



**The
VENNY**

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

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PO Box 1140, Kensington 3031

VISION, MISSION AND MODEL

VISION

That all children have the freedom to play.

MISSION

Breaking the cycle of disadvantage by supporting children to be their best through play, education, guidance and early intervention.

MODEL



Hands of Support

We support children and families. We help fill gaps in systems when they appear. We connect with community, schools, support agencies, families to provide a wrap-around support network. This can include practical assistance such as food, education supplies, uniforms, clothes and support to access cultural experiences like music, dance and sport.



Heart of play work

Play work is at the heart of what we do. We have been providing risk-taking play opportunities to children and young people for over 40 years. Our practice is based on Playwork principles and has been developed over the past 40 years. Our staff are play workers and we use play in our daily practice.



Home for children

We are the backyard of public housing. We provide the rhythms and rituals of a home. We are a place to gather and witness each other's lives. We are a green space with animals and provide children with the opportunity to play, connect and learn. Our playgrounds have been built with and by the community. Play sessions are free and all are welcome.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY, written by the kids of The Venny

We are on the traditional land of the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Eastern Kulan Nation, the traditional custodians of The Venny land. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging, and any community elders who are with us today.

We get to play and tell stories on this land. We, The Venny kids, and the community, want to pay our respects to all Aboriginal children. This is your land that we share together, and we acknowledge your continuing relationship to this land and its waterways. We are learning to care for this land, care for its people, and care for ourselves.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The mission of The Venny to provide risk-taking play continues to be critical to the communities we serve in the inner north of Melbourne. The Play Australia position statement in June reinforced that 'risky play is an inherent and critical component of children's lives'. The Venny's work continues to be recognized in the media with an ABC series, 'The Role of a Lifetime' filmed at the Venny showing that 'play is as important as sleep' in a child's development.

This has been a transformational year, and one that sets us up for a sustainable and successful future. In early 2025 we appointed our new CEO, Carolyn Webster, who is doing an outstanding job leading the Venny through a period of growth and change. Amongst their many achievements, Carolyn and the team have:

- Continued to deliver excellent service at The Venny, Cubbies and the Venny to You.
- Commenced additional programs at Cubbies generously supported by The Baker Foundation.
- Concluded the collaboration with Polyglot with a public screening of *Us. Here. Now.*
- Developed a new three-year strategic plan.
- Renewed our contract with City of Melbourne for a further two years.

On top of this we have continued refreshing the board with two new members joining us – George Tansley (Treasurer) and Megan Davison.

On behalf of the Board I would again like to sincerely thank those who work for The Venny – Carolyn, Danielle von der Borch, the Playworkers and our volunteers. The Play Team has continued to deliver our quality services in Kensington, Fitzroy, Flemington and North Melbourne.



As always, we thank our supporters, donors and funders, particularly:

- The City of Melbourne who continue their long running support of The Venny through funding and access to the Kensington site;
- City of Yarra who support our delivery of services at Cubbies in Fitzroy;
- The supporters of The Venny To You - Bank of Melbourne Foundation and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.
- Our philanthropic supporters including The Baker Foundation, Bupa Foundation, Shine On and the Scalzo Food Group.
- The many individual and business contributors to The Venny through donations of time, food and money.

Finally, I would also like to personally thank my fellow volunteer board members Lauren, George, Megan and Zak.

This will be my last AGM as President of The Venny. We are currently seeking an experienced NFP director as my replacement. The past six years has been an enriching experience and I have enjoyed every moment working with this amazing organization. I look forward to continuing to support The Venny in another capacity in the future.

Owen Quake

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

I joined The Venny in March 2025, though my connection to this amazing organization goes back many years; first as a parent, then through a partnering organization, and more recently as The Venny's grant writer, amongst other roles. Stepping into the CEO role has felt like coming home, albeit challenging.

One of the things that struck me immediately when I started this role is how solution-focused and resilient the organisation is. The same qualities we aim to nurture in children and young people - confidence, adaptability, and strength - are embodied every day by our staff and leadership team.

Having witnessed The Venny's work from so many angles, I can attest firsthand to the incredible reputation and deep trust that the community holds for The Venny. It is trust that has been built over many years through genuine engagement and care by The Venny's people (staff, board and volunteers). Their commitment and unwavering belief in what we do is heart warming.

My goal as CEO is to support and strengthen all the brilliant play work and community engagement that happens daily with strong business acumen. My aim is to ensure The Venny is not only thriving today but positioned for future long-term sustainability.

We have a new three-year strategic plan, supported by a detailed annual business plan and financial budget to support long-term sustainability. We also have fundraising and social media strategies designed to engage the community, highlight our good work and increase our ability to generate our own income.



The past 12 months has seen us consolidate and cement our reputation in the Cubbies and Fitzroy community. We now sit on the leadership team of the Connecting Fitzroy Network, a network of 130+ members. As we head into the third and final year of our Cubbies contract we are well placed to retain the contract.

Taking on the management of Cubbies has been a significant milestone and, understandably, has placed extra pressure on our leadership team. Their hard work, resilience, and dedication has been outstanding. Whilst it's been a whole a team effort, it would be remiss of me not acknowledge the huge contribution made by Danni von der Borch and Lloyd Greenland.

Whilst Cubbies has been a large focus over the past two years, we have continued to tirelessly meet the needs of the communities in Kensington, Flemington and North Melbourne.



Although before my time, a few highlights at The Venny in Kensington have been the *Us. Here. Now.* collaboration with Polyglot Theatre, the Family Feast delivered in partnership with the Kensington Neighbourhood House and the Altona Beach excursion. Whatever the event or activity, The Venny always draws a crowd.

The same can be said of The Venny To You (TV2U). Average weekly attendance across Flemington and North Melbourne from January to June was 60 children. Importantly TV2U continued to provide a safe place for children to play whilst their home and environment was undergoing major change with the redevelopment of both public housing estates.

I'd like to thank the Board for placing their trust in me, the staff and volunteers for their hard work and dedication and the community for providing the inspiration and motivation every day.

Carolyn Webster



DIRECTOR OF PLAY & PROGRAMS REPORT

In recent years, we've witnessed a remarkable shift in how Australia understands the importance of play. After decades of quiet advocacy, play and playwork are finally having their moment in the sun — and The Venny is proud to be at the forefront of this movement. Across Melbourne and Victoria, The Venny has found itself increasingly recognised as a leader in play, playwork, and risky play provision, as well as a trusted voice in child safety.

Nationally, Play Australia, the peak body for play advocacy, continues to advance this agenda through research, training, and sector-wide leadership. Locally, both the Cities of Melbourne and Yarra provide ongoing investment in supervised adventure playgrounds. Together, these forces are shaping a renewed understanding of how children grow, learn, and thrive through play.

Across Australia, parents and carers are starting to question the effects of constant screen time, smartphone access, and social media on their children's wellbeing. Many are noticing the toll these digital experiences take on mental health and are actively seeking opportunities for their children to reconnect with nature, friendship, and freedom.

At The Venny's *Kensington and Yarra 'Cubbies' Parent and Carer Consultation* in July 2024 and February 2025, these themes emerged strongly. Parents spoke openly about the challenge of balancing their protective instincts with their desire to let children explore. Many shared feelings of fear, judgment, and uncertainty about how to support their children's natural need for risk and adventure. The Venny plays an important role in helping families navigate this balance. Our team works alongside parents and carers, offering reassurance and encouragement for "stepping



back" and allowing children to take appropriate risks. Key to this is gaining the trust of the adult carers and parents and we see education as a key part of our work on modelling how to support risky play safely and confidently.

As Play Australia's 2025 *Children Thriving with Risky Play* position statement reminds us: "Risky play is not unsafe play; it may involve some risk of injury but does not involve hazards that cause injuries."

International research is reinforcing what playworkers have known for years. In *The Anxious Generation* (2024), social psychologist Jonathan Haidt highlights the period between 2010 and 2015, when smartphones became common among children, as a turning point. His work demonstrates that face-to-face connection declined sharply, and with it, children's mental health and independence. Haidt argues that children are healthiest when they experience a "play-based childhood in the real world". Fearful parenting and excessive digital engagement, he warns, can deprive children of the very challenges and freedoms that build resilience.

At The Venny, this philosophy underpins everything we do. We provide time, space, and



permission for children to play freely and on their own terms. Through play, local children learn to manage emotions, regulate stress, and build confidence. They are wired for challenge, curiosity, and creativity and we provide the environment that allows these instincts to flourish.

For decades, The Venny has been an advocate for understanding the essential relationship between play and risk. As Play Australia notes in its State of Play report (2025): “Risky play is not a category of play but rather an element of the play experience.”

When safety measures become overly restrictive, they can unintentionally harm children’s development. Haidt calls this “safetyism”, the belief that children must be protected from all risk. In reality, exposure to manageable risks helps children build coping skills and resilience, ultimately reducing anxiety.

As Play Australia’s 2025 statement explains, “Risky play provides a context in which children practice their responses to uncertainty and unpredictability. In doing so, they develop coping skills and resilience which, over time, may reduce the risk of childhood anxiety”.

David Kutcher, The Venny’s Honorary Principal, puts it simply, “Safetyism is harmful because it makes it harder for children to learn to care for themselves and to deal with risk, conflict and frustration. Children require exposure to setbacks, failures, shocks and stumbles in order to develop strength and self-reliance. Risky play might involve some minor scratches, bumps, tears and bruises but that is not something we should be overly concerned about.”

Or, as Jonathan Haidt reminds us, “All children are by nature antifragile. They are durable, not fragile.”

At The Venny, risky play is not a novelty, it’s a daily experience. Risky play is any thrilling or exciting form of play that gives children opportunities to challenge themselves, and this may involve a risk of physical injury. Which let us remind ourselves does not mean an injury will happen. Children are encouraged to climb, balance, build, explore, and take age-appropriate risks. The six core elements of risky play; great heights, rapid speeds, dangerous tools, dangerous elements, rough and tumble, disappearing and ‘getting lost’ form what we call a full play diet, the foundation for healthy, confident, and capable young people.

Through our continued advocacy, research partnerships, and community engagement, The Venny will keep leading the way, ensuring that every child has access to the freedom, challenge, and joy of real play.

Danielle von der Borch



ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

Us. Here. Now.

Us. Here. Now. was a two-year participatory arts project between The Venny, Polyglot Theatre, and the children and young people of The Venny.

Co-created by the children, the project celebrated individuality, inclusion, and community through storytelling, art, song, and film. Children of all abilities and ages (5–18) contributed through performance, costume design, filming and interviewing each other about what makes the world a good place.

The outdoor performance featured music, light, shared food, and joy-filled moments of dancing and connection. Daily reflections between artists and playworkers deepened the creative process.

In October 2024, families gathered at Federation Square for a public screening of the *Us. Here. Now.* film, capturing the spirit of play, empowerment, and belonging. Watching themselves on the big screen gave children and parents a powerful sense of pride and visibility, highlighting The Venny's ongoing commitment to creativity, inclusion, and community celebration.



Playworker Training with the World's Best Practitioners

Investing in The Venny staff's professional development has been a key priority, ensuring best practice in playwork and quality risky play. Staff are trained to understand and advocate for children's play, support adventurous and rough-and-tumble play through dynamic risk-benefit assessment, and know how to sustain the play cycle through appropriate interventions.

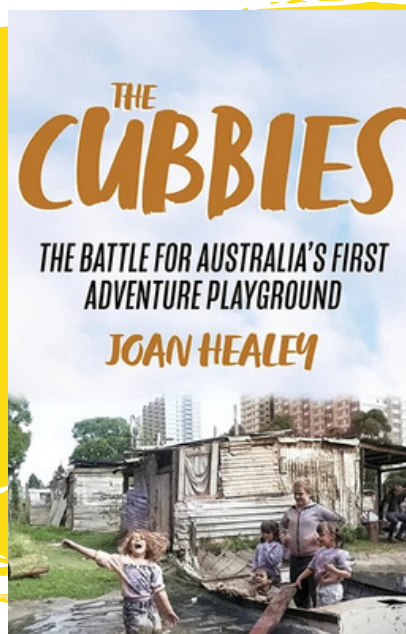
For the first time in Australia, we accessed face-to-face playworker training with Play Wales, globally recognised leaders in the field, delivered in partnership with Play Australia to ensure local relevance. In July 2024, five Venny staff completed the Foundation Playwork Practitioner Training, and in May 2025, four completed Senior Practitioner Training, with another three undertaking the Foundation module. Held in Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, and the NT, the training united diverse practitioners, with Melbourne sessions proudly hosted at The Venny in Kensington and Cubbies.

The Role of a Lifetime

In March 2025, The Venny proudly featured in ABC's *The Role of a Lifetime* with Nazeem Hussain, Kate Ritchie and Amanda Keller. The episode focused on risky play and how The Venny has long supported children to explore, take chances and build resilience through play.

Nazeem visited The Venny and spoke with Honorary Principal, David Kutcher, who highlighted the importance of letting kids test their limits in a safe, supportive environment.

Finnish Education Expert Professor Pasi Sahlberg, from the University of Melbourne, also joined the discussion, reminding parents that play is as essential as sleep. He noted that Australian children are playing less than ever, contributing to rising mental health issues. His message to families was simple: take time each day to get outside, play together and nurture your children's joy and confidence.



The Cubbies Book Launch

The Venny was thrilled to celebrate the launch of *The Cubbies – The Battle for Australia's First Adventure Playground*, written by Cubbies founder Joan Healey. The sold-out event brought together councillors, community members, and long-time supporters to honour the legacy of adventure play.

The Venny's Honorary Principal, David Kutcher, officially launched the book, highlighting our shared commitment to creating safe, adventurous spaces where children can take risks, explore, and grow. The evening was filled with warmth, memories, and renewed energy for playwork and child-led learning. Guests left inspired by the reminder that free play is vital to children's wellbeing. Many have since expressed interest in revisiting the 1979 film *The Cubbies*, which captures the playground's beginnings.

In a wonderful gesture, Joan Healey has chosen to donate book royalties to The Venny to continue supporting play, creativity, and community connection at Cubbies.

THE VENNY @ KENSINGTON

Every **Drop-in Play Session** at The Venny is an adventure of discovery, creativity, and challenges. Children climb, swing on ropes, ride bikes, and jump on trampolines, testing their limits while learning balance, coordination, and spatial awareness.

Children experiment with fire, water, earth, and air by pretending to be blacksmiths, making mud pies, washing guinea pigs, and feeling the wind rush past on fast bikes. Indoors, they mix paints, slime, and food concoctions, cook cakes and pizzas, and explore tools and wood. Children are busy building and deconstructing as they problem-solve and negotiate with peers.

Messy play, animal play, tactile experimentation, and physical challenges allow children to explore uncertainty, develop confidence, and strengthen their senses. Games, cooperative projects, and shared tasks foster social skills, creativity, and decision-making. In this rich environment, children take ownership of their learning, navigate risk safely, and experience joy, resilience, and a profound sense of belonging. They grow through play that is both daring and meaningful.

This year saw the establishment of **The Girls+ Advisory Group**. The group met for 12 sessions, each lasting two to three hours. The

aim was to provide young women with a platform to actively influence The Venny's strategic direction. Focused on democracy, advocacy, and civic participation, the sessions nurtured leadership, encouraged decision-making, and strengthened participants' confidence in shaping their own lives.

Therapeutic principles guided each session, supporting participants to explore the Rights of the Child, including the right to freely express thoughts (Article 13) and the right to play and cultural participation (Article 31). Participants reviewed The Venny's Child Safe Statement of Commitment, and contributed feedback on safety measures. Art-based reflection, including drawing, sculpting, and collaborative creation, allowed participants to express feelings and insights meaningfully, fostering understanding and connection within the group.

This year, the **Girls Group+** program flourished, with around 30 girls attending each session. The program provides a creative and supportive space where participants engage in activities that foster teamwork, confidence, and self-expression. Collaborative projects and shared personal stories encourage empathy, active listening, and conflict-resolution skills, while exposing girls to diverse perspectives that promote self-discovery and personal growth.



Shared meals deepen friendships, provide emotional support, and create a sense of routine and community. The program strengthens social bonds and nurtures resilience against challenges at home and school.

The **Boys Group+** program run in partnership with Drummond Street Youth Services provides a supportive space for young boys to connect, build friendships, and develop life skills through sports, arts, crafts, and team-building activities. The program encourages self-expression, communication, and social growth in a safe, structured setting.

Boys explored non-traditional interests like baking and sewing. In the face of teasing from peers, staff reinforce these as valuable life skills, and challenging gender stereotypes. This approach nurtures inclusion, diversity, and empathy, helping all participants broaden their understanding of human expression, embrace different interests, and grow socially and emotionally in a respectful, supportive community.

Safety, skill-building, and community connection remain central to our work. Between October 2024 and January 2025, The Venny partnered with YMCA and Lifesaving Victoria to deliver a **Water Safety Program** at Melbourne City Baths, targeting children from migrant, refugee, and culturally diverse backgrounds.

In January, 86 children and 30 parents/carers participated in beach-based activities at Altona Beach, combining structured water safety instruction with free play. This program strengthened peer and family connections, encouraged environmental curiosity, and nurtured both competence and confidence in aquatic environments.



Community engagement is further exemplified by the **Kensington Family Fest** in November 2024, hosted in partnership with Kensington Neighbourhood House. The event offered cultural workshops, performances, food, and inclusive play activities, framed by a Welcome to Country by Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Bill Nicholson. Activities included African drumming, henna painting, Ethiopian coffee ceremonies, and traditional games, fostering cross-cultural understanding, celebration, and intergenerational engagement.

Over the past year we have seen schools reconnect with The Venny, allowing new children and families to access excursions, evening programs, and school-linked activities disrupted by COVID-19.

Across every initiative, The Venny ensures that children, young people, and families are active contributors to program design and delivery. From advisory groups to creative performances, water safety programs, cultural festivals, and enriched play spaces, the organization fosters confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging. The transformative impact of The Venny extends far beyond individual participants, enriching the wider community and nurturing connections that endure across generations.

THE VENNY @ CUBBIES

The Venny's second year at Cubbies was important in building community connection, trust, and belonging. When we took over the operation and management of Cubbies in late 2023, the objective was clear: to restore the heart of a place that had once been a thriving hub of play, creativity, and togetherness.

Our **Drop-in Play Sessions** were working well. They provided children and young people with the space, freedom and permission to direct their own play. Attendance was exceeding all expectations. The next step was to create strong connections with families and community to build trust and respect.

In August 2024 we introduced the **Family Dinner Night** program. For six consecutive Fridays, Cubbies opened its gates for extended play sessions followed by hearty, home-cooked meals shared by families, staff, and volunteers, all free of charge. The first night was a joyful surprise. 131 children and 32 adults filled the playground, sharing BBQ sausages, salads, soups, and apple crumble, before toasting marshmallows by the fire.

More than just a meal, these evenings restored Cubbies as a community hub. Parents weren't passive participants, they cooked, served, washed dishes, and joined in the fun alongside their children. Kids revelled in the novelty of play after dark: telling ghost stories, exploring with torches, creating dance floors under the stars, and inventing new games.

For The Venny staff, Family Dinner Night offered a precious opportunity to connect more deeply with parents. With extra staff on hand, they could engage in longer conversations, explain playwork philosophy, and build the trust needed to expand programs where children could participate independently. By the end of

the six weeks, over 800 meals had been served, with an average weekly attendance of 109 children and 27 adults. Parents' growing confidence was soon reflected in their willingness to allow their children to attend new evening programs, Boys Group+ and Girls Group+, without them present.

The success of Family Dinner Nights paved the way for deeper programming designed to meet the developmental and social needs of children aged seven and above. With funding from the Shine On Foundation, The Venny launched two new initiatives in late 2024: **Boys Group+** and **Girls Group+**. These programs were developed in direct response to consultation sessions with parents and children, including feedback gathered from Family Dinner Nights and a July 2024 parent workshop.

These groups offered something unique. They were structured yet flexible programs where children could explore independence, make new friends, and strengthen self-regulation and resilience. Crucially, they were "parent-free zones." For many parents, this initially raised concerns.



Conversations were needed to explain the importance of giving children autonomy and the chance to play, lead, and make decisions in a safe but less supervised setting. Over just four weeks, attitudes shifted dramatically, with families expressing new confidence in the Cubbies team and pride in their children's growing independence.

Each group ran for four weeks, offering two-hour evening sessions that included dinner and a "walking bus" home for children living in the nearby Atherton Gardens housing estate. Participants were involved in every stage; from menu planning and food preparation to deciding on games and helping with setup, attendance rolls, and clean-up. Through these roles, they developed ownership, leadership, and teamwork skills. The programs also created opportunities for children from different social groups to mix, build new friendships, and experience new ways to play.

Boys Group+ and Girls Group+ are now permanent ongoing programs that run for four weeks each term. Average attendance is 28 and 27 participants per week respectively.

Since assuming management at Cubbies, The Venny has not only met but exceeded every operational target. Attendance numbers have soared, staffing has expanded, and program hours have increased by 60%.

In 2024-25 The Venny secured significant philanthropic and government funding for Cubbies. Spread across two years this funding will allow the Venny to enrich existing programs, deliver new programs and upgrade facilities as part of our **Build Project**.

Excitement is growing around the Build Project. Planned works include new cubby houses, a bike circuit, a fire pit and landscaped play



reas. Like everything at Cubbies, it will be co-designed and created with children to provide a sense of ownership over their environment.

A Cubbies Community Advisory Group was formed earlier this year to provide insight and guidance from across the community. It includes representatives from local schools, youth services, childcare, libraries, and community groups, as well as local parents. Though advisory in nature, it is a vital platform for shared ideas, community listening, and collaborative planning. Its work ensures that Cubbies continues to evolve in response to children's needs and community aspirations.

From shared meals and laughter under the night sky to the joy of children leading their own play, Cubbies has reclaimed its place as a cornerstone of community life in Fitzroy. Through play, food, trust, and collaboration, The Venny has revitalised the playground.

Cubbies today stands as living proof that when children are given space to lead and communities are invited to belong, extraordinary things happen.

THE VENNY TO YOU

The Venny To You, or TV2U, is The Venny's mobile playground - a vibrant, ever-changing play space that quite literally brings joy on wheels. What began as a converted ambulance filled with loose play parts - ramps, crash mats, bikes, art supplies, balls, ropes, hula hoops, and tools for building - has become an essential part of community life in Flemington and North Melbourne. Wherever TV2U parks, it brings the spirit of play, freedom, and belonging with it.

In 2024-25, thanks to Shine On and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, TV2U delivered 61 sessions across Flemington and North Melbourne. Across those sessions, there were nearly 2,000 visits from children and young people aged 5 to 18, along with over 500 visits from younger children and 750 visits from adults. Food and snacks were shared at every session, turning each gathering into a kind of outdoor celebration. A place where neighbours, children, and families could connect and unwind together.

But numbers alone can't capture what TV2U means to the community. As the public housing estates in Flemington and North Melbourne are being demolished and redeveloped, the children who still call these places home have been navigating uncertainty and upheaval. The familiar landmarks of their childhoods are disappearing behind fences and construction hoardings. In the midst of all this change, TV2U has remained a reliable, joyful presence, a safe place to play, to explore, and to feel at home.

When the playground at 120 Racecourse Road was fenced off, one mother expressed her relief that TV2U still came every week: "My kids feel sad about this playground and how the building is getting empty, but then they come to The Venny To You and they can forget. We all relax here. You do a great job."



This sentiment captures what makes TV2U so special. It isn't just a play session, it provides continuity, connection, and care. Every week, children arrive to find bikes waiting to be ridden, trees ready to be climbed, and a world of loose parts that spark imagination. Some children construct cubby houses and villages, decorating their handmade "homes" and inviting friends to visit. Others experiment with ramps and heights, learning how to balance, take risks safely, and master new skills. In the process, they build not just structures, but confidence, resilience, and relationships.

Watching the children grow through play has been a highlight for The Venny team. They see small but powerful moments of courage and generosity, like one child encouraging another as they prepared to jump from a tree onto a crash mat: "You are very, very, very good." These exchanges reflect a deeper learning about trust, leadership, and compassion.

Parents and carers often describe the sessions as a welcome respite. While their children play safely under the guidance of experienced staff, adults have the chance to relax, connect, and watch their kids thrive. The Venny team also gently encourages parents to give children space and let them take risks, try new things, and discover what they're capable of. In this way, TV2U nurtures both independence and community trust.

At its heart, The Venny To You is more than a mobile playground. It's a moving reminder that play is not a luxury, but a necessity. It's where resilience takes root, where friendships are forged, and where joy continues to bloom, even in the shadow of change.



TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to present The Venny's 2024-25 financial statements, prepared by Pitcher Partners and audited by Collins & Co (with an unmodified audit opinion issued).

Total income for the year grew 4.7% to \$749,530 while expenditure grew 20.2% to \$757,113. Despite the increase in expenditure relative to last year, only a small deficit of \$7,583 resulted. As proportion of expenditure, staff related expenses (wages and oncosts) remained at 79%, the largest cost area. Other key cost areas, administrative expenses, operational expenses and repairs and maintenance, as a proportion of expenditure all remained relatively consistent with last year. This and the increase in expenditure is reflective of additional services to our communities in 2025.

During the year, the contract with City of Melbourne, long running supporters of The Venny, was renewed for a term of two years. The Venny's management continued to advocate for The Venny and benefited from new grants, generous philanthropic donations and the most successful end of year fundraising campaign to date. This support reflects the excellent service provided by The Venny and is a recognition of The Venny's importance to the Kensington, Fitzroy, Flemington and North Melbourne community and supports the long-term sustainable operation of The Venny. I echo Owen's thanks for our supporters, donors and funders.

Looking at our balance sheet, there were large movements in The Venny's assets and liabilities. These movements are reflective of recognising grant income on a systemic basis, as expenditure is incurred, rather than when



the cash is received. To ensure our assets are maximised, a term deposit was opened during the year.

Our ability to effectively and efficiently manage the financial affairs of The Venny continues to be greatly assisted by the support of Pitcher Partners – thank you Pitcher Partners.

I am confident that under Carolyn's leadership and the stewardship of my fellow board members, The Venny will continue to operate sustainably in 2026, without impacting the service level the community has come to expect.

George Tansley

PROFIT AND LOSS

Income	\$	
Local Government	524,407.30	
State Government	34,695.13	
Federal Government	1818.18	
Philanthropic Grants	110,926.07	
Donations	36,908.78	
Fee for Service	36,803.77	
Interest	3,971.27	
Total Income		\$749,530.50
Expenses	\$	
Employment costs	519,762.05	
Program costs	180,320.40	
Administration	6,700.01	
Depreciation	4,709.93	
Facilities	28,496.49	
Finance	7,991.57	
Insurance	9,132.87	
Total expenses		\$757,113.32
Profit/Loss		(\$7,582.82)

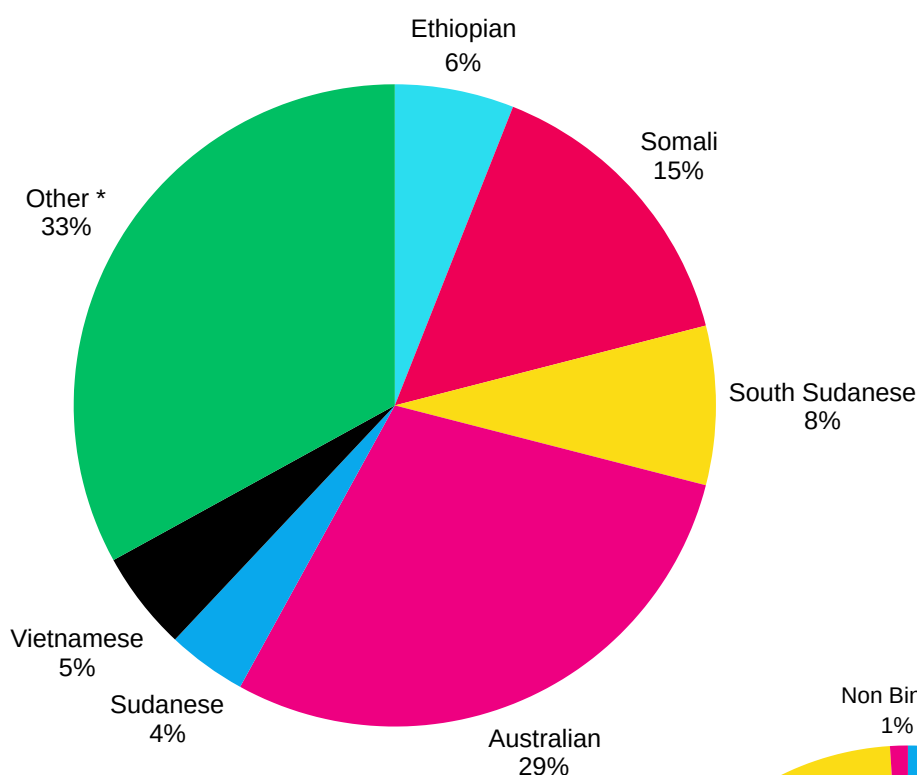
BALANCE SHEET

Current Assets	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	560,290
Trade and other receivables	9,762
Total Current Assets	570,052
Non Current Assets	
Property, plant and equipment	21,940
Total Non-Current Assets	21,940
Total Assets	591,992
Current Liabilities	
Trade and other creditors	12,946
Amounts received in advance	280,716
Provisions	84,727
Total Current Liabilities	378,390
Non-Current Liabilities	
Provisions	0
Total Non-Current Liabilities	0
Total Liabilities	378,390
Net Assets	213,602
Equity	
Accumulated Funds	213,602
Total Equity	213,602

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Cultural Identity

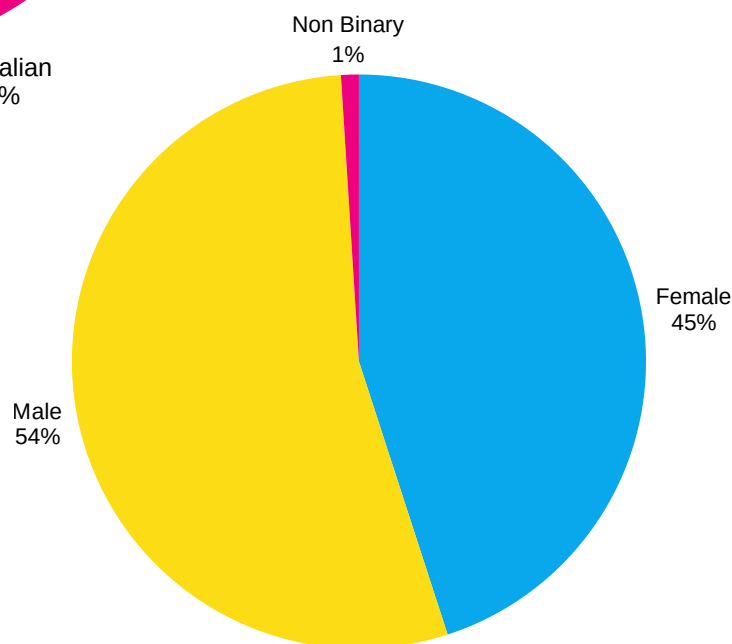
We live in a very multicultural community and this diversity is reflected in those that attend The Venny. It informs what we eat, our celebrations and enriches our play. Children's descriptions of their culture can be complex and nuanced, reflecting their unique experiences and perspectives. In our attendance data 10% of participants identify as multi-racial e.g. Chinese/Japanese, Indonesian/Maltese, Irish/Polish/Australian.



Other* includes; Aboriginal, Afghani, American, Argentinian, Canadian, Chilean, Chinese, Colombian, Cook Islander, East Timorese, Egyptian, Eritrean, Fijian, Filipino, French, Greek, Indian, Indonesian, Iranian, Iranian, Iraqi, Italian, Japanese, Lebanese, Malaysian, Maltese, Maori, Mauritian, Mexican, Nauruan, Oromo, Portugese, Samoan, South African, Spanish, Thai and Torres Strait Islander.

Gender

The Venny provides a safe space for children and young people that is supportive of all genders.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Partnerships

Acacia Child Care
Australian Catholic University
Community Housing Limited
Connecting Fitzroy Network
Drummond Street Youth Services
Debney Meadows Community Hub
Debney Meadows Primary School
Djerring Hub
Fitzroy Community Grocer
Fitzroy Primary School
Foodbank Victoria
Gathering Men
Holy Rosary Primary School
Hotham Mission
Inner Melbourne Community Legal
Inner West Children and Youth Network
Kensington Community Children's Cooperative
Kensington Community Farm Collective
Kensington Community Network
Kensington Flemington Junior Sports Club
Kensington Neighbourhood House
Kensington Primary School
Leeds Beckett University UK
Life Saving Victoria
Living Learning Australia
Melbourne University
MIECAT Institute Inc
Moonee Valley Council
Mount Alexander College
North Melbourne Language & Learning
Play Australia
Polyglot Theatre
RMIT University
Sacred Heart Primary School
Saints College (formerly St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre)
Scouts Victoria
The Huddle

The North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre
Unison Housing
Victoria Police
Victoria University
Wonderkidz Disability Group
Yarra Libraries
Yarra Youth Services
YMCA

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Shine On Foundation
The Baker Foundation
Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust

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Christmas Box
Inner West Community Bike Hub
NGV Kids on Tour
Pitcher Partners
Police Community Consultative Committee
Scalzo Food Group

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Student Placements and Work Experience

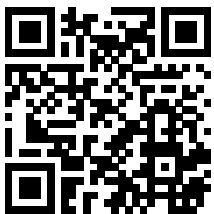
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Amy Anderson-Fitt
Ava McKirdy
Ayan Daher
Carolyn Webster
Henry Fraser
Jacqui van Heerden
Jonathan Smith
Judy McKinty
Julie Webb
Kathryn Harker
Katie Shaw
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