



STaR
access, opportunity
and acceptance

Annual Snapshot 2021



Comments from the Board



Valentina Borbone – President

In December 2001 our Founding Director, Dr Coral Kemp, established the STaR Inclusive Early Childhood Association Inc in collaboration with parents and professionals. Coral's unrelenting commitment to STaR and to advocacy for people with disability and their right to learn has been fundamental to STaR becoming the strong and progressive organisation it is today. We acknowledge her significant contribution to the lives of people living with disability as she continues to inspire and direct us all.

In our 20th year, we celebrate moving forward with confidence and clarity. STaR has evolved from being an incorporated association to a company limited by guarantee - Special Teaching and Research (STaR) Ltd. This enables STaR to expand its scope of delivery from state-based to national. A key focus over the next two years is to establish STaR Education as a quality national training division in Special Education and to pilot a post-school Lifelong Learning hub for adults with disabilities. Our work in the childcare centres and preschools with children, educators and families continues to operate well. Each year, the new children bring fresh change and challenge, which disallows 'service apathy'.

This year we welcomed Associate Professor Rebekah Grace, from Western Sydney University, to the STaR Board. Rebekah has been a member of the STaR Research Committee since 2014 and is passionate about understanding and addressing the support needs of people and families who are vulnerable.

We have weathered the COVID-19 storm well because of the years of support from The MonSTaR Foundation, Australian Stockbrokers Foundation, a businessman (who wishes to remain anonymous) and, more recently, Axi. This extraordinary financial support and continued belief in the work we do are deeply respected at STaR.



Stephen Fox – Treasurer

Many businesses, not-for-profit providers and individuals will never recover financially from the impact of the worldwide pandemic we have lived these past two years. Fortunately, unexpected donations, sustained stability in government funding and a secure capital base have again delivered a balanced budget and comfortable surplus this financial year. The STaR Board remains vigilant in monitoring all aspects of STaR's finances, and a prudent approach to expenditure ensures financial longevity.

It is fitting that in the 20th year of its operation STaR will invest in a post-school Lifelong Learning pilot project and the rollout of professional learning nationally.



Margaret Meaker – CEO

The years 2020 and 2021 will forever be memorable for the disability and education sectors. It has certainly given us a renewed perspective on the importance of science, research and community. Whilst our usual supports and operations were again significantly disrupted by COVID 19, we have continued to deliver quality learning support to the childcare centres, preschools and adult services we work with, albeit differently. The outcomes achieved under the strategic pillars of Educating Educators | Lifelong Special Education | Informing Communities are exceptional.

Our belief that lifelong learning for people with disabilities is a human right has remained steadfast. STaR has made significant progress in expanding its scope from the early years to providing services across the lifespan, which reflects our renewed Mission and Vision. This means that we have commenced a pilot program, working in adult post-school work and accommodation settings in collaboration with Fighting Chance, an innovative social enterprise for people with disability.

Research on post-school experiences and an online training course for support workers are well underway. Although we are in the early stages of expanding our scope, we are confident that the model we are developing will demonstrate the importance of continued learning for adults with disability. This has also led to implementing changes in our governance, operations and the way in which we deliver services.

This productive and progressive year was made possible by the community of people who support us: a committed and highly skilled Board and an extraordinary team of employees who have worked so hard to get through a challenging and unprecedented time so positively – together. In January 2022 we will mark our 20th year of delivering Special Education to over 30 childcare centres and preschools across four local government areas. We remain very committed to ensuring that our growth and success are measured by the level of our impact and its ripple effect on people and communities, not by the size of our organisation.

20 years of STaR

2001



December 2001,
STaR was established

2002



Supporting 5 children at
Meadowbank MLC

2003



New logo - the STaR hand was
made out of the fingers of each
of the original STaR children



2005

Rollout to
Blacktown,
Penrith &
Ryde LGA's

- FaCHSIA funding
- Invest to grow
- First staff
employed by STaR

2006



- Caring for carers
(Westmead)

2007

Established
North Ryde
office



2008

HWCA
Funding
lead agency

2009



2010



Gifted Program
established

2011



Outreach Program
established

- Research committee
established

2012



2013

Indigenous
Playgroup

2015



Launched
Professional Learning

2016

Launched
new website
& Facebook

2017



- Registered
NDIS provider

2018

DoE Sector
Capacity
Building
Project

2019



STaR showcased
at ISEI Conference

2020



Lifelong Learning
program established

- Launched
Online Learning



2021



DoE Sector Development
statewide webinar delivery

STaR celebrating



years

2001 - 2021

OUR VISION



2001

"ALL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES HAVE THE RIGHT TO ACCESS GENERIC EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES WITH THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF SUPPORT TO MEET THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL/ EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ARE VALUED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY."

2006

"TO EMPOWER CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS, AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEM, THROUGH RESEARCH-BASED EDUCATION."

2010

"TO BE A HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION PROVIDING RESEARCH-BASED EDUCATION AND SUPPORT TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEM"

2012

"TO ACHIEVE GREATER ACCESS, OPPORTUNITY AND ACCEPTANCE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES ACROSS AUSTRALIA"

2018

"WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT, ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN TOGETHER"

2020

"WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT, ALL PEOPLE CAN LEARN TOGETHER"



About STaR

OUR VISION

With the right support
all people can learn
together

OUR MISSION

To achieve ACCESS,
OPPORTUNITY and
ACCEPTANCE for all
people with disability

OUR VALUES

Respect, Integrity,
Social Justice, Empathy

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

1

INDUSTRY LEADERS

Be industry leaders in
research-based special
education across the lifespan

2

PROMOTE SPECIAL EDUCATION

Promote special education for people with
disabilities to their families, educators,
support workers and the wider community

OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

Educating Educators

Providing quality research-based training and mentoring

Activate STaR Research | Course Development | Course Delivery | Coaching & Mentoring



Lifelong Special Education

Implementing best practice

Early Learning Programs | Lifelong Learning Programs | Family Support



Informing Communities

Advocating for special education to a range of audiences

Consultancy & Advocacy | Communication

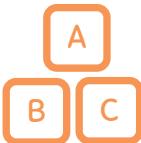


STaR by the numbers

In FY 2020–2021

 **12**
Employees



Income
\$1,248,896


20
preschools


1
supported living
home for adults

 **86%**
Program delivery
and support


76 STaR
families

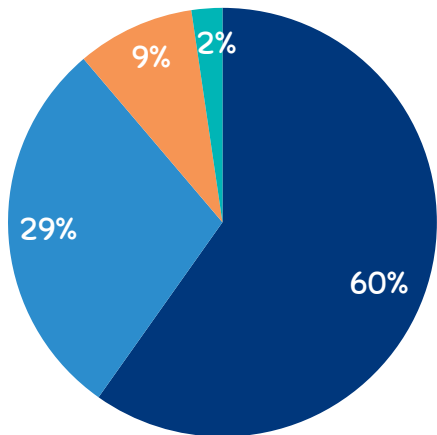
 **14%**
Operation costs
(8% admin)

 **13**
Childcare
centres


Expenses
\$924,464

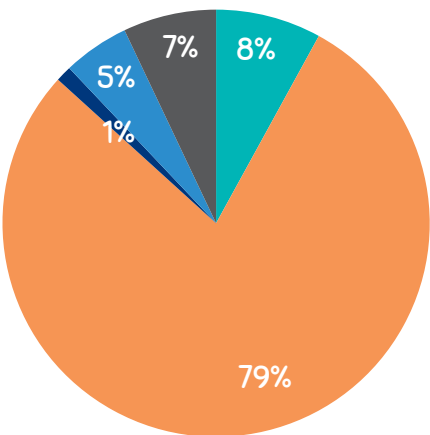
10  professional
development
courses

Where the funds came from
STaR Income for FY2020–2021




- Donations & Sponsorship
- Government Funding
- COVID-19 Government Stimulus Funding
- Other

Where the funds go
STaR Expenses for FY2020–2021



- Administration
- Salaries & Wages
- PD, Research & Marketing
- Rental and Utilities
- STaR Education



Outcomes Achieved 2020–21

1. EDUCATING EDUCATORS

Providing quality research-based training and mentoring

1.1 Course development

- Developed two new courses for Support Workers working with adults with disability.
- Developed two new workshops for preschool educators supported via the Disability and Inclusion Sector Capacity Building (SCB) Program, funded by NSW DoE.
- Converted two face-to-face workshops for early childhood educators into interactive self-paced online courses.

1.2 Course delivery

- Invested in online learning platform (Learning Management System)
- Piloted online live webinar delivery of early childhood courses.
- Piloted delivery of self-paced online course for support workers.
- Enrolled 87 educators from STaR affiliated centres and preschools receiving SCB support in self-paced online courses (48 completed the courses before the end of June 2021).

1.3 Development and implementation of STaR generated research

- STaR research team formed a collaborative relationship with the research team from the Institute of Special Educators (InSpEd).
- Launched survey of parents regarding post-school experiences of young adults with disability (in data collection phase).

2. LIFELONG SPECIAL EDUCATION

Implementing best practice

2.1 STaR Lighthouse program

- Operated STaR program in 11 centres: Tregear, Doonside, Willmot, Rooty Hill, Bidwill, Ngallu Wal (Doonside), Top Ryde, Midson, Quakers Hill, Seven Hills, Kings Langley.
- Increased support to children and families in lower SES and Aboriginal families (Tregear, Doonside, Willmot, Rooty Hill and Bidwill).
- Offered four free quality professional training to all STaR affiliated educators (Transition to School, STaR Model, Shared Book Reading & Working with NDIS).
- Continued to offer weekly coaching and training face-to-face and via zoom throughout lockdown.

2.2 STaR Outreach

- Continued to offer quality outreach individualised program and educator support if families were NDIS self-managed (out of area or locally).
- Implemented Sector Capacity Building program funded by DoE to support 20 preschools with continued coaching, mentoring and training opportunities.

2.3 Lifelong Learning program

- Mentored Support Workers and developed training through involvement in a supported living home for young people with disability and a work program for people with disability.

2.4 Family support

- Offered ongoing family support and crisis management to any STaR family.
- Provided referrals to supporting specialist agencies such as domestic violence and mental health family services in the area.

3. INFORMING COMMUNITIES

Advocating for special education to a range of audiences

3.1 Increased understanding of the role of Special Education

- Maintained consistent focus on the importance of Special Education in STaR social media posts, online learning courses and face-to-face workshops.
- Continued weekly communications delivered via Facebook/Instagram.
- Made a joint submission with the Institute of Special Educators (InSpEd) to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Lili continuing to learn post-school



Lisa sharing a love of books with Zak and Neveah

We acknowledge

Our Board members, Honorary Associates and Staff

For their ongoing commitment to the Vision and Mission of STaR.

Board members



Mrs Valentina Borbone
President



Ms Margaret Meaker
CEO



Dr Coral Kemp
Founding Director



Ms Kristy Michael
Director



Mr Stephen Fox
Treasurer



Assoc. Prof. Rebekah Grace
Director

The STaR Team



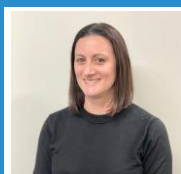
Margaret Meaker
CEO



Megan Cooper
Manager, Families & Education



Dr Sarah Carlon
Manager, Research & Education



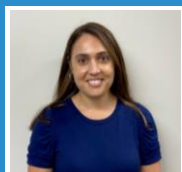
Rosie Vella
Early Intervention Teacher



Philippa Wong
Special Educator



Elise de Jong
Special Educator



Lisa Mifsud
Special Educator



Sarah Roberts
Educator



Jen Vandenbroek
Learning Administrator



Sally Ryan
Operations Assistant



Christie Kedward
Operations Assistant

We acknowledge

Our partners and sponsors

The Australian Government Department of Social Services, the NSW Department of Education, MonSTaR Foundation, Australian Stockbrokers Foundation, Institute of Special Educators (InSpEd), Banter Group, Axi and Netcare.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

InSpEd
Institute of Special Educators

MonSTaR
FOUNDATION
Together we can make a difference

axi



Banter
GROUP

ASF
AUSTRALIAN
STOCKBROKERS
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