annual 2020



SCIN children's services





is a not-for-profit organisation that has been offering quality child care and children's services since 1905.

We are proud of our long history of working with children and their families and supporting the development of practitioners and children's services. With more than 600 staff across 32 sites in Sydney, regional NSW and the ACT, we are one of Australia's most respected children's services organisations.

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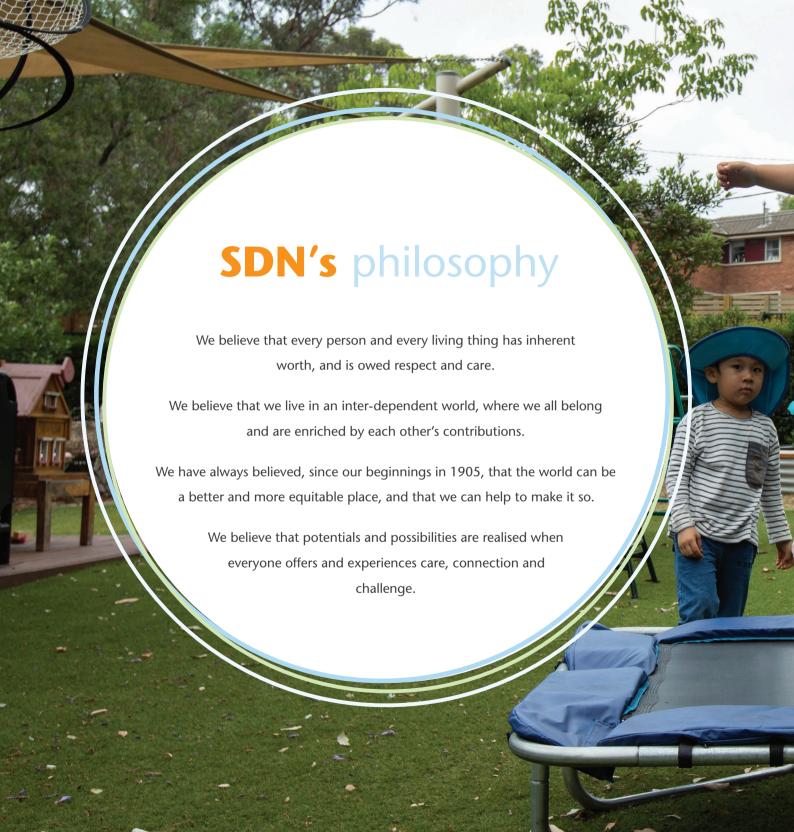
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SDN's **vision** is for an equitable world where all children thrive.

Our purpose

To promote and enhance children's wellbeing, learning and development in inclusive environments.

Our values

In carrying out our purpose we commit ourselves to being:











we provide

Early childhood education and child care

For children from birth to six years, across 24 centres in Sydney, regional NSW and ACT

Family support services

Promoting strong, functional and well-supported families to help children thrive

Therapies for children

From birth to transition to high school, including services provided under the National Disability Insurance Scheme

Professional learning

Supporting professionals in our sectors through practical workshops





The first six months of 2020, starting with the devastating bushfires and moving straight into the many months of the COVID-19 pandemic, has tended to throw into shadow the highlights of the past twelve months.

News and highlights

The 2019–20 year was a big year for centre anniversaries and growth in centres.







SDN Paddington celebrates 95 years

SDN Paddington celebrated its 95th anniversary with a party on the actual date of its anniversary, 29 November 2019. La Perouse Aboriginal Community member Aunty Lola Ryan welcomed us to Country, and the event was attended by a large crowd of current and former SDN Paddington children and families, SDN members, as well as Federal Member for Wentworth, Dave Sharma and Paddington Ward Councillor, Peter Cavanagh.

SDN Paddington began life as a colonial style villa dating back to around 1868 built as the residence for merchant John Elly Begg, and was originally named Olive Bank Villa. The building was renovated to make it suitable for use as a child care centre, and in 1969 a new preschool building was added. The centre and playgrounds were extensively refurbished in 2014.

SDN Marrickville turns 75

SDN Marrickville marked 75 years with a family event at the centre on 18 October 2019. Joining the SDN community were special quests Inner West Mayor,

Darcy Byrne; Inner West Councillor, Anna York; Susanne Heath representing the federal Opposition Leader the Hon. Anthony Albanese; and Gadigal Elder Uncle Chikka Madden who welcomed everyone to Country.

A birthday plaque was unveiled by Darcy Byrne, Anna York, and her son (who attends SDN Marrickville). There were also special tributes to longstanding educator Peggy Lane, for her 45 years of dedicated service at the centre.

SDN Marrickville originally opened on 28 October 1944. There was a large female workforce employed by the many industries in the area, with husbands away at war, so the need for child care was vital.

The centre was built by the then Marrickville Council following significant fundraising by local businesses and the community. SDN was invited to operate the centre from the beginning, and the relationship with the Council (now the Inner West Council) continues today, through the lease of the property. It stands as a reminder of the importance of a combined vision to improve the lives of working mothers and their children in the suburb.



SDN Riverwood marks 45 years

SDN Riverwood marked their anniversary of 45 years by combining their anniversary with their annual Christmas party, held at Rotary Park in Riverwood. More than 100 families joined the celebration, including new families starting with SDN Riverwood in the new year.

SDN Riverwood's history goes back even further than 45 years. SDN originally opened a centre in the area in January 1947, in a converted army hut on Belmore Road in what was then the Herne Bay Housing Settlement. By the early 1970s the building was in disrepair, and a new centre was built at the current location on the corner of Belmore Road and Roosevelt Avenue. The new building was completed at the end of 1974, and children began attending from the start of 1975.

Welcome SDN Chippendale

On 20 January 2020 we officially added Chippendale to the SDN community. Chippendale is a long day care

centre licensed for 36 places per day and was previously operated by another provider on behalf of the City of Sydney, offering childcare for City of Sydney staff and for the local community. SDN has a strong relationship with the City of Sydney as we lease SDN Surry Hills, SDN Lois Barker at Waterloo, and SDN Pyrmont from them. The Chippendale site itself has a long history, having originally opened in 1915 as a preschool, and was extensively refurbished in 2011.

SDN to manage three **UNSW** centres

In August 2020 following a formal tender process, SDN was announced as the preferred provider to operate three long day care centres on behalf of the University of NSW. The three centres are currently owned and run by the university and are located around the campus, serving the children of university staff, students and the local community. SDN expects to begin operating the centres from January 2021.

responding to COVID-19

In late January 2020 the first coronavirus cases started appearing in Australia, and by 1 February the Australian Government had implemented a travel ban for people returning from China. By 1 March, the list of banned countries had grown, and on 12 March the World Health Organisation officially declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic.

SDN had been managing its response to COVID-19 since the end of January, when a number of staff and families began returning from China and other overseas 'hot spots' at the end of the school holidays. There was little information, lots of questions, and a growing awareness that this was going to be something very different. Business continuity plans were reviewed and contingencies put in place, and a response team established.

By 13 March, all overseas arrivals were being required to self-isolate for 14 days, and Australians were being urged not to travel overseas. As case numbers in NSW and across the country escalated rapidly, the NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced on 23 March that while schools would remain open, parents were being

asked to keep their children at home. Meanwhile schools in the ACT closed early for school holidays. Non-essential businesses were ordered to close from 24 March.

By this stage, most office-based SDN staff had already moved to working from home. Offices and clinics were officially closed, but the focus on delivering services to children and families remained. Our Children's Therapies and family support programs had suspended all face to face service delivery and quickly moved to online sessions, and were working at full capacity.

Our centres remained open, with centre-based staff continuing face-to-face delivery with increased hygiene practices, and a ban on visitors and excursions. However attendances in our centres were dropping rapidly as more and more families kept their children at home. Our



forecasting showed we would experience a significant drop in revenue from the start of April, with no end in sight. Non-essential expenditure was put on hold, and recruitment stopped.

SDN's Board and senior management worked closely together during this period, with five board meetings in the space of a month. The Board's Risk and Audit Committee scheduled additional meetings, and daily COVID leadership meetings were implemented. The huge volume of questions and decisions needed in a quickly changing environment meant that timely, clear communications were key.

On 1 April, staff were given 30 days' notice that they may be asked to take their annual leave, in line with the requirements of SDN's Enterprise Agreement. SDN accrues its annual leave liability in its balance sheet, so this move would mean staff could continue to receive an income from their leave payments, but for the organisation it meant they would be paid from balance sheet funds rather than from what we expected to be a shrinking revenue stream.

The next day, on 2 April, the Australian Government announced its Child Care Relief Package for early childhood services, to be topped up with JobKeeper



payments for those who were eligible, to take effect from Sunday 5 April. As part of this package, families would not be paying any child care fees, and we could not charge our usual gap fee between our daily rate and the families' usual amount of Child Care Subsidy. This enabled families to keep their children home without having to pay a fee to keep their place open.

By this stage the NDIS had already implemented special payment conditions to help families and services. We also negotiated extensions of funding for our family support programs.

This also meant we would have enough certainty of income to keep our services open and operating for essential workers although the actual level of income would only be around 80% of our normal budget for that period. We did not know how long this would be for and at the same time we had many staff who needed to be at home with their own children when schools were closed. We decided we had to preserve cash to sustain the organisation in case these conditions continued for more than a few months. We needed to reduce staff costs in our centres and our shared services by 20% to bring our expenditure into line with revenue, or else we faced the possibility of losing millions of dollars. A major priority was to keep people in their jobs.

Attendances in our centres continued to drop as the number of community COVID cases climbed, eventually reaching a low of 42% of the pre-COVID attendance level. So on 20 April, centre and Shared Services staff were given notice that from 27 April, their hours and therefore their pay would be reduced by around 20%, up to a day per week, with the option of topping up their salaries by using annual leave or long service leave for that day. Some staff with large leave accruals chose to take even more leave. Members of the Executive team voluntarily reduced their salaries by 20% but continued to work full time.

Tight restrictions on gatherings were in place; gyms, entertainment venues, cafes, and bars were closed, retail businesses were closing their doors for good.

With revenue and staffing capped, centres had to cap the number of children attending each day, which also allowed centres to maintain social distancing requirements. However we were also facing another concern — with so many children at home, we needed new ways of keeping children in contact with their friends and their educators. How could we keep them enjoying activities and learning while at home?

Centres began regular online catch ups with their children, playing games together online, making craft to be shared beyond the centre. We surveyed centre families asking them what would help them, and centrally, SDN began developing an online activity hub, with resources, play-based activities and videos for families with children at home. This was a very different way of working for all of our staff. The investment we had made in our IT network and systems over the previous few years paid off enormously.

With older children returning to school and the number of new COVID-19 cases slowing down, children started gradually returning to the centres. Meanwhile our Children's Therapies and family support programs continued to operate at full capacity to meet the demand.

On Monday 8 June, the Australian Government announced that its Child Care Relief Package would end on 12 July, and JobKeeper for staff in the early childhood sector would end on 20 July. A new transition package would be in place until the end of September, and the Child Care Subsidy would return from 13 July. Families would once again start paying fees for their child care. It was uncertain what the take-up of places would be in the face of an economic downturn and increased unemployment.

Our teams worked closely with families to determine their preferences, help them apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy as needed, and return to our centres.

By 13 July, we were back to 94% of our pre-COVID attendance level.

This meant we could return our centre and Shared Services staff to their regular working hours. Not a single job had been lost. No service had had to close. No staff had been diagnosed with COVID-19.

However with the economy sliding into a recession, and unemployment hovering at around 7.5%, future utilisation in our centres is uncertain. It's already obvious that the pattern of attendance for children is shifting — enrolments are averaging fewer days each week, there is increasing demand for occasional and casual care and half days where we offer them, and the proportion of children accessing the Additional Child Care Subsidy in our services increased from 0.35% in March to a high of just under 3% in August.

The second wave of COVID cases in Victoria and the continuing low level number of new cases in NSW shows just how tentative our grasp on controlling the pandemic is. SDN survived the first wave of the pandemic thanks to the responsiveness of the Board, the dedication, creativity and hard work of our staff, and the support of families in our services. We've now lifted our heads and are looking forward, focusing on our purpose and our strategy, but all the while conscious that there'll be more ups and downs to come.



Financially, we ended the financial year on 30 June with a surplus of around \$1.2m. Prior to COVID, we had been on track for a much larger surplus of around twice that amount, thanks to cost control measures and a focus on increased utilisation and revenue. Our centres broke even, so this surplus is thanks to the government relief packages and the sacrifices made by our staff. It sets us up well for the 2020–21 financial year, and we now have a buffer to carry us through the uncertainty.

We still need to manage our COVID response. SDN has registered all of its sites as COVID-safe. Our offices are only now (during September) slowly and carefully re-opening to staff. We expect many office-based staff to continue working from home at least part of the time, with travel on public transport remaining risky and the ongoing requirement for social distancing limiting the numbers in our offices. Our heightened hygiene practices remain in place across all sites, and we're still restricting visitors and excursions.

The way we're working and living has changed, probably permanently. What's carried us through these changes as we've made our decisions is our shared focus on what's in the best interests of children and their families, and for our staff who are key to our ability to deliver on our purpose of promoting and enhancing children's wellbeing, learning and development in inclusive environments.



Meeting challenges

Communicating with families during COVID

Open, transparent and timely communications with families has always been an important part of the SDN way, as we understand that communication that helps families to feel more confident, capable and connected also supports children's wellbeing.

Never has a strong communication practice been as important as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When it became clear that the pandemic would have a substantial impact on children, families and staff across all of our services, SDN established a rigorous program of consistent communications with staff, families and other stakeholders.

Many families in our centres chose to keep their children at home, so the challenge was to ensure all children remain connected with their friends and educators.

Service delivery in our children's therapies and family support programs moved to online, and staff in these programs as well as our Shared Services staff all began working from home. Our centre teams continued to work onsite. Making sure all staff were connected and knew what was happening was vital.

Immediately families and staff began receiving communications from our CEO that were sent out at least weekly, more often if the changing circumstances called for it. We set up email addresses for families and staff specifically for COVID-related questions, so concerns could be raised directly and responded to quickly.

Key to SDN's communication strategy was gaining insights into the impact that the pandemic was having on families and on our staff. We ran two surveys of families who had children in our centres or who had placed their names on our centre waitlist, and a survey of staff about their wellbeing. These surveys ensured we could fully

support the needs and expectations of children, families and staff.

More than 1,000 families responded to the first survey, strongly expressing a need for more online engagement during the pandemic. Families were clear that, while they needed continued contact between the centre and their child, they also needed support, as parents, to help them to nurture their child's wellbeing, learning and development while they were at home.

SDN's response was to build and implement an online framework that saw centres increase their outreach to families at home; the production of an online family activity hub; and the creation of webinars on play based learning and transition to school.

A follow-up survey was sent to families in late May 2020, as the pandemic was easing and families were starting to return to centres. One component of this survey was feedback on our communication during the pandemic. 97% of families who completed the survey agreed that the communication they received from SDN met or exceeded their expectations, with almost one third agreeing that SDN's communication during the pandemic far exceeded their expectations.

A staff survey, distributed in May 2020, highlighted that, while many staff, whether they continued working in one of our centres, or worked from home, found the period challenging, 72% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that Communication from SDN helped them understand what they needed to do during the pandemic.

As the effects of the pandemic continues, we will continue to make sure that families, staff and other stakeholders can rely on us to listen to their concerns and communicate openly and transparently with them.

Staying connected

Delivering the online village

'John F Kennedy is quoted as saying that, 'When written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity.'

While the COVID19 pandemic delivered many challenges to SDN, our teams and our families, it also delivered an opportunity to exercise two of our core values, creativity and innovation.

One of the biggest challenges SDN faced was ensuring that children had as much consistency as possible. The number of children who were kept home during the period, and restrictions to offering face to face services meant we had to devise new ways to maintain consistency, ensure the maintenance of secure relationships and share our expertise and resources. As COVID started, SDN built a framework to guide the development of online work with children and families. The framework clearly identified the work that was needed and clarified the roles of those involved in delivery.

In children's therapies, the change to online therapy for children was devised, equipped, tested and rolled out within three weeks, allowing children and families to experience continuity of service. As the pandemic escalated, the team implemented a system of continuous feedback and learning, which meant that they could deliver ongoing improvements for therapists and

families. Post-pandemic, online therapies are here to stay, and provide SDN with opportunities to extend our family-centred practice into rural and remote areas.

Teams working in our family support programs, such as Brighter Futures, faced considerable challenges in the implementation of online services with families. Their greatest challenges were how to deliver online services to vulnerable families, who typically have less access to technology, how to ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained and how to ensure that children are safe. The team collaborated to overcome these challenges, delivering a mixed model of both inperson and online services to families.

In centres, which remained open throughout the pandemic, family attendance dropped as many families felt safest keeping their children at home. Centres responded to the challenge by connecting with families online, videoing story time, sending home craft packs and supporting families with ideas for activities that they can run at home.

Centrally, SDN established a website that housed online, play-based activities that families could use to



support their child's learning and development at home. From providing a 'play toolkit' with recipes for goop, paint and playdough, through to designing obstacle courses that promote the development of gross motor skills, the site is a hub for information families need for learning at home.

An important part of the family activity hub is webinars for families, with two already developed — one

on play-based learning and the other on preparing a child for transition to school. More are on the way.

Taking inspiration from the needs evident during the pandemic, SDN is now also developing of an online learning platform for children that will be designed to inspire moments of play and ignite the same feeling of wonder, inquiry and surprise that our educators, therapists and social workers, seek to inspire in children every day.



our strategic plan

SDN is now coming to the end of the second year of our five year strategic plan.

The 2019–2020 year began well, however our ability to focus on some of the key strategic projects was sidetracked by the need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.







However while COVID-19 forced us to change the way we worked and delivered services for a period of time, this provided us with the opportunity to implement some projects earlier than expected. You can read more about our response to COVID-19 elsewhere in this review, including the development and launch of our online activity hub for families.

While we expect COVID-19 to continue to require monitoring and responding to, it's now become 'business as usual', and we have returned to our focus on our strategic plan.

We move our strategy forward through continuous improvement of our core work, and through the major projects that fall under the five priority actions identified in our strategic plan.



Priority action 1

Implement the SDN Way, our inter-disciplinary value commitment to children and families across all SDN services.

During 2019–20, we have worked hard to develop and articulate evidence-based, interdisciplinary, organisation-wide practice standards to support our goal of consistent quality services. We've embedded real-time quality self-assessment and continuous improvement approaches in our early learning centres using an online platform for our Quality Improvement Plans required under the National Quality Standard.

Recruiting the right staff and ensuring they have the right skills is essential. We have developed an employee value framework that has identified areas for improvement and adding value for staff, and ensured that foundational skills are being developed and embedded across all of our services.

We also know that we can't achieve our desired outcomes for children without working as a trusted partner with families. We've continued to work on the implementation of our family engagement and communication framework (our 'customer value proposition'). This includes a focus on the family experience from enquiry to their first day in our services, using family partnership meetings early in the relationship to better understand their family situation and preferences, and the use of the online communications platform StoryPark to better keep families up to date with their child's day to day activities and their centre's educational program.



Priority action 2

Increase the reach and impact of early learning places with a balanced portfolio of centres.

During the first year of our 2019–2023 strategic plan, one of our major projects was to review our property portfolio. We have a mix of owned and leased centres, and centres that we operate on behalf of other organisations.

Extensive analysis and modelling of our centres was undertaken, and work is beginning on developing a 20-year property masterplan which will outline maintenance and major capital works required for each site. COVID-19 delayed some of our work on this action, and we are now starting to return our focus to this area.

In the meantime, in January 2020 we added SDN Chippendale to our portfolio, managing this centre on behalf of the City of Sydney, and will begin operating three centres on behalf of the University of NSW centres from January 2021.



Priority action 3

Have a stronger voice on behalf of children, their families and the services that support them.

Through COVID-19, we were active in lobbying, in conjunction with other early childhood providers and peak bodies, including the short term suspension of some of the requirements under the Child Care Subsidy (such as the activity test for families). We contributed to selected consultations and inquiries, with increased invitations to participate in hearings and comment in the media.



Priority action 4

Extend our reach with our specialised services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, developmental delay and with the impacts of trauma.

Our Children's Therapies services target children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or developmental delay. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic we were forced to move our service delivery to online only, and we now include tele-practice and targeted groups as part of our range of service offerings.

We have also increased the number of children with ASD or developmental delay in our family support programs, and have maintained this number in our early childhood services.

A major upcoming focus is how to offer support to families and children while they are on our waiting list for Children's Therapies, and how to replicate our autismspecific pre-school SDN Beranga to meet the demand for these services.



Priority action 5

Develop innovative solutions for children who are not in safe and supportive family environments.

A significant project for 2019–20 was the development and implementation of our innovative, evidence-based and evidence-informed model of practice for SDN family support programs, including Brighter Futures. This practice framework completely changes the way we work with families to increase their capacity to provide safe and supportive environments for their children.

how much we did



SDN works with children and families across three main streams: our early childhood education and child care services, children's therapies, and family support programs, including Brighter Futures, Playlinks and our Child and Parenting Support program.

Our work this year was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This limited the face to face contact we offer children and families through our children's therapies and family support programs, and even in our centres.

We were however able to maintain contact with many children and families online using videoconferencing through the pandemic.

For children

Across all of 2019–20, we worked with a total of 4,396 children and families, by:

- providing 2,892 children with high quality early childhood education and care through our 24 centres
- supporting an additional 115 children facing challenges to be enrolled in mainstream settings
- providing specialised early intervention for 534 children with disabilities
- supporting 21 children in supported playgroups and activities.

For families

In 2019–20, 577 families facing challenges were strengthened through our playgroups, family programs and our Brighter Futures programs.

For other children's services providers

SDN is active in supporting the children's services sector to be more inclusive of children. In 2019–20 we supported 268 other services, through the following programs:

Brighter Futures: 150 services

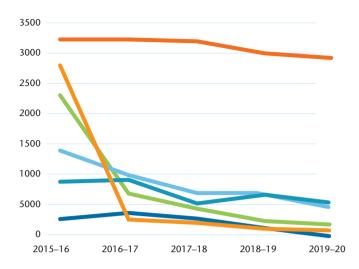
Child and Parenting Program: 47 services

Eastern and Sydney Child and Family Interagency: 60 services

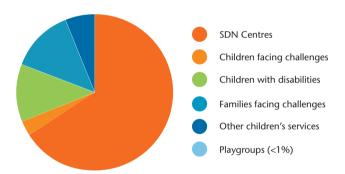
Our new Start Strong Pathways program: 20 services.

The pattern of support offered to children and families continues to change as a result of changes in funding streams and their objectives.

Sectors we work in: Five year overview



2019-20 clients by sector



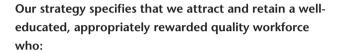
Over the past five years the number of children we supported has dropped slightly, with a significant drop in 2016–17 in the number of children facing challenges and other services as a result of our unsuccessful tender for the Australian Government's Inclusion Support Agency contract. The number of children with disabilities supported has dropped in recent years, however is now holding steady, following the shift from NSW government funding to the NDIS.





Our people are the key enablers of our strategy and our biggest annual investment. The quality of our workforce has the most influence on our ability to keep our commitments to children and families.





- have foundational knowledge of child wellbeing, learning and development, family wellbeing and functioning, inclusion and relevant service system
- access to specialist skills to address barriers to access, participation and inclusion
- are aligned, engaged and accountable
- have opportunities for career progression.

Our 2019–20 aim was to ensure clear communication and build trust between staff and management. However, our efforts were diverted to managing the risks associated with COVID-19, with the priority being to achieve healthy, safe, secure and quality outcomes for staff.

Staff retention continues to be above SDN's target of 40%, with the average annual staff retention for 2018–19 being 48.58%. Staff turnover has increased to 25.52% for the year to 30 June 2019, which was slightly lower than 2017–18. Turnover is remaining high due turnover in particular specialities including therapists in our Children's Therapies teams and social workers in our Brighter Futures program.



Safety and wellbeing

The safety and wellbeing of children and staff have always been a priority. SDN has invested in training staff in safe work practices including online training in manual handling, harassment and bullying, and duty of care.

Training on safety culture, risk assessments and injury management has been rolled out. This includes opportunities for consultation with staff about safety and promotes a safety culture. The Risk Assessment process is currently being improved to ensure analysis and scoring of risks is completed in a robust manner, thus ensuring higher level of compliance and understanding of the risk and controls.

Although the number of workers compensation claim has increased, the LTI claims have decreased with most claims returning to work on suitable duties, thus ensuring a safe and durable return to work.

Year	FY 2018-19	FY 2019–20
Incidents	146	123
Workers Compensation Claims	22	31
Lost time injuries	10	9
Total Claims Cost (\$)	77,831.96	85,494.90

Snapshot of our **staff**

Our workforce is diverse, qualified and experienced and complies with the Workplace

Gender Equity Act. As at 30 June 2020 we employed 660 staff,

broken down as below:



Shared services

55 8%

Direct service delivery

605 ⁹²%



Permanent full-time

296

Permanent part-time

166

Maximum term contract full-time

42

Maximum term contract part-time

36

Casual

120



Female

621

94%

Male

39 6



Safety and wellbeing during COVID-19

During COVID-19 it is essential that we support our staff and regularly check in on staff's mental health. There are a number of initiatives that SDN has undertaken to support staff:

- fitness and wellbeing survey sent out to all staff to gain insight into how they are feeling under the current circumstances
- COVID-19 infection control training available to all staff
- regular communication emails and updates in SDN's staff newsletter Community Times to all staff with current updates on COVID-19
- health declaration forms required to be filled out by all students, visitors, families and contractors prior to entering SDN childcare centres or offices.

Flu vaccinations are offered to all SDN permanent staff on a yearly basis and staff are reimbursed for the vaccination through payroll. However, this year SDN went further and offered flu vaccinations reimbursements to SDN casuals and also sourced a practice nurse to visit each centre to administer the flu vaccination. This approach increased the number of staff who accessed the flu vaccination.

Gap analysis were completed against Safework Australia guidelines to ensure SDN was compliant with home visiting and physical distancing guidelines. Several risk assessments were completed internally and shared with staff to educate them on what control measures SDN has in place to ensure compliance with hygiene practices, social distancing and COVID-19 symptoms.

Staff engagement

SDN values staff's opinions. Almost 80% of staff completed our 2019 staff survey — this result is one of the highest in SDN's history. Staff rated 84% in passion which means they are engaged and committed to SDN's purpose, vision and values, and rated SDN 78% in performance.

	2018	2019	Increase
Passion	80%	84%	+4%
Performance	72%	78%	+6%

The top five rated statements were:

Topic	Question	
Values	I believe in the values of SDN	95%
Purpose	I believe in the overall purpose of SDN	95%
Engagement	I like the work I do	94%
Vision	I am aware of SDN's vision for the world	92%
Marketing	SDN has a good reputation	89%

We conducted a COVID-19 Life Balance Survey to help us understand the overall emotional, social and physical wellbeing of staff during COVID-19 and the factors driving it, especially given that a portion of our workforce began working from home.

The outcome of the survey results was positive, and while those results don't offset the tremendous uncertainty and anxiety that some staff continue to feel, they do point to a distinct sense of staff confidence and trust in SDN.





Learning and development

Learning and education is fundamental to SDN's vision, purpose and values, and we encourage and support our staff to do further studies by giving them flexibility of working hours and study leave.

The onset of COVID-19 and lockdown measures meant a number of SDN training programs were postponed or cancelled, however many organisations offered online professional development at reduced rates or for free.

We delivered 13,576.93 hours of learning and development, an average of 25.14 hours per person (up from 12.51 hours per person last year). This can be attributed to the increased access to online training and webinars to all staff and the introduction of compulsory WHS and IT webinars for all staff.

SDN Learning and Development Awards

Each year SDN offers the Learning and Development Awards in recognition of staff who continue to develop themselves, both professionally and personally, by undertaking further studies whilst working. These awards recognise an employee's endeavours in developing their skills, knowledge and experience, and their ability to bring this professional development back into the workplace.

2019 award recipients were:

Afia Nouman SDN Riverwood
Airyan Daly Brighter Futures Central Sydney
Beatriz Parra Quintana SDN North Sydney
Subrin Hazera SDN Riverwood
Katharine Fahy SDN Bluebell
Katherine Elford SDN Paddington
Khanittha Kongmanee SDN North Sydney
Laura Paget SDN Surry Hills
Sheyeon Hartwig SDN Bluebell
Theodora Hatzihrisafis Playlinks
Tsz Kwan Lo SDN Marrickville





Our **staff** as at 30 June 2020

- **211** Educators (Certificate III)
- 175 Senior Educators and Diploma qualified staff
- 87 Early Childhood Teachers and Centre Directors (Degree qualified)
- 42 Social Workers, Area Managers and Team Leaders
- 28 Cooks and Assistant Cooks
- **26** Centre Administrators
- 17 Allied Health Professionals and Family Systemic Practitioners
- 9 HR, Payroll and WHS staff
- 8 Communications and Marketing specialists
- 7 Specialist Business Professionals
- 7 Program Administrators and Project Officers
- 7 Trainees
- 7 SDN Enquiry Team members
- 7 Administration support
- 5 Finance and Property staff
- 5 Service Leaders
- 4 Professional Practice staff (includes Aboriginal Practice Lead)
- 3 Directors of Shared Services functions
- 4 Members of the Executive
- 1 CEO





staff service

40 years and over

Peggy Lane SDN Marrickville, 46
Anne Irving SDN North Sydney, 40
Megan Brophy SDN Paddington, 40

30 years and over

Fiona Redwood SDN Marrickville, 32 **David Farrel** SDN Linthorpe St, 31

25 years and over

Carol Muldoon SDN Hamilton St, 26 Michelle Briscoe SDN Woolloomooloo, 25 Rama Sama SDN Marrickville, 25 Helen Price SDN Crookwell, 25

20 years and over

Ritu Gupta SDN Surry Hills, 24 Behrooz Arzani SDN Ngallia, 23 Mini Kaur SDN Riverwood, 23 Kay Turner Shared Services, 23 Louise Casey SDN Glebe, 23 Joka Milicevic SDN Riverwood, 22 Anne Reeves SDN Crookwell, 22 Leean Weekes SDN Lady McKell, 22 Elleni Diaz SDN Linthorpe Street, 22 Glynis Chang Shared Services, 22 Kay Daley SDN North Sydney, 21 Sam Lau Casual, 21 Jing Zhang SDN Marrickville, 21 Lorraine Smart SDN Lady McKell, 21 Tina Robinson Disability Services, 21 Victoria Marsden SDN Surry Hills, 20 Myint Sein SDN Linthorpe St, 20

Barua Piyasa SDN Erskineville, 20 Janelle Collins SDN Lady McKell, 20 Micheline Azar SDN Hurstville, 20 Marian Achkar SDN Ultimo, 20

Amanda Brown SDN Pyrmont, 19

15 years and over

Lili Guo SDN Hurstville, 19 Ann Halliday SDN Lady McKell, 19 Rahman Sudipta SDN Woolloomooloo, 18 Jane Anable SDN Lady McKell, 18 Niba Samantaray SDN Lois Baker, 18 Carol Soleymanbik SDN North Sydney, 18 Annie Ding SDN Hurstville, 18 Farida Khan SDN Ultimo, 18 Akhtari Khan SDN Ultimo, 18 Karen McIntosh SDN Crookwell, 18 Reeta Koirala SDN Riverwood, 18 Michelle King SDN Bluebell, 17 Jini Outschoorn SDN Bluebell, 17 Connie Blake SDN Paddington, 17 Christina Skiadopoulos SDN Erskineville, Kerry Stephenson SDN Lady McKell, 17 Nasrin Islam SDN Surry Hills, 17 Olena Odnostalchenko SDN Lois Baker, 17 Lindy Church SDN Hamilton St, 17 Georgette Khalil SDN Riverwood, 17 Min Zhang SDN Riverwood, 17 Emerena Marsh SDN Bluebell, 16 Jenny Wang Lei SDN Woolloomooloo, 16 Lyn Li Ru SDN Riverwood, 15

Margo O'Connor SDN Lady McKell, 15
Vicki Walden SDN Ultimo, 15
Sarah Locke Shared Services, 15
Farzana Ambareen SDN Surry Hills, 15
Helen Manolias SDN Linthorpe Street, 15
Maree Friend SDN Lady McKell, 15
Catherine Anderson Integrated Services, 15
Ann Wai Wing Cheung SDN North
Sydney, 15
Rita Haider SDN Linthorpe Street, 15

10 years and over

Julie Watson SDN Hurstville, 14 Anna Cotterill, SDN Lady McKell, 14 Chi Duong SDN Bluebell, 14 Amanda Santos SDN Hurstville, 14 Kiet Su SDN Marrickville,14 Alex Kaewpijit SDN Redfern, 14 Tracey Brunton SDN Hurstville, 14 Sarah Harris SDN Lady McKell, 13 Cathy Cao, SDN Ultimo, 13 Laura Sultana SDN Ultimo, 13 Insha Shakya SDN Ngallia, 13 Taryn Heffernan SDN Paddington, 13 Trent Browne SDN Hamilton Street, 13 Ai Liu SDN Ngallia, 12 Katerina Athanassiou SDN Erskineville, 12 Asma Parveen SDN Ultimo, 13 Ernie Chang Shared Services, 13 Tina Nigro SDN Ultimo, 13 Leanne Dematos SDN Mosman, 13 Katherine Sheehan SDN Paddington, 12



Joanne Evans SDN Lady McKell, 12
Crystal Kui Zheng Yan SDN Ngallia, 12
Sara Sheekey SDN Lady Mckell, 12
Lynn Connolly Shared Services, 12
Tania Vallario SDN Paddington, 12
Tania Lever Aboriginal Playgroups, 12
Rey Canoy Shared Services, 12
Olivia Liva SDN Surry Hills, 12
Manisha Raj SDN Beranga, 12
Sofia Pereyra Ananias SDN Glebe, 12
Christina Americano SDN Paddington, 12
Zenia Hill SDN Hamilton St, 12
Nina Williams SDN Linthorpe Street, 12
Kristabelle Arias SDN Mosman, 11

Linda Maclean Shared Services, 11
Olga Michalopoulos SDN Surry Hills, 11
Gordana Skopelja SDN Ngallia, 11
Teresa Cabrera SDN Surry Hills, 11
Leanne Citra SDN Lady McKell, 11
Oznur Teke SDN Ngallia, 11
Xiuling Wang SDN Marrickville, 11
Paw Bway Ler SDN Bluebell, 11
Alison Collins SDN Crookwell, 10
Nayana Sagar SDN Erskineville, 10
Ruth Wilson SDN Erskineville, 10
Stephanie Riemer SDN Woolloomooloo, 10

Margaret Kelly SDN Marrickville, 10

Deborah Lucero SDN Lois Baker, 10

Afroza Sultana SDN Riverwood, 10

Miguel Rivera SDN Northern Suburbs, 10

Amy Wong SDN Redfern, 10

Debra Morrison Shared Services, 10

Genaro Capistrano Shared Services, 10

Jing Liu SDN Hurstville, 10

Sabreena Karunakalage SDN Milperra, 10

Min Zhang SDN Marrickville, 10

Sally Nicholson SDN Crookwell, 10

Sabina Shakya SDN Marrickville, 10

Lynne Lindh Start Strong Pathways

Eurobodalla, 10

Tahira Anjum SDN Bluebell, 10



our financial performance

The SDN group maintained a strong financial position despite the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation, and we were able to strengthen our balance sheet through careful management of our resources.

The SDN group generated a surplus after tax of \$1,204,012, which was an improvement on last year's comparative figure of \$87,445. (The 2018–19 figure has been adjusted for reporting purposes due to changes to the relevant Accounting Standards regarding the treatment of donations and fundraising revenue, to allow for comparison with the current year results).

The surplus was better than budgeted as result of a significant turnaround in Children's Therapies performance and the deferring of some Shared Services expenditure. The consolidated surplus includes SDN Child and Family Services Pty Limited, which reported a surplus of \$681,693, compared with a deficit of \$307,928 in 2018–19.

Revenue rose during the year due to the addition of SDN Chippendale in January 2020 and the strong financial performance of the organisation prior to the COVID-19 impact. The temporary introduction of free childcare in April 2020 slowed this growth by reducing

our anticipated centre revenue by \$1.2 million. Revenue for the year was \$49,326,81 compared with \$46,972,431 in 2018–19.

During 2019–20, revenue from our fee-for-service therapies for children with a disability or developmental delay continued to grow with the National Disability Insurance Scheme now in place. We receive Federal and state government funding for the delivery of specific programs and projects that are the result of successful tenders and grant applications. Our largest government-funded contract continues to be for the NSW Brighter Futures program.

Expenditure was tightly controlled through the year but particularly during the period of free childcare which saw a significant reduction of revenue. We actively managed our expenditure to closely match our revenue. Expenditure in 2019–20 was \$48,122,849, compared with \$46,884,986 in the previous year.



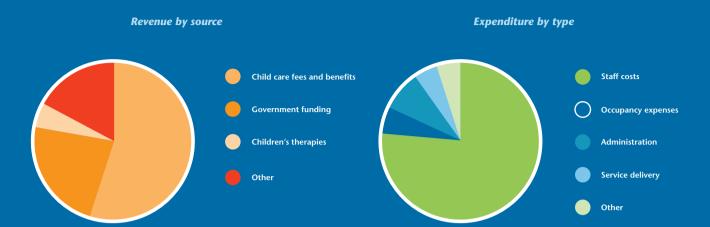
Net assets

\$39.4m

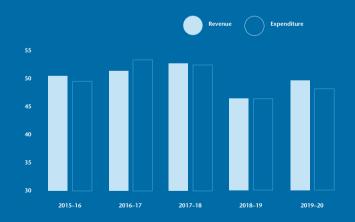
Cash equivalents

\$11.6m

The SDN group maintained a strong financial position with approximately \$11.6m in cash equivalents and \$39.4m in net assets. Net assets increased by \$6m following an independent valuation of SDN's owned property and land as at 30 June 2019. Our profit and loss statement and the statement of our financial position are on pages 44–45 of this review.



Five year consolidated revenue vs expenditure (\$m)



Consolidated surplus over five years



Children's **Education** and **Care Centres**

Fees from our Early Childhood Education and Care Centres continue to be our largest source of revenue, however centre fee revenue fell during the year due to the temporary introduction of free childcare in April 2020, from \$33.9m in 2018–19 to \$27.3m in 2019–20. This shortfall was partially offset by \$1.5m in JobKeeper and \$1.3m in Early Childhood Education and Care Relief packages. These vital programs allowed us to keep our doors open to families through the pandemic and to keep on all of our staff.





Despite the effect of the pandemic we maintained utilisation in our centres at 83% (2018–19: 86%) at a time of increased competition and oversupply.



Utilisation as % of approved places over 5 years



our supporters

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships

Mrs Kirsty Albert

Mrs Ruth Armytage AM

Mrs Robin Blackwell

Mrs Susan Braham

Ms Linda Cassidy

Mrs Angela Donohoe

Mrs Barbara Fewings

Dr Joy Goodfellow

Mrs Jan Harvey-Sutton

Dr Leone Huntsman

James N. Kirby Foundation

Mr Bill and Mrs Pat Locke

McEwen Family Foundation

Mrs Coral Miller

Mrs Sue Perdriau

Mr John Sanders

Mrs Pat Sinclair

Mrs Marion Taylor

Mrs Joan Thomson

Ms Margaret Turnbull

Mr George Turgoose

Mrs Ginie Udy

Mrs Beth Vernon

Ms Rosalie Wilkie

Mrs Barbara Wise

Plus contributions from 208 SDN

staff and families

SDN Access and Inclusion Scholarships

Elizabeth Albert

Ms Nancy Butterfield

Mrs Hillary Hannam

Jenour Foundation

Mrs Jan Jones

Mrs Nancy Lefmann

Building Fund

Mrs H.E. Fairfax

Prudence Finlay

Mr Tonia Goddard

Mrs Mary Hill

Mrs Alice Killen

Ms Emma Longworth

Mr Norman Longworth

Mr Ian Philip

Ms Susan Salter

Mr Tom Taylor

Ms Nanette Swinburn

Mrs Marina West

Life members

Ruth Armytage AM

Effie Bland OAM

Mary Hill

Thanks to the City of Sydney for waiving the rent for three of our centres for 12 months from April 2020 to March 2021, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



be involved

SDN's vision is for an equitable world where all children thrive.

We believe in it is the right of all children to access high quality early childhood education, child care, and early intervention, regardless of economic circumstances, developmental status or cultural background. Our purpose is to promote and enhance the wellbeing, learning and development of children, in inclusive environments. As a not-for-profit organisation, we earn much of our revenue through fee-for-service activities, as well as government funding. However we do need to find additional funds to extend our work to those who are particularly vulnerable and who otherwise might fall through the gaps.

SDN thanks all of our supporters, including staff, members, government, local businesses, donors, families, and other generous supporters.

Support from our families

Many of our children's education and child care centres are supported by volunteer fundraising committees run by the families who use the centre. The funds raised are used to buy additional equipment for the centre, or for special excursions.

Many of our families also donate to our annual 'Families helping families' fundraising campaign, which funds scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children with disabilities in our centres.

If you would like to support a local centre, please contact us to find out how.

Support from the community

We receive grants from philanthropic trusts and foundations to support our two early childhood scholarship programs, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and for children with disabilities or developmental delays.

We also receive donations from corporations, trusts and foundations to buy equipment for specific programs, such as our supported playgroups and our preschool for children with an autism spectrum disorder, SDN Beranga.

Support from our staff

SDN established its Staff Giving program in July 2012 to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships. In 2015 we extended it to include our Access and Inclusion Scholarships for children with a disability or development delay. It is a voluntary regular payroll giving program, and to date it has raised \$14,540 for both scholarships, and contributed to a total of 25 scholarships.

Evie and **Aysha**



In February we presented our 109th Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship to a family at SDN Lois Baker, Waterloo. Our scholarships offer a child a year of preschool education at an SDN centre, and are funded solely through donations. In this instance, the scholarship was supported by SDN families through our 'Families Helping Families' appeal.

What made this scholarship particularly special was the fact that the recipient Aysha is the second child in her family to receive a scholarship. Aysha is one of nine children, and her older sister Evie was one of the first recipients of our scholarships in 2011.

We were thrilled to discover that Evie is now in her first year of high school at Sydney private girls' school Ascham, thanks to a full scholarship from the GO Foundation, which was founded by former Sydney Swans players Adam Goodes and Michael O'Loughlin.

Aysha and Evie's mum Koolyn said, 'Our family and children are so blessed and thankful for the opportunity to be assisted in daycare'.

These opportunities are only possible thanks to the support and generosity of our donors.

Main photo: Aysha with Sam, CEO Kay Turner, Mum Koolyn and Adrienne.

Inset: Evie with Adam Goodes and Michael O'Loughlin of the GO Foundation.



Make a donation

We accept donations from philanthropic foundations, businesses and individuals for our work with our priority areas, including:

- our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early
 Childhood Scholarships
- our Access and Inclusion Scholarships for our early childhood centres, and
- our work with children and families facing challenges
- the SDN Building Fund.

Our subsidiary company, SDN Child and Family Services, is endorsed by the Australian Tax Office as a Deductible Gift Recipient, and donations greater than \$2 are tax deductible.

SDN Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships

In 2007 SDN established its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Scholarships as it was apparent that many Aboriginal children were not accessing mainstream child care and preschool due to cultural barriers and costs.

These scholarships are one of the few funded education scholarship programs in Australia offered to Aboriginal children in the early years before school. They

cover the cost of a child attending an SDN Children's Education and Care Centre, two days a week for one year. The scholarships aim to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children access to high-quality early education and lay the foundations for lifelong learning, ensuring more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can start school on an equal footing.

Since 2007, we have provided scholarships to 115 children, which has only been made possible thanks to donations from philanthropic foundations and individuals. You can see our list of supporters on page 46 of this report.

SDN Access and Inclusion Scholarships

In 2015 SDN established its Access and Inclusion Scholarships to help to reduce financial barriers and increase participation for children with disabilities or developmental delays by covering the cost of a child to attend an SDN Children's Education and Care Centre, up to two days a week for one year. Our inaugural scholarships were awarded thanks to funding from long term supporters the Jenour Foundation. We have now provided scholarships to 29 children.

SDN Building Fund

In 1992 SDN set up a tax deductible Building Fund to assist with the upkeep and repair of SDN's buildings. This Fund is supported by donation only.

More information

To find out how you can be involved, call us on (02) 9213 2400, visit our website www.sdn.org.au, email us on info@sdn.org.a, or follow us on Facebook or Twitter @sdnchildren.

Mona Wilson Bequest







The Mona Wilson Bequest was given by Mona in memory of her sister Hilda Antill, who worked at SDN for 34 years from 1949 to 1983. The bequest was specifically to be used for the 'Woolloomooloo Day Nursery' (now SDN Woolloomooloo).

Over the past year, the upstairs toddler play area at SDN Woolloomooloo was earmarked for upgrading, and in keeping with the bequest's intent, SDN's design team developed a brief in conjunction with the Centre Director and her team. This came to life in the hands of landscapers Puddleton Gardens, who have worked with SDN for a number of years on our playground upgrades.

The building that now houses SDN Woolloomooloo was originally built in 1921 as a multipurpose site

combining SDN's Woolloomooloo Day Nursery, a kindergarten, a Baby Health Centre clinic, and a milk depot that provided access to sterilised milk from government farms. Over the years, the building has been adapted to now be entirely a long day care centre, and the Mona Wilson Bequest has enabled SDN to maintain and upgrade this huge site to keep pace with modern standards and requirements.





SDN Children's Services Level 2, 86–90 Bay Street, Broadway, NSW 2007

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this review and gave permission for their photographs to be used and their stories to be told.

Produced by SDN's Communication Unit. Photography by Anna Zhu. Additional photography by Linda Maclean.

View our full Annual Report at www.sdn.org.au/corporate-publications

Joint Vice-Regal Patrons: The Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC, Governor of New South Wales and Mr Dennis Wilson