



## Learning Links Centres

### Alexandria

Support Office

Suite 3, Level 1 140 Bourke Rd Alexandria NSW 2015

### Bella Vista

6a/7 Meridian Place Bella Vista NSW 2153

### Gledswood Hills

Suite 7, Level 1 SOMA Wellness, 7 Gregory Hills Drive

Gledswood Hills NSW 2557

### Liverpool

Shop 2, 54-56 Macquarie St (North) Liverpool NSW 2170

### Oatley

Cnr Oatley Ave and Hurstville Rd Oatley NSW 2223

### Peakhurst

12-14 Pindari Rd Peakhurst NSW 2210

[learninglinks.org.au](https://learninglinks.org.au)

1300 003 900

ABN 71 097 577 636

 @learninglinksau  Learning Links

 @learninglinksau  Learning Links



2023 / 24

# IMPACT REPORT

A charitable, not-for-profit organisation  
that supports children to learn, develop and thrive.

Artwork by Gadigal woman, Aunty Deanna Schreiber



We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waterways and skies across Australia. We thank Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for sharing and caring for the land on which we live, work, learn and play. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

# Contents

Continuing our Journey of Reconciliation	2	Building the Capacity of Parents and Professionals	30
The Year’s Reflections	3	Parent Support Programs	31
Our Commitment to Children	5	Professional Development	33
A Holistic Model of Support	7	Influencing Funders, Government and the Community	36
Why Our Mission is So Crucial	9	Advocating for Positive Change	37
What We Achieved Together This Year	11	How Funding Changes Lives	39
Our Support Services	12	Thank You to Our Funders and Supporters	43
Assessments, Mental Health and Wellbeing Support	13	Our People and Culture	46
Speech, Language and Communication Support	17	A Values-Led Organisation	47
Literacy, Numeracy and Learning Support	19	Our Leadership Team	49
Improving Outcomes in Schools With Our For Life® Programs	23	Our Financial Summary	53
Early Education Support	24	Thank You	54

# Continuing our Journey of Reconciliation

Learning Links is committed to continuing its reconciliation journey and making a meaningful contribution to the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children face substantial educational challenges and are twice as likely to experience difficulties with learning and mental health concerns compared to their non-Indigenous peers.

Learning Links has an important role to play in sharing its expertise in supporting children’s learning, development and wellbeing to close this gap.

At the end of 2023, we reviewed our progress against our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) with Reconciliation Australia and our RAP Committee is now in the process of further defining our future vision and action plan for reconciliation with the broader organisation.

This process will help us gain a deeper understanding of our role in reconciliation and where Learning Links can make the most significant impact. We will implement key initiatives in targeted priority areas over the next strategic period, including:

- Continuing to expand our Aboriginal Education Program.
- Building relationships with Aboriginal organisations more widely across the organisation and local to each of our Learning Centres.
- Professional training to strengthen our cultural competence and inclusive practices.
- Collaborating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to co-design culturally responsive and inclusive support programs that make learning more relevant and meaningful.
- Cultural immersion opportunities such as offsite excursions, volunteering and use of cultural spaces for RAP events.



# The Year's Reflections

## A message from our Chair

As we reflect on another year of progress and impact at Learning Links, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the dedicated and generous people who make our work with children and families possible. It is through the commitment of our supporters, staff, and partners that we continue to help children thrive.

## Welcoming Our New CEO

On behalf of the Learning Links Board of Directors, I am very pleased to welcome Jill Reich as the new Chief Executive Officer of Learning Links. Jill started in November 2023.

Jill's drive, energy and focus are great strengths. The strong foundations at Learning Links, combined with Jill's fresh approach, mean that we envisage ongoing growth. Since commencing, Jill has used her wealth of knowledge and experience to refresh our strategic plan. We expect this to ensure that we continue to help more families every year.

## Commitment to Growth and Excellence

The past year has been one of transformation and opportunity for Learning Links. As a board, we have worked closely with the leadership team to sharpen our focus on delivering high-quality services that reflect our core values of Embracing Inclusivity, Stronger Together, Leaders in Learning, and Caring and Compassionate. These values shape every aspect of our work and ensure that the children and families we support feel respected, valued, and inspired to succeed.

## Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities for the coming years are clear – we are committed to expanding our services both in person and online to ensure families across Australia can access the support they need. This growth will be driven by our focus on personalised, compassionate care, and by strengthening partnerships with schools and communities.

## Acknowledging Our People

None of this would be possible without the extraordinary efforts of the Learning Links team. Their professionalism, compassion, and accountability are the cornerstones of our success. This year, we have made key investments in developing our people, to ensure we maintain a high-performing, values-driven culture.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow board members for their ongoing commitment and service to Learning Links. Their leadership and guidance have been instrumental in driving our organisation forward.

## Looking Ahead

As we move into the next year, I am filled with optimism for the future of Learning Links. With a refreshed strategy and the strong leadership of Jill Reich, we are well-positioned to grow our impact and support even more children and families.



**Clive Cuthell**

Chair

## Message from the CEO

As the new CEO of Learning Links, I would like to start by acknowledging the remarkable work of my predecessor, Birgitte Maibom, whose leadership has equipped the organisation with strong foundations, robust governance practices, and a dedicated team of talented individuals. I am honoured to build upon her legacy.

## Driving Impact Through Partnership

In the past year, we have worked hard to expand our reach and impact, directly supporting over 6,900 children through our Learning Centres, online services, and school-based programs. Our focus has been on enhancing children's outcomes across our key areas of expertise including early childhood development, literacy and numeracy, speech and language, and overall wellbeing.

This has been possible due to the incredible generosity of our funders and community partners, including registered clubs across NSW. Their support has ensured that more than half of the children we assist have been able to access services at no cost in their education setting. This is especially important as many families face rising cost-of-living pressures, forcing them to make difficult choices between everyday essentials and much-needed support for their children.

## Navigating a Complex Environment

The external environment has been challenging, with several government inquiries and reviews in progress across disability, early childhood education, and the school system. The Productivity Commission's review of the early childhood sector has been particularly relevant, as it highlights the need for more comprehensive and accessible supports for young children and their families.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review has also created uncertainty for families and service providers alike. In response, Learning Links has engaged extensively with government representatives to advocate for the changes needed to ensure that all children are included and supported in early childhood, and for effective foundational supports within a reshaped NDIS.

## Refining Our Vision for the Future

Despite these challenges, we have remained focused on our mission of creating better outcomes for children who face difficulties with their learning. We have refined our vision for the future, introducing a refreshed strategy to guide our next phase of growth and sustainability. Our goal is to ensure that Learning Links continues to make a lasting and meaningful impact on the educational journeys of children across Australia.

## The Heart of Our Success

I am deeply grateful to the incredible people who make Learning Links' work possible. The dedication of our team, from those delivering services to those behind the scenes, is what drives our success. I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our partners in schools, early childhood centres, corporate organisations, government, philanthropic bodies, and registered clubs. Your support has enabled us to achieve so much this year.

A special thank you to the Learning Links Board for their guidance and unwavering support, as well as to the families and children, who continue to inspire us to push further and do more.

## Looking Ahead: Growing Impact

Children and families will always remain at the centre of everything we do. As we move forward, Learning Links is committed to strengthening our support for parents and carers, recognising that understanding and engagement are key to achieving positive outcomes for children. This year, we launched a free evidence-based parent reading program, the first step in what will be a broader offering of resources for families. Similarly, our partnerships with over 150 schools and thousands of educators and allied health professionals continue to grow, ensuring that we can make a broader impact in classrooms and communities across the country.

The coming years hold exciting opportunities for Learning Links, and I am confident that with the strong foundations we have in place, we will continue to enhance our impact and expand our reach, creating brighter futures for even more children.



**Jill Reich**

CEO

# Our Commitment to Children

At Learning Links, we are driven by the heartfelt belief that every child deserves the opportunity to learn, develop and thrive. It's the reason why we have been dedicated to supporting children who face difficulties with their learning to reach their full potential at school, and in life, for over 50 years.

As an organisation, we stand for the young children who need some extra help to interact with the world and those around them. For the 1 in 5 who start school with developmental vulnerabilities. For those who struggle to make sense of the letters and words in their readers, or the numbers on their maths sheet. For the child sitting in the corner of the classroom feeling anxious and like they'll never fit in. The teenager being bullied. Or the one labelled as the 'naughty kid' who is just begging for someone to ask them if they're ok.

We envisage a community where these children are understood and defined by their strengths, not their weaknesses. And that they have access to the supports that can help them to build confidence, learn alongside their peers and reach their goals.

Our team of passionate professionals is the heart of Learning Links, working tirelessly to make this vision a reality. We are dedicated to providing high-quality support in literacy, numeracy, mental health, and speech and language development, and fostering inclusive learning environments where every child can thrive. Together with families, early childhood settings, schools, professionals, communities, funders and government, we seek to create a powerful network of support that drives meaningful change.

We see the impact of our work in the smiles of children who have mastered a new skill, in the confidence of those who have made progress to overcome their difficulties, and in the gratitude of families who have found hope. Our success is measured in the real and lasting changes we make in the lives of those we support.

Together, we can build a future where every child's learning potential is realised and they are celebrated for who they are and what they can achieve.



## Beliefs

We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to **learn, develop and thrive**.

We believe that **early identification of developmental difficulties is crucial** and can significantly impact a child's learning and future success.

We believe that children can be supported where they live, learn and play, but some will also need **additional, specialised support to truly thrive**.

We believe that **positive mental health and communication skills** are vital foundations for learning.

We believe in using an **evidence-informed approach** to help children achieve the best possible outcomes.

We believe in creating strong partnerships with families, early childhood settings, schools, professionals, organisations and communities to create a **comprehensive network of support** for children.

We believe in **listening to and sharing children's voices**, so support can be tailored to their needs, interests and aspirations.

We believe in **building trust** by maintaining transparency, regularly monitoring and evaluating our progress to ensure we are making a meaningful impact.

We believe in **actively advocating for the rights and needs of children who find learning difficult**, to raise awareness amongst government and funders, and influence meaningful systems change.

## Our Values

Our values reflect Learning Links' dedication to being a caring, inclusive, and strengths-based organisation that fosters a positive and collaborative culture both internally and externally.

### Embracing Inclusivity

We celebrate diversity and what makes each team member, child and family unique. We welcome all experiences and perspectives to ensure individuals feel respected, valued and a strong sense of belonging.

### Stronger Together

Our collective strength lies in our teamwork and collaboration with each other, and with the families, professionals and communities we support. We forge partnerships and work towards common goals to create positive, lasting change.

### Leaders in Learning

We are committed to continuous growth and cultivating a culture of creativity and innovation. We embrace new ideas, seek out opportunities for development, and ensure everyone has access to the knowledge and resources they need to develop and succeed.

### Caring and Compassionate

Empathy and kindness guide our actions and interactions with children, families and our people. We approach every situation with understanding and prioritise safety and wellbeing above all else.

## What Guides Our Work

### Vision

All children who face difficulties with learning are understood and supported to reach their potential.

### Mission

To work in partnership with families, schools, professionals and organisations to provide expertise and evidence-based supports for children's literacy and numeracy, communication, and wellbeing outcomes.

### Purpose

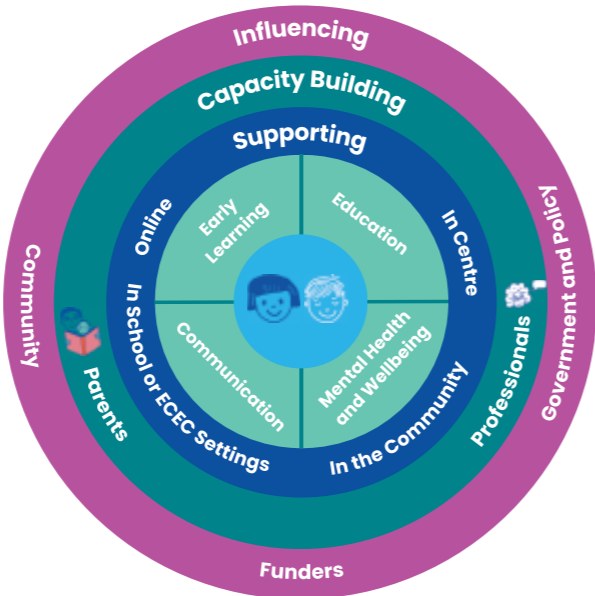
To help children who face difficulties with learning gain the skills and confidence to learn alongside their peers.

# A Holistic Model of Support

## Support for Children (see Page 12)

For over 50 years, children have been at the centre of everything Learning Links does. That's why we focus on understanding children's strengths, interests and motivations. We tailor support that truly addresses their needs, in a way that works best for them. This inspires and generates results, builds confidence and self-belief, and ensures each child feels included in their development.

Our passionate multidisciplinary team of specialist teachers, speech pathologists, psychologists and early childhood professionals offers assessments and evidence based- programs in our centres, online, in schools and early childhood settings, and in the community. We aim to identify difficulties as early as possible and help families put the right supports in place where their child lives, learns and plays.



## Building the Capacity of Parents and Professionals (see Page 30)

We know that children achieve the best results when the support we provide is enhanced by others around them. That's why we are dedicated to building the capacity of parents, carers, teachers and other professionals. We do this through our school and community partnerships, and by providing engaging and practical learning opportunities and resources around education, development, communication and wellbeing.

## Influencing Funders, Government and the Community (see Page 36)

To have the biggest impact, we partner with funders and organisations that align with our purpose and seek to collaborate with government and decision makers to achieve positive change in the wider community and the support systems that families navigate. We're dedicated to raising the profile of Learning Links, so people in our community understand the devastating impacts that difficulties with learning can have on children's lives and are inspired to join us in making lasting change.

# Our Strategic Plan for Impact

## Amplifying Our Purpose, Enhancing Our Reach

Our FY25-28 strategic plan outlines four key pillars to amplify the work Learning Links does to support children's learning, communication and wellbeing and enhance our reach nationally.

Expanding our footprint nationally	Reaching children earlier for better outcomes later	Engagement and growth of partnerships with schools, families and communities	Achieving a step change in fundraising to grow our impact
For over 50 years, Learning Links has been making an incredible difference in the lives of children in NSW, but there is still so much need. We aim to expand services to new regional and metropolitan areas by growing and enhancing our online service delivery capabilities and exploring opportunities to utilise a best practice family hub model.	It is crucial to address key developmental vulnerabilities in the early years before school. We will increase the reach and effectiveness of our early childhood programs, explore the development of a family hub model, repilot a new speech screener to identify and support children in need and undertake research to explore gaps in supports.	Partnerships offer an invaluable opportunity to upskill professionals and reach families in need. By establishing and nurturing relationships with more schools, early childhood settings, parents and communities in NSW and nationally, we can build the capacity needed to support more children's learning, communication and wellbeing.	It's only through our vital funded programs that Learning Links can continue to support children and families facing disadvantage. By building more values-aligned partnerships and diversifying funding streams, we can drive significant incremental growth in revenue to reach more children who would otherwise miss out.

Supporting Areas				
Workforce	Advocacy	Brand and Reputation	Systems and Processes	Quality
Foundational Themes				
Enhancing Core Service Excellence	Meaningfully Engage Aboriginal and CALD Communities		Embracing Digital Innovation and Enhancement	

# Why Our Mission is So Crucial

## 1 in 5 Children are Starting School Behind

Too many children are already developmentally vulnerable in one or more of the following areas when they start school<sup>1</sup>:



### Emotional Maturity

The child is able to concentrate and help others, and is not aggressive or angry.



### Communication skills and general knowledge

Child can tell a story, communicate with others and articulate themselves.



### Social competence

The child gets along with others and shares, and is self-confident.



### Physical health and wellbeing

The child is ready each day, healthy and independent, and has excellent gross and fine motor skills.



### Language and cognitive skills

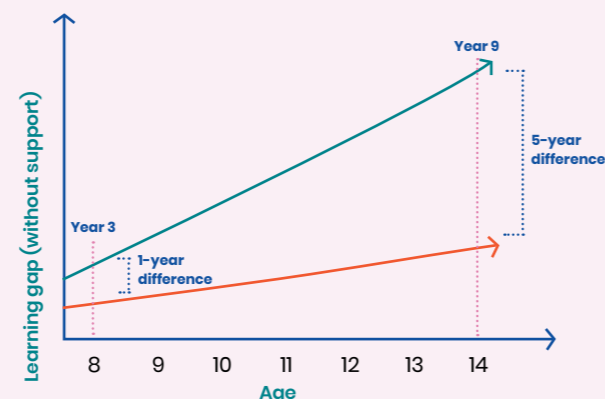
The child is interested in reading or writing, can count, and can recognise numbers and shapes.

## The Gap in Abilities Widens Over Time

Children who are developmentally vulnerable or at risk across core communication, wellbeing and cognitive skill domains in their first year of school are more likely to be behind their peers in literacy and numeracy in later years<sup>2</sup>.

National school NAPLAN data tells us that by the time children reach Year 3, 31.8% are not proficient in reading<sup>3</sup> and 34.7% are not proficient in mathematics<sup>4</sup> – that's up to eight of 24 students in the typical Australian classroom.

On average it is estimated that a child with learning difficulties learns at half the rate of their peers<sup>5</sup>.

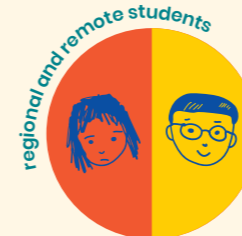


By the time these struggling students reach Year 3, crucial time has already been lost. Without support, a learning gap of one year in Year 3 can stretch to a gap of more than five years by Year 9<sup>6</sup> and is far more challenging to close<sup>6</sup>.

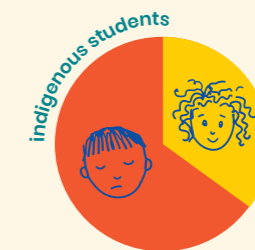
## Our Most Vulnerable Children are Falling Even Further Behind

NAPLAN results show that:

By the time they start high school, **students from disadvantaged backgrounds are ten times more likely to be below national minimum standards** for reading and mathematics than advantaged students<sup>3</sup>.



50% not meeting grade level expectations across reading and mathematics<sup>4</sup>



60-65% not meeting grade level expectations across reading and mathematics<sup>4</sup>

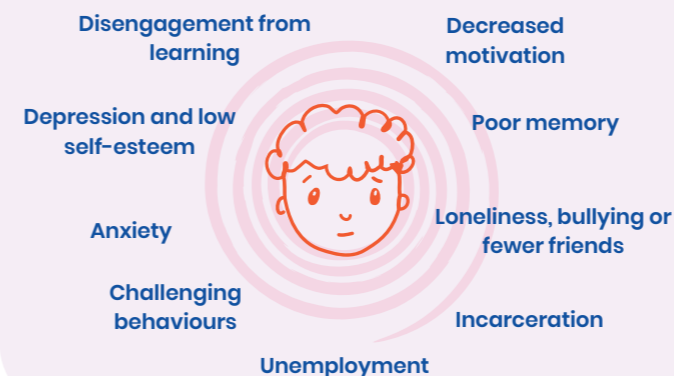
## Funding Support is Limited

- Many children who face difficulties with learning are unable to access key sources of funding such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), due to strict eligibility criteria.
- Those who do not qualify for the NDIS may rely on partial Medicare rebates for a small number of therapy sessions or limited benefits through private health insurance.
- Families face high out-of-pocket costs for assessments and private therapies, or are subject to long waitlists or limited access through school-based and community health services.



## The Impacts are Devastating and Long-Lasting

Without vital support for learning, communication and wellbeing, children who have fallen behind their peers are at serious risk of:



## The Economic Cost is Significant

The economic impact of students leaving school and facing these long-term challenges due to poor academic outcomes is estimated to be about

**\$40 billion** over their lifetimes<sup>3</sup>.



## These Children Need Our Help!

<sup>1</sup>Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), 2021; <sup>2</sup>AERO, Which skills are important for future literacy and numeracy learning, 2023; <sup>3</sup>Grattan Institute, The Reading Guarantee, 2024; <sup>4</sup>ACARA, NAPLAN National Results, 2024; <sup>5</sup>Thompson, 1990; <sup>6</sup>The Centre for Independent Studies, Learning Lessons – The future of small-group tutoring, 2024

# What We Achieved Together This Year

In 2023–24, Learning Links supported:

**6,900** children



**3,600** of these children through fundraising efforts

**2,950** families



**137** education settings and communities

and

**1,500** education, allied health, and other professionals



## Our Support Services

Our team is proud to work in partnership with families to understand each child's background, interests, needs and motivations so we can tailor programs to help them set goals, gain confidence and let their strengths shine through.

# Assessments, Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

**Mental health and learning are closely connected – when children feel happy and supported, they can participate in the classroom, build strong relationships with others and showcase their strengths.**

Through our centre-based, online and school-based programs, Learning Links' team of 48 psychologists are passionate about helping children and adolescents gain the skills and strategies they need to build confidence, expand their social skills, enhance their emotional wellbeing and learn to their full potential.

## Expanding Access to Assessments

An assessment is often a crucial first step in identifying a child's strengths and needs and enabling families to access funding and services. However, assessments can be a significant investment. The lack of government support means many families are not in a financial position to seek an assessment, leaving children without the vital supports they need. Recognising the difficulties families were facing in accessing assessments, we worked with our funding partners over the last year to provide families with free diagnostic and clinical support.

Learning Links' psychologists collaborated with local school communities to identify students who may be experiencing learning, attention or social difficulties and delivered a range of academic, cognitive and behavioural assessments to help develop individualised plans to support them. Delivering these assessments through the schools was crucial in removing barriers so families could more readily access support from a Learning Links psychologist.

Thanks to generous funding support from Canley Heights RSL and Sporting Club, Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club, Club Central Hurstville, Guildford Leagues, Georges River Council, Hornsby RSL and Windsor RSL, we were able to provide over 100 children with an assessment that their families may not have had the means to access otherwise.



**481 children**  
supported through  
**one-on-one counselling**

 **Over 2,650 students**  
were supported through  
in-school counselling and  
small-group programs

 **403 children**  
**accessed vital assessments**



**77 schools**  
benefitted from mental health  
and wellbeing programs

“Thank you to Learning Links for the grant you initiated with our school this year. The funding from Dooleys has enabled us to perform much needed cognitive assessments that have been the impetus for important interventions and supports that otherwise would not have occurred. So for this, thank you and your team.

- Learning Links High School partner

“My child has gained lot of skills from your psychologists, past and present. Even I as a parent have learnt a lot from you and can better understand how to work with my child.”

- Parent



## Staff Spotlight

### Olivia – Psychology Program Manager

My strengths: Empathy, Learner, Individualisation, Developer, Input

"Empathy plays a key role in my communication with schools. Organising programs and services can be challenging, but a willingness to listen goes a long way. I am passionate about finding positive solutions that benefit all stakeholders."





## Helping Children and Communities Recover From Traumatic Events

In recent years, Australian children have experienced widespread devastation from extreme weather events such as bushfires and flooding, as well as disruptions from the pandemic. These events have been detrimental to children's mental health, causing ongoing challenges with anxiety, depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

To better support children to cope in the aftermath of these experiences, Learning Links partnered with two Primary Health Networks (PHNs) – Nepean Blue Mountains and South Western Sydney – to curate psychology programs that provided trauma-informed support to help build the resilience of children and families in these regions.

**The Phoenix Project**, developed in collaboration with Nepean Blue Mountains PHN, aimed to address the mental health impacts of the bushfires in the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains regions. Learning Links' psychologists partnered with four schools to provide whole class, small group and individual support to students. More than 2,000 students benefitted from the feedback and collaboration between teachers and Learning Links' psychologists. The program used a stepped care model, allowing

students to access different levels of support as their needs changed. Our psychologists also delivered three parent webinars, providing 75 families with strategies to help their children build resilience, manage anxiety and overcome adversity.

**The Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing Program** is a whole-community program developed in collaboration with South Western Sydney PHN and designed to aid mental health recovery and promote resilience in 240 vulnerable adolescents following the COVID-19 pandemic. Our psychologists partnered with five high schools to provide direct support to students as well as deliver workshops to equip 75 teachers and 250 parents with the knowledge and skills to identify and support children with mental health concerns.

To expand our capacity to support children and adolescents impacted by trauma, Learning Links introduced two new trauma-informed group psychology programs to implement in these school settings – Bounce Back and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS). Bounce Back helps primary school students to learn a range of age-appropriate coping skills while CBITS helps high school students to better understand common reactions to stress, grief and trauma. Both programs teach students relaxation techniques, problem-solving strategies and how to challenge negative thought patterns.

Through these targeted programs, Learning Links made a significant impact on mental health recovery in these regions and has contributed to improved student wellbeing, attendance and performance at school.

**We would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment you have demonstrated in implementing your program, Learning Links' Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing Program, funded by the Mental Health Recovery Grant. Your efforts have not only made a positive impact on the individuals and communities you have served but have also exemplified the values of resilience and community that define our region.**

– South Western Sydney PHN



## How Our Psychologists Work with Children



### Cailin, Provisional Psychologist

As a provisional psychologist at Learning Links, my role encompasses a diverse range of responsibilities, including facilitating group programs within schools, providing individual counselling sessions, and conducting comprehensive assessments for clients.

I enjoy many aspects of my role; however, my two favourites are, firstly, the group programs, which allows me to have a meaningful impact on a large number of students and provides me with the opportunity to run different programs within the school environment and create a safe space for students. I also enjoy offering personalised support to children and adolescents in individual sessions, where I can build strong trusting relationships with them and their families – working closely to strive towards their goals and provide support for both the child and their support systems.

I enjoy working with children because of their resilience and unique perspectives they bring to each session. Their ability to bounce back from difficulties and approach challenges

with innovative and creative perspectives often leads to a dynamic and rewarding therapeutic experience. Each individual client's perspective offers new insights and opportunities for growth, overall enriching the therapeutic process. The diversity in the cliental leads to diversity in their experiences and viewpoints which I find incredibly rewarding, not only making sessions unique but allowing for a more tailored approach to their development. Their continual energy, creativity and capacity for change inspire and motivate me.

My primary goal when working with children and adolescents is to support their emotional wellbeing, enhance their coping skills, and foster their self-confidence, whether in individual or group settings. I aim to equip them with the tools they need to thrive both socially and academically. It is incredibly fulfilling to help them navigate challenges, and I feel privileged to do this work. I hope to make a meaningful impact early in their lives that will positively influence their future.

# Speech, Language and Communication Support

Effective speech, language and communication skills are vital for learning, fostering understanding, participation and meaningful interactions with educators and peers. Our team of 23 speech pathologists and 14 therapy aides supports children with communication difficulties to build the skills needed to understand others and express themselves with confidence. Our therapists deliver evidence-based programs in our centres and online, and worked in 31 school communities over the last year.

## Screening Children Early for Better Future Outcomes

More than 20% of children start school with a speech, language or communication disorder, significantly impacting their educational outcomes<sup>7</sup>. As part of our strategic commitment to support children in the crucial early years before they start school, Learning Links has developed a simple screening tool that can be used by early childhood professionals to identify children who may need additional support with speech and language development.

The brief screener was designed to be completed in 15-minutes to ensure it can be easily administered in a busy early learning environment. It helps educators evaluate children's communication skills in three key areas – intelligibility, articulation and language – and provides clear guidance on when and where to refer if there are concerns about a child's communication development.

To test whether this tool could be used to accurately identify children with communication difficulties, we conducted a small-scale pilot study with 10 early childhood educators and 38 children. Educators were provided with video training before administering the screener with the children. Four Learning Links speech pathologists then completed the screener with the same children to compare the results.

Our initial findings were promising with educators referring children with over 80% accuracy when compared to results from our speech pathologists. Surveys and audio recordings also showed that educators could easily administer the screener within the 15-minute timeframe.

This simple format and low-cost screening tool could be easily scaled for use across the early childhood education sector. As a strategic initiative, we plan to refine this tool and pilot it with a larger sample of children and educators. Paired with professional training on communication disorders, an educator-administered communication screener could significantly improve the early identification and support of children with communication difficulties.

<sup>7</sup>Speech Pathology Australia, Submission to the Productivity Commission Issues Paper: National Education Evidence Base, 2016.

“My child loves that the sessions are personalised around her interests. Her speech pathologist makes them fun and educational.”

– Parent

“My child is more confident in talking and with her own self esteem.”

– Parent



### Staff Spotlight

#### Sheridan, Speech Pathologist

My strengths: Empathy, Developer, Consistency, Harmony, Relator

“I utilise my strengths to create a nurturing and effective therapeutic environment for my clients. My developer strength drives me to see the potential in every client, encouraging them to progress towards their communication goals.”

## Pip's story



“It is very important to remember that I can speak. I can't hear, so my Mum and Dad sometimes sign to me, but I can always respond to them with my voice. Believe me, there is nothing wrong with my tongue, my Grandma says that I can talk the ears off of her and my Nanny says that I can talk a blue streak.”



PIP

Pip was born with a hereditary genetic condition called Connexin 26, causing severe to profound hearing loss. Her significant hearing loss means that she is unable to hear all the speech sounds fully, making it difficult to understand others and impacts the way she speaks herself. She also has difficulty with balance and distinguishing between different tones in voice and other sounds.

Despite her barriers in communication, Pip loves to talk. She loves making presentations in class, performing in plays and playing clarinet. Pip has also recently achieved her personal goal of making the debating team at school.

All these passions keep Pip's schedule very full so being able to access speech therapy online at Learning Links gives her the flexibility to pursue her interests.

Pip's mum, Dee, says there are so many other benefits of online speech therapy for her family.

“Pip is deaf and in online sessions the therapist's face is so close to the screen that lip reading is easier. Pip can also Bluetooth the audio directly to her cochlear implant so there is less interference, and the sound is much clearer. It also allows me the ability to support my second child, who also has support needs, during the session.”

While Pip's love of performance and public speaking make her no stranger to the spotlight, Pip can find it hard to assert her communication needs with others.

“Some things are pretty scary, like asking someone to move if they are blocking my view, or asking a teacher to wear the microphone. However, it is crucial for me to learn this skill.”

Pip is working with her Learning Links speech pathologist to build self-advocacy skills and confidence in her communication.



**548 children**  
accessed communication assessments and speech therapy sessions



**Over 1,400 students**  
received communication support at school



**33 schools**  
benefitted from speech and language programs





# Literacy, Numeracy and Learning Support

Core literacy and numeracy skills in the early years of school set the foundations for children to achieve success both academically and across key aspects of their life. Our team of 25 experienced education specialists equip children who have difficulties learning with the skills, motivation and confidence to achieve their goals at school. We work collaboratively with parents and teachers to discover each child's unique interests and provide evidence-based, tailored tutoring programs for literacy and numeracy in our centres, online and in schools.



**196 children and adolescents** were supported with literacy and numeracy in centres or online



**169 students** accessed tailored educational support at school



**11 schools** benefitted from literacy and numeracy programs

## Celebrating Our Five-Year Commitment to Aboriginal Education Outcomes

As part of our commitment to reconciliation and improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, Learning Links has been working in partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and the Liverpool Local AECG to provide targeted literacy and numeracy programs in local schools for the past five years. These organisations play a crucial role in providing community perspectives, advising on education and training and identifying schools and students who would benefit from additional support from a Learning Links education specialist.

Learning Links has supported more than 105 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children since the program commenced in 2018. On average, these children started the program 10 months behind in reading and up to 18 months behind in basic numeracy skills.

In some cases, students were behind by five to six years in core skill areas, highlighting the incredible need for culturally appropriate, targeted educational support in these communities. Our Links at School – Aboriginal Education Program aims to address these disparities and prevent educational disengagement.

Thanks to generous funding, we have been able to place a Learning Links education specialist into local primary schools in the Liverpool area to provide weekly individual and small-group support over two or three school terms (around four to seven months).

The program focuses on building phonemic awareness and reading accuracy, and fluency in mathematical operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. It also aims to upskill teachers and support staff, while promoting collaboration between home and school to enhance the learning outcomes for these children.

Feedback from the schools has been overwhelmingly positive with students achieving average gains of 11 months in reading and 18 months in numeracy skills. These outcomes have made a significant contribution towards closing the academic gap between the students in the program and their peers.

Learning Links is proud to achieve this five-year milestone in our relationship with First Nations people and their communities. The program's success highlights the importance of collaboration in bridging educational gaps and fostering an inclusive learning environment. We look forward to continuing to build on these partnerships to further support Aboriginal students and contribute to their long-term academic and personal success.

“My girls really look forward to Tuesdays when they get to work with you. My daughter G especially talks about how she is learning, and it is helping her with her letters and words. She wants to keep getting better at knowing words to use in her sentences.

– Parent



# The Impact of Our Education Programs

On average, children in our Education Support program started 11 months behind their peers in reading and 11.7 months behind in mathematics.

Without the targeted support of our program, it's estimated that these children could learn at half the rate of their peers. However, over an 8-month period in our program, children made the following improvements in their learning.



## Average Gains

### Literacy

Reading Accuracy:  
8.5 months

### Numeracy

Overall: 11.5 months

Addition: 8.4 months

Subtraction: 11.1 months

Multiplication:  
10.5 months

Division: 15.7 months

“My kids improved in their reading, story writing, learning more vocabulary, and neat handwriting. The most important thing is that they look forward to and feel comfortable attending the centre every week.”

– Parent



### Staff Spotlight

Mary, Education Specialist

Activator, Empathy, Learner, Developer, Connectedness

“I live for that voiced or unvoiced “A-ha” moment from my students when they finally understand or master something they thought was too difficult. My ‘Activator’ and ‘Empathy’ strengths are used in combination to understand and anticipate my student’s roadblocks and then to support and encourage them, step by step, towards the end goal. Having access to a library of evidence-based programs and professional development sessions has enhanced the ‘Learner’ and ‘Developer’ strengths in me. ‘Connectedness’ is working together as a team to make a holistic difference in each child’s life today and into their future – and that is why I have been doing my part with passion for over 18 years at Learning Links.”

## Alyssa and Bernard’s Story



\*stock photos have been used to respect the privacy of this family

Twins, Alyssa and Bernard, were born prematurely at just 27-weeks. Since their early arrival, they have both experienced developmental delays and ongoing challenges with their learning.

Bernard was diagnosed with Autism at 4 years 4 months old, which impacts his language and social development. When he started school, Bernard could read at a similar level to his peers but had significant difficulty with comprehension, grammar and writing tasks. He also had difficulties retaining information to remember concepts he had learned.

Alyssa was later diagnosed with ADHD at 7 years old after an assessment with her school psychologist identified difficulties with inattention and executive functioning. At the time of her diagnosis, Alyssa was reading at a level one year behind the rest of her peers and had trouble maintaining concentration, staying on task and following oral instructions.

With both children needing support for their different difficulties, it was vital for the family to find a tutoring solution that was individualised for each child and worked in their busy schedule. There were so many different options for tutoring but mum, Tran, was worried that most wouldn’t be suitable for Alyssa’ and Bernard’s needs. She was thrilled when she discovered Learning Links with teachers experienced in supporting learning difficulties and a centre close to their home.

“When we first started, I wasn’t sure my kids could adapt to the environment but when we got into it, I knew I made the right choice for them. Learning Links has the best choice of therapists and teachers to understand what the family’s and the parent’s needs are.”

Tran says that choosing a tutoring service was about more than just learning for her children. She wanted her children to have fun and have a good relationship with their teacher.

“The most important thing is that they look forward to and feel comfortable attending the centre every



week. Their teacher is the best teacher. She helps them a lot during the lesson and makes them feel safe.”

Both Alyssa and Bernard now attend weekly sessions with Learning Links education specialist, Donette. Tran says her children really enjoy their sessions with Donette and she has noticed so many improvements in their confidence and learning.

“Their teacher has combined the games and learning materials to make it fun and easy to understand when they learn. My kids have improved in their reading, story writing and comprehension and are more focused and using more vocabulary, more verbs and more complex sentences.”

Alyssa’ and Bernard’s teacher, Donette, says they have both developed stronger literacy and concentration skills and greater independence.

“Alyssa and Bernard should be commended for their consistency and eagerness to learn and improve although faced with learning difficulties. They have shown confidence and consistent effort in their learning sessions.”

Donette is now working with both Alyssa and Bernard to improve concentration using structured routines, iPad apps and personalised attention as well as use assistive technologies like graphic organisers and C-Pens to become more independent in their learning.

# Improving Outcomes in Schools With Our For Life® Programs

**Reading for Life® is a 15-week evidence-based literacy program that supports children in Years 1-4 with reading difficulties, including Dyslexia, to gain vital skills with reading and spelling.**

**Counting for Life® is a 10-week numeracy program that supports children in Years 2-5 to improve their numeracy skills, self-esteem and confidence.**

These school-based programs are fully funded by generous community partners and make an incredible difference for children at risk of falling behind their peers. The programs are delivered by trained volunteer Reading or Counting Buddies, who follow a semi-structured program that uses a range of fun activities and games to encourage engagement and build foundational skills for learning.



**359 students**  
received literacy support  
through Reading for Life



**399 students**  
received numeracy support  
through Counting for Life

## The Impact of For Life

Across the short duration of the For Life programs, pre- and post-testing shows that children make incredible gains with their learning. Without this support, it is estimated that the same children would only make 1-2 months of progress over the same time period.

### Average Gains

**Reading Accuracy:**  
**6 months**

**Comprehension:**  
**6 months**

**Numerical Operation:**  
**7 months**

**Mathematical Reasoning:** **8 months**

**“I have had positive feedback from our Stage 2 teachers who have students in the program. They report students are so much more confident and have improved in their reading (including fluency) in class.”**

– Deputy Principal,  
Ashcroft Public School

# Early Education Support

## Learning Links Preschool

**Our inclusive Learning Links Preschool provides children of all abilities and their families with a diverse early learning community where they feel valued, supported and respected. Our professional transdisciplinary team, including early childhood teachers, educators and speech pathologists supports 82 children each week through a wide range of experiences and play opportunities to enhance their development, learning and wellbeing.**



## Our New Philosophy

At the start of 2024, the Learning Links Preschool launched a new philosophy to encapsulate their commitment to creating a truly inclusive environment for all children to develop a lifelong love of learning.

The philosophy was the result of an in-depth, 20-week reflection and review process that incorporated discussions with the preschool staff, wider Learning Links team and leadership, as well as extensive consultation and feedback from the preschool families and children.

To reflect the new philosophy, the preschool established a new learning environment where play and children's agency are at the forefront of the curriculum. This means that children are no longer assigned to a room, rather they have complete choice in the toys, resources and group times they are part of.

Our preschool philosophy illustrates the passion we have for advocating on behalf of children, supporting families and removing barriers that some children may face in their continued education.



Read the new philosophy here:  
<https://www.learninglinks.org.au/preschool/about-our-preschool/#our-philosophy>



## Cultural Learning

As part of their ongoing cultural learning, the Preschool was fortunate to enjoy a visit from close friend and Gadigal woman, Aunty Deanna Schreiber. She brought in some cultural artefacts including a boomerang made by her father and nutcracker used by her uncle, and spent time creating a beautiful artwork with the children to display in the preschool.

**“Your nurturing spirit and the joy you bring have made our time in this preschool truly special. Thank you for your patience, creativity and the genuine kindness you share with the children. We’ve seen our little one grow in so many beautiful ways under your guidance.”**

– Parent



## Fostering Curiosity and Exploring Interests

Curiosity opens up new worlds and possibilities for children and is such a powerful aspect of lifelong learning. This year we nurtured our preschool children’s curiosity through exploring their interest in insects. The children created a ‘bug hotel’ for the resident and visiting bugs in our garden and took a particular liking to the snails. They used cardboard, paper, plastic and tape to craft the shelters and the snails seemed to be very happy customers.

To extend their interest in bugs, the children participated in focus groups where they discussed different insects, their features and what makes them interesting. They even incorporated insects into craft activities including drawing, clay creations and adding insect toys into slime to explore sensory play.

We love seeing where the preschool children’s curiosity takes them each year and can’t wait to see what will capture their interest next.



## Mason’s Story

Mason was born with Hirshsprung’s disease, a rare and lifelong condition causing incomplete formation of the bowels. Due to his condition, Mason requires substantial support with toileting, regular stoma bag changes and feeding via a PEG tube. With Mason’s complex needs, it was important for his mum, Izabella, to find an early learning centre that could accommodate his specific medical requirements. Izabella was recommended Learning Links Preschool by their NDIS coordinator and felt reassured that her son could access early education while having his medical needs cared for.

*“Learning Links has ensured that Mason receives the necessary care and attention while he’s at school. It’s given me a peace of mind, knowing that he is in a safe and supportive environment where his medical needs are understood and accommodated.”*

Since his birth, Mason has had frequent hospitalisations, which significantly impacted his communication and social development. When he first joined the preschool he was using mostly sounds, gestures and simple two-word sentences to communicate and was still learning how to interact and play with other children. Izabella says she chose Learning Links Preschool for its individualised approach to support and the multidisciplinary team that includes educators and speech pathologists.

*“What stood out to me about Learning Links was their focus on learning and development plans tailored to each child’s needs. The positive feedback from other families about the supportive environment and the progress their children made at the preschool also influenced my decision”*

The early childhood teachers and speech pathologists at Learning Links Preschool collaborate with Mason’s external therapists to ensure he receives consistent and coordinated support throughout his early education. This collaboration between professionals has enabled the Preschool team to implement activities and strategies that support Mason’s communication and development goals. Since joining the preschool, Mason has gained confidence to use communication tools to interact with staff, increased his emotional understanding and developed play skills.

*“Mason’s progress is truly something I’m so proud of. It’s so reassuring to know that he’s in such caring and capable hands. Keep embracing all the wonderful progress and support he’s getting, it’s truly heartwarming to see him happy in such a nurturing environment. Keep up the fantastic work, and I’m sure there are even more exciting milestones ahead for him!”*



**MASON**



## Staff Spotlight

**Lauren, Early Childhood Teacher for the Sector Capacity Building (SCB) Program**

My strengths: Input, Responsibility, Relator, Learner, Includer

*“Utilising my strength as a relator, I build strong relationships with staff in the preschools that I support through the SCB Program. This enhances opportunities to promote growth and improve inclusive early education practices, enabling positive learning outcomes for children with disability or additional needs. By integrating my strengths as a relator and my input, I identify key inclusion areas where preschools require support, ensuring they receive tailored information, training, and resources. Embracing new learning opportunities highlights my strength as a learner and enables me to make a positive impact for delivering high-quality inclusive preschool programs.”*



## Prep 4 Preschool

Our Prep 4 Preschool early intervention playgroups offer support for families who have experienced challenges accessing an early education service that can cater to their child's needs. The groups are facilitated by a team of early childhood educators, speech pathologists and occupational therapists, with play activities tailored to enhance the development of each child and support their transition to centre-based learning.

Prep 4 Preschool is funded by the NSW Department of Education as part of their Start Strong Pathways program.



**90% of enrolled P4PS children secured a Preschool position for 2024 by the end of 2023, with support from our program**



**51 children's development was supported through our Prep 4 Preschool program**



**They've been helping my son a lot, and have highly trained staff that have helped him, and they are attentive and know how to talk and interact with children.**

– Parent



**The team provides advice for issues that arise. Recommend other services for me and my child. Pass on community information and events that me and my family might be interested in.**

– Parent

## Matilda's Story

**Working as a midwife, Bridget had a good idea of what to expect at different ages of children's development, so when at 15 months old her first child, Matilda, wasn't talking or developing skills at the same rate, she grew concerned.**

*"It's super concerning because it's your first child and you don't know what you're doing and then you're thrown into this situation where you think, What do I do?"*

A visit with her paediatrician confirmed that she had chronic glue ear that was affecting her hearing. Matilda was fitted with grommets, and Bridget immediately began looking for ways to support her communication and development, attending weekly speech and occupational therapy and various playgroups like Kinder Gym and Montessori.

*"When it's your child's development, you'll just put everything you've got into it."*

Bridget was recommended Prep 4 Preschool by a friend and says she hasn't looked back.

*"Matilda thrives in Learning Links and I promise you ask every single teacher there, the difference between her walking in to now is huge."*

When Matilda first joined Prep 4 Preschool at the end of 2023, she had difficulty communicating, interacting with others, sitting for morning tea and didn't show a strong interest in drawing or colouring. After six months at Prep 4 Preschool, Matilda is getting more involved with the other children, using more gestures to communicate her needs, is more trusting of her teachers and participates in activities like singing, dancing and painting.

*"The biggest benefit for Matilda is the socialisation and the gentle approach to transition. They do structure in a very gentle way that doesn't force them to be on a strict routine."*



While the Prep 4 Preschool environment has helped Matilda thrive, Bridget says the program has also helped her so much as a parent.

*"It's the one thing that has healed me as a struggling mum. To help a child starts with helping the mum. Learning Links helps the mum be the best mum she can be to her child. If you can build confidence in the mother, you're only going to help the child."*

At Prep 4 Preschool, parents can consult with a team of early childhood teachers and speech pathologists to learn strategies to support their child. Families are taught the OWL approach, which stands for Observe, Wait and Listen, to build children's independence.

*"The biggest thing I've learned is just to wait. Just to wait and go with the child, let them guide you."*

Bridget says that Prep 4 Preschool has helped her find a community of parents who are having a similar experience and can offer advice on decisions like transitioning to preschool or navigating the NDIS.

*"I feel so included and so normalised because you're with women that are like you. It's a community where you don't feel judged at all. These mums, they just get it. We're all there for the same reason."*

## HIPPY

HIPPY (Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters) is a free, structured, home-based program running over two years, to support and encourage literacy and numeracy, language and physical skills in the important early childhood years. It's based on evidence that a child's earliest and most powerful learning comes from their family. Learning Links has been running the program for more than ten years, coordinating the program in the Riverwood and Cabramatta areas in Sydney.



**175 children and their families**

**received guidance in the lead up to starting school**

## Supporting Migrant Women into Employment

The Cabramatta HIPPY tutors were given the opportunity to attend a Professional Development course, Supporting Migrant Women into Employment (SMWE). This course was delivered in short 2-hour workshops over several weeks providing our HIPPY tutors with access to crucial career advice and pre-employment support to help them develop confidence and employability skills.

SMWE was a relevant and meaningful program for the HIPPY tutors as they will be seeking employment in the next year when they finish their two-year period with HIPPY. The course content consisted of setting goals, recognising the link between mindset and confidence, developing an effective resume and cover letter, professional presentation and interview skills.

All in all, the HIPPY tutors recognised this as a valuable opportunity and were grateful to take part in this program. They took away constructive advice as well as a Personalised Career Action Plan with their identified goals and strategies moving forward.



**It's been a wonderful journey with HIPPY. I feel more connected with my community and have made some lovely friendships. The activities and everywhere learning ideas have been very helpful in fostering T's development, and we've both enjoyed doing them together.**

– Alice, HIPPY Riverwood Mum



# Building the Capacity of Parents and Professionals

We know that the parents, caregivers and professionals surrounding each child are crucial in supporting their needs. That's why we seek to provide parent support grounded in their child's needs and are passionate about sharing knowledge and best-practice strategies to build the capacity of families and professionals. We do this through our school and community partnerships, and by providing engaging and practical learning opportunities and resources.

# Parent Support Programs



When parents and carers feel knowledgeable, confident and supported, children are far more likely to make progress and achieve their goals. We are dedicated to providing high-quality information and resources to give parents the best possible tools and strategies to support their child’s learning and development at home and advocate for their needs.

## Links at Home – Reading Program

Reading is one of the most important skills children need to develop for success in learning. However, learning to read is a complex process that many children can find difficult. Family involvement is a key contributor to reading success, but many parents often don’t know where to begin and, with the move towards phonics-based instruction, feel unequipped to help their child.

That’s why Learning Links developed a new program that equips parents with the necessary information and a step-by-step guide to supporting their child when reading is hard. Links at Home – Reading combines demonstration videos and downloadable resources to help parents understand the basics of synthetic phonics and boost their confidence in supporting their child.

The free program was incredibly well received with over 500 parents registering to access the resources so far, and 160 also joining a supportive Facebook community where they can receive ongoing information from Learning Links and guidance from one another.

Development of Links at Home – Reading was made possible thanks to generous funding from our community partners including Berkeley Sports Club, Club Banora, Cumberland City Council, Georges River Council, Liverpool Catholic Club, The Shellharbour Club and the NSW Premier’s Cabinet through the LSCA program.

## Out and About in the Community


Our team were delighted to be part of several community events throughout the year including the Winter Warmth and Reclaim the Night events alongside our partner, The Benevolent Society, as well as the first ever Sydney Education Expo. These events provided us with a wonderful opportunity to connect directly with families in our local communities, provide information about Learning Links and our services and share helpful resources to support children with learning and development at home.


Attending community events plays an important role in helping our teams better understand the needs of children and families so we can continue to improve the support we provide.





## Parent Webinars


Each month, we share our knowledge and practical strategies with parents and carers through a range of free webinars. Our goal is to help families feel equipped and confident in supporting their child with their learning, development and wellbeing at home. We cover a broad range of topics including literacy and numeracy, communication, mental health and behaviour.

 **892 parents/carers accessed webinars to support their child’s learning and development**

 **100% of survey respondents said they would recommend Learning Links’ webinars to other parents**

 **All the information presented regarding reading was very informative.**  
– Parent

 **Thank you! The webinar was helpful in building my confidence in this area.**  
– Parent

 **Your webinars are really helpful. Your website also has great resources. Thanks a lot!**  
– Parent

# Professional Development

Learning Links' experienced multidisciplinary team offers high-quality support and training to teachers, psychologists and allied health professionals across Australia through webinars, workshops, consultation with schools and early childhood settings, and speaking opportunities. Our key areas of expertise include assessment and support of learning difficulties, mental health and wellbeing and use of assistive technologies to support student outcomes.



**98% of survey respondents said they would recommend Learning Links' professional learning to others**



**1,251 education and allied health professionals attended our webinars and courses to gain evidence-based strategies to support children with their learning and development.**



I just wanted to write and thank you for organising the professional learning yesterday afternoon. Teachers have been speaking about how beneficial it was and we are now considering how it informs our practices and planning for improvement.

– School Principal



[My key learnings were] there is not one strategy that fits all student with ADHD. All students are different. Also, ask yourself, can I change my classroom plan for a lesson and still have the same outcome.

– Classroom Teacher



The webinar was excellent. This just gave me more background info about writing and further detail that will help me when providing recommendations and feedback to the families after an assessment.

– Psychologist



The webinar reminded me not to spend too much time focusing on getting a child to sit still – a teacher's goal to educate; supportive environment is key as is working with (talking with) child and family.

– Classroom Teacher

## Creating a Roadmap for ADHD Assessment and Support

There has been an increase in public awareness of ADHD in recent years, driven by social media platforms and sustained through the development of national Clinical Practice Guidelines for ADHD and a Senate Inquiry. This greater attention on ADHD led to increased demand for assessment and support services and a need for professionals to upskill in this area.

To help psychologists feel better equipped to diagnose and support children with ADHD, in late 2023 Learning Links developed a comprehensive online course that consolidated the most up-to-date information in one place. The course brings together the latest diagnostic criteria, standardised assessment tools, evidence-based supports and insights from leading paediatricians to provide psychologists with a roadmap to deliver best practice, high-quality assessment and support services for children and adolescents with ADHD.

## Sharing Expertise Around Australia

Learning Links was fortunate to be represented by our experienced and knowledgeable professionals at conferences and on discussion panels throughout the year.

Our Executive Manager, Learning and Education, Dr Samantha Hornery, presented her talk "Technology supports for secondary learners with Dyslexia" at the DSF (Dyslexia – SPELD Foundation) Language, Literacy and Learning Conference in Perth. This conference takes place every two years, bringing together over 400 teachers, speech pathologists and psychologists to discuss how to best support children with their learning – particularly those who struggle.

Samantha also spoke on an expert panel discussing "Supporting students with Dyscalculia in the mainstream classroom" for the Assistant Principals Learning and Support Network. Schools from all over NSW were in attendance, many from regional areas. This was a fantastic opportunity to showcase her extensive knowledge in Dyscalculia assessment and best practice interventions for maths difficulties.

Michelle Button, our Executive Manager, Psychology, joined a panel of psychologists from diverse backgrounds at the Australian Psychological Society's (APS) Early Career Expo to discuss pathways to endorsement (see image below). Michelle shared her insights in the endorsement area of Educational and Developmental Psychology and career opportunities for early career psychologists who are interested in working with children.

We were also incredibly honoured to have our Therapy and HIPPY Manager, Liz Bell, present at the Reimagine 2023 National Conference to share the early outcomes of our study evaluating the viability of early childhood educators administering communication screeners (read more on Page 17). The Reimagine conference brings early childhood professionals together to share the latest information, resources and support available for children in the early learning years.





## Supporting Inclusion in Early Childhood

Learning Links is thrilled to continue its vital work as a provider of the NSW Department of Education's Sector Capacity Building (SCB) Program. This initiative enables us to share our knowledge and experience in inclusive education with 49 community preschools in the South Western Sydney region and surrounds.

Learning Links' program is delivered by a passionate Early Childhood Teacher who has more than 20 years' experience in the sector, providing regular training and consultation to support preschools with the implementation of inclusive practices. This involves sharing recommendations for equipment and environment adaptations and challenging outdated practices to better support children with disability and diverse learning needs.

This year we introduced a new Self-Reflection Tool that helps these preschools identify their current strengths and set meaningful goals to work towards throughout the program. The enhancements to the program have helped preschools increase their awareness of their own practices and the supports available for children with developmental concerns.



**82% of preschools said their educators feel more able to include children with disability or additional needs**



**The children in our service have benefitted from the program as educators have increased their skills and knowledge and applying this to the relationships we build with families.**

– Participating Preschool



**Learning Links provides amazing advice on how we can support children with high support needs in our program. This has improved their ability to communicate and participate in our program. This supports families as we share our learnings with them also.**

– Participating Preschool



## Influencing Funders, Government and the Community

To have the biggest possible impact on the lives of children and families, Learning Links builds strong partnerships with funders, all levels of government and like-minded organisations to influence position change in the community and in the systems that families navigate to seek support.

# Advocating for Positive Change

Across the 2023–24 year, Learning Links continued to share its expertise and demonstrate its commitment to improving the core educational and support systems that families navigate. The team met with a number of ministers and representatives across all levels of government, and participated in initiatives that focused on generating positive change for children's development and future educational outcomes.

## Government Relations

Learning Links' outgoing CEO, Birgitte Maibom, and members of the leadership team met with **The Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education**, to discuss the ongoing need for early identification of difficulties with learning and how multidisciplinary support can build the capacity of teachers and school communities, alongside targeted programs for children.

The team also engaged with:

- **The Hon Dr Sarah Kaine, MLC**, who visited our Peakhurst Learning Centre and Preschool, to hear about Learning Links' mission and see firsthand how we implement inclusive practices in early childhood programs and school-aged supports.
- **The Hon Jacqui Munro, MLC**, who also visited Peakhurst, and discussed educational support across the early childhood and school years and key funding limitations for families to access the support their need (pictured below).
- Key advisors for **The Hon Prue Car MP, NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning**, to discuss Learning Links' work in schools and early childhood settings, and the potential impacts of the introduction of NDIS Foundational Supports in the coming years.
- Members of the **NSW Department of Education's Early Childhood Outcomes Directorate**, to speak about Learning Links' work around inclusion in the early years and best practice models of support, and gain additional insights around the upcoming changes to the NDIS.

A key focus during this period was advocating for the continuation of the NSW ClubGRANTS Scheme and its support of not-for-profit organisations and vital community programs, as it was being reviewed by the NSW Government.

## Working Towards Improved Outcomes in Early Childhood

Jill Reich, CEO, joined The Front Project's Apiary Fellowship Program, which connects people from across the early learning space who are committed to creating thriving futures for children in Australia.

“Joining the Apiary Fellowship has provided me with an invaluable opportunity, allowing for the exchange of ideas, strategies, and insights with fellow leaders committed to enhancing Australia's early learning system.”

Learning Links also continues to support the incredible work as a partner of the Minderoo Foundation's Thrive by Five initiative, to help advocate for an equitable early childhood education system.



## Our Patrons

Learning Links is honoured to have **Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW and Mr Dennis Wilson as Joint Vice Regal Patrons of the organisation.**

We share a strong commitment to education and an understanding of the need to help those in the community who face disadvantage.

## Engaging Our Patrons in Aboriginal Education

Celebrating a four-year partnership supporting the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, we were thrilled to have Learning Links joint Patrons, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales, and Mr Dennis Wilson, visit Ashcroft Public School in November.

In collaboration with the Liverpool Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and our generous funders of the program, our team has been running an education support program at Ashcroft Public School since the start of 2020. One of Learning Links' specialist teachers provides evidence-based literacy and numeracy support individually and in groups for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, equipping them with the vital skills and confidence they need for the classroom.

The Governor and Mr Wilson thoroughly enjoyed their visit and the opportunity to hear more about the different programs and initiatives on offer at the school. After students performed a dance to welcome them to Dharug country, they joined in on some fun and engaging mathematics games in Learning Links' education support group, before touring the rest of the school ground and meeting with more students and teachers.

The team at Learning Links is incredibly proud of the work that has been done in partnership with Ashcroft Public School over the last few years and was delighted to be able to share it with the Governor and Mr Wilson. The organisation looks forward to continuing this program for many years to come, to ensure more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have the opportunity to learn, develop and thrive.



# How Funding Changes Lives

Learning Links’ generous supporters make so much of our work and impact possible. Over the last year, 3,600 children in 114 schools have gained vital skills and confidence for their learning, development and wellbeing through fully funded programs. Thank you to our valued partners for aligning with our mission and changing the trajectory of children’s lives.

## Clubs

Our valued community club partners allow us to deliver specialist education, speech therapy and vital psychology support, and parent and teacher professional learning programs across NSW.

This year we received more support than ever from clubs across metropolitan and regional NSW, who funded a wide range of essential Learning Links programs in their local schools and communities.

We were thrilled to be acknowledged for our collaboration with Workers Lifestyle Group at the 2024 NSW Clubs and Communities Awards (pictured below). We won the Education category for our Resilient Kids Program, which provides education and psychological support to children who have been impacted by traumatic experiences.

“ We at the Workers Lifestyle Group are humbled and incredibly proud of our long-term partnership with Learning Links who created and delivered this new and now award-winning Resilient Kids Program for children in our local Blacktown community. The outcomes they are achieving in improving the lives of our children are both tangible and profound.

- Morgan Stewart, CEO  
Workers Lifestyle Group

## Charity Housie

Charity Housie is vital in supporting Learning Links as an organisation and in helping to provide much needed programs and services for children and families.

This low-cost community game, run by Learning Links in NSW and QLD, offers entertainment to patrons in licensed clubs with proceeds going towards charitable organisations. The game has also been shown to promote social inclusion and prevent loneliness for people who play Housie in their local community.

## Corporate Partnerships

Learning Links partners with corporates and organisations on values-aligned programs and projects to provide long-lasting opportunities to children facing challenges at a vital stage of their educational and social development. This year we were supported by our corporate partners through a wide range of awareness raising and fundraising initiatives.

Funding from our corporate partners has helped our team of specialist educators, psychologists and speech therapists deliver over 600 subsidised sessions for children seeking support from our Disadvantaged Children’s Education Fund.

We are also grateful to Officeworks who continue to be a great supporter of Learning Links, regularly donating essential learning tools and games that help our professionals continue to deliver fun and engaging sessions so that all children can learn, develop and thrive.



## Philanthropy

Funding from philanthropic trusts and foundations has greatly accelerated Learning Links' mission to work in partnership with more families, schools and communities to provide expertise and evidence-based supports for children's literacy and numeracy, communication, and wellbeing outcomes.

This year we celebrated 12 years in partnership with one of our long-term philanthropic funders. Since 2012, they have helped us to reach and support over 500 children and over 100 families through our Reading for Life and Counting for Life programs. These short, structured literacy and numeracy programs, support children to make measurable learning gains of up to eight months over a 10-15 week period, whilst building confidence and self-esteem.

This relationship also spearheaded our impact in Aboriginal Education, in partnership with the NSW and Liverpool Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups. Since 2019, the program has supported over 130 children across 14 schools, supporting Aboriginal children to learn, develop and thrive.

**“We are proud of our partnership with Learning Links and the funding bodies that enable our students, our families and our communities to participate in these programs. We have seen the results and it makes all the difference for our Mob, the confidence gained by the children who have taken part is just amazing to see.”**

– Patricia Daniel, President  
Liverpool Local Aboriginal  
Education Consultative Group

## Government Funding

Funding from federal, state and local government bodies enables Learning Links to develop new programs and vital resources to expand our support for children's learning, development and wellbeing. Our government funding partners have helped us to provide direct support to children through our early childhood programs, develop resources to build the capacity of parents through our learning programs, equip educators and other professionals to support inclusive practices and address the specific needs of families facing disadvantage in local communities.

We are incredibly grateful for the support from all levels of government in helping Learning Links to provide targeted and tailored support for children, families and communities.

## Fundraising and Donations

We are incredibly grateful to see an increasing number of individuals supporting Learning Links through donations and various fundraising initiatives. These contributions are so important in supporting children in disadvantaged communities who have difficulties with learning by providing life-changing access to free or subsidised support services that can set them up for a brighter, happier and more successful future.

Learning Links' annual fundraising raffle had a record year, raising over \$16,000. We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who sold and bought tickets to support children in need, and to our supporters and prize sponsors including BSG, Australian Turf Club and Taronga Zoo.

Thanks to personal donations made this year, we have been able to support more children through our Disadvantaged Children's Education Fund.

## James' Story

James is a 6-year-old boy who moved to Sydney with his father following a family separation. James' father is only able to work part-time after relocating.

James has Developmental Language Disorder, which is characterised by significant receptive and expressive language difficulties, as well as a mild speech delay. After a comprehensive communication assessment with Learning Links, it was discovered that James had significant difficulty expressing himself, understanding others, participating in conversations and understanding social cues. James' father also reported he had a hard time adjusting to his new school environment after relocating.

After using the maximum sessions available through Medicare rebate, the family could no longer afford the ongoing therapy James needed. Thanks to funding available through our Disadvantaged Children's Education Fund, Learning Links was able to support the family by subsidising the cost of sessions. This enabled James to continue to access vital speech therapy support to help him better participate in school activities, establish new friendships and understand his teacher's instructions.

Family involvement is essential for speech therapy success. James' father has been collaborating with the speech pathologist and conducting regular home practice. This has had a positive impact, with James' father reporting he is now more confident at school and enjoys going each day.



*\*stock photo has been used to respect the privacy of this family*



# Thank You to Our Funders and Supporters

## Corporates and Foundations



Fred P. Archer Charitable Trust  
Australian Turf Club  
Australian Turf Club Foundation  
Be Kind Sydney  
BSG Australia  
James N Kirby Foundation  
Lyone Foundation  
Matana Foundation for Young People  
Grill'd Miranda  
The Rali Foundation

## Government Partners

Cumberland Council  
Department of Health and Aged Care  
Department of Home Affairs  
Department of Industry, Science and Resources  
Department of Social Services  
Georges River Council  
Liverpool City Council  
NSW Department of Education  
NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet

## Community Partners

Brotherhood of St Laurence  
Cabramatta SaCC  
Georges River College – Oatley Senior Campus  
HIPPY Australia  
Liverpool Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group  
Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network  
South Western Sydney Primary Health Network  
The Benevolent Society

The Smith Family

## In-Kind Supporters

Australian Reptile Park  
Giants Netball  
Cabravale Diggers  
Officeworks  
Panania Diggers  
Norths Collective  
Australian Turf Club  
Questacon ACT  
Raging Waters Sydney  
Sydney FC  
Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre  
Sydney Olympic Park Archery Centre  
Taronga Western Plains Zoo Dubbo  
Taronga Zoo Sydney  
Symbio Wildlife Park  
Royal Agricultural Society of NSW  
Willow Pie & Co  
Western Sydney Wanderers

## Volunteers and Pro Bono

David Williams (Kurtis Paige Initiatives)  
Glenn McCormack (Benson McCormack Architecture)  
Kristy Peacock-Smith (Bird and Bird Lawyers)  
Neal Johnston (EY)  
Marco Maldonado (EY)  
Wayne Camzuli (Innova Capital)

## Special Thanks

Aunty Deanna Schreiber

## Registered Clubs



Ashfield RSL Club  
Australia Hotel and Brewery  
Bargo Sports Club  
Bellambi Bowling Club  
Berkeley Sports Club  
Bexley RSL & Community Club  
Campbelltown Catholic Club  
Campsie RSL  
Canada Bay Club  
Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL  
Canterbury League Club  
Castle Hill RSL Club  
Chatswood RSL Club  
Chester Hill RSL & Bowling Club  
Club Ashfield  
Club Auburn  
Club Banora  
Club Burwood  
Club Central  
Club Parramatta  
Club Rivers  
Club Wyong  
Cronulla RSL  
Dapto Citizens Bowling Club  
Dapto Leagues Club  
Dapto Showground  
Doyalson-Wyee RSL Club  
Ettalong Diggers  
Granville Diggers  
Guildford Leagues Club  
Harbord Diggers Memorial Club  
Helensburgh Tradies  
Hornsby RSL Club  
Hurstville RSL Club

Ingleburn Bowling Club  
Lantern Club  
Magpie Sports Club  
Matraville RSL  
Merrylands RSL Club  
Moorebank Sports Club  
Norths Collective  
Parramatta Leagues Club  
Penrith Panthers  
Penrith RSL  
Pittwater RSL Club  
Ramsgate RSL  
Redlands RSL  
Richmond Club  
Riverstone Memorial Club  
Rules Club Wagga Wagga  
Seven Hills RSL  
Springwood Sports Club  
South Sydney Juniors' Rugby League Club  
South Tweed Sports Club  
St George Maso's  
St Johns Park Bowling Club  
St Marys Diggers and Band Club  
St Mary's Leagues Club  
The Entrance Leagues Club  
The Juniors Kingsford  
The Shellharbour Club  
Tradies Caringbah  
Tradies Gynea  
Twin Towns  
Vikings Sports Club  
West Pennant Hills Sports Club  
West Ashfield Leagues Club  
Windsor RSL  
Workers Lifestyle Group



## Our People and Culture

Learning Links can only do what it does because of our team of incredible people that are dedicated to making an impact each and every day. We share in each other's successes and are so proud of what the organisation continues to achieve each year – creating opportunities and a bright future for children.

# A Values-Led Organisation

At Learning Links, our people and values are the heart of our success. We are guided by the core principles of Embracing Inclusivity, Stronger Together, Leaders in Learning, and Caring and Compassionate, which shape how we work together, how we serve children and families, and how we deliver high-quality services. Our values-led culture motivates us to consistently achieve meaningful outcomes, ensuring that every child and family feels supported.

## High Performing Teams

To build a strong foundation for future growth, we have made significant investments in our people, focusing on the development of high-performing teams. This year, we partnered with leadership expert Trudy MacDonald from TalentCode HR for a high-performance workshop aimed at aligning our teams' strengths with our organisational values. This initiative encouraged collaboration, trust, and accountability, helping our teams work more effectively towards common goals.

We also incorporated Patrick Lencioni's The Five Dysfunctions of a Team model, which reinforces key elements such as trust, healthy conflict, commitment, accountability, and attention to results. By embedding these principles across our teams, we've strengthened the bonds between our people, ensuring they are well-equipped to continue delivering exceptional outcomes for children and families.

## Taking Action on Our Values

Through our annual Staff Engagement Survey, we heard directly from our people about areas where we could improve. In response, we initiated three employee action groups focused on enhancing child-friendly spaces, strengthening staff recognition, and improving sustainability.

Each group presented an action plan with short- and long-term goals to the Learning Links leadership team. These action plans are still evolving, with some of their suggestions just beginning to take shape. While we have yet to implement all of the recommendations, the collaborative spirit driving these initiatives reflects our commitment to Embracing Inclusivity and ensuring everyone has a voice in shaping our future.

These efforts reinforce our belief in being Stronger Together—by working as a team and engaging with diverse perspectives, we are creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

“We just wanted to pass on some feedback and let you know how impressed I am with Jennifer. She is extremely professional, approachable, helpful, has the child’s best interest at heart and is an asset to Learning Links!”

– Feedback from school regarding speech pathologist, Jennifer

“Miss Michelle is part of our family and has helped our child so much. We are so grateful for the program and Learning Links.”

– Feedback from parent regarding teacher, Michelle

## Ongoing Professional Learning and Growth

At Learning Links, we know that investing in our people is key to maintaining our values-led culture and delivering the highest standards of service. As Leaders in Learning, we prioritise professional development, offering a robust calendar of learning opportunities that bring our teams together for relationship building and skills development.

Our quarterly People Leaders sessions and all-staff events are designed to foster leadership skills, teamwork, and personal growth. These sessions have covered areas like team-building, change management, and strategies for nurturing high-performing teams, ensuring our leaders are equipped to guide their teams effectively.

Our broader professional learning days provide additional opportunities for staff to expand their expertise, share knowledge, and develop innovative approaches to supporting children’s learning and development. Throughout the year we covered a wide range of topics including play-based therapy, neurodiversity affirming approaches, trauma-informed practice, assistive technologies, Australian autism guidelines and supporting children in the early years.

These learning initiatives demonstrate our ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of creativity, innovation, and continuous improvement.

## Our Values in Action

Throughout the year, we’ve seen our values come to life in all areas of the organisation. Caring and Compassionate behaviours are evident in every interaction with children, families, and colleagues, where empathy and kindness guide our approach. We continue to Embrace Inclusivity by celebrating the unique perspectives and experiences that each person brings to Learning Links, ensuring everyone feels respected and valued. Working collaboratively allows us to be Stronger Together, while our focus on learning and development reinforces our position as Leaders in Learning.

It is this alignment between our values, culture, and everyday practices that allows us to deliver high-quality, impactful services, ensuring the best outcomes for children and families.



### Staff Spotlight

Marion, Quality and Research Officer

My strengths: Consistency, Achiever, Learner, Harmony, Empathy

“My role within Client Services is very process, data and systems driven. It supports the organisation in quality projects and initiatives, data collection and analysis, NDIS processes and compliance. My strengths help me in growing my skill set and knowledge and I am always keen to tackle new challenges and help others along the way.”



## Our Leadership Team



### Jill Reich, Chief Executive Officer

- A purpose-driven leader with extensive experience leading corporate functions and driving organisational effectiveness, collaboration, innovation, and business transformation.
- Bachelor of History and Philosophy, Masters in Coaching Psychology, Graduate Diploma in Computer Science, MBA, Australian Graduate School of Management, UNSW
- Executive Leadership Program in Corporate Finance, Harvard Business School and Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors



### Simone Montgomery, Chief Operating Officer

- Over 30 years in the not-for-profit sector with extensive experience in senior management roles across housing and mental health, with a particular focus on vulnerable communities
- Bachelor of Adult Education, Master of Social Development



### John McCormack, General Manager, Finance and Digital Transformation

- Diverse skillset with over 25 years' experience in senior finance roles and over 12 years in the not-for-profit sector with special expertise in project management, implementing IT software, infrastructure systems and facility management
- Bachelor of Business (Accounting), Member of Chartered Practising Accountants Australia



### Alex Biviano, General Manager, People and Culture

- Results-driven professional with expertise in human resources, shared services, leadership, organisational development and culture
- Experience working with large and medium-sized national and international businesses in the for profit and not for profit sectors.
- Bachelor of Business (Human Resources)



### Rachel Brodie-Browne, General Manager, Fundraising

- Extensive experience working in not-for-profits in the UK and Australia, including the world's largest cancer research charity
- Has led the implementation of large-scale fundraising, marketing and events strategies
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Modern Languages and Cultures



### Dr. Samantha Hornery, Executive Manager, Learning and Education

- Primary and special education teacher with over 25 years' experience supporting children with learning difficulties
- Extensive experience in the development and implementation of professional learning opportunities for teachers and allied health professionals.
- Completed PhD in Dyslexia Interventions, evaluating Learning Links' Reading for Life® program



### Sophie Mail, General Manager, Brand and Communications

- Over 15 years' experience in marketing, communications and fundraising in Australia and the UK, across education, health and disability not-for-profits
- Special expertise in social media, digital marketing, content and fundraising strategies
- Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Public Communication), Diploma in Marketing Communications



### Diane Peacock-Smith, General Manager, Governance and Risk

- Over 30 years' experience in executive management positions across education, disability and not-for-profits
- Expertise in leading teams, service innovation, project management and operational excellence.
- Bachelor of Arts, Masters in Special Education, Diploma of Education (Remedial Education), Graduate Diploma in Community Leadership, Certified Community Director, Diploma of Small Business Management



### Don Tilley, General Manager, Community and Strategic Partnerships

- Diverse career in senior roles in large corporations across sales and general management and as a retail business owner
- Expertise in business development and partnerships
- Australian Sports Medal Recipient Year 2000
- Bachelor of Business Management

## Our Board



### Clive Cuthell, Chair

- Joined the Board of Learning Links in July 2017, appointed Chair in November 2022
- Chair of the Property Redevelopment Advisory Committee
- Extensive experience in commerce and finance
- Member of Chartered Accountants (Australia, New Zealand/Scotland) and Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Enjoys supporting the organisation through growth and change



### Jackie Gambrell, Deputy Chair

- Joined the Board of Learning Links in 2019, appointed Deputy Chair in 2023
- Member of the Finance and Audit Committee
- Extensive experience in senior executive level strategic and operational roles across commercial, education and not-for-profit sectors
- Enjoys supporting organisations through growth and is passionate about social justice and high quality, evidence-based service delivery



### Sarah Donald, Secretary

- Joined the Board of Learning Links in April 2015
- Company Secretary and Chair of the Governance and Risk Committee
- Experienced commercial lawyer with postgraduate qualifications in contract law, risk management and corporate governance
- Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Shares a passion for the education sector and ensuring that all people have access to supportive learning environments



### Elizabeth Death, Non-Executive Director

- Joined the Board of Learning Links in September 2022
- Member of the Finance and Audit Committee
- A degree qualified early childhood professional whose career has spanned teaching, not-for-profit executive leadership, university lecturing, senior government roles and ministerial advisor
- Dedicated to driving research and innovation and engaging with government, sector, community and media to generate greater awareness of the need for investment in high-quality early learning and care



### Helen Hu, Non-Executive Director

- Joined the Board of Learning Links in May 2017
- Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee
- Extensive experience managing finance for not-for-profit and membership-based organisations
- Fellow member of the Governance Institute of Australia, fellow member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and New Zealand, Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and member of CPA Australia.
- Brings in-depth knowledge around corporate governance, regulation and risk management



### Margaret Smylie, Non-Executive Director

- Joined the Board of Learning Links in September 2022
- Member of the Governance and Risk Committee
- Extensive experience in both government and not-for-profit sectors embedding improved operational, risk management and assurance practices
- Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Certified Practising Accountant
- Brings substantial program and project evaluation experience to support complex social reform and sustainable growth



### Jennifer Wilson, Non-Executive Director

- Joined the Board of Learning Links in July 2019
- Member of the Governance and Risk Committee
- Internationally recognised and awarded creative digital leader
- Creative and strategic consultant with deep specialisation in mobile, apps, web, games, and social media
- TEDx presenter and author of several papers and books
- Passionate about healthcare, behavioural change, education and consumer focused entertainment

# Our Financial Summary

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2024

Income	2024 \$	2023 \$
Income	23,217,665	21,348,291
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>23,217,665</b>	<b>21,348,291</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2024 \$</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>
Expenses	23,550,179	21,214,472
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>23,550,179</b>	<b>21,214,472</b>
<b>Net surplus for the year attributable to members</b>	<b>-332,514</b>	<b>133,819</b>
<b>Items that will not be reclassified consequently to surplus or deficit</b>	<b>2024 \$</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>
Gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	49,504	74,619
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>	<b>49,504</b>	<b>74,619</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income attributable to members</b>	<b>-283,010</b>	<b>208,438</b>
<b>Where we obtained our income</b>	<b>2024 \$</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>
Fee income for services	4,700,457	4,470,466
Grants, donations and other fundraising	4,261,977	4,026,480
Charity Housie and Bingo*	14,021,887	12,572,254
Membership fees	5,413	4,818
Other income	227,931	274,273
	<b>23,217,665</b>	<b>21,348,291</b>
<b>How we applied our income</b>	<b>2024 \$</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>
Human resources costs services	9,266,982	8,411,209
Charity Housie and Bingo*	12,130,296	10,757,583
Program costs	203,968	217,922
Support services and facility costs	1,948,933	1,827,758
	<b>23,550,179</b>	<b>21,214,472</b>

\* Charity Housie is a fundraising activity and community game similar to bingo where small cash prizes are paid out to participants. These prizes make up 75% of all income as regulated by NSW government in the Community Gaming Act.

## Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2024

Current Assets	2024 \$	2023 \$
Cash and cash equivalents	3,832,611	4,066,390
Trade and other receivables	587,272	570,642
Inventories	146,842	124,055
Other current assets	231,720	256,602
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>4,798,445</b>	<b>5,017,689</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>2024 \$</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>
Property, plant and equipment	3,205,781	3,245,869
Right-of-use assets	135,676	419,322
Intangibles	42,455	52,516
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>3,383,912</b>	<b>3,717,347</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>8,182,357</b>	<b>8,735,036</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>	<b>2024 \$</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>
Trade & other payables	942,224	1,045,328
Contract liabilities	378,861	332,326
Lease liabilities	126,168	313,005
Employee benefits	751,560	684,941
Provisions	277,332	247,582
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>2,476,145</b>	<b>2,623,182</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>	<b>2024 \$</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>
Lease liabilities	0	122,632
Provisions & employee entitlements	80,129	80,129
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>80,129</b>	<b>202,761</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>2,556,274</b>	<b>2,825,943</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>5,626,083</b>	<b>5,909,093</b>
<b>Equity</b>	<b>2024 \$</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>
Reserves	2,486,870	2,437,366
Accumulated surplus	3,139,213	3,471,727
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>5,626,083</b>	<b>5,909,093</b>

A copy of the Detailed Financial Report and Auditor's Report will be sent to any member free of charge upon request.



# Thank You

Thank you to all who have been part of Learning Links' journey in the 2023-24 financial year.

We are so proud of the impact and achievements we have made throughout the year and look forward to our next strategic horizon as we endeavour to reach and support even more children and families to foster positive outcomes for the future.

Our vision of all children who face difficulties with learning being understood and supported to reach their potential is not something we can achieve alone. We are incredibly grateful to our community of families, professionals, funders and government partners who believe in this vision and seek to create meaningful, lasting change for children in need.

## **Learning Links**

**ABN 71 097 577 636**

**Financial Report - 30 June 2024**

**Learning Links**  
**Contents**  
**30 June 2024**

Directors' report	2
Auditor's independence declaration	5
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income	6
Statement of financial position	7
Statement of changes in equity	8
Statement of cash flows	9
Notes to the financial statements	10
Directors' declaration	24
Independent auditor's report to the members of Learning Links	25

**Learning Links  
Directors' report  
30 June 2024**

The directors present their report, together with the financial statements, on the Company for the year ended 30 June 2024.

**Directors**

The following persons were directors of the Company during the whole of the financial year and up to the date of this report, unless otherwise stated:

Clive Cuthell  
Sarah Donald  
Jackie Gambrell  
Helen Hu  
Jennifer Wilson  
Elizabeth Death  
Margaret Smylie

**Objectives of the Company**

The Company assists children and young people who have difficulties learning by providing them with the skills, services and family support that enable them to reach their full potential. This includes:

- Establishing and operating programs which directly assist children who have learning difficulties, disabilities or developmental delays, and their families.
- Establishing and operating programs that support, educate and upskill professionals and families who assist children who have learning difficulties, disabilities or developmental delays.
- Establishing and operating early childhood programs which provide inclusion of children with special needs into early childhood settings.
- Increasing public awareness, understanding and interest in the special needs of children who have learning difficulties, disabilities or developmental delays.

**Principal activities**

The principal activity of the Company during the financial year was to help children who have disabilities, learning difficulties, and developmental delays to realise their full potential.

**Performance measures**

The Company assesses its performance using the following methodologies in order to ensure that the objectives of the Company are being met:

- Annual financial budgets and performance metrics prepared
- Monthly financial reporting and analysis
- Accountability reporting to all major funding partners
- Comprehensive quality framework and systems with wide-ranging policies and procedures reviewed regularly
- Regular client and staff surveys
- Managing governance, compliance and risks
- Monthly monitoring of client numbers
- Reporting and monitoring of key performance indicators
- Dashboard reporting on a monthly basis

**Review of Operations**

The Company recorded a deficit of \$332,514 for the financial year, compared to a surplus of \$133,819 in 2023. A thorough review of the operations confirms that the Company continued to engage in its principal activities throughout the year, as detailed in the accompanying financial statements.

The fluctuating economic conditions, including rising interest rates and inflation, have impacted the cost of living for our customers and contributed to increased pressure from wage and expense growth, all of which influenced this year's results. In addition to these challenges, the Company faced unexpected expenditure related to increased recruitment costs to fill key roles, alongside significant investment in the development and implementation of our new strategic plan. Despite these pressures, we are pleased to report continued revenue growth of 8.7%. Client service fees remained stable, and the Company maintained strong relationships with both government and non-government organisations. NSW Clubs, in particular, have been key supporters through initiatives such as ClubGrants and Charity Housie. We have also been closely monitoring several sector developments, including announcements concerning the NDIS, foundational supports, and early childhood reviews, all of which may shape future operations.

**Learning Links  
Directors' report  
30 June 2024**

In 2024, the Company introduced its latest strategic plan for 2024–2028, building on our existing strengths. This plan sets out ambitious goals, including expansion efforts, new early childhood initiatives, a digital strategy aimed at growing community relationships nationwide, and significant improvements to fundraising activities.

Maintaining effective service delivery and strong connections with families, children, schools, early learning centres, government, partners, and supporters remains critical, especially amidst ongoing economic uncertainty. Learning Links remains dedicated to assisting families and children, ensuring they are supported in reaching their full potential.

After a decade of leadership as CEO, Birgitte Maibom departed the company in November to pursue new opportunities. The Board expressed their gratitude for her significant contributions to the organisation. In the same month, Jill Reich was appointed as the new CEO. The Board extends a warm welcome to Jill and wishes her a successful and fulfilling tenure.

**Subsequent Events**

No other matter or circumstance has arisen since 30 June 2024 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the Company's operations, the results of those operations, or the Company's state of affairs in future financial years.

**Information on directors**

Name:	Clive Cuthell
Title:	Chairperson
Qualifications:	Bachelor of Arts (Hons.), Accountancy and Finance, CA, GAICD
Experience and expertise:	Senior Executive - multinational organisation in manufacturing, construction materials and property

Name:	Sarah Donald
Title:	Secretary
Qualifications:	Master of Laws, Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Business (Management), Grad Dip Legal Practice, GAICD
Experience and expertise:	Legal counsel

Name:	Jackie Gambrell
Title:	Deputy Chairperson
Qualifications:	Bachelor of Arts (Hons.), Master of Business Administration
Experience and expertise:	Senior Executive - education and health-based not-for-profits

Name:	Elizabeth Death
Title:	Director
Qualifications:	MAICD, Bachelor of Education (Distinction) - Early Childhood Education
Experience and expertise:	Broad experience in social policy service delivery and academia coupled with a solid track record of achievement in both the public and private sectors.

Name:	Helen Hu
Title:	Director
Qualifications:	Bachelor of Arts, Master of Commerce, GAICD, FGIA, FCA, CPA
Experience and expertise:	Senior Executive and Company Secretary - member-based organisation, service sector

Name:	Margaret Smylie
Title:	Director
Qualifications:	Bachelor of Arts (Accountancy), GAICD, CPA
Experience and expertise:	Senior Executive - governance, risk and assurance.

Name:	Jennifer Wilson
Title:	Director
Qualifications:	GAICD
Experience and expertise:	Specialist advisory roles in digital development and production; corporate management and advice

### Meetings of directors

The number of meetings of the Company's Board of Directors ('the Board') and of each Board committee held during the year ended 30 June 2024, and the number of meetings attended by each director were:

	Full Board		Finance and Audit		Finance and Audit		Governance and Risk	
	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held
Clive Cuthell	5	5	1	1	-	-	-	-
Sarah Donald	4	5	-	-	3	3	-	-
Jackie Gambrell	5	5	3	4	-	-	-	-
Elizabeth Death	4	5	3	4	-	-	-	-
Helen Hu	2	5	4	4	-	-	-	-
Margaret Smylie	5	5	-	-	3	3	-	-
Jennifer Wilson	5	5	-	-	3	3	-	-

### Indemnifying Officers or Auditor

The Company has indemnified the directors and executives of the Company for costs incurred, in their capacity as a director or executive, for which they may be held personally liable, except where there is a lack of good faith.

During the financial year, the Company paid a premium in respect of a contract to insure the directors and executives of the Company against a liability to the extent permitted by the Corporations Act 2001. The contract of insurance prohibits disclosure of the nature of the liability and the amount of the premium.

The Company has not, during or since the end of the financial year, indemnified or agreed to indemnify the auditor of the Company or any related entity against a liability incurred by the auditor.

### Proceedings on behalf of the Company

No person has applied for leave of Court to bring proceedings on behalf of the Company or intervene in any proceedings to which the Company is a party for the purpose of taking responsibility on behalf of the Company for all or any part of those proceedings.

The Company was not a party to any such proceedings during the year.

### Members' Guarantee


Learning Links is a Company limited by guarantee without share capital. In the event of the Company being wound up, each member undertakes to contribute an amount not exceeding any outstanding membership fees. As at 15 September 2024, there were 593 (15 September 2023: 674) members of the Company.


### Auditor's independence declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration is set out immediately after this Directors' report.

This report is made in accordance with a resolution of directors.

On behalf of the directors

  
Clive Cuthell  
Chairperson

  
Sarah Donald  
Secretary

22 October 2024

## Auditor's Independence Declaration under Section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012

### To the Directors of Learning Links

As auditor for the audit of Learning Links for the year ended 30 June 2024, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

This declaration is in respect of Learning Links during the year.



**William Buck**  
Accountants and Advisors  
ABN 16 021 300 521



**Domenic Molluso**  
Partner  
Sydney  
22 October 2024

Level 29, 66 Goulburn Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
Level 7, 3 Horwood Place, Parramatta NSW 2150  
1/28 National Circuit, Forrest ACT 2603

+61 2 8263 4000  
+61 2 8263 4000  
+61 2 6126 8500

nsw.info@williambuck.com  
nsw.info@williambuck.com  
act.info@williambuck.com  
williambuck.com

William Buck is an association of firms, each trading under the name of William Buck across Australia and New Zealand with affiliated offices worldwide.  
Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.



**Learning Links**  
**Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2024</b> <b>\$</b>	<b>2023</b> <b>\$</b>
<b>Revenue *</b>			
Fee income for services		4,700,457	4,470,466
Government grants	5	2,987,186	2,982,032
Fundraising - non-government grants	29	1,234,422	1,034,357
Donations		40,369	10,091
Housie income	27	14,021,887	12,572,254
Membership fees		5,413	4,818
Other income	4	227,931	274,273
		<u>23,217,665</u>	<u>21,348,291</u>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Human resources costs for services		(9,266,982)	(8,411,209)
Human resources costs for Housie & Bingo		(1,992,483)	(1,544,780)
Housie & Bingo other costs		(10,137,813)	(9,212,803)
Program costs		(203,968)	(217,922)
Marketing costs		(102,493)	(97,180)
Administration & office costs		(1,316,636)	(1,228,353)
Finance costs		(51,775)	(66,127)
IT costs		(478,029)	(436,098)
Total expenses		<u>(23,550,179)</u>	<u>(21,214,472)</u>
<b>(Deficit)/surplus for the year attributable to the members of Learning Links</b>		<b>(332,514)</b>	<b>133,819</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>			
<i>Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss</i>			
Gain on the revaluation of land and buildings		<u>49,504</u>	<u>74,619</u>
Other comprehensive income for the year		<u>49,504</u>	<u>74,619</u>
<b>Total comprehensive (deficit)/income for the year attributable to the members of Learning Links</b>		<b><u>(283,010)</u></b>	<b><u>208,438</u></b>

\* Where possible, certain prior year revenue amounts have been reclassified.

*The above statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*

**Learning Links**  
**Statement of financial position**  
**As at 30 June 2024**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2024</b> <b>\$</b>	<b>2023</b> <b>\$</b>
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	7	3,832,611	4,066,390
Trade and other receivables	8	587,272	570,642
Inventories	9	146,842	124,055
Other current assets	10	231,720	256,602
Total current assets		<u>4,798,445</u>	<u>5,017,689</u>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	11	3,205,781	3,245,869
Right-of-use assets	12	135,676	419,322
Intangibles	13	42,455	52,156
Total non-current assets		<u>3,383,912</u>	<u>3,717,347</u>
<b>Total assets</b>		<u>8,182,357</u>	<u>8,735,036</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	14	942,224	1,045,328
Contract liabilities	15	378,861	332,326
Lease liabilities	16	126,168	313,005
Employee benefits	17	751,560	684,941
Provisions	18	277,332	247,582
Total current liabilities		<u>2,476,145</u>	<u>2,623,182</u>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Lease liabilities	19	-	122,632
Employee benefits	20	80,129	80,129
Total non-current liabilities		<u>80,129</u>	<u>202,761</u>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<u>2,556,274</u>	<u>2,825,943</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>5,626,083</u>	<u>5,909,093</u>
<b>Equity</b>			
Reserves	21	2,486,870	2,437,366
Retained surpluses		<u>3,139,213</u>	<u>3,471,727</u>
<b>Total equity</b>		<u>5,626,083</u>	<u>5,909,093</u>

*The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*

**Learning Links**  
**Statement of changes in equity**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	<b>Asset revaluation reserve \$</b>	<b>Retained profits \$</b>	<b>Total equity \$</b>
Balance at 1 July 2022	2,362,747	3,337,908	5,700,655
Surplus for the year	-	133,819	133,819
Other comprehensive income for the year	74,619	-	74,619
Total comprehensive income for the year	74,619	133,819	208,438
Balance at 30 June 2023	<u>2,437,366</u>	<u>3,471,727</u>	<u>5,909,093</u>

	<b>Asset revaluation reserve \$</b>	<b>Retained profits \$</b>	<b>Total equity \$</b>
Balance at 1 July 2023	2,437,366	3,471,727	5,909,093
Deficit for the year	-	(332,514)	(332,514)
Other comprehensive income for the year	49,504	-	49,504
Total comprehensive income for the year	49,504	(332,514)	(283,010)
Balance at 30 June 2024	<u>2,486,870</u>	<u>3,139,213</u>	<u>5,626,083</u>

*The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*

**Learning Links**  
**Statement of cash flows**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2024</b> <b>\$</b>	<b>2023</b> <b>\$</b>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from customers (inclusive of GST)		23,548,665	21,513,840
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of GST)		(23,513,409)	(21,129,871)
Interest received		167,126	95,278
Finance costs		<u>(23,081)</u>	<u>(39,926)</u>
Net cash from operating activities		<u>179,301</u>	<u>439,321</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Payments for property, plant and equipment	11	(72,351)	(83,334)
Payments for intangibles	13	<u>(27,724)</u>	<u>(46,326)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(100,075)</u>	<u>(129,660)</u>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Repayment of lease liabilities		<u>(313,005)</u>	<u>(291,742)</u>
Net cash used in financing activities		<u>(313,005)</u>	<u>(291,742)</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(233,779)	17,919
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		<u>4,066,390</u>	<u>4,048,471</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	7	<u><u>3,832,611</u></u>	<u><u>4,066,390</u></u>

*The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*

**Note 1. General information**

The financial statements cover Learning Links as an individual entity. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars, which is Learning Links' functional and presentation currency.

Learning Links is a Company limited by guarantee, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. Its registered office and principal place of business is:

12 - 14 Pindari Road, Peakhurst Heights NSW 2210

A description of the nature of the Company's operations and its principal activities are included in the directors' report, which is not part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were authorised for issue, in accordance with a resolution of directors, on 22 October 2024. The directors have the power to amend and reissue the financial statements.

**Note 2. Material accounting policy information**

The accounting policies that are material to the Company are set out below. The accounting policies adopted are consistent with those of the previous financial year, unless otherwise stated.

**New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted**

The Company has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

The adoption of these Accounting Standards and Interpretations did not have any significant impact on the financial performance or position of the Company.

**Basis of preparation**

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB'), the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and New South Wales legislation the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and associated regulations and the Corporations Act 2001, as appropriate for not-for-profit oriented entities.

*Historical cost convention*

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for, where applicable, the revaluation of financial assets and liabilities at fair value through profit or loss, financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income, investment properties, certain classes of property, plant and equipment and derivative financial instruments.

*Critical accounting estimates*

The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Company's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in note 3.

**Revenue recognition**

The Company recognises revenue as follows:

*Revenue from contracts with customers*

Revenue is recognised at an amount that reflects the consideration to which the Company is expected to be entitled in exchange for transferring goods or services to a customer. For each contract with a customer, the Company: identifies the contract with a customer; identifies the performance obligations in the contract; determines the transaction price which takes into account estimates of variable consideration and the time value of money; allocates the transaction price to the separate performance obligations on the basis of the relative stand-alone selling price of each distinct good or service to be delivered; and recognises revenue when or as each performance obligation is satisfied in a manner that depicts the transfer to the customer of the goods or services promised.

**Note 2. Material accounting policy information (continued)**

Variable consideration within the transaction price, if any, reflects concessions provided to the customer such as discounts, rebates and refunds, any potential bonuses receivable from the customer and any other contingent events. Such estimates are determined using either the 'expected value' or 'most likely amount' method. The measurement of variable consideration is subject to a constraining principle whereby revenue will only be recognised to the extent that it is highly probable that a significant reversal in the amount of cumulative revenue recognised will not occur. The measurement constraint continues until the uncertainty associated with the variable consideration is subsequently resolved. Amounts received that are subject to the constraining principle are recognised as a refund liability.

*Sale of goods*

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised at the point in time when the customer obtains control of the goods, which is generally at the time of delivery.

*Rendering of services*

Revenue from rendering of a service is recognised upon the delivery of the services to the customers.

*Grant revenue*

Grant revenue is recognised in the statement of comprehensive income when the Company obtains control of the grant and it is probable that the economic benefits gained will flow to the Company and the amount of the grant can be measured reliably.

If conditions are attached to the grant which must be satisfied before the Company is eligible to receive the contributions, the recognition of the grant as revenue will be deferred until those conditions are satisfied and control of the funds is obtained.

*Bingo and Housie revenue*

Bingo and Housie revenue is recognised on sale of the game ticket.

*Donations and bequests*

Donations and bequests are recognised as revenue when received.

*Interest*

Interest revenue is recognised as interest accrues using the effective interest method. This is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and allocating the interest income over the relevant period using the effective interest rate, which is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset to the net carrying amount of the financial asset.

*Other revenue*

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

**Income tax**

As the Company is a charitable institution in terms of subsection 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, as amended, it is exempt from paying income tax.

**Current and non-current classification**

Assets and liabilities are presented in the statement of financial position based on current and non-current classification.

An asset is classified as current when: it is either expected to be realised or intended to be sold or consumed in the Company's normal operating cycle; it is held primarily for the purpose of trading; it is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting period; or the asset is cash or cash equivalent unless restricted from being exchanged or used to settle a liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other assets are classified as non-current.

A liability is classified as current when: it is either expected to be settled in the Company's normal operating cycle; it is held primarily for the purpose of trading; it is due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting period; or there is no unconditional right to defer the settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other liabilities are classified as non-current.

**Note 2. Material accounting policy information (continued)**

**Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

**Trade and other receivables**

Trade receivables are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any allowance for expected credit losses. Trade receivables are generally due for settlement within 30 days.

The Company has applied the simplified approach to measuring expected credit losses, which uses a lifetime expected loss allowance. To measure the expected credit losses, trade receivables have been grouped based on days overdue.

Other receivables are recognised at amortised cost, less any allowance for expected credit losses.

**Inventories**

Finished goods inventories are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value on a 'first in first out' basis. Cost comprises of direct materials and delivery costs. Costs of purchased inventory are determined after deducting rebates and discounts received or receivable.

Net realisable value is the estimated selling price in the ordinary course of business less the estimated costs of completion and the estimated costs necessary to make the sale.

**Property, plant and equipment**

Land and buildings are shown at fair value, based on periodic, at least every 3 years, valuations by external independent valuers, less subsequent depreciation and impairment for buildings. The valuations are undertaken more frequently if there is a material change in the fair value relative to the carrying amount. Any accumulated depreciation at the date of revaluation is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the net amount is restated to the revalued amount of the asset. Increases in the carrying amounts arising on revaluation of land and buildings are credited in other comprehensive income through to the asset revaluation reserve in equity. Any revaluation decrements are initially taken in other comprehensive income through to the asset revaluation reserve to the extent of any previous revaluation surplus of the same asset. Thereafter the decrements are taken to profit or loss.

Plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis to write off the net cost of each item of property, plant and equipment (excluding land) over their expected useful lives as follows:

Buildings - improvements	2 - 5 years
Leasehold improvements	2 - 5 years or the length of the premises lease (whichever is shorter)
IT hardware	2 - 5 years
Office furniture & fittings	2 - 5 years

The residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each reporting date.

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when there is no future economic benefit to the Company. Gains and losses between the carrying amount and the disposal proceeds are taken to profit or loss. Any revaluation surplus reserve relating to the item disposed of is transferred directly to retained profits.

**Right-of-use assets**

A right-of-use asset is recognised at the commencement date of a lease. The right-of-use asset is measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability, adjusted for, as applicable, any lease payments made at or before the commencement date net of any lease incentives received, any initial direct costs incurred, and, except where included in the cost of inventories, an estimate of costs expected to be incurred for dismantling and removing the underlying asset, and restoring the site or asset.

**Note 2. Material accounting policy information (continued)**

Right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the asset, whichever is the shorter. Where the Company expects to obtain ownership of the leased asset at the end of the lease term, the depreciation is over its estimated useful life. Right-of use assets are subject to impairment or adjusted for any remeasurement of lease liabilities.

The Company has elected not to recognise a right-of-use asset and corresponding lease liability for short-term leases with terms of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets. Lease payments on these assets are expensed to profit or loss as incurred.

**Intangible assets**

*Software*

Significant costs associated with software are deferred and amortised on a straight-line basis over the period of their expected benefit, being their finite life of 3 to 5 years.

**Impairment of non-financial assets**

Non-financial assets are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount.

Recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value-in-use. The value-in-use is the present value of the estimated future cash flows relating to the asset using a pre-tax discount rate specific to the asset or cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. Assets that do not have independent cash flows are grouped together to form a cash-generating unit.

**Trade and other payables**

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Company prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

**Contract liabilities**

Contract liabilities represent the Company's obligation to transfer goods or services to a customer and are recognised when a customer pays consideration, or when the Company recognises a receivable to reflect its unconditional right to consideration (whichever is earlier) before the Company has transferred the goods or services to the customer.

**Lease liabilities**

A lease liability is recognised at the commencement date of a lease. The lease liability is initially recognised at the present value of the lease payments to be made over the term of the lease, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, the Company's incremental borrowing rate. Lease payments comprise of fixed payments less any lease incentives receivable, variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, amounts expected to be paid under residual value guarantees, exercise price of a purchase option when the exercise of the option is reasonably certain to occur, and any anticipated termination penalties. The variable lease payments that do not depend on an index or a rate are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

Lease liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. The carrying amounts are remeasured if there is a change in the following: future lease payments arising from a change in an index or a rate used; residual guarantee; lease term; certainty of a purchase option and termination penalties. When a lease liability is remeasured, an adjustment is made to the corresponding right-of use asset, or to profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset is fully written down.

**Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the Company has a present (legal or constructive) obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable the Company will be required to settle the obligation, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the consideration required to settle the present obligation at the reporting date, taking into account the risks and uncertainties surrounding the obligation. If the time value of money is material, provisions are discounted using a current pre-tax rate specific to the liability. The increase in the provision resulting from the passage of time is recognised as a finance cost.

**Note 2. Material accounting policy information (continued)**

**Employee benefits**

*Short-term employee benefits*

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and long service leave expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

*Long-term employee benefits*

The liability for annual leave and long service leave not expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on corporate bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

*Defined contribution superannuation expense*

Contributions to defined contribution superannuation plans are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

**Fair value measurement**

When an asset or liability, financial or non-financial, is measured at fair value for recognition or disclosure purposes, the fair value is based on the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date; and assumes that the transaction will take place either: in the principal market; or in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market.

Fair value is measured using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming they act in their economic best interests. For non-financial assets, the fair value measurement is based on its highest and best use. Valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data are available to measure fair value, are used, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

**Goods and Services Tax ('GST') and other similar taxes**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the tax authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority is included in other receivables or other payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to the tax authority, are presented as operating cash flows.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority.

**Note 3. Critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions**

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events that management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting judgements and estimates will seldom equal the related actual results. The judgements, estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities (refer to the respective notes) within the next financial year are discussed below.

**Note 3. Critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions (continued)**

*Revenue from contracts with customers involving the provision of services*

When recognising revenue in relation to the provision of services, an assessment is made to identify when the key performance obligations are satisfied, and how the customer consumes benefits as the key performance obligations are satisfied. Revenue is then recognised based on the timing of the work performed in order to satisfy the requirement of the performance obligation. This includes the recognition of revenue based on the number of school days (for programs run during the school term), the contract period in which services are to be provided, or the costs associated with the provision of services to end customers being incurred to satisfy the relevant performance obligation.

*Estimation of useful lives of assets*

The Company determines the estimated useful lives and related depreciation and amortisation charges for its property, plant and equipment and finite life intangible assets. The useful lives could change significantly as a result of technical innovations or some other event. The depreciation and amortisation charge will increase where the useful lives are less than previously estimated lives, or technically obsolete or non-strategic assets that have been abandoned or sold will be written off or written down.

*Impairment of non-financial assets other than goodwill and other indefinite life intangible assets*

The Company assesses impairment of non-financial assets other than goodwill and other indefinite life intangible assets at each reporting date by evaluating conditions specific to the Company and to the particular asset that may lead to impairment. If an impairment trigger exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is determined. This involves fair value less costs of disposal or value-in-use calculations, which incorporate a number of key estimates and assumptions.

*Lease term*

The lease term is a significant component in the measurement of both the right-of-use asset and lease liability. Judgement is exercised in determining whether there is reasonable certainty that an option to extend the lease or purchase the underlying asset will be exercised, or an option to terminate the lease will not be exercised, when ascertaining the periods to be included in the lease term. In determining the lease term, all facts and circumstances that create an economical incentive to exercise an extension option, or not to exercise a termination option, are considered at the lease commencement date. Factors considered may include the importance of the asset to the Company's operations; comparison of terms and conditions to prevailing market rates; incurrence of significant penalties; existence of significant leasehold improvements; and the costs and disruption to replace the asset. The Company reassesses whether it is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, or not exercise a termination option, if there is a significant event or significant change in circumstances.

*Incremental borrowing rate*

Where the interest rate implicit in a lease cannot be readily determined, an incremental borrowing rate is estimated to discount future lease payments to measure the present value of the lease liability at the lease commencement date. Such a rate is based on what the Company estimates it would have to pay a third party to borrow the funds necessary to obtain an asset of a similar value to the right-of-use asset, with similar terms, security and economic environment.

*Employee benefits provision*

As discussed in note 2, the liability for employee benefits expected to be settled more than 12 months from the reporting date are recognised and measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made in respect of all employees at the reporting date. In determining the present value of the liability, estimates of attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation have been taken into account.

*Estimation of the fair value of land and buildings*

The Company determines the fair value of land and buildings based on an estimate of its valuation provided by a certified professional real estate valuer. The reasonableness of the valuation is assessed by taking into account existing and comparable market sales data at the date of valuation.

**Note 4. Other income**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Interest income	167,126	95,278
Other income	60,805	178,995
	<u>227,931</u>	<u>274,273</u>

**Learning Links**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

**Note 5. Government grants**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
NSW Department of Education	1,470,749	1,494,532
Brotherhood of St Laurence	523,867	559,059
The Benevolent Society	461,754	365,902
Community Services Grants Program (TEI)	146,020	134,622
The Smith Family	253,169	112,201
Parenting Research Centre	70,730	315,716
Primary Health Network (PHN)	44,025	-
Department of Premier and Cabinet	12,325	-
Georges River Council	4,547	-
	<u>2,987,186</u>	<u>2,982,032</u>

**Note 6. Expenses**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
(Deficit)/surplus includes the following specific expenses:		
<i>Depreciation and Amortisation</i>		
Buildings	74,666	29,090
Office furniture & fittings	13,720	23,799
IT Hardware	48,997	52,186
Leasehold improvements	24,559	40,741
Right-of-use assets	283,646	282,451
IT Software	37,425	22,090
Total depreciation and amortisation	<u>483,013</u>	<u>450,357</u>
<i>Finance costs</i>		
Interest and finance charges paid/payable on lease liabilities	<u>23,081</u>	<u>39,926</u>
Defined contribution superannuation expense	<u>1,035,224</u>	<u>819,498</u>
Employee benefits expense excluding superannuation	<u>9,767,926</u>	<u>8,801,517</u>

**Note 7. Current assets - cash and cash equivalents**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Cash at bank	834,174	784,087
Cash on deposit	2,998,437	3,282,303
	<u>3,832,611</u>	<u>4,066,390</u>

**Note 8. Current assets - trade and other receivables**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Trade receivables	568,800	567,519
Less: Allowance for expected credit losses	(3,626)	(8,981)
	<u>565,174</u>	<u>558,538</u>
Accrued revenue	<u>22,098</u>	<u>12,104</u>
	<u><u>587,272</u></u>	<u><u>570,642</u></u>

**Note 9. Current assets - inventories**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Inventories - at cost	<u>146,842</u>	<u>124,055</u>

**Note 10. Current assets - other current assets**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Prepayments	<u>231,720</u>	<u>256,602</u>

**Note 11. Non-current assets - property, plant and equipment**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Land and buildings - at independent valuation	3,050,000	3,000,000
Building improvements - at cost	177,417	158,313
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(151,934)	(77,268)
	<u>3,075,483</u>	<u>3,081,045</u>
Plant and equipment - at cost	116,826	112,813
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(108,461)	(94,741)
	<u>8,365</u>	<u>18,072</u>
IT Hardware	264,903	224,067
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(205,231)	(156,234)
	<u>59,672</u>	<u>67,833</u>
Leasehold improvements - at cost	208,736	208,736
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(195,816)	(171,257)
	<u>12,920</u>	<u>37,479</u>
Capital work in progress	<u>49,341</u>	<u>41,440</u>
	<u><u>3,205,781</u></u>	<u><u>3,245,869</u></u>

**Note 11. Non-current assets - property, plant and equipment (continued)**

*Reconciliations*

Reconciliations of the written down values at the beginning and end of the current financial year are set out below:

	Land and buildings \$	Office furniture & fittings \$	IT hardware \$	Leasehold improvements \$	Capital Work in progress \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2023	3,081,045	18,072	67,833	37,479	41,440	3,245,869
Additions	19,600	4,013	40,836	-	7,901	72,350
Revaluation increments	49,504	-	-	-	-	49,504
Depreciation expense	(74,666)	(13,720)	(48,997)	(24,559)	-	(161,942)
Balance at 30 June 2024	<u>3,075,483</u>	<u>8,365</u>	<u>59,672</u>	<u>12,920</u>	<u>49,341</u>	<u>3,205,781</u>

*Valuations of Land and Buildings*

The basis of the valuation of land and buildings is fair value. The land and buildings were last revalued in September 2024 based on independent assessments by a member of the Australian Property Institute having recent experience in the location and category of land and buildings being valued. The directors do not believe that there has been a material movement in fair value since the revaluation date. Valuations are based on current prices for similar properties in the same location and condition.

**Note 12. Non-current assets - right-of-use assets**

	<b>2024</b> \$	<b>2023</b> \$
Land and buildings - right-of-use	1,248,299	1,531,177
Less: Accumulated depreciation	<u>(1,112,623)</u>	<u>(1,111,855)</u>
	<u>135,676</u>	<u>419,322</u>

*Reconciliations*

Reconciliations of the written down values at the beginning and end of the current financial year are set out below:

	Land & buildings \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2023	419,322	419,322
Depreciation expense	<u>(283,646)</u>	<u>(283,646)</u>
Balance at 30 June 2024	<u>135,676</u>	<u>135,676</u>

**Note 13. Non-current assets - intangibles**

	<b>2024</b> \$	<b>2023</b> \$
Software - at cost	171,745	144,021
Less: Accumulated amortisation	<u>(129,290)</u>	<u>(91,865)</u>
	<u>42,455</u>	<u>52,156</u>

**Learning Links**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

**Note 13. Non-current assets - intangibles (continued)**

*Reconciliations*

Reconciliations of the written down values at the beginning and end of the current financial year are set out below:

	IT software \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2023	52,156	52,156
Additions	27,724	27,724
Amortisation expense	(37,425)	(37,425)
Balance at 30 June 2024	<u>42,455</u>	<u>42,455</u>

**Note 14. Current liabilities - trade and other payables**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Trade payables	164,891	392,205
Other payables	719,582	621,991
Goods & services tax payable	57,751	31,132
	<u>942,224</u>	<u>1,045,328</u>

**Note 15. Current liabilities - contract liabilities**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Income received in advance	-	9,328
Grants & funding in advance	378,861	322,998
	<u>378,861</u>	<u>332,326</u>

**Note 16. Current liabilities - lease liabilities**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Lease liability	<u>126,168</u>	<u>313,005</u>
<i>Future lease payments</i>		
Future lease payments are due as follows:		
Within one year	131,924	336,085
One to five years	-	131,924
	<u>131,924</u>	<u>468,009</u>

**Note 17. Current liabilities - employee benefits**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Employee benefits	<u>751,560</u>	<u>684,941</u>

**Note 18. Current liabilities - provisions**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Housie prize fund	<u>277,332</u>	<u>247,582</u>

**Note 19. Non-current liabilities - lease liabilities**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Lease liability	<u>-</u>	<u>122,632</u>

**Note 20. Non-current liabilities - employee benefits**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Employee benefits	<u>80,129</u>	<u>80,129</u>

**Note 21. Equity - reserves**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Asset revaluation reserve	<u>2,486,870</u>	<u>2,437,366</u>

*Asset revaluation reserve*

The reserve is used to recognise increments and decrements in the fair value of land and buildings, excluding investment properties.

**Note 22. Members' guarantee**

Learning Links is a Company limited by guarantee without share capital. In the event of the Company being wound up, each member undertakes to contribute an amount not exceeding any outstanding membership fees. As at 15 September 2024, there were 593 (15 September 2023: 674) members of the Company.

**Note 23. Key management personnel disclosures**

*Compensation*

The aggregate compensation made to key management personnel of the Company is set out below:

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Aggregate compensation	<u>810,088</u>	<u>886,326</u>

No remuneration was paid or is payable to the Directors of the Company.

**Note 24. Remuneration of auditors**

During the financial year the following fees were paid or payable for services provided by the auditor of the Company:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<i>Audit services -</i>		
Audit of the financial statements	<u>67,000</u>	<u>60,000</u>

**Note 25. Contingent liabilities**

The Company has no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2024 (2023: Nil)

**Note 26. Related party transactions**

Members are generally also clients of Learning Links. Clients who become members pay a membership fee of \$20 which also entitles the member to a 10% discount on services provided by Learning Links.

*Key management personnel*

Disclosures relating to key management personnel are set out in note 23.

*Transactions with related parties*

There were no transactions with related parties during the current and previous financial year.

*Receivable from and payable to related parties*

There were no trade receivables from or trade payables to related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

*Loans to/from related parties*

There were no loans to or from related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

**Note 27. Housie operations (excluding Bingo)**

Charity Housie is a gaming program with cash prizes run for charitable purposes while Club Bingo is a gaming program with non-cash prizes usually run as a social activity in registered clubs. Both are required to comply with government legislation.

The disclosure below relates only to Charity Housie, in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (NSW) requirement.

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Income		
Housie ticket sales	12,654,350	11,359,380
Other sales	<u>1,367,537</u>	<u>1,212,875</u>
Total income	<u>14,021,887</u>	<u>12,572,255</u>
Expenses		
Housie prizes	(9,552,785)	(8,369,085)
Wages, superannuation and workers insurance	(1,992,483)	(1,544,779)
Profit sharing arrangements	(86,595)	(59,658)
Housie tickets	(387,753)	(291,353)
Miscellaneous	<u>(110,680)</u>	<u>(83,579)</u>
Total expenses	<u>(12,130,296)</u>	<u>(10,348,454)</u>
Gross surplus on Housie games	<u>1,891,591</u>	<u>2,223,801</u>

**Note 28. Events after the reporting period**

No matter or circumstance has arisen since 30 June 2024 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the Company's operations, the results of those operations, or the Company's state of affairs in future financial years.

**Note 29. Fundraising activities**

The Company has an authority to fundraise under the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (NSW). The Authority number is CFN 13232 which expires on 15/02/2026. Additional notes and information have been provided in the financial report to assist the authority holder with its disclosure requirements. A detailed list of fundraising permits has not been provided in this report but is available upon request.

All proceeds from fundraising activities were used in the costs of providing services to children who have difficulty learning and their families.

Charity Housie is a gaming program with cash prizes run for charitable purposes while Club Bingo is a gaming program with non-cash prizes usually run as a social activity in clubs. Both are required to comply with government legislation.

**Note 29. Fundraising activities (continued)**

**Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 disclosure**

**(a) Income from Fundraising**

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Gross income from fundraising	29(c)	15,256,309	13,606,612
Total costs of fundraising	29(c)	(12,253,697)	(10,692,887)
<b>Net Income from Fundraising</b>		<b><u>3,002,612</u></b>	<b><u>2,913,725</u></b>

**(b) Fundraising Events and Appeals Conducted During the Financial Year:**

Comparisons by Monetary Figures and Percentages

	2024 \$	2024 %	2023 \$	2023 %
Total costs of fundraising / Gross income from fundraising	12,253,697 / 15,256,309	85	10,692,887 / 13,606,612	81
Net surplus from fundraising / Gross income from fundraising	2,119,510 / 15,256,309	15	2,588,868 13,606,612	19
Total cost of services / Total expenditure	11,416,257 / 23,546,553	48	10,451,206 21,208,790	49
Total cost of services / Total income received	11,416,257 / 23,217,665	49	10,451,206 / 21,348,292	49

**(c) Details of Aggregate Gross Proceeds and Total Costs of Fundraising Appeals**

**Gross Proceeds from Fundraising**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Charity Housie (Note 27)	14,021,887	12,572,255
Trader – Helping Hand Sweet Company and other fundraising	1,234,422	1,034,357
Total	<u>15,256,309</u>	<u>13,606,612</u>

**Total Costs of Fundraising**

Charity Housie (Note 27)	(11,840,967)	(10,348,454)
Other fundraising	(412,730)	(344,433)
Total	<u>(12,253,697)</u>	<u>(10,692,887)</u>

<b>Net surplus from fundraising</b>	<b><u>3,002,612</u></b>	<b><u>2,913,725</u></b>
-------------------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

**(d) Statement showing how funds received were applied**

During the year ended 30 June 2024 the net surplus from fundraising of \$3,002,612 was spent on direct service delivery.

**Learning Links**  
**Directors' declaration**  
**30 June 2024**

In the directors' opinion:

- the attached financial statements and notes comply with the Corporations Act 2001, the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and New South Wales legislation the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and associated regulations, the Corporations Regulations 2001 and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

In compliance with Section 24 of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the Authority conditions, the directors also declare that:

- the statement of comprehensive income gives a true and fair view of all income and expenditure with respect to fundraising appeals;
- the statement of financial position gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs with respect to fundraising appeals;
- the provisions of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the regulations under that Act and the conditions attached to the authority to fundraise have been complied with; and
- the internal controls exercised by the Company are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received and applied by the Company from any of its fundraising appeals.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of directors made pursuant to section 295(5)(a) of the Corporations Act 2001.

On behalf of the directors



Clive Cuthell  
Chairperson



Sarah Donald  
Secretary

22 October 2024

## Independent auditor's report to the members of Learning Links

### Report on the audit of the financial report



#### Our opinion on the financial report

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Learning Links (the Company) has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

#### What was audited?

We have audited the financial report of the Company, which comprises

- the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024,
- the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year then ended,
- the statement of changes in equity for the year then ended,
- the statement of cash flows for the year then ended,
- notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information, and
- the director's declaration.

#### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report* section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act) and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Level 29, 66 Goulburn Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
Level 7, 3 Horwood Place, Parramatta NSW 2150  
1/28 National Circuit, Forrest ACT 2603

+61 2 8263 4000  
+61 2 8263 4000  
+61 2 6126 8500

nsw.info@williambuck.com  
nsw.info@williambuck.com  
act.info@williambuck.com  
williambuck.com

William Buck is an association of firms, each trading under the name of William Buck across Australia and New Zealand with affiliated offices worldwide.  
Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.



## Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Company's directors' report for the year ended 30 June 2024, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

## Responsibilities of the Directors for the financial report

The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. The directors responsibility also includes such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The directors are responsible for overseeing the Company's financial reporting process.

## Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: [https://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar4.pdf](https://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf)

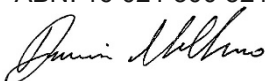
This description forms part of our auditor's report.



**William Buck**

Accountants & Advisors

ABN: 16 021 300 521



**Domenic Molluso**

Partner

Sydney

22 October 2024