



Investing in
our youth Inc.

Annual Report

25|26



Artwork by Ninnette Comito
Balladong woman of the Gnaala Karla Booja

Commitment to Reconciliation

Investing In Our Youth is committed to an ongoing reconciliation journey, increasing cultural awareness, developing respectful relationships, and creating meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land we work on, the Wardandi Noongar people, and pay respects to their ancestors and Elders past and present.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today and acknowledge your continuing connection to land, waters, and communities.

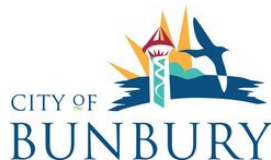
We respect the oldest, continuous living culture and are committed to working in partnership to strengthen and embed First Nation's voices and perspectives in our decision-making, now and into the future.

Acknowledgements

Investing In Our Youth would like to extend thanks to our funding bodies, community partners and individual supporters who make it possible for us to continue to deliver high quality programs and services to children, youth, families and the community.



Bethanie



*With special thanks to our Child and Parent Centre host schools,
Carey Park Primary School and Wilson Park Primary School.*

Business Partners & Memberships



Vision & Purpose



Vision

That all children, youth, and families live and grow in safe, healthy, and connected communities.

Purpose

Building our communities' capacity so that every child and young person, regardless of location, household income or individual needs, can be nurtured to achieve their potential.

OUR VALUES



Wholeheartedness

Our approach is grounded in care, compassion and generosity.



Sustainability

Our programs and practices grow and contribute positively to people and planet.



Integrity

Our practices are based on evidence, expertise and ethics.



Collaborations

Our partnerships are meaningful, equitable and diverse.

OUR PRIORITY AREAS

1.

Empowering children and young people to participate.

2.

Embedding child safety at the heart of our organisation.

3.

Working collaboratively with others to foster partnerships.

4.

Encouraging curiosity and lifelong learning.

5.

Building a sustainable and inclusive organisation



Chair Report

It is hard to believe we are reporting back already, as the year goes far too quickly, yet here we are. Another opportunity to report on the achievements of IIOY, on the amazing efforts and commitment of Nicky and the team and proudly on the positive impact this all has within our community. It is worth noting that IIOY commenced activities in 1999, fundamentally to support the community in creating a healthy and safe environment where children and young people are valued and supported to reach their potential. This hasn't changed and you will see this embedded through our Programs, focusing on empowerment, child safety, collaboration, encouragement and inclusivity.

We continue to operate in challenging times. Constraints on funding co-exist with an increasing demand for support and services, combining to challenge the team to be innovative and nimble. That they achieve what they do is awesome.

We will continue to seek innovative solutions to ensure IIOY is supported to achieve its objectives. The demand and support for our programs highlights the importance of securing our future. The Board and CEO are committed to achieving this outcome.

Our Board Members are united in supporting Nicky and her team through strategic oversight, good governance and risk management. I thank all Board Members for their time and expertise, particularly Kylie Cullen as Treasurer who is stepping down at this AGM. I also thank all our staff and stakeholders for your continued support.

Ian Telfer
Chairperson





CEO Report

As I look back on the 2025–2026 financial year, I feel incredibly grateful for the people, partnerships and shared purpose that continue to shape Investing In Our Youth. This work matters deeply to me because it is about children, young people and families feeling safe, valued, connected and supported to thrive. Our value of being wholehearted has been present in so much of what we have done this year, in the way our teams show up, the way we listen, and the way we keep children, youth and families at the centre of our decisions.

Across the financial year, we continued to offer programs across the South West including the Child and Parent Centres at Carey Park and Collie Valley, Yallo Early Years in Dalyellup, and the End to End Driver Training Program. I am continually reminded that these programs are not just services on a page, they are welcoming places, spaces and services where people can build confidence, ask questions, learn new skills and feel genuinely supported without judgement. At the end of March 2026, the organisation finished up the three year Healthway funded Blue Leaf Initiative and supported a transition of this program to Peppy Project which will allow the young adults activities to continue in a sustainable way.

One of the things I value most about this organisation is that we do not do this work alone. This year has again shown the strength of relationships, with schools, government agencies, community organisations, volunteers and local supporters. I want to sincerely acknowledge every person and organisation that has worked with us, trusted us, challenged us and helped us create stronger pathways of support for children, young people and families.

Our commitment to reconciliation, child safety and culturally responsive practice remains personal and important to me, and to our whole organisation. We will keep listening, learning and strengthening First Nations voices in our governance, programs and relationships. We will also keep working to make sure children are safe, heard, respected and empowered in all the spaces we create and families are supported to thrive.

Like many community service organisations, we have faced challenges this year, including growing demand, increased costs and the complex realities many people and particularly families are experiencing. What has stood out to me is the care and steadiness of our team. Even when the work is hard, they continue to bring warmth, professionalism, creativity and compassion. I am deeply thankful to our Board, staff, volunteers and partners for the difference they make, often quietly, often behind the scenes, but always with heart.

As we look to the year ahead, I feel hopeful about what we can continue to build together. Investing In Our Youth will keep working with community to strengthen capacity, improve practice and create opportunities for every child and young person to thrive. The achievements of the last financial year belong to many hands and many hearts, and I am proud to be part of an organisation that continues to lead with care, courage and a genuine belief in the future of our children and youth.

N Smith

Nicky Smith
Chief Executive Officer





Safeguarding Children & Young People

Over the last year there has been a continued focus on child and youth safeguarding at all levels of IIOY. Our vision remains clear, that all children, youth and families live and grow in safe, healthy and connected communities. This vision aligns closely with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, which provide a nationally consistent approach to embedding child safety and wellbeing into organisational leadership, governance, culture, policy and everyday practice.

For IIOY, the National Principles are not separate from our values; they help us put those values into action. Wholeheartedness is reflected in the way we listen to children, young people and families and take their views seriously. Integrity guides our commitment to safe recruitment, clear expectations, child-focused responses to concerns and ongoing accountability. Sustainability is reflected in building systems, policies and learning that can be maintained and strengthened over time. Collaboration reminds us that families, communities, staff, volunteers, schools, service partners and children and young people themselves all have an important role in promoting safety and wellbeing.

During the year, we continued to strengthen practice across the ten National Principles. This includes embedding child safety in leadership and governance; supporting children and young people to understand their rights, participate in decisions and be taken seriously; involving families and communities in child safety and wellbeing; upholding equity and respecting diverse needs; ensuring staff and volunteers are suitable and supported; maintaining child-focused complaints and reporting processes; building staff and volunteer knowledge through induction, supervision and learning; promoting safe physical and online environments; reviewing and improving our approach; and ensuring our policies and procedures clearly describe how we keep children and young people safe.

This work is especially important because safeguarding must be inclusive, relational and culturally responsive. We continue to promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people with disability, and children and young people who may experience vulnerability or barriers to being heard. Guided by the National Principles, IIOY will keep building a culture where child safety is everyone's responsibility, where concerns are welcomed and responded to appropriately, and where children, young people and families experience our services as safe, respectful and empowering.

Reconciliation

IIOY's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) concluded as of 30 June 2026 and has been an important starting point for deepening our understanding of reconciliation and what it means in practice for our organisation, our staff, our programs and the communities we work alongside. The Reflect RAP gave us a clear structure to begin this work with intention. It helped us move beyond goodwill and identify practical actions that could build relationships, increase cultural learning, strengthen respect, and create greater accountability.

One of the strongest outcomes of the Reflect RAP has been the growth in our relationships and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, Elders, cultural educators, community leaders and service partners across the South West. This work has shown us that reconciliation is relational and place-based. Meaningful progress comes through taking the time to listen, connect respectfully, understand local context and build trust over time. While some connections are still developing, the RAP has expanded our knowledge of who we can learn from, collaborate with and walk alongside in the next stage of our reconciliation journey.

The Reflect RAP also strengthened respect and cultural understanding across IIOY. Staff participation in Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training, the review of cultural learning needs, and the sharing of further learning resources have contributed to a stronger foundation for cultural awareness.

We have also become more consistent in observing cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country at Board meetings, Team Leader meetings, Local Advisory Committee meetings, children's programs and playgroups. The inclusion of Noongar language, seasonal elements and culturally respectful resources in our environments reflects a growing commitment to making our spaces more welcoming and culturally responsive.



There were positive steps in promoting reconciliation through National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and internal awareness activities. The IIOY Reconciliation Tree, staff pledges, shared resources, meeting discussions and participation in local reconciliation activities helped make reconciliation more visible across the organisation. At the same time, the RAP process highlighted that not every planned action can be achieved exactly as intended. Some events were affected by cancellation, weather or competing priorities. These challenges have been valuable because they remind us that reconciliation requires ongoing commitment, flexibility and shared responsibility rather than one-off participation.

The Reflect RAP encouraged us to look honestly at our role as a small not-for-profit organisation and consider where we can influence employment, professional development and procurement outcomes. While our employment opportunities are limited, the RAP prompted reflection on previous pathways, conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and opportunities to strengthen culturally safe employment practices into the future. We also began identifying Aboriginal-owned businesses and purchasing good and services as appropriate.

Governance has been a key achievement of the Reflect RAP. The establishment of a RAP Working Group, regular engagement with the Board and Team Leaders, CEO leadership, tracking of outputs and completion of reporting requirements to Reconciliation Australia have strengthened accountability. IIOY also joined as member of Reconciliation WA as part of the RAP and looks forward to being a partner in any future place-based RAP in the Bunbury area or broader SW region. IIOY is now better prepared to continue its reconciliation journey with greater knowledge, stronger community connections, and practical learnings.





Child and Parent Centre
Carey Park



Child and Parent Centre Carey Park

The 2025–26 year was one of significant growth and engagement for the Child and Parent Centre. Throughout the year, the Centre delivered a diverse range of programs designed to support children's development and strengthen family wellbeing. These included playgroups, transition-to-school initiatives, and a variety of parenting education opportunities, ranging from one-off information sessions to multi-session evidence-informed programs.

The Centre also continued to strengthen its commitment to early literacy through the ongoing integration of Paint Bunbury REaD principles across service delivery. Our early literacy mascot, Bubbles Biyabeda, remained a much-loved and engaging presence within Centre activities, helping to promote positive early literacy experiences and encouraging families to connect with reading, storytelling, and language-rich interactions from an early age.



Parent & Child attendances at
Centre programs & services
25/26

The release of the 2024 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) results, which demonstrated improvements across the Bunbury region, provided further encouragement for the collaborative work being undertaken to support young children and their families. These positive outcomes reinforce the value of strong partnerships between services, schools, community organisations, and families, and provide continued motivation to work collectively towards improving child development, school readiness, and lifelong wellbeing outcomes for children across the Bunbury community.



437

Parent attendances at **parenting workshops and education sessions** offered by the Centre



HIGHLIGHTS

South West Parenting Survey and Early Years Forum

Child and Parent Centre Carey Park, alongside Investing In Our Youth and Yallo, played a key role in the planning, implementation, and promotion of the South West Parenting Survey. Led by the South West Early Years Network, of which the Centre is an active member, the survey attracted more than 300 responses from parents and caregivers across the region. The findings provide valuable insights into the experiences, needs, and priorities of families and will help inform future service planning and delivery across the South West.

Survey findings, together with the 2024 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) results, were presented at the inaugural South West Early Years Forum. The event brought together 65 professionals working with children and families across the region and received highly positive feedback, highlighting the value of collaboration and knowledge-sharing in strengthening outcomes for young children.

Supporting Positive Dental Health

The Centre welcomed the Smiling Starts Dental Program to playgroup sessions throughout the year. Through play-based activities and positive interactions, children were introduced to dental health concepts in a fun and engaging way, helping to build familiarity with oral health care from an early age and reducing anxiety associated with dental visits.

Investing in Professional Learning

Staff continued to strengthen the Centre's practice through engagement in a range of professional learning and representational opportunities, including attendance at Early Childhood Australia's National Conference, the Australian Play Summit, and participation in the national Emerging Minds Child Voice Community of Practice. These opportunities support the Centre's commitment to evidence-informed practice and ensuring children's voices remain central to service delivery.

Recognition of Paint Bunbury REaD

Paint Bunbury REaD, which is embedded across both Child and Parent Centre Carey Park and Yallo programs, was selected to participate in a commissioned study by Paint the Town REaD (PTTR) examining the relationship between PTTR initiatives and AEDC outcomes. The Bunbury program was chosen in recognition of the region's positive 2024 AEDC results, which showed improvements across all five developmental domains—an outcome that contrasted with broader state and national trends. This recognition highlights the strength of the collaborative, community-wide approach to supporting early literacy, child development, and school readiness in Bunbury.

"I feel welcomed at the Child and Parent Centre and all the people here are so kind and very helpful in assisting parents with young children. No words can express how thankful I am"



Child and Parent Centre
Collie Valley



Child and Parent Centre Collie Valley



The Child and Parent Centre - Collie Valley continued to play a vital role in supporting children and families by providing early intervention, parenting support, child development services, health promotion activities, and community connection opportunities. Through strong partnerships with schools, health services, government agencies and community organisations, the Centre delivered a comprehensive range of universal and targeted programs designed to improve outcomes for children and strengthen family wellbeing.

HIGHLIGHTS

New Culturally Responsive Programs

This year saw the introduction of Puggles Koorliny – Little Ones Walking Together, a supportive space for parents and carers with babies under 18 months. Initially trialled over six sessions, strong parent feedback led to the program becoming an ongoing eight-week offering. The program provides opportunities for connection, early parenting support and access to visiting professionals. Its name, meaning little ones walking together, reflects the shared journey of families and incorporates elements of Paint Collie REaD, further embedding the initiative within the Centre's early years focus.

Building School Readiness and Child Development

Supporting children's development and successful transitions to school remained a key focus throughout the year. Programs incorporated evidence-based approaches including KIDDO physical literacy and Aussie Optimism emotional literacy strategies, helping to strengthen children's social, emotional and physical development.

The Centre worked collaboratively with schools and feedback from families indicated improved confidence around school readiness, including children's social skills, emotional regulation, toileting readiness and separation from caregivers.



5,440

Parents & children
supported at the
centre in 25/26



300

Children utilised
creche facilities offered
by the Centre



Innovation & Community Impact

The Centre continued to build its reputation both locally and regionally through innovative partnerships and projects. A standout achievement was collaboration with Western Sydney University to pilot an in-person delivery model of the Young Wellbeing's program for young mothers, contributing to research and program development at a national level.

I have learned so much about healthy development, my role as a parent, supporting my child and connecting with them in valuable ways, including in relation to current and recognised issues eg tech time.

The staff are honestly amazing.

Anonymous
CPC Parent Survey

I didn't want to leave the house today but I knew I had this [MyTime] on and I said stuff it kids, we're going cos I don't want to miss out.

MyTime Member
Carers Week Feedback Survey

Participants valued the face-to-face format, peer connection and practical activities, with benefits including increased awareness of self-care, stronger support networks, improved engagement with local services and greater confidence in seeking support when needed.

One participant experienced significant personal growth through the program, including developing stronger self-care routines, increasing engagement with support services, gaining her driver's licence and securing employment. The program also supported participants to recognise the importance of prioritising their own wellbeing, with increased confidence in identifying what support they needed and taking steps to access it.



127

Parent attendances at
parenting workshops
and education sessions
offered by the Centre



yallo'



Yallo

Early Years

Yallo's Early Years Programs continued to provide welcoming, family-friendly spaces that supported connection, play, and early childhood development in Dalyellup. Programs delivered included Little Chuditch Wonders, Bubs on Rugs, Play Cafe for Young and Old, Bub & Me Meander, and a range of parenting programs that supported families through early learning, social connection, and practical guidance. Across the year, Yallo worked in partnership with local organisations and sponsors to strengthen community engagement and ensure programs remained accessible and responsive to family needs. These initiatives contributed to positive early learning experiences, parent confidence, and stronger local networks for young children and their families.

HIGHLIGHTS

Out And About with Bubbles Biyabeda

A custom storybook was created in which Bubbles visits Play Cafe for Young and Old. The story was developed to build community awareness of the program and to highlight the benefits of intergenerational playgroups, where children and older adults come together to sing, read, play and yarn, supporting children's early language, social and emotional development.

Little Chuditch Wonders

Little Chuditch Wonders is the new name for our outdoor, nature-based play series that recognises and celebrates each Noongar seasons through culturally responsive, sensory-rich play experiences for children birth to five years and their families.

New Bub & Me Meander Success

The group provided a low-pressure, pram-friendly space for parents and carers to build friendships, enjoy fresh air and gentle movement, and strengthen local connections. Feedback from participants highlighted the value of regular, local opportunities to socialise, reduce isolation, and feel more connected to the Dalyellup community, with many carers reporting increased confidence in getting out with their babies and a stronger sense of belonging in the neighbourhood.





3870+

Family interactions in 2526FY

414

People attended Play Cafe for Young & Old over 9 sessions



21

Families attended **Bubs on Rugs** over 30 sessions



20

Families attended **Parenting Programs** (Tuning into Teens & BUGK Babies)



59

Families attended **Little Chuditch Wonders** over 35 sessions.



10

Families attended **Bub & Me Meander** over 12 sessions

“

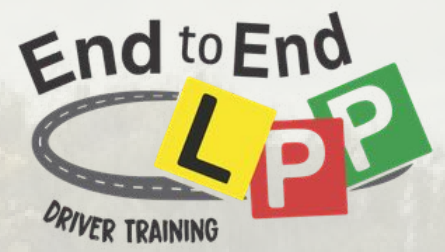
Yallo was the best thing in the early months with my baby. Caitlin and the fairy did an amazing job providing different activities. It was one of the highlights of our weeks.

”

Corinna

Yallo Outdoor Play Events





End to End Driving Program



The End to End Driver Training Program has had a successful year assisting over 230 participants on their licensing journey with 73 of those gaining their Provisional Licence with our help. Participants came from the LGA's of Bunbury and Busselton as well as Harvey, Capel, Dardanup, Collie, Donnybrook-Balingup and Augusta-Margaret River. The program continues to be funded by both Department of Justice and Department of Transport. IIOY successfully applied for an increase in funding for the Driving Access and Equity Program for the 2026 to 2027 financial year.

A key strength of the Program continues to be our dedicated team of Driver Mentors, who generously contribute countless volunteer hours to support participants as they build skills, confidence, and experience behind the wheel. We remain incredibly grateful for their commitment and the positive impact they make in the lives of those we support.

HIGHLIGHTS

South West Volunteer of the Year

This year, we were proud to recognise one of our outstanding Driver Mentors, Ken Sprigg, by nominating him for the 2026 Volunteer South West Volunteer of the Year Awards. It was a wonderful evening celebrating Ken's contribution, and we were delighted when he was announced as the South West Volunteer of the Year. His recognition highlights the extraordinary dedication of our volunteer mentor team.

Volunteer WA State Conference

The Program also celebrated several important milestones during the year. Driving Programs Coordinator, Raine, attended the Volunteer WA State Conference, providing valuable opportunities for learning, networking, and strengthening volunteer engagement practices. Driving Support Officer, Steve, successfully completed Driver Instructor Training and obtained his Driving Instructor Licence, further enhancing the Program's capacity to deliver high-quality driver education and support.



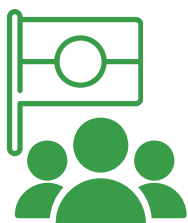


Participants engaged in the **End to End Driver Training** program this financial year.



73

Participants obtained their **P-plates with End to End Driver Training.**



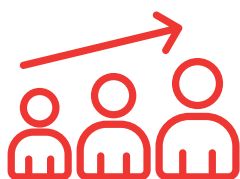
22%

Participants identified as **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander**



8%

Participants identified as **Culturally & Linguistically Diverse**



83%

Participants aged 16 to 25

17%

Participants aged 25+



58%

Participants identified as Female

40%

Participants identified as Male

2%

Participants identified as Other

I would like to thank the End to End Program for assisting me to get my licence. Without the support of the End to End Driving Program, I wouldn't have been able to get my hours up.

I come from a large family who also foster children. This made it harder for me to find time to drive without my baby siblings being in the car. I also have autism, ADHD and anxiety, so I struggled to find someone I felt comfortable learning with. Paying for 50 hours of driving lessons would not have been feasible for my family.

With the End to End Program I felt supported and safe. Now that I have my licence, I can help my parents drive my siblings around, take them on special outings, and access more opportunities for work.

I am so grateful that there is a program like End to End. Getting my licence was a relief and made me very happy. Thank you again for everything.

Sarina

End to End Driver Participant



Blue Leaf Initiative

The Blue Leaf Initiative, funded by Healthway, completed three years of program delivery as of the end of March 2026. The aim of the initiative was to support youth mental health and wellbeing through social connection and community engagement. Blue Leaf predominantly focused on facilitating free, welcoming, inclusive events for young adults aged 18 to 30 but also offered events and mental health training for all ages.

The evaluation of the Blue Leaf Initiative undertaken by UWA indicated that the success of the program included these factors:

- Youth-led and community-driven
- Alcohol and drug-aware
- Lived experience as a guiding principle
- Mental health literacy and associated outcomes
- Cross-sector collaboration and partnerships
- Emphasis on prevention
- Scalable and resource light

The evaluation based on feedback from participants indicated:

- 71% felt more confident supporting others' mental health
- 66% felt more aware of available services
- 72% felt a positive change in their own wellbeing
- 80% tried something new to support their wellbeing
- 67% made new friends
- 77% felt more connected to community
- 1 in 3 joined another community group
- 1 in 3 volunteered with Blue Leaf

Blue Leaf consistently hosts engaging, social, fun, educational and community-oriented events. What I love is how they help ice break, and support attendees to connect with new people at the games nights, and they encourage so many new fun activities by making them so accessible and free at the Have A Go Expo. They do amazing stuff, and I would be devastated to see these activities stop!

Anonymous
Blue Leaf Participant



Have A Go Expo

The 2026 Have A Go Expo held on the 31 January was a huge success, with the attendance increasing by more than fivefold (1000+ attendees) from previous years. Feedback indicated that:

- 80% of surveyed attendees tried something new
- 94% of surveyed attendees felt welcomed and included
- 2 in 3 surveyed attendees expanded their social network
- 88% of surveyed attendees felt more connected to the local community
- 97% of surveyed attendees felt more aware of activities in the local community
- 2 in 3 surveyed attendees discovered a group they are interested in joining

We also heard about the ripple effects of this initiative, such as a story shared by one of the performers at the Youth Open Mic:

"I attended last year's Have a Go Expo event and learnt that there were auditions being held for a community musical production in Bunbury. After getting this information I then did an audition and was lucky enough to be given a role in this show. I am now in my second musical with them and was lucky enough to be provided the opportunity to perform at this year's incredible Have a Go Expo event and it really felt like a whole circle moment."



3600+

Event attendees over 100+
social events since March
2024



"I truly appreciate the work you do; it's been way easier finding friends and being part of the Bunbury community with the help of you guys."

Anonymous
Blue Leaf Participant

Governance

IIOY Board



Ian Telfer
Chair



Kylie Cullen
Treasurer



Amanda Caunt
Secretary



Cherie Hazlitt



Claire MacDonald



Beth Ferguson



Thelma Moyo



Brendan Manning



Paula Nankiville

Organisational Information

Investing In Our Youth was incorporated in 2002 under the 'Western Australian Associations Incorporation Act 1987', Registration No: A1010627M. Our constitution was updated to comply with the 'Western Australian Associations Incorporation Act 2015' in November 2017. The organisation is an income tax exempt charity and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for Profits Commission. The organisation is registered for GST and ABN details are 26 472 921 505.

Audits and Accounts

A finance sub-committee has been formed to assist the Board in overseeing the proper financial management of the organisation. The Committee members included Ian Telfer, Kylie Cullen and Nicky Smith, CEO. End of month reporting is contracted out to Megan from Nomad Accounting.

The organisation requires that proper records of accounts are kept, true and complete accounts are maintained and audited annually and the auditor's report is presented at the Annual General Meeting. The external auditor for Investing In Our Youth is David Paine, CPA.

A photograph of two children playing in a white plastic water tub outdoors. The child on the left is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and yellow arm warmers, leaning over the tub. The child on the right is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt. The tub is filled with water and contains several toys, including pink and green plastic cups and a green toy rake. A colorful patterned blanket is visible on the right side of the tub. The background shows green grass and a patterned rug.

[Click here to view the complete 2025/2026 Financial Year Audit.](#)

Financial Report

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Our Contact



(08) 9721 6951



hello@iioy.org.au



www.iioy.org.au