

**Big Fat
Smile**

2018

ANNUAL REPORT



About Big Fat Smile

Big Fat Smile is a not-for-profit, community-owned organisation that plays an important part in the lives of thousands of children and families.

Big Fat Smile is one of the most respected and reputable providers of quality education, care, recreation, cultural and inclusion services in Australia.

Where did it start?

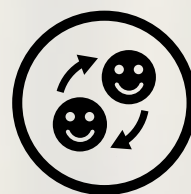
Illawarra Children's Services Action Group was established in 1981 with a view to bring positive, lasting change to the region through active campaigning for the rights of families to affordable care. Today Big Fat Smile consists of a network of Community Preschools, Fun Clubs and a portfolio of community and inclusion programs across Australia, but still with a firm, solid foundation in the Illawarra.

Our Work



Preschools and Long Day Care

- 27 Community Preschools for 0 – 5 year-olds, made up of:
 - Term only
 - Long day care
- From Castle Hill to Goulburn to Kiama Downs



Include Me

- Funding and inclusion support
- Delivers supported playgroups
- Parenting workshops
- Transition to school support
- Capacity building sessions



Fun Club Out of School Hours

- 14 Fun Clubs for 5 – 12 year-olds
- Before school, after school and school holiday programs
- Servicing the Illawarra and Goulburn regions



Green Bean Play Café

- Green Bean Play Café offers safe indoor play for young children

90%
FAMILY
SATISFACTION
RATE

Big Fat Smile Group Ltd.

ACN: 002 796 232 | ABN: 82 002 796 232

We're not-for-profit
community-owned.

Chairman's Report

David Campbell



The year in review was a year of new beginnings, direction and focus for Big Fat Smile, as we entered the inaugural year of our 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan.

The forward-focused Strategic Plan provides a benchmark against which we can measure success and foster a culture of continuous improvement. It prompted changes to our budget and organisational structure. One of our key achievements was developing our new vision and values to be rolled out across the organisation in 2019.

I am pleased to report that the executive structure implemented in 2018 has been successful in delivering against our 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan. Additions to the executive team were the role of Pedagogical Thinker in Residence, an industry-leading role dedicated to enhancing the educational foundation and function of our business, and the Chief Financial Officer role, focused on guiding financial direction and ensuring the long term sustainability of the organisation.

Our strong focus has been on organisational sustainability and achieving long term viability for Big Fat Smile. We developed an approach for long-term sustainable growth by analysing all current service offerings for viability. This analysis, coupled with a challenging year in 2018 due to increased competition and regulation, saw the closure of The Gallery, Artspace and Little Village services. All of these decisions were hard and made with plenty of angst. The fact the Board and Executive Team endorsed this action demonstrates our desire for a sustained business. I acknowledge very openly and thoughtfully the people these decisions impacted.

The Board recognises the exceptional work of our employees which, coupled with Big Fat Smile's industry-leading programs, has resulted in 100% of centres since 2014 achieving the 'meeting' or 'exceeding' rating under the demanding National Quality Standard. This achievement continues to demonstrate our strength as Australia's leader in Quality Assessment and Rating and by extension our core business strength in Early Education and Care.

In order to remain at the forefront of quality Big Fat Smile, as a team, rolled out an innovative new compliance training program and audit tool.

Big Fat Smile also reviewed and commenced consultation of our organisation's injury management

and return to work program, with a focus in 2018 on developing our WHS Management System.

Big Fat Smile is committed to keeping all employees safe, diligent, up-to-date and empowered to keep children safe. We value our staff.

One of my personal highlights for 2018 was joining the children at Woronora Heights Community Preschool in May to read the book for National Simultaneous Storytime. More than 1,000 children across our 27 Community Preschools participated in the national event that recognises the importance of early literacy.

I formally thank the Board of Directors for their tireless work and contributions in establishing the strategic direction of the organisation, ensuring an effective framework for the management of risk and overseeing executive and business performance of Big Fat Smile. The success of our organisation flows directly from the hard work and commitment of Board Members, Executive Leadership Team and staff. Sincere thanks and recognition must go particularly to our CEO Jenni Hutchins, for her vision, dedication, passion and leadership in a year of change and progress for the organisation. Jenni's commitment to strengthening our organisation and building opportunities for the future continues to see Big Fat Smile thrive as an organisation.

Thank you also to the families who use our Early Learning and Care services; the trust you place in Big Fat Smile is valued.

In 2019 we will be implementing Year 2 of our Strategic Plan with a continued focus on the financial sustainability of the organisation. We look to establishing, maintaining and constantly improving organisational governance and creating a cost aware culture. We will continue to work on developing an optimal service offering and maintaining our position as an industry leading provider of inclusive early learning and care services.

I look to the year ahead with great excitement for what is to come for our organisation as we work together to deliver extraordinary services to our customers and the community.

The Hon. David Campbell
Chairman, Big Fat Smile



CEO Report

Jenni Hutchins



Big Fat Smile is a vibrant organisation, focussed on the education, care and wellbeing of children and families. It is an organisation which, through its engagement with children and families, embeds itself in the communities in which we work.

2018 was the first year of our new Strategic Plan. As an organisation, we have continued to focus on our Strategic Plan outcomes. Our six Pillars set the tone and focus of the organisation for 2018 and these are our achievements:

PILLAR 1 Client Experience and Innovation:

The Child Care Subsidy roll out on 2nd July 2018 saw one of the most significant changes to the sector for at least a decade. New technology was implemented and a strong and coherent communication plan deployed with our 3,500 families. In light of the CCS changes, we introduced a new product, Attendance Blocks, so that families could get the most out of their eligible subsidy hours. Big Fat Smile's Board, executive and staff were acutely aware of the potentially negative impact of the changes on vulnerable or disadvantaged families. Big Fat Smile developed adept solutions for these families. We redesigned both our Marketing and our Client Engagement teams to be client-driven with highlighted positive results for families.

We continue to focus on and develop our strategies as a Child Safe Organisation. Safety for our children is our number one priority and our commitment to this was borne out in a day where we invited Robert Fitzgerald AM, Royal Commissioner, Megan Mitchell, Human Rights Commissioner for Children and Steve Kinmond, NSW Deputy Ombudsman for Community Services to talk on the importance of child safety to a cross-sector audience of about 200 people.

Big Fat Smile is a sector-leading organisation in the Early Learning and Care, Out of School Hours Care and Inclusion space. Coupled with this work, our focus on diversity and community support services has been central to the DNA of our organisation.

PILLAR 2 Educational Ethos:

A new Pedagogical Thinker In Residence role was designed and Michele Peden commenced in the role to further build our educational focus and framework. Our children's educational journey commences the moment they engage with us, no matter the environment and we are proud of the leading edge nature of this role and what it will bring to our children and families.

PILLAR 3 Staffing Excellence:

With over 690 staff, Big Fat Smile is a leading employer in the sector and in the Illawarra, where a concentration of our services exist. We redesigned our People and Culture Team to place a greater emphasis on culture and permanency for staff in a highly casualised workforce. Our Employee Engagement survey highlighted our strengths with our Net Promoter Score improving by 22% from the previous year. We continue to focus on building a vibrant, positive culture and a talented workforce. We finalised our vision and values in partnership with the Board and staff.





PILLAR 4 Strategic Partnerships:

Big Fat Smile is aware that we can't be the be-all and end-all to all families. Strategic Partnerships highlight opportunities to partner with other organisations to improve outcomes for children and families. Big Fat Smile has partnered with Barnardos, Illawarra Credit Union, Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour Council and Kiama Council, to name a few central partnerships which directly and indirectly benefit our clients.

PILLAR 5 Organisational Sustainability:

The early learning and care sector is changing rapidly in Australia. It has become a highly competitive, developer-driven market where early learning and care has become an emerging focus of for-profit organisations. Big Fat Smile has spent considerable time reviewing our business model to ensure we are competitive and quality-driven, community-based lens in this market. Through our vision and values work, we

have clarified our focus and, in 2018, made some difficult decisions, and strengthened our resolve to grow in a smart, considered and steady way, which will hone our strengths. These decisions will aid the continued focus on our vision and will ensure that our financial foundations are strong.

PILLAR 6 Advocacy and Leadership:

Big Fat Smile has an ongoing commitment to children, families and communities and, in particular, accessible early learning and care for all. Being a part of industry advocacy and leadership provides the opportunity to improve early education for all and is a key focus in the strategic direction of our organisation.

Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA): In 2018, I became the National Co-chair of Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA). ELACCA is a peak-body which focusses on promoting the value of quality early learning and care as an integral part of Australia's education system. Through ELACCA, Big Fat Smile has participated in National and State leadership forums and engaged with Government and political leaders to highlight the importance of early learning and care for Australia's children.

MP Visits: Independently, Big Fat Smile has focussed on promoting its services and developing strong, collaborative relationships with Government. In 2018 Big Fat Smile had many visits from politicians and Government officials:

- Bundanoon Community Preschool's new building was officially opened by NSW Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, Minister for Early Childhood Education, The Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC and Member for Goulburn, the Hon. Pru Goward.
- Kate Washington MP – Corrimal and Helensburgh Community Preschools
- Ryan Park MP – Corrimal Community Preschool
- The Hon. Sharon Bird MP – Bulli Community Preschool
- Lee Evans MP and the Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC – Helensburgh Community Preschool
- The Hon. Pru Goward, Wendy Tuckerman MP and the Hon. Ursula Stephens – Reynolds Street Community Preschool

Chairman of the Board David Campbell and I were delighted that the Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education, came to visit our Big Fat Smile Head Office in May. We were able to discuss our services, culture of continuous



improvement and our delivery of quality outcomes. Big Fat Smile is committed to continuing to work in partnership with the Government to provide industry leading early childhood education and care.

I continue to be inspired by our staff, and the stories of our impact daily. Thanks must go firstly to the Big Fat Smile Board, particularly the Chairman David Campbell for his support, and the chairs of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee and Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee, Jason Malone and Ken Whitton respectively. The Executive at Big Fat Smile work extremely hard to bring to the fore the strength of our competencies and role model our values to build our culture. I thank them collectively and individually for their hard work and commitment. Finally, an organisation is nothing without its staff. Our staff are long-standing, committed, passionate and important. Important to us, important to families, but in particular, very, very important to our children as they work alongside them everyday. Thanks must go to all of our staff for working with integrity and respect, for committing to Big Fat Smile, and for playing their role in the life of a child.

Jenni Hutchins
CEO, Big Fat Smile

Strategic Plan Pillars

PILLAR 1

Client Experience & Innovation:

Big Fat Smile is the number one choice for families for the provision of quality education and care.

PILLAR 2

Education Ethos & Practice:

Our organisation has a deep foundation and a clear education ethos that is visible in our daily education practices.

PILLAR 3

Staffing Excellence:

Big Fat Smile is recognised as an Employer of Choice and widely regarded as having high quality staff leading to the delivery of quality education.

PILLAR 4

Strategic Partnerships:

We value all of our partners and work together to achieve mutually positive outcomes.

PILLAR 5

Organisational Sustainability:

We achieve long term viability of the organisation.

PILLAR 6

Advocacy and Leadership:

We are thought leaders, advocates and experts in our field.



Board and Leadership

Board Directors

David Campbell – Board Chair

- M Mgt, FAICD
- Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2014
- Governance, Nominations & Remuneration Committee Member
- Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee Member
- Retired Member of Parliament

Sophie Ray – Board Deputy Chair

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

- Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2016
- Governance, Nominations & Remuneration Committee Member
- Director & business owner

Louise Meyrick

BA, Dip Ed, M Comm, M. Dispute Resol

- Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2015
- Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee Member until May 2018
- Governance, Nominations & Remuneration Committee Member since May 2018
- Senior Consultant, Policy & Planning Specialist

Ken Whitton

B Commerce, MBA, Grad Dip (Fin Plan)

- Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2015
- Chair, Governance, Nominations & Remuneration Committee
- Senior Policy Advisor, Superannuation Peak Body

Tony Deliseo

B. Sc (Physics), Cert IV TAE, GAICD

- Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since 2015
- Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, Chair until May 2018, Member since May 2018
- Asia Pacific CEO, International Software Group

Jason Malone

BComm, MBA, CPA,

- Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since April 2018
- Chair, Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, Chair since May 2018
- Executive General Manager, Aged Care Sector

Chelsea Hampel

BComm, MA, GCMgmt

- Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. since November 2018
- Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee Member
- Director, Higher Education Sector

Vanessa Bourne

BA LLB EMBA FGIA, MAICD

- Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. from 2016 – November 2018
- Governance, Nominations & Remuneration Committee Member from January – May 2018

- Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee Member from May – November 2018
- Executive Director, Higher Education Sector

Chris Stolk

Bcom CPA GAICD

- Non Executive Director of Big Fat Smile Group Ltd. from 2015 – April 2018
- Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee Member from January – April 2018
- Chief Financial Officer, Health Insurance Industry

Senior Executive Group

Jenni Hutchins – Chief Executive Officer

B Arts (Welf, Psych), PG Dip (Child & Family, Psych, Intern Psychologist), R. Psych

Jenni has been the Chief Executive Officer of Big Fat Smile since February 2017. Jenni leads the implementation of Big Fat Smile's Strategic Plan with the outcome of enriching the lives and minds of our children and families in their communities.

Angela Taylor – General Manager, Governance & Risk

BA/LLB (Hons), LLM (App Law) (Inhouse Practice)

Angela has been the General Manager, Governance & Risk and Company Secretary of Big Fat Smile since July 2017. Angela leads a team in the delivery of Big Fat Smile's child protection strategy, compliance, quality assurance, policies and procedures.

Melissa Woodhouse – General Manager, Operations

Dip (Children's Services), Grad Dip (Public Sector Management), Cert IV Training and Assessment

Melissa has been the General Manager Operations since December 2017. Melissa leads a team in the operations of Big Fat Smile's portfolio of community preschools, early learning and care, Fun Clubs, school holiday care, Inclusion Agency and community support programs to enhance the education, care and wellbeing of children, families and communities.

Ben Marsh – Chief Financial Officer

BA MCom EMBA FCPA

Ben has been the Chief Financial Officer of Big Fat Smile since March 2018. Ben leads a team in the delivery of the finance, facilities and IT functions of the organisation.

Michele Peden – Pedagogical Thinker in Residence

Associate Diploma of Social Science (Child Studies), BEt(EC), Cert IV Workplace Training Category 2, GDipAdultEd, Cert IV Training and Assessment, MEd(EC)

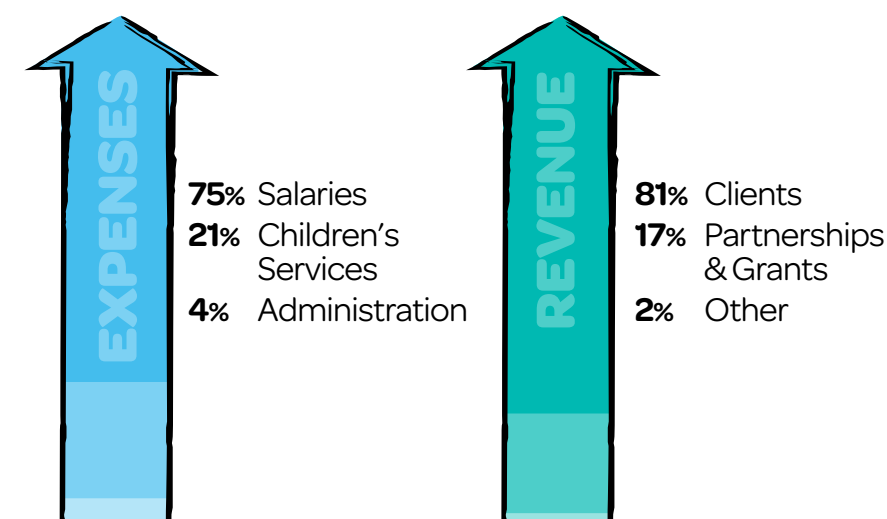
Michele has been Big Fat Smile's Pedagogical Thinker in Residence since February 2018. Michele leads a team in developing an educational framework for children aged 0 – 12 to support Big Fat Smile's services and enhance education and care outcomes.

2018 Financials

2018 Revenue

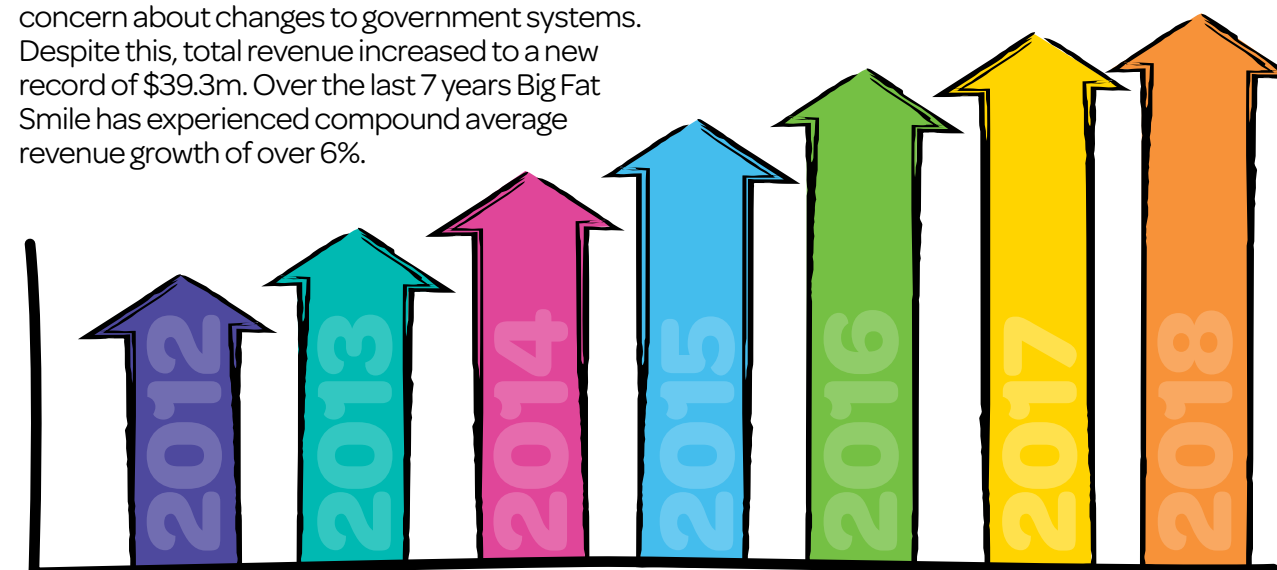
At an operating level, Big Fat Smile incurred a loss of \$1.135m, driven by increased investment in staffing (up 11%). Tighter control of non-staff costs delivered savings (3%) to facilitate this investment.

Big Fat Smile remains debt free and has net equity of over \$3m. In 2018 a number of under performing services were identified with closures occurring in December 2018 and January 2019.



Total Revenue

Big Fat Smile experienced a challenging year in 2018, impacted by increased competition and concern about changes to government systems. Despite this, total revenue increased to a new record of \$39.3m. Over the last 7 years Big Fat Smile has experienced compound average revenue growth of over 6%.



As of December 2018:





Community Preschools and Early Learning and Care

Our Community Preschools offer a combination of long day care, term only preschool and mobile preschool services for children aged six-weeks to five-years-old across NSW. We focus on delivering best practice staffing ratios, highly qualified teachers and centre staff, play environments that nurture children and facilitate their creative expression, and high quality early education and care.

2018 saw a significant increase in new parent tours of centres which had a flow on effect of new enrolments thereby increasing utilisation in our services.

2018 Highlights

Community Building Partnerships Program, NSW Government Grant:

Bellambi – painting the centre
Kenny Street – backyard upgrade
Reynolds Street – sand pit upgrade

Stronger Communities Australian

Government Grant: promoting exercise and outdoor play at Warrawong Community Preschool

Long Day Care

Attendance Blocks: After significant changes to the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy in 2018, Big Fat Smile responded with a new innovation – attendance blocks. The attendance blocks scheme allows parents to choose from a 9 hour, 10 hour or full day attendance block based on what suits their circumstances, in order to get the most out of their eligible Child Care Subsidy hours. Big Fat Smile is committed to identifying and responding to the needs of our families and ensuring our services are accessible.

275,827

care experiences across
our 27 Community
Preschools in 2018.

Term Only Pre Schools

Bundanoon District Community Preschool

Expansion: The grand opening of Bundanoon District Community Preschool's new building was held on 28th February, with Big Fat Smile staff, Board members and Government dignitaries in attendance. The building was officially opened by NSW Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, Minister for Early Childhood Education, The Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC and Member for Goulburn, The Hon. Pru Goward. The new building was an expansion of the existing Community Preschool, allowing four and five-year-old children to participate in a comprehensive transition to school program. This expansion was made possible by a grant from the Department of Education and donations from Wingecarribee Shire Council and numerous local businesses and organisations. Both our new and existing buildings will continue to provide our play-based and nature-focussed curriculum, designed to enhance each child's creativity and curiosity. The additional space also provides access to local community based services.

National Quality Standards: National vs NSW vs Big Fat Smile

- 35 centres assessed since 2014 have achieved the 'exceeding' rating.
- Centres assessed in 2018 – Koonawarra CPS (exceeding overall in all quality areas), Port Kembla CPS (exceeding), Reynolds Street CPS (exceeding), Kenny Street CPS (meeting), Kiama CPS (meeting), Shellharbour CPS (meeting), Warrawong CPS (meeting)

	Working Towards	Meeting	Exceeding
Long Day Care National	21%	49%	30%
BFS Long Day Care	0%	25% ⚙️	75% ⚙️
Preschool Term Only National	7%	33%	59%
BFS Preschool Term Only	0%	0%	100%



"My child loves going to day care and it's a testament to the love and care that she feels in her environment. We know she is in good hands."

Parent, Rosehill CPS

Fun Clubs

Fun Clubs provide the highest quality out of school hours care for children aged 5 – 12 years.

Our Fun Clubs offer before school, after school and school holiday care.

In line with Big Fat Smile’s broader 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan, a new Fun Club strategy was developed to direct the overall business strategy for the school age service from 2018 – 2020. This strategy was largely informed by insights derived from 2017 Staff and Parent & Carer surveys. The Quality Assurance and Operations teams worked collaboratively to focus on practice, increase community connections and provide a point of difference in our service offering.

Our Fun Club programs now include:

- Diverse Activity Gurus teaching cooking skills, drama play, photography and specialised art

- A larger variety of sport, fun and creative activities to suit children’s different interests
 - Healthy food menus
 - Supported homework sessions
- Fun Clubs welcomed new Activity Gurus in 2018, providing a holistic play-based program that supports the foundation of creativity.
- Big Fat Smile Fun Clubs continued to grow in 2018, with the opening in February of a new Fun Club in Corrimal at St Columbkille’s Catholic Primary School.
- In October a ‘Voice of the Child’ survey and focus groups were conducted in Fun Clubs, so we could hear directly from our children about what they wanted. We learnt that what is on the menu is very important to them. In 2019, we plan to continue to deliver innovative new ideas, offer competitive prices and deliver a top quality service at all Fun Clubs.

2018 Highlights

Canon Oceania Community Grant

Big Fat Smile received \$5,000 from the 2018 Canon Oceania Grant towards photography equipment for our Photography Guru program.

In 2018 our Photo Guru ran a number of photography sessions at Wollongong East and Wollongong West Fun Clubs. A total of 60 children had a great time learning about ‘flat-lay’ photography, depth of field and portraiture.

Camp Wombaroo

In partnership with The Outdoor Education Group, Fun Clubs had one week of exclusive use of Camp Wombaroo’s outdoor adventure camp. The children participated in a range of risk-taking activities such as high and low ropes, the vertical challenge, the high swing and archery. The children and Educators had an amazing adventure.

St George Illawarra Dragons Clinic

The St George Illawarra Dragons visited our Balarang Fun Club and ran a Rugby League clinic.

Nature Play Training

Outdoor Connections trained our Fun Club Directors on nature play experiences. The training provided the Directors with hands-on environmentally friendly nature play activities that they can implement and share with the children in their Fun Clubs.



National Quality Standards: National vs Big Fat Smile

In 2018, 100% of our Fun Clubs were rated by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) as exceeding the National Quality Standard.* This can be attributed to our dedication to providing industry-leading education and care to all children

	Working Towards	Meeting	Exceeding
Australia	28%	56%	16%
BFS	0%	0%	100%

* St Columbkille’s Fun Club awaiting assessment.





Include Me

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

Big Fat Smile is passionate about inclusion. 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 and 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

The New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory Inclusion Agency is a collective of partners including Big Fat Smile (through the work of Include Me), KU Children's Services and Gowrie NSW. The Federal Government has committed to re-funding our program until the end of June 2021.

Teaming up with the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) we offered a series of forums in NSW and the ACT for educators to join together and discuss the revised National Quality Standards and what it means for inclusion.

We assisted over 1,000 eligible services build their capacity and capability to provide and embed inclusive practice in their delivery of learning and care programs.

The four Include Me Inclusion Hubs hosted several Conversation Cafes, where educators were invited to engage in reflective conversations focusing on a range of topics.

Our Inclusion Hubs supported Yarnin Circles with Early Childhood Education and Care services, where educators looked at making connections with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IDFM)

The Inclusion Development Fund exists to provide funding assistance to eligible childcare services for the purposes of addressing and removing barriers to inclusion, for children with additional needs.

In 2018, Include Me continued to partner with KU Children's Services to serve as the IDFM contracted by the Australian Government and the Department of Education and Training to provide nationally consistent and equitable management of the Inclusion Development Fund.

Children and Parenting Support (CAPS)

Communities for Children Program is funded by the Australian Government under the Families and Children Program. Children and Parenting Support (CAPS) is part of Big Fat Smile's Include Me Program, designed to support families with young children aged 0 – 12 years living in the 2518 and 2502 postcode areas.

Supported Playgroups operate to assist children and families with identified needs in their development and readiness for school.

1,615 unique clients across 248 sessions 7,429 client attendances



2018 CAPS Highlights

- Playgroups operated during school terms across Primbee, Corrimall East, Bellambi and Warrawong, supporting a total of 2,199 unique clients across 377 sessions, with a total of 10,878 client attendances.
- School holiday programs for 0 – 12 year olds were held in parks in Primbee and Corrimall.
- In term 3, CAPS commenced a partnership with Healthy Cities Illawarra to deliver the Healthy Active Tweens program in Bellambi. Between 12 – 20 children attended the program weekly.
- Parenting Course – The Circle of Security Parenting Program, an eight week program, is designed to help parents and carers build supportive and secure relationships with their children. The Program ran 3 times in 2018, with 61 parents and children attending over the course of the 24 sessions, with free childminding provided by Big Fat Smile.
- Swimming Program – CAPS provided free swimming lessons in partnership with Northern Stars Swim School at Bellambi. In terms 3 and 4 a total of 37 children participated, 30 of whom were from an indigenous background. Swimming NSW provided additional funding for the Indigenous program.

Other Community Collaborations

- Post Natal Depression Group – In partnership with Grand Pacific Health, a program offering free counselling with a psychologist from NSW Health Family Care Centre for post natal depression, with free childminding offered by Big Fat Smile. The program received a generous donation from the Illawarra Women in Business network.
- In addition, other community collaborations saw community members attend free workshops such as Developing Effective Sleep Patterns: From Birth and Beyond (with the Illawarra Early Parenting Centre), and the Foodsmart program (cooking and waste reduction classes with partner Healthy Cities Illawarra).

Transition to School (TTS)

Big Fat Smile, through the work of Include Me, also delivers the Illawarra Transition to School Project, covering the Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama local government areas. 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 school, through information sharing and community events. The project also has a strong emphasis on supporting Aboriginal children in their transition to school.

2018 TTS Highlights

- 87 local community events and sessions attended by Billy Backpack, including library story times, preschool visits, playgroup sessions, orientations and NAIDOC activities
- 39 meetings with local community organisations and agencies
- 500+ children and families attended our annual Lord Mayor's Picnic in the Park
- 3 professional development sessions for Big Fat Smile educators and directors hosted in the training room at Head Office
- 2,000+ families engaged with the program and received information and resources to support their child and family in their school readiness journey

2018 Inclusion Agency Highlights

1,000+ eligible services supported

10

Sessions of Conversation cafes with 3 topics

9

Yarnin Circles sessions

The Day Care Project facilitates access to early childhood services for children with a developmental delay and ongoing high support needs.

2,572 supported hours in 2018 11 attendees

Green Bean Play Cafe

Big Fat Smile's Green Bean Play Café is one of few community spaces in the Illawarra region that is truly parent and child friendly.

The café offers a place for safe and creative indoor play for young children aged 0 – 8, while parents can enjoy a barista brewed coffee and some delicious food.

In 2018, Green Bean Play Café offered a range of weekly events for children, including visual arts, music workshops, kids yoga, soccer, dancing and story-telling.

A highlight for Green Bean in 2018 was partnering with local community organisations to host a range of free information sessions, including "Developing Effective Sleep Patterns: From Birth and Beyond" presented by Illawarra Early Parenting Centre, Figtree Private Hospital, in partnership with Ramsay Health. These sessions were great in engaging our community, were well attended and received extremely positive feedback.

2018 Highlights

- Transition to School (TTS) information days
- A SIDs and Kids Fundraiser
- 3 graduation ceremonies for Community Preschools
- Story time with Corrimal Library
- Visits from Carters Kids Family Daycare
- Excursion visits from Corrimal Community Preschool
- Happy Handz hygiene education for kids

10,000+ Visitors
70% Repeat visitors
16 Parties

"Wonderful staff, reasonably priced food and coffee, and lots for the kids to do!"

Green Bean customer

Pedagogy / Research

In 2018, Big Fat Smile's Pedagogical Thinker in Residence, Michele Peden, commenced to enhance the organisations' future educational and care practices for children birth-12 years through the strategic development of an educational framework. This framework will aim to foster the development of an inclusive, collaborative, child-centric education and learning culture for children, families and educators.

In August 2018, a new Pedagogical Champions forum was created, which comprised of a number of directors from our educational and care services (birth-12 years). Facilitated by Michele Peden, the Champions will aid in the promotion of pedagogical leadership, support colleagues in their ongoing development as early education specialists and assist in the development of the organisation educational framework.

Curriculum

Big Fat Smile's educational foundations align with a play-based curriculum whereby our teachers and educators engage in child-initiated and adult supported learning to enhance children's academic and developmental learning outcomes. Informed by research, this will help to prepare our young children for lifelong learning success in the 21st century. Central to our National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), play-based learning is a multifaceted type of natural enquiry that allows children to learn through play as they are continually encouraged by our educators to explore, think laterally, create, negotiate, discover, problem solve, experiment, construct knowledge, and be curious learners - all vital foundations for academic, social and emotional competence.

Research partnerships - University of Wollongong

As part of the organisation's Strategic Plan, in 2018, Big Fat Smile partnered with Wollongong University, and its Early Start Research institute, in a jointly funded project called 'Strong Children, Strong Families'. This exploratory study aimed to investigate the impact of a seven month intensive professional learning program designed to upskill educators in successfully meeting the complex needs of vulnerable or disadvantaged children and families attending our services.

The main results indicated that this was a successful small-scale implementation trial, with educators showing a significant improvement in their sense of self efficacy and effect improvements were noted in practice across educators of varying qualifications, roles and experiences. Also, significant statistical improvement in educators' sense of adequacy working with vulnerable families were reported, and an increase in educators knowledge and understanding around the theory of family-centered practices.

The outcomes of this study will inform how educators within our organisation can further support vulnerable children and families and promote family-centered practices.

Also in 2018, the Early Start Discovery Space conducted an entomological research study for the early years called 'Insect Hotels' in some of our services. Our educators were trained by UOW researchers to implement an 8-10 week hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) based learning project. Whilst results of this study are not yet available, educators reported children engaged in play-based learning exploration, as they investigated concepts around biology, problem solving, critical thinking, cooperation skills and gaining a greater understanding of insect habitats. Big Fats Smile continues to implement a range STEM based learning across all services.



Child Protection

Child safety, wellbeing and child protection continued to be a focus across Big Fat Smile in 2018.

Highlights included

- Comprehensive review of the Royal Commission's findings and recommendations into the abuse of children in the care of organisations and the subsequent development of the Big Fat Smile Child Safe Action Plan to drive child safe activities across all Big Fat Smile portfolios.
- In partnership with the Illawarra Community Industry Group, we hosted a Forum in March 2018 drawing together Guest Speakers Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald AM, Australian Children's Commissioner Megan Mitchell, Deputy Ombudsman Steve Kinmond to discuss "The Royal Commission – Implications & Opportunities to Improve Child Safety for Human Service Organisations". This provided an opportunity to explore how providers in the region can work together to develop and implement best practice in the protection of children and vulnerable people. The day was a great success and was well received by both organisations' staff and the broader community.

- The introduction of a monthly Child Safety and Wellbeing Practice Group involving key representatives across all of our education and care services to review research and best practice, changes in our policy and practice, provide opportunities for peer supervision and mentoring, and championing a child safe culture within Big Fat Smile.
- Review of the Child Safe Organisation Policy, recruitment and screening practices and updated child protection training for educators on a monthly basis through staff meetings and to ensure currency of knowledge and practice.
- Continued liaison with key agencies and peak bodies including NSW Ombudsman, ELACCA, Office of Human Rights Commission, Family and Community Services to advocate and inform sector wide (education and care) child safe practices and protocols.



2018 Highlights

Stellar Awards:

Big Fat Smile employees were recognised for their work and service at the second annual Big Fat Smile Stellar Awards night, held in December.

After receiving an overwhelming number of nominations for the awards, the Big Fat Smile 2018 Stellar Award winners were:

Educator of the Year: Merryn Cahill, Kiama Downs Community Preschool

Director of the Year: Elisabeth Moller, Koonawarra Fun Club

Community Engagement Award: Karen Edwards, CAPS Team

Stellar Support of the Year: Sineva Hill, Client Engagement Team

Team of the Year: Bellambi Point Community Preschool

Employee of the Year: Nichole Tuckerman, Balarang Fun Club

An additional 24 Big Fat Smile employees were honoured for 10 or more years of service to the organisation. Special acknowledgement was given to Olivera Cunzolo, from Kenny Street Community Preschool, and Cathy Bradley, from our Inclusion Development Fund Manager, for 25-years of service, commitment and dedication to Big Fat Smile.

Congratulations to all award winners, nominees and staff, whose dedication is integral to Big Fat Smile providing superior education and care for young people in our communities.



Early Childhood Australia National Conference

In September, CEO Jenni Hutchins, along with members of the Board of Directors, managers and Big Fat Smile educators, joined over 2,000 attendees at the Early Childhood Australia National Conference. Big Fat Smile staff and leadership are committed to continual professional learning and development opportunities resulting in improving our services to enrich children and families in our communities.

National Simultaneous Storytime

In May, more than 1,000 children across our 27 community preschools participated in National Simultaneous Storytime. Recognising the importance of early literacy in the development of children aged birth – 5 years old, we joined in on the national event aimed at encouraging young Australians to read and enjoy books. It was great to have Big Fat Smile educators, Board members, parents and community members read the stories at our preschools.





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