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**Government
of South Australia**

**OFFICE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
2023-24 Annual Report**

30 Flinders Street, Adelaide 5000

[Office for Early Childhood Development](#)

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2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT for the Office for Early Childhood Development

To:

The Hon. B.I. BOYER

Minister for Education, Training and Skills

This annual report will be presented to Parliament to meet the statutory reporting requirements of *(insert relevant acts and regulations)* and the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular *PC013 Annual Reporting*.

This report is verified to be accurate for the purposes of annual reporting to the Parliament of South Australia.

Submitted on behalf of the Office for Early Childhood Development by:

Bec Curtain

A/Chief Executive

Date 30/09/2024

Signature 

From the Chief Executive

The 2023–24 year marks the start of a significant chapter for the Office for Early Childhood Development (the Office) and the early childhood sector more broadly.

Since the Office’s formation in 2023, our mandate has been clear. We exist to work across the early childhood sector to create a system that gives all South Australian children the best possible start.

Critical to this is the roll-out of universal 3-year-old preschool from 2026, giving every child access to 2 years of teacher-led, play-based early learning before school.

Our role is to work with all parts of the early childhood sector and communities to support and drive the big changes that will be needed to reduce the developmental vulnerability of our children. This means building collective capacity across the state through workforce attraction and retention initiatives, uplift and expansion of preschool services, provision planning, and the introduction of integrated hubs to offer more preschool hours and supports for children in need.

In June 2024, the South Australian Government announced an additional \$1.9 billion investment in early childhood to commence the staged roll-out of 3-year-old preschool and other key reforms from 2026. This investment is a once in a generation opportunity for the early childhood sector, the significance of which is not lost on our Office. We’ve spent the past year laying the essential groundwork for these systemic reforms and, together with the government and sector partners, I am pleased to say that we have made significant progress.

We have supported government to plan and announce the staged 3-year-old preschool roll-out to commence from 2026 as promised.

We are partnering with the long day care sector across the state to unlock existing capacity, and are working with government and non-government sessional preschools with an early focus on regional areas.

We supported government to announce the opening of 2 integrated hub demonstration sites in Port Pirie and Adelaide's northern suburbs by Term 4, 2025.

We have worked with the Teachers Registration Board and the sector on regulatory changes to allow teachers with birth to 5 qualifications to register and work as teachers in preschools across the state. This was a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care to build the workforce required for the 3-year-old preschool roll-out and is now included in relevant regulations.

We consulted on the legislation that establishes the Office for Early Childhood Development to steward the early childhood system through these vital changes and beyond.

We supported government to launch the Early Childhood Workforce Strategy, which provides a full suite of supports to lift the attraction, retention and diversity of the workforce, and support quality service provision.

This includes opening a financial support program to assist aspiring teachers and educators to pursue early childhood qualifications, with additional support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those living and studying in regional and remote communities.

We also developed a statewide workforce attraction campaign to capture the attention of current and prospective students considering post-secondary pathways and opportunities to upskill and reskills.

We are progressing the establishment of the Aboriginal Co-design Governance Group (ACGG) in partnership with the South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON). The ACGG supports a shared decision-making process to co-design, shape and implement, early childhood reforms for Aboriginal children, together with the voices of Aboriginal leaders and the South Australian Aboriginal communities.

These are big stakes in the ground already. I'd like to thank the many people in our sector who have advocated for change in South Australia's early childhood sector and contributed to the work that's been achieved. Reforms of this scale are complex but with continued focus, dedication and collaboration, the momentum is building every day and I have every confidence that, working collectively, we will succeed.

Let's give our children the start they deserve and work together to achieve this bold, generational reform.



Kim Little

Chief Executive

Office for Early Childhood Development



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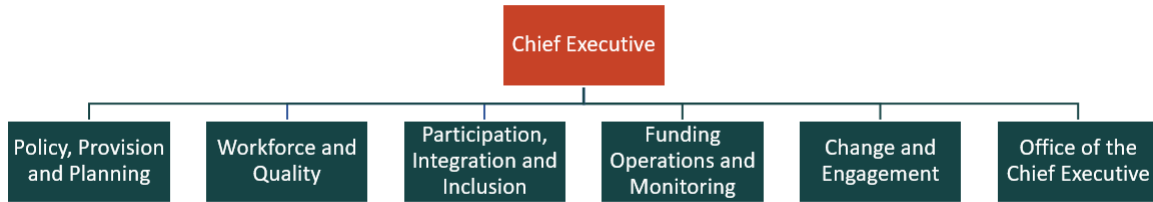
Overview: about the agency

Our strategic focus

Our Purpose	To create a fairer and better future for all children in South Australia.
Our Vision	To reduce the rate of South Australian children entering school developmentally vulnerable from 23.8% to 15% over 20 years.
Our Ways of Working	<p>In the Office for Early Childhood Development, we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are champions for change to create a better system to support children’s development • are stronger when we work across the sector, with other departments and jurisdictions, creating partnerships to make real change in children’s lives • learn from research, Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing, services making the biggest impacts and from children and families • respect and show kindness to children, families, communities and people who dedicate themselves to supporting early childhood development.
Our functions	<p>The primary function of the Office is to act as a steward of South Australia’s early childhood development system, and in particular to reduce the proportion of children in the state who are developmentally vulnerable when starting school.</p> <p>Additional functions of the Office are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to facilitate, commission and support research relating to early childhood development • to support and facilitate the development of systems, policies and processes for the secure sharing of data across the early childhood development system • to support the universal reach of child health and development checks • to promote a vision of place-based, responsive and connected service delivery, building early childhood education and care as the backbone of a universal early childhood development system • to promote universal access to 3- and 4-year-old preschool, developing and implementing funding models and connecting preschool providers to the broader early childhood development system

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to develop, implement and fund fit-for-purpose infrastructure and targeted programs and services, including commissioning integrated service hubs, to support the early childhood development of children at increased risk of developmental vulnerability • to align supports and services with the needs of children by partnering with families, state authorities, non-government organisations and local and Commonwealth governments • to provide overall strategic direction in relation to government early childhood development services • to commission or recommission government services, as required • to promote the recognition of the cultural and linguistic diversity of children accessing services within the early childhood development system • to promote the participation of children with disability in the early childhood development system • to promote the participation of children in care, children who are in contact with the child protection system and children who are receiving child and family support services in the early childhood development system • to undertake strategic workforce planning to support early childhood reforms and service provision. <p>Specific functions in respect of Aboriginal children are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting the cultural safety of early childhood education and care services for Aboriginal children • aligning supports and services with the needs of Aboriginal children by partnering with Aboriginal families and organisations • supporting measures aimed at implementing national agreements relevant to the early childhood development of Aboriginal children • promoting Aboriginal data sovereignty in relation to early childhood development data.
<p>Our objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver universal preschool programs for all 3-year-olds by 2032 • Unlock potential by providing extra support to children who need it most. • Work together to empower Aboriginal children. • Build a connected early childhood system for the best start. • Grow and support the early childhood workforce. • Steward the early childhood development system.

Our organisational structure








Our Minister(s)

The Hon Blair Boyer MP is the Minister for Education, Training and Skills.



Our Executive team

	<p>Kim Little is the Chief Executive of the Office for Early Childhood Development. Working with her team and across governments and departments, Aboriginal leaders, sector stakeholders, unions, the professions, parents and the community, she is tasked with leading the design and implementation of the landmark reforms flowing from the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.</p> <p>She brings her expertise in education and social policy issues to the table as South Australia embarks on bold reforms to increase the number of children starting school developmentally on track.</p>
	<p>Natalie Atkinson is the Executive Director of Participation, Integration and Inclusion and is responsible for leading the design and delivery of additional supports to unlock the potential of all children and support the government’s target to reduce the rate of South Australian children entering school developmentally vulnerable, from 23.8% to 15% within 20 years. This includes reforms to empower Aboriginal children, led by a dedicated Closing the Gap team.</p>

	<p>Nicole Lynch is the Executive Director of Policy, Provision and Planning and is responsible for overarching budget, provisioning, and infrastructure strategy, including market modelling and funding model design. This division also has responsibility for whole-of-reform program management.</p>
	<p>Bec Curtain is the Executive Director of Workforce and Quality. Bec's team is responsible for work to grow and support the early childhood workforce and support quality improvement in the sector.</p> <p>Workforce and Quality works with the sector to design innovative approaches to increasing the supply, diversity and quality of the workforce.</p>
	<p>Georgy Grundy is the Director of Funding Operations and Monitoring. Georgy's team oversees the partnership conditions, contracting arrangements and associated funding for the new preschool program; monitors program delivery and oversees research, data and evidence to drive quality and reduce developmental vulnerability; and works with rural and remote communities to provide support and advice on addressing childcare shortages.</p>
	<p>Hannah Turnbull is the Director of Change and Engagement and is responsible for leading a strategic approach to communications, engagement and change to drive transformative early childhood reforms in South Australia. This includes responsibility for the establishment and management of the Office's local teams.</p>
	<p>Jason Turner is the Chief Information Officer and is responsible for digital strategy for OECD and leading the implementation of the technology solutions. This includes ensuring appropriate protocols and safeguards are in place for the collection and management of data.</p>

Other related agencies (within the Minister's area/s of responsibility)

Department for Education

Department for State Development

TAFESA

The agency’s performance

Performance at a glance

Office for Early Childhood Development at a glance

SA Government committed to action all recommendations

in response to the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.

\$96.6 million announced

for investment in SA’s early childhood workforce over 4 years.

Minister’s Early Childhood Advisory Forum established

to engage with sector voices and early childhood experts.

\$14 million committed

over 4 years to partner with Aboriginal communities.

Ongoing funding announced for Words Grow Minds.

Universal 3-year-old preschool roll-out announced

as part of the \$1.9 billion SA Budget 2024–25 investment in early childhood services and support over the period to 2032–33.



Two demonstration hubs announced

in Port Pirie and Adelaide’s northern suburbs.

Early Childhood Workforce Strategy launched

in June 2024.



Broader recognition of qualifications

for early childhood teachers in SA with the inclusion of the birth to 5 years degree.

16,000+

total downloads.

2,000+

weekly user sessions.



Early Years SA App

Agency specific objectives and performance		
Agency objectives	Indicators	Performance
Establish foundations of the early childhood reforms	Determine full suite of reform components and investment.	Full response to Royal Commission recommendations released. \$1.9 billion over 9 years announced to support reforms, including \$715m within the 2024/25 Budget forward estimates.
Deliver quality, universal preschool for all 3-year-olds by 2032	Provide a clear plan for the staged roll-out of 3-year-old preschool, to guide sector action and partnership.	Roll-out schedule for 3-year-old preschool released.
Unlock potential by providing extra support to children who need it most	Plan targeted initiatives to support children most in need, including integrated hubs and 30-hour preschool places.	Two demonstration sites announced in Port Pirie and Adelaide's Northern suburbs to trial integration hubs, bringing together health, wellbeing and education offerings.
Work together to empower Aboriginal children	Support genuine shared decision-making and co-design, backed by additional investment to help Close the Gap.	\$14 million over 4 years secured to co-design initiatives to increase the benefits that Aboriginal children receive from existing 3-year-old preschool and invest in early childhood education and care Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Grant agreement with the South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network established to partner in the co-design work.

<p>Build a connected early childhood system for the best start</p>	<p>Sector leaders are well connected to the reform agenda and each other.</p> <p>Parents are supported with high quality information and connection to services.</p>	<p>Established the Ministerial Early Childhood Advisory Forum.</p> <p>Launched the OECD website and social media presence.</p> <p>Maintain and expand the Early Years app, providing trusted information for parents; reminders to organise child health and development checks, immunisations, dental checks and when to start preschool and school enrolments; and connecting parents with early years providers.</p>
<p>Grow and support the early childhood workforce</p>	<p>Co-design a South Australian early childhood workforce strategy to support attraction, qualification pathways, retention and quality.</p>	<p>Workforce Strategy released June 2024, setting the strategic direction to attract and retain a quality early childhood workforce.</p>
<p>Steward the early childhood development system</p>	<p>Establish the Office for Early Childhood Development to act as a steward of the South Australia’s early childhood development system and reduce the proportion of children in the state who are developmentally vulnerable when starting school.</p>	<p>Consultation undertaken on the Office for Early Childhood Development Bill 2024 to establish the Office for Early Childhood Education in legislation. The Bill is expected to be introduced to Parliament in 2024.</p>

Corporate performance summary

Corporate services were provided to OECD by the Department for Education in 2023-24.

Employment opportunity programs

OECD is committed to being an inclusive workplace that reflects the diversity of the South Australian community. As at 30 June 2024, the OECD workforce comprised of:

- 91 per cent women
- 88 per cent female executives
- 5 per cent of employees identifying as Aboriginal.

Aboriginal Leadership Committee

OECD is committed to providing opportunities for the Aboriginal voice to be front and centre in all the work we do. The Aboriginal Leadership Committee (ALC) has been established to:

- provide a culturally safe space to discuss issues that are impacting the cultural responsiveness of OECD and associated projects
- provide a forum for Aboriginal employees to have their voice heard
- provide strategic cultural advice to OECD wide projects
- monitor the cultural safety and appropriateness of the OECD and advise OECD Executive of any concerns
- provide professional network and support structures for Aboriginal employees.

Program name	Performance
Disability Inclusion	OECD is developing a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to set out actions to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of the office and its services.
Diversity Inclusion	OECD is developing a Diversity and Inclusion Plan to ensure the office attracts and retains a diverse, equal and inclusive workforce.
Reconciliation	OECD is in the process of developing its own Reconciliation Action Plan to set out its commitment to tangible, sustainable and substantive reconciliation and cultural safety.

Agency performance management and development systems

Performance management and development system	Performance
<p>The OECD’s approach is guided by the Performance and Development Policy and Guideline managed by the Department for Education.</p> <p>Employees and their managers are expected to engage in regular performance and development conversations, including bi-annual review.</p> <p>Implementation is monitored via the Human Resource System (HRS).</p>	<p>As at 30 June 2024, 95% of eligible employees had a current performance and development review.</p> <p>The Office will engage employees and managers in the importance of regular performance and development discussions in 2024-25.</p>

Work health, safety and return to work programs

Program name	Performance
WHS policies and programs	<p>The OECD has adopted Department for Education WHS policies and procedures.</p> <p>To 30 June 2024 there have been no incidents or hazards to report.</p>

Workplace injury claims	Current year 2023-24	Past year 2022-23	% Change (+ / -)
Total new workplace injury claims	0	N/A	0
Fatalities	0	N/A	0
Seriously injured workers*	0	N/A	0
Significant injuries (where lost time exceeds a working week, expressed as frequency rate per 1000 FTE)	0	N/A	0

**number of claimants assessed during the reporting period as having a whole person impairment of 30% or more under the Return to Work Act 2014 (Part 2 Division 5)*

Work health and safety regulations	Current year 2023-24	Past year 2022-23	% Change (+ / -)
Number of notifiable incidents (<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012, Part 3</i>)	0	N/A	0
Number of provisional improvement, improvement and prohibition notices (<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Sections 90, 191 and 195</i>)	0	N/A	0

Return to work costs**	Current year 2023-24	Past year 2022-23	% Change (+ / -)
Total gross workers compensation expenditure (\$)	0	N/A	0
Income support payments – gross (\$)	0	N/A	0

**before third party recovery

Executive employment in the agency

Executive classification	Number of executives
Chief Executive	1
SA Executive Services Level 1	4
SA Executive Services Level 2	4

The [Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment](#) has a [workforce information](#) page that provides further information on the breakdown of executive gender, salary and tenure by agency.

Financial performance

Financial performance at a glance

The following is a brief summary of the overall financial position of the agency. The information is unaudited. Full audited financial statements for 2023-2024 are attached to this report.

Enter text, tables, charts and text information. Ensure alternative text is included for all graphics to ensure accessibility.

Statement of Comprehensive Income	2023-24 Budget \$000s	2023-24 Actual \$000s	Variation \$000s	Past year 2022-23 Actual \$000s
Total Income	8,010	8,033	23	0
Total Expenses	8,010	7,632	378	0
Net Result	0	401	401	0
Total Comprehensive Result	0	401	401	0

Total expenses were \$0.4m lower than budgeted mainly reflecting vacancies and updated data system strategy and payment timing for cost modelling services.

Statement of Financial Position	2023-24 Budget \$000s	2023-24 Actual \$000s	Variation \$000s	Past year 2022-23 Actual \$000s
Current assets	0	2,992	2,992	0
Non-current assets	0	81	81	0
Total assets	0	3,073	3,073	0
Current liabilities	0	1,411	-1,411	0
Non-current liabilities	0	1,261	-1,261	0
Total liabilities	0	2,672	-2,672	0
Net assets	0	401	401	0
Equity	0	401	401	0

Total assets recorded as at 30 June 2024 are due to under expenditure as above, and also a transfer of cash from the Department for Education due to an administrative restructure.

Total liabilities recorded as at 30 June 2024 mainly reflect the balance of employee leave entitlements.

Consultants disclosure

The following is a summary of external consultants that have been engaged by the agency, the nature of work undertaken, and the actual payments made for the work undertaken during the financial year.

Consultancies with a contract value below \$10,000 each

Consultancies	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
All consultancies below \$10,000 each - combined	Various	\$9,245

Consultancies with a contract value above \$10,000 each

Consultancies	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
BDO Services Pty Ltd	Provide risk management support for setting up organisational risk management approach.	\$12,431
Deloitte Access Economics Pty Ltd	Deliver sector preschool planning survey.	\$13,320
Chamonix It Management Consulting (SA) Pty Ltd	Provide enhancements to OECD Early Years Application.	\$20,306
Deloitte Access Economics Pty Ltd	Provide detailed costing and modelling services.	\$257,712
Scyne Advisory Pty Ltd	Provide project management support, machinery of Government discovery work, and development of service level agreement.	\$270,700
	Total	\$583,714

See also the [Consolidated Financial Report of the Department of Treasury and Finance](#) for total value of consultancy contracts across the South Australian Public Sector.

Contractors disclosure

The following is a summary of external contractors that have been engaged by the agency, the nature of work undertaken, and the actual payments made for work undertaken during the financial year.

Contractors with a contract value below \$10,000

Contractors	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
All contractors below \$10,000 each - combined	Various	\$21,830

Contractors with a contract value above \$10,000 each

Contractors	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
Square Holes Pty Ltd	Benchmarking survey for early childhood workforce sentiments.	\$10,500
Gabriel Burman	Policy analysis and modelling for Layered Supports.	\$15,349
Jessica Graham	Policy development and project management.	\$19,320
Kim Little	Strategic policy, planning and operations establishment.	\$24,240
Showpony Adelaide Pty Ltd	OECD visual identity creation.	\$37,200
Benjamin Kite	Policy development and program management for Workforce Strategy.	\$53,650
Nunkuwarnin Yunti of South Australia Inc	Service support to increase the reach of child health and development checks for Aboriginal children in South Australia.	\$54,050
Nicole Lynch	Policy development and modelling strategy.	\$75,825

Contractors	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
Hays Specialist Recruitment (Australia) Pty Ltd	Office recruitment support.	\$138,195
Richard Rose Sydney Pty Ltd	Creative strategy, concepts and marketing collateral to support the Workforce Attraction campaign.	\$158,975
	Total	\$609,134

The details of South Australian Government-awarded contracts for goods, services, and works are displayed on the SA Tenders and Contracts website. [View the agency list of contracts.](#)

The website also provides details of [across government contracts.](#)

Risk management

Risk and audit at a glance

The Office for Early Childhood Development engaged the services of BDO to commence risk identification and mitigation strategies.

Risk Management responsibility will sit with Corporate Services and report into the Chief Executive and the Executive Leadership Team.

Fraud detected in the agency

Category/nature of fraud	Number of instances
Maladministration	0
Misconduct	0
Corruption	0

NB: Fraud reported includes actual and reasonably suspected incidents of fraud.

Strategies implemented to control and prevent fraud

The Office adheres to relevant fraud, corruption, misconduct and maladministration control framework and procedures, under an arrangement where corporate service functions are provided by the Department for Education. This includes controls for fraud detection, prevention and response strategies. The Office has implemented its own internal processes to align with the Department for Education’s relevant framework and policies.

Public interest disclosure

Number of occasions on which public interest information has been disclosed to a responsible officer of the agency under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018*:

Nil.

Note: Disclosure of public interest information was previously reported under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 1993* and repealed by the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* on 1/7/2019.

Public complaints

Number of public complaints reported

Complaint categories	Sub-categories	Example	Number of Complaints 2023/24
Professional behaviour	Staff attitude	Failure to demonstrate values such as empathy, respect, fairness, courtesy, extra mile; cultural responsiveness	0
Professional behaviour	Staff competency	Failure to action service request; poorly informed decisions; incorrect or incomplete service provided	0
Professional behaviour	Staff knowledge	Lack of service specific knowledge; incomplete or out-of-date knowledge	0
Communication	Communication quality	Inadequate, delayed or absent communication with customer	0
Communication	Confidentiality	Customer's confidentiality or privacy not respected; information shared incorrectly	0
Service delivery	Systems/technology	System offline; inaccessible to customer; incorrect result/information provided; poor system design	0
Service delivery	Access to services	Service difficult to find; location poor; facilities/ environment poor standard; not accessible to customers with disabilities	0
Service delivery	Process	Processing error; incorrect process used; delay in processing application; process not customer responsive	0
Policy	Policy application	Incorrect policy interpretation; incorrect policy applied; conflicting policy advice given	0
Policy	Policy content	Policy content difficult to understand; policy unreasonable or disadvantages customer	0

Complaint categories	Sub-categories	Example	Number of Complaints 2023/24
Service quality	Information	Incorrect, incomplete, out-dated or inadequate information; not fit for purpose	0
Service quality	Access to information	Information difficult to understand, hard to find or difficult to use; not plain English	0
Service quality	Timeliness	Lack of staff punctuality; excessive waiting times (outside of service standard); timelines not met	0
Service quality	Safety	Maintenance; personal or family safety; duty of care not shown; poor security service/ premises; poor cleanliness	0
Service quality	Service responsiveness	Service design doesn't meet customer needs; poor service fit with customer expectations	0
No case to answer	No case to answer	Third party; customer misunderstanding; redirected to another agency; insufficient information to investigate	0
		Total	

Additional Metrics	Total
Number of positive feedback comments	0
Number of negative feedback comments	0
Total number of feedback comments	0
% complaints resolved within policy timeframes	N/A

Service Improvements

OECD has processes in place to respond to and manage complaints and consider these along with any feedback for improvement purposes, in line with the Department for Education’s Complaint Management Policy and Procedure.

Compliance Statement

<p>The Office for Early Childhood Development is compliant with Premier and Cabinet Circular 039 – complaint management in the South Australian public sector</p>	<p>OECD processes align with the Department for Education’s Complaint Management Policy and Procedure and complies with the PC039.</p>
<p>The Office for Early Childhood Development has communicated the content of PC 039 and the agency’s related complaints policies and procedures to employees.</p>	<p>The Complaint Management Policy, Procedure and resources utilised by OECD are available to all employees via staff intranet.</p>

Appendix: Audited financial statements 2023-24