



# **CRAIG FAMILY CENTRE**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2025**

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## Our Purpose and Service Philosophy

***We strive to ensure that individuals and families of all kinds are respected by, connected with and engaged in our local community.***

The Craig Family Centre is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation providing activities, support and educational services to local residents and families since 1957. We are committed to working with and for the community.

The Craig Family Centre is involved in early learning and developing new programs that encourage information sharing, mutual support and community participation in local and social issues. The Craig has a strong community development focus and encourages participation and involvement by people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, beliefs and cultures.

### About Us

The Craig is an incorporated association with a long history of community inclusion and development. Established in 1957 as a children's centre, the 'Craig' has grown into a multipurpose hub offering children's services, community and Neighbourhood House programs. The Craig is co-located with Access Health and Community and Maternal and Child Health. Strong connections and cross referral is a key feature of the 'wrap around' model that our 'hub' facility provides.

As an incorporated association, the elected Committee of Management is charged with the responsible management of services in accordance with the Constitution on behalf of its members. Day to day operations are run by our Executive Director leading a team of professionals across core funded program and fee for service areas.

### Our Vision

The Craig's vision is driven by our belief that people, regardless of income, ethnicity or any diversity that defines them for who they are, should be equally respected and given the same opportunities and access to the same services.

Historically, Ashburton had a large proportion of public housing and low-income families but over the past decade rapid gentrification has seen a rise in the overall social and economic index for area (SEIFA) scores that measure disadvantage.

The challenge for our centre is to meet the needs of the broader community whilst not letting low income and socially disadvantaged individuals and families fall through the cracks. We do this with a strong network of partnerships with other service providers in the area, coupled with policies that balance any restrictions to full social inclusion.

Importantly, we are also a strong advocate for sustainability – both in the environment and in our approach to the services we deliver.

# Our People

## **COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT**

### **OFFICE BEARERS 2025**

**CHAIR** Winnie Waudu (**to August 2025**)

Joy Vogt August to current

**VICE CHAIR** Sinead Mooney

**SECRETARY** Rosemary Braut

**TREASURER** Bob Stensholt

### **GENERAL MEMBERS**

Raj Temby

Rob Taylor

Tracey Wheeler

Niketa Simpson

Melanie Thomas

### **MANAGEMENT**

**Executive Director** - Louise Ippolito

#### **Administration**

Administration Officer – Sam Turcinovic

Finance Officer – Dan Ryan

Assist Admin Officer – Sophie Allen

#### **Community Programs, Neighbourhood House**

Community Programs Coordinator – Jordan Sibley

#### **Homework Support Group**

Program Co-ordinator – Vacant

#### **Children Services**

**Educational Leader** – Lin Guo

#### **Joeys Occasional Care**

Room Leader - Margot Serena

#### **Co-Educators**

Emily Fung

Marzia Samad

Nasreen Patel

Charlotte Smart

Pam Kyriazis

Meg Williams

#### **3-Year-Old Kindergarten**

Teacher- Fiona Lin

Co-Educator – Shakiba Shams

Teacher- Lin Guo

Co-Educator – Shakiba Shams

#### **4-Year-Old Kindergarten**

Teacher- Magdalena Castro

Co-educator – Sarah Adam/Emily Fung

Teacher – Anne Muscatello

Co-Educator – Maree Nolan

## Our Partners

### **CO-LOCATED SERVICES**

Access Health and Community  
Ashburton Maternal and Child Health

### **MAJOR FUNDERS**

City of Boroondara  
Department of Education & Training (State)  
Department of Health & Human Services (State)  
Department of Family Fairness & Housing

### **STRATEGIC PARTNERS**

Balwyn Rotary  
Bendigo Bank – Ashburton Community  
Chadstone and Malvern East Rotary  
The EDGE Community Fund  
Lions Club – Boroondara Gardiners Creek  
Shelter Real Estate  
Samarinda Ashburton Aged Services

### **COMMUNITY USER GROUPS**

Ashburton United Soccer Club  
Australian Breastfeeding Association  
CamCare  
Country Women's Association (CWA) – Ashburton  
The EDGE Community Fund  
Egg Decorators Guild of Victoria  
Growing Old Living Dangerously (G.O.L.D)  
Lion's Club – Boroondara Gardiner's Creek  
Lion's Club – Ashwood/Mt Waverley  
Prada Willie Association  
Salvation Army  
Real Mandarin  
Victorian Guild of China Painters

### **SERVICE PARTNERS**

Access Health and Community including CamCare  
Ashburton Baptist Church, House of Hope  
Ashburton Community Centre  
Alamein Neighbourhood House  
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria  
Playgroups Victoria  
EDVOS  
Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)

Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre  
St Kilda Mums  
Power Neighbourhood House  
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

### **AUSPICED GROUPS**

Growing Old Living Dangerously (G.O.L.D)

## Report from the Chair

This has been a productive year at the Craig Family Centre.

**The Committee of Management has overseen the Financial Management** as reflected in the Treasurer's Report and the **growth and maintenance of our Early Childhood and Early Years Programs** as evidenced in the report from our most capable Executive Director, Louise Ippolito.

Our annual enrolment at our Craig Family Centre reflects our excellent reputation within the Boroondara community. The Committee of Management **thanks our wonderful, caring and professional staff for working as a professional team to ensure the highest standard of care, safety and meaningful education for our children and parents.**

Given what's been happening sector wise, ***our children's safety and security has been our highest priority. We have ensured appropriate policies have been sourced and implemented best practices with the commitment of all staff and volunteers.***

Our excellent service delivery is reflected our Craig Family Centre's early years program independent assessment and rating by Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) of **"Exceeding the National Standards of the National Quality Framework."**

It has been heartening to see the growth and development of so many vital **programs in our Neighbourhood House**. Thank you to Jordan Sibley for enriching so many community participants and volunteers' lives

In 2025 the CoM instigated a **professional development scholarship system** to enable two staff members to attend the Early Childhood Australia Annual National Conference in Perth. We are pleased with the positive feedback this experience provided. It is hoped to increase the number of participants in 2026 when the National Conference will be held in Melbourne.

The CoM have also funded two items suggested by staff to increase the wellbeing of our children, volunteers, and staff. **A Shade Sail** has been installed, and the installation of new, more **environmentally friendly, artificial grass in the playground**, which will occur in April.

We're blessed with so many **other wider community groups using the Craig and its resources:** The Egg Painters, Australian Breastfeeding Group, the Growing Older Living Dangerously mature women's group, Boroondara Gardeners Creek Lions Club and the Edge Community Fund.

I would like to thank the **Committee of Management volunteers** who have given their time and shared their expertise to ensure the Craig Family Centre maintains good governance, financial accountability and provides an excellent standard of Early Years Education.

**Committee members:** Sinead Mooney, (Vice President), Bob Stensholt, (Treasurer), Rosemary Braut, (Secretary), and Melanie Thomas, Niketa Simpson, Rob Taylor, Tracey Wheeler, Raj Tembe.

Joy Vogt

President

The Craig Family Centre. 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

# Executive Director's Annual Report 2025

Welcome to my Executive Director's Annual report for the Craig Family Centre Ashburton.

Another year has passed us by which was a year filled with transformation, expansion and with additional projects started and these will continue into 2026. I would like to welcome all the new families who have come to the Craig Family Centre throughout 2025, in addition we welcome new staff members that we have come onboard. I have respected the working relationship I have built with all stake holders, and I intend to continue building on those in the foreseeable future.

In my role as Executive Director, it is and continues to be an honour to lead staff and to be a supportive leader of the team. In Children's Services, we continue to be full in all our programs and ever-growing staff team. The success has come about through the increase in our Kindergarten program and in sessional care. In addition, our team of administration, Neighbourhood House Coordinator have in their roles increased the programs provided and supported CFC overall.

In 2025, CFC had an average of 208 individuals and families attend across the week with some 568 children and adults enrolled across the year, this is a significant increase throughout the year in all our groups. Free kindergarten has enabled CFC to continue four kindergarten classes across a week to support children and families. Our community groups have also continued to grow, and it has been terrific to see the GOLD group attending the CFC bi-monthly having and enjoying many varied activities.

CFC Neighbourhood House employed a new Coordinator, Jordan Sibley who we welcomed to the position where she continued with several of the playgroups filling up as the year evolved. It is wonderful to see the families growing together in many of our programs and making new friends. Music has become one of the most popular playgroups along with our Bush Kinder and parent led playgroups. Jordan has also reinstated our Homework Club which is very successful with the children re naming it to the Vegemite club. This along with many new initiatives and some fantastic free sessions not only for our younger children but also for all ages to participate in has seen the growth of families attending.

Our Philosophy persists to be the underpinning of the significant work the educators do and this then supports our families and assists the COM to reflect on our vision and values. As part of our licencing and regulations the Centre went through the process of Assessment and Rating under the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which remains an integral part of Children's Services. I was so very pleased to announce that the Centre has been rated exceeding the national standard. A huge thanks to all the staff who during their working time contribute to making CFC the centre that we are so very proud of. The QIP documents and identifies our strengths and areas that the service believes may require improvement. CFC is committed to maintaining the seven quality areas through the support and guidance of all the educators, families, and the wider community.

The Craig Family Centre, we foster teamwork that promotes respect, compassion, clear communication, and that's culturally inclusive in our daily practices. In all area's kindergarten and Joeys, the staff are committed to creating positive learning environments that then has contributions in moulding the potential of children within the Boroondara community through partnerships and family focus.

Our President Joy Vogt has supported me throughout the year and committed to many volunteer hours in encouraging me in my role, as at times for both of us it has been a incredibly busy but fruitful year. Joy has also been a wealth of knowledge and support in 2025. In addition, a wonderful support to the Craig Family Centre. Joy has been a member of the Committee of Management coming up to 25 years in April 2026, in many wide-ranging roles throughout this time. Unfortunately, Peter stepped down at the AGM in 2025, form not only his role as President but also a COM member, my sincere thanks go to him and to Kate, Peter's wife who had borne countless hours of Peter's commitment and support of the CFC. I wish them both the very best in the future and hope they enjoy traveling more. to both I say a huge thank you

To all the members of the Committee of Management I express my gratitude for their contribution and time given voluntarily to CFC as it is invaluable. The whole Committee of Management have devoted numerous hours to their positions exceeding what is expected. The Committee of Management through their volunteer input not only play a significant role at CFC but have a focus to commitment in improving the workplace conditions of the educators/staff. The Committee of Management recognises that the employees are CFC most valuable resource and values each individual employee, supporting work life balance. I acknowledge and extend my thanks to all the Committee for their support and relentless time and work they have put into the past twelve months. Each position is one that is a volunteer which regularly demands more time than initially thought and for that I would like to say thank you too all.

A special mention goes to Bob who in his capacity of Treasure has kept us on a financial track to enable a surplus for 2025.

As a not-for-profit organisation overall, we applied for and have been triumphant in acquiring several grants, during 2025, inclusive of IT, Professional Development, Harmony Day, Chatty Café, Childrens week to name only a few. This has supported CFC to continue to provide events for the broader community where we observe a necessity and will continue to support the broader community as we continue our journey.

Reflecting on 2025 several changes have occurred at CFC. We welcome to our Neighbourhood House Coordinator of programs Jordan Sibley. Jordan has built up many new programs and continued with a number of our continuing playgroups. We will continue to grow and develop many more free programs available to the wider community in 2026. CFC will continue a journey of improvement and continued success, and I look forward to another busy year in addition school holiday programs. Sessional care will continue to operate the extended hours throughout the year closing at Christmas time only. Wrap around care held before and after the free Kindergarten hours will continue as we have seen this very popular in supporting our families, this is offered on a term basis due to staffing regulations. A holiday program for our Kindergarten children in the term breaks will be offered where enough places are requested.

Again, a busy year for all staff and COM with many legislative and regulations changes in 2026.

All the best for 2026

Louise Ippolito

Executive Director



# Treasurer's Report 2025

The following comments have been based on the audited Financial Statements presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Craig Family Centre for the 2025 financial year.

## Overall Comments

The Craig Family Centre incurred a surplus of \$61,846 compared to a surplus of \$195,867 in 2024. The main contribution to this result was an increase in staff costs with changes to awards and hours of operation. This was partly offset by an increase in revenue and a decrease in program and other expenses.

## Revenue

Total revenue for the year increased by \$162,265 to \$2,085,856 (\$1,923,591 in 2024). The main revenue items were Children's Services fees \$1,727,238, grants from Government and local organisations totalling \$276,298, other revenues \$40,453 and Neighbourhood House income of \$27,737.

## Expenses

Total expenses for the year increased by \$296,285 to \$2,024,009 (\$1,727,724 in 2024). Increases were incurred for Employee Benefits of \$295,225 to \$1,756,921 in line with changes to staff awards and hours, while Program and Other Expenses decreased.

## Assets

Total Assets were \$1,089,909 compared to \$941,958 in 2024. The main change was due to an increase in Current Assets (including cash) of \$145,788 to \$968,841 (\$823,053 in 2024). Cash funds are held in Term Deposits at the local community bank.

## Liabilities

Total Liabilities increased by \$86,105 to \$326,779 (\$240,674 in 2024). This is mainly attributable to increases in employee accrued benefits and tax liabilities.

## Equity

Equity (Net Assets) was \$763,130 compared to \$701,284 in the previous year, an increase of \$61,846.

This amount reflects the financial result for the year of a surplus of \$61,846.

## Other issues

There are no outstanding issues that have not been reported in the audited Financial Statements. Current arrangements regarding funding from Commonwealth agencies and State and local governments are expected to continue in 2026.



*Bob Stensholt*

*Treasurer*

# Membership Report 2025

<b>Groups / Members</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Craig Family Centre Children's Services</b>	
Sessional Care	
3 Year Old Kindergarten	
4 year Old Kindergarten	
Total Number of Children's Services Members	497
<b>Craig Family Centre Programs and Community Groups</b>	
Committee of Management	9
Neighbourhood House Programs (Harmony Day)	572 259
G.O.L.D Group	29
<b>Total Craig Family Centre Members (2025)</b>	<b>1366</b>

## The Joey Room Annual Report 2025

2025 in the Joeys room was an extremely productive, dynamic year with child enrolments at capacity and waiting lists extensive.

The passion for open-ended play based, child centred learning remained the hallmark of a creative and innovative educational program offered in the Joeys room, and to outline some of the many experiences and provocations through the children's journey of our adaptable environment we began at the start of the year in which the children and educators celebrated the Year of the Snake for the Chinese Lunar New Year.

In March the annual Dental incursion from Access Health took place. The children who participated were able to gain confidence in their personal hygiene and care through an understanding of the aspects of a healthy lifestyle and good nutrition. Through storytelling, discussion around every day and sometimes foods, healthy eating, plus counting and cleaning the children's teeth made such an experience invaluable.

Other highlighted experiences and activities included Easter celebrations, Mother's Day events, Naidoc Week, National Science week, Book Week, Father's Day, Children's Week, Diwali Festival and Christmas celebrations.

An essential part of the Joeys week throughout the year was the Tuesday morning music program facilitated by the very talented Jo Jo who introduced the children to song, dance, stories, musical instruments and the ability to bring out the creative self in everyone.

As part of our community contacts which took place over a term, students from Solway Primary school were invited to spend time reading books and playing with the children. Some of the students had attended the Craig in their younger days so it made these visits even more important creating a connectedness.

The Joeys and the kindergarten rooms were fortunate to gain the support of one of our parents, Christie Cooper, who, through her connections encouraged each and every one by donating several lightboxes, designed through upcycled materials, so the children could become involved planting seeds and seedlings, (also donated), into the punnets in the lightboxes, watching them grow then planting them out into our vegie

Pods placed around the outdoor play space. There was a vast array of vegetables grown and wonderful cooking experiences that followed.

Thankyou Christie for your amazing enthusiasm and ongoing support.

Our Executive Director, Louise, throughout the year, had placed a very high focus on staff professional development, and through this all educators consistently sought to advance the delivery of quality programs and incorporate varied experiences, all of which are documented in our Quality Improvement Plan.

A positive reflection for the coming year is one with optimism and promise, to continue to provide enhanced collaboration and connection, to foster inclusivity and a strong sense of belonging between our families, The Craig Family Centre and the wider community.

Room Leader – Margot.

Educators - Luisa, Charlotte, Nasreen, Pam, Meg and Jeesa.



## Kindergarten Annual Reports 2025

### Platypus Group 2025 Kindergarten 4

The **Class of 2025 Platypus Group** consists mostly of children who transitioned from the previous Kinder 3 – Wombat Group, along with several new families and two families who transferred from the previous Kangaroo Group.

To support the new families in becoming familiar with the learning environment and the teaching team, the children showed great initiative in welcoming the newcomers. They actively initiated play with the new children, helping them develop a sense of belonging and build friendships within the group.

To support and prepare the children for school readiness, we have promoted and reinforced self-help skills since the commencement of Term 1. Children were encouraged to take responsibility for their own belongings, such as their bags, lunch boxes, and drink bottles. In addition, children were encouraged to show respect and help maintain a safe learning environment by assisting with setting up and packing away learning resources. They were also encouraged to report any safety hazards to teachers and to familiarise themselves with the Platypus safety rules. This helped them develop an understanding of how to work cooperatively with other children, particularly during outdoor play when sharing the yard with children from other groups.

To minimise incidents, the children would remind their peers of the safety rules each time before going outside to play. I also have a favourite saying where I raise my hands in the air and the children call out, **“No paper, no pen, no accident report!”** I must admit that this practice worked very well throughout the year.

Regarding social interaction between peers, the teaching team encouraged children to speak up, share their ideas, and express their feelings honestly. Teachers frequently promoted messages about equality and respect for individual differences through turn-taking activities, role modelling, group discussions, and literacy experiences such as storytelling and reading. Through these activities, children developed a better understanding of how to communicate positively with their peers and were given opportunities to strengthen their negotiation and communication skills.

Since the beginning of Term 1, many children have shown a high level of interest in STEM activities. Children frequently engaged in a range of constructive experiences such as building with blocks and magnetic resources, as well as sensory play including water play to explore concepts like sinking and floating. The sandpit and water pump area became a popular STEM station where children experimented with their favourite water pipe system.

To further support their interest in science, we implemented many physics and chemistry learning experiences during the first half of the year. These included balancing activities using a variety of materials, reading books related to the topic, making volcano experiments, creating rain clouds in a jar, and making playdough using conditioner. Children also designed and implemented their own science experiments, such as testing the speed of toy cars and creating constructions with irregular shapes to explore balance. Through these experiences, children had opportunities to develop their problem-solving and negotiation skills. Most importantly, they learned to understand and respect different ways of thinking and doing, building flexibility in their thinking and teamwork.

At the beginning of Term 3, Emily, a teacher from the Joey Room, joined the Platypus Group. Emily brought many valuable ideas to our program, particularly activities related to sustainability and biology. To continue supporting children’s interest in science, Emily introduced loose parts experiences, which enhanced children’s creativity as they used recycled materials to create abstract and unique constructions.

During spring, children also showed great interest in the insects they discovered in the yard. Emily took this opportunity to teach and discuss the life cycle of insects with the children using books with clear illustrations and simple wording that were easy for children to understand. This helped to expand their knowledge and appreciation of nature. We also planted pumpkin seeds together, and the children were excited to observe the growth of their plants over time. At the end of the project, each child was able to take a plant home.

One of the highlights of the year was the end-of-year celebration party. Children contributed their ideas about which songs they would like to perform, alongside some teacher-selected songs. To ensure inclusivity for all children, some of the songs were in languages other than English. The children were excited to learn the dance moves and incorporate simple sign language into the performance.

I felt very grateful to work with such a group of active learners who consistently engaged in their learning and shared their curiosity with me. Their interests and ideas helped guide the development of a program that was meaningful and responsive to their learning.

What a fulfilling year we had! Thank you to the Platypus Class of 2025 and families, Mary, Emily, and Pam for such a wonderful year together.

By Maggie, Emily and Mary

## Koala 2025 Kindergarten 4

We are pleased to present the Annual Report for the Four-Year-Old Kindergarten Koala Group for 2025. The year was particularly meaningful as the children returned for their second year at the service, bringing with them a strong sense of familiarity, belonging, and confidence within the learning environment. Building upon the foundations established in their previous kindergarten year, the program continued to embrace a holistic approach to learning, recognising the interconnectedness of the children's physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual development based on the Early Years Learning Framework.

Central to our educational program is play-based learning, which serves as the primary way children explore, experiment, and make sense of the world around them. Understanding and respecting the uniqueness of each child, we created and extended the learning experiences to reflect the individual strengths, current and emerging interests, and developmental stages. The familiarity the children had with the environment, routines, and the educators, supported a strong sense of safety, belonging, connection, and wellbeing within a culturally safe and inclusive setting.

Throughout the year, the children engaged in a rich and stimulating curriculum which aimed to encourage curiosity, investigation and problem solving. Through collaborative play and meaningful interactions with their peers and educators, children were able to strengthen their critical thinking, communication, and social skills. Experiences included daily program based and weekly music sessions with JoJo, sensory exploration, creative arts, literacy, and numeracy as well as engagement and connection with the natural environment.

A key focus of our program highlighted the children's social and emotional development, supporting them to further develop their understanding of emotions, build positive relationships, and strengthen their sense of identity and independence. We aimed to achieve this by modelling respectful relationships and supported the children through emotion focused conversations, storytelling, social stories and reflective discussions within the experiences and play-based environment. These experiences helped the children further develop skills such as self-regulation, empathy, resilience, and cooperation.

As part of our four-year-old kindergarten program, we also placed a strong emphasis on school readiness and the transition to primary school. We intentionally incorporated experiences that supported children to further develop the skills and dispositions needed for a confident start to primary school. These included opportunities to foster independence, responsibility, following routines and instructions and developing early literacy and numeracy skills. The children were encouraged to manage their own belongings, engage in decision making independently about their learning and environment, and participate in in group discussions and collaborative experiences. Through these experiences, children were able to develop a sense of belonging and readiness for the expectations of the school environment.

Our Term 4 excursion to Chesterfield Farm was a highlight for the children, providing a "hands-on" experience of farm life. The students' day at Chesterfield Farm included feeding animals (such as emus, goats, kangaroos) a ride in the fun tractor-drawn wagon, a visit to the pig sties, hand milking a cow with a show and to conclude the day, a fun farm show including sheepdog work.

Our end of year celebration marked the end of a rewarding and successful year, with the children demonstrating growth across all areas of development. As they prepared to transition to their next stage of learning, the children had developed a range of important skills and a love for learning.

We extend our sincere thanks to all the children, families, educators, and supporters who contributed to our kindergarten community. Your ongoing trust, partnership, and support enabled us to provide a nurturing and engaging environment where every child could thrive.

Thank you,

Anne Muscatello & Maree Nolan

## Wombat Group 2025 Kindergarten 3

Dear Committee Members, Families, Educators, and Supporters,

It is with great pleasure that we present the Annual General Meeting (AGM) report for the Wombat Group's kindergarten program in 2025. This year has been filled with meaningful learning experiences, joyful discoveries, and continued growth within our supportive kindergarten community. We are proud of the children's progress and grateful for the strong partnerships we share with families and our wider community.

### Program Overview

In 2025, we welcomed 22 three-year-old children into the Wombat Group program. Throughout the year, we focused on creating a warm, inclusive, and engaging learning environment where children felt safe to explore, express themselves, and develop new skills. Our play-based program supported children's holistic development and included a variety of learning experiences such as:

#### Social-Emotional Learning:

We supported children in building confidence, empathy, and strong relationships with their peers. Through group discussions, cooperative play, emotional literacy activities, and yoga sessions, children developed important skills such as communication, self-regulation, and problem-solving.

#### Music and Movement:

Music, dance, and drama continued to be joyful parts of our program. These experiences encouraged children to express themselves creatively, develop body coordination, and build confidence while working together as a group.

#### Literacy and Numeracy:

Children were introduced to early literacy and numeracy concepts through storytelling, songs, games, and both group and individual activities. These experiences supported language development, early reading skills, counting, pattern recognition, and problem-solving.



#### Sensory Play:

Hands-on sensory experiences remained a key part of our program. Activities such as water play, sand exploration, and sensory trays helped children develop fine motor skills, creativity, and curiosity while encouraging experimentation and discovery.

#### Art and Craft:

Creative experiences allowed children to explore different materials and techniques while expressing their ideas and imagination. These activities also supported the development of fine motor skills that are important for future writing and learning.

#### ELLA Program & Auslan:

We continued to introduce children to additional languages through the ELLA program and basic Australian

Sign Language (Auslan). These experiences supported communication skills while promoting respect for cultural diversity and inclusion.

### **Exploring the Natural World:**

Children showed great curiosity about the natural environment. Through outdoor play, nature exploration, and discussions about animals, plants, and insects, children developed early scientific thinking and a deeper appreciation for the world around them.

### **Cooking Experiences and Science Experiments:**

Throughout the year, children participated in simple cooking activities and hands-on science experiments. These experiences encouraged teamwork, curiosity, and an understanding of basic concepts such as mixing, measuring, and observing changes.



### **Special Events & Celebrations**

Celebrations and community events were highlights of the year, providing opportunities for families to connect with the kindergarten and share meaningful moments with the children. Events included:

Chinese New Year Celebration

Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Grandparents' Day celebrations

Easter Egg Hunt Day

Spooky Dress-Up Day (Halloween)

Book Week Dress-Up Day and "Bring Your Favourite Book to Kinder"

End-of-Year Celebration

These events strengthened our sense of community and allowed children to experience and appreciate different cultural traditions.

### **Incursions**

In 2025, children also enjoyed a range of incursions that enriched their learning and provided real-world experiences.

Incursions included:

Dental Check-Up by Assess Health – promoting oral health awareness and good hygiene habits.

Reptile Encounter Incursion – giving children the opportunity to see and learn about fascinating Australian reptiles up close.

Storytime with the Ashburton Librarian – introducing children to the joy of books, storytelling, and encouraging early literacy while building connections with our local library.

These experiences sparked curiosity and excitement while supporting children's understanding of the world beyond the classroom.

## Looking Ahead

As we reflect on another successful year, we remain committed to providing a nurturing and engaging environment where every child can grow, learn, and thrive. In the coming year, we will continue to build on children's interests, strengthen family partnerships, and provide meaningful learning experiences that support each child's development and wellbeing.

We sincerely thank all our families, educators, and supporters for your ongoing trust, involvement, and encouragement. Your support plays a vital role in creating a positive and enriching kindergarten community for our children.

Warm regards,

**Fiona Lin**

Early Childhood Teacher

Shakiba Shams Assistant

Wombat Group



## Kangaroo Group 2025 Kindergarten 3

2025 marked my third year at Craig Family Centre. This year, we welcomed 22 three-year-old children into the program, including several younger siblings of children who attended in 2023 and 2024. It was wonderful to reconnect with returning families and to see the continued trust they place in our centre to care for and support their children.

A key focus of the Kinder Three program is supporting children to develop self-identity and independence. Throughout the year, children were encouraged to practise daily self-help skills such as packing and unpacking their bags on arrival, managing their belongings and developing personal hygiene routines. These experiences help build confidence and a sense of responsibility.

Developing children's emotional intelligence and social competence was another important focus. Educators used social stories, puppets, role play and group discussions to support children in recognising emotions, understanding others' perspectives and learning appropriate ways to resolve conflicts. At this stage of development, children benefit greatly from adult guidance to navigate social situations. It was rewarding to receive positive feedback from families who observed their children using language to express their feelings and manage challenges more effectively at home.

The community corner continued to be a valuable learning environment where children engaged in imaginative and social play. Areas such as the hair salon, nail salon, restaurant, coffee shop and birthday party setting encouraged children to exchange ideas, negotiate roles and practise communication and collaboration skills.

Learning experiences in the Kangaroo Group were planned in response to children's interests. Throughout the year, themes such as airports, pandas, farms, castles and fairylands inspired children's imaginative play. These play-based experiences encouraged creativity, problem solving and sustained engagement.

Children's understanding of science and inquiry was supported through hands-on exploration. Sensory play, such as mixing cornflour and water, and various science experiments encouraged children to observe, predict and test ideas. We also borrowed Bee-Bots from the Melbourne Museum, providing children with opportunities to explore early concepts of technology and coding. Children demonstrated curiosity and creativity while building car ramps to explore speed, constructing bridges for knights and experimenting with building tall towers.

Mathematical and early literacy skills were embedded throughout both intentional teaching and free play experiences. Activities such as puzzles, craft projects and engagement at the mathematics focus table supported children's problem solving, pattern recognition and fine motor development.

Children's cognitive development was further extended during group times through intentional teaching on topics including space, the human body and different types of animals. Children also enjoyed participating in cooperative games such as Jenga, which supported teamwork and concentration.

Gross motor development was promoted through yoga sessions, music and movement activities and a wide range of outdoor play experiences. Children practised balance and coordination through activities such as using walkers, throwing basketballs and playing football. The outdoor environment also provided rich opportunities for imaginative play and collaborative role play.

Family and community engagement remained an important part of the program. Throughout the year, we hosted Mother's and Special Person's Day, Father's and Special Person's Day, and Grandparents Day, welcoming families to participate in the children's learning environment. We were also grateful to have family volunteers share their culture and experiences with the children. For example, one family celebrated Diwali with us, while another visited to talk about their work in the police force.

Children also participated in celebrations of cultural and community events such as Chinese New Year, Pancake Tuesday, Diwali and Christmas. In addition, events such as Bird Week and Plastic Free July were acknowledged as part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability education.

Cooking experiences were an enjoyable and meaningful part of the program. Children prepared a variety of foods including sushi, dumplings, green fruit skewers, smoothies and fried noodles, using vegetables that they had planted in our vegetable garden such as spring onions, bok choy and herbs. These activities supported children's understanding of healthy eating while introducing foods from different cultures.

Indigenous perspectives were respectfully incorporated into the curriculum. Children took turns leading the Acknowledgement of Country and developed an emerging understanding of Australia's history and the importance of respecting the land of the First Peoples.

During the year, children also participated in an excursion to Ashburton Library. This was a valuable learning experience where children observed their local community, learned about the library borrowing system, participated in songs and enjoyed craft activities. We also hosted reptile and dental incursions, and students from St Michael's Primary School visited the Kangaroo Group for a play day, providing children with opportunities to connect with the broader community.

As the year concludes, 21 children will transition into the Kinder Four program in 2026. We are proud of the progress they have made and look forward to supporting them in their continued learning journey. We also look forward to another year of meaningful learning, growth and joyful experiences for the children and families at Craig Family Centre.

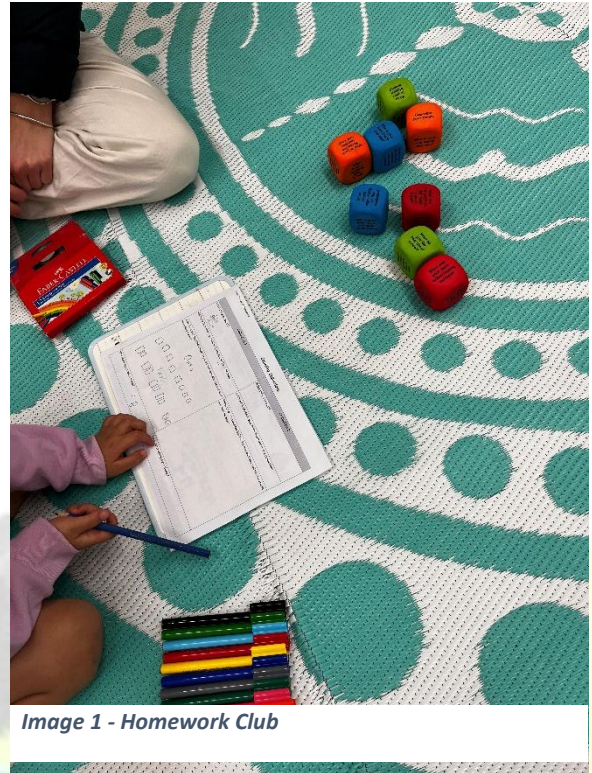
Many thanks

Lin Guo Teacher,  
Shakiba Shams Assistant  
Kangaroo Group

# Neighbourhood House Annual Report 2025

## **2025 program impact highlights:**

- Welcomed a total of 580 participants to all community programs, with an extra 300 participating in Harmony Day Festival = a total of 880 participants engaged over 2025
- Increased centre membership by an extra 100 with the development of new free and low-cost programs (terms 3 & 4)
- Developed a robust volunteer program, growing from 1 volunteer engaged in term one to 20+ engaged in term three
- Applied for and awarded x5 funding requests, totalling \$18,500 to fund community program room upgrade, program material costs, event facilitation and more
- Upgraded facilities and furniture within the community room ensuring a welcoming, inclusive, safe and comfortable environment
- Personally invited to speak on the international Volunteer Manager's panel for the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre
- Developed and introduced 5 new, free community programs in response to Council of Boroondara 2024 feedback for program expansion



*Image 1 - Homework Club*



*Image 2 - Children's Week in partnership with ACCESS health*

## **2025 key program development:**

In 2025, I commenced my role as Community Programs Coordinator at the Craig Family Centre—a position that I deeply value and thoroughly enjoy. When I began, my primary goal was to expand the centre’s community programs to engage a broader cross-section of the local community, particularly individuals and families experiencing disadvantage.

To guide this work, I referred to council priorities for the Craig Family Centre’s community programs, which focused on expanding program offerings to engage a broader cross-section of the community, including individuals experiencing disadvantage.

Over the past 12 months, I have worked toward these goals by significantly increasing the diversity of programs offered at the Craig Family Centre and by developing a strong and sustainable volunteer program.

This process has been both challenging and deeply rewarding, requiring creativity, adaptability, and collaboration. It has also supported significant professional and personal growth.



*Image 3 - Community Cooking Classes*



*Image 4 - Community Art Classes*

A particularly successful initiative in 2025 was the development of the Community Art Classes. This program provides up to 20 community members per term with the opportunity to learn new creative skills, build social connections, and gain awareness of local community services.

The program has been designed to remain financially accessible, with participants only required to hold an annual centre membership rather than pay per session. Through this approach, the program has engaged 60 participants across three terms. It has also provided valuable experience for 12 short-term volunteers, all of whom have been able to include their involvement in the program on their resumes to support future employment opportunities. The volunteer component of this program has also supported emerging facilitators and community members seeking experience in community engagement and program delivery.

Further to my 2025 accomplishments, I successfully secured \$18,500 in program funding through five successful grant applications from a range of philanthropic and funding bodies; a further \$11,500 has been awarded for 2026. These grants have been able to support the development and provision of community programs, of which continued growth and strengthening is underway for 2026.



Image 5 - Project run in collaboration with Council



Image 6 - Crowd at Harmony Day

## 2026 program goals:

Looking ahead to 2026, I have a range of goals focused on strengthening and expanding the impact of the Craig Family Centre's community programs. These include the continued development of our volunteer program, which currently engages 30 active volunteers, as well as increasing participant capacity across our free and low-cost programs.

As always, increasing centre memberships remains an important priority. In Terms 3 and 4 of 2025 alone, our free programs generated 100 new centre memberships, and I aim to continue building on this momentum in the coming year.

A key focus of my work will be further expanding the cohort of community members who access our programs. This includes identifying participants' needs and connecting them with relevant support services through partnerships I have developed with organisations such as Eastern Community Legal Centre, EACH, Good Shepherd, and others. Through these connections, participants can access both skill-building opportunities and meaningful social engagement.

I will also continue strengthening partnerships with local health and community organisations to support social prescribing referrals and integrated community support pathways.

Jordan Sibley  
Community Programs Coordinator  
10/03/2026



*Image 7 - Photo of participants enjoying a tea on the couch after yoga*



*Image 8 - LEGO Club*

## G.O.L.D group Annual Report 2025

GOLD Growing Older Living Dangerously is a group for women aged 55 and older which promotes fellowship and fun. We always welcome new members. The group has been going for around 25 years and is a women's only group, because men are the majority in so many scenarios. GOLD is all about sharing updates, milestones, forging new friendships, deepening existing ones, lending a helping hand, promoting camaraderie and engaging with new ideas.

Last year was a good year with many interesting meetings and outings. There was an Indian theme during the year to promote cultural understanding, the highlight being the Bollywood Bonanza, with Indian dance, Indian food, wonderful clothing, such a riot of colour and tastes. There were traveller's tales about India and a visit to the restaurant Tandoori Den. Also during the year we had talks about navigating My Aged Care and visits to Retirement Villages such as Rylands Burwood and Aveo. There was a courageous talk about "Living with an intellectual disability" by Robyn McKay.

The last year has been one of connection and growth, with many thanks to our competent and creative president Sue Adams. Thanks also to Pamella, Kaye, Joy and Di and to all who contributed.

Sincere thanks to the CRAIG for their ongoing support. GOLD is a very caring and beneficial group, and we are grateful for the use of these excellent premises, which enable us to deliver such meaningful sessions.

Wendy Frayne (Secretary)

## Financial Statements 2025

Please refer to the separate document titled:

*Craig Family Centre Incorporated – Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31 December 2025.*