



THE SOUTH COAST CHILD WELLBEING NETWORK REPORT 2022

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND FAMILY FUN DAYS

The Network was formed in 2012 under the ethos that **Protecting Children is Everyone's Business**. It brings together multiple local services to promote a shared responsibility for the well-being and safety of children, young people and families.

Any local services who support children, young people and their families within the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas are open and eligible to participate in the Network. The participating services for 2022 were: Goodstart Early Learning, Big Fat Smile, Anglicare, CareSouth, NSW Department of Education, William Campbell Foundation, IACC Early Childhood Services, South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation – Family Connect and Support, Barnardos, UOW Discovery Space, UOW Social Work Department, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District – School-Link program, Child Protection and Child Wellbeing Unit, Illawarra Aboriginal Medical Service, Family Services Australia. And Wollongong City Council.

The Network activities aim to raise awareness of the risks associated with poor outcomes for children and their families within the Illawarra Shoalhaven and develop strategies and partnerships to improve the results.

Annual Conference

Date: 6th September 2022 at Kiama Pavilion

Theme: Connect, Care, Play – Keeping Children in Mind

The South Coast Child Wellbeing Network Conference offers an opportunity to bring together a range of professionals from organisations who provide valuable knowledge and experience within the sector. One of the objectives of the Network is to provide a low-cost Conference, which allows staff to engage with nationally, and internationally recognised speakers and evidence-based practice programs.

The conference for 2022 engaged 192 attendees, registering from a range of services, including the Department of Education, Child Protection, Non-Government Organisations, Family and Community Services, and Early Childhood and Health sectors. In addition, there was a diverse range of professionals in attendance, including Teachers, Managers/Coordinators, Family Support/Case Workers, Psychologists, Counsellors, Child Care Workers/Educators, Social Workers, Nurses, Health Promotions Workers, Trainers/Assessors and Students from University/TAFE. The highest identified sectors were Early Childhood Educators and Family/Community Services. This is similar to the prior year in 2019, where Early Childhood Educators were more prominent. There was an increase this year in the proportion of Child Protection and Out of Home Care Services attending. The conference was well received after the COVID-19 lockdowns, with significant participation and engagement.

The day offered a keynote speaker, Heather Irvine-Rundle, Senior Psychologist and Director of The Read Clinic, presenting her topic: 'Attachment and Attunement: Exploring the Key Components Underpinning Healthy Relationships for Children To Promote Positive Mental Health And Connections Across The Lifespan'. This was followed by a Wellbeing Session run by Deanna Dale and four workshops, of which participants could select one to attend.

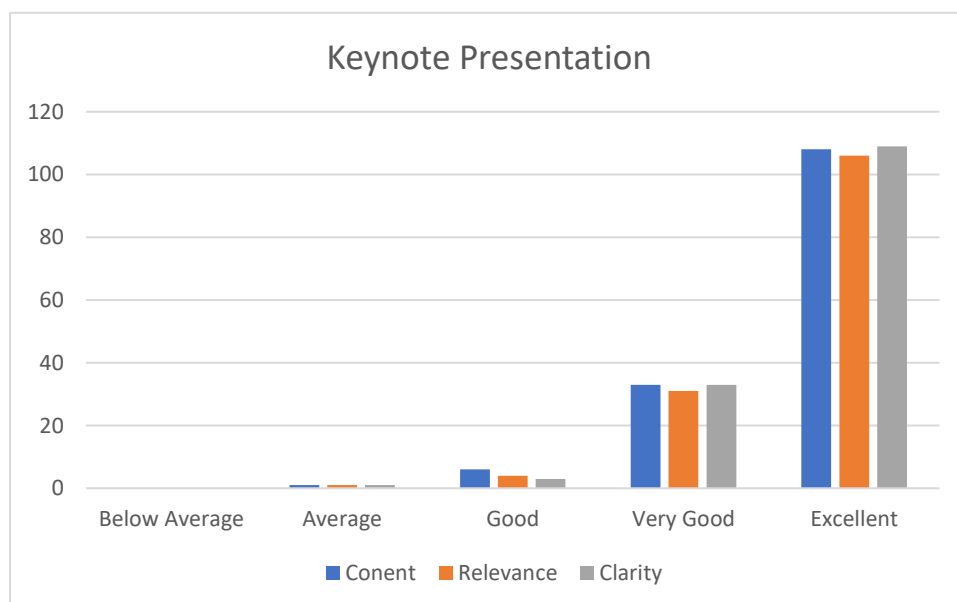
They were presented by;

- Sue Buratti, Senior Manager for Therapeutic Services NSW for the Australian Childhood Foundation, Finding Professional Relational Safety in the Midst of Trauma Work.
- Fiona Beale, Senior Occupational Therapist and DIR Floortime Practitioner, Reaching Children Where They Are: A framework for understanding the main elements contributing to a child's emotional capacity and developing a relationship that will nurture their emotional growth.
- Mark Donovan, Clinical Psychologist, Playful approaches to managing anxiety in a challenging world.
- Sharlene Vlahos from Karitane, Child and Family Health Nurse, Having difficult conversations with parents – Maintaining the relationship and working in partnership.

Participants complete an evaluation providing feedback on the keynote speaker, the workshops and their overall satisfaction with the conference. This allows the space for any input and recommendations. Out of the 200 people registered, 192 participated attended the conference, in conjunction 145 surveys were completed (72.5%). This is a high return rate and an increase from 2019 responses. The evaluation asked for presentations and workshops to be rated across a Likert scale of below average, average, good, very good, and excellent. This provided valuable information to influence and reflect on the opportunities for improvement in future conferences.

Keynote Presentation

Heather Irvine-Rundle presented 'Attachment and Attunement: Exploring the Key Components Underpinning Healthy Relationships for Children to Promote Positive Mental Health And Connections Across the Lifespan'. This presentation focused on the value of connection and attunement to a child's needs. Heather explored this through a scientific and theoretical framework with practical ideas for multiple adaptations to the early learning environment. Heather's address was rated most commonly as Excellent and Very Good for all three categories: content, relevance and clarity.



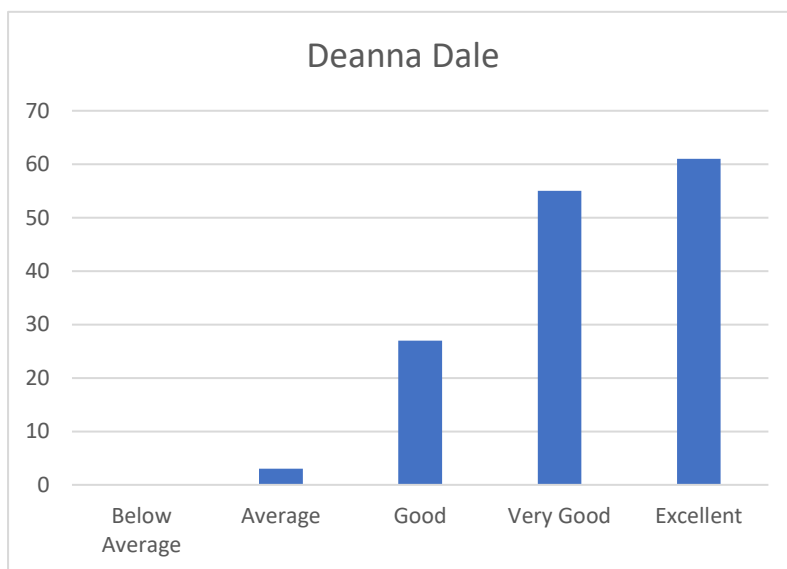
Registered = 192

Responses = 145

Session One

Wellbeing Session

Deanna Dale presented 'Resisting Burnout by Holding Values and Mattering at The Heart of Our Work with Children and Families. Deanna has over 30 years of experience working as a frontline clinician, team leader, senior manager, consultant and educator in a range of NSW child protection, sexual assault and domestic violence services.



Registered = 192

Responses = 142

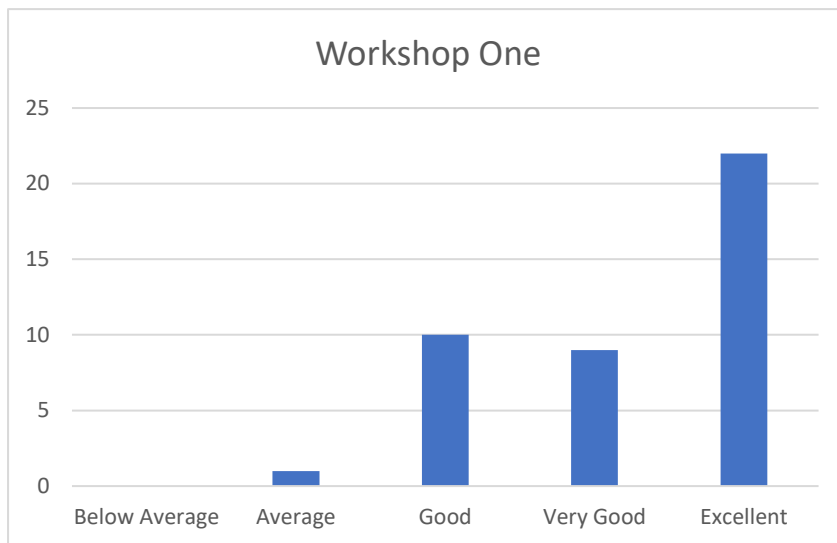
Workshop Presentations

Four concurrent workshops were offered, enabling participants to engage in one smaller group-learning experience. Overall, the return rate of the survey regarding the presenters was 75%, which was an increase from the last conference in 2019.

Workshop One

Sue Buratti presented 'Finding Professional Relational Safety in the Midst of Trauma Work'. This workshop focused on how adults can respond to a child's anguish while aiming to mitigate and de-escalate behaviours, creating opportunities to deepen relational

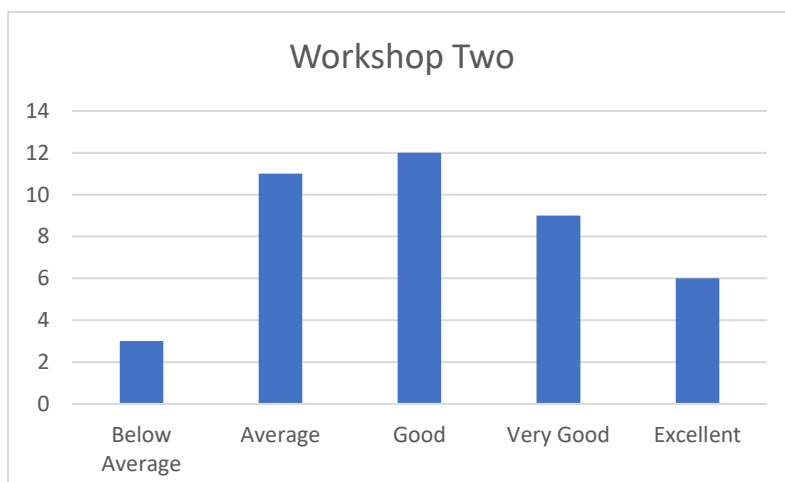
connections. Each survey was evaluated through selecting below average, average, good, very good, excellent. In which corresponds to the effectiveness of the workshop.



Registered = 48
Responses = 42

Workshop Two

Fiona Beale presented 'Reaching Children Where They Are: A framework for understanding the main elements contributing to a child's emotional capacity and developing a relationship that will nurture their emotional growth. This workshop focused on the DIR Floortime Model, exploring the different stages of emotional development. Fiona displayed videos and case studies on how emotional development can impact the body, mind, relationships, and environment. Due to extenuating circumstances Fiona had to deliver her session online, this type of delivery may have impacted the results and outcome. Each survey was evaluated through selecting below average, average, good, very good, excellent. In which corresponds to the effectiveness of the workshop.

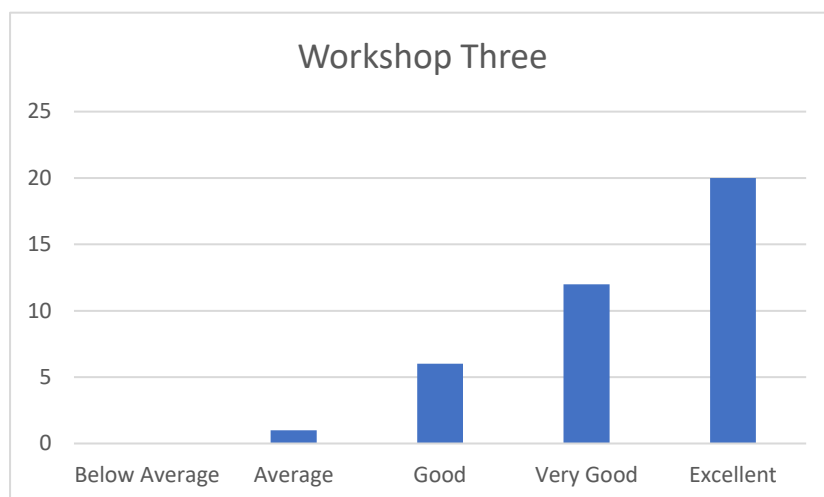


Registered = 48

Responses = 41

Workshop Three

Mark Donovan presented 'Playful approaches to managing anxiety in a challenging world'. This workshop focused on developing an individual's understanding of how children respond to challenges. Mark discussed practical tools and ideas to help children and families experiencing anxiety and distress. Each survey was evaluated through selecting below average, average, good, very good, excellent. In which corresponds to the effectiveness of the workshop.

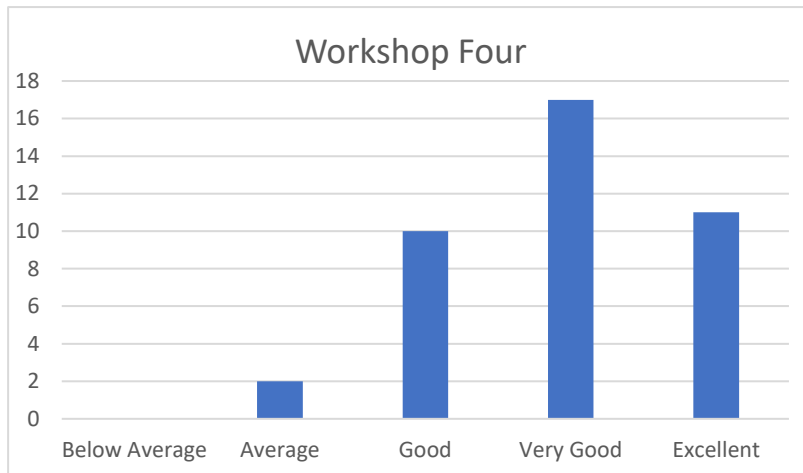


Registered = 48

Responses = 39

Workshop Four

Sharlene presented, 'Having difficult conversations with parents – Maintaining the relationship and working in partnership'. This workshop focused on providing individuals with crucial principles and skills on how to have difficult conversations with clients; this was further displayed through skill practice sessions. Each survey was evaluated through selecting below average, average, good, very good, excellent. In which corresponds to the effectiveness of the workshop.



Registered = 48

Responses = 40

Evaluation Responses

The conference was generally well received after the COVID-19 lockdowns, with 68% of respondents saying they would recommend the conference to their colleagues. The other 32% of participants felt the conference discussed entry-level information, whereas they would have liked more in-depth knowledge to suit their educational and professional needs.

To meet their clinical and collaborative needs, participants were given a chance to provide input for future conference enhancements. Suggestions include moving the conference to a more prominent location as the attendees felt the venue to be crowded. Another suggestion was incorporating more group work and group discussions into the workshops to take advantage of the knowledge and experience already in place and designing workshops with some practical components that might be used in practice. Other comments asked for more opportunities to Network, information and flyers of nearby services, as well as a list of attendees and the organisations they represent, to maximise networking opportunities.

There was an overall consensus that the knowledge and skills learnt from the conference would enhance their service delivery and workplace. Respondents identified that they could use the content they had learned in their workplaces by:

- Team building and networking
- Facilitating difficult conversations
- Identifying the circle of security
- Understanding mattering
- Understanding Mark Donovan's bad feelings bucket
- Relationship and attachment
- Identifying and understanding brain functions

- Trauma Expression and connection Assessment/trauma
- BMMS
- MEDS
- Developmental, individual-differences & Relationship-based Model

In suggestions for future themes in upcoming conferences, the responses included:

- Having more engagement with presenters
- Allocating more time for networking
- Providing more practical strategies for working with trauma
- More interactive activities and resources
- More space within the venue was requested, along with a more and more efficient way of serving lunch
- Different workshop themes, e.g. an in-depth workshop on trauma-informed practice, including practical strategies and resources.

The 2022 South Coast Child Wellbeing Network Conference was appreciated by a broad representation of professionals who engage with children and families in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven and is becoming an anticipated annual event. The feedback received was positive and constructive as participants invested in the day with openness to learn and enjoyment in networking with others.

Family Fun Day 2022

8th of September 2022

Warrawong

The Warrawong Family Fun Day for 2022 was situated in the Warrawong Plaza with six stations set up with local services offering different low/no cost engaging play activities. Suzi began the morning with a Welcome to country. Bright Spark joined us in the morning to greet the families, be a part of the activities and join in the fun. A reading tent was available to children, careers and families to provide a quite space to relax and read together. The Wollongong Lord Mayor, Gordon Bradbury officially opened the event and read a book to the children and families.

The participating services on the day were Barnardos, Illawarra Area Child Care (ECTARC), Family Connect and Support, CareSouth, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. Children aged five were also present as they were home-schooled and accompanied by their siblings.

Activities included:

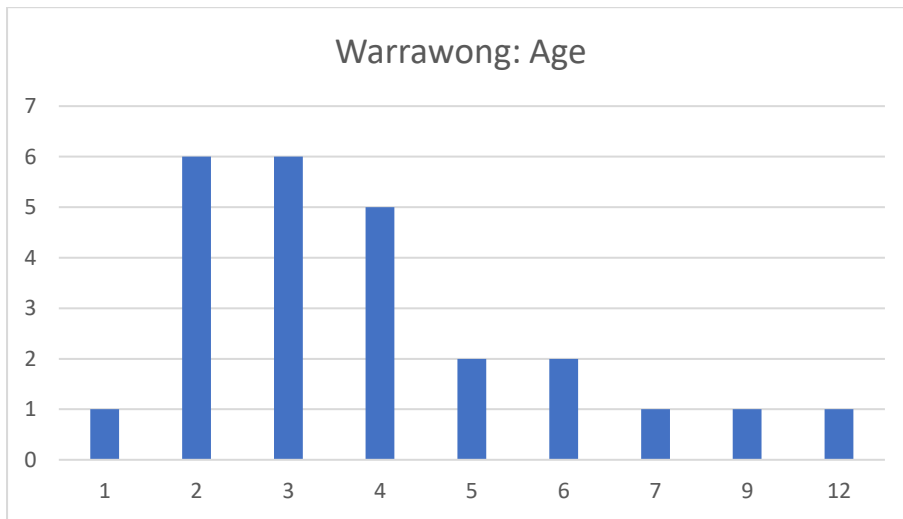
- Music mat
- Paper dolls
- Sensory play & Key rings
- Planter boxes
- Activity mat

Evaluation Responses

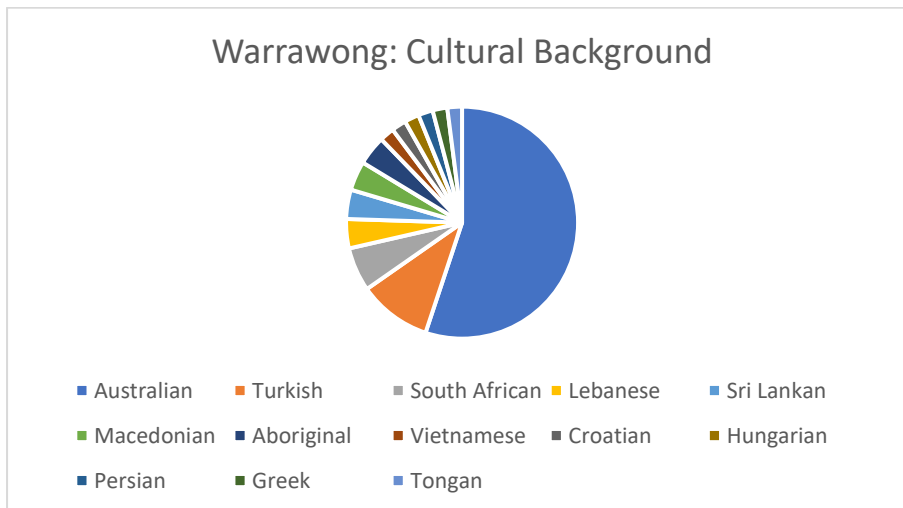
A total of 24 children attended from the big fat smile Warrawong preschool unfortunately the data supplied by the preschool was not complete. Of these, the majority of families identified as Australian (55%), Turkish, South African and Lebanese.

The most common age was two years and three years old accounting for 18% of responses, this differs from 2018 where children aged four were one of the most frequent. A total of twelve postcodes were listed, with most respondents residing within a close proximity to the Warrawong Plaza. The two most common reasons for attending the event was being in the centre/walking by (26%) and through Email (51%).

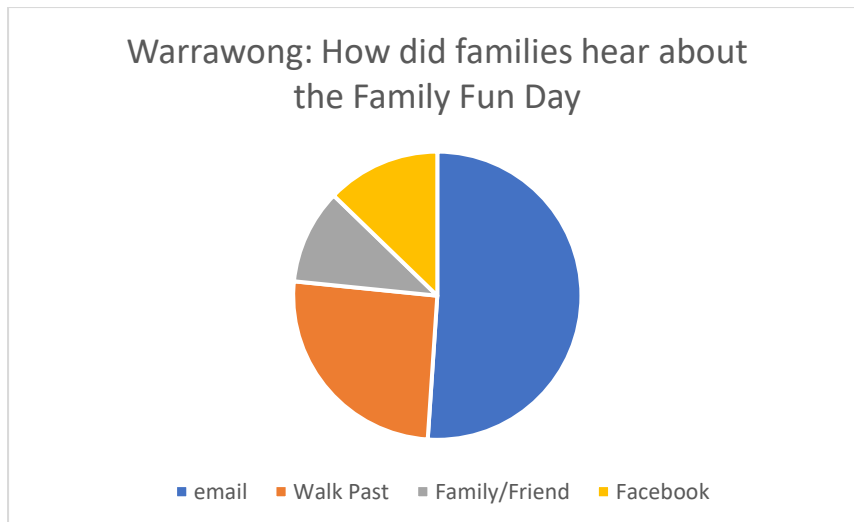
Participants were asked the whether they had learnt easy, fun activities to do with their child; all participant selected *yes* except one who did not specify an answer. When asked whether they had more knowledge about services that could assist them or their child, twenty-three respondents selected *yes*, zero selected *maybe* and one selected *no*.



Response = 25



Response = 49



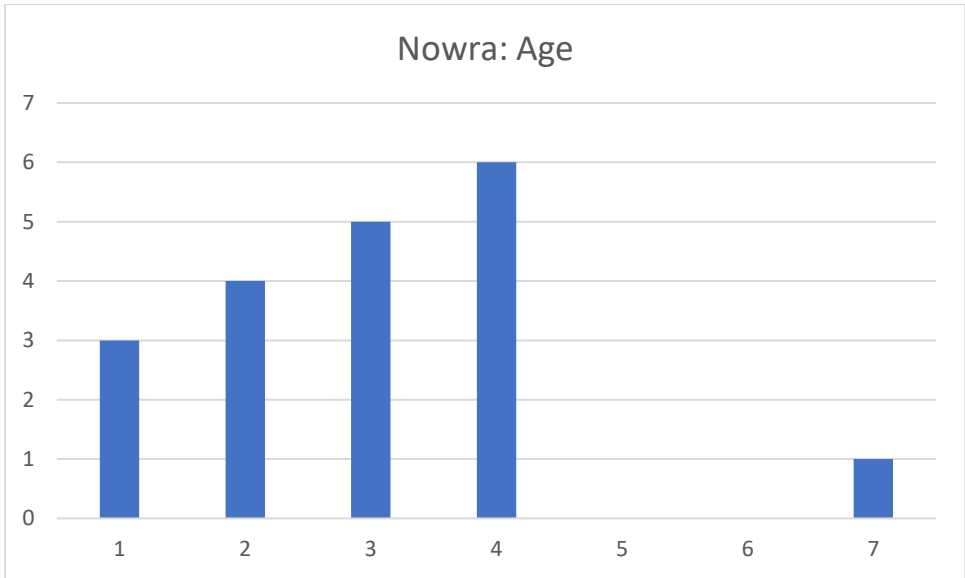
Response = 47

Nowra

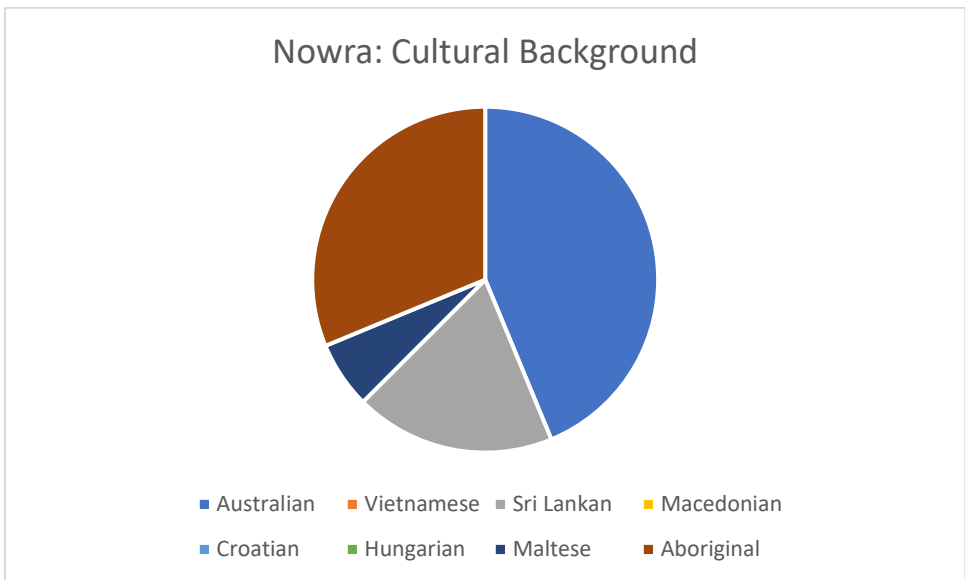
The Nowra Family Fun Day was held in the central court of Nowra Stocklands with stations set up with local services offering different low/no cost engaging play and craft activities. Mayor Amanda Findley opened the event. A range of families including parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles brought the young children into the event and engaged with the services' activities. Cullunghutti came along with Agi the Black Cockatoo to take photos with the kids and greet the families. The participating services on the day were the William Campbell Foundation, South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation, ECTARC, Anglicare, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, Barnardos, Family Services Australia and Cullunghutti.

The activities included:

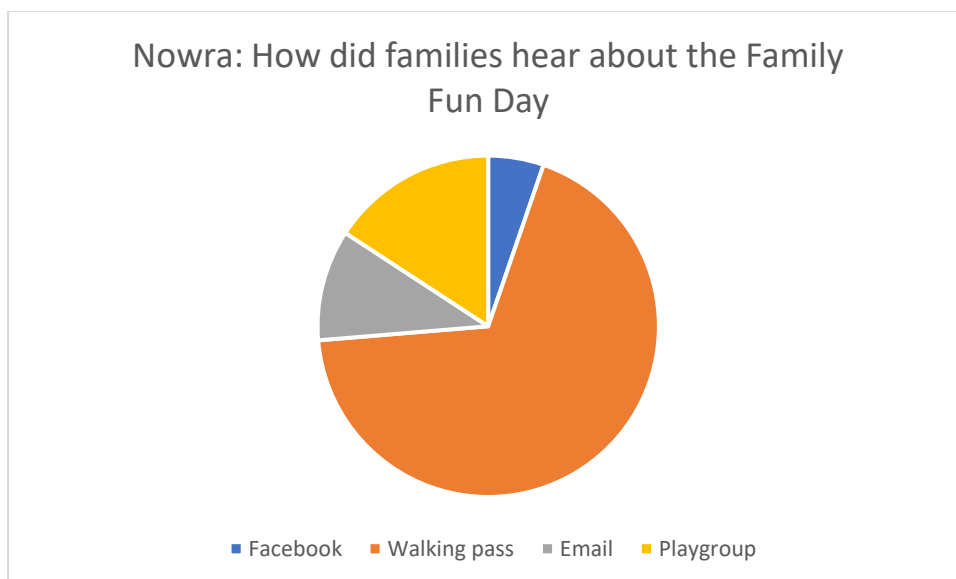
- Playdough activity with take-home instructions
- Colouring in station
- Sensory play
- Weaving station
- Craft
- Kite making station
- Beaded bracelet station



Response = 19



Response = 16



Response = 22

Dapto

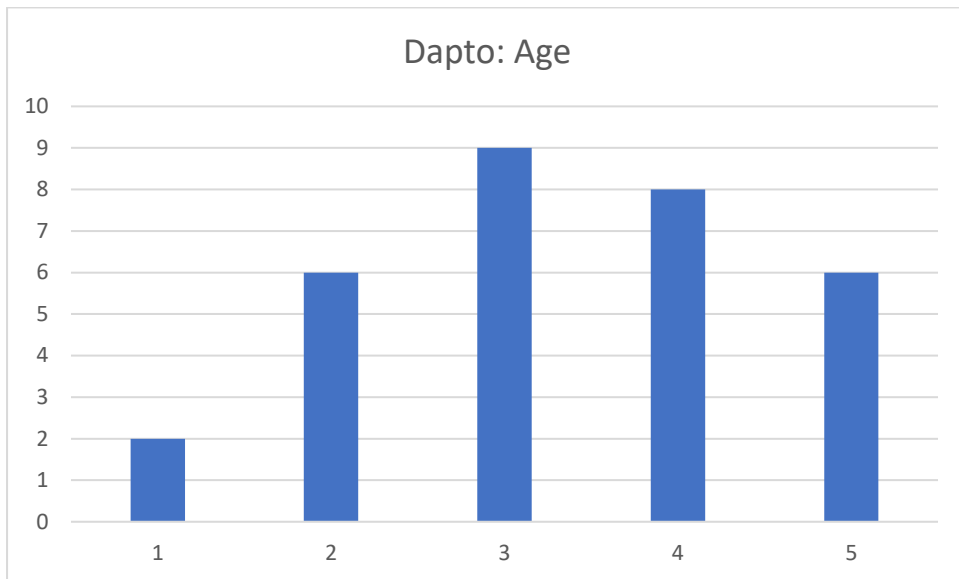
Dapto Family Fun Day for 2022 was situated in the central court of Dapto Mall. Dapto was set up in the same way as Warrawong including a reading tent as a quiet space. The day saw stations set up with local services offering low/no cost engaging and fun play activities. A reading tent was set up by Paint the Gong 'READ', providing a quiet space for children, carers and families to relax and read together. It is important to have a quiet space for children to settle for as a safe area for children with sensory needs. Young people were joint in the reading tent for a story; Pirates... Bright Spark and Billy Backpack (Paint the Gong 'READ' mascots) made an appearance later in the morning to greet the children and families and join in on the fun.

The participating services on the day were Barnardos, Dapto library, Wollongong Council, Early years care, Kids Uni, UOW early years course and early start at UOW, Corrimal Rotary Club The Smiths Family, Farmborough Road Schools as Community Centre, Family Services Australia, Anglicare.

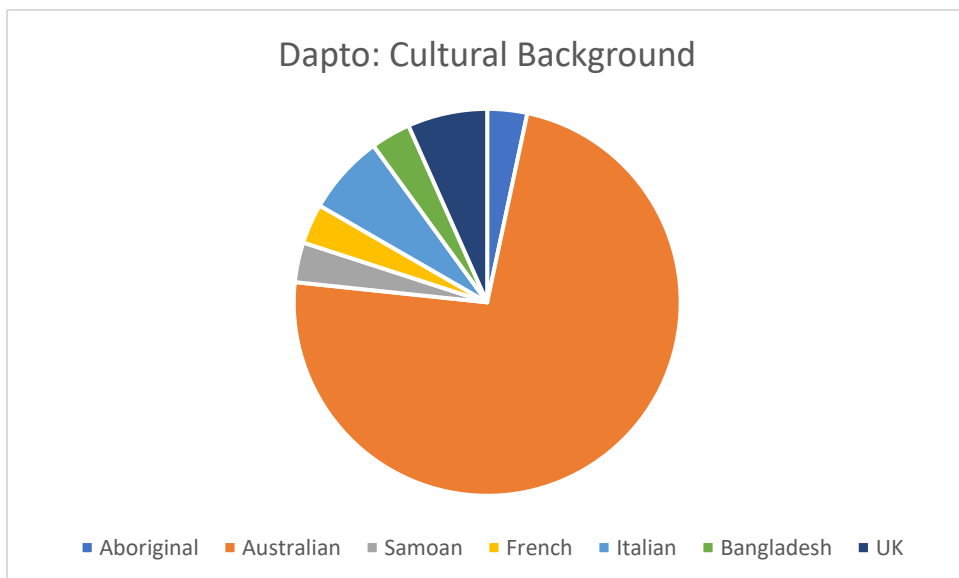
The activities included:

- Craft activities
- Music matt
- Aboriginal mat/nature play activities
- Playdough activity with take-home instructions
- Coloured interactive floor tiles
- Puppet show

- Sensory activities
- Native animal fur discussions

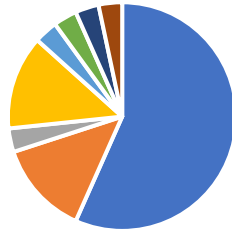


Response = 31



Response = 30

Dapto: How did families hear about the Family Fun Day



■ Walk by ■ Facebook ■ Ad ■ Big fat smile
■ Goodstart ■ Family ■ From last year ■ Playgroup

Response = 30

Evaluation Responses

A total of nineteen children attended the Family Fun Day. A high majority of participants identified as Australian (73%), the next most common cultural background was Italian and English with (7%). Other families identified as being from Samoan, Aboriginal and Torres strait islander and French backgrounds.

Three-year old's were most represented on the day accounting for 33% of responses received; followed by four-year old's (27%) and two-year old's (20%). A total of six suburbs were listed as the family's residence, with the majority of participants living within 10km of the event (90%). The two most common reasons for how they heard about the event was from walking by (57%) and through Facebook (13%).

Participants were asked the whether they had learnt easy, fun activities to do with their child; all participant selected *yes*. When asked whether they had more knowledge about services that could assist them or their child, twenty-nine selected *yes* and two selected *maybe*.