

FROM  
***strength*** TO  
***STRENGTH***



Annual  
Report  
2016

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# strength

# It's who we are!

**B**ig Fat Smile exudes strength. It's core to who we are and evident across every facet of our organisation.

Our rich history, vision and purpose are built upon an innate desire and passion to make quality care available to the children and families of our community. Established in 1981 as the Illawarra Children's Services Action Group, our not-for-profit, community-owned company sought to bring positive, lasting change to the region through active campaigning for the rights of families to affordable care.

Fast-forward 35 years, and Big Fat Smile has evolved into one of the largest, most respected and reputable providers of education, care, recreation, cultural and inclusion services in Australia.

With 26 Community Preschools, 14 Fun Clubs and a robust portfolio of bold social inclusion and creative programs, we are proactive, ethical citizens making significant contributions to the communities in which we operate.

Through our many offerings, we play an integral role in the lives of thousands of children and families, equipping them now and shaping their futures to be big, bold and bright. Our work positively contributes to the economic prosperity and social strength of our country and the communities that we call home.

## **Why are we strong?**

### **We have a strong foundation and focus!**

Big Fat Smile is driven by a vision for a braver, brighter, more creative world. We are anchored in a purpose to be Australia's best-run and most respected provider of programs, services and products for children, families and the community. Our values are imagination, courage, integrity and respect and our beliefs, including creativity, fun, diversity, leadership and learning, underpin everything we do.

Our growing number of centres, programs and services are unique. They have been individually tailored to the communities in which we operate to ensure we meet the needs of local children and families.

*Big Fat Smile exists to benefit the thousands of children and families that we care for*

Quality is at the heart of everything we do, with 100% of centres assessed in 2014, 2015 and 2016 achieving the coveted 'exceeding' rating under the National Quality Standard.

Big Fat Smile is one of the top 10 employers in the Illawarra, employing 645 staff across 44 New South Wales locations. Our employees are best in class. They personify our values and deliver world-class early education and care.

We value our staff and want them with us for a long time...and a good time. This is why we provide sector-leading benefits, flexible work options, career paths and a rich program of professional development.

Our extensive research programs informs professional practice and the development of early learning programs. Our imaginative collaborations including the Artspace Studio for Kids, Artist-in-Residence Program, The Gallery @ Big Fat Smile and the Green Bean Play Café foster creativity and fun in our Community Preschools, Fun Clubs and wider communities.

Big Fat Smile continues to maintain and nurture value-adding partnerships with government, industry and community-based organisations, to deliver socially inclusive programs and open the door to accessible childcare in our communities through the provision of funding, to assist and support eligible childcare services.

Big Fat Smile exists to benefit the thousands of children and families that we care for, educate, nurture and support every day; to champion the cause of accessible childcare for all; and to create a future stronger, bigger and brighter than ever before.



# Chairman & CEO Report

## THE STRENGTH, RESILIENCE AND COURAGE OF BIG FAT SMILE WAS ON DISPLAY IN 2016.

We continued to operate 40 individual services, providing world-class early education and quality care for over 5,600 children and 4,200 families in the communities in which Big Fat Smile resides.

The Board and I are incredibly proud of our employees who, day in and day out, continue to provide personalised care while delivering our early learning programs. Their exceptional work, coupled with Big Fat Smile's industry-leading programs, resulted in 100% of centres assessed in 2014, 2015 and 2016 achieving the coveted 'exceeding' rating under the demanding National Quality Standard. This achievement continues to demonstrate our strength as Australia's leader in Quality Assessment and Rating.

The strength of Big Fat Smile and its teams was further evidenced in the strong operational and financial outcome achieved in 2016. Despite experiencing significant turnover in senior staff, and the departure of long-serving CEO Bill Feld, we achieved a budget surplus of \$677,000, the second-largest in the company's history! This surplus will enable us to provide new equipment and resources to our centres and further support future expansion.

I am sincerely appreciative of the Board's confidence in me, which was demonstrated through my appointment as interim CEO during the recruitment process of a new, permanent CEO. The positive way in which the Big Fat Smile staff responded to this decision is further evidence of their strength and resilience as a corporate body.

We welcome Ms. Jenni Hutchins, who has been appointed as Big Fat Smile's new CEO, effective from February 2017. Jenni, along with our Senior Executive Group of General Managers including Diana Kapera, John Balmforth and Peter Walsh, will unite to build on the outstanding 2016 results, taking the business from strength to strength in 2017.



I welcome Jenni and the entire Senior Executive Group to Big Fat Smile and have complete confidence in their experience and professional ability to project the company into a new year and a new era.

In 2016 Big Fat Smile was successful in two expressions of interest to establish new Early Learning Preschools at Stockland Shellharbour Shopping Centre and a new residential subdivision at Willowdale in South West Sydney. Big Fat Smile's reputation and market-leading position were evident and integral to the successful outcome of these expressions of interest.

These successful tenders have resulted in Big Fat Smile entering into a strong and strategic partnership with Stockland, a listed Company that openly supports our vision and growth trajectory. In addition to these new centres, Big Fat Smile will also add another two new opportunities – at Glenmore Ridge and Corrimal – to its portfolio, resulting in a total of four new opportunities that will come to fruition over the next two years.

In July, our partnership with KU successfully won tenders for Inclusion Agency and Inclusion Development Funding Management. Through other collaborative and creative partnerships, we also won a national competition for funding to operate programs across New South Wales to ensure inclusion opportunities in Early Childhood Education. The team responsible for this program personify our company's vision for a braver, brighter, more creative world.

We launched a company-wide child protection policy, which includes the appointment of a dedicated child protection professional in each Centre, to reinforce our core function of quality, safe and professional early childhood education and care. In 2016 we were tested by a prosecution for a supervision breach, a situation that we must learn from, with policies and procedures already in place to counteract recurrence.

Board-level renewal continued at the 2016 Annual General Meeting with the resignation of long-term Director, Harold Cosier. On behalf of Big Fat Smile, I would like to thank Harold for his continued service and commitment to this company over many years.

**David Campbell,**  
Chairman & Acting CEO

The Board welcomed Sophie Ray and Vanessa Bourne as Directors, based on a strategic mission for a skills-based Big Fat Smile Board whose focus is on inclusion, quality, equity and sustainability.

The Board initiated an internal audit in 2016, resulting in a number of process changes to improve compliance, initiate training and increase productivity in both frontline child-related operations and back office functions. This audit highlights the importance of Board-initiated internal audits in order to ensure quality, compliance, continued improvement and future growth.

Big Fat Smile Directors' continued to maintain a strong focus on strategic direction in the quest for long-term sustainability. Work health and safety, innovation, strategic marketing and business development remain strong priorities for both the Board and Senior Executive Group.

A full-day strategy workshop by the Board and Senior Executive Group resulted in a forward focused plan for Human Resources Policy and Practice, ICT for frontline and back office functions, optimum financial strategy and a value-adding program to be reviewed ongoing as a priority.

In many ways, 2016 was a year of 'changing of the guard', taking a deep breath and introspection. This was done with a sense of courage, integrity and discretion, and indeed with some angst. As a result of this internal experience and, having gleaned valuable lessons from 2016, our company is now stronger and as resilient as ever as we move into 2017.

## strong focus on strategic direction in the quest for long-term sustainability



# Big Fat Smile Board

## Board of Directors

Big Fat Smile is governed by an elected Board of Directors. Their role and responsibility is to establish the strategic direction of the Company, ensure an effective framework for the management of risk, and oversee executive and business performance.

In 2016 David Campbell continued to serve as the Board Chair, Chair of the Remuneration Committee and Member of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee. Louise Meyrick also continued in her role as Deputy Board Chair and Chair of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee (until September) in 2016.

Long-serving director, Harold Cosier, stepped down at the Annual General Meeting as part of the scheduled Board renewal process. Big Fat Smile would

like to thank Harold for his ongoing and unwavering commitment and time spent with us here at Big Fat Smile, and we wish him well for the future.

In 2016 the Board welcomed Sophie Ray and Vanessa Bourne. Sophie Ray is a Director and business owner and Vanessa Bourne is an Executive Director in the higher education sector. Both bring a wealth of knowledge to the table and the Big Fat Smile team welcomes them to the Board.

During the year, the Board initiated an internal audit to identify and implement process changes to improve compliance, training and productivity on both frontline and back house operations.

Consistent with best governance practice, the Board commenced a process of evaluation in December.



## Welcome to our new CEO

### Jenni Hutchins

In 2017 Big Fat Smile will welcome Jenni Hutchins as our new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Jenni brings a wealth of professional and industry knowledge and experience to the role, as well as a shared vision to create a braver, brighter and more creative world.

Jenni is currently the General Manager for Community and

Children's Services with YMCA NSW. She has held previous roles in the commercial sector including General Manager for Business Development at Campbell Page Australia, and has had significant leadership, policy and operational experience in her time with the Benevolent Society.

Jenni will join Big Fat Smile as our CEO from Monday 6th February 2017.



**David Campbell** M Mgt, FAICD

### BOARD CHAIR

Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. September 2016

Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. 2014 – September 2016

Chair, Remuneration Committee

Member, Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee

Retired Member of Parliament



### Louise Meyrick

M Com, M Dispute Resol, BA, Dip Ed

### BOARD DEPUTY CHAIR & DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2014

Chair, Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee (until September 2016)

Member, Remuneration Committee

Senior Consultant, Policy & Planning Specialist

### Vanessa Bourne

BA, LLB, EMBA, FGIA, FAICD

Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2016

Member, Governance & Nominations Committee

Executive Director, Higher Education Sector



### Ken Whitton

MBA, Grad Dip (Fin Plan), B Com

Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2015

Chair, Governance & Nominations Committee

Senior Policy Advisor, Superannuation Peak Body



### Chris Stolk

B Com, CPA, GAICD

Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2015

Member, Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee

Chief Financial Officer, Health Insurance Industry

### Tony Deliseo

B Sc (Physics), Cert IV TAE, FAICD

Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2015

Member, Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee (from October 2016)

Asia Pacific CEO, International Software Group



### Sophie Ray

BA (Hons), LLB (Hons), Grad Dip Leg Studs

Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2016

Member, Governance & Nominations Committee

Director and business owner





# SENIOR Executive Group

In September 2016, Big Fat Smile undertook a formal review of its portfolios to identify the optimum organisational structure to drive the company into a new era of growth, in pursuit of the vision to create a braver, brighter, more creative world.

As a result of this review, the organisation has been sectioned into the following four portfolios:

1. **Development & Finance**
2. **Corporate Services**
3. **Operations**
4. **Governance & Risk**

An integral outcome of the review was the introduction of a new Executive Leadership Team. Each new Executive Leader resides over one of the above portfolios and the teams within each.

The new Executive Leadership Team introduces a robust collective of experienced, knowledgeable, strategic and skills-based professionals.

The new Senior Executive Group is comprised of:

## John Balmforth

B Arts (Music) (Hons),  
Ph.D. (Music), G Dip Marketing,  
B Bus, M Comm (Marketing),  
G Dip Professional  
Business Coaching,  
G Dip Strategic Alliances  
General Manager,  
Development & Finance  
Member, Senior Executive  
Group



## Peter Walsh

B Eng, B Science, MBA,  
Juris Doctor,  
G Dip Legal Practice  
General Manager,  
Corporate Services  
Company Secretary  
Member, Senior Executive  
Group



## Diana Kapera

B Social Science (Psych),  
G Dip Psych  
General Manager,  
Operations  
Member, Senior Executive  
Group



In 2017, Big Fat Smile will welcome a new General Manager, Governance & Risk.

## DEVELOPMENT & FINANCE PORTFOLIO

### by General Manager John Balmforth

The new Development & Finance portfolio encompasses the marketing, business development, finance and strategy divisions of Big Fat Smile.

As part of the formal review in September 2016, all of the existing roles and functions within these divisions were assessed and realigned to ensure the delivery of the key priorities and objectives set for 2017.

This new portfolio is now accountable for strategic development across Big Fat Smile, for all financial functions, all business development programs and a marketing support function which includes market analytics, communications and brand, market research and public relations.

As an organisation, Big Fat Smile has established a number of operational priorities to ensure financial sustainability and growth for the organisation. To contribute to the achievement of these company-wide operational objectives, the Development & Finance portfolio has identified a series of key priorities for 2017.

The priorities include:

- An Investment and Asset Strategy to improve Big Fat Smile's asset allocation and financial returns;
- A Financial Literacy Program that will be implemented across the organisation to educate management to understand the financial implications of decisions made;
- An Innovation Strategy to promote collective intelligence and provide a space to work on improving product enhancements and service delivery to families;
- A Business Development Pipeline to drive existing and future business growth; and
- A Systemised Reporting Strategy to proactively manage performance across the organisation which will include Management and Executive Information Systems with Key Performance Indicators to develop a Balanced Scorecard approach.

## CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

### by General Manager Peter Walsh

The new Corporate Services portfolio encompasses the Human Resources, Learning and Development, Information and Communication Services, Employee Engagement, Facilities Management and Procurement Services divisions of Big Fat Smile.

The portfolio exists to provide support services to other parts of the organisation, particularly Operations.

Human Resources is responsible for supporting the recruitment of new personnel, ensuring new employees are a sound cultural fit and embody Big Fat Smile's core values and beliefs, ensuring that staff are appointed and paid within our enterprise agreements, awards and the National Employment Standards.

Learning and Development captures Big Fat Smile's commitment to employee professional development. In 2016 this became a mandated process for early childhood teachers who are now required to be registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA, formerly known as BOSTES). This function is focused on developing employees to ensure they are competent and professional in their roles, growing both personally and professionally. It also encapsulates Big Fat Smile's traineeships in Early Childhood Care and scholarships.

Information and Communications Technology support employees through the provision of computing and telephone facilities that enable the business function. It also supports a suite of organisation-wide corporate business systems including finance and business systems, human resource information systems, enrolment and fees collection, and internet/intranet provision.

Lastly, Corporate Services is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of our facilities and equipment to ensure the provision of excellent surroundings that support the education activities of our children.



# OPERATIONS PORTFOLIO

**by General Manager Diana Kapera**

The new Operations portfolio is responsible for the operations of Big Fat Smile's programs and services. This encompasses the organisations 26 early childhood services, 6 traditional preschools, 20 long day care centres and 14 fun clubs across the Illawarra, Wollondilly, Southern Highlands and South and North West Sydney Regions.

2016 saw the organisation commence operations at our newest centre in Manooka Valley and farewell our Narellan Community Preschool. The Operations portfolio is anticipating strong performance and new growth opportunities in 2017 and the years to follow.

The portfolio is underpinned by Big Fat Smile's commitment and strong ethos in social purpose, working with children and families to ensure inclusive practices in the provision of childcare in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

As a result, the portfolio encompasses the management of Big Fat Smile's Include Me group of programs, including the Inclusion Agency and the Inclusion Development Fund. These programs afford Big Fat Smile the opportunity to partner with organisations such as KU Children's Services and Gowrie NSW to facilitate service access to children with additional needs on behalf of the Australian Government.

The portfolio also delivers a suite of community programs including Transition to School, Children and Parenting Support Programs, Post Natal Depression Groups, Day Program, Intervention Support and Supported Playgroups.

The Corrimal Head Office hosts three additional services that are positioned within the Operations portfolio. Our Green Bean Play Café offers a range of daily activities and a safe play environment for children and their parents. The Gallery is a creative outlet for Big Fat Smile and hosts a variety of exhibitions throughout the year. While Artspace is our popular art school, providing term art classes and an eclectic school holiday program.

# GOVERNANCE & RISK PORTFOLIO

The new Governance and Risk portfolio has the overarching responsibility for the organisation's compliance whilst also promoting best practice. The portfolio comprises of Regulation and Compliance, Quality Assurance, Workplace Health and Safety, Child Protection, Internal Audit, Policy as well as the legal functions of General Counsel and Company Secretary.

2016 saw the introduction of the organisation's first position dedicated to Workplace Health and Safety, a recognition of the importance of staff health and wellness in the delivery of high quality care and education programs.

The Quality Assurance team supported the remaining four centres through the assessment and rating process with all four services rated as 'Exceeding the National Standard'.

Child Safety remained a high priority within the organisation and the portfolio with the introduction of the Child Safe Organisation policy, framework and action plan for ongoing improvements.

The key priorities for 2017 are:

- Revision of the Operational Manual of policies and procedures for Children's Services to support Big Fat Smile staff in the delivery of high quality, safe and compliance education and care services.
- Introduction of a robust Workplace Health and Safety management system, including revised policies procedures and reporting methods.
- Review of corporate risk management system and introduction of a new risk management framework to ensure Big Fat Smile is aware of ongoing and emerging risks as well as mitigating strategies.
- Increased availability of training to education and care staff to support a child safe culture within the organisation.

*Big Fat Smile  
has continued to  
achieve the coveted  
'exceeding' rating  
under the demanding  
National Quality  
Standard...*





# A Year in Review

In 2016, Big Fat Smile was bigger, stronger and brighter than ever before. Here are just some of our hero highlights.

## Gareth Ward visits Kiama Downs Community Preschool

Big Fat Smile's Kiama Downs Community Preschool was the recipient of \$28,700 of funding from the New South Wales Government, secured by the Member for Kiama, Gareth Ward.

Gareth Ward visited the centre on 14th of January, 2016, to present the staff with a big, colourful cheque.

The funding was used for the renovation of the centre's kitchen facilities and enhance the range of food that can be prepared for the children.



## Manooka Valley Community Preschool brings colour to the Camden Show

The Camden Show is a 'hero' annual event for the Camden community each year.

The team from Big Fat Smile's Manooka Valley Community Preschool attended the festival, creating a free art workshop for local children to enjoy.

With tens of thousands of members from the community attending the event over two days, staff had the opportunity to share Big Fat Smile with parents while their children were busy letting their imaginations run wild at the art station.



## Big Fat Smile successful in tender for a three-year Australian Government inclusion support

In July 2016, the Australian Government announced that Big Fat Smile (and Include Me) had successfully tendered for a three-year Australian Government Programme.

This enabled the formation of a consortium partnership between Big Fat Smile, KU Children's Services and Gowrie NSW. Together these agencies form the official Inclusion Agency for New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

Inclusion Agency's Inclusion Support Programme supports mainstream early childhood and child care services to improve their capacity and capability to provide quality inclusive practices, address participation barriers and include children with additional needs alongside their typically developing peers.



## Wollondilly Big Day In

Big Fat Smile employees from the Bingara Gorge and Wollondilly Mobile Community Preschools attended the Wollondilly Big Day In community event to raise vital funds for those affected by the severe storms and flooding in Wollondilly in June 2016.

Staff from the centres created a craft and face painting exhibition and spent the day helping the children make masterpieces in exchange for a gold coin donation. All funds raised went to the Wollondilly Big Day In, which raised over \$45,000 to support local flood victims.



## Big Fat Smile brings elite Chinese youth ballet exclusively to Wollongong

Through Big Fat Smile's larger educational, cultural and arts exchange with China, the organisation secured Dream Field, a celebration of Chinese ballet and traditional music, to perform at the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre in July 2016.

The exclusive cultural show featured eight elite youth ballet dancers from Mianyang City's Boyuan Art School, the only professional ballet training school in south-western China, to perform exclusively in Wollongong.

The schools program, and the Dream Field show, reflected Chinese cultural heritage with unique works from the peoples of Tibet, Mongolia, Qiang and more.

Big Fat Smile celebrated the partnership and presence of the ballet in Wollongong, recognising the unique ability that artistic expression has to engage the community and bring people together.





# A Year in Review

## Little Scientists Win at Bulli Community Preschool

The children at Bulli Community Preschool were awarded the Little Scientists People's Choice Award at the Thyssenkrupp Engineering competition for their sustainable igloo house built entirely out of donated milk cartons.

With a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), the centre's educators encouraged the children to explore their ideas and participate in the competition.



During free play in the yard, the children collectively showed great interest in building houses using a variety of materials. After a little research, the children decided on building an igloo made of milk cartons. In doing so, they learned about snow, structural forms, stability, material strength, patterns and much more.

## August

### Reynolds Street Champion the ELLA Program

Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) is a digital, play-based language learning program for preschool aged children.

Throughout 2016 Big Fat Smile's Reynolds Street Community Preschool participated in an ELLA pilot program.

The program included the trialling of language learning apps for educators and families and resource materials for educator support networks, designed to enhance the delivery of early language learning in preschool services.

The Reynolds Street Director, Jo, identified many positive outcomes from the pilot in the centre including learning a new language, supporting turn-taking, an increased ability to utilise technology, family inclusion and cultural learning.

Reynolds Street was named an "ELLA Champion" as a result of their work within the trial in 2016.

### Kiama Downs Community Preschool bring Rio to Kiama

Big Fat Smile's Kiama Downs Community Preschool brought the Rio Olympics to Kiama in August 2016 when centre staff coordinated an Olympic Day for the children.

Both children and staff came dressed in their favourite sports attire and participated in a range of Olympic sports and games including basketball, ribbon dancing, long jump (into the sandpit), the balancing beam and relay running races.

The greatest of the Olympic traditions were also replicated with the carrying of the Olympic torch and a medal ceremony where all participants were rewarded for their outstanding sportsmanship.

## October

### Corrimal Community Preschool celebrates its 30th birthday

Three generations of Corrimal Community Preschool children and families gathered to celebrate the centre's 30th birthday in October.

The celebrations featured a colourful morning tea complete with cake, face painting and a small ceremony.

A host of families were in attendance, including Kim Pepper, her daughter Madeleine Morris and her grandchildren Ella and Audrey Morris. Together they represent three generations to have been part of Corrimal Community Preschool, with Madeline Morris being a part of the grand opening festivities of the centre 30 years ago.



Ian (casual staff member and maintenance man) designed and carved the beautiful plaque. He made it with so much love in his heart for the whole family, him and his wife were asked to be included in the presentation.

## November

### Wollongong City Community Preschool get their Viva on

Viva la Gong is Wollongong City Council's core multicultural event of the year. In 2016, the team at Big Fat Smile's Wollongong City Community Preschool attended Viva la Gong, contributing a creative space for attending children and families to engage with.

The staff set up face painting and fake-tattooing stands, connecting with children and families from the Wollongong community. There was good conversation and lots of laughs all-around.

### Reynolds Street Community Preschool upgrades their sandpit

In December, Big Fat Smile's Reynolds Street Preschool celebrated the opening of their upgraded sandpit. This is no ordinary sandpit. The team decided to name the sandpit after one of the centre's beloved children – Elvie.

Elvie is living with a rare form of brain cancer and has always loved to play in the sandpit. Her family is a valued part of the Reynolds Street preschool community and truly appreciate the team, especially and the centre's Director, Jo. They even nominated Jo for Director of the Year in the Australian Family Early Education & Care Awards.

## December



# Quality Achievements

## AT BIG FAT SMILE, INVESTMENT IN QUALITY IS IMPORTANT TO US!

We focus in delivering the best possible staffing ratios, highly qualified teachers and centre staff, play environments that nurture children and facilitate their creative expression, and world-class early education and care.

Our focus on excellence and quality care has made Big Fat Smile Australia's top quality performer in early education and school aged care, according to the results of the annual National Quality Standards.

In 2014, 2015 and now again in 2016, we have achieved the coveted 'exceeding' rating under the demanding National Quality Standard.

We have received the Exceeding National Quality Standard for 31 centres in a row, with all of our centre's receiving the Exceeding National Quality Standard since September 2013 – that's over three years running.

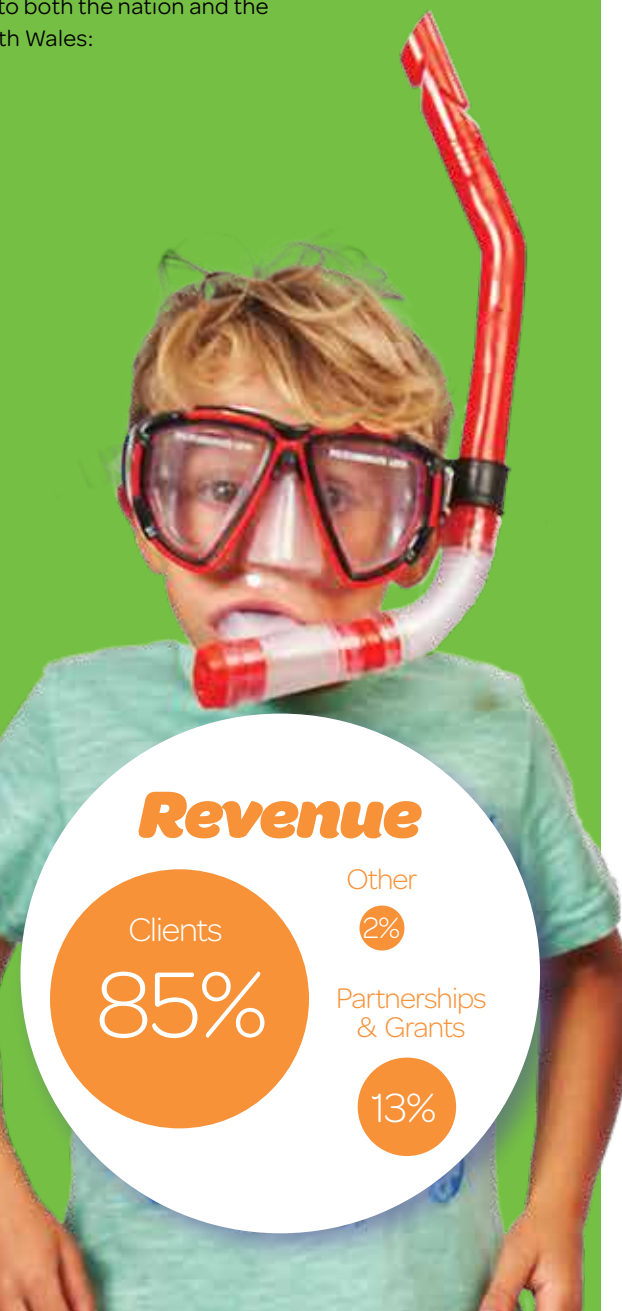
Some of our centres, to name just a few, that have received the Exceeding National Quality Standard overall, as well as in all seven Quality Areas, include Port Kembla Community Preschool, Bulli Community Preschool, Stewart Street Community Preschool, Western Suburbs Community Preschool, Bundanoon District Community Preschool, Wollongong City Community Preschool, Robertson Community Preschool, Corrimal Community Preschool, Bellambi Point Community Preschool, Picton Community Preschool, Barrack Heights Community Preschool, West Wollongong Fun Club, Balarang Fun Club, Unanderra Fun Club and Koonawarra Fun Club.

The table below illustrates Big Fat Smile's superior performance in the National Quality Standards when compared to both the nation and the state of New South Wales:

## MEETING & EXCEEDING NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

NATIONAL	71%
NEW SOUTH WALES	65%
BIG FAT SMILE	94.59%

Data taken from the November 2016 ACECQA Snapshot



# FINANCIALS

*Big Fat Smile Group has delivered an outstanding financial result for 2016. With a \$677k surplus and 25% increase to net assets...*

*we have the opportunity to reinvest back into the services we deliver and continue to provide high quality early education and care for the children and families in our communities.*





# Celebrating **our people**

## Bravissimo:

### Recognising and rewarding strength and long-service

Bravissimo is our annual staff award ceremony where we take time out to recognise staff that have achieved excellence and those that have been with us for many years.

In 2016, Bravissimo was attended by 100 of our amazing employees, with our Board of Directors and Senior Executive Group presenting the awards in Excellence and Long-Service.

BIG congratulations to...



### Awards for excellence in Service

- Koonawarra Community Preschool
- Bellambi Point Community Preschool
- Matthew Cignarella
- Leah Rudman
- Jamie-Lee Athanassopoulos
- Michael Stone
- Gloria Dalla Valle
- Kristy Whitney
- Dilek Atak

### 30+ Years of Service

- Lyn Schroder (36 years)
- Gloria Dalla Valle (30 years)

### 25 Years of Service

- Julie Woods

### 20 Years of Service

- Melinda Watson
- Leann Noble
- Michelle Smith

### 15 Years of Service

- Billie White
- Julie Royan
- Kylie Gal
- Cassandra Bowman
- Jane Delhaas
- Lee Karayiannis
- Lucy Ladic
- Holly Allen
- Tina McMahon
- Vittorio Folino
- Deni Harden
- Jenine Callaghan

### 10 Years of Service

- Paula Hill
- Lauren Jones
- Tahlia Young
- Patricia Pickering

- Cassandra Matias
- Mine Tekkol
- Svetlana Bernardi
- Kerry Perkins
- Elizabeth Depers
- Karen Ayers
- Megan Turner
- Andrew Craig
- Nerida Scholze
- Jennine Primmer
- Sara Holloway
- Jessica Martins
- Sharon Webster

### Chef Cheryl's retirement, Kiama Downs Community Preschool

Big Fat Smile employee Cheryl Bird retired in December 2016 after 14 years of service at Kiama Downs Community Preschool. Cheryl was a much-loved member of the team, making significant contributions to the culinary offering of the Kiama Downs Community Preschool. Cheryl saw food as more than a source of energy, rather she understood its potential to educate children, forge new friendships and connections and open our palates to the world.



Cheryl would travel Australia and beyond to discover local delicacies and transform them into international teaching opportunities for the children. She was the lead collaborator in Big Fat Smile's very own cook book titled The Preschool Chef. Then, in 2008, Cheryl received a Healthy Cities Award for her contribution towards a healthier, safer, greener and more caring Illawarra.

The Big Fat Smile team is so thankful for Cheryl and her unique and instinctive approach to cooking for our kids!

### Our staff are recognised and awarded as leaders in service, excellence and strength

Big Fat Smiles employees and centres were awarded a suite of accolades in 2016, demonstrating their industry-leading delivery of early childhood education and care, and the excellence and strength that they contribute to their communities.

Our educators at Koonawarra Community Preschool were awarded a Certificate of Recognition by the Australian College of Educators for being highly effective educators and role models, and for being a high-quality care service with excellent community engagement.

The staff at our Corrimal Community Preschool were announced as finalists in the 2016 South Coast Business Awards in the Outstanding Service category and went on to win the category at the 2016 Awards Ceremony.

Lastly, the team at the Reynolds Street Community Preschool were nominated for the Excellence in Small Business (under 20 employees) category at the Goulburn Australia Business Excellence Awards.

Congratulations to our dedicated teams whose daily pursuit of excellence and quality education and care has been recognised and rewarded in the communities in which they reside.

### Employee development strengthens staff even further

At Big Fat Smile, we value our employees. This is why we commit to equipping and supporting them to deliver the highest possible standard of education and care, and develop their skills and abilities as an individual. We provide sector-leading benefits, including a robust program of professional development.

In 2016, Big Fat Smile staff collectively completed more than 1,350 training and development courses. We are proud of our teams and their achievements in successfully completing additional training to better themselves and the service they deliver to our communities.



### Supporting local students through Scholarship

Big Fat Smile is committed to supporting local students who are studying Early Education. Our support extends to the allocation of scholarships to local students at the University of Wollongong and TAFE Illawarra. In 2016, the scholarship winners were Larissa Jenkins, Kirralee Scrivener and Blake Stewart. We wish Larissa, Kirralee and Blake all the best with their continued study and feel privileged to support them along the way.



### **Barrack Heights Community Preschool**

#### *Family fun with craft, food and photos*

Educators work together to carry out a series of fun and engaging centre events throughout the year, with all educators playing a role in organising activities that truly engage everyone - mums, dads and carers of children. In 2016, events evolved to include a variety of foods, a craft experience encouraging parents to interact with their children, and a photo booth.

One event attracted 41 families, a true testament to the strength of Barrack Heights Community Preschool in bringing the local community together and fostering a sense of pride for all.



Ryan Park at  
Bulli Community Preschool



### **Dapto Community Preschool**

#### *Fostering a love of art*

The children and educators from Dapto Community Preschool enjoy excursions outside of the centre, one of which was a visit to The Gallery@ Big Fat Smile in Corrimal to see their amazing clay portraits - part of the Joy and Mess exhibition.

Excitingly, photos of the children creating their clay portraits were used in the Joy and Mess book. Being able to visit another Big Fat Smile space gives children additional opportunities, in this instance the chance to see their artwork on display at a public gallery.

### **Helensburgh Community Preschool**

#### *A team effort creates one-of-a-kind art*

At the beginning of 2016 the team at Helensburgh Community Preschool decided their foyer needed an update with something reflecting the community and its special geographical location - the Royal National Park on one side and the gorgeous Pacific Ocean on the other.

### **Kenny Street Community Preschool**

#### *Outdoor pursuits expand children's interest*

The Kenny Street Community Preschool extensions to the outdoor yard area have supported the educators in extending the children's interests, as well as providing more play spaces that are safe and open. Outdoor play is important for child development and included in educational programming.

### **Kiama Downs Community Preschool**

#### *Grandparents Day values role of all family members*

Celebrating the important role grandparents' play in the lives of many of the children who attend Big Fat Smile preschools is important for reminding children about the value of family. Kiama Downs Community Preschool children's grandparents or special family friends were invited to attend an event on the back verandah and yard, sharing a delicious afternoon tea with the children and playing games. It was a special event enjoyed by all who attended.

### **Bellambi Point Community Preschool**

#### *A passion for drumming!*

Music is a wonderful way to help children learn. Muso-in-Residence Robby regularly visits Bellambi Point Community Preschool. His music program focuses on drumming and culture. Robby's knowledge and passion for the drums inspired the children and made a lasting impression with them, so much so they regularly request drumming with their favourites - the full drum kit and the Djembe drum.

### **Bulli Community Preschool**

#### *Reflective moments with yoga and meditation*

Recognising that children need "time out" and moments of reflection just as much as adults do, the Early Learning Room and Preschool Room began practising mindfulness in the form of "cosmic yoga" and meditation in the quiet space called the Willow Room.

The educators and families have also continued their community kindness program, supporting Need A Feed, The Ryan Park Toy Drive for Christmas and a Mission Australia collection bin for clothes.

### **Bundanoon Community Preschool**

#### *Connecting generations*

The children at Bundanoon Community Preschool took time to visit Warrigal Community Village Bundanoon. Prior to the visit, the children prepared music, dance, craft, art, playdough and some games of tic-tac-toe to play with the residents. It was lovely to see everyone so connected and having a good old chat.

### **Castle Hill Community Preschool**

#### *Educational sustainability creates love of nature*

Educational Sustainability is an important inclusion in the programs implemented at Castle Hill Community Preschool. Learning experiences include planting saplings, bulbs and herbs with the children within the outdoor yard and garden. The children's interest with trees are further encouraged and supported through books, songs and a 'tree appreciation day'.

Exposing the children to nature increases the children's capacity to think outside the box. Our highly qualified staff at Castle Hill Community Preschool work with the children to build skills and knowledge on sustainability through the planting of seasonal herbs and veggies, and sharing the responsibility for watering them to watch them grow.

### **Cobblers Hill Community Preschool**

#### *Hair today, gone tomorrow for a good cause*

Cobblers Hill Community Preschool support various charities and staff member Angela put other's health before her hair, raising money to shave her head in support of the World's Greatest Shave. Angela and her supporters raised over \$1,300 that will go towards research and funding for the Leukaemia Foundation. The staff and children of the preschool were very proud of her efforts!



# Preschools

Staff member Marti pulled over at the top of Bald Hill near the preschool one morning and took a stunning photo of the sunrise; it was agreed this was the perfect image for the foyer.

The print arrived but the team wanted to enhance the photo by honouring the traditional owners of the land in a respectful manner. One of the mums, Kathryn Dalmer, had expressed a love of painting and she got to work, adding traditional indigenous symbols to represent the children moving from their family into the wider community with guidance from elders.



### **Koonawarra Community Preschool**

#### *Culture Day*

Koonawarra Community Preschool was honoured to be chosen by the Department of Education to hold a Cultural Day, coinciding with National Sorry Day.

Very esteemed guests from the Department of Education attended, along with elders from the local community Aunty Adelaide and Aunty Barb, and Mark Olive (aka Black Olive, Australia's renowned Indigenous Chef), who cooked a bush tucker lunch for the families and guests.

Children and families participated in arts, stories, dance and a smoking ceremony with Jake and his Wild Bush Talk.



# Community Preschools

## **Little Village Community Preschool** *Easter Hat Parade brings smiles*

Parents of children aged 2-5 years at the Little Village Community Preschool joined their children in creating a fantastic hat for the Easter Hat Parade. Afterwards, a morning tea was available for everyone to reflect upon the amazing creativity on display!



## **Picton Community Preschool** *Family night fills the auditorium!*

Over 400 staff, families and children gathered together at the Bargo Sports Auditorium for Picton Community Preschool's Family Night. The children performed their favourite songs from the year, along with some traditional Christmas songs. This event was the perfect way to celebrate a happy year together.

## **Port Kembla Community Preschool** *Teaching children beyond the classroom*

With a strong focus on community partnerships and building community links, Port Kembla Community Preschool children often interact with external groups and organisations. Children often put smiles on the faces of nursing home residents who are so happy to see them and share conversations. They have the opportunity to help the elderly with fun, engaging activities including craft and singing, always requesting to visit again soon.



The Warrawong Fire Brigade also came to visit, teaching the children about fire safety. Some even sat in the fire truck and had turns with the water hose.

## **Robertson Community Preschool** *Sustainable Communities*

Robertson Community Preschool educators and children have been busy implementing a Sustainability Community Building Program in partnership with the local council. They have proudly implemented a number of sustainability actions across energy, water, waste, soil fertility, reduced toxicities and sustainability education categories.

## **Rosehill Community Preschool** *Zen Garden takes pride of place*

The inclusion of sustainability in educational programmes is important for Big Fat Smile centres, and the children at Rosehill Community Preschool are getting a head start on their veggie patch for summer by planting their favourite vegetables and herbs in a Zen Garden, all of which are now included on the lunch menu.

The children are involved in monitoring the growth of vegetables and herbs, plus picking them to use within the preschool menu.



Western Suburb Community Preschool's Chinese arts & crafts



## **Stewart Street Community Preschool** *Cooking up a storm*

Helping children understand what they can create through cooking has been a source of great adventure and learning for the children at the Stewart Street Community Preschool. From learning the basics about measuring and mixing, through to enjoying the finished product, children are learning important life skills from an early age and can go home and "help" mum and dad with meal preparation too.

## **Warrawong Community Preschool** *Engaging with animals*

The staff at Warrawong Community Preschool saw how the children loved animals and decided to visit the local pet shop. The children excitedly selected a few fish to bring back to preschool. Recognising the keen interest of the children in pets, the educators also arranged for a special visit from Chicks'R'Us, where the children explore chickens hatching and growing.

## **Western Suburbs Community Preschool** *Chinese New Year celebrations*

Recognising and celebrating different cultures helps children to understand the world around them. Chinese New Year was a special time for the Warrawong Community Preschool, with educators explaining what the celebrations mean to children and arranging for them to participate in traditional Chinese arts and crafts activities.

## **Wollondilly Mobile Community Preschool** *Easter fun turns feet into carrots!*

Easter is a special time for children at Big Fat Smile preschools and the children attending Wollondilly Mobile Community Preschool enjoyed a wonderful celebration. Forget carrot tops – at Wollondilly it's about carrot feet! Each child had their feet painted for an Easter craft activity which resulted in their foot print being made into a carrot!

Children were able to see first-hand how creativity can play a huge role in their engagement with an event or activity.

## **Wollongong City Community Preschool** *Music to teach hits the right note*

Music is an engaging way for children to learn creatively. Big Fat Smile's Artist-in-Residence program visits community preschools throughout the year featuring professional artists and musicians.

Wollongong City Community Preschool implemented a month-long program with Muso-in-Residence, Shab. The children had lots of fun singing, dancing, and playing the instruments. They loved Shab's educational games and songs!

## **Woronora Heights Community Preschool** *Children helping children*

When staff and families work together to help others, the magic happens. The team at Woronora Heights Community Preschool organised a toy drive for Randwick Children's Hospital on behalf of one of the children in their community currently in hospital. The children loved the community spirit this gesture fostered, and look forward to making the toy drive an annual event to spread positivity.





# Fun Clubs

Before School,  
After School and  
School Holidays.



## Big Fat Smile Fun Clubs support - the first Illawarra Child's Play event

In what was a great opportunity to strengthen relationships with local families and show support for a local community event, Big Fat Smile Fun Clubs participated in the first-Illawarra Child's Play event held at Killalea.

Fun Club Flinders, Fun Club Albion Park and Fun Club Balarang were all on display at the event. The team offered free face painting and Fun Club tattoos to children.

Held in celebration of Universal Children's Day, the event provided a unique but welcomed opportunity for Big Fat Smile staff to engage directly with families in the local community.



## School holidays = fun days!

There is no reason for children to be bored, or for parents to be pestered, during the school holidays!

Big Fat Smile's Fun Club school holiday programs are run at 13 centres including Albion Park, Austinmer, Bingara Gorge, Bulli, Balarang, Bellambi Point, Fairy Meadow, Flinders, Koonawarra, Unanderra, Wollongong City, Wollongong East and West Wollongong.

Our centre directors put a lot of effort into planning a variety of activities each holidays, including excursions and activities.

Excursions include destinations like Luna Park, Jamberoo Action Park, Taronga Zoo, Symbio Wildlife Park, Hangtime and Laser Tag, Circus Monoxide, Inflatable World, UOW Early Start Discovery Space, Dolphin Watch Cruises, Artspace workshops, go karting, movies, bowling and trips to the beach, local parks and the Botanic Gardens.

Activities at the centres include discos and karaoke, water fun (water pistols, slip 'n' slides), colour run, dress-up days, MasterChef cooking, treasure hunts, art workshops, tie-dyeing, cultural days, sports tournaments and survivor games.

There are also special visitors to the centres with activities like special effects makeup, laser tag, science demonstrations, drumming and music workshops, dance workshops, reptile shows, console games and sports clinics.

## Flinders

### Fun Club - finding the special bond between student and teacher

Educator Katie at the Flinders Fun Club was delighted when one of the children wrote a speech about her at school.

Lachlan was asked by his school teacher to write a speech about someone they admired and chose Katie. In the speech, Lachlan spoke of Katie's commitment to ensuring a wide range of experiences for the children, plus her supportive and caring

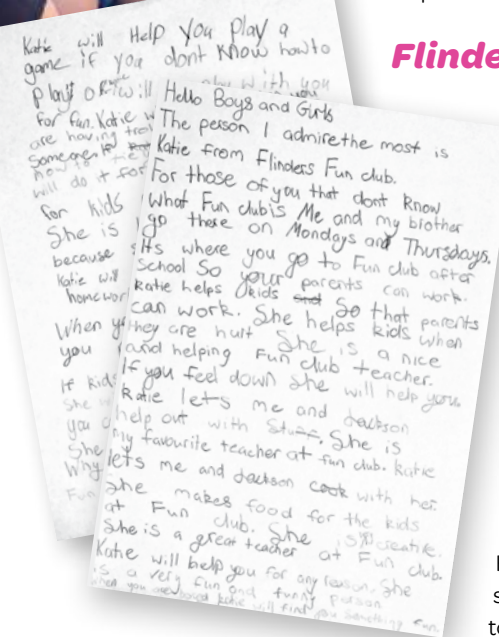
nature.

Praise indeed from the highest power - our children - and a testament to the strong, nurturing bond between Big Fat Smile educators and the children they care for.

## Koonawarra Fun Club - lighting up little [and big] smiles

Christmas lights create excitement during the festive season for little and big children alike! The team at Koonawarra Fun Club decided to capture this opportunity to forge stronger links with local families and the community by organising a family event centred on travelling around the local community to view all of the festive lights in preparation for Christmas.

The event stemmed from children's interest in the lights within the local community and 2016 was the first time it was held. After receiving positive feedback from all of the families and children who participated, plans are afoot for this to become an annual event.





Include Me is the equity arm of Big Fat Smile. It is the part of our organisation through which we proactively work and strive to make quality child care and family support accessible to all children and families in our communities.

Include Me consists of a suite of programs that are delivered within a socially responsible framework in order to meet the needs and aspirations of local communities. Some of these programs focus on, for example, the removal of barriers for children who have additional needs by providing targeted inclusion support to early childhood and care services; and the delivery of early intervention programs to families and educators to ensure children have the best possible start to life.

Include Me also sees Big Fat Smile partner with the Australian Government, NSW Government and Community Organisations to deliver the following key initiatives:

### Inclusion Agency

In 2016 Big Fat Smile, through the work of Include Me, partnered with KU Children's Services and Gowrie NSW to successfully tender for a three-year Australian Government Programme. As a result, this collective of partners have become the Inclusion Agency for New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

### Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IDFM)

Big Fat Smile's Inclusion Development Fund exists to provide funding assistance to eligible childcare services for the purposes of addressing and removing barriers to inclusion, specifically those barriers that cannot be addressed by the support of an Inclusion Agency.

Once again, Include Me has partnered with KU Children's Services to serve as the IDFM and are contracted by the Australian Government to provide nationally consistent and equitable management of the Inclusion Development Fund.

### Children and Parenting Support

Children and Parenting Support (CAPS) is another initiative that Include Me delivers on behalf of the Australian Government. The program has been designed to support families with young children aged 0-12 years-old, living in the 2518 and 2502 postcode areas.

Through this initiative, Include Me delivers a range of support programs and activities including parenting workshops, playgroups and joint programs in partnership with other community support services.

# Include



Together Include Me, KU Children's Services and Gowrie NSW share 230 years' experience in the provision of high quality, not-for-profit early education and care. Each agency is well respected

within the early education sector for the provision of a range of early childhood services, family support programs, inclusion programs and consultancy for educators.

Together we form a formidable and highly-experienced collective that exists to champion accessible child care for all families and communities. We support mainstream early childhood and child care services to improve their capacity and capability to provide inclusive practices and address participation barriers.

In 2016, CAPS delivered the following programs and initiatives:

- Six weekly supported playgroups based in local schools, community centres and public parks throughout Warrawong, Corrimall and Bellambi;
- School holiday activities in local parks;
- Swimming lessons in Bellambi through Project 291 and in partnership with local community organisations;
- Information dissemination through public information stands located at Warrawong Plaza, to provide families with services and program information available in the Illawarra; and
- Parenting workshops delivered in partnership with Northern Family Care Cottage.



These initiatives and programs delivered over 340 sessions in 2016, hosting almost 9,000 attendees from the community.

### Transition to School

Big Fat Smile, through the work of Include Me, also delivers the Illawarra Transition to School Project. This Project is funded by Families NSW and is a NSW Government early intervention strategy that supports

parents in giving their children the best possible start to life.

At its core, the Project supports children starting school to make a smooth transition through connecting parents, schools and services and offering practical support. The Project also has a strong emphasis on supporting Aboriginal children in their transition to school.



# Me

Together we form a formidable and highly-experienced collective that exists to champion accessible child care.





# Partnerships

**B**ig Fat Smile is an ethical local and national citizen and as such, partners with a range of local, state and national organisations in mutually beneficial arrangements, to strengthen the delivery of childcare services and make positive contributions to our communities and the industry.

Here is a shout-out to all of our incredible education, funding, research, service delivery, community, creative and facility/centre partners. Their support and collaboration enables us to achieve our purpose and work towards creating a braver, brighter and more creative world.

Here they are...

## Education Partners

- Little Scientists
- TAFE Illawarra Institute
- TAFE Higher Education
- University of Wollongong – Faculty of Social Sciences
- University of Wollongong – Early Start Research Institute
- University of Wollongong – UOW College

## Funding Partners

- Department of Education & Training
- Department of Social Services
- Families NSW
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Department of Family & Community Services

## Research Partners

- IRIS Research Group
- People Pulse

## Service Delivery and Community Partners

- Care South
- Communities for Children – Shellharbour

- Gowrie NSW
- Grand Pacific Health
- Illawarra Academy of Sport
- Interchange Illawarra
- KU Children's Services
- Mission Australia
- Noah's Ark – Shoalhaven
- Playgroups NSW
- Strategic Community Assistance for Refugee Families (SCARF)

## Creative Partners

- Bundanoon Trust
- Conservatorium of Music – Wollongong
- Home@735 Art Gallery
- Merrigong Theatre Company @ IPAC
- The Red Room Company
- UOW School of Arts, English and Media
- Wild Rumpus

## Facilities/Centre Development Partners

- Camden Council
- Department of Education and Communities
- Jalenco Homes
- Kiama Municipal Council
- Lend Lease
- Mintus

- [Re]velop
- Shellharbour City Council
- WEA Illawarra
- Wingecarribee Shire council
- Wollondilly Shire Council
- Wollongong City Council
- Stockland Shellharbour
- Stockland Willowdale



## Strong Community Partners

Each year Big Fat Smile partners with local Illawarra organisations and initiatives to share resources, expertise and skills, to the benefit of children, families and communities. We have selected just a few community partnerships to highlight from 2016:

### Illawarra Academy of Sport

Big Fat Smile partnered with the Illawarra Academy of Sport in 2016 in an information and skills exchange. This saw athletes strengthen their leadership capabilities while the children in our Fun Clubs learned sporting skills from leading local athletes.

Under this partnership arrangement, we hosted the athletes at a leadership workshop in February, with a focus on sharing practical leadership skills. The athletes then had the opportunity to develop these leadership skills in a practical setting by visiting our Fun Clubs and leading sessions with the children to teach them essential sporting skills.

### Mission Australia

Big Fat Smile and Mission Australia partnered in 2016 to encourage recycling within the Illawarra community. This collaboration resulted in the creation of Mission Australia clothing donation bins that are now located at our Bulli Community Preschool, Corimal Community Preschool and the Green Bean Play Café.

Through this collaboration and initiative, children and families are learning the importance and value of recycling, and have a new understanding of how easy it can be to make a positive contribution to the life of someone less fortunate.

### Savvy Kids Fun Run

Big Fat Smile laced up its joggers and got sweaty at the 2016 Bulli Burn. We partnered with Savvy Fitness to sponsor

the 2km Kids Fun Run, an event that saw hundreds of children and families from the Bulli and northern Illawarra communities enjoy a day of family fitness fun.



# Partnerships

*Big Fat Smile is also proud to continue its partnership with the higher education and research sectors.*



## Strong Research Collaborations

Big Fat Smile is also proud to continue its partnership with the higher education and research sectors. Specifically, we continue to partner closely with the University of Wollongong and its Early Start Research Institute to

generate vital research on the early childhood years for the industry.

Here are some of our research collaborations in 2016.

<b>Getting an Early Start to Aspirations</b>	Professor Valerie Harwood	Early Start Research Institute UOW
<b>Effects of Reduced Sitting on toddler's cognitive development</b>	Prof Tony Okley, Dr Rute Santos, Sanne Veldman	Early Start Research Institute UOW
<b>Starting Strong: Making children resilient in Early Childhood</b>	Dr Amy Conley Wright, Prof Iram Siraj, Prof Lesley Cooper, Toni Latham, Jane Harbinson	Early Start Research Institute UOW
<b>Early Start Baseline Project</b>	Prof Tony Okley, Prof Marc DeRosnay, Franca Mackie	Early Start Research Institute UOW
<b>Munch &amp; Move</b>	Rebecca Stanley	Early Start Research Institute UOW
<b>Path-ABC study: Preschool Activity, technology, health, adiposity, behaviour and cognitive study</b>	Dylan Cliff	Early Start Research Institute UOW
<b>Transforming Literacy Outcomes</b>	Dr Pauline Jones, Prof Beverly Derewianka, Prof Peter Freebody, Dr Jan Turnbull, A/Prof Lisa Kervin, A/Prof Honglin Chen, Dr Jessica Mantei, Dr Barbara McKenzie, Dr Erika Matruglio, Ms Emma Rutherford Vale	School of Education UOW
<b>Wellbeing and academic aspirations in Australian Youth</b>	Kristi McKenzie	University Of Sydney- School of Psychology Faculty Science
<b>Positive Education</b>	Dr Suzy Green	The Positivity Institute
<b>Kids in communities Study</b>	A/Prof Sharon Goldfeld, Prof Billie Giles-corti, Prof Tanton, A/Prof Sally Brinkman, Prof Ilan Katz, A/Prof Geoff Woolcock	Murdoch Children's Institute





## Artspace Studio

Big Fat Smile's Artspace Studio is a hub of creative expression and community engagement, and as such, makes a significant contribution towards realising our vision of a braver, brighter and more creative world.

Our Artspace Studio certainly makes the world more colourful by offering a platform from which children can express their creativity. In 2016, an average of 150 children enrolled each school term and an additional 2,000+ attended our school holiday programs. Artspace also served as an excursion venue for Big Fat Smile's preschools and Fun Clubs.

Artspace has also ventured into an adult offering in recent years, delivering an ever-growing adult evening program for lapsed creatives and beginners. We also continue to deliver our

scholarship program for Big Fat Smile employees, allocating one scholarship per term to an educator who has nominated themselves for the adult course. In 2016 we also hosted ten 'hands-on' sessions as part of Big Fat Smiles Welcome Day inductions (for new employees).

These offerings and initiatives are in addition to a pre-existing suite of programs including our morning



preschool and after-school programs for children aged 3 to 16 years.

The Studio continues to experience unprecedented growth, with enrolments increasing by 57.5% since 2014.



## Highlights from 2016 include:

- Hosting a series of 'hands-on' creative sessions for corporates, community groups like Wild Rumpus, and home-schoolers.
- Hosting one-day professional development sessions for third-year UOW and TAFE Illawarra Early Childhood degree students.
- Creating workshops and experiences that draw from the innovation and contemporary practice of the international arts community. This resulted in an increase in our technical, conceptual and skills-based learning agenda, bringing a new level of sophistication to the process of creativity.
- We partnered with SCARF to host free Saturday workshops for high school children to create masterpieces that featured in the Art for Refugees exhibition in October 2016.







## The Artists

Core to the program are our resident artists and musicians, all of whom are degree-qualified and practicing. Exhibiting in 2016 our participating artists and musicians were:

- **Jill Talbot**, visual artist
- **Robby Fernandez**, musician - percussion and drums
- **Shabnam Hinton**, musician - world music
- **Penny Hartgerink**, musician - contemporary folk/pop
- **Laura Stekovic**, visual artist
- **Tamara Gulic** - visual artist
- **Baylie Canavan** - musician (Year 12 student & Young Mentor)



Through the work of Artspace and our Artists-in-Residence Outreach Project, Big Fat Smile endeavours to support every child in becoming a confident, curious artist and a lifelong creative thinker.

Our Artists-in-Residence Project is a core initiative that contributes to this endeavour, as children have the opportunity to work alongside practicing, exhibiting and professional artists in a process of conception, construction and the celebration of making and creating art and music.

The Project has been inspired by the Reggio approach to education and involved the collaboration of Big Fat Smile's creative team and educators. Collectively we developed a shared creative program based on the Early Years Learning Framework learning objectives and the current interests of our children.







**T**he Gallery @ Big Fat Smile embodies artistic expression, collaboration and inspiration. In 2016 we presented 13 professional exhibitions featuring the works of artists (emerging and mid career) through to children.

The schedule was supported by a host of family and cultural events that fused with the art to make The Gallery @ Big Fat Smile a one-of-a-kind in Australia.

Exhibition highlights in 2016:

**December 15, 2015 – February 9, 2016: Convergence** – showcasing the talents of the Big Fat Smile artists.

**February 16 – March 1, 2016: Sunshine** – Donald Key's evocative exhibition of Summery paintings and limited edition prints.

**March 6 – April 6, 2016: Home@735 Collection** – an on-loan collection from one of Sydney's most contemporary galleries. The collection included 36 works including Arthur Boyd, David Hockney, Sidney Nolan, Norman Lindsay and a number of Australia's hottest art stars.

**May 5 – June 8, 2016: Fantastic Funnell Web** – a collaborative installation created in the April school holidays by children and their families.

**May 5 – June 8, 2016: Cut A Silver Path** – a conceptual exhibition featuring five invited photographers and one poet.

**July 8 – 19, 2016: Pilgrim** – a solo exhibition of paintings and drawings by Gaillyn Cooper.

**The Four Treasures** – a corporate partnership exhibition featuring Shu Fa by international guests and Chinese cultural pieces on-loan.

**July 22 – August 5, 2016: Joy & Mess** – this exhibition launched the NEW Big Fat Smile book, Joy & Mess alongside an exhibition of children's work from the Western Suburbs, Dapto, Kiama Downs, Bellambi, Port Kembla, Bundanoon, Warrawong, Barrack Heights and Robertson Community Preschools.

**August 11 – 25, 2016: Borne** – curated by Amy Cuneo as part of our scholarship series for artists returning to their practice after having children, this exhibition featured eight local artists' works themed around what it means to be a mother.

**August 30 – September 16, 2016: A Disappointed Horse** – featuring the works of Big Fat Smile's own Jill Talbot, arts therapist (and painter) Suzanne Perry and photographer Colin Talbot.

**September 21 – October 18, 2016: Visual Liminal** – featuring a collection of paintings, drawings, ceramics and installations by Jess Armstrong and Big Fat Smile's Nina Young.

**October 21 – November 9, 2016: UOW Graduate Prize** – Big Fat Smile's inaugural prize supporting Creative Arts graduates from the University of Wollongong.

**November 12 – December 12, 2016: Red Room Poetry Object** – delivered in partnership with The Red Room Company, The Gallery hosted the international children's poetry competition for children and educators.

**December 16 – 23, 2016: From The Studio Corner** – The Gallery invited a mix of emerging and mid career artists from Artspace and the exhibiting artists from the exhibition calendar to be part of a curated show.

## Highlight:

### Joy and Mess book launch and exhibition

Six years in the making, Big Fat Smile launched its latest book in July, 2016 – Joy and Mess, An Educator's Handbook.

Joy and Mess was written for educators by Big Fat Smile's Artist in Residence, Jill Talbot, and produced by Big Fat Smile's Chief Creative Officer, Jennine Primmer. It illuminates the processes and outcomes of the Artist-in-Residence project over a six-year period in Big Fat Smile's preschools, featuring children and educators from our centres. Specifically, the book highlights the importance of an educator's own creative confidence when educating children through the expressive arts.

The book launch and accompanying exhibition of children's fine art opened on July 26 at The Gallery @ Big Fat Smile. The exhibition showcased works created in eight of our preschools and celebrated the creative process and satisfaction of 'making'.





# The Gallery @ Big Fat Smile

## Creative Partnerships strengthen Artspace Studio and The Gallery @ Big Fat Smile

Creative community collaborations are a core component of Big Fat Smile's creative programs, specifically our Artspace Studio, The Gallery @ Big Fat Smile and the Creative Outreach Project.

In 2016 we established new creative partnerships and continued to invest time and creativity into pre-existing collaborations, to strengthen our creative offering to the children and families in our community.

These partnerships enable us to deliver best quality, creative education in our services and widen the reach of our creative message and innovative work.

## SCARF

SCARF is an Illawarra-based, not-for-profit organisation that supports local refugee families. Each year they host an Art For Refugees exhibition to raise awareness and funds for their great work. In 2016, they introduced the Art For Refugees Junior event to their portfolio and engaged with Artspace to facilitate the creation of pieces for exhibition.



## The Red Room Company

The Red Room Company is a national not-for-profit organisation that delivers school-based creative writing programs. In November 2016, Big Fat Smile joined forces with The Red Room Company to present The Red Room's Poetry Object. Previously held at Campbelltown Regional Gallery and Custom's House in Sydney, the

exhibition showcased work by children and educators from all over Australia and New Zealand.

## University of Wollongong School of Arts, English and Media

In 2016 Big Fat Smile partnered with the University of Wollongong's School of Arts, English and Media to offer a creative-based prize to two successful students from the School. The inaugural Graduate Art Prize was designed to celebrate outstanding arts practice and was established to support and encourage emerging artists, grow a creative community and support Big Fat Smile's vision for a braver, brighter and more creative world.

Graduates Lauren Burton and Anita Holloway were the successful joint-recipients of the prize which included a professional exhibition at The Gallery held over a three-week period in



The Red Room Company



October and November 2016, a launch event, supporting promotion and curatorial.

## Wild Rumpus

Wild Rumpus is a local, not-for-profit social enterprise that seeks to build a resourceful, sustainable and creative community. In a move to support local curators of creativity, Big Fat Smile offered Wild Rumpus free access to the Artspace Studio to host a series of practical art workshops in 2016. Big Fat Smile employees had free access to the workshops and our Artspace Studio also partnered with Wild Rumpus to collaboratively deliver workshops for children at The Makers Market at the Wollongong Town Hall.

## Home@735 Art Gallery

A contemporary visual arts gallery in Sydney, Home@735 Art Gallery lent their permanent collection to The Gallery @ Big Fat Smile in March 2016. The collection featured well-known artistic names including Arthur Boyd, Norman Lindsay and Sidney Nolan to name just a few. The exhibition was a significant coup for Big Fat Smile and a testament to the strength of its partnerships with creative agents. It further demonstrates the value of strategic partnerships in creating positive contributions to our communities, as this collection was made available to our community for their enjoyment free of charge.



Jill Talbot



Anita Holloway

**"I just want to get my work out there so this prize is practical and generous and the fact that The Gallery @ Big Fat Smile are taking no commission on sales is an added bonus for us as emerging artists."**

- Anita Holloway.





# Green Bean Play Café

*It's one of the few play spaces in the Illawarra region that is genuinely parent AND child-friendly.*

*At Green Bean Play Café, children can let their imagination – and their physical bodies – run free, while their parents watch and enjoy the tempting treats at the café.*

## **Changing it up to create fresh perspectives**

After two years, the Green Bean staff and Inclusion Agency Team decided to change the layout and positioning of activities, props and toys at the Café to inject a fresh perspective and energy into the space. The change created more space and lots of positive comments from parents.

A change in parents' engagement with their children while in the café was a positive outcome of the changes. They began to sit with their children, playing with them in the home corner area as it was more open and inviting. Parents also sat down near the ball pit area and played games with their children as a space was created for them to do so.



## **Activities for everyone**

Combining the perfect mix of exploratory fun and factual learning, Green Bean Play Café is major attraction for parents and children due to its variety of activities on offer. No two days are ever the same!

- **Monday** [November and December only]: SoccerMan proved to be very popular with the children who would go into the training room to learn the basic fundamental skills of soccer, crawl through tunnels and score goals.
- **Tuesday**: The children loved singing with Penny, Big Fat Smile Muso-in-Residence who sings all the children's favourite tunes whilst playing guitar and brings instruments for them to join in. Penny is like the pied piper of children – they absolutely love her!
- **Wednesday**: Face painting with Beth is always a hit! Whether your child wants to be a princess or a possum, a dragon or a dog, she has an amazing repertoire that can cater to any requests. Children love watching Beth turn their little friends' faces into works of art with her paint and brushes.
- **Friday**: Shab's music train sees Shab, one of Big Fat Smile's Muso-in-Residence, sing and dance with the children. Shab brings along a variety of instruments and sings songs from a variety of cultures.

Stay tuned for new exciting activities being planned for Green Bean Cafe in 2017.



# Locations

## 26 Community Preschools

- Barrack Heights
- Bellambi Point
- Bingara Gorge
- Bulli
- Bundanoon District
- Castle Hill
- Cobblers Hill
- Corrimal
- Dapto
- Helensburgh
- Kenny Street
- Kiama Downs
- Koonawarra
- Little Village
- Manooka Valley
- Picton
- Port Kembla
- Reynolds Street
- Robertson
- Rosehill
- Stewart Street
- Warrawong
- Western Suburbs
- Wollondilly/ Oran Park Mobile
- Wollongong City
- Woronora Heights

## 14 Fun Clubs

- Albion Park
- Austinmer
- Balarang
- Bingara Gorge
- Bulli
- Bellambi Point
- Fairy Meadow
- Flinders
- Koonawarra
- Thirroul
- Unanderra
- Wollongong City
- Wollongong East
- West Wollongong

*Our values are  
imagination, courage,  
integrity and respect  
and our beliefs,  
including creativity, fun,  
diversity, leadership  
and learning, underpin  
everything we do.*





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