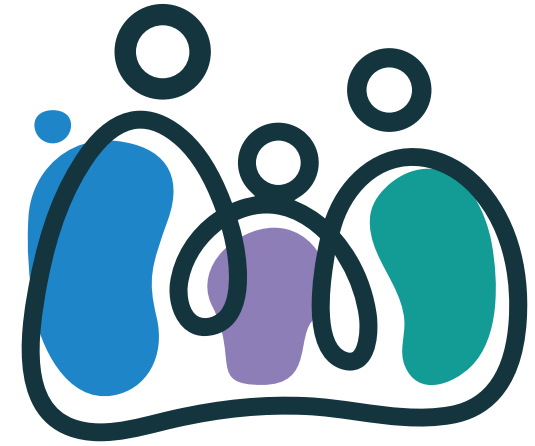


Our Vision is that every child's development is nurtured by the community to ensure they reach their potential!



**STRONGER  
TOGETHER**  
FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2025 AT A GLANCE**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

It is with great pride and gratitude that we welcome you to the Stronger Together Foundation's Annual Report for 2025. This year marked an important chapter in our journey, as we built on strong foundations to deepen our impact for children with disability, development delays or who are neurodivergent and the families who support them.

A significant milestone in 2025 was the celebration of our first anniversary as the Stronger Together Foundation. This milestone provided an opportunity to reflect on our progress while reaffirming our commitment to inclusion, connection and community-led support. The Foundation has continued to grow in confidence and capability, guided by the same purpose that has always underpinned our work.

This year saw the introduction of several new initiatives to strengthen support for families and professionals. We hosted our first Annual School Options Workshop, bringing together schools, professionals and families in a practical and supportive setting, and were honoured to receive a letter of recognition from Mark Hodges, Member of State Parliament, acknowledging its value and impact.

We also introduced free Speech and Occupational Therapy screeners, providing families with an accessible entry point to better understand their child's development. In addition, we delivered our first sibling day camp, Stronger Sibs, creating space for siblings to connect, build confidence and feel recognised. This initiative reinforced our commitment to supporting the whole family and was made possible through The CommBank (CBA) Staff Foundation Community Grants. Professional development remained a key focus throughout 2025 with the launch of our online Professional Development Workshops, expanding our reach and providing flexible, evidence-informed learning aligned with neurodiversity-affirming practice.

We were also proud to host our fourth annual Stronger Together Conference, a cornerstone event for our community. This year's conference featured our first Inclusive Talent Showcase, celebrating the strengths and individuality of neurodivergent young people and reinforcing the importance of inclusive spaces. The conference was made possible through The Hills Shire Community Grants Program.

Creating opportunities for inclusion beyond our centre walls remained a priority. Our Sensory Breakout Tent supported families at a range of



community events, including the Hills Food and Wine Festival, providing a calm and welcoming space for children who may otherwise find large events overwhelming.

Connection and joy were also central to our community events program. In 2025, we hosted two exclusive evenings at Lollipops Playland, offering inclusive experiences where children could play freely and families could connect.

None of these achievements would be possible without the dedication of supporters, partners, the governance of our Board of Directors and the trust of the families we serve. As we look ahead, we remain committed to growing and evolving while staying true to our purpose. Together, we are stronger, and together we will continue to build a community where every child is supported to thrive.

Ellen Kulbicki, CEO  
*Educational and Developmental Psychologist*

# OUR IMPACT IN 2025



children & families supported through therapy



**7,975**

hours individual therapy



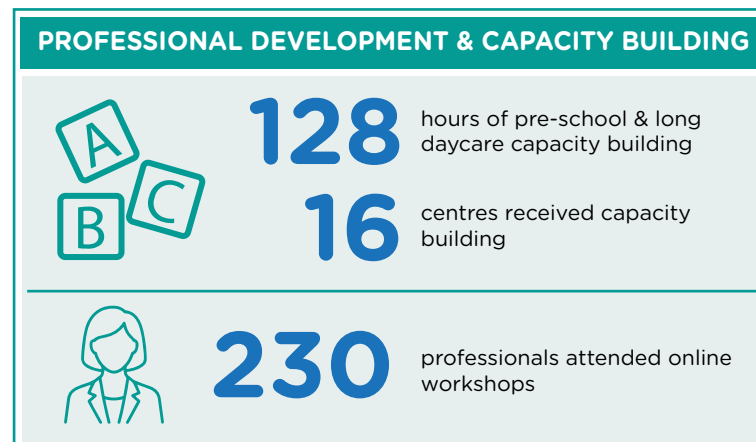
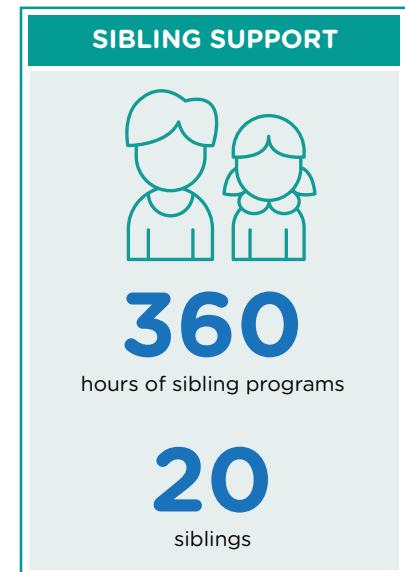
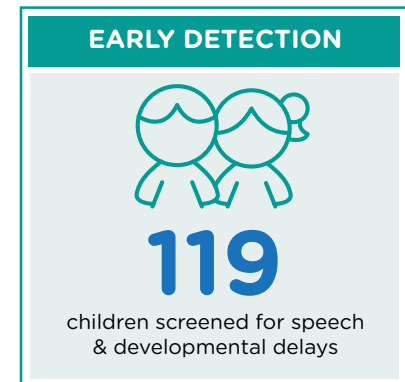
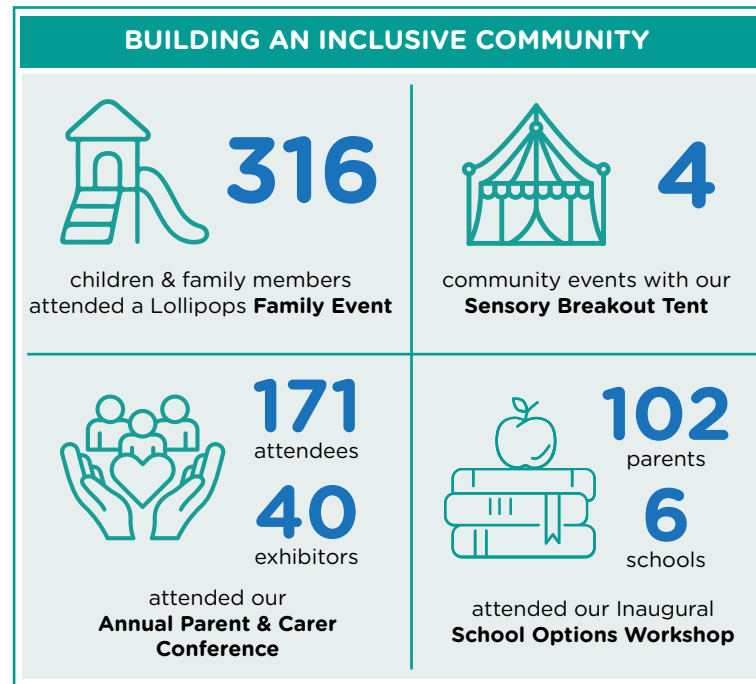
**2,738**

hours of termly specialised groups



**1,812**

hours of school holiday specialised groups



# FAMILY SPOTLIGHT - Luca's Journey

## Diagnosis

Luca's journey began early. At just 16 months old, there were signs that he might need additional support, although his official diagnosis didn't come until he was four. His family first noticed an inflexibility around changes at home, particularly when routines shifted after Covid restrictions eased. Small things, such as where cars were parked, and differences in his play patterns stood out.

Receiving the diagnosis and beginning the support journey was confusing, overwhelming and, at times, frustrating. Having accessed support previously with other children before the introduction of the NDIS, the process felt completely different this time around. It was a steep learning curve for the whole family.

## Discovering the Foundation

Luca's Mum Tori first heard about Stronger Together Foundation online, through Facebook. What stood out most was the availability of group services. At a time when navigating support options felt daunting, knowing there were structured, welcoming programs available for Luca made the decision to connect an easy one.

## Ongoing support

Luca has taken part in sensory and communication groups, individual speech therapy and Andy Bear Club, and over time Tori has seen a real shift. "The biggest difference has been his ability to connect — he's building friendships, becoming more aware of others and developing skills that are preparing him for school."

For Tori, the experience has been just as important. "It's also helped me build connections with other parents who understand what this journey looks like. One of the most meaningful parts has been the relationships Luca has formed along the way."

"The connection he's built with his therapists across groups, individual sessions and Andy Bear Club has been really special."

## Smooth transition to school

As Luca prepared for school, the Foundation's programs played a key role in building his independence and confidence. He developed an understanding of classroom routines such as group time, eating together, participating in shared activities and starting and finishing tasks.

Just as importantly, he learned how to connect with peers and build on those friendships. These skills laid strong foundations for a smoother, more confident start to his school journey.



“  
Even though it  
may feel overwhelming  
at first, your child will find  
their place. You will build a  
connection with them. It may  
not be what you expected,  
but it isn't bad. It's just  
different.

Tori, Luca's Mum

”

# NEW INITIATIVES IN 2025

## Stronger Sibs Camp

In 2025, we delivered our first Stronger Sibs program, a dedicated sibling day camp held at CCC Camps Hawkesbury in Yarramundi for siblings aged 8-14 who have a brother or sister with a disability, developmental delay or who is neurodivergent.

Across the program, children took part in a combination of facilitated group discussions and outdoor adventure activities designed to build confidence, resilience and peer connection. Activities such as rock climbing, archery, laser tag and the flying fox created opportunities for siblings to encourage one another, try new experiences and develop friendships with others who share similar family experiences.

Stronger Sibs reinforced the Foundation's commitment to supporting the whole family and highlighted the importance of sibling wellbeing.



### Family Story

For many families, siblings quietly navigate the complexities of growing up alongside a brother or sister with additional needs. Jack, aged 10, is the older brother to Elise, who experiences developmental challenges. His mum Jessica enrolled him in the Stronger Together Foundation Stronger Sibs Day Camp hoping he could connect with other children who share similar family experiences.

The program gave Jack the opportunity to build friendships, take part in outdoor activities and reflect on his role as a sibling. Jessica noticed the impact immediately. Jack returned home each day excited to talk about what he had learned and experienced. The activities helped him build confidence and gave him space to share his thoughts and feelings.

Since attending the program, Jack has developed a deeper understanding of his sister and feels more comfortable asking questions about her needs. Programs like Stronger Sibs help ensure siblings feel seen, supported and connected to others who understand their journey.

“  
Jack loved the program.  
He came home excited each  
day to share his experiences.  
For a quiet kid, he was very  
bubbly and confident talking  
about his day.”

- Jess, Mum of Jack



CommBank  
**Staff Foundation**

# NEW INITIATIVES IN 2025

## School Options Workshop

In 2025, we delivered our inaugural Annual School Options Workshop, providing families with practical guidance as they navigate schooling pathways for children with additional needs.

The workshop brought together local schools, professionals and families in a supportive setting, helping to reduce uncertainty and empower parents through shared information and connection. We were honoured to receive a letter of recognition from Mark Hodges, Member of Parliament acknowledging the value and impact of this initiative for local families.

The success of the inaugural School Options Workshop has established it as an important addition to the Foundation's annual calendar, strengthening our role as a trusted source of support during key transition points for children and families.



## Celebrating Neurodiversity Week

We proudly marked Celebrating Neurodiversity Week on the calendar for the first time. Held each March, this global initiative recognises and celebrates the strengths, talents and diverse ways of thinking and learning within the neurodivergent community. It aims to shift conversations away from deficits and towards understanding, acceptance and genuine inclusion.

Throughout the month of March, we shared resources, insights and conversations across our community to promote a strengths-based perspective and encourage more inclusive environments at home, in schools and in practice. It was an opportunity to elevate lived experience and reinforce the value of different ways of experiencing the world.

Celebrating Neurodiversity Week reaffirmed our ongoing commitment to inclusion and our belief that when every child is understood, respected and supported, they are better placed to thrive. It also marked an important step in continuing to embed neurodiversity affirming principles across everything we do.

# NEW INITIATIVES IN 2025

## Free Screeners

In 2025, Stronger Together Foundation screened 119 children with our free therapy screening programs, supporting families to identify areas of need early and access the right supports sooner.

We began by introducing our free Communication Screeners, providing accessible speech and language checks for children in our community. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with families valuing the opportunity to gain professional insight without financial barriers.

Following the success of this initiative, we expanded our offering to include free Occupational Therapy Screeners. This allowed us to support children presenting with challenges related to regulation, fine and gross motor skills, sensory processing and everyday functional tasks.

Together, these screening programs have strengthened our early-intervention pathway, helping families take confident next steps and ensuring children receive timely, appropriate support.



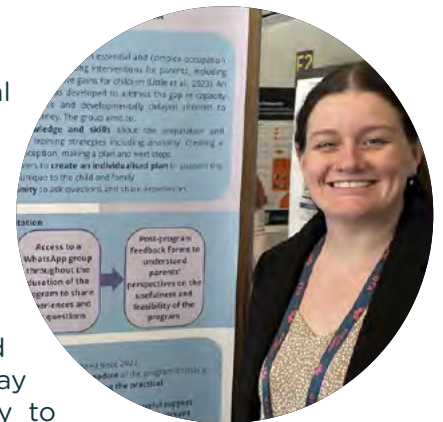
# OUR TEAM

Occupational Therapists	8	Administration	2
Early Childhood Teacher	1	Events and Marketing	1
Therapy Assistants	7	Speech Pathologist	7
Management	3		



## Staff Spotlight

We were proud to see our Lead Occupational Therapist, Rhyannah, take the stage at the OT Australia Conference in Adelaide, sharing her expertise with allied health professionals from across the country. At the conference, Rhyannah presented on Sensory Kidz, our play-based program that supports children with sensory differences through engaging activities and helps families build confidence in everyday routines. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the innovative work we do and the real impact it has on children and families.



# STRONGER TOGETHER CONFERENCE 2025

## Empowering your journey through connections

We were proud to host our fourth annual Stronger Together Conference in 2025, made possible through a grant from The Hills Shire Council and the generous support of our community through fundraising efforts. This annual event continues to be a cornerstone of our work, providing families, carers and professionals with access to trusted information, shared experiences and meaningful connection.



The 2025 conference saw a change of venue and format, moving to Visy Dior, Norwest, and condensing the program from 9:00am to 2:00pm. This revised format was intentionally designed to improve accessibility for families, recognising the competing demands many parents and carers face.

We were honoured to welcome Sarah Hayden as our keynote speaker, whose insights resonated deeply with families and professionals alike. Returning once again as MC was Sandy Golder, whose warmth, authenticity and deep understanding of the community continue to set the tone for the day. Panel discussions were expertly facilitated by Jo Abi.

Our parent panel included Atilio from Dads Speak. His contribution as a father was particularly well received, reinforcing the importance of including diverse parental voices. Julie Charlton also joined one of the panels, bringing valuable professional insight alongside lived experience.

Throughout the day, attendees were invited to take part in a creative, collaborative activity, contributing individual canvases that were later brought together to form a mosaic symbolising connection, belonging and community. This collective artwork reflected the spirit of the conference and the shared commitment to supporting one another.

The conference was further enriched by the presence of 40 exhibitors, many of whom were neurodivergent creators and community-based organisations.

“Your staff are amazing and it is a very well thought out and very organised event - a credit to you all!”

“The panel discussions were great - offering a range of disabilities/ ages etc... Loved the talent showcase.”



## Inclusive Talent Showcase

A special addition to the 2025 conference was our first ever Inclusive Talent Showcase. This segment celebrated the strengths, creativity and individuality of neurodivergent young people, offering a platform for participants to perform in a safe, supportive and affirming environment.

For many of these children, opportunities to participate in eisteddfods and mainstream community performances are limited, making the Talent Showcase an important and meaningful inclusion within the conference program. The Talent Showcase reinforced the Foundation's commitment to genuine inclusion.



# COMMUNITY EVENTS

## Inclusive Family Events

We also hosted two exclusive evenings at Lollipops Playland, creating safe and inclusive environments where children could play freely and families could connect.

These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to inclusion beyond formal programs and to creating accessible community experiences for all families. Family events are only possible with the support of Castle Hill RSL Group, Club Grants.



## Out & About in the Community

Throughout 2025, the Stronger Together Foundation supported inclusive community participation through our Sensory Breakout Tent, providing calm and welcoming spaces for families at events including the Hills Food and Wine Festival, Mayor's Easter Egg Hunt, Mayor's Christmas Party and Glenhaven Carols.

These events are supported by Hills Club, Club Grants.



## Professional Development Workshops

In 2025, we expanded our impact beyond direct family support with the introduction of our Professional Development Workshop series. Designed for allied health professionals, educators and those working with neurodivergent children, these sessions focus on practical, neurodiversity-affirming approaches that can be embedded into everyday practice.

We launched the series in March with an in-person workshop, Neurodiversity Affirming Practices, presented by NeuroWild (Em Hammond). The response was overwhelmingly positive, and due to strong demand we delivered the workshop again online in November, enabling even more professionals to access the learning. We also

partnered with Heidi Brandis to deliver a specialised workshop on Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), supporting attendees to better understand and respond to complex nervous system presentations.

Across all sessions, feedback was exceptionally strong, with participants valuing the practical strategies, reflective conversations and opportunity to deepen their understanding of neurodiversity affirming. These workshops represent an important step in strengthening inclusive practice across our broader community.

# FUNDRAISING OVERVIEW

In 2025, the Stronger Together Foundation continued to strengthen its fundraising program, supported by the generosity of our community, corporate partners and local organisations. Funds raised throughout the year played a vital role in enabling us to deliver inclusive programs, community events and support services for children with developmental delays and neurodivergent needs, and their families.

## 2025 Annual Charity Golf Day

Our flagship fundraising event, the Annual Charity Golf Day, remained a cornerstone of our fundraising efforts in 2025. Held once again at Lynwood Golf and Country Club, the day brought together local businesses, community leaders and supporters for a professionally run event with a strong sense of purpose. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, players and donors, the Golf Day raised \$34,000, directly supporting the Foundation's programs and services.



## Christmas Raffle

Our annual Christmas Raffle continued to be a popular and successful fundraising initiative. The raffle was made possible by the generous donation of a \$1,000 gift card by Castle Towers. The raffle raised \$4,000.

## Grants & Community Support

The Stronger Together Foundation continued to benefit from the support of key grant partners in 2025, enabling us to extend our reach and enhance service delivery.

- The Hills Shire Council – Community Grants Program: \$17,500
- CommBank Staff Foundation – Community Grants Program: \$20,000
- Castle Hill RSL Group – ClubGRANTS Program: \$7,000
- Hills Club Grant - \$3,500

These grants have been instrumental in supporting community-focused initiatives and advancing the Foundation's mission.

## Ladies Night “A Night in Tuscany”

In 2025, we expanded our fundraising program with the introduction of our first Ladies Night fundraiser, A Night in Tuscany.

This exclusive evening brought women from the local community together for a relaxed and engaging event in support of the Foundation's work.

Featuring live entertainment, raffles and silent auctions, the event created a warm and vibrant atmosphere.



We were incredibly proud to raise \$11,000, marking a strong and successful addition to our fundraising calendar and laying the groundwork for future growth in this event.

## Looking Ahead

We are committed to continuing our work in supporting children and families, and we look forward to the ongoing collaboration with our partners and supporters to achieve even greater outcomes in 2026.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to our fundraising efforts in 2025. Your support is invaluable in helping us make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

# SUPPORTERS



- Castle Hill RSL Group -



**THE HILLS**  
Sydney's Garden Shire



**THE HILLS CLUB**  
THE HUB OF THE HILLS



CommBank  
**Staff Foundation**



**JDI Services Pty Ltd**  
Business Coaching | Consulting | Sales Training



CASTLE TOWERS



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## Where the money comes from - Income

Total Income \$ 1,950,255.51

Services, programs & projects

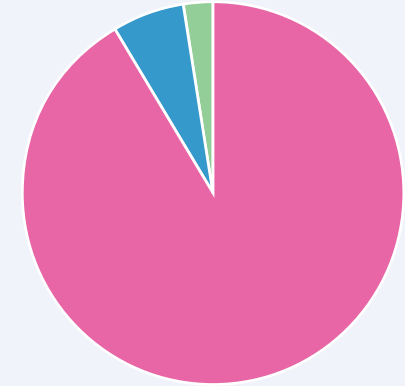
91.5%

Fundraising & donations

6.0%

Grants

2.5%



## Where the money goes - Expenses

Total Expenses \$ 2,060,129.10

Employee Costs

86.6%

Services, programs & projects delivery costs

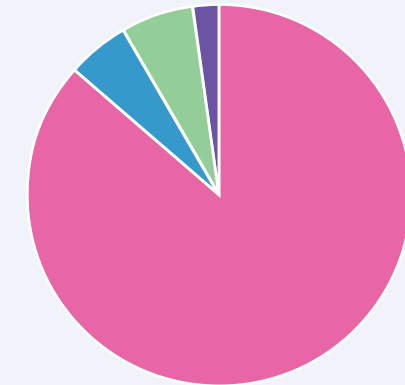
6.3%

Admin & Occupancy

5.1%

Fundraising

2.0%



# TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

## How can you support us

### Make a donation

Support our work with a one-off or regular gift. Every contribution helps us continue our vital subsidised programs and provide services to the community.

### Volunteer your time to help with community or fundraising events

From wrapping raffle items or transporting items to and from an event, there is a volunteer role to suit everyone.

### Donate products or services

Contribute items or professional services for our fundraising event - a practical and powerful way to help.

### Sponsor an event

Partner with us by sponsoring a fundraising event or one of our inclusive Community Family Events. It's a great way to show your support and make a lasting difference.

Thank you for helping us build a stronger, more inclusive community.



**STRONGER  
TOGETHER  
FOUNDATION**



Unit 16, 5-7 Anella Avenue | Castle Hill, NSW 2154 | 1300 111 783