



Annual Report 2024





With the deepest respect, we acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of this land – Australia. The Garigal people of Guringai Country are the traditional custodians of Warriewood on Sydney's Northern Beaches where our centre is based. We acknowledge and pay our respects to elders past, present, and emerging, recognising their strength and resilience in thriving as sovereign owners of this land.

At Be Centre, we strongly advocate for equality for all. We embrace diversity and condemn any kind of discrimination, whether based on race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.



Contents

Who We Are	1
Message from our Founder & Chair	3
Message from our CEO	5
Key Statistics	7
Be Centre's Theory of Change	9
Our Programs	10
Our Outcomes	11
A Parent's Story	13
A Child's Story	14
Financial Highlights	15
Financial Details	16
Our Be Centre Team	17
Our Supporters	18
Together We Can Help	19

Who We Are

Be Centre provides specialised therapeutic services to children aged 3-12 facing trauma and mental health challenges.

Our mission is to ensure every child gets the support they need to thrive, regardless of their circumstances. We use play therapy as a powerful, evidence-based tool for healing - helping children express themselves, process difficult experiences and build resilience. Be Centre is a safe, unjudgmental place where children can just “be”.

Our mission

To be the leading provider of play therapy and help children heal through rewiring physical and emotional patterns created by trauma.

Our vision

To create a safer, more resilient society through ensuring the future of all children.

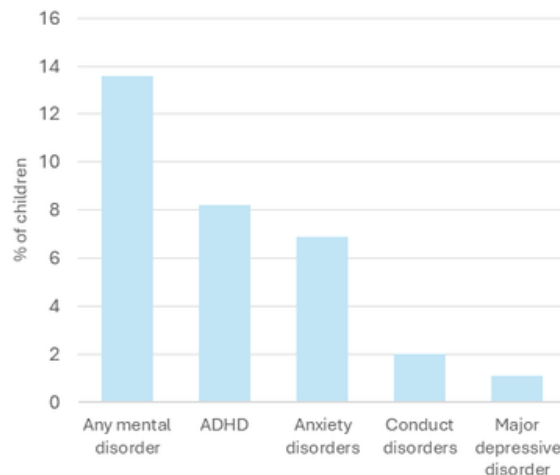


WHAT THEY STRUGGEE TO SAY
WE HELP THROUGH PLAY

The status quo in Australia

Prevalence of child mental illness

- Almost **14%** of children aged 4–11 experience a mental health disorder
- Suicide is the leading cause of child death
- For children aged 5–14, **3 of the 5 leading causes** of the total burden of disease were mental disorders
- **50%** of adult mental illness begins before 14 years of age
- Of the children who are mentally unwell:
 - 20% had moderate disorders
 - 8.2% had **severe disorders**
- Mental disorders were significantly more common among children living in families with **poor family functioning** (34%)



Access to support

- Just **51%** of children with mental disorders received professional help within the past year
 - More alarmingly, **7% only had one session**
 - Children's mental health **overlooked and underfunded** when compared to that of teenagers.
- Of children with mental illness, only 46% of those aged 4–11 years accessed support, whereas 61% of young people aged 12–17 years did





Message from our Founder & Chair

Be Centre's vision is "*Resilient children reaching their full potential and creating a brighter future for themselves, their family and their communities.*"

As I reflect on 2024, I am filled with both pride in what we have achieved and a renewed determination to overcome the challenges ahead.

I often get asked why I chose to found Be Centre in 2008. Working in the philanthropic world for the past 25 years, I have found most people engaged in this type of work have a personal connection to the cause they support.

Be Centre is deeply personal for me. My passion for play therapy began with my own life experience as a parent, when my son struggled with challenges that words alone couldn't address. Play Therapy became a lifeline, it gave him a voice. It helped him to process his emotions, allowed him to discover aspects of himself and it made an extraordinary difference to our family life, this helped us to understand why he was struggling.

This personal journey inspired me to establish Be Centre - a place where children are not only supported but cherished, where healing is gentle, and every child, regardless of their circumstances, has the chance to heal and thrive.



My vision has always been to make this transformative therapy accessible to all children, and thanks to the incredible support of our community we're making that vision a reality.

To our supporters, funders, and volunteers: thank you. Your unwavering generosity and belief in our mission ensures we can continue to provide life-changing therapy to children who need it the most. You are the reason we can open our doors to families in crises and offer them a brighter future.

I would like to recognise the work of the Be Centre Board, who donate their time, to our ambassadors, Tania Taylor CEO, the clinical team, fundraising, parent support and administration, all of whom work together to support our children and their families.

Together, we are changing lives - one child, one family, one session at time. With your ongoing support, we will continue to ensure that every child who comes to Be Centre finds healing, resilience and an opportunity for a better tomorrow.

Thank you all for being an essential part of the Be Centre family.



Deborah Killelea AM
Founder and Chair



Message from our CEO

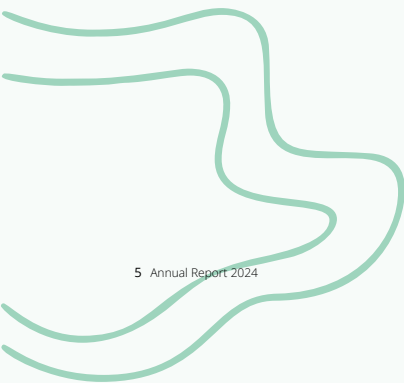
2024 has been a year of significant growth, innovation, and impact for Be Centre.

At the heart of everything we do remains our unwavering focus on healing as many children as possible, providing them with the support they need to overcome trauma and thrive.

This commitment has inspired the development of innovative group programs like Good Planet Studio, addressing climate anxiety and helping children process emotions related to extreme weather events, and Seasons for Growth, which centres on loss and grief. We are also incredibly

proud to have implemented the Teachers Optimal Relationship Approach (TORA, developed by Dr. Kate Renshaw) in a local school, marking the first rollout of this groundbreaking program in New South Wales. These programs not only reflect our dedication to children's mental health but also position Be Centre as a leader in innovation.

Our pursuit of evidence-based practice led us to begin a three-year study with Deakin University to investigate the efficacy of tele-play therapy, reinforcing our commitment to advancing the field. Through partnerships with organisations like Royal Far West, we're extending our reach to rural and remote areas, ensuring that vital services are accessible to children who need them most. Thanks to these efforts, our impact has grown significantly, supported by our team of 10 highly qualified clinicians.





On the fundraising front, we've achieved remarkable milestones, securing much-needed multi-year funding and fostering strong partnerships within the corporate sector and our local community. A key highlight of the year was the launch of our *Founder's Circle*, a giving circle that empowers its members to enhance Be Centre's fundraising capacity through donations, networking, and advocacy.

I am immensely proud to have been part of the Be Centre team this year. Together, we've made tremendous strides in scaling our impact, leading innovation in the sector, and strengthening our sustainability. To our funders, supporters, volunteers, and staff—thank you for your unwavering dedication and generosity. Your support enables us to continue our mission to help children heal and build brighter futures.

Here's to a 2025 filled with even greater opportunities to change children's lives and help them thrive.



Tania Taylor
CEO

Key Statistics



240

Children attended individual or group therapy sessions

2298

Individual therapy sessions across Play, Art, and Drama Therapy - a **51% increase YoY**

7.5 years

is the average age of the children we see

21

is the average
number of sessions
a child attends

327

Referrals from schools
and health professionals

51%

Increase in clinical
capacity to serve more
children and families

204

Group therapy
sessions in total at **no**
cost to families

4 point

reduction in Total
Difficulties Scores on
average - a significant
improvement

1 in 3

children and families
on **full** scholarships

270

Parental support
sessions delivered to
57 parents

1475

hours contributed by our
39 volunteers at the
centre and our events

34%

increase in Be Centre's
annual operating income

Be Centre’s Theory of Change

Be Centre’s mission is propelled by our Theory of Change, which outlines the issue, our response and the expected outcomes. The below Theory of Change is produced independently by Social Ventures Australia, a social impact consulting organisation, in 2022.

Impact			
Children are able to make sense of and come to terms with their earlier life experiences, growing into future adults who are resilient, thriving, and capable of reaching their full potential. Family members are better able to connect with each other, building stronger, more cohesive and supportive family units.			
Issue	Strategic Response	Activities	Priority Outcomes
Children may have a range of challenging experiences in their early lives that they're not able to make sense of. Traditional psychological interventions don't always allow children to fully engage with the experiences and resulting emotions as they rely on a cognitive level that many children haven't yet developed. There is also a tendency in the system towards using cognitive-behavioural therapy and medication for these children, an approach that's not always necessary or appropriate. The impact of these challenges can often be felt by the whole family and even the broader community.	In contrast to traditional cognitive-behavioural therapy, Be Centre relies on giving children a voice through the natural language of play. Addressing childhood trauma through early intervention, prevents it from compounding throughout their youth	• Deliver play therapy programs for children • Deliver ancillary programs for children and parents • Advocate for change Contribute to evidence-based research • Work with partners to enhance each other's initiatives	Children • More able to make sense of their past and present experiences • More able to express themselves • Experience greater self-awareness of personal strengths and difficulties • More able to self-regulate • More able to build positive family relationships and develop secure attachment • Experience better overall mental health and wellbeing Parents/Carers • Feel more supported • Have an improved appreciation of the important role they play in their children's wellbeing • Experience more positive interactions with their children, building secure attachments





Our Programs

- ① **Play, Art and Drama therapy**
 - 1:1 counselling
- ② **Parent Support**
 - individual or family support
- ③ **Teachers Optimal Relationship Approach**
 - created by Dr Kate Renshaw, the Teachers Optimal Relationship Approach (TORA) is a framework designed to help educators build strong, positive relationships with students to enhance learning and emotional well-being
- ④ **Good Planet Studio**
 - a group art therapy program aimed at addressing climate anxiety for children impacted by severe weather events
- ⑤ **Seasons for Growth**
 - helping children process grief and loss
- ⑥ **Tele-play therapy**
 - reaching children in rural and remote areas
- ⑦ **Art Club**
 - group sessions designed to help transition children out of therapy

Our Impact

At Be Centre, being able to measure, quantify, and track the positive impact we make for the children and their families is paramount. To this end, we ask parents/carers to fill out the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)* at various stages of their child’s therapy program as well as a supplemental *parental survey* post-intervention.

SDQ Improvement

The SDQ is the most recognised tool globally for assessing the mental health of 2-18 year olds. It assesses 5 aspects of a person - emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship issues, and prosocial behaviour. The first four categories combine to form the *Total Difficulties Score*.

Threshold levels for the Total Difficulties Scores are provided on the table on the lower right. 80% of 2-18 y/o’s will score 0-13, with “average” levels of difficulties; 10% will score 14-16, “slightly raised”; 5% will score 17-19, “high”; 5% will score 20+, “very high”.

In 2024, we recorded an average shift of **4 points** on the SDQ before and after therapy among our clients. This is an **impressive improvement** considering the **narrow 3-point ranges** of slightly raised and high levels of difficulty. For instance, a child coming in with a Total Difficulty Score of 17, which places them in the 90th percentile, can expect a score of 13 at the end of treatment - returning them to what is considered average and in line with 80% of children.



Average (80% of pop.)	Slightly raised (10%)	High (5%)	Very high (5%)
0-13	14-16	17-19	20-40

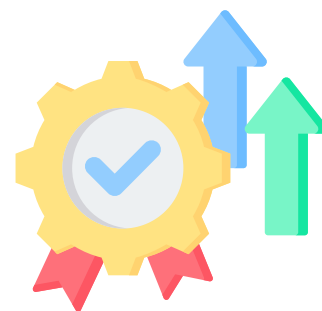
*For References, see p19



Parental surveys

Our parents have also observed first-hand the improvements in their child's and the whole family unit's wellbeing. Survey results show:

- 92% agreed therapy at Be Centre improved their child's overall wellbeing
- 92% agreed therapy helped their child better express their emotions
- 88% agreed therapy enhanced their child's self-awareness
- 83% reported stronger, more positive family relationships



A Child's Story

Ava is a 10-year-old girl who's lived with the trauma of domestic violence for three years. After her mother finally left her abusive father, their lives were thrown into chaos - couch surfing and sometimes sleeping in their car.

School became unbearable for Ava; she didn't have the words to tell her friends about her situation and could no longer invite them over for playdates.

Despite her father's temper issues and violence, Ava still loves and misses him. This conflicting mix of emotions left her feeling confused and helpless. She didn't want to add to her mum's stress, so she stayed silent and bottled up her fears and sadness.

For Ava, Play Therapy at Be Centre became a lifeline. Here, she found a safe space to express her feelings and start to heal. The sessions helped her understand her emotions, cope with her trauma, and rebuild her confidence.



Age: 10
No. of sessions: 21

A Parent's Story

Linda's days blurred together, each one an exhausting challenge. Her severely autistic son is non-verbal and often expresses himself through uncontrollable outbursts. Linda devoted every ounce of her energy to his care, but that left no room for herself. Isolation consumed her as she watched other mothers at the park, their children laughing and playing—a vivid reminder of what she and her son were missing.

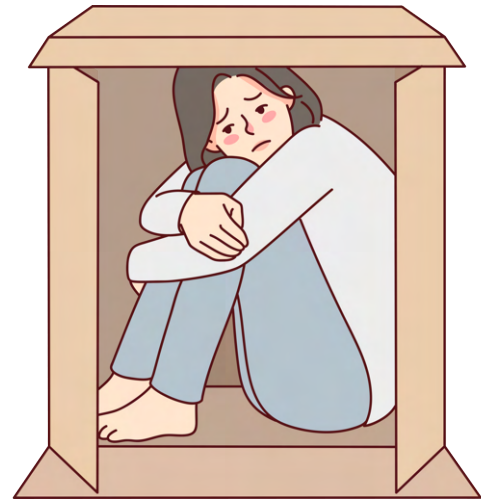
Her husband, often away for work, supported them financially, but the emotional load was solely hers to bear. She started to wonder if she was failing James as a mother and if she had somehow caused her son's condition. She was consumed by guilt.

On the most difficult days, Linda longed for a quick fix—something, anything, to bring peace to their lives. Then she discovered Play Therapy. Skeptical, but desperate, she decided to give it a try.

The transformation wasn't instant, but it was life-changing. Therapy didn't just help her son—it helped Linda, too. Through attending parental counselling, she began to process her emotions, understand her son's unique needs, and find ways to cope with the realities of parenting a neurodiverse child. For the first time, she felt seen, supported and no longer isolated in her struggles.

Her son began to regulate his emotions. Although he still couldn't speak, he found new ways to communicate that didn't involve frustration or tears. Linda's relationship with her son deepened as she learned to connect with him on his terms. Their bond grew stronger, creating a foundation that would last a lifetime. The weight of their challenges hadn't disappeared, but it no longer felt crushing. She felt hopeful, not just for her son, but for their whole family.

At Be Centre, this is what we do. We walk alongside families like Linda's, helping them heal, connect, and thrive—changing the trajectory of their lives forever.



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Financial Highlights



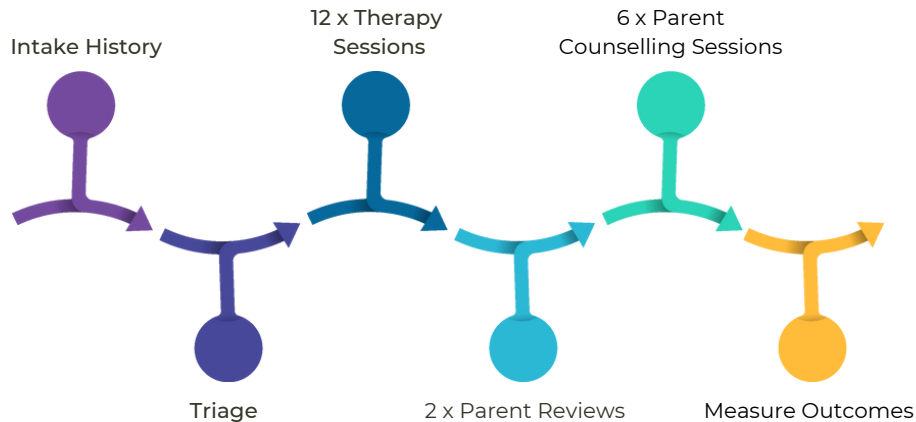
74% of funds spent directly on programs

Total Expenditure = \$898,000 / Fundraising Revenue = \$1,219,000



\$3.79 raised for every \$1 spent on fundraising

Total Fundraising Revenue = \$1,219,000 / Fundraising Expenses = \$322,000



22 INTERACTIONS PER 'HEAR ME PLAY' PROGRAM

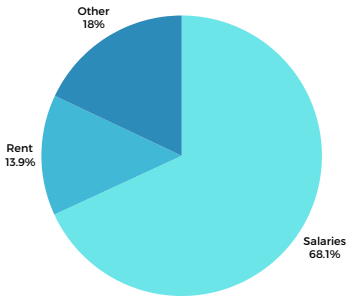
Each scholarship costs \$2,600

Every dollar works harder, so more children can receive life-changing Play Therapy. Thank you for making this possible!

Financial Details

Income

	FY 23	FY 24	FY 24 %
Donations	645,800	693,100	44.3
Grants	241,000	384,400	24.6
Events	208,800	141,800	9.1
Fee for service Therapy	156,000	277,300	17.7
Other	56,600	66,700	4.3
Total	1,308,200	1,563,300	-



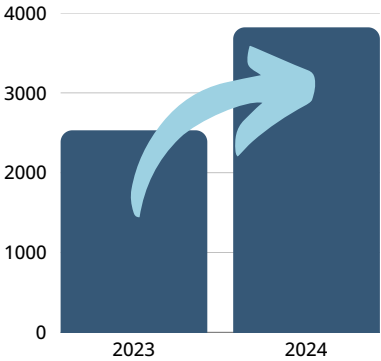
Basic cost breakdown

Expenses

	FY 23	FY 24	FY 24 %
Therapists/Support Staff	757,400	1,001,600	66.2
Rent & Outgoings	209,500	210,400	13.9
Office/Playroom Supplies	130,200	138,200	9.1
Fundraising Events	98,200	55,000	3.6
Marketing	6,200	6,400	0.4
Clinical Supervision & Training	8,800	28,500	1.9
Research & Project Work	-	24,700	1.6
Other (VC Share services)	44,000	47,600	3.1
Total	1,254,300	1,512,400	-

Net change in position: +50,900

Focused investment to meet demand saw a **51%** increase in session capacity



Our Board



Deborah Killelea AM
Founder & Chair



Chris Wilcox
Board Member



Graham Mott
Board Member



Mark Lollback
Board Member



Prof Roberta Ryan
Board Member



Joanna Samios
Company Secretary

Leadership Team

- Tania Taylor - CEO
- Penny Bird - Clinical Manager
- Christina Rooney - Fundraising & Marketing Lead

Ambassadors

- Jimmy Wong - Masterchef Contestant Seasons 8 & 17
- Nici Andronicus - Former Triathlon World Champion
- Tom Carroll - Former Surfing World Champion





Our Generous Supporters

A heartfelt thank you to the many individuals, families, companies, organisations, and foundations that have contributed to Be Centre. Your support, whether in monetary donations or other invaluable means, whether large or small, goes directly towards healing as many children and families as possible.

Major donors & supporters

in alphabetical order

Dee Why RSL
Fraser & Sylvia MacKenzie
Johnson Winter Slattery (JWS) Law firm
Mark East & Margaret Hartmann
Mark Lochtenberg & Helen Hunt
Michael & Melinda Moraza
Patrick Teodorowski & Vivien Santos
Profield Foundation
Rodney & Judith Oneil Foundation
St George Foundation
Sydney North Health Network
The Bayard Foundation
Vernon Foundation



*Donations or grants over \$10,000

Together we can help more children

Your support, big or small, makes a world of a difference to children and families in need. Your contribution helps us stop cycles of harm through early intervention, changing the trajectory of a child's life forever.



Ways you can help:

[Partner with us](#)

[Volunteer with us](#)

[Join our events](#)

[Spread the word](#)

[Donate](#)

Visit: www.becentre.org.au/donations/ or scan the QR code below:



To get involved, send an email to info@becentre.org.au

Identifying details of children and parents/carers mentioned in this report have been changed to protect their privacy.

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www.becentre.org.au
E: info@becentre.org.au P: 02 9913 7000

Be Centre Foundation Ltd is a registered charity



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