

2018 / 2019
ANNUAL
REPORT



Enriching children's lives from
birth through every day literacy.

raising
literacy
AUSTRALIA

Acknowledgement:

Thank you to staff and families for allowing us to take these wonderful photographs and use them in this Annual Report.

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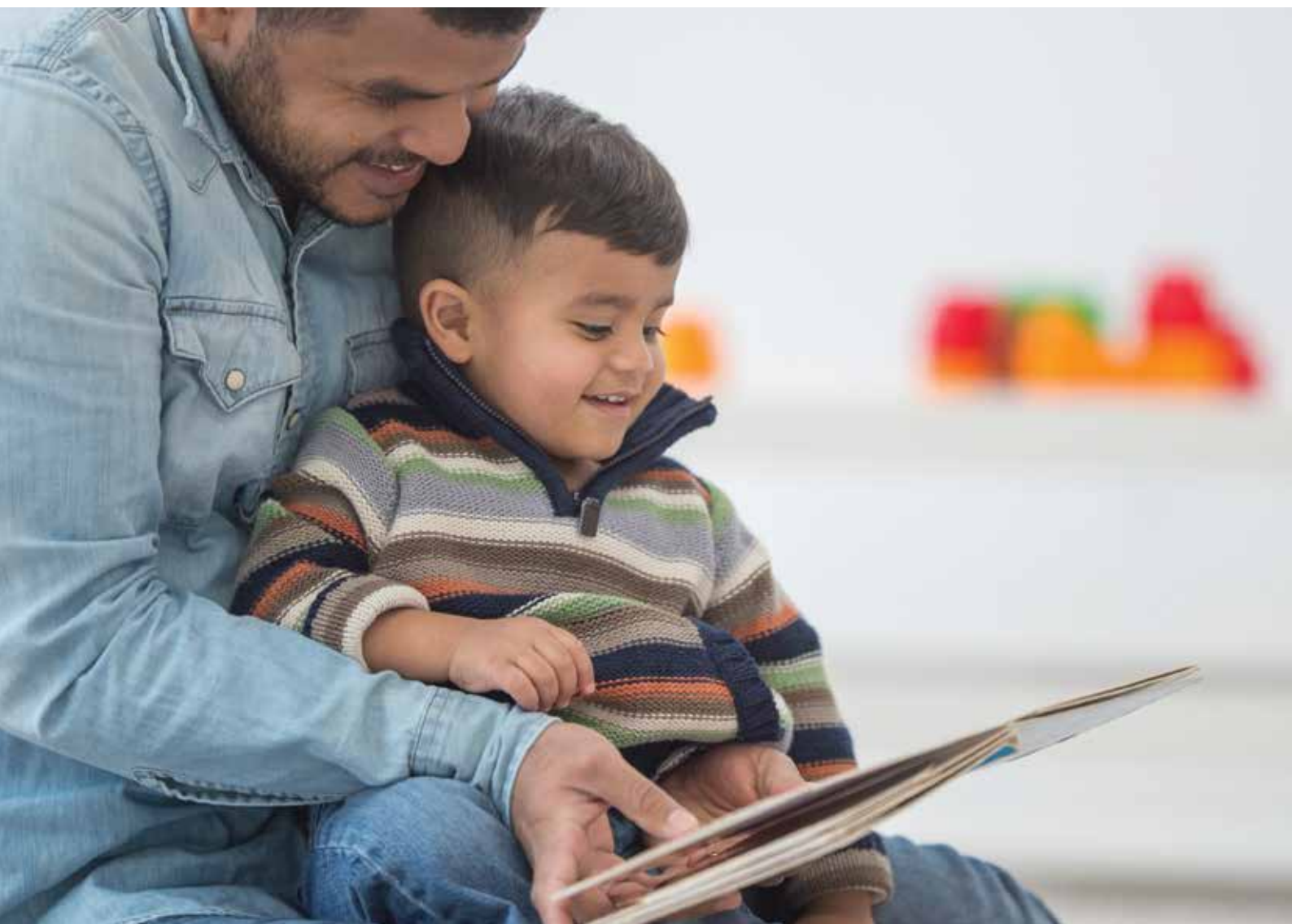
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Is he
behind
the door?

Nations who invest in early childhood programs are likely to have stronger economies and societies. It is therefore essential that the first few 1000 days of a child's life are prioritised as a platform for lifelong success. The return on investment is realised through higher education and employment levels, improved health outcomes and less dependence on social services.
(Garcia, Heckman, Leaf, Prados, 2016)

Who is Raising Literacy Australia Inc?

Raising Literacy Australia is a not for profit organisation committed to enriching Australian lives through literacy. Through universal and targeted programs, we encourage families to **read, sing, talk** and **play** with their children from birth by providing books and resources that nurture young children's development and information for parents to encourage effective engagement with their child's learning.

Our vision

Transforming children's lives by giving families access to everyday literacy.

Our mission

Our programs, support families to read, sing, talk and play with their children from birth, which builds a rich home learning environment.

We provide reading packs, books, training and resources to support families to nurture children's development to establish a love of lifelong learning.

Our priorities

1 Advocacy

To raise awareness of the crucial importance of literacy and the role it plays in children's everyday lives.

2 Partnerships

Working and collaborating with governments, like-minded organisations and the early childhood sector.

3 Professional Learning

Provide learning opportunities to services, individuals and organisations to support best literacy practices.

4 Knowledge

Continue to develop and provide projects and programs, which nurture families in developing a rich home learning environment. Also to give access to quality children's picture books and resources.



A message from our Chair, Ceinwyn Elleway

As a newcomer to Raising Literacy Australia (RLA), I have been struck by the level of energy and commitment to the vision and mission of the organisation. While it is now widely understood that literacy development in the early years is integral to literacy development, there is still significant work to be done within our communities to appropriately resource all parents to engage in the practice of reading aloud to their children. The resourcing of this practice is the focus of many of our programs at RLA and in the pursuit of this, the organisation works to develop sound community-based relationships with a wide range of stakeholders. Learning about the depth and scope of these relationships has been one of the most significant features of my introduction to the organisation. Within the organisation we have a deep knowledge and understanding of the needs of the parents and children with whom we work, and the contexts within which their daily lives unfold. This enables us to tailor programs and services that are contextually relevant and most appropriately reflect the purpose of our organisation.

RLA has a portfolio of programs and services that have served us well, and many of which show further development potential for the future. After a successful 2018/2019 year, we are now entering a period where, as a board, we will focus on strategic development of those key areas that best reflect our purpose as an organisation and have capacity for further growth through the coming year. With the departure of Nicole Marshall and Michelle Little and the realignment of roles within the office, we have scope for our talented team to explore the future development of these key strategic areas in partnership with the RLA Board.

Ceinwyn Elleway
Chairperson

A message from our CEO, Sue Hill

In 2020, Raising Literacy Australia will celebrate its fifteenth year of supporting South Australian families.

Our mission is to engage with families and communities and support and grow their capacity to connect with children through everyday literacy practises. We now know that children grow and learn best in situations where they feel supported and connected, where they have relationships that are responsive and enriching.

Research increasingly shows us how children's brains develop and how the important people in their lives help that development. Children's brains grow through the relationships and environments they experience. The more often people respond to a baby, the stronger their brain development will be. From when they are born until they are about three years old, little brains are making about 700 to 1,000 neural connections a second. The more those connections occur, like every time they see someone smile at them or hear a familiar nursery rhyme, the stronger those connections become.

That is why at Raising Literacy Australia we are now looking forward to another fifteen years of helping, supporting and guiding all families to understand the important role they play in their child's life, right from the start.

To achieve our mission, we have our universal reading pack program, which in 2019 delivered 65,000 reading packs to families across South Australia. This year also saw the commencement of our Building Home Libraries (BHL) intensive literacy program. The 12-month program will be implemented as part of the inner-north

collaborative of Uniting Care Wesley Bowden, Family Zone at Ingle Farm, The Food Centre, and St Brigid's Community Hubs Australia.

Our professional learning program intensified with a calendar of events offered to early childhood sector and parents/carers. The whole year learning calendar presented a diverse range of opportunities including *Sensory Processing in the Early Years*, *Chitter Chatter – Speech & Language*, *Sing a Song of Sixpence: Music Matters (PLS)* and *Integrating Literacy and STEM*.

I would also like to officially welcome our two newest team members Julia Jones, who has spent six months communicating and collaborating with the inner-north collaborative and their families to ensure the BHL program will have the intended impact. Georgina Hore is currently with us one day a week, working on our social media calendar, our fifteenth-year celebration to be launched in early 2020 and supporting our Little Book Press titles.

We couldn't do what we do without a range of partners and stakeholders including the State Government, Department for Education, Department Child Protection, Department for Health and Wellbeing, Child and Family Health, Variety SA, the children's charity, Cochranes Transport, Carthew Foundation and our newest funding partner James and Diana Ramsay Foundation.

To finish of a very busy year we are proud to announce that *Let's Go Strolling* written by Katrina Germein and illustrated by Danny Snell, two very talented South Australians, is the winner of the 2019 Australian Speech Pathology Award.

Sussan Hill
Chief Executive Officer



Founding and program partners

We couldn't do what we do without a range of founding and program partners:

Founding partners

State Government of South Australia
Advertiser Newspapers Pty Ltd
Variety SA, the children's charity
Carthew Foundation
Cochrane's

Program partners

Department of Education and Child Development
Women's and Children's Hospital
Lyell McEwin Hospital
SA Health
SA Dental
UnitingCare Wesley Bowden
Family Zone – Ingle Farm
The Food Centre
St Brigid's Community Hub
Child and Family Health Service
Department for Child Protection
Department for Health and Wellbeing
Booktopia
Origin Foundation
James and Diana Ramsay Foundation

Our programs

Reading packs

Universal program to all families across SA

- 3 direct points – baby, toddler and preschool
- Bridging services in the home to embed everyday effective literacy practices
- Accessible information on a parent's role as their child's first teacher and how read, sing, talk and play are crucial for development and learning
- Touch point with Government & NGO services and programs including: health, educational and outreach programs.



Packing week

All walks of life

You never know who you'll find on a volunteer table – an author, illustrator or someone who has been volunteering for 20 years!

The team said they love coming back each year because it is “fun, educational and you get to meet new people while doing something for a great purpose”.

Kat Taylor from Topline Promotions, who provided us with our fabulous tote bags, also joined this impressive team!



Special inspiration

Chari was inspired to volunteer with Raising Literacy after her son, Carter, was born prematurely at 29 weeks in 2015.

Weighing just 590 grams, little Carter was placed in a Humidicrib, but his parents were still able to read to him.

The first book they read together was *Guess How Much I Love You* from our Baby Reading Pack.

“The fact that we could read to him from the outset was just amazing,” Chari said.

“Even now every time I put him to bed, Carter says ‘I love you to the moon’.”

Chari was also inspired by friends who volunteer and through her volunteer days with NAB.

She joined a very enthusiastic table to pack Toddler Reading Packs!



2019 preschool reading pack survey responses

Have the packs helped
your preschool have
literacy based discussions
with parents/carers?

95.09%
said YES

Are the children
enjoying the books?
Do they recognise the
story, if and when
you use in group
reading time?

90.18%
said YES



Are the packs
having impact
with families
and children?

96.93%
said YES

Can you advise if
families are share
reading the books
with their children?

91.88%
said YES

Does the centre/
preschool read the
books in preschool packs
during group story time?

85.89%
said YES

Read to Me – Building Home Libraries

As part of our targeted intervention strategy, RLA have been collaborating with the inner-north collective impact group. In partnership, we aim to support children, from birth to 6 years, to gain the skills needed to start school with confidence and readiness for a successful learning path. We have been working closely with several organisations in the inner north, towards the following shared goals:

- Increase engagement between parents/carers and their children through everyday positive interactions and literacy resources
- Increase the level of literacy skills for families and children and awareness of child development
- Encourage connection with services such as playgroups, libraries and childcare centres.

The service providers include:

- UnitingCare Wesley Bowden
- The Food Centre
- St Brigid's Community Hub
- Family Zone – Ingle Farm

In consultation with the service providers from the inner north, RLA has designed a 12-month literacy intervention program, Read To Me – Building Home Libraries, which provides existing services with literacy resources to provide children with a home library as well as staff coaching. Each child receives their own library tub and book starter kit, and then additional books each month, for a total of 12 months. The staff filter down the coaching about literacy development as they give the library tubs/books and tip sheets to families. Each service also receives a Community Sharing Library for use by the general public, to encourage all families to share books with their children.

To date, each service has signed up approximately 20 families. RLA has delivered the starter kits in the library tubs to the services and the service providers have passed these on to the families. Each family has been assisted to complete an initial survey to gauge literacy practices and beliefs, prior to starting the program. Two more surveys will be conducted in the middle and end of the program. All services have received a Community Sharing Library. The feedback thus far has been very positive, and families have expressed that their children have shown excitement and enthusiasm about the books on receiving the tub.

“When they get their tubs, their reaction is like all their Christmas’ have come at once. They are engaged with the books straight away, lots of fun and laughter looking at the books together. The Community Library is going very well. So much use! Lots of people engaging.”

James, The Food Centre

“Thanks for bringing (the Community Library) in today. We have already had one person borrow a book!”

Deinol, Family Zone

“We had a family of 6 kids come for vaccines today. I asked if anyone wanted a book. They were very excited and chose one each, and one for the baby brother screaming all hell downstairs. They were so excited and found choosing fun but difficult. Proudly walked out with a book each like it was their most prized possession. Forgot about the 4 injections each they had just received. So much better than lollipops.”

Kate, Refugee Health Service.

Other findings point towards English not being the main language spoken at home and that many children are only being exposed to books or read to between 1 to 3 days a week. By the end of the program we are hoping to see a shift in this last point and find that children are being read to everyday. We know that this increases developmental outcomes for children and assists in their school readiness.

Over the coming months, we will continue to work with the services, deliver the monthly books and tip sheets and collect more data through feedback and surveys. Our goal is to use the data and evidence from this pilot to fine tune the program and access funding, so we can implement the program across South Australia.

Julia Jones

Program officer

Read to Me - Building Home Libraries



Read to Me

Since 2015, the Read to Me project has been supporting children, from birth to 6 years, living in out-of-home care and their carers by providing resources and information to encourage positive adult-child interactions and experiences that will support healthy brain development. Over 60,000 books have been sent directly to these children in care providing them with the opportunity to develop their growing literacy skills and improve their chances of lifelong learning.

This project is made possible thanks to the invaluable support of Variety SA – the children's charity, Cochranes, Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People, Department of Education and the Department for Child Protection

In September 2018, the top-up packs sent out to children included a short survey seeking carer feedback on the Read to Me program. Both online and postal options were made available. Given that no contact is available with carers, a 18% participation in the survey was achieved.

Key achievements of the Read to Me project

40,500 + 20,500 = 61,000 books in homes since start of program in 2015

Carers now engaging more readily with their children

Book routine developed from the child's earliest days with care families

It is a significant reminder to engage daily with their care child through the ongoing regular giving of books posted direct to the care home

Connection with carers through relationships developed with the sector.

Feedback from carers about the Read to Me book packs

“As a foster carer – kinship, I love that my grandchild receives these books. It truly fosters a love of books. Children learn to read on the laps of parents/grandparents.”

“Our son loves getting the books in the mail. It makes him feel very special. Reading has always been a part of bedtime routine.”

“We are a family who loves books. Receiving some in the mail makes it feel like Christmas every time. Thanks for doing such a fantastic job encouraging children to read.”

“This has been a wonderful gift to our children and has contributed greatly to their love of reading (they are achieving well above the standard).”

“It's fabulous! We have emergency care children come through our house too and if they receive a pack while with me, I make sure to name their books and send it all with them. Very important and special!”

Through the Read to Me project, we now have residential support workers, foster and kinship families that are reading, singing, talking and playing with their care children everyday.

Janet Leske

Director of Community Programs

Read to Me survey results – October 2018

95%

of carers agreed the
Read to me books are
enjoyed by the child/ren.



83%

of carers agree the
Read to Me book packs
have meant I spend more
'together' time with
my child/ren.



86%

of carers read
(Read to Me or other)
books to their child/ren
at least once a day.



Featured stories

Raising Literacy Australia's Featured Stories program was developed in 2006 as a way to support families and the early childhood sector to choose high-quality, age appropriate books for young children and encourage regular, shared reading experiences.

Each month, the Raising Literacy team select and recommend three children's picture books for families to enjoy.

The selected titles are suitable for babies, toddlers and preschoolers and are usually linked to a theme or topic.

The team also develop free resources to support each title including Activity Time sheets (perfect for use at home with a parent and child) and Learning Time sheets (written in the form of a lesson plan and great to use in library, child care and school settings).

We have a library of over 400 quality picture book recommendations that are searchable by book title, theme or author/illustrator on our website and the titles can be purchased through our preferred online bookseller, Booktopia.

Parents and the early childhood sector are encouraged to seek out these books and borrow or buy them for their home library.



ACTIVITY TIME

Under the Ocean

Nancy Bevington

Explore all the things under the sea. Can you find them all at the end of the book?

Peek-a-boo animals under the sea!

You will need:

- You and your baby
- Template (see attached)
- Glue or sticky tape.

What to do:

1. Cut out the 2 fish templates and fold in half
2. Stick or glue the 2 templates together to make a double-sided, tummy time card
3. When your baby has tummy time prop the card in front of them and talk about the fish
4. Then fold one flap over to hide the fish
5. Say Peek-a-boo and lift the flap to reveal the fish to your baby
6. NOTE: Adult supervision is required to ensure baby does not mouth or eat the paper/card.

Other ideas

Carry these cards in your bag so you can play and explore together with when waiting for appointments.

It takes several months for your baby's eyesight to develop while they are very young but they can see high-contrast images of black and white. Using these tummy time cards helps nurture their development.

Songs to sing

Once I Caught a Fish Alive, Here is the Sea, The Wavy Sea or A Sailor went to Sea Sea Sea.


Key message:

The first five years matter and last a lifetime.



Adult supervision is required at all times when children play or are around water.



Find booklists, tip sheets, nursery rhymes and activity and learning time sheets @ thelittlebigbookclub.com.au     

 Proudly supported by 

Training

This year has seen the busy and successful roll-out of our 'Calendar of Training Events' with a wide range of guest speakers offering specific expertise in topics relevant across all sectors. This has been in addition to offering RLA's own Building Foundations for Early Learning (BFEL) and Cultural Diversity workshops throughout the year. Guest speaker workshops included:

Sensory Processing in the Early Years (Kelly Kroeger, Paediatric Occupational Therapist)

Making Music Matter (Emily Gann, Music Teacher and Early Years Programs)

Speech and Language in the Early Years (Dariell Rice, Speech Pathologist with Special Education)

Positive Discipline – Parent Session (Madhavi Parker, Behaviour Consultant).



A comprehensive marketing campaign, and highly regarded guest speakers with new topics, meant we extended our reach to many new organisations and participants for the first time. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with many people attending multiple workshops.

Other events and opportunities that the RLA training team have engaged with through the year include:

- Public Library Services to deliver BFEL (2 sessions), Cultural Diversity, Making Music Matter, and Sensory Processing workshops
- Literacy and Numeracy Festival parents information evening, hosted by CEASA – Educators SA
- Inner-north collective impact consultation, coaching and information sessions with United Care Wesley Bowden, The Food Centre, St Brigid's School Community Hub, Family Zone – Ingle Farm
- Three articles on reading with babies, toddlers and preschoolers, contributed to Starting Blocks, the website created by ACECQA (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority)
- Using Eventbrite online booking, payment and ticket issuing service for workshops to streamline and simplify payments for our training events.

Looking ahead to 2020

Our submission on BFEL and Cultural Diversity workshops has been accepted for inclusion in the Victorian Department of Education's School Readiness Funding menu of evidence. Victorian Kindergartens have additional state government funding and can retain our services to deliver our workshops to their staff. We already have one enquiry for interstate training. This further recognises our training credentials and raises our brand awareness in the interstate market.

Some training events are already locked in for 2020 including the new Integrating Literacy and STEM practical workshop in February.

Belinda Spry
Director of Training

Little Book Press our publishing house

Raising Literacy Australia's publishing house Little Book Press has gone from strength-to-strength and produced a range of high-quality children's books in 2019.

As part of a new initiative, the publishing house began working in conjunction with health organisations from around South Australia to create stories that help engage families and children in difficult conversations.

From simple lessons like brushing your teeth to understanding healthy eating, the stories help families navigate these conversations while also teaching them important literacy skills.

My Teeth



Cleverly written and superbly illustrated, *My Teeth* is a non-fiction picture book all about teeth.

My Teeth by Danny Snell, is designed to help children understand their teeth, why they are important and how to care for them.

The story is filled with fun illustrations and facts about animal, insect and human teeth.

Produced in conjunction with SA Dental Service, manager of health promotion Kristy Nixon said "the book is filled with positive and interactive dental health messages for both parents and children."

"The book raises awareness of the importance of good oral health, which is often overlooked," Ms Nixon said.

"It is important parents receive accurate, consistent health information from a range of avenues, to reinforce the messages.

"*My Teeth* provides accurate dental messages in a light hearted, fun way to increase child and parent engagement whilst increasing dental knowledge."

Mr Snell said "the challenge was to make dental health interesting and engaging for both children and parents."

"Books offer an intimate way for parents and their children to discover more about themselves and the world around them," he said.

"Children love obscure facts and figures. So, the idea was to pair serious facts about dental care with interesting and odd facts like 'sharks never run out of teeth' or 'we make enough saliva over our lifetime to fill 53 bathtubs.'"

"Hopefully, this sparks a conversation and keeps everyone engaged."

Food, Me and ABC



Designed in conjunction with SA Health, *Food, Me and ABC*, is a colourful, fun picture book, which introduces families to a wide variety of different foods.

The new book was specially developed

and designed by the team at Raising Literacy Australia to support food literacy.

Food, Me and ABC is bursting with every day foods, colours and the alphabet. Raising Literacy Australia CEO, Sue Hill, said the book is a great way to talk with children about where food comes from.

For example, apples and pears grow on trees, carrots and potatoes grow underground, while milk comes from certain animals.

"The story is a fun way to explore your world together and encourage parents to talk with their little ones about the types of food they are eating or trying for the first time," Ms Hill said.

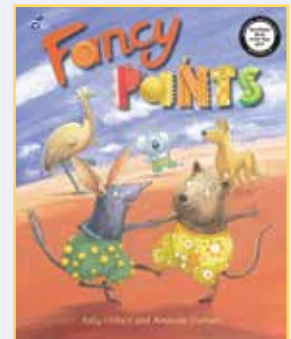
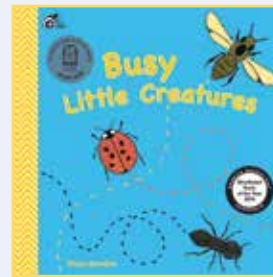
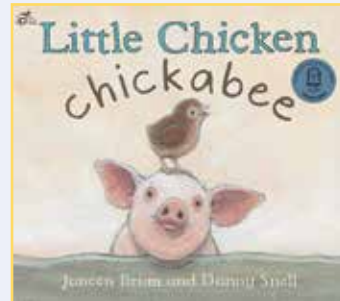
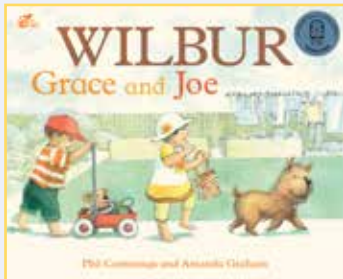
"The story also helps families understand the foods that are important for growing bodies and minds.

"Families can play 'I spy' with foods at the supermarket, cook dinner together with foods from the story, learn about healthy foods, different colours and letters of the alphabet – *Food, Me and ABC* opens so many doors for learning."

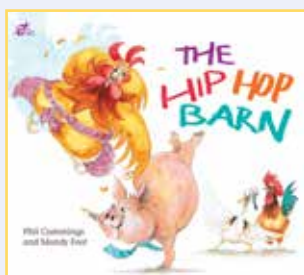
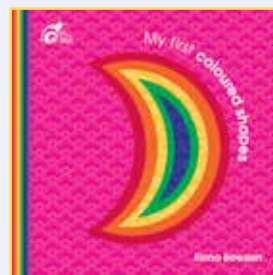
The book also introduces readers to foods from around the world including dragon fruit, jackfruit, Udon noodles and Ximenia.

Other titles from Little Book Press in 2019 included *Sing With Me* a nursery rhyme buggy board book, *The Hip Hop Barn* by Phil Cummings and Mandy Foot, and *Once Upon My Legs* by Mike Dumbleton and Sarah Boese.

Produced by us – award winning and nominated books



New books



Let's Go Strolling – winner of 2019 Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year awards

Let's Go Strolling, took out a top gong at the 2019 Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year awards.

The picture book, written by Katrina Germein, illustrated Danny Snell and published by Raising Literacy Australia's publishing house Little Book Press, won the best book in the Birth to 3 Years category.

The judges said *Let's Go Strolling* was "a beautiful book for parents to share with their babies and toddlers".

"The author's choice of text is excellent for early language learners as it models simple, early expressive phrases, while allowing the parent to emphasise and elaborate on key words," they noted.

"The rhyming is perfect. The pictures are bright and simple, yet highly engaging and readily identifiable by young children."

Let's Go Strolling is a delightful story with simple rhythm, which centres around a family spending the day together.

Strolling to the park they say hello to a neighbour, marvel at the orange bus, wave to a rubbish truck and point to the ducks waddling by.

The story began as a poem in an anthology titled, *It's Playtime*. Originally titled, *Strolling*, Little Book Press noticed its popularity and after some tweaks and edits the *Let's Go Strolling* manuscript was born.

"The story is a reflection of my own experiences of early motherhood when one of the things that helped me was packing the kids in the pram and heading for the park," author Katrina Germein said.

"A picture book manuscript is only a manuscript and it was a delight to watch Danny Snell's delightful illustrations complete the story.

"Little Book Press then worked their magic to ensure everything was beautiful."

"The final product is as gorgeous as a picture book should be, just what small children deserve, and I hope that little ones and their grown-ups find joy in its pages and are maybe inspired to step outside and go strolling together."

Katrina said she was thrilled with the feedback she has received and to have her work acknowledged and recognised by Speech Pathology Australia.

"A strong foundation in early language and literacy is so important for all children – it allows them to confidently communicate, participate and learn with others," she said.

"As an early years teacher, I'm frequently exposed to the difference a good speech pathologist can make to a child's development, and to their life.

"My friend sent a copy of the book to her eighty-year-old uncle interstate. He had recently become a grandfather and he said the book brought a tear to his eye because it captured the walks he and his grandson take together. That was beautiful feedback for me."

Illustrator, Danny Snell, said Katrina's text gave him a lot of freedom to explore the characters and settings.

"I think this is why the main characters ended up being a father and daughter – as I was able to draw on my experience as a dad, taking my girls for walks when they were little," he said.

"I think the story is one that everyone can relate to. Every child enjoys going for a stroll and discovering the world along the way. And every parent has experienced the simple pleasure of taking their child for a walk.

"The text is uncluttered, with a rhythm that is perfect for a stroll. And I've tried to complement these qualities by keeping the layout simple and consistent, and giving the illustrations plenty of space."

The Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Awards promote quality Australian children's literature, the role of speech pathologists in language and literacy development, and a love of learning from books.

National President of Speech Pathology Australia, Tim Kittel, said "the awards look to identify the best children books available."

"People often ask why Speech Pathology Australia conducts a book of the year award," he said.

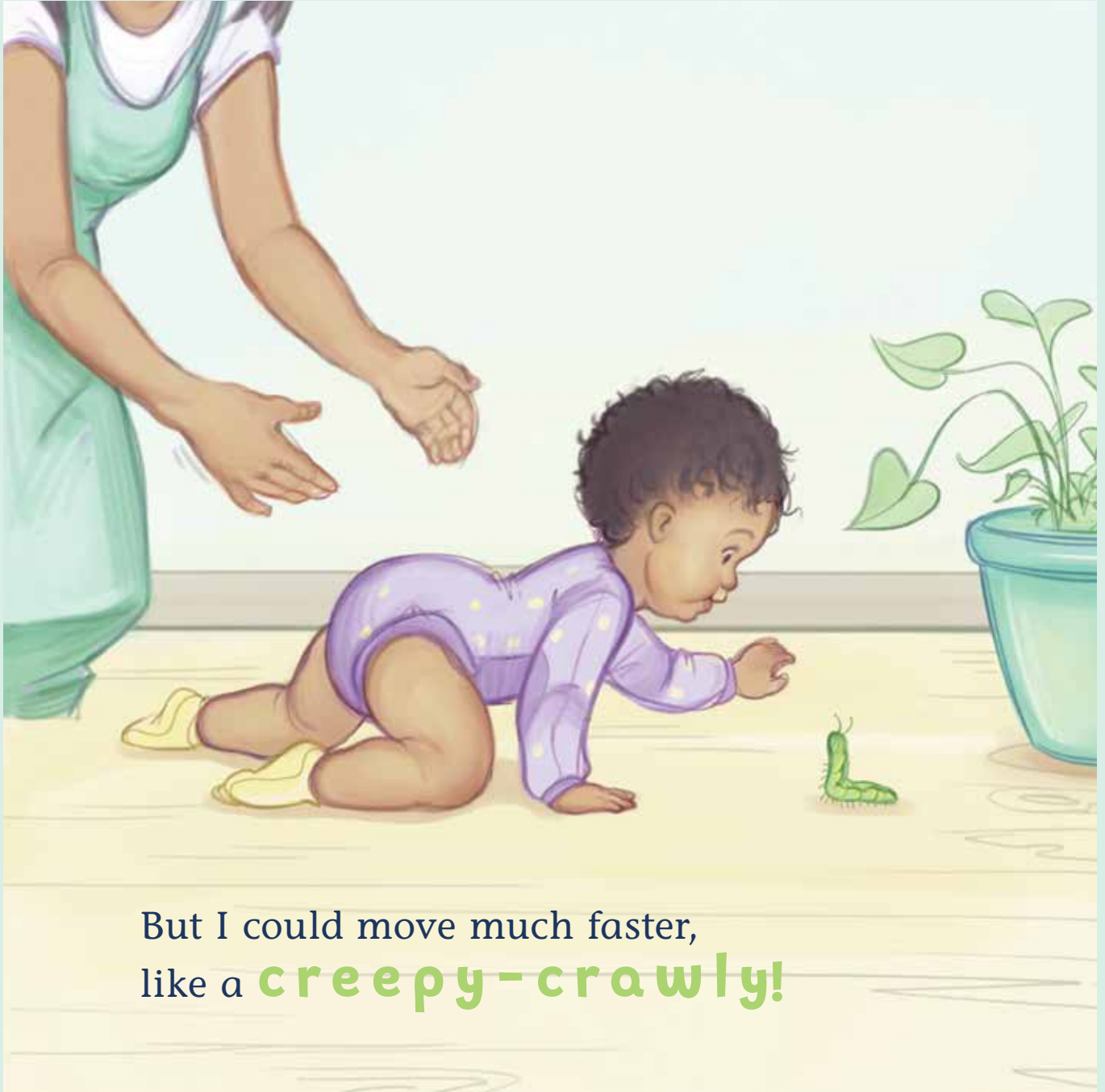
"It is because speech pathologists understand the link between language, speech and reading. Speech pathologists are in a unique position to recommend books to parents and teachers."



Let's Go Strolling



Katrina Germein and Danny Snell



But I could move much faster,
like a **creepy-crawly!**

From *Once Upon My Legs* written by Mike Dumbleton and illustrated by Sarah Boese.

Available in the 2020 Reading Pack for Babies.

The Author and Illustrator Mentoring Initiative

Mike Dumbleton

Mentoring Initiative Committee Chair

Thanks to the support of the James and Diana Ramsay Foundation, Raising Literacy Australia has begun a successful new mentoring project. The project enables well-established picture book creators to nurture the talents of two new writers and two new illustrators from South Australia. Their work will be published by Raising Literacy Australia's publishing house, Little Book Press, and included in a future book pack to be distributed to over 21,000 children across South Australia.

The key objectives of the project are to provide professional development and employment opportunities for emerging picture book authors and illustrators, support emerging artists to develop their artistic practices and create new audiences for their work, and provide employment opportunities for established authors and illustrators in a mentoring role.

A large number of manuscripts and illustrations were received from aspiring creators keen to take advantage of this opportunity, and a panel of experts, including writers, illustrators, publishers, booksellers and literacy educators, was established to review the submissions. After extensive reading and discussion, four talented winners were selected:

- Kylie Covark and Kaliah Tsakalidis – writers,
- Robin Tatlow-Lord and Ross Morgan – illustrators.

The pairings of author and illustrator were then decided for both manuscripts. Consistent with the publishing ethos of Little Book Press, the winning entries displayed the potential to become high quality books, which were imaginative, bright, engaging and with genuine appeal for young readers.

The two-year mentoring program was devised to support the winners with their ongoing involvement in publishing and all facets of book production, not just in the development of one book. Therefore, a team of professional mentors (writers Janeen Brian and Mike Dumbleton and illustrators Danny Snell and Mandy Foot) was assembled to help hone the emerging artists' skills and expand their professional knowledge. Additionally, renowned publisher, Jane Covernton, agreed to assist with



Mike Dumbleton and Jane Covernton

the development of both books. Jane also gave an highly informative presentation to the mentees on 'Publishing as a Business', after which there was an extended question and answer session. It is widely recognised that aspiring book creators struggle to obtain insider information on publishing, so this session was very well received and fully appreciated.

Detailed work quickly began on polishing and finetuning the manuscripts with many meetings and conversations between the writers and their mentors. Meanwhile, before having a manuscript to work on, the illustrators and their mentors were able to discuss the process involved and clarify a wide range of concerns associated with illustrating picture books. There was also an invaluable meeting with the printer to establish best practices and identify pitfalls to avoid in relation to design, pre-press and production issues.

With the manuscripts having been finalised, work is now well underway on the illustrations. We look forward to sharing more exciting details with you next year in the form of two wonderful new Little Book Press books!

South Australia has a reputation for producing many successful children's writers and illustrators over the years and this project will help ensure that the trend continues. The James and Diana Ramsay Foundation are to be commended for supporting the Author and Illustrator Mentoring Initiative. Their commitment has enabled the mentorship winners to gain access to a unique learning experience, which will lead to them fulfilling their dream of creating a children's picture book.

Kaliah Tsakalidis

Author of *Molly Moores Has a House Like Yours*

As an aspiring children's book author, the James and Diana Ramsay mentoring initiative has helped me gain knowledge and insight into the publishing world that is otherwise very difficult to acquire. I have had the privilege of receiving feedback from some of South Australia's finest writers and publishers at Little Book Press, most significantly by my mentor, Mike Dumbleton. With Mike's guidance my first manuscript went from a great idea to one that is worthy of being published! Not only that, the writing techniques and creative methods that Mike generously shared with me has vastly improved my writing and thus will progress my chances of having a second book published.

After completing the creative writing process, it has been exciting to see my story come to life with the wonderful illustrations by Ross Morgan. It has also been a great learning experience to see how illustrations reflect the words and how they all fit together in the picture book format. The direction of Little Book Press to ensure that *Molly Moores Has A House Like Yours* is transformed into a fun and magical book for children to enjoy has been a pleasure to be a part of.

The mentoring initiative is a very rare opportunity for emerging writers and illustrators and is a testament to Raising Literacy Australia's commitment to encouraging a love of books for all young Australians and supporting those who love writing and illustrating them. For me personally, it has been a brilliant learning experience and fun creative journey. It would be great to see other emerging writers have the chance to take part in The Author and Illustrator Mentoring Initiative in the future.



From left to right: Ross Morgan (illustrator mentee), Mandy Foot (illustrator mentor), Kylie Covark (writer mentee), Janeen Brian (author mentor), Mike Dumbleton (Chair and author mentor), Danny Snell (illustrator mentor), Kaliah Tsakalidis (writer mentee) and Robin Tatlow-Lord (illustrator mentee).

Ross Morgan

Illustrator of Molly Moores Has a House Like Yours

For years it has been a dream of mine to illustrate a book, but the unknown path of the industry always seemed overwhelming. My background in fine art has often been inspired by the narrative, and I have naturally been drawn to create images that feel like they are from a storybook. Many of my past exhibitions included artworks that followed a series or sequence and often explored characters and relationships as they progressed on a journey.

I was selected for the emerging Author and Illustrator Mentoring Initiative with Raising Literacy Australia sponsored by the James and Diana Ramsay Foundation.

Feeling a little nervous and unsure of myself at the initial meeting, we were warmly welcomed and given a thorough introduction to the business of the publishing industry. Hearing how challenging it is to get into the industry, I felt privileged to be part of such a wonderful initiative.

After the initial meeting, I was looking forward to receiving the manuscript I would be illustrating. While the authors were being mentored through the story writing process, it was a good opportunity to ask about the many concerns that come with illustrating a picture book and having a career as a book illustrator. Mandy Foot has been a wonderfully generous mentor, sharing her knowledge and resources as a successful illustrator.

Finally, the manuscript arrived and wow, I was so lucky! Molly Moores Has a House Like Yours was everything I had hoped for and more. Kaliah Tsakalidis had written a beautifully visual concept that oozed vivid childhood imagination, and that really gelled with me. I was so excited on my first read, images started to bloom immediately.

Mandy gave me advice on how to approach the conceptual stage of the book and begin the 'storyboard' process. It was quite a special experience sharing our ideas together and getting immediate feedback from one another over a coffee.

Storyboards

The storyboard process was quite complex. Imagining and interpreting how the story will flow and communicate visually took a lot of brainpower. For the next month or so, all I could think about was Molly and her house. I continually sketched ideas, designed many different characters and imagined I was little Molly in all the different rooms of her extraordinary little house. Mandy provided some valuable advice and resources on how to take my ideas and present them professionally to the publisher. Not everyone thinks visually like an illustrator does, so it was very important that my concepts could be presented in a way that clearly communicated my vision to someone who might think or see differently. Once I had completed the storyboards it was then time to share my vision with the publisher. This meeting was a real learning experience. It was great to see how my vision of the story was reflected. But it was also very interesting to learn how my rough drawings were being used as a form of communication. It was very much about conversation. Taking my storyboards to publishers felt like a trigger to openly discuss the story on a visual level and begin focussing on important details about the visual elements and characters of the story.

Illustration roughs

The next stage of the process was creating 'illustration roughs'. This stage was about taking my storyboards and discussions and creating a more refined version of the illustrated story to match the design, scale and layout of the final book. This part was very difficult as it was ultimately about trying to make it all work and making sure all the elements fit onto the page without causing issues. Once again Mandy provided so much support, resources and advice on how to make this work. By the end of this process I basically had a mini black and white mock up version of the book printed.

Final artworks

Currently I am working on the final paintings and I can't wait to see it all come together in the published book later next year. It will be a dream come true.

I have learned so much during my mentorship. It has given me the opportunity to take my art and imagination to another level. I feel so privileged to be a part of this wonderful initiative. I hope that other illustrators have the same opportunity in the future.

Mandy Foot

Mentor – The Author and Illustrator Mentoring Initiative

The opportunity to mentor fine artist, Ross Morgan, for his first picture book, has been both a privilege and a delight. As an artist, in applying paint to canvas, he needs no help, but illustrating a picture book is a whole different beast. When first presented with a manuscript it can be very daunting if you haven't created a book before. Where do I start? Over the years and through many, many books, I have created a process for dealing with this overwhelming feeling and approaching each. From what took me years to develop, it's so wonderful to be able to share this knowledge and help another illustrator. It has enabled Ross to learn from my experience, short cut the tedious parts and simply create. He will of course, over time, adjust this process to his own suiting but it has given him so many more tools to work with.

After sending the manuscript to Ross, I allowed him a few days to soak it in and I asked him to make note of all those first ideas that came flooding in, no matter how crazy, and any questions he might have. These first ideas needed to be his without my influence.

When we met for coffee, Ross had already determined the text jumped from reality to imagination and he had a vision early on for the guts of the story. The ending however, was a challenge. We talked through how the role of the illustrator is to take the reader on a visual journey complimented by the text and the ending needs to tie everything together hopefully with a great twist that the reader may not see coming. The reader also needs room to be able to make discoveries for themselves. A book becomes far more engaging this way. It was very exciting to brainstorm the ending, working back through each page in the process. Through this I was able to teach Ross how to think through this stage and by the time we were done, he had the resolution.

Early on we arranged a pre-press tour through Graphic Print Group so Ross could see the technical side of pre-production, which colours scan well, which don't, what size and medium is best for creating artwork and the best way to approach how he wanted to paint the images. Ross brought along some artwork samples to receive feedback on, for example, the scanner will pick up every texture of his canvas so he needed to sand this back smoother. Critical knowledge before creating a whole book of artwork.

Over the next few months we worked through storyboards (how to present them), providing storyboard notes, character concepts, creating a small colour illustration from one of the pages to show style, then the meeting to seek approval on all of this before proceeding through to final drawings, and the benefit of creating a mock-up. I provided Ross with templates I had developed over the years for preparing these files and these were of enormous benefit.

I encouraged Ross to think of each meeting as a conversation not a presentation - just show them your vision, you know it well. I was thrilled see him receive congratulations for how well prepared he was for each meeting. Ross was able to see that the creation of a picture book is very much a collaboration between all parties. Continually discussing ideas and asking questions makes for a much smoother and less stressful journey.

Over the next few months, we had numerous coffees and phone calls discussing each stage; the role of endpapers, the differences to allow for between paperback and hardback, bleeds, gutters, colours, paint, planning your time to reduce pressure and meet deadlines, and so on. I was working on a book myself at the same time but one stage ahead, so I was able to show Ross each stage of this book's creation, right through to finished artwork.

In regards to painting, I felt like my role switched from mentor to mentee at times. I have learnt so much myself through this experience. As I type, Ross is in the finished paintings stage. Three have been completed, approved and test scans under way.

We could say all the hard work has been done as this is now the stage where Ross knows exactly what he is doing and does it so well. I can't wait to see these images come to life through his brushstrokes. A few more coffees will be had before the completion.

This has been an amazing opportunity for which I am very grateful. To all involved and who made it possible – thank you.





*From The Hip Hop Barn written by Phil Cummings and illustrated by Mandy Foot.
Available in the 2020 Reading Pack for Toddlers.*

2019 Treasurer's Annual Report

Income

The 2019 year saw total income from all sources consistent with prior years.

INCOME	2019	2018	Variance
Product sales	233,392	253,948	-20,556
Grants	706,700	707,000	-300
Donations & sponsorships	8,106	5,989	2,117
Copyright	11,673	14,460	-2,787
Interest	3,013	2,469	544
Workshops	23,708	70,427	-46,719
Projects commissioned	96,702	31,515	65,187
Total	1,083,294	1,085,808	-2,514

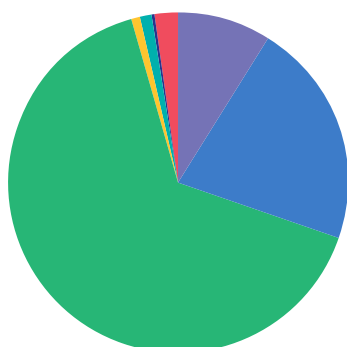
Expenditure

Expenditure increased for the year by \$11,525 however this due is to the increased costs associated with additional project revenue referred above.

EXPENDITURE	2019	2018	Variance
Cost of products sold	135,256	131,678	3,578
Depreciation	5,638	5,952	-314
Project costs	622,018	458,762	163,256
Employee benefits	202,485	318,177	-115,692
Occupancy costs	69,542	80,076	-10,534
Advertising	7,687	16,473	-8,786
Administration	42,353	45,573	-3,220
Other overheads	48,268	65,031	-16,763
Total	1,133,247	1,121,722	11,525

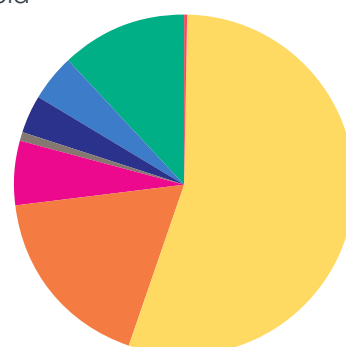
Breakdown of 2019 revenue

- Product sales
- Grants
- Donations & sponsorship
- Copyright
- Interest
- Workshops
- Projects commissioned



Breakdown of 2019 expenditure

- Cost of products sold
- Depreciation
- Project costs
- Employee benefits
- Occupancy costs
- Advertising
- Administration
- Other overheads



Profit or loss and other comprehensive income

EXPENDITURE	2019	2018
Sales revenue	233,392	253,498
Other revenue	849,902	831,861
Total Income	1,083,294	1,085,809
Cost of sales	(135,256)	(131,678)
Depreciation	(5,638)	(5,952)
Project costs	(622,018)	(458,762)
Employee benefits	(202,485)	(318,177)
Occupancy expense	(202,485)	(80,076)
Advertising expense	(7,687)	(16,473)
Administration expenses	(42,353)	(45,573))
Other overheads	(48,268)	(65,031)
Total expenses	(1,133,248)	(1,121,722)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(49,954)	(35,913)
Total comprehensive income for the year	(49,954)	(35,913)

Changes in equity

EXPENDITURE	Accumulated surplus	Total members funds
Balance as at 1 July 2017	265,223	265,223
Deficit for the year	(35,913)	(35,913)
Total comprehensive income for the year	35,913	35,913
Balance as at 30 June 2018	229,310	229,310
Balance as at 1 July 2018	229,310	229,310
Deficit for the year	(49,954)	(49,954)
Total comprehensive income for the year	(49,954)	(49,954)
Balance as at 30 June 2019	179,356	179,356

