

# Childcare Leadership Alliance



**ANNUAL REPORT** 



# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The Childcare Leadership Alliance acknowledges and pays its respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, and play. We pay special respect to the Barada Barna people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our current work is taking place. We recognise and respect the continuing connection that they, and all First Nations people have, to the land, sea, waterways, and community.

The Childcare Leadership Alliance pays respect to all Elders past, present and emerging.

# THE CLA - STRATEGIC INNOVATION IN REGIONAL CHILDCARE

### **OUR VISION**

Our vision is to strategically enable and support the provision of high quality, sustainable early childhood and school age care in the Isaac Region, with initial programs piloted in the townships of Moranbah and Dysart.



### **OUR MISSION**

### Our mission is to:

- Ensure the successful roll out of the project in the pilot phase in Moranbah and Dysart as part of the initial pilot project.
- Establish a professional, engaged and supportive Childcare Leadership Alliance,
- Provide support to attract, recruit and retain childcare staff
- Coordinate access to high quality professional development for childcare staff
- Develop a sustainable model to strategically support the childcare sector
- · Collaborate with and encourage the participation and support of a wide range of partners and stakeholders.
- Actively advocate for the childcare sector.
- Share knowledge across the sector to help ensure high quality, sustainable childcare is possible in other regions.

### **OUR VALUES**

- Equitable access
- Knowledge sharing
- Respect
- Professionalism
- Transparency
- Commitment
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Flexibility



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### **HOW WE STARTED**

Quality, sustainable childcare provision is a long-standing issue for the communities of Dysart and Moranbah, and improved future service delivery was identified as a priority issue by the Smart Transformation Advisory Councils (STACs) operating in both towns. The STACs saw that in order to future-proof the towns by enabling greater economic opportunity and diversity, childcare services needed to be available.

To that end, BMA provided funding for a Childcare Study ("the Study") which was conducted by Maree Roberts Consulting in 2020/2021. The Study investigated the issues around childcare in the region and provided recommendations which would seek to resolve the problems.

The Childcare Leadership Alliance's (CLA) purpose is to implement the Study recommendations over a period of two years as a pilot project between CLA, BMA and Astute Early Years Specialists (AEYS). The first two years has seen AEYS engaged to facilitate the establishment of the CLA, and to support the CLA to achieve its key objectives.



### OUR FOUNDER. BHP MITSUBISHI ALLIANCE (BMA)

BMA is Australia's largest producer and supplier of steelmaking coal and is owned 50:50 by BHP and Mitsubishi Development. BMA operates five Bowen Basin mines (Broadmeadow, Caval Ridge, Goonyella Riverside, Peak Downs and Saraji. ) and owns and operates the Hay Point Coal Terminal near Mackay.

BMA seeks meaningful long-term, mutually beneficial relationships that respect local cultures. BMA aims to support the development of diversified and resilient local communities and economies and contribute to quality-of-life improvements that continue beyond the life of its operated assets.

Through the independent Smart Transformation project, funded and supported by BMA, it was identified that childcare was a key community concern for the towns of Dysart and Moranbah. Access to childcare was increasingly difficult to obtain, impacting the whole community. In 2020, under the stewardship of the Smart Transformation Advisory Councils, BMA commissioned a report that sought to quantify the childcare shortages for these towns and identify practical solutions to the identified challenges. The report, titled "Addressing the Childcare Challenges in the Bowen Basin" was produced by Maree Roberts Consulting, and identified that "a strategic approach to the planning and funding of childcare as well as leadership and advocacy at the highest level is needed". The report further identified that "A leadership alliance must take responsibility for the broad, long-term strategic direction and oversight of childcare in communities across the Bowen Basin... providing support and advocacy for services".

Following this report, a Childcare Committee was established that brought together Smart Transformation stakeholders, childcare representatives and BMA to investigate and action the Alliance. As part of BMA's commitment to the communities of Dysart and Moranbah, and BMA's recognition of this as a key community issue, funding was provided for the establishment of the Alliance for its initial two years of operation, plus a further two years through a recent funding extension. This resulted in the engagement of Astute Early Years Specialists to deliver the critical resources and expertise to initially establish the organisational structure, set up the Board and management arrangements, determine the strategy and initial work plans, and engage with the childcare service providers and broader community.

Through this funding support, the Board of the Alliance, along with Astute, has been able to guide decisions and direction of the Childcare Leadership Alliance (CLA) to ensure progress towards its ultimate goal of being an independent, sustainable and strategic organisation that delivers sector-wide support to solve the complex challenges affecting the childcare sector in Dysart and Moranbah.

BMA is extremely proud to be a part of this journey with the community from the start, and to now witness the progress that has been made by the CLA since its inception. It is a testament to the numerous stakeholders involved including Astute Early Years Specialists, the childcare centres, Smart Transformation, and the broader community. By working together in a coordinated and collective manner the challenging issues facing the childcare sector can be collectively addressed, for the benefit of all.



**KYLIE DAWSON** 

### **OUR PEOPLE**

**MELISSA WESTCOTT CHAIR** 

**CHRIS WRIGHT TREASURER** 

**AMANDA STEPHAN SECRETARY** 

**SANDY MOFFAT BOARD MEMBER** 

**MICHAEL THOMAS BOARD MEMBER** 

**JASMINE CADD NON-VOTING** 

**BOARD MEMBER** 

**MELISSA COMERFORD PROJECT MANAGER** 

> **SECRETARIAT &** PROJECT MANAGER



### **OUR OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

### **OUR GOAL**

Our goal is to enable, through the formation of the Alliance, the provision of sustainable strategic support to the childcare sector across the Isaac Region, starting with the pilot towns of Moranbah and Dysart.

To help achieve our vision, mission and goals, we focused on the following key activities during our second year:

Activity	Detail
Continuing to implement strong governance practices	The CLA is a not for profit, incorporated association with Rules, Terms of Reference and a robust policy framework to guide and support strong governance. The Board is made up of a broad range of representatives from across the community.
Implementation of our Strategic Plan	We continued to work hard on the implementation of our relevant and ambitious strategic plan seeing great results in the area of attraction of educators to the pilot towns.
Engaging with early childhood and school age care staff and providers	From the beginning the CLA has ensured that they have engaged with and included the providers and staff of early childhood and school age care services in the pilot towns.
Implementation of our Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement Plan	The CLA has committed considerable time and efforts into implementing these plans because they are vital for bringing the whole community together to work collaboratively to solve the issues around the stable provision of early learning and school age care services. These plans help to raise awareness of the situation in regional communities, the CLA, its goals and work. They are also critical for ensuring all stakeholders are engaged with and informed and given the opportunity to participate and contribute wherever possible.
	We have seen great results from our efforts with local and state wide media coverage, a highly successful advocacy campaign, engagement with local, state and federal governments, and interest coming to the CLA from other regional communities.
Implementation of strategies for attracting, recruiting and retaining childcare staff	We have run a range of local, domestic and international attraction campaigns, and it has achieved some fantastic results! At the date of printing, we have successfully attracted more than 150 educators to enquire about working in the pilot towns, and we have placed more than 30 educators into one of the pilot towns. These educators arrive with high levels of qualifications and experience and we are so pleased to report that their practice and engagement with children and families is of the highest standards.
Implementation of strategies for offering professional development for childcare staff	During our second year we offered educators the chance to participate in Care to Lead, a leadership and professional networking program. We have had wonderful engagement from educators who have explored a range of concepts related to leadership and supported each other through the sharing of ideas, insights and information. Educators have also had the opportunity to learn from leaders outside their field with a wonderful Q&A session delivered with the generous support of BHP and the AFLW. We were also available to provide educators with the opportunity to apply to attend an all expenses paid trip to a leading sector conference, the annual C&K conference.
Implementation of strategies for garnering community support and collaboration	The CLA launched its second advocacy campaign during the 2023-2024 period. These are our children. This campaign has been extremely successful and has seen a considerable increase in interest in and support of the CLA, as well as increasing interest in educators moving to the region to live and work.
Implementation of strategies for seeking further financial investment	The CLA has worked very hard to secure further financial investment so it can continue, and expand, its vital work. It has been successful in receiving grants from The Local Buying Foundation and The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, and is engaged in focused discussions with other organisations that operate in the pilot towns.
	The CLA welcomes all individuals, businesses and government representatives to connect so we can share evidence-based insights into how our work can help create stable, high quality offerings of early childhood and school age care services in regional communities.

### THE CLA STRATEGIC INNOVATION IN REGIONAL CHILDCARE

### A REPORT FROM OUR CHAIR

On behalf of the Board I am pleased to present the Childcare Leadership Alliance's annual report for 2023 - 2024.

The vision of the Childcare Leadership Alliance is to strategically enable and support the provision of high quality, sustainable early childhood and school age care in the Isaac Region, with initial programs piloted in the townships of Moranbah and Dysart, and I am very proud to say that in our second year of existence we have achieved some fantastic results.

During our second year we assisted with the successful recruitment, relocation and housing of more than 30 international educators to Moranbah. The flow on effect from this was a reduction in wait lists and an increase in occupancy across centres in Moranbah. We also saw these educators delivering outstanding practices with children and families and supporting the growth and development of other staff. This is a fantastic result for the entire community!

I am also very proud of the leadership and professional networking program that we have been able to offer to educators across the pilot towns throughout the 2024 year at no cost. This has been due to the wonderful support of The Local Buying Foundation and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal. This program has been codesigned with educators and has continually adapted throughout the year to meet their needs. I extend my thanks and appreciation to all of the educators who have given up their personal time to attend the program; your commitment to the children and families of the community in which you work is to be highly commended.

I am also very happy to report that this year, through the kind support of the Moranbah Workers Club, and C&K, we were able to send an educator on an all expenses paid trip to the esteemed C&K conference in Brisbane. Not only was this a fantastic experience for this educator, the impact will flow on to the rest of the community as the educator returns to share her knowledge, experience and insights with her colleagues across the pilot towns.

It is also a great testament to the work of the CLA that we have been named in the Central Highlands Development Corporation's (CHDC) "Workforce Development and Accommodation Strategy" as an organisation to engage with and learn from.

The CLA has started discussions with the CHDC and it is exciting to consider that we could possibly share our experiences and skills with other regions to assist them with securing the future of their communities through stable, sustainable child care.

I would like to thank BMA for taking the leap and investing in the establishment of the Alliance and its initiatives, and I would also like to thank the Smart Transformations Advisory Council (STAC) for helping to bring the Alliance to life. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Astute Early Years Specialists for their dedication in being the lead delivery project partner for the CLA and their invaluable industry knowledge.

To all of our stakeholders and community members; thank you for supporting the Alliance and contributing your time, thoughts and efforts to enable us to achieve what we have so far.

Immense appreciation and gratitude must go to all of the educators working in early childhood and school age care services; your energy, experience and commitment is of the utmost importance to our communities; we couldn't exist and thrive without you.

I strongly encourage anyone who is affected by the current child care challenges in our communities to reach out; if we work together we can make even more of an impact.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my fellow Board members for your ongoing guidance, support and commitment to furthering the important work we do; thank you.

**Melissa Westcott** 

Marstall



# Achievements we are proud of



Helping to recruit, relocate, and house more than 30 qualified educators from around the world



The creation and launch of our "These are our children" campaign with outstanding engagement from the broader community



State wide media coverage of the Alliance from the ABC



Delivery of Care to Lead to educators at no cost and the establishment of an online version to enable educators to participate at any time, anywhere



Sending an educator to the C&K conference and supporting them to bring their learning and insights back to share with their colleagues and peers



Connecting with representatives from the office of the Hon Minister for Education. Dr Anne Aly



**Implementing** close to 100% of our strategic plan



Being asked to join the advocacy groups, Thrive by 5 Qld and The Parenthood



Presenting to a stakeholder group at the Qld **Resources Council** 



Being approached to support and connect with the Central Highlands Development Corporation



Commencing discussions with other industry organisations as to how they can support the work of the Alliance



### THE CLA STRATEGIC INNOVATION IN REGIONAL CHILDCARE

### A WORD FROM OUR PROJECT MANAGER

I have been extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work in different roles in the Isaac region for 7 years now, and I and my team have felt very privileged to project manage the pilot of the Childcare Leadership Alliance pilot for the past two years.

The challenge to solve the childcare problem in a regional community has been, and remains, complex. The entire country is experiencing a critical workforce shortage across the early childhood and school age care sectors, as well as a housing affordability and availability crisis. And even with all these challenges, BMA made the leap and took the risk to invest in a new and different approach to addressing the challenges being faced in the communities of Moranbah and Dysart, and their investment, trust and commitment is paying off.

Since the start of 2023 the CLA has supported the attraction and recruitment of more than 30 qualified, highly experienced educators into the services in Moranbah, which has resulted in a significant reduction in wait lists and a fantastic increase in children and families accessing early childhood and school age care services. This is of huge importance for the children and their current and future growth and development, and is very important for the sustainability and longevity of the services themselves who are so critical to the entire community. And the flow on effects for the community are enormous; parents can start or return to work, employers can operate their business at a sustainable level, schools can employ and retain teachers, and medical facilities can employ and retain health care staff.

And in addition, the newly arrived educators and their families contribute to creating a strong, diverse community. They join sporting clubs, attend local schools, work at local businesses, and share foods and cultural practices from their country of origin, and just as an ecosystem needs to be diverse to be strong and healthy, so too do our communities.

The Alliance is proud to have been named as an organisation for the Central Highlands Development Corporation (CHDC) to connect with and we are excited to share that we have commenced discussions with the CHDC. It is vital that regional communities work together and share learnings, experiences and insights that can benefit everyone.

I am honoured, excited and proud to be a part of the journey of the Childcare Leadership Alliance. We are at the forefront of something big that could contribute to and support many regional communities, now and into the future. I want to encourage all of you, regardless of who you are and what you do, to jump on board and contribute in any way you can to the provision of quality, stable early childhood and school age care services in your community.

Finally I would like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the Board, BMA, the educators in the services, the towns of Moranbah and Dysart and my team at Astute. I look forward to continuing to work with you all so we can achieve our vision and ensure all children have access to quality, stable care and education.

**Mel Comerford** 

manaford

**Astute Early Years Specialists - Managing Director** 



# Looking to the future

We are very keen to continue to work = with BMA and to renew our partnership with them.

It is absolutely vital that the Alliance forms partnerships with other organisations who work in the Isaac Region.

Ensuring the financial viability of the Alliance is absolutely critical and we will be actively seeking investment from a range of partners.

The Board has decided to transition from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee, and this work will commence in the coming financial year. This will, among other things, also enable us to apply for DGR status, which is an important step in ensuring our financial viability.

We have done amazing work to support the recruitment of more than 30 educators in Moranbah. As we look to the future we will be engaging with educators to understand their needs and working hard to ensure we can retain the educators currently working in the pilot towns.

We will continue to connect with and reach out to all levels of government to share who we are, what we stand for and what regional communities need to ensure all children and families have access to quality, stable care and education services.

The Alliance will continue to work to build and grow a strong professional network in the region, and we aim to continue to provide or support the provision of leadership, networking and professional development opportunities for all educators.

The Alliance will continue to advocate for the early childhood and school age care sector, children, families and communities and we look forward to creating and sharing a new campaign to deepen the wider community's understanding of how critical stable, sustainable, quality offerings of childcare area to everyone.

The Alliance understands that the Dysart community has not progressed as far as Moranbah throughout the pilot project and we will be working closely with the Dysart community and interested stakeholders to better understand the unique needs and challenges in Dysart and how the Alliance can better support and assist.

We seek to continue to build and nurture strong partnerships with other organisations that believe in our vision and objectives.

We have a goal of sending more educators to leading sector conferences in the coming years and we will seek more support from possible partners and sponsors to assist us in doing this.

We would like to connect with other regional locations that could benefit from the support and insights of the Alliance, such as the Central Highlands area.

We are focused on securing more stable housing for educators to ensure we can attract and retain educators in the community.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

### PARTNER WITH US

### The CLA is seeking partners to join with us to:

- Develop long term, secure streams of revenue to support the ongoing initiatives of the CLA
- Develop mutually beneficial relationships for both the partner organisation and the CLA.

### Partnering with the CLA will help support the following activities:

- Supporting service providers to navigate the immigration system, and pay for the process, when seeking skilled workers from overseas,
- Supporting service providers to access, secure, manage and fund appropriate affordable housing for educators relocating to rural communities,
- The strategic provision of professional development opportunities for educators and leaders in the sector,
- Ongoing administration, governance and advocacy activities for the CLA.

### SPONSOR AN EVENT

The CLA is seeking organisations who are interested in sponsoring CLA initiatives, events and programs.

## We want to encourage organisations to support events and programs that:

- help attract and retain early childhood professionals,
- provide a sustainable revenue stream to fund effective event-based initiatives.
- develop long-term beneficial relationships with key stakeholders that will support scaling initiatives and encourage other businesses and organisations to consider sponsorship.

### OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- Sign up to Mailing list
- Follow us on socials
- Follow like minded and supportive organisations such as BMA, Thrive by 5, Thriving Qld Kids Partnership, The Parenthood, Welcoming Australia, The Isaac Regional Council, and the early childhood and school age care services in your community





### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANK YOU

### **BMA**

The CLA is extremely thankful to BMA for investing in, supporting and promoting this innovative, collaborative approach to supporting the communities in which they live and work. We acknowledge and extend our gratitude to BMA for the coordinated and collective manner in which they sought to address the challenging issues facing the childcare sector, and the broader community, for the benefit of all.

### **EXTENDING OUR THANKS** AND APPRECIATION

The CLA would also like to thank and acknowledge the support, time, effort and commitment of the following individuals and groups:

The centre leaders and educators of the early childhood education and school age care services in Moranbah and Dysart, including:

- Simply Sunshine Early Education
- Moranbah Early Learning Centre
- Moranbah Early Learning Centre Outside School Hours Care
- Bright Kids Outside School Hours Care
- C&K Moranbah Community Kindergarten
- Dysart Community Kindergarten
- Lady Gowrie Child Centre and Community Space

Representatives from the various providers of early childhood education and care services in Moranbah and Dysart, including:

- Jarrid Kennedy, President of the Simply Sunshine Committee
- Dr Sandra Cheeseman, CEO of C&K
- · Louise Jackson, CEO of Lady Gowrie
- The Board of the Moranbah Early Learning Centre
- The volunteer parent management committee of the Dysart Community Kindergarten
- Damon Somerfield and Andrew Paterson from Family Day Care Australia

Representatives from the Isaac Regional Council, with special thanks to:

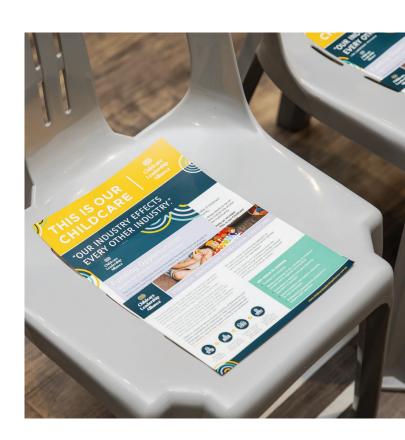
- Melissa Westcott, Councillor and Council Representative on CLA Board
- Beau Jackson, Executive Manager, Advocacy and **External Affairs**
- Shane Brandenberg, Manager, Economy and Prosperity

Others who have or are supporting us, with special thanks to:

- Moranbah Workers Club for donating money to enable us to send an educator to the C&K conference
- C&K for the provision of a complimentary ticket to their conference

### GRANTS

We are very thankful for the support of The Local Buying Foundation, Queensland and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.





# Childcare Leadership Alliance Report

Astute Early Years Specialist Pty Ltd ATF The Comerford Family Trust ABN 27 231 004 262 For the year ended 30 June 2024

Prepared by Xperion - proud to be boring accountants





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### THE CLA STRATEGIC INNOVATION IN REGIONAL CHILDCARE



### **Certificate By Senior Finance Officer**

# Astute Early Years Specialist Pty Ltd ATF The Comerford Family Trust For the year ended 30 June 2024

I, Ashleigh O'Neill being the senior finance officer of Astute Early Years Specialists Pty Ltd (as trustee for The Comerford Family Trust) certify that:

- I have prepared the attached reports in accordance with the requirements set out in the Community Project Contract between BM Alliance Coal Operations Pty Ltd and Astute Early Learning Years Specialists (ATF The Comerford Family Trust) dated the 24th of June 2022.
- This is the final report as outlined in Clause 8.1(d) and Subsection 10 of Schedule 8, Part 1: Semi-Annual, Annual and Final Reports.
- 3. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in the attached final report is a true and accurate reflection of the actual expenditure against budget.

Achlaigh O'Maill

Ashleigh O'Neill

Dated: 23/Oct 2024





# **Income and Expenditure Statement**

Astute Early Years Specialist Pty Ltd ATF The Comerford Family Trust For the year ended 30 June 2024

	CHILDCARE	CHILDCARE LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE (30 JUNE 2023)
	ALLIANCE	
	(30	
	JUNE 2024)	
	2024)	2023/
Childcare Leadership Alliance		
Funding contribution	600,000	600,000
Total Childcare Leadership Alliance	600,000	600,000
Expenditure		
Website design and maintenance	20,452	15,529
Subscriptions	4,598	5,852
Consulting costs	78,673	88,911
Accounting costs	18,450	2,088
Management fee	293,496	264,000
Wages and salaries	200,875	180,121
Insurance	864	
Travel and accommodation	27,292	31,678
Meeting conferences	5,579	2,446
Motor vehicle		327
Other associated costs	641	
Project costs	1.5	7,335
Total Expenditure	650,920	598,288
Gross Surplus	(50,920)	1,712
Current Year Surplus/ (Deficit) Before Income Tax Adjustments	(50,920)	1,712
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit) Before Income Tax	(50,920)	1,712
Net Current Year Surplus After Income Tax	(50,920)	1,712

### THE CLA STRATEGIC INNOVATION IN REGIONAL CHILDCARE



### **True and Fair Position**

# Astute Early Years Specialist Pty Ltd ATF The Comerford Family Trust For the year ended 30 June 2024

### True and Fair View of Expenditure Against Budget

I, Melissa Comerford being the director of Astute Early Years Specialists Pty Ltd and the Recipient's Representative as set out in the Community Project Contract between BM Alliance Coal Operations Pty Ltd and Astute Early Learning Years Specialists (ATF The Comerford Family Trust) dated the 24th of June 2022, hereby certify that –

The final report attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the expenditure in relation to the Childcare Leadership Alliance Project at the end of the financial year ending on 30 June 2024.

**Melissa Comerford** 

Dated: 23 Oct/2024





## **Compilation Report**

### Astute Early Years Specialist Pty Ltd ATF The Comerford Family Trust For the year ended 30 June 2024

Compilation report to Astute Early Years Specialist Pty Ltd ATF The Comerford Family Trust.

We have compiled the accompanying Income and Expenditure Statement of Astute Early Years Specialists Pty Ltd ATF The Comerford Family Trust to the extent that it relates to activities undertaken for the Childcare Leadership Alliance Project.

### The Responsibility of the Recipient's Representative

The Representative of Astute Early Years Specialist Pty Ltd ATF The Comerford Family Trust as detailed in the Community Project Contract between BM Alliance Coal Operations Pty Ltd and Astute Early Learning Years Specialists (ATF The Comerford Family Trust) dated the 24th of June 2022 is solely responsible for the information contained in this final report, the reliability, accuracy and completeness of the information.

### Our Responsibility

On the basis of information provided by the Representative(s) of Astute Early Years Specialists Pty Ltd ATF The Comerford Family Trust, we have compiled the Income and Expenditure Statement to satisfy the requirements details in the Community Project Contract.

### **Assurance Disclaimer**

Since a compilation engagement is not an assurance engagement, we are not required to verify the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the information provided to us to compile these financial statements. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or a review conclusion on these financial statements.

The Income and Expenditure Statement was compiled exclusively for the benefit of the Representative of Astute Early Years Specialists Pty Ltd who are responsible for the reliability, accuracy and completeness of the information used to compile them. We do not accept responsibility for the contents of the attached final report.

**Xperion Pty Ltd** 

Robert King

**Chartered Accountant** 

Dated: / / 22 10 2024





# THE CLA STRATEGIC INNOVATION IN REGIONAL CHILDCARE

### STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The Childcare Leadership Alliance is a registered not for profit, incorporated association.



### **CONTACT US**

### www.childcareleadershipalliance.com.au

CLA@weareastute.com.au

https://www.facebook.com/childcareleadershipalliance

https://www.instagram.com/ChildcareLeadershipAlliance/

https://www.linkedin.com/company/childcare-leadership-alliance/



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

