



Year in Review

2024 - 2025

The themes of the year included change, growth and a relentless focus on delivering, demonstrating and supporting high-quality early learning.

We acknowledge and thank Susan Anderson, our CEO for five years, and Paul Geyer who completed his tenure as Chair at the end of 2024. We thank them for their leadership and stewardship of Gowrie Victoria.

Our strategy commits to increasing our impact by growing a diverse portfolio of programs and services. We are delighted that Gowrie Victoria has been selected by the Department of Education as the provisional provider for six new kindergartens opening across 2026 and 2027. This expansion enables us to grow beyond metropolitan Melbourne, provide high-quality early learning to more children and families, and to develop new partnerships in the communities of Geelong, Wyndham, Footscray, and Craigieburn.

This year saw a significant increase in the scale and reach of our adult learning programs. Our team supports hundreds of services and thousands of teachers and educators in all corners of Victoria. We

are proud of the impact of the coaching, mentoring and networking programs that we deliver for the Department of Education and are excited about our next partnership, which will focus on building leadership capabilities.

In this report, we share stories of the great work of our team and the strong partnerships we rely on across our sector and communities. All that we achieve is through the commitment of our people and we are proud that 92% of our team see Gowrie as a "Truly Great Place to Work." It speaks to their dedication, passion and commitment to continuous improvement and learning.

We thank all children, families, students, adult learners, staff, including Nicole Pilsworth for her valuable contribution in leading quality practice, program partners, community partners, board members and also the Department of Education, all of whom have supported Gowrie in a myriad of ways over the year. We continue to be purpose-driven and our belief in the potential of children drives everything we do.

Karen Weston
CEO

Mark Burke
Chair

Acknowledgment of Wurundjeri Country

Gowrie Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the place now called Victoria, and all First Nations Peoples living and working on this land where we support educators and early learning services. We celebrate the history and ways of knowing and being of the world's oldest living culture. As educators, we believe we have a strong responsibility to nurture

an understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in new generations of children. We are committed to developing genuine relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and embedding learning about our shared history throughout our organisation and curriculum.

The Year at a Glance

Our children and families

Every week Gowrie's quality early learning is experienced by over 1100 children from just under 1000 families. Our families are diverse with 56% coming from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, 3% identify as Aboriginal, 6% are refugees and 10% of children require family support.

Since free kindergarten was introduced back in 2023, there has been steady growth in demand for sessional kindergarten from around 20% to 25% and the proportion of children under 3 in our services is now around 22%.

We supported

397 early learning services

across Victoria through one or more of our programs

around 1200 teachers and educators and around 80 allied health professionals

through School Readiness Funding in 2025

We facilitated

284 networking events

with almost 4900 teachers across Victoria in 2025

We coached and mentored

332 teachers and educators

on programs on behalf of the Victorian Department of Education (provisionally registered teachers, those returning or migrating to the Victoria sector, and trainees)

70 early childhood professionals

attended study tours and blended learning

49 school students

undertook the intro to early childhood program

From our own team

41 employees

were promoted

11 Certificate III-qualified educators

completed the Diploma

19 educators

completed their teaching qualification and a further 15 are working towards completing their teaching qualification

92%

of our staff say Gowrie Victoria is a 'Truly Great Place to Work'

Our staff rated our culture as a

Culture of Soaring

in the highest bracket with a score of 76% compared to 58% for the early learning sector.

Our turnover reduced to

15%

with the for-profit sector benchmark at 41%

Our facilities

\$7.029m

invested in renovations and new buildings, creating 116 new places at Broadmeadows and Carlton North and upgrading facilities and play areas across our services

Our 2025 Staff Conference

In May, 270 Gowrie staff gathered at Moonee Valley Racecourse for a day of professional learning, reflection and connection at our annual Staff Conference. The event was an opportunity for all staff to come together to share ideas and engage in a series of presentations and workshops designed to inspire and inform.



This year's conference theme was play, explored through engaging workshops and presentations. The day began with a warm Welcome to Country from Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Tony, followed by a Yidaki performance by Kiernan Thompson.

Throughout the day, our own Gowrie educators led twelve interactive breakout sessions showcasing high quality practice across our services. Each service offered up their own learnings and unique identity by focusing on topics such as trauma-informed practice, nutrition, foundational literacy, and the use of technology with young children.

We thank our guest speakers, Professor Tricia Eadie, who reinforced the critical role of play-based learning, as well as Karen Glancy who reflected on the power of sustainable practices with children.

By sharing knowledge, celebrating successes and reflecting together, we continue to strengthen our professional community and nurture a culture of ongoing learning and continuous improvement.

Service Achievements

Our Broadmeadows Valley team achieved the Excellent rating from ACECQA for the third consecutive time, recognising its outstanding service. The assessment praised the service's commitment to respecting, reflecting, and celebrating culture and diversity and its exceptional collaborative partnerships with community and research organisations. It also commended the team's leadership in the wider education and care sector by contributing to improved practices beyond the service itself.

CEO Karen Weston congratulated the team for their relentless focus on continuous improvement and the strong community they nurtured for children and families. Broadmeadows Valley is one of only 26 services nationally and eight in Victoria currently holding this top rating. The service is also a finalist in the Victorian Early Years Awards for 2025 for its evidence-based partnership with MacKillop Family Services, which integrates early education and social services to strengthen outcomes for children.

Additionally, the Gowrie Docklands (GDK) team was recognised as a top three finalist in the 2025 HESTA Early Childhood Education and Care Awards in the

'Outstanding Service' category across Australia, after more than 250 nominees. The nomination was in recognition for the team's ongoing support of migrant children and families new to Australia, addressing barriers with support services.

These prestigious acknowledgments underline Gowrie's dedication to setting the highest possible standards for early childhood education and care across Victoria.

Docklands Kinder



Broadmeadows Valley



New Kindergarten Rooms Open at Broadmeadows Valley and Carlton North

The new kindergarten rooms at Gowrie Broadmeadows Valley and Carlton North opened in early 2025, welcoming more children and families into our growing community—thanks to successful grant applications through the Victorian School Building Authority and Building Blocks. The \$2.3m investment at Broadmeadows Valley created 66 additional places, while the \$2,179,490 investment at Carlton North added 50 new places.

At Broadmeadows Valley, the 4–5 month construction project drew plenty of excitement as children watched dump trucks and excavators transform the site. The result is two bright, spacious kindergarten rooms with natural light, new hygiene amenities, meeting rooms, and inviting communal spaces. A beautifully landscaped garden now complements the rooms, with trees and rocks from the original site thoughtfully repurposed into the play space. At Carlton North, two new rooms have also opened, alongside a community space and an upgraded outdoor learning area.



Broadmeadows Valley

“A wiggly building, a different building.”
– Walker



Carlton North

“Last year it was just the rooftop, and the walls and people were still building.”
– Spencer

Both projects were supported by the Victorian Department of Education’s Best Start, Best Life reforms, which provide free kindergarten to all three- and four-year-old children in Victoria—removing barriers for families and expanding access to quality early learning. Simon Daniel, Manager of Property and Services, said “our team achieved some excellent work to upgrade the services, creating cohesive and refreshed environments which seamlessly combine the old and the new. The increase in capacity will mean that more families will have access to free or low-cost kindergarten.”

Additionally, our team at The Harbour received a renovation grant of \$641k which went towards enhancing comfort, functionality, and aesthetics across the site. Works included new interior flooring across the entire site, new custom-built storage joinery, refreshed staff and office facilities, repainted children’s rooms, refinished classroom timber linings, upgraded acoustic display boards throughout and improved outdoor play spaces.

Gowrie Partners with Restacking the Odds to Boost Kindergarten Attendance

Gowrie Victoria continued our partnership with Restacking the Odds (RSTO), a Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) initiative developing educator skills in using data to enhance service quality and participation in early learning. Our Broadmeadows Valley (BV) and Carlton Learning Precinct (CLP) services collaborated with RSTO to tackle low attendance, as data showed many children, especially from priority groups, were missing their recommended 15 hours of kindergarten.

RSTO partnered with our service improvement teams including educators, leaders, and management to explore data dashboards. This collaborative approach used continuous improvement tools to unpack data, move beyond assumptions, and pinpoint specific, real-world barriers to attendance.

With these insights, our teams implemented targeted, relational strategies. Broadmeadows Valley built strong



relationships via outreach calls, addressing family barriers like food insecurity. A key part was our wayipungitj, Sarah Rawley, using personalised check-ins to build rapport with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Carlton Learning Precinct developed an engaging Bush Kinder program, removing barriers by providing all-weather gear and adding a strong literacy focus.

These efforts achieved significant results: BV saw a 19% participation increase for priority group children—with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's attendance now on track to surpass their peers—and CLP achieved an 11.1% overall increase in children on track for 600 hours. Sarah, Ebony Lee, Sam Newbury, and RSTO's Gemma Davey presented these findings at the ECA National Conference in front of other professionals in the Australian early childhood sector.

Gowrie Victoria and Lady Gowrie Queensland Study Tours

Now in its second year, the 2025 Queensland Study Tours brought together 26 educators, teachers, and leaders from 20 services in Queensland down to Melbourne. This program strengthens the partnership between Gowrie Victoria and Lady Gowrie Queensland as the tours demonstrate a shared commitment to connection, reflective practice, and strengthening the early childhood sector through collective growth.

The tours provided educators with opportunities to step away from their day-to-day routines and engage in meaningful professional learning.

Program Manager Simone has now supported four study tours over two years. For Simone, "the tours create space for educators to connect, to reflect, and to see high-quality practice in action. The Study Tours strengthen our sector together by promoting shared learning, which in turn inspires meaningful change for early childhood communities."

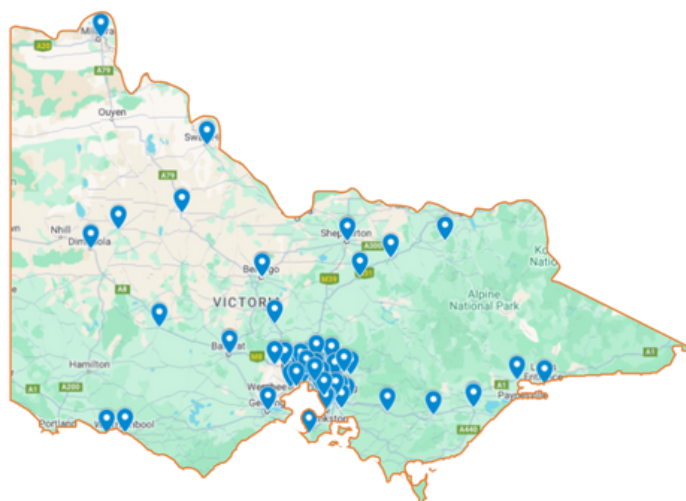
“ I loved every second of it. It challenged my thinking, gave me passion and confidence, and made me feel seen. From here, I'm going to advocate and challenge more. I want to be the change.

- Holly, Journey Early Learning Queensland



Gowrie Running Department Learning Networks

In 2025, Gowrie was appointed by the Department of Education to deliver the Early Years Learning Networks. Operating over 71 network meetings per term, and located across Victoria, these meetings provide valuable opportunities for early childhood teachers to connect, collaborate and share professional practice. These networks have reached over 4,900 teachers this year, and have supported them to navigate change, strengthen practice and deliver high-quality early learning outcomes for children and families. Teachers and educational leaders are encouraged to join their local Network to share knowledge and build professional connections.



School Readiness Funding Coaching

Since 2019, our coaching team has supported Victorian kindergartens through School Readiness Funding (SRF). Recognising that every service is unique, Gowrie's coaching program offers a flexible, blended approach that is tailored to each team's goals, priorities, and community. In 2025, we supported 109 services and over 1,100 educators and teachers.

Our SRF coaching program combines one-on-one coaching, team workshops, practical supports, and Gowrie's new online Learning Hub. Services choose how their sessions are structured, which staff are involved, and which focus areas to explore. "Working with a coach really gives you knowledge and a chance to

understand the 'why' behind your own curriculum decision-making," one participant told us. "It gives you a chance to reflect deeply on practices and the way it impacts children, families and the community."

Some coaching packages also include study tours to Gowrie services, giving educators the opportunity to observe high-quality practice in real time. These experiences help participants connect theory with practice. "The structure of the tour was perfect," a participant, Louise, says. "The blend of seeing practice and then hearing about the underpinnings of it was so valuable for my practice."

By offering choice, flexibility, and ongoing support, Gowrie's SRF coaching has empowered educators to grow in ways that are meaningful to them building capability, confidence, and quality outcomes for children and families.

School Students Get Insight into an Early Childhood Career

Over the past 12 months, 49 students in years 10-12 from government schools across Victoria participated in the Introduction to Early Childhood for School Students program at The Harbour.

The four-week program, led by Program Manager Sue Plowright and facilitated by several Gowrie trainers, gave students a taste of what working in the early childhood sector looks like through a series of

workshops, discussions and observable practices one day per week.

Over the four weeks, the students learn about working with babies and toddlers; play-based learning and planning, preparing and delivering an experience with children; and a careers expo with representatives from CityLLEN, Headstart and Gowrie's People and Culture team.

Gowrie at The Harbour Once Again Participates in the Playbound Festival

Gowrie at The Harbour, in partnership with Global Play Lab, hosted an interactive discovery lab called 'Lightscape Explorers' as part of Museum Victoria's Playbound Festival in July. The lab encouraged children to investigate light, shadow, and transparency using STEM tools like microscopes and projectors on natural and recycled materials.

The children were heavily involved in the event's planning and design. An intentional children's committee of 0–3 and 3–5-year-olds was formed to capture their voices and perspectives. Early Learning Manager Sabiha said "Educators supported the children as they explored the materials, with their

curiosity guiding the final design. This process ensured the space truly reflected the children's voice and highlighted the importance of their active role in transferring their learning into practical applications." In one of the activities which encouraged children to have deep conversations with one another, one child said "I'm the boss of my body" on the topic of friendships, which was a wonderful reflection of their strong self-awareness and agency.

In total, 86 children and families attended the event which strengthened community connections and highlighted Gowrie's commitment to making early learning accessible and inclusive.

Building Strong Foundations Through the Early Language and Literacy Playgroup

Recognising a need to support families speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL), Gowrie Carlton Learning Precinct launched an Early Language and Literacy Playgroup. The program has been a success, with over 15 families regularly attending. The program empowered parents as educators, strengthening their role and building significantly higher trust between families and staff. Additionally, the playgroup's literacy approach aligns directly with the co-located primary school. This creates a seamless educational transition, ensuring children build foundational skills at the playgroup that are built upon immediately when they start school, establishing a sustainable, community-wide support ecosystem.



Karen Reflects on Her Time Returning to Gowrie

It's been an absolute privilege to return to Gowrie as CEO and see and feel our purpose and history driving what we do. Our strong focus on demonstrating quality early learning, our commitment to children and pedagogical leadership guide what we do.

I have especially enjoyed meeting our dedicated teams, seeing firsthand the incredible work they do. It has been

truly inspiring to see the connections to children and families and how we support the early childhood profession. This is the heart of Gowrie.

I am looking forward to seeing what 2026 will bring. I am excited to continue supporting our teams as we innovate and uphold Gowrie's 85+ year legacy of excellence.

Financials

2024 - 2025

Income Statement

	30 June 2025	30 June 2024
Revenues		
Operating revenue	28,278,772	25,382,464
Interest Income	262,640	258,519
Capital grant revenue	3,459,454	997,555
Other income	69,538	31,668
Expenses		
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	617,465	652,348
Employee benefits expenses	24,842,081	22,392,179
Occupancy expenses	862,746	729,539
Advertising expenses	71,251	64,752
Finance costs	84,639	78,910
Administration expenses	297,090	241,774
Operational expenses	1,269,040	915,961
Organisational expenses	71,853	93,303
IT expenses	523,487	405,376
Other expenses	26,031	39,911
Total Income/(Loss)	3,404,721	1,056,153

Balance Sheet

	30 June 2025	30 June 2024
Current assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	3,971,998	3,879,562
Receivables	1,190,841	681,628
Other assets	6,666,665	4,291,942
Total current assets	11,829,504	8,853,132
Non-current assets		
Lease assets	741,825	238,622
Property, plant, and equipment	5,443,948	1,937,690
Other assets	252,358	193,170
Total non-current assets	6,438,131	2,369,482
Total assets	18,267,635	11,222,614
Current liabilities		
Payables	2,277,668	1,202,244
Lease liabilities	217,383	307,088
Provisions	2,523,174	2,083,196
Other liabilities	3,354,391	1,633,865
Total current liabilities	8,372,616	5,226,393
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	554,828	101,500
Provisions	351,738	310,989
Total non-current liabilities	906,566	412,489
Total liabilities	9,279,182	5,638,882
Net assets	8,988,453	5,583,732
Member Funds		
Accumulated surplus	8,988,453	5,583,732
Total equity	8,988,453	5,583,732

Board

Paul Geyer – Chair
(until November 2024)
Mark Burke – Chair
(from November 2024), Treasurer (to November 2024)
Mia Bromley – Vice Chair
(to November 2024)
Dilip Shankar
(from May 2024), Treasurer (from November 2024)
Jessica Murphy
Sarah Young
Margaret Abernethy
Erin Dale
Gabi Burman
Kristy Fotiadis
(from October 2024)

Executive

Susan Anderson – CEO
(until December 2024)
Karen Weston – CEO
(from January 2025)
Nicole Pilsworth – Early Learning
(until November 2024)
Heather Lyon – Early Learning
(from November 2024)
Glyn Williams – Adult Learning
Sue Chamberlain-Ward – People & Culture
Paul Hodgson – Commercial

