

August 2023

Investment Proposal – Delivering Prevention and Early Intervention through Supported Playgroups

Presented to The Hon. Kate Washington MP, Minister for Families and Communities
Executive Summary

‘The thing that small talk does is that it kind of breaks those patterns of parenting that we sort of follow just because that’s what we’ve experienced. It sort of breaks the circuit so that you can go well actually, this is how we’re going to do things in our family.’

The Problem	<p>The first 2000 days of a child’s life are critical determinants of physical, social and emotional health¹. Experiences during these early years have deep and long-lasting effects on schooling and employment, lifelong health and risk of substance abuse and criminal behaviour.</p> <p>The need to improve experiences in a child’s first 2000 days is particularly critical for vulnerable families, including First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and the socio-economically disadvantaged, who face greater barriers without appropriate support.</p> <p>The recently released 2023 Australian Child Maltreatment Study found that child maltreatment remains widespread and is associated with severe mental health problems and behavioural harms, both in childhood and adulthood. People who experienced child maltreatment were 4.5 times more likely to have attempted suicide and 3.9 times more likely to have self-harmed.</p> <p>The study also found that more young people are experiencing emotional abuse, with the research showing that the impacts of this on child development and future mental health are more significant than previously understood.</p> <p>This emphasises the need for investment in evidence-based early intervention and prevention programs that support better parent-child relationships and reduce the likelihood of abuse.</p>
The Solution	<p>smalltalk is an evidence-based early intervention program for parents of young children (0-5 years), delivered in Supported Playgroups by a qualified facilitator. It was developed in Victoria by the Parenting Research Centre to improve the learning outcomes of children living in families that can benefit from additional support.</p> <p>smalltalk consists of a set of strategies and resources that parents can use to enhance the home learning environment for their children from birth to school age. It aims to increase:</p>

¹ NSW Government (2021) ‘Brighter Beginnings’, NSW Government, accessed 24 April 2023.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality and frequency of parents' interactions with their children 2. Level of stimulation in the home environment 3. Parental self-care (stress management and seeking support) 4. Parenting confidence 5. Parents' connection to their community and local services. <p><i>smalltalk</i> is already being delivered successfully in 388 Supported Playgroups in Victoria, with a three-year randomised trial showing that participation in the program resulted in improvement in children's learning and developmental outcomes, lasting into school years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children whose parents had participated showed better spelling and word recognition at age 7 years. • Facilitators and parents reported that the program had a positive effect on parent knowledge, skills, and behaviour e.g. they were more verbally responsive to their child and engaged in more activities with their child at home. • Parent satisfaction with the interventions was extremely high, with 95% of parents either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the program • Families with greater needs and identified vulnerabilities benefited more if they received concurrent home visits (<i>smalltalk plus</i>) alongside group participation. <p><i>smalltalk</i> can be successfully adapted for specific communities, where knowledge is shared across entire kinship care system including grandparents, aunts, and uncles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Victoria, a co-designed, adapted version of the program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families (<i>smalltalk Big Yarns</i>) was developed to increase accessibility and usability. • <i>smalltalk</i> has been translated into 8 languages – Arabic, Mandarin, Dari, Karen, Farsi, Vietnamese, Burmese and Hakha Chin. <p><i>smalltalk</i> can help break the cycle of disadvantage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many participants in the supported playgroup cohort have experienced the child protection system themselves, particularly the younger parents. • <i>smalltalk</i> is effective in normalising positive parenting practices within family systems, thus disrupting the legacy of child maltreatment and improving both child and parent outcomes.
The Investment	<p><i>smalltalk</i> is a low-cost, high-impact opportunity to support positive parenting change and improve early childhood outcomes. <i>smalltalk</i> could be rolled out across NSW and scaled up rapidly, as it is delivered as an enhancement to existing Supported Playgroups.</p> <p>Requiring only a modest investment of \$1.5 million from the NSW Government, <i>smalltalk</i> would enable evidence-based parenting supports to be widely available and easily accessible in Department of Communities and Justice districts delivering</p>

	<p>Targeted Early Intervention funded supported playgroups. Commencing the NSW rollout in the 2023-24 fiscal year will require an initial government investment of \$500,000, with the remaining funding being allocated over the subsequent two years.</p> <p>One hundred and eighty-eight Fams members registered for a sector information session on smalltalk, with 86% of those in attendance indicating interest in running the program in the 2023-24 FY.</p>
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About Fams

Fams is a New South Wales peak body that supports the not-for-profit sector to build on capacity and capability. We advocate for improved policies for children, families, communities and services.

Fams works collaboratively with Government, Policy and decision-makers, non-government organisations, academic organisations, peak bodies, family and community services sector, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and organisations working with diverse communities.

Children and family's safety, health and wellbeing are at the heart of all our work. Fams is committed to children and families receiving the support they need, through evidence-informed and outcomes-based service delivery, government and sector accountability and influencing policy outcomes.

Contact

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The growing need to support vulnerable families in the first 2000 days

Research shows that the circumstances in which children grow up, including the home learning environment and the quality of the parent-child relationship, strongly influence long-term development². However, socioeconomic disparities in learning and development are evident from birth and persist across childhood³.

Risk factors are more present where there is a young parent, single parent, language other than English spoken at home, low parental education, low family income, receipt of government benefits, low parenting self-efficacy, or parent psychological distress⁴.

In addition, increasing numbers of children and families are requiring support in NSW. Department of Communities and Justice data shows that Risk Of Significant Harm reports rose by 13.5 per cent overall

²Siddiqi A, Irwin LG, Hertzman C (2007) 'Total environment assessment model for early child development', Vancouver: Organización Mundial de la Salud.

³Nicholson JM, Lucas N, Berthelsen D, Wake M (2012) 'Socioeconomic inequality profiles in physical and developmental health from 0-7 years: Australian National Study', J Epidemiol Community Health, 66(1), pp.81-87.

⁴Hackworth N, Nicholson J, Matthews J, Berthelsen D, Cann W, Westrupp E, Ukoumunne O, Yu M, Bennetto J, Bennetts S, Hamilton V. (2013) 'Early Home Learning Study: Overview and outcomes'. Final report to the Victorian Government Department of Education and Early Child Development.

in the three years to 2020–21, up by more than 20 per cent in some locations. For Aboriginal children, over the five years to 2019–20, there was a 40 per cent increase⁵.

The *2023 Australian Child Maltreatment Study*⁶ is the first Australian study to identify how many Australians experienced any of the five types of child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and exposure to domestic violence), and estimate the impacts on key health outcomes through life.

- Child maltreatment is widespread. Across the population, the Study identified high prevalence of physical abuse (32.0%), sexual abuse (28.5%), emotional abuse (30.9%), and exposure to domestic violence (39.6%).
- Child maltreatment is associated with severe mental health problems and behavioural harms, both in childhood and adulthood.
 - Adults who experienced child maltreatment are 2.8 times more likely to have a mental health disorder than adults who have not experienced child maltreatment.
 - People who experienced child maltreatment were 4.5 times more likely to have attempted suicide and 3.9 times more likely to have self-harmed.
- Emotional abuse is on the rise, impacting 35% of young people surveyed, and is linked to severe mental health problems that rapidly commence and cause long-term difficulties for children and youth in dealing with key life events and experiences, school performance, relationships and employment.

In the context of increasing demand for child protection services in NSW, there is a strong case for greater investment in early intervention and prevention initiatives targeting children and families experiencing vulnerable circumstances.

Building capacity within families that need additional support

Enhancing a family's capacity in the early years is critically important for a child's long-term development. A home environment rich in language and age-appropriate stimulating play has a strong positive impact on children's development in early childhood and presents a powerful opportunity for early intervention.

Early childhood parent-child interactions have been shown to mediate the effects of family socioeconomic disadvantage on developmental outcomes.⁷ Supports that aim to enhance positive, loving parent-child relationships, teach non-abusive parenting strategies, combat negative attributions, and enhance parental confidence are likely to be the most effective for the prevention and treatment of child maltreatment.

⁵ NSW Communities and Justice (2023), 'Quarterly Report on Services for Children and Young People 2022-23 (Q1)', NSW Government, accessed 24 April 2023.

⁶ Pacella RE, Nation A, Mathews B, Scott JG, Higgins DJ, Haslam DM, Dunne MP, Finkelhor D, Meinck F, Erskine HE, Thomas HJ, Malacova E, Lawrence DM, Monks C. Child maltreatment and health service utilisation: findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study. *Med J Aust* 2023; 218 (6 Suppl): S40-S46.

⁷ Miller EB, Farkas G, Vandell DL, Duncan GJ (2014) 'Do the effects of head start vary by parental preacademic stimulation?', *Child Development* 85(4):1385–400.

⁸ Yeung WJ, Linver MR, Brooks-Gunn J (2002) 'How money matters for young children's development: parental investment and family processes.', *Child Development* 73(6):1861–79.

Research has demonstrated for those parents who have experienced traumatic experiences including child maltreatment, families should not only be supported to process the impact of trauma, but also to improve their ability to parent in a warm and supportive capacity⁹.

Population studies of parenting interventions have demonstrated reductions in rates of physical abuse across whole communities, indicating even parents who do not actively attend parenting programs benefit from their availability. This likely occurs through changing social norms and social contagion effects. Since these focus on strengthening parent-child relationships and reducing known parental risk factors, it is likely they would also reduce rates of emotional abuse.

Supported Playgroups as a means to build parenting capacity

Supported Playgroups target families who are often vulnerable, facing stressful life circumstances alongside low social support and economic pressures. They aim to support families with particular needs or vulnerabilities by providing opportunities for parents to meet and share experiences, and for children to play, learn and socialise. They are defined as having a dual-focus on supporting the development and wellbeing of both children and their parents, together.

Supported playgroups target families who are: culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD; including migrant and humanitarian entrant families); Indigenous; young parent families; socially isolated; disadvantaged; experiencing mental health issues; or living with a disability (either the parent or child).

Research based on *Growing up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children* has explored the association between participation in playgroup (inclusive of all types of playgroups and parent-child groups) and outcomes for children aged 4 to 5 years¹⁰.

The research indicates that disadvantaged families were least likely to attend but most likely to benefit from attending playgroup. Both boys and girls from disadvantaged families who had attended playgroup scored 3–4% higher in learning competence than those who had not attended playgroup.

Girls from disadvantaged families who attended playgroup scored 5% higher on social and emotional functioning than those who did not attend playgroup. This is noteworthy, given that the *Child Maltreatment Study* indicates that girls experience particularly high rates of sexual abuse and emotional abuse, including double the rate of Child Sexual Abuse¹¹.

Introducing smalltalk – a low-cost, high-impact policy solution

Fams recommends the NSW Government invest in *smalltalk*, an evidence-based, early intervention program for parents of young children (0–5 years) delivered in Supported Playgroups by a qualified facilitator (usually two hours per week).

smalltalk was developed in Victoria by the [Parenting Research Centre](#) to improve the learning outcomes of children living in families that can benefit from additional support. It consists of a set of evidence-based strategies that parents can use to enhance the home learning environment for their children from birth up to school age.

⁹ Silvern, L. (1994) 'Parenting and family stress as mediators of the long-term effects of child abuse', *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 18(5), pp.439-453.

¹⁰ Commerford J and Robinson E (2017) 'Supported playgroups for parents and children: The evidence for their benefits.', *Family Matters*, 99(2017), pp.42-51.

¹¹ Pacella RE, Nation A, Mathews B, Scott JG, Higgins DJ, Haslam DM, Dunne MP, Finkelhor D, Meinck F, Erskine HE, Thomas HJ, Malacova E, Lawrence DM, Monks C. Child maltreatment and health service utilisation: findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study. *Med J Aust* 2023; 218 (6 Suppl): S40-S46.

It has been designed flexibly to fit within the normal rhythm of service delivery for Supported Playgroups by local government and community service agencies, offering an effective, evidence-based approach to working with vulnerable families to enhance the early home learning environment and developmental outcome of young children.

The program seeks to build capability in five key areas:

1. **Quality everyday interactions:** Quality interactions between parents and their children happen in every family. What matters is how often they occur, and in how many different ways. 'Quality interactions' refers to the little extra parents can do to make the most of everyday opportunities for children to extend their language and learning.
2. **Stimulating environment:** A stimulating environment for a child is one designed to help them learn and develop. *smalltalk* encourages parents to establish and maintain routines; read and play with their children; engage with their community and local resources, and consider the amount and type of media their child accesses.
3. **Parental self-care:** Parents who attend to their own health and well-being needs can more effectively meet their child's needs and stimulate their development. This component focusses on simple stress-mitigation skills and aims to increase parental coping skills.
4. **Parenting confidence:** Increased parental confidence can help parents turn knowledge into action by supporting them to apply the knowledge gained from participation in a *smalltalk* group.
5. **Community and services connectedness:** A person's well-being can be affected by the quality of their social environment and the extent to which they and their family feel supported by and contribute to their community. This component of *smalltalk* focuses on helping parents increase their knowledge of and participation in local, community-based services, and to access more opportunities for community-based social and personal support.

An additional component of the approach, *smalltalk plus* includes in-home support to help participants use the *smalltalk* strategies in their homes. This involves a qualified facilitator visiting a family in their own home. Parents participating in *smalltalk plus* may also be attending a Supported Playgroup.

During these home-based sessions, parents see practical examples of the *smalltalk* strategies, and have the opportunity to practice these ideas with guidance from a qualified facilitator.

An evidence-based approach with enduring benefits

A three-year randomised trial funded by the Victorian Government and involving 2228 parents showed that *smalltalk* delivered improvements in children's learning and developmental outcomes, lasting into school years¹²:

- Children whose parents had participated showed better spelling and word recognition at age 7 years.
- Facilitators and parents reported that *smalltalk* had a positive effect on parent knowledge, skills, and behaviour e.g. they were more verbally responsive to their child and engaged in more activities with their child at home.

¹² Hackworth N, Nicholson J, Matthews J, Berthelsen D, Cann W, Westrupp E, Ukoumunne O, Yu M, Bennetto J, Bennetts S, Hamilton V. (2013) 'Early Home Learning Study: Overview and outcomes'. Final report to the Victorian Government Department of Education and Early Child Development.

- Parent satisfaction with the interventions was extremely high, with 95% of parents either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the program.
- Families with greater needs and identified vulnerabilities benefited more if they received concurrent home visits alongside group participation.

A snapshot of smalltalk participant feedback

'It's the little things; now they seem obvious, but [smalltalk] really points out what is important.'

'I felt less stressed. As a parent, I felt like I was more confident that I was doing the right things or that I would be able to deal with unexpected things. And I saw the relationship that we [with son] were developing was becoming a lot closer and more positive. So I guess it was that nice feeling of "Oh look what we're doing for each other" and then being able to recognise that this was really nourishing for him.'

'Helps with play at home, something I've always struggled with. Learning to play with him at his level. Just join in with what he's doing. Not having the pressure to play in a certain way.'

'The cards [program resources] supported my use of the strategies at home, including for my partner who didn't come to the group.'

'It offered me benefits not offered by other playgroups. For example, tips, supporting my child's learning, and it was interactive'.

Benefits for babies and toddlers

The *Early Home Learning Study: Overview and Outcomes* report on *smalltalk* presented to the Victorian Government found that parents who attended *smalltalk* improved in a number of areas:

smalltalk for babies	
Parents reported that they:	Facilitators directly observed that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Were more verbally responsive to their child ✓ Were engaged with more activities with their child in the home ✓ Provided a richer home literacy environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Parents followed their child's lead more ✓ Parents used more descriptive language

smalltalk for toddlers	
Parents reported that they:	Facilitators directly observed that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Were more verbally responsive to their child ✓ Were engaged with more activities with their child in the home ✓ Engaged in higher quality parent-child interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Parents followed their child's lead more ✓ Parents maintained their children's interest in activities ✓ Parents engaged in high quality parent child interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Parents continued to report and show improvements five months after smalltalk sessions finished 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Parents who received in-home coaching as well as attending a smalltalk group showed the biggest improvements 	

How *smalltalk* can help break the cycle of disadvantage

With its focus on building parental capability and positive relationships, the learnings of *smalltalk* can be shared with the entire kinship care system including grandparents, aunties, and uncles in communities where it has been delivered.

In Victoria, a co-designed, adapted version of the program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families (*smalltalk Big Yarns*) was developed to increase accessibility and usability. The program has also been translated into 8 languages – Arabic, Mandarin, Dari, Karen, Farsi, Vietnamese, Burmese and Hakha Chin – making it suitable for roll-out in a number of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Acknowledging that many participants in the Supported Playgroup cohort have experienced child maltreatment themselves, particularly the younger parents, *smalltalk* presents an important opportunity to break the cycle of disadvantage for families with multiple risk factors. The program is effective in normalising positive parenting practices within family systems, thus disrupting the legacy of child maltreatment and improving both child and parent outcomes.

Case Study

Jane* is a mum of a fun loving 2-year-old who was referred to *smalltalk* following a challenging pregnancy and postnatal health complications. Living on farm and with few social connections, Jane found herself isolated with limited confidence in her parenting skills. Her counsellor referred her to *smalltalk*, which proved to be an essential to support both her child and her own parenting confidence. It also provided her and her partner with a common language to best care for their son.

"It's meant we've been able to be more on the same page. He's [Jane's partner] been there for nearly every session and now we get to talk about what's going on together. We understand that our son needs warm and gentle parenting, that you don't have to yell, that it doesn't work. You just want what's best for your kid. I was an older mum, living rural and didn't know anyone else with kids. It made such a difference to my confidence to have someone come in and tell me I was doing ok, that I was doing a good job of being a mum."

Sector support across NSW

Fams recently held a sector information session to assess the level of support and readiness for a potential statewide implementation of *smalltalk* and *Big Yarns* programs in New South Wales. With nearly 100 services participating in the session and an impressive 86% of attendees expressing enthusiasm for adopting these programs within their service, it is clear that the sector is fully prepared and capable of taking part in what could potentially become the largest-ever rollout of evidence-based family support initiatives in the state.

"I'm excited of the prospect of additional funding and the opportunity to implement an evidence-based program that will enhance outcomes for families. The program will also strengthen the sector and upskill the workforce". David Gbogbo, Catholic Care.

"smalltalk and Big Yarns sound like excellent programs to engage parents through an already trusted activity (supported playgroup) with an evidence base to back up its efficacy. What an amazing opportunity this might provide to our families!" Cathy Dyer, Maari Ma Aboriginal Health



"This program would provide me with the tools and knowledge needed to support parents achieve better outcomes; socially, emotionally, and cognitively, for their children. Our goal is to support families through practical, evidence-based strategies, building resilience and emotional wellbeing, creating a cycle of positive change". Cathryn Ferreira, Belong Blue Mountains Community and Community Services.

"As the Manager of several TEI Supported Playgroups, I would be delighted to see smalltalk and Big Yarns rolled out across the sector. I also have every confidence that if successful, FAMS will deliver high quality and meaningful sector support. Thank you for the work you do supporting our work!" Vanessa Hodges Schembri, Gunnedah Family Support

Recommendation and Delivery Timeline

There is a clear need for low-cost, high-impact policies to better support children and families in NSW. As a highly-adaptable and implementation-ready program, *smalltalk* could be rolled out across NSW and scaled up rapidly as an enhancement to existing Supported Playgroups.

Requiring only a modest investment of **\$1.5 million** from the NSW Government, *smalltalk* would enable evidence-based parenting supports to be widely available and easily accessible in all Department of Communities and Justice districts.

Through our network of non-government organisations, Fams could support delivery of this project from October 2023 (assuming notice of funding by September 2023). Initially, the focus would be placed on engagement and needs assessment, clarifying goals and readiness, tailoring the package of delivery elements and scheduling delivery across the most appropriate local government areas.

Fams will partner with the Parenting Research Centre to support *smalltalk* roll-out. The Parenting Research Centre in partnership with Fams will provide training and implementation support to all DCJ funded TEI supported playgroups.

Program roll-out

The NSW Government will fund Fams to implement *smalltalk* and *Big Yarns* to all DCJ TEI funded supported playgroups. This will include Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). Fams is currently consultation with AbSec to explore the implementation of an adapted version of Big Yarns in NSW. It is essential that this initiative is carried out in collaboration with our Aboriginal partners, and with active engagement from the community. This approach is crucial to guarantee that the program effectively caters to the specific cultural and community needs of NSW Aboriginal children, families, and service providers.

Over 200 Agencies delivering 450 Supported Playgroups in NSW with approximately 450 facilitators will have the opportunity to have access to this exciting, evidence-based program. Costing equates to approximately \$3000 per playgroup to be fully trained and supported with ongoing and resources.

Proposed Activities

1. Implementation support to local agencies (DCJ funded TEI supported playgroups)
 - a. One-hour kick-off/introductory meetings with each agency with the following draft agenda:
 - i. Brief presentation about *smalltalk*
 - ii. Presentation of program requirements and deliverables

- iii. Roles and responsibilities
- iv. Expectations
- v. Brief readiness assessment detailing infrastructure requirement and processes

Facilitator Training, comprising:

- b. Pre-training activities (e-learning program)
 - c. Two-day training event
 - i. Day 1 – *smalltalk* in SPG
 - ii. Day 2 – *smalltalk* home coaching
 - d. Post-training support
 - i. 1 x online meeting with each facilitator approx. 2-weeks post-training (45-mins)
 - ii. 1 x site visit to observe delivery and coach for improvement (3-hrs)
 - iii. 2 x online, post-site visit review sessions (45 mins each)
 - iv. Facilitator Communities of Practice
 - 1. 2-hour facilitated, online sessions 3 x per year.
2. Agency Support
- a. Half-day manager orientation/training with the following draft presentation outline:
 - i. Introduction to *smalltalk*
 - ii. 'Coaching support' approach
 - iii. Program materials access
 - iv. Data collection and reporting requirements and processes
 - b. Managers' Program Review meetings
 - i. 2-hour, regional online senior staff meetings held quarterly
 - 1. Review of roll-out
 - 2. Presentation of data (if possible)
 - 3. Program updates

Indicative costings

Item	Total
Training	\$320,000
Agency implementation support	\$320,000
Facilitator post-training support	\$575,000
Adaptation of Big Yarns	\$95,000
PRC Administration cost	\$90,000
Resources/Materials	\$80,000
Travel (Flights/mileage/accommodation/ car hire/ catering/ venue hire)	\$20,000
Total program cost	1.5 million

Assumptions

1. There are approx. 450 playgroups delivered by approx. 200 Agencies in NSW and 450 supported playgroup facilitators in NSW who will need to be trained and supported.
2. Project will cover PRC program management and oversight.

3. Supported playgroup facilitators will be given the time to participate in training and post-training support activities.
4. Facilitator training events will be limited to 15 participants per training event, with one trainer. Costs are based on one trainer per training event.
5. A minimum of 30 facilitator training events will be needed to cover the anticipated number of facilitators requiring training (450 facilitators/15 participants per event)
6. Supported playgroups in NSW are 2-hours in length
7. Manager training events will be limited to 30 participants per event, with one presenter
8. Training costs include one hard copy facilitator manual and one set of parent materials for each participant at \$63 each.
9. Facilitator Manuals will be provided in hard copy to each Facilitator training participant.
10. PRC responsible for prep and coordination of Community of Practice (CoP) events
11. Community of Practice Sessions delivery format:
 - a. Groups for CoPs will be determined in discussion with Fams and may reflect Training groups.
 - b. Each CoP will comprise a maximum of 15 participants per event.
 - c. Each CoP Group will be invited to three CoPs meetings each over the life of the project.
12. No significant changes needed to *smalltalk* website.
13. *smalltalk* parent facing materials will be re-branded with funder (NSW govt/ Fams) details.
14. PRC will manage the printing, storage and distribution of parent materials to participating agencies/sites.
15. There is no train-the-trainer program currently available but can be costed and developed.
16. All costs noted are ex-GST.
17. Budget allocation has been made for the co design of the reviewed content of *Big Yarns* adaptation for NSW.
18. Supported playgroups are facilitated by a paid facilitator who is a trained early childhood educator, and aim to support families with particular needs or vulnerabilities by providing opportunities for parents to meet and share experiences, and for children to play, learn and socialise.