Point Foundation  
Anonymous  
The Estate of Basil Waugh  
Dr Amanda Sampson and Dr Lyndon Hale  
Mary Muirhead and Tom Gleisner  
Ducas Paul Foundation  
Pressroom Philanthropy  
Tom and Evelyn Snow  
Morena Buffon and Santo Cilaurio  
The John & Betty Laidlaw Legacy  
Lesley McMullin Foundation  
The William Angliss (Vic) Charitable Fund  
The Campbell Foundation  
The Willink Family and the BP Foundation  
Pallet Logistics P/L  
Anne Tisdall  
James Wood  
Ann Marie & Rob Herten  
H&L Hecht Trust  
Perpetual Foundation - WEMAC Endowment  
Matsarol Foundation Pty Ltd  
Therese and Danny McCoppin

### BRIGHTER FUTURE PARTNERS

Thank you to our regular giving donors as well as our community fundraisers.

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE PARTNERS

We are grateful to our business and in-kind service partners for supporting us throughout the year:

Red IT  
Pressroom Philanthropy  
Kartini Digital  
Johnson Winter Slattery  
Justice Connect  
Wilson Pateras  
Salesforce (with Michael De Hennin and Mike Burnside)  
Bendigo Community Bank (Canterbury, Ashburton, Surrey Hills and Balwyn)  
Boutique Legal  
Angela Scaffidi (Senate SHJ)  
Pitcher Partners  
DFK Kidson

### CELEBRITY EVENT & CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS

Tom Gleisner AO  
Joshua Batten

# FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

It takes a village to raise a child, which is why we work with a network of individuals and organisations to ensure the children we support receive the best support possible.

We call this the L4Life Village. Our Village includes families, carers, therapists, health professionals, psychologists, schools, aides, educators, classmates, private donors, philanthropic organisations, volunteers and the NDIS. All working towards one goal: a world where all autistic and neurodivergent people can thrive and live the life they choose.

You can join our Village by donating, working with us, volunteering or partnering with us. Visit [www.learningforlife.com.au/get-involved](http://www.learningforlife.com.au/get-involved)



## ONE TIME DONATION

Your one time donation will assist us to continue to provide high-quality ABA-based services to help autistic children and their families live the life they choose, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

## REGULAR GIVING

Regular giving provides a predictable stream of funding, enabling us to plan for larger scale programs and subsidies.

You can help us create brighter futures by giving to our Brighter Futures Regular Giving Program.

## GIFT IN WILL

Individual donors can choose to support L4Life by leaving a legacy bequest in their will. There are a number of different ways in which you can leave a bequest.

## WORKPLACE GIVING

You can ask your employer to deduct an amount from your pre-tax pay, or check if they are one of the many who will match your donation via Good2Give or Benevity.

## SPONSORSHIP

Sponsor an event, program, activity, building or centre to help us expand the reach of L4Life, so more children and families can benefit from our services.

## PARTICIPATE IN OUR EVENTS

Sign up to participate in one of our annual events and help us raise funds and friends.

You might also like to volunteer to help organise these events. Find out more about our volunteer program.

## BECOME A COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER

Join the L4Life Village to raise funds through your own events.

**Donate at [www.learningforlife.com.au/donate](http://www.learningforlife.com.au/donate)**





**Learning for Life**  
AUTISM CENTRE INC  
*20 years*

25 - 27 High Street South, Kew, Victoria 3101

PO Box 7118 Hawthorn North 3122

Phone (03) 9853 4607

Email: [admin@learningforlife.com.au](mailto:admin@learningforlife.com.au)

Website: [www.learningforlife.com.au](http://www.learningforlife.com.au)

ABN 47 260 122 955

The Learning for Life Autism Centre Inc. is a registered NDIS provider. Provider Number 4050050613.

