



ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022



KAYA / WELCOME

Our 2021-2022 Annual Report is a reflection of our continuing tenacity, capacity, and flexibility to innovate. The highlights and positive impacts captured over the past financial year provide a snapshot of who we are, our people and culture, and how we collaborate with community partners to deliver services that support our community.

Thank you to our teams, our partners, our Board, and our volunteers for their ongoing support in promoting positive childhoods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Ballardung, Wadjuk, Noongar Boodja, where Meerilinga's main offices are located, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community.

We respectfully acknowledge the First Nation people, past and present in the spirit of reconciliation.



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ABOUT US

About Meerilinga

Meerilinga is a not-for-profit integrated organisation and registered charity that promotes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by providing enriched early education experiences for children and through developing strong and connected communities.

Meerilinga provides early childhood and community services for the child and family services sectors, is a registered training organisation and contributes to the diverse education, policy and practice areas to empower children and families and improve practice in the sectors.

Our Vision

Providing enriched early education experiences for children through developing strong and connected communities.

Our Mission

To be outstanding in the development and wellbeing of children and to support their families and community as a local, independent, charitable organisation.

Promoting Play with Purpose

Children are drawn to new and exciting experiences and have an innate ability to decide their own play based on their individual interests. Meerilinga promotes play with purpose by encouraging children to explore their world and create their own unique learning outcomes.

Promoting Positive Childhoods

Meerilinga aims to build the capacity of families and communities to identify and respond to their own needs and develop strategies for healthy and happy childhoods.

Promoting Professional Excellence

Meerilinga is committed to exceeding industry standards in every aspect of our organisation.

This is achieved through a dedication to continuous improvement, best practice approaches, and strategic collaborations with other providers.

Promoting Health and Wellbeing

Meerilinga encourages families and communities to prioritise health and wellbeing and recognise the importance of resilience.

Programs, workshops, and other resources are made available to support families and communities in developing knowledge and skills in these areas.



BKLYN
NEW YORK

Meerlings
Meerlings Training College
RTD Code: 6000

Meerlings
Training College

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO AND PRESIDENT

The fiscal year 2021 - 2022 marked a pivotal period for Meerilinga to adjust to the yo-yo impact and business fall out from COVID-19. Our priority and attention to the safety and health of people has been priority and testament to our values and purpose. However, the economic fallout has presented our organisation with a difficult year ahead as we shape and accelerate a new era and a future inclusive of changing community and purchaser dispositions as well as address the levels of exhaustion and overwhelm post social distancing, masks, lockdowns and mandates.

Toward the close of the year our planning shifted from managing a pandemic crisis, to managing the realisation that the place we're going to come back to will be different from the place we were prior Covid. Feedback and data have been critical in determining the level and speed of actions required and this methodology will remain critical and concurrent to our strategic and operational decisions going forward. We can anticipate that growth will be compressed initially as we navigate multiple versions of our future and trial new markets.

Our investment in technology and upskilling of staff achieved advancement in digital initiatives for our human resources, administration and training areas. We also achieved retention of all purchased services and continuing contracts, delivering our services with community foremost in our efforts through flexibility and sheer determination. And turning our attention to our employees, finding tailored interventions to maximize satisfaction, performance, and productivity during the pandemic, our next response is to accelerate clear responsibilities and further opportunities to learn and grow, and define new staffing models to match the new ebb and flow of business areas.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all our financial supporters, sponsors, philanthropists, and corporate volunteers for their commitment to West Australian children and acknowledge the Board, Executive, Advisory Team, staff and volunteers who have all contributed to our determination to complete the 2021-22 year successfully.



Lesley Moreschi
Chief Executive Officer



Bruno Camarri AM LLB
President

FINANCE UPDATE

It is pleasing to be able to report that Meerilinga has managed effectively to navigate through the impact of COVID-19 whilst maintaining the quality and level of services and programs, despite the restrictions imposed over a significant part of the year as well as increased Covid case numbers that occurred when travel restrictions were relaxed.

Therefore, it was a challenging year with major revenue streams being impacted. However, with the dedication and hard work of the entire Meerilinga community, managed to provide the platform to navigate through such challenges.

Consequently, Meerilinga incurred an end of financial year overall deficit and therefore our team is working hard to potentially grow the existing revenue streams and expand into new business strategies whilst keeping costs under control.

Our annual financial audit was conducted by Ray Woolley Pty Ltd who verified that the financial reports fulfilled the financial reporting requirements under the Associations Incorporations Act 1987 (WA) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. This includes both Meerilinga Children and Community Services Foundation Inc and Meerilinga Children and Community Services Inc.

We thank the Department of Communities, Lotterywest, Heathway and Department of Education for their continued support and significant funding contributions to various programs and projects.

In addition, we also greatly appreciate the support of all our other stakeholders, partners, communities and friends, as it is invaluable to the successful continuity of our organisation.

With the continued assistance and support of all our stakeholders, in the context of easing restrictions on business activities and the new normal of post Covid era, the Board of Governors, Executives and staff are confident that the times ahead, though challenging, will provide renewed growth prospects in our core business strategies, to successfully drive Meerilinga and the community towards our vision, mission and goals.

Peter Harper
Executive Manager Finance and Resources





CHILDREN'S WEEK

Children's Week is a national awareness week celebrated annually in October across Australia. This week is dedicated to celebrating children and the important role children play in society and the importance of fostering positive childhood across our state.

Despite the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, we held a successful Children's Week and Family Fun Day in 2021. We are excited for Children's Week and Family Fun Day to return in 2022 with a 'Go for 2 & 5' message that encourages healthy eating habits for all Western Australians.

The theme for the upcoming 2022 Children's Week is based on UNCRC Article 27: **'All Children have the right to a standard of living that supports their wellbeing and healthy development.'**

This year, we are excited to work in partnership with Lotterywest, Healthway and The Department of Communities in distributing a grant funding pool of over \$80,000 to 84 remote and regional community organisations to host their own local Children's Week events.

A heartfelt thank you to Lotterywest, Healthway, The Department of Communities, The WA Department of Education, The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment, our sponsors, partners, volunteers and the WA community for supporting Children's Week.

84 Remote and regional community organisations supported with grants

7,000 Registrations to attend 2022 'Go for 2 & 5' Family Fun Day

95+ Children's Week events celebrated across WA from Walpole to Kununurra

MAJOR SUPPORTERS:



as convened in WA by



Government of Western Australia
Department of Communities



Department of
Education

OUR COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

At Meerilinga, our impacts reach far and wide across the community.

Our services foster children's sense of belonging through connecting them with their community. Our Early Learning Program (Pre-Kindy and Bindi Kindi) and Playgroups provide opportunities for children to build their confidence and develop strong social connections through building positive relationships.



Our parenting services help mums, dads, new parents, single parents and caregivers to increase their capacity in developing parenting skills, accessing resources, and building on a support network. We partner with the City of Cockburn, Kwinana Early Years Service, Telethon Kids Institute and Caralee Community School to support families in local communities.



We support students in their journey to becoming educators through our Registered Training Organisation. Our Meerilinga Training College offers Certificate III, Diploma and Traineeship qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care. We help individuals and communities develop

their capacity to become lifelong learners through our training programs.



COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Creating pathways that enable individual, family, and community wellbeing is at the heart of what we do at Meerilinga.

Some of the ways we foster and nurture community wellbeing is through leading WA's Children's Week, where we support remote, and regional organisations throughout WA to host events that celebrate and raise awareness of Children's Week. We work in collaboration with Lotterywest, Healthway, The Department of Education and The Department of Communities to provide grants for remote and regional not for profit organisations and councils to strengthen their community engagement during Children's Week.

We also organise the Children's Week Family Fun Day celebration and engage the Perth Metro community in a variety of activities to raise awareness of Children's Week.



Our Children and Family Services are community hubs where each Centre collaborates with local organisations in the community. As local community needs change, so do our partnerships. We have partnered with Giv-it, supplying voucher for families in need, and Share the Dignity, providing women's personal products and care bags.



We foster great relationships with our friends at the WA Police, The Department of Fire and Emergency Services and St John Ambulance so our children and families can get to know our local first responders.



We also provide culturally inclusive Playgroups and support networks in consultation with our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, children, families, and communities.



Our Connecting Families in Bullsbrook service partners with the City of Swan to empower young people in the community by hosting Junior Hangouts - a safe space for teenagers to engage with their community and build positive relationships.



Our eight Children and Family Services continue to serve local communities as inclusive places where children and families can thrive, find belonging and feel valued for their contribution.



We were deeply humbled to receive a bequest during May this year on behalf of a past Meerilinga volunteer, Grace Alexander. This money will be invested back into our services through sponsorship of Early Learning Families and to children's resources as per Grace's request.

To honour Grace's memory and her interest in the education of young children, we have established the Grace Alexander Fund within Meerilinga.

Thank you to Grace and her family for this generous gift.

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Meerilinga respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Traditional Custodians of the Land in which we live and share. We respect the local perspectives, stories and knowledges shared with us as Custodians and in allowing us to enrich our lives through mutual knowledge and understanding.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Meerilinga's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was updated in February 2022 and new actions have been embedded across our organisation. Our RAP outlines our commitment to reconciliation both internally and in the communities in which we serve.

We would like to thank our Elders, Koya, Ngalang Moort Ngalang Koorlangka, Kadadjiny Waabiny Families, AEIO West Beechboro Primary School, and the City of Swan for their time and contribution towards our RAP. Without their guidance and tireless commitment, it would not have been possible to bring our RAP into its current stage.

We would like to recognise all internal and external members of the RAP Working Group for their sharing of knowledge and commitment to Meerilinga's journey to reconciliation.

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

Since its formation in 2017, our RAP Working Group have been working cohesively to ensure our plan is embedded in all our programs and services.

We have been successful in our NAIDOC grant application which supported all our Services in hosting NAIDOC Week celebration events with their local communities.

We have also incorporated the Acknowledgement of Country across all our Centres during Pre-Kindy, Bindi Kindi, Playgroups, in meetings, and during Meerilinga Training College classes and cultural training sessions.

In line with our RAP action plan to increase cultural competence of provide opportunities to extend knowledge our Beechboro Service hosted a screening of Incarceration Nation as part of NAIDOC Week. Staff, community members, and other local organisations were welcome to attend and participate.



"Mihi Betham (CELA) is a very strong advocate for Aboriginal children and families engaging with Meerilinga. Mihi brings a wealth of cultural knowledge that enables her to easily support cultural learning and development for Aboriginal children and communities".
- Community Partner



VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers continue to be the heart and soul of programs and services here at Meerilinga. We continued to enjoy the opportunity to work closely with Volunteering WA and local government Resource Centres, including the City of Swan, City of Melville, City of Cockburn, and Midland Resource Centre. These important connections help us recruit new volunteers and learn new skills through volunteer training courses they provide.

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

This year we have seen a slow return in volunteers transitioning back from COVID restrictions. Our biggest increase has been the placement of students from a range of learning institutions including Curtin and Murdoch Universities, Stotts College, Tafe colleges throughout the metropolitan area and a number of high schools. These students have brought with them a new and exciting range of expertise and knowledge to share with our staff, children, and families.

Once again Meerilinga was very fortunate to receive a Thank You Volunteer Grant through Volunteering WA. The grant was put towards expressing our thanks to our amazing volunteers. We hosted a morning tea during which volunteers were able to network, learn more about the Centres they supported and were presented with a certificate of appreciation and a gift.



This year we formed a special partnership with Stotts College, due to Covid-19 the college had difficulties placing many of their Diploma of Community Services students. After taking on one of their Community Services students with our Youth Officer as a supervisor, Stotts College reached to Meerilinga with a special project asking if we could take on another 12 Diploma of Community Services students into our service for student placement.

These students worked with the Youth Officer and Volunteering Coordinator. They focused on the gaps and needs of the community for the services located Beechboro, Ballajura, Woodvale, Kingsley, Cockburn and High Wycombe. It was fantastic to work with these students, thanks to Stotts College for allowing us the privilege.

41 REGISTERED VOLUNTEERS

8 COMMUNITY MOTHERS GROUP MEMBERS SUPPORTING NEW MUMS IN THE COCKBURN AREA

12 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STUDENTS



CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICE: BALLAJURA

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

Meerilinga Ballajura, has seen an increase in our Early Learning Programs. The Bindi Kindi, our two-year-old program, had full enrolments this year and they have since successfully transitioned confidently into our Pre Kindy program.

Our Pre Kindy children continue to engage with community, further developing their life skills and socialisation, whilst building upon their pre literacy and numeracy skills ready for “Big School”.

Our Little Sunshines Playgroup continues to strengthen families’ social connections within community, whilst developing trusting relationships with each other to mentor and discuss parenting and form new friendships.

Recently we had the privilege of supporting our local community of Brabham by being involved with a pilot program called Bubs of Brabham. Our staff were able to highlight the importance of play based learning and early literacy skills with the families while enjoying a casual walk in the community.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our collaboration with the Sikh Temple to provide vegetarian meals, Foodbank referrals, and Woolworths food division program helps fill our community pantry for people requiring food assistance.

We also work closely with the Ballajura Library and City of Swan for our story time visits and Junior Board Games program which continues to be a fantastic space for local youth engagement.

We maintain relationships with Stotts College, local Early Years Networks, Second Bite, Paint the Swan REaD, Helping Minds, and many others.



2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

This years Reconciliation Week event was a huge success with great attendance by community members and local agency partners.



“Thank you to the amazing staff, you are all so lovely, caring and kind. Our daughter loves coming to Meeriliga and is always excited to see you all.”
- Ballajura Parent

As a part of Meerilinga Ballajura’s Reconciliation Week celebrations, we lined our centre with a “Footprints to Reconciliation” display. These footprints told the story of Australia’s ongoing journey towards reconciliation beginning in 1788.

Community members were encouraged to follow the footprints and learn more about Australia’s reconciliation history, and where we stand today.

Visitors were invited to share visually what reconciliation means to them and what they feel is needed to move forward.

We were left with some wonderful and inspiring messages promoting reconciliation within the Ballajura community.



“Thank you for making our son excited for school! He loves playing with all the things you take time to organise. Thanks for making him feel safe and secure.”
- Ballajura Parent

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICE: BEECHBORO

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

At Meerilinga Children and Family Centre Beechboro we value the community and family input into all our programs and services.

Whilst COVID-19 presented many obstacles for both our families and the wider community, we came together to overcome them and strive for a more connected and integrated service moving forward. Through our Early Learning Program, our MTC students, our Playgroups and community groups we have evolved into the integrated service you see today.

Community events such as our NAIDOC celebration are always looked forward to as they are a chance to reconnect the community.

We look forward to many more collaborative events being held at Beechboro within our programs and with our key stakeholders who support our many endeavors and initiatives.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We continue work in collaboration with the City of Swan and their community development officers, Landcare, Food Bank WA, Woolworths Altona, Coles Beechboro, local primary schools including Beechboro, West Beechboro, and East Beechboro Primary Schools, and many others. We are so grateful for these partnerships and the impact they enable us to have in our community.

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

A huge centre highlight for Beechboro this year was our NAIDOC 2022 event which was celebrated on Tuesday 28th June 2022. It was a fantastic day had by all. We enjoyed lots of activities, having a yarn, connecting to country, and eating all the tucker. It was a busy morning mingling with our community with over 200 people in attendance.

Special mention to the City of Swan, West Beechboro Primary school, Middle Swan Primary School, Cahoots, Woolworths Altona, and everyone involved who helped bring this day together.

It was great to see the community embracing the theme to Get up! Stand up! and Show up! for all First Nations Peoples.

In March 2022, we had Vicki and Anri from Hearing Australia for coming to Kadadjiny Waabiny to share the HAPEE Ears for Early Years information with us. Hearing Australia returned during second term to provide hearing testing for children in attendance.

"Our family is so grateful for such caring educators for our son. Every drop off and pickup we are always met with warmth and kindness from Lisa and Asheka. Our son loves going to Bindi Kindi every Thursday and Friday, and we know it's because his educators take great care of him as well as provide loads of learning and support whilst he is in their care
- Beechboro Parent



On May 26, the children in the Pre-Kindy Early Learning Program acknowledged National Sorry Day. The children recreated native flowers and painted the Aboriginal flag.

Together we read the story 'Day Break' by Amy McQuire and spoke about how families were split up and taken away from their home.



CONNECTING FAMILIES IN BULLSBROOK

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

Here at Connecting Communities Bullsbrook, we have been busy engaging in partnerships and connecting our community through Playgroups, a weekly Pram Walk, workshops, community events, and various school holiday activities.

We've had a successful year engaging and connecting with over 200 families. The Meerilinga Bullsbrook Playgroup's Facebook group, which was developed since COVID-19, continues to grow into a thriving online portal for families to stay connected with the community and has now reached 147 members who share information on events and activities with other community groups.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We work in collaboration with the Ethel Warren Community Centre to host our community events. We work closely with the City of Swan's Community Development team and Youth Development team as well as Community Link and Network (CLAN) Midland to deliver workshops and events.

Our connections with the Bullsbrook Child Health Nurse, Bullsbrook Youth Services, and Bullsbrook Library continue to be an asset to the services we provide our community.

2020-2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Our Junior Hangout program is still increasing in number with 40 children registered and attending most weeks. We will be continuing this partnership with City of Swan over the next three years thanks to a grant received through Swan Communities for Children.

Our Easter event was highly successful with an estimated 120 people participating. This event provided the community with a day filled with a variety of art, crafts activities, toys, books, games and a special easter egg hunt, further empowering local people and strengthening social connections.



"Meerilinga provides an invaluable service to the Bullsbrook Community. Families thoroughly enjoy the relaxed and very welcoming environment that Miranda creates. I have very limited resources out here in rural Bullsbrook and without Meerilinga, families would be probably never join and support each other."
- Bullsbrook Community Partner



CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICE: COCKBURN

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

Cockburn have formed some wonderful new connections in our community.

Laura from Little Messy Learners provides a weekly messy play class in our Community Room, we have formed a new Sustainability Network Group with the support of Belinda from Little Green Steps, and connected with Helping Minds to provide some workshops for the community.

We have continued our strong connection with Bree from Bunnings Bibra Lake, who provides activities for our school holiday programs and supports our Community Events.

Our totem has been embedded in our Early Learning Programs and the children have enjoyed taking Kookie (Bindi Kindi) and Maggie (Pre-Kindy) Koolbardie home to their families and to share their home life with them. Our new RAP resource area in our foyer has supported the children in learning about Aboriginal culture.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our Service works in collaboration with the City of Cockburn, Cockburn Toy Library, Helping Minds, Sustainability Network Group, Cockburn Integrated Health, Meerilinga Parenting Service, and many more.

2020-2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Once again our NAIDOC Week celebration was a highlight for Meerilinga Cockburn. We were very blessed to have Elder Marie Taylor's daughter, Chelsey, do a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony.



We had KAB Art N Design facilitate a community art canvas, lots of delicious bush tucker to taste and children's activities. Thank you City of Cockburn for the Cultural Grant which supported this event.



"Wonderful update of all the great activities that are delivered at Meerilinga. Thank you everyone for your dedication to our children and the warmth you show"

- Cockburn Parent



In June 2022, we celebrated World Oceans Day: an international day of action that recognises and supports the fulfilment of worldwide sustainable development goals.

Our children participated in activities and group discussions focussing on how ocean pollution affects sea animals and what we can do to help.

Together we brainstormed promoting the awareness about revitalisation and collective action for the ocean and saving sea animals.

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICE: HIGH WYCOMBE

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

High Wycombe have continued with our Pre-Kindy and Bindi Kindi Early Learning Programs.

We continue to work closely with the local community to service their needs, while collaborating with local agencies and services. We currently offer multiple different Playgroups for families, a range of parenting workshops, First Aid courses, Food Sensations workshops and more.

We continue to work with Meerilinga Training College as part of our Integrated Service Approach and offer the opportunity for students and aspiring educators to study Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care at our Centre.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We work in collaboration with our local child health nurse to provide families accessible health consultations. We partner with ZigZag Early Years in organising pop up play-days and parenting workshops. We work closely with Communicare to offer free parenting support services and workshops at our Centre.

Through a partnership with High Wycombe Library, we were able to provide our families with Better Beginnings reading resource packs to help encourage early literacy.

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

During April we held the launch of our Purple Bench project. We were joined by local community, as well as MLA Stephen Price, MLC Donna Faragher and Margaret Thomas the Mayor of City of Kalamunda, Lifeline, Healthy Minds, Mihi our Cultural and Engagement Liaison, and Nick Abraham our local Noongar Elder. Our purple bench honors the memory of women who are victims of domestic violence, and reminds us all to look out for our community.



In June, we received a land care grant from Woolworths to help with expanding on our existing bush tucker garden. We plan on adding more fruits, vegetables, and native plants.

We will also be updating our gardening and educational tools to teach the children how to care for land and be more sustainable. This will involve using our scraps in the worm farm or compost bin.



“Thank you to all of you who make up the beautiful team at Meerilinga High Wycombe. I appreciate you all very much. Thank you for everything you do for our son and our entire family. You all put in so much effort and are so caring. Happy Educator’s Day, we would be lost without you ”
- High Wycombe Parent

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICE: HILTON

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

Meerilinga Hilton Children and Family Service continues to be a valued hub for community events and workshops.

The Service is used by the community for activities and events such as children birthday parties, first aid, adult learning courses, and community enrichment programs. Service providers also use the facility, for workshops such as Therapy Focus.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We are continuing to build connections and partner with our wider Hilton community. We work in collaboration with Hilton Child Health Centre, Hilton Dads, City of Fremantle, local elders Marie Taylor and Freda Ogilvie, plus many other.

Our partnerships with several parenting organisations, including the South West Metropolitan Parenting Service, enable us to provide free in-person and online workshops for parents and carers

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

This year we collaborated with Men's Health WA, PCYC, and Fremantle Toy Library to hold a Pizza and Lego Night. We held this event to connect with fathers, father figures, and men in Hilton in order to gain their input and identified needs in the community for future events.

The conversations and feedback we received were very encouraging and the lego creations were phenomenal.

Local community members expressed interest regular meetings for increased connection; so developing and implementing a playgroup at Hilton has been a big focus this year. We are excited and ready to launch a Hilton playgroup in September this year.



Our community really came together for our NAIDOC Celebration. The incredible Koolankas Kreate provided storytelling, didgeridoo playing, and a dance performance. Bunnings O'Connor provided a children's activity and Woolworths South Fremantle donated items to make bush tucker.



"It was lovely to see you again, and to be a part of today's event. It was very special to hear Chelsea and James speak and the boys were amazing, so good to see the emerging leaders loving and sharing their culture"
- Hilton Community Member

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICE: KINGSLEY

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

Meerilinga Kingsley has a long history of engaging with community and working towards local solutions, working in different ways to achieve outcomes. We value the community and family input into all our programs and services.

Our educational workshops and programs continue to be well received by community. Some examples of the workshops we delivered this year are: healthy lunch box workshops, daddy and daughter hairdressing sessions, and cyber safety for seniors. These workshops are well attended, with great outcomes for the participants.

The community playgroup is attended by families from the Kingsley and surrounding areas. Our facilitated playgroup is sort after for our planned experiences and engaging mat sessions with families learning different ways to tell stories, set up environments and provide creative experiences that are play based.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our Seniors cuppa club, Cancer support playgroup, and German playgroup all help to improve neighbourhood relationships and social connections, facilitating a sense of belonging to our service.

We continue to work in collaboration with a variety of local organisations including Coles Second Bite, Communicare, Ngala parenting programs, Men's Shed Wangara, and The Fathering Project.

Our creative workshops with our local Bunnings continue to be a lovely way to connect with our local community.



2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

In October 2021, we launched our Purple Bench Project to raise awareness of domestic violence and honour domestic violence victims.

We are thankful for community partners: Jayde from the Centre for Women's Safety and Well-being, Kristy from Relationships Australia WA, and Vicki from Pat Giles Centre for joining us for the launch.

The presence of the purple bench at our front entrance raises public awareness of the role of society to make a difference with both little and big steps.



"Meerilinga Kingsley is a welcoming friendly place where children and their families are made to feel safe and welcomed. It's a place where friendships are formed. It's a welcoming community space"

- Kingsley Volunteer



CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICE: WOODVALE

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

At Woodvale we have connected with a variety of co-located services based on community feedback. This has seen our community room almost fully booked all day and evenings for all ages and interests.

We run three different playgroups to meet the high demand for families to connect safely. These were initially started when our borders opened and we needed to be more wary of potential Covid-19 spread.

We have seen an increase of community participation, especially from over 55's, in activities, events and workshops with most now becoming fully booked out well before the event.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our community connections continue to grow.

We run monthly Intergenerational Storytimes at Woodvale Library in collaboration with the library and the City of Joondalup.

Our weekly intergenerational afternoon teas with Woodvale Social Club continues to be a highlight in our week.

Secondbite and SUPA IGA Woodvale provide food for our community pantry and various community events throughout the year.

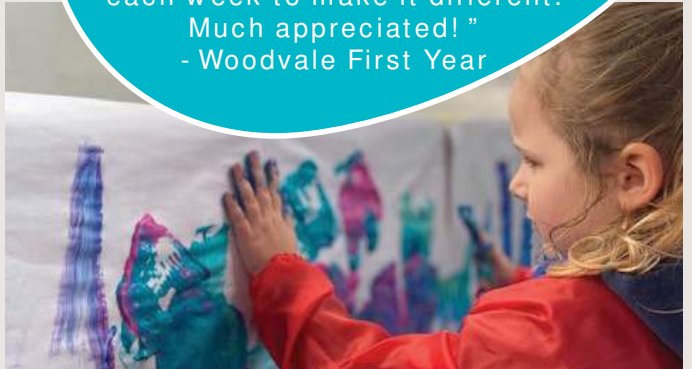
And many fantastic organisations running programs and workshops through our centres, including Helping Minds, and Little Free Spirit.



2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

In March we celebrated Harmony Week with the Kindy class at North Woodvale Primary School. Together made a collaborative artwork using their handprints to signify the beauty in diversity. We love the partnership we have made with the teachers there and look forward to future shared events.

“Thanks you for a great Term 1!
The team at Woodvale always put
so much effort to make us feel
welcome and even vary the toys
each week to make it different.
Much appreciated!”
- Woodvale First Year



In 2022, we partnered with Wanneroo Library to receive regular installments of ‘Museum in a box’! Our first box came in February and was called ‘Introduction to Nyoongar Culture.’

As we were learning about sustainable living at the time, this box aligned perfectly. We used this opportunity to explore being sustainable by living off the land.



PARENTING SERVICES

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

Meerilinga Parenting Service continued to build on previous highlights and achievements in 2021-22, notably our relationships with families and key stakeholders. We work with families with children aged 0-18 years in the local government areas of East Fremantle, Fremantle, and Melville.

 **30**
WORKSHOPS DELIVERED

16 
COURSES COMPLETED

 **35** **PARENTS PROVIDED ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT**

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We partner with Fremantle Women’s Health Centre to run workshops and courses from their facility that supports parents and children, as well as professional development opportunities and networking days.

We partner with Multicultural Futures to support families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. We have seen great outcomes for families in the form of increased accessed to parenting workshops and improved cultural responsiveness.



2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

A major highlight is that a significant proportion of parents are returning for more than one workshop or event.

Our PlayTime program was a highlight because it met a demand for service – the chance for parents to attend a parenting workshop with their child(ren). Participants have reported feeling less isolated in their struggles. They have stated that being able to attend the workshop with children in attendance gives them the opportunity to experiment with new parenting strategies in-the-moment, and see parenting tools modelled by the facilitator. A number of parents have commented on the organic way this program has allowed them to learn new strategies for tricky times and transitions.



The ongoing relationship with SLWA and libraries has meant the continuation of the Sharing Stories project, a celebration of reading, multiculturalism and families in WA; this continues to be a fruitful collaboration with outcomes of deepened feelings of support and connection for CaLD families.

The Children’s Week Podcast series was a highlight in that it allowed us to showcase some fabulous WA voices in the Parenting sphere, in an accessible way. We are continuing this podcast for Children’s Week 2022 and are very excited for the new episodes to be released.

OUR SUCCESS STORY

The grass roots capacity building that we've seen via Parenting by Connection programs has been a huge success!

Parents have set up WhatsApp groups, ongoing play sessions and regular Listening Partnerships as a way to find supportive spaces. The program assists parents in creating a web of caring and reciprocal relationships.

Not only does this reduce their sense of isolation, but parents who feel understood by their peers are then able to offer deeper understanding, as well as firm but caring limits, to their children. Listening, respect, and warmth provide participants with the leadership skills and support needed to assemble the conditions they need to help their families thrive.



For me it has been absolutely amazing. That focused playtime has made such a difference. Building that strong attachment for separation anxiety, having all those games – the chasing, don't leave me, the smothering in kisses – the bond that has strengthened with doing those activities has been so lovely. I can't say enough how much it has actually made a difference for us. It has been absolutely beautiful. And singing times at teeth time, you know brush our teeth for morning and for night, he knows the song and the routine, and it has made a huge difference for us. The strength that has come for our relationship has just really blossomed. I'm really thankful. I've absolutely cherished it.
-Participant of PlayTime



OUR GOALS

We aim to continue to build Meerilinga Parenting Services both in the South West Metropolitan Region and more broadly across our Children and Family Services and service delivery areas to ensure Meerilinga is regarded a leader in supporting parents in WA.

We aim to find new and innovative ways to engage with our clientele; one initiative we hope to pursue is podcasting. This option offers learning at the point of need, and because it is both free and flexible it is a highly accessible way to share information.

We aim to continue to build and strengthen partnerships, connections, and relationships with service providers and organisations both at the local level, at a state wide level and nationally.

We will continue our partnership with the South West Metropolitan Parenting Service to deliver parenting support, education, and information to families with children with a focus on Aboriginal families and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse families, fathers, and young parents.



TRAINING AND EDUCATION

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

Meerilinga Training College (MTC) continues to deliver quality training to students in the early childhood education and care sector and supporting their journey on becoming Educators. 2022 sees the third year of the Department of Training and Workforce Development's Lower Fees, Local Skills initiative – which has continued to reduce the barrier for students in taking up studies.

This year, MTC also remains committed to supporting our diverse cohort of students with various needs through continuing our new 'Level Up' program aimed specifically at youth.

We have worked tirelessly to develop and succeed to scope the new Early Education and Care training package CHC30121 and CHC50121 and look forward to its imminent implementation. We are also transitioning to a new learning management system, CloudAssess, to align with the launch of the new qualification. We expect this to go live in late 2022.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our partnership with Multicultural Futures enabled us to provide a Professional Development Training morning for all Meerilinga staff at the end of 2021. This training was well-received and eye-opening for many of our staff

We have continued our partnership with the Department of Education in providing a learning environment for youth seeking an alternative pathway from school.

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

This year we celebrated 100 years of MTC! has a long history of producing educators who are passionate about teaching children in WA and empowering them to be the best they can be.

Meerilinga Training College was founded on the tenacity of Bessie Mabel Rischbieth, a key member of the Children's Protection Society in 1906, and many educators before us who gave back to the community. Their values of excellence, integrity, respect, and social responsibility guide our ethos today and will endure as we empower and support the next generation of educators.

We look forward to seeing what the future holds for us!



OUR SUCCESS STORY

Of our seven Level Up students who successfully graduated in December 21, six are now working in the industry (one returned to school).

It has been hard work, but very rewarding to have made such a difference in the life of these young people.

Our current cohort of seven are about to commence their final cluster and are excited to be nearing the end of their journey with Meerilinga.

MTC congratulates them for their commitment to 'staying the course'. They have learnt so much, not only course content, but about themselves, their potential and valuable life skills.



OUR GOALS

We are continuing to network and develop our relationships across the sector which has resulted in an upturn in traineeships – we are focused on increasing the momentum of interest in our traineeship program and improving our product.

We will continue promotion and implementation of the Job Ready short course. The optimal outcome of the Jobs Ready Program will be that students are offered a traineeship at the conclusion of their practical placement - which MTC will host. The successful engagement of students in the Jobs and Skills program will ultimately feed into our Traineeship program.

We hope to refine the classroom participation model to best meet student expectations and industry needs. Currently, we are considering how we can meet the unique training needs of the Family Daycare sector and the challenges faced by Out of School Care Services



“I love training with Meerilinga because the small class size allowed us to get a lot of support from our trainers, which was great, and also build through friendships with our classmates along the way.”
- Level Up student



“Now that I've complete studying, I am working full time. We provide opportunities for the children to learn through play, whether that's outside or inside. Every day is a new adventure for me. I get to observe the children, and watch how they learn and grow and develop”
- Level Up student





A SPECIAL THANK YOU

A heartfelt thank you to all of the generous and compassionate individuals, volunteers, staff, government departments, community organisations, local businesses and the communities our Children and Family Services operate in - who partnered with us or gave generously to the children, families and communities we served in 2021-2022.

Thank you for your continuous support in helping us promote positive childhoods and for being a part of the work that we do at Meerilinga. We are forever grateful.

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