



**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2023/24

Interchange
illawarra

Highlights

During the 2023/24 financial year we coordinated:

- 646 Social Support group activity sessions
- 12 special events
- 60 weekends away
- 8 short breaks



Interchange Illawarra staff members undertook 853 training modules including the Annual Mandatory Training Program, Midazolam Administration, Enteral Feeding, Epilepsy Awareness and passive self defence.

We offered 10 Parent/Carer Health and Wellbeing events during the financial year including a winery visit, an ice bath and sauna experience, high tea, lunches at Centro and Panorama House, Cuppa for Carers morning teas with guest speakers and a male carer event at Okami Japanese restaurant.



Construction work on our new Community Centre and Office space at 114 Church Street, Wollongong, continued to progress well. The building features an open plan space for people with a disability to receive individual or group-based support with office accommodation on the first floor.

Participants, their families, board members and employees celebrated a great year at Interchange with an end of year party in December 2023, our first since 2019. The evening featured dinner, outdoor games, lucky door prizes, staff service awards, two photo booths and dancing to the DJ.



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Acknowledgement of Country

Australia is a land with a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Interchange Illawarra celebrates and respects these people as the First Australians. We acknowledge their unique cultural and spiritual relationships with the land and waters as we all strive for respect and equality in disability care.

About Us

Interchange Illawarra is a not for profit, community based, registered NDIS organisation providing quality flexible supports for people with disabilities.

Interchange Illawarra has proudly delivered support to people with disabilities and their families for over 43 years. To us, supporting people goes beyond physical wellbeing to include nurturing friendships, discovering new talents and abilities. We are incredibly flexible with our programs to ensure they are always engaging, relevant and enjoyable.

Interchange Illawarra employs over 130 dedicated Support Workers. We support over 270 participants, and their families, but no matter how much we grow we promise that our heart and values will always remain the same.

We have an unwavering commitment to create opportunities for the people who choose us as their provider.





Our Services



Daily Living Assistance

Offering support to people with disabilities to increase independence in their own homes.



Community Inclusion

We offer a choice of assistance during activities, pursuing personal interests or going on a short break, independent of family members.



Coordination of Supports

Assisting people with disabilities, their families and carers to identify goals and aspirations they may have to live a meaningful life.



Parent/Carer Support

Developing opportunities for parents and carers to participate in the local community, foster relationships and strengthen informal networks.

Management Team



Jake Pearson, Chief Executive Officer

Jake has been the CEO of Interchange for over six years. He holds an MBA, Bachelor of Commerce, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, as well as completing studies in Case Management, Community Services Coordination and the AICD Company Directors training course.

Jake is also a committee member on the International Short Breaks Association Board and a Director on the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music Board.



Amanda Maslowski, Business Services Manager

Amanda has extensive experience in the banking sector and small business management, particularly with not for profit organisations.

Amanda holds an Advanced Diploma in Accountancy and a Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) and has worked at Interchange Illawarra for over 11 years.



Michael Corby, Social Support Manager

Michael has been involved in disability support for over 22 years, initially as a volunteer and casual support worker, while studying for a Degree in Communications.

Michael also holds a Diploma of Community Services Coordination and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. He has a wealth of experience including roles as a Training Coordinator for people with a disability and teaching roles with TAFE Community Services department.



Emma Robinson, Human Resources Manager

Emma has worked in the disability sector for over 15 years starting as a volunteer with Interchange Illawarra's Social Support programs before becoming a casual Support Worker. Emma has worked in various roles within the sector including Team Leader, Case Manager, Support Coordinator and Planner. She has a Diploma in Disability and Community Service Coordination, a Diploma in Human Resources and a Diploma in Leadership and Management.



Tracey Greated, Practice Lead

Tracey has a Bachelor of Science (Psychology), a Cert IV in Disability Support and has undertaken further studies in Trauma Informed Practice. She has extensive experience in welfare, including working with homeless and disadvantaged youth, as a youth counsellor, and providing early intervention support to children under 8 years of age and their families. Tracey has worked in the disability sector for over 14 years.

Board of Directors



Susan Wallis - Chairperson



Peter Andrews - Treasurer



Lorraine Diaz - Secretary



John Kennedy - Director



Nathan McEwan - Director



David Richardson - Director



Bruce Rowles - Director



Chairperson's Report

After many years in the role of Chairperson, it would be fair to assume writing this report would get easier, but this is one of the harder reports in my long history with the organisation.

After many years of stability, aside from the shifting sands of the NDIS, our organisation experienced significant changes, mostly planned but sadly not all.

We were devastated to lose our colleague and longtime friend of Interchange, Dot Vassallo, who was not only connected as carer for her daughter Kimberley but served as a Director for many years. We were then humbled when her family chose Interchange as the recipient of donations in lieu of flowers, and the funds supported our Carer Wellbeing program that we are all so proud of.

Dot was posthumously acknowledged for her commitment to the board, alongside the late Margaret Kennedy, when both amazing women were inducted as Life Members of the organisation. Our constitution was amended to enable these appointments, and we are proud of the contribution they have made to our history and hope the recognition brings some comfort to their families.

The constitutional changes also facilitated the recognition of volunteers, most recently Faye Sengstock, a quiet achiever and our longest serving volunteer was acknowledged with this honour. We now have five Life Members including Jan May and Glenda Pearce; all incredible women who have made immeasurable impact on the lives of people with disabilities in the Illawarra.

Jake Pearson and Amanda Maslowski have once again steered the ship through stormy as well as calm waters, and with much regulatory change ahead, their kind and professional leadership will continue to be essential to provide continuity for all our stakeholders.

Sadly, loss has been experienced throughout our team with several family members as well as participants passing during the year. I am grateful for the compassion of Jake and Amanda in particular, and the gentle way the team have supported each other, both at an administrative and direct service level, going above and beyond. This kindness is one of the things that sets us apart in the sector, and is at the heart of our culture. I would like to personally thank all our team members for their commitment during this challenging year.



Another unexpected change was the resignation of long-term employee Maria Luke, who we wished well as she moved onto other employment, leaving space to welcome and transition Rene Giblett into the team.

Proudly, Interchange employed Ellie McLean in the role of Trainee Administration Officer, and it is her friendly voice and face that welcomes you on the phone and at reception. Ellie self-identifies as a person with a disability and brings perhaps overdue lived experience to our team, that is making us all better at what we do for the families we support.

On the more exciting subject of planned changes, our long-awaited construction project at 114 Church Street, Wollongong commenced. This strategy was many years in the making and I look forward to reflecting on the positive impact this momentous change will have on our service delivery in next year's report. The opportunity to purchase the property next door also presented itself in the previous 12 months, and whilst earlier than anticipated, it continues our program of operating from adjoining properties as we do in Evans Street and Pur Pur Avenue.



Please be assured that whilst our new premises are purpose-built and state of the art, they will also be the same welcoming and warm environment you have come to expect from Interchange Illawarra. This new location will enhance the experience and culture of our team and service delivery, and we can't wait to use the space to its fullest potential. The parking is better too, which we recognise is important when travelling with a person with a disability.

People with disabilities, their carers and families, and our incredible team of Support Workers are the centre of all we do now and into the future. Whilst the NDIS has forced us into a business environment, providing quality and flexible support with a 'can do' and innovative approach remains our focus. Our new premises are a small way of acknowledging your loyalty and support as we grow and transition to meet your needs, and the respect and gratitude we have that you continue to choose Interchange Illawarra to be part of your lives.

To my fellow Directors, I am again humbled that you choose to spend your time setting the strategic direction of Interchange Illawarra and volunteering alongside me in your governance roles. Whilst we will continue to feed you well during board meetings, I know it is not only lunch that brings you to the board table and I will never cease to be delighted that you renominate each year. You each bring unique and essential skills to the board table and are individually valued. As volunteer rates continue to decline, your ongoing commitment to Interchange is even more extraordinary, and I am proud of our teamwork and what we achieve together.

I recently calculated that I have volunteered for Interchange Illawarra for a third of my life and this is the longest and strongest connection I have outside of my family. Thank you all for providing this opportunity for me to serve and contribute.

I wish you all good health for the coming 12 months and a successful 2025.

Susan Wallis
Chairperson



CEO's Report

Compiling the Annual Report offers the opportunity to take time away from the usual hustle and bustle of operating an organisation in the dynamic and ever changing NDIS environment, and reflect upon the year that was.

2023/2024 will go down in the Interchange Illawarra history books for a number of reasons, none more important than the passing of our long-term carer and Director Dot Vassallo in July 2023. Dot served on the Board of Directors several times over her more than 25 year relationship with Interchange and always gave her all in the capacity as both carer to her daughter Kimberly, and as an Interchange Director. Dot was well loved and respected and the Interchange community will continue to miss her.

The year also marked the commencement of construction for our new Centre and Office building on Church Street in Wollongong. This project will increase our capacity to deliver quality services to people with disability and their carers in the Illawarra region, and we are eagerly anticipating its completion. To complement this asset, we have also purchased 116 Church Street and we will utilise this asset as part of our medium-term growth strategy.

From an industry perspective, this year will be remembered for the Publication of the Disability Royal Commission Final Report and the Independent NDIS Review. At the time of writing the Federal Government is yet to respond to the many recommendations outlined in both of these reports however it is anticipated that we will experience considerable industry wide reform in coming months and years. Further to this, increasing price and cost pressures are negatively impacting all disability providers, particularly registered providers such as Interchange Illawarra.

From a staffing perspective, we have continued to invest in the training and development of our people. Interchange recognises our staff to be our greatest asset and the key to high quality, safe and inclusive supports. Apart from the usual mandatory training and specific training opportunities, we also supported six office based staff to complete the Accidental Counsellor Course. We now have every office based staff member trained in this course, equipping any person who picks up the office phone to better support participants and carers who may be experiencing some challenging circumstances. Service is at the heart of everything we do.



After 20 years of loyal service Maria Luke, Senior Accounts Officer resigned. Maria has taken up position with a not for profit community services provider in Nowra. We successfully recruited Rene Giblett to the role of Accounts and Payroll Officer and Rene is proving to be an asset to the Administration and Finance Team. This year we also welcomed Ellie McLean to the team as our Trainee Administration Officer. Ellie is the first member of the office based staffing group that identifies as having a disability and I believe this important milestone complements the significant lived experience we have on staff through our many employees who also have a personal caring role.

This year also marks the induction of three new life members: Faye Sengstock, Dot Vassallo (posthumous) and Margaret Kennedy (posthumous). These are the first appointments since 2014 and were

made possible due to a change to our constitution approved at the 2023 AGM. Faye, Dot and Margaret join Jan May and Glenda Pearce on our Life Members honour list.

On the service delivery front, we developed and launched our Independence Pathway Program. This is an individually tailored program designed to take advantage our existing skills, experience and resources to build custom made opportunities for participants to develop their capacity in a range of skills that promote independence. The program offers options to develop skills in home, as part of focused groups and also as a mid-week stay in our respite cottage and Villa. Launch events were held for workers and participants/carers in September and were positively received by both groups.

From a personal perspective, I took great delight in hosting the Interchange End of Year Party in December 2023 after COVID-19 restrictions and outbreaks prevented the event from taking place for the previous three years. The event was all inclusive with participants, their families and staff in attendance and included dinner, lots of dancing and socialising. Formalities were kept to a minimum and staff service awards were announced as part of the celebrations. Post event, we received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Partnerships/Networks and Alliances

Working in partnership with other agencies continues to be a priority for Interchange Illawarra. The strength of our well-developed relationships provides the opportunity to support a greater number of people with disabilities to access value added activities, and to foster opportunities for community inclusion initiatives.

We have key partnerships with:

- Illawarra Disability Alliance Members
- Community Industry Group
- Good360 Australia
- Playgroups NSW
- ASPECT South Coast School for Children with Autism
- Greenacres Disability Services
- Big Fat Smile
- Illawarra Quota Inc.

Donations

Interchange Illawarra is always appreciative of donations received. These valued contributions provide opportunities to people with disabilities, their families, and their carers, that would not be otherwise available. In particular, donations to Interchange fund health and wellbeing activities for carers, as these activities are no longer funded under the NDIS.

Interchange Illawarra acknowledges the following donations received throughout the 2023/2024 year:

- Illawarra Quota Inc.
- Henry and Maureen Crawford
- Carers NSW
- A variety of individuals offering a donation in lieu of flowers for Dot Vassallo





Acknowledgements

Throughout the year, various people and organisations work in collaboration with Interchange Illawarra. These relationships are valued by this organisation and are vital to the ongoing support to people with disabilities, their families and carers.

These include:

- Interchange Illawarra Carers Advisory Committee
- Paul Davies from Paul Davies Digital Co.
- Ross Boyd from RB Computing
- Jo Kernot from Belrebel Consultancy and Training
- The Illawarra Disability Alliance Membership
- The International Short Stay Association Committee
- Staff of National Disability Insurance Agency and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Special mention needs to go to our Board of Directors, led by Chairperson Susan Wallis. The board has continued to provide clear and sensible guidance to the executive team. Their trust and shared vision have allowed the organisation to operate in ways that contribute to our mission: partnering with people with disabilities to live meaningful lives and to deliver high quality support. Each Board Member brings different skills and experience to the organisation and the generosity in which these are shared supports our ongoing success.



Our office staff team, being both the Planning and Administration/Finance teams, continue to perform at a very high level under challenging circumstances, helping to ensure the participant and worker experience is a good one at Interchange Illawarra. Being a relatively small team, communication, collaboration and respect are essential and these are hallmarks of our culture. To Amanda, Michael, Emma, Tracey, Leanne M, Kylie, Brooke, Leanne D, Leonie, Ash, Kade, Cat, Sally, Jen, Rene, Ellie, Lui, Jess and Mel – I thank you for your continued hard work throughout the year.

Without our skilled, passionate and committed Support Workers there would be no Interchange. I will never tire of hearing daily reports of our Support Workers doing incredible things to support our participants achieve their goals, and a great quality of life.

Lastly, thank you needs to go to people with disabilities, their families and their carers for sharing their lives, and continuing to choose Interchange Illawarra as their preferred service provider.

The year ahead is shaping up to be one of regulatory change, something that providers in the NDIS world have grown strangely accustomed to. As has been the case in previous years Interchange will need to respond and adapt to industry wide changes with minimal or no preparation time, agility is one of our key strengths. I look forward to leading our talented and passionate team through the challenges that change will inevitably bring in the coming year.

Jake Pearson
CEO



Interchange Illawarra Life Members	
Name	Year
Jan May OAM	2014
Glenda Pearce	2017
Faye Sengstock	2023
Margaret Kennedy	2023
Dot Vassallo	2023

Workforce Team Report

This year we have had a focus on promoting a positive workplace culture through engagement with our workforce, as they are the backbone of our organisation, and the reason we can provide flexible person centered supports to people with disabilities.

We shouted staff drinks on a Friday afternoon, held successful morning teas for R U OK? Day and Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea and our annual Christmas Party. This was an opportunity for connection for our whole organisation.

Recruitment has been ongoing throughout the year based on the needs of our participants. We also worked to better utilise our existing workforce and provide them with their desired work/life balance.

Interchange Illawarra are committed to ensuring our workforce is highly skilled and provide ongoing opportunities for training throughout the year. We hold an annual paid training campaign as well as face to face training opportunities to learn about Enteral Nutrition and passive self-defence.

This year our incredible workforce has completed over 800 hours of both online and face to face training. Our Workforce has access to over 60 relevant courses, in house training, our orientation program and policy and procedures all in one place that can be accessed at any time they choose, via our etrainu training platform.

As an organisation we value the ongoing contributions that our dedicated workforce make and recognise those who have reached significant milestones in service. These individuals are celebrated at our annual Christmas party with a certificate and gift.

This year we celebrated:

- 5 years service for 23 staff members
- 10 years service for 7 staff members
- 15 years service for 4 staff members
- 20 years service for 1 staff member

Moving forward we have identified opportunities to strengthen collaboration, foster a culture that is positive and based on mutual respect, and enhance the relationships that drive our organisation forward as we move towards a phase of significant growth within the organisation.

It is our workforce, in all roles across our organisation, that contributes to the ongoing success of Interchange Illawarra. We look forward to another great year ahead.

Emma Robinson and Brooke Nigro
Workforce Team

Social Support



The 2023/2024 financial year saw the Interchange Illawarra Social Support program through a period of consolidation. After some major expansion and changes during the 2022/2023 financial year, it was a chance to concentrate on enhancing the quality of our participant's experience at groups. We also focused on offering group support to new participants and existing Interchange participants who had not previously engaged with our Social Support programs. There were a couple of new Support Worker faces supporting the groups but the Social Support team remained largely unchanged.

Adult participant attendance at groups was very strong again, with the Monday cooking group that was added last financial year now a permanent fixture of our Weekdays program. We continued to provide transport to Weekdays participants who

require it. This relatively recent addition to Social Support has bolstered the numbers at groups as well as provided a value-add for busy parents and carers.

During the year, the program structure for groups changed slightly in response to the changing trends we identified. Saturday Club South ceased to exist, as the majority of participants using the service turned 18 over the course of the 12 months. This cohort of participants now attend Social Support South on Saturdays, a social group for over 18's right next door at Pur Pur Avenue, Lake Illawarra. Given the change was relatively minor, the transition for these participants was a smooth one. The one remaining participant from the group, who was still under 18, now attends Saturday Club North.



The other change to group structure was removing our Thursday evening group from our Social Support weekdays program and combining it with our TGIF group to create a new program “Nightlife Social”. The combination of the groups with more flexible times around activities has seen a marked increase in interest and attendance at both the Thursday and Friday evening groups. As part of the Nightlife Social program we attend a Disco for people with a disability on the first Thursday of each month and offer our outdoor movie night (complete with firepit, barbeque and popcorn) once a month on Fridays during non-daylight savings time. Both are great activities that have fit in well around our other evening activities.

Whilst there was somewhat of a downturn in numbers attending our younger groups due to poorly funded NDIS plans for younger participants in the previous financial year, I am pleased to report that trend seemed to be changing towards the end of 2023/2024 financial year. The school holidays program for high school students with a disability and our Saturday Club program both had a surge in numbers in the last quarter. This was in part due to our usual marketing campaigns and enquiries coming through from events like the annual IDO expo, but was mostly thanks to word of mouth enquiries where our groups had been recommended by satisfied customers and families of the Social Support program. Hopefully the trend continues and we can continue to support younger participants to develop social skills, meet new people and form friendships with other participants in a fun, safe and supportive environment.



In 12 months, we offered 646 regularly scheduled group activity sessions across our Social Support program groups. Groups offered included Social Support Weekdays, Social Support Saturdays, Weekends Away (Short Term Accommodation), Saturday Club, Kiama Group, Social Support South, Nightlife Social and our school holiday program.

We provide support to participants across a number of age groups and service the three local LGAs of the Illawarra. The most popular activities this year were Laser Tag again for the younger groups and good old lunch at the pub for the adult groups. Jamberoo Action Park, whale watching cruises, Sydney Zoo and Luna Park proved very popular also.

As well as our regular group activities, we try to offer special events outside our normal operating hours where we can. Some of the cool special events we attended were Owlween at the Australian Wildlife Sanctuary, Disney on Ice, Alice in Wonderland, Grease the Musical, The Bubble Laboratory magic show in Sydney, iFly Penrith (indoor skydiving), The Enchanted Forrest and Rodeo for Life.

Our Social Support Dragons and Hawks fans supported their beloved local sports teams again and we had groups attend all Wollongong home games for both teams.

Our Weekends Away and Short Break programs offer short term accommodation (STA) to participants and respite to their carers. Participants can stay at our respite cottage in Evans Street, Wollongong, for the weekend with a group of their friends from the program. It gives the participants a chance to increase their independence, practice their daily living skills, spend time away from their primary carers and maintain their informal supports.



Between our Wollongong and Kemira Weekends Away, we held 60 weekends of Short Term Accommodation (STA) group support over the 2023/2024 financial year.

As expected, the Social Support Short Breaks were very popular again. The breaks provide respite to parents and carers, and are a chance for participants to travel with friends while still getting the support they need. Our Short Breaks included Hobart, The Sunshine Coast, Christmas in July (Southern Highlands) and a Morvern Valley Farm Stay. We even had a group enjoy a houseboat short break on the Hawkesbury River and two different trips to Sydney to enjoy world class musical theatre and many other attractions around the city. Thanks to our amazing Support Workers, everyone had a great time on these supported breaks and created memories with friends that will last a lifetime. We have four more breaks booked in for 2024 and are currently working on our 2025 Short Break schedule.



All in all, the 2023/2024 financial year was a successful one for Interchange's Social Support program. I would like to extend a massive thank you to all the participants, families and Support Workers involved in Interchange Illawarra's Social Support programs. We have some exciting plans in the works for the 2024/2025 financial year, and I am looking forward to seeing what the next 12 months will bring.

Michael Corby
Social Support Manager



Parent/Carer Health & Wellbeing

Interchange Illawarra has continued to offer Carer Health and Wellbeing activities for the parents and carers of registered Interchange participants. The organisation has a proud history of providing holistic support that benefits both the person with a disability and the members of their family and we know that research shows that the health, wellbeing and success of people with disabilities is directly related to the wellbeing of their carers, both from a physical and mental health perspective. Caring for a person with a disability can be exhausting, isolating and create significant social and financial disadvantage.

Health and wellbeing activities are designed to offer carers opportunities to connect with each other and we do this by organising and facilitating various programs, workshops and events free of charge to the carers of Interchange participants.

Our Support Planners have taken responsibility and worked together to arrange events throughout the year, giving carers not only the opportunity to enjoy activities with fellow carers, but also the chance to get to better know our planning staff. We ensured that any new member of the Administration Team attended a carer event soon after starting with Interchange Illawarra, so that they could meet some of our carers face to face. Each new member of the Administration Team has enjoyed meeting carers and getting a better idea of the carer role.

Over the past year, we have arranged a variety of events, held at different times, on different days and in different areas. We have attempted to cater to as many of our carers as possible, all of whom have different personalities, interests and time available to them. Organising our events by Expressions of Interest has enabled a number of new carers to join in the activities on offer.



Two small groups experienced a delicious High Tea at Sugar, Butter, Eggs in Woonona in August and September. As is tradition, we hosted lunch to celebrate Carers Week at Centro in October 2023. The end of year party was a huge hit with participants, carers and Interchange Illawarra staff enjoying a night out at the Bert Lillye Lounge at Kembla Grange Racecourse. In February, some brave carers stepped out of their comfort zones and had a Sauna and Ice Bath session in Wollongong. It was a chance to try something different, and all agreed that it was an interesting experience. A winery tour and lunch at Coolangatta was well attended, as always, there was a night out for male carers at Okami Japanese restaurant, and a lunch with a view at Panorama House finished off the year in fine style. Plans are underway for upcoming events.

Cuppa for Carers is an initiative that was started in 2023. It is a chance for carers to call in to either our Kenny Street or Pur Pur Avenue offices and have a cuppa, some morning tea and chat with other carers. A number of information sessions were held, including visits from NSW Trustee and Guardian, where information was shared to help carers consider options for future planning. We have gathered ideas from carers on topics for discussion at future morning teas, and will provide a mix of social mornings and information sessions in the coming year.



Kemira Respite House

The 2023/2024 financial year marked the eighth year of Interchange's partnership with Greenacres and IRT. As well as providing a raft of individual support to residents of Kemira, Interchange offer respite weekends in the state-of-the-art facilities that boast five beautiful individual bedrooms complete with ensuite bathrooms for each participant.

During the financial year Interchange Illawarra held a total of 24 Short Term Accommodation respite weekends at Kemira, with one weekend for male participants and one weekend for female participants occurring every month. The program focuses on participants practicing independent living skills and enjoying some time away from their primary carer. There is a real social and recreational emphasis on the Weekends Away, ensuring that it's an enjoyable experience that participants look forward to each month.

Josie's Club is a Social Support program that also occurs at Kemira. The fortnightly group is specifically for residents of Kemira who live with a disability. Residents work together collaboratively to create a timetable of activities including hosting dinners in the centre, enjoying events out in the community, as well as craft, cooking and games nights.

After another positive year of partnership at Kemira, the individual support and programs Interchange Illawarra offer continue to thrive and be well received. We look forward to the opportunity to continue our support of Interchange participants at Kemira in the year ahead.

Catherine Windle
Kemira Coordinator

MyTime Wollongong

The 'MyTime' project is funded by The Department of Social Services (DSS) and is provided in partnership with the Parenting Research Centre, Playgroup NSW, Interchange Illawarra, TAFE Illawarra and Big Fat Smile. This program is about assisting families who care for children 0-16 years to develop social networks, enjoy some time out and provide children who have additional needs and chronic illness an opportunity to socialise with other children, whilst sharing information that can make their caring role easier.

MyTime continued to be well attended with parents/carers enjoying the opportunity to have a two hour break to chat with others and learn about relevant information. This supported playgroup initiative is the only one of its kind Australia wide where TAFE Child Care students have a practical opportunity to work with, and better understand, children with disabilities in a social learning environment for the child and siblings.

The students are supported by their teacher and a staff member from Big Fat Smile, who ensure that the children are engaged and well supported. MyTime is good for carers, children and students.

At the end of June 2024, we were awarded the contract to run MyTime Wollongong for another 12 months. We are excited for the year ahead, supporting families as they start the adventure that caring can be.

Kylie White
MyTime Coordinator





Saturplay

During the past 12 months the Saturplay program has operated on a fortnightly basis providing focused support for a small group of participants. Consistent access to the ASPECT South Coast School at Corrimal has provided a 'home base' for the program familiar to the participants as well as access to a bus to support community participation activities.

Currently there is capacity to support more participants, however small participant numbers allow staff to provide intensive focused support for participants to meet their individual goals as well as continuing to encourage positive social interactions to develop social skills. In addition, high levels of experienced support staff assist participants with greater opportunities to make personal choices about the activities they engage in.

The strength of the Saturplay program continues to be the quality, professionalism and commitment of the staff. Working with a positive mindset and commitment to person centred, strengths based individualised support. Staff are motivated by the success of the participants meeting personal goals and achieving success and remain committed to supporting the program.

Leanne Micallef
Program Coordinator



Thank you

Interchange Illawarra is proud to be a registered disability service provider.

To us, supporting people goes beyond physical wellbeing to include nurturing friendships, discovering new talents and abilities. We are dedicated to offering services, programs and events that are engaging, relevant and enjoyable.

We sincerely thank participants, and their families and carers, for continuing to choose Interchange Illawarra as their preferred service provider.





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