



HECIS Report | 2026

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Message from the President

Welcome to our client families, committee members, staff and anyone with an interest in the HECIS service and early childhood intervention (ECI) in general.

2025 was a year of big changes for the HECIS committee and staff. Emma Charlton chose to step down as president of the committee, and we thank her for her years of dedication to supporting HECIS. Sheron Miller announced her retirement from office manager, effective from January 2026. We wish Sheron all the best in her retirement and are extremely grateful for her years of service at HECIS. Finally, our lovely Co-Ordinator, Tracy Brown, followed through on her desire for a sea change. Tracy led HECIS for many years, with passion and a genuine desire to achieve best outcomes for all clients. She will be missed and we wish her well.

At the conclusion of 2025 we received the happy news that Cassandra (Cass) Gill had agreed to step up as the new Co-Ordinator for HECIS. Cass has many years of experience providing client support and previously held the position of 2IC. She is already doing a fantastic job of balancing Co-Ordinator responsibilities whilst continuing to provide supports to clients. We believe HECIS is in great hands under her leadership.

Throughout 2025 we saw a decrease in the number of clients seeking HECIS support. This unfortunately resulted in needing to use some cash reserves to cover financial shortfalls. HECIS staff and the Committee are working together to improve outcomes for 2026. Part of our plan is to maintain greater contact with clients who are waiting on NDIS funding, improve advertising efforts, and to restore in-service support in some circumstances (e.g. for children who are in between Education and Care Services).

The Assessment and Referral Service, under our Advisory Program, continues to be in high demand from families and local Education and Care Services, with bookings filling up fast. Our playgroup also continues to be successful. Both the playgroup and Assessment and Referral Services remain funded by the Department of Education's Start Strong Pathways Program.

Thank you, Staff and Management Committee Members, who have continued to support our service throughout the year. I recognise it was a challenging year, requiring an immense amount of flexibility and adaptability. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed and is genuinely appreciated. We welcome all feedback, comments and suggestions from our client families, members and other HECIS Service users. Please email us on info@hecis.org.au or post to 12 Stewart Street, South Windsor 2756.

Emma Foster
President HECIS

HECIS

Vision and Values

The Staff and Management Committee of Hawkesbury Early Childhood Intervention Service believe in:

- The right of children with special needs to be provided with a range of services that meet their needs and promote optimal growth and development.
- The right of children with special needs to gain access to mainstream services as appropriate for the individual child and for their inclusion into such services to be positively supported and professionally facilitated.
- The right of families who have a child with special needs to access services available within their own community.
- The right of children with special needs to be valued as individuals with strengths and abilities who can contribute to their environment in many positive ways.



- The right of families to be supported in their parenting role and to be encouraged to have input into their child's Individual Education Program and the services provided by HECIS.



HECIS Staff facilitate this by:

- Open communication, sharing of information, ideas and abilities.
- Engaging in respectful and responsive relationships with client/families and other professionals and agencies.
- Respecting families' personal beliefs, culture and heritage.
- Being active in their own learning and critically reflect and adjust their practices accordingly.
- Being committed to achieving best practice, quality outcomes, confidentiality and continuous self-improvement/development.

HECIS Coordinator's Report

In 2025 HECIS has continued to provide advice, assessments, referral, speech therapy and special education support to children and their families in the Hawkesbury LGA with assistance of:

Dept. of Education(Start Strong Pathways Program) for:

- Early Childhood & Care grants for the Advisory program
- Open playgroup

HECIS continues as a registered service provider for the NDIS offering Early Childhood Early Intervention Supports to participants, being re-accredited in 2022 and an interim mid-term audit in May 2025. HECIS continues to expand our service delivery area into surrounding regions; Penrith, Blacktown and Hills LGA.

The HECIS Speech Therapy Program continues to be in high demand, providing speech therapy to

- NDIS Participants with a NDIS Plan

HECIS Staff continue to collaborate with other services and professionals in the area, and forging new networks and links outside the Hawkesbury

- Speech, OT and other therapists both private, and at Hawkesbury Area Health
- Hawkesbury Community Interagency with other disability and community support organisations
- ECIA (NSW Chapter)

Summary of Services

Throughout 2025, HECIS primarily delivered direct, face-to-face support to children, reflecting our strong focus on hands-on early intervention:

Child Face-to-Face Educator Support: 2,362 hours (93.0%) – direct engagement with children to promote developmental, social, emotional, and functional skills.

Child Face-to-Face Speech Therapy: 163 hours (6.4%) – supporting communication, speech, and language development.

Non Face-to-Face Supports: 6 hours (0.2%) – tele meetings, visual resources, and report preparation to support planning, documentation, and collaboration.

Overall, the 2025 service profile highlights the commitment of HECIS educators to delivering high-quality, child-focused, face-to-face support.

There were a number of factors that impacted on the smooth running of HECIS administration and office operations throughout the year, particularly as working from home became more

prevalent. However, the phased transition away from this arrangement in November resulted in improved functionality, communication, and overall operational efficiency. We would like to thank the committee for implementing these changes, which have contributed significantly to smoother operations.

We saw Emma Charlton resign from her position as President of the HECIS Committee. We sincerely thank Emma Charlton for volunteering her time and contributions to HECIS. We welcomed Emma Foster as the Interim President, and we thank her for stepping into this role and supporting the committee.

At the end of 2025, Tracy Brown resigned from her position as Coordinator, and I accepted the role. While there is work to be done, I am committed to ensuring the smooth running of HECIS and making 2026 a successful year. I would like to sincerely thank Tracy Brown for her valuable contributions and service to HECIS.

We also saw Sheron Miller resign from her position as Administrator, and Samantha Woldon was employed in this role. I would like to acknowledge and thank Sheron Miller for her dedication and over 20 years of service to HECIS.

Cass Gill

HECIS CoOrdinator

Reports and outcomes for our individual programs are:

Advisory Program

The funding for this program is provided by *Department of Education* under the Early Childhood Education and Care Grants Program (Start Strong Pathways Program) and has been renewed for 2025/2026.

The funding body's aim of this program is to enhance children's early learning and developmental outcomes.

The HECIS Advisory Program provides:

- Special education services including screening of speech and language skills, pre-academic/cognitive skills, fine and gross motor skills, social and behavioural development.
- Suggestions for individualised programs and teaching strategies
- Professional support for Early Child Care staff
- Advice and support for parents/families
- Advice regarding referrals to other professionals and support services

Some families return to HECIS for NDIS ECEI Supports if approved for NDIS funding.

The HECIS Playgroup Program

The HECIS Open Playgroup Program providing:

- A Special Education Teacher and EI Support Assistant and is open to any family
- Families may self-refer their child for the HECIS Advisory program for an assessment/screener
- The playgroup also provides support for families and links into the local community.
- The playgroup program supports each child's interests, abilities and family culture and encourages parent/family involvement in the playgroup.

This program has been well supported with a regular roster of families each week (approx. 12 families)

The Early Intervention Program – NDIS ECEI Education Supports

- A Special Education Support Teacher (or EI Support Worker under the ECEI Programmed support category) works on a 1:1 basis with the child and in small groups, as is appropriate, (at the child care service or school) on a regular basis, depending on the identified needs of the child, family and child care staff, being guided by the participant's plan goals.
- Provides support and assistance to 'build capacity' with families, child care centre staff and others involved in the child's care and learning to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities to support the child in all areas of their life and their environment

The Early Intervention Program – Speech Therapy Supports

- Our highly experienced and qualified Speech Therapist implements individualized programs and supports to achieve NDIS goals across the child's learning environments (child care service or school)

2025 Membership and Management Committee

Our 2025 membership consisted of 6 members.

Our Management Committee for 2025 consisted of 4 Executive members and 2 general members.

Committee members included Child Care Centre staff.

We sincerely thank the 2025 Management Committee members for their continued support of our service by contributing your time and expertise to our management during this year. Your involvement has been vital in continuing to navigate us through another year of challenges, growth and change.

Looking Forward

Finance:

Education & Communities (ECEC) – Funding agreement continues in 2026

NDIS (Provider income from participants under a plan) – Outgoing service agreements

Programs:

- Our Advisory programs will continue to be offered
- HECIS Open Playgroup – Mondays 10am to 12pm
- NDIS Provider supports (Education, Speech Therapy) – for children with an individual NDIS plan that complete a service agreement with HECIS, and is funded from the child's plan.
- Private supports (Education, Speech Therapy) – for children where the family/carer has elected to pay for private supports – new in 2026

Staffing:

The HECIS Staff are dedicated and professional, work well as a team, offering great mentoring and support to each other. They seek to build strong relationships with the child & family, child care center staff and allied health and other professionals working with the child.

HECIS Staff are active in their development and training and share their knowledge and resources with the other staff of HECIS and the early education and care centers, and are one of HECIS' greatest resources.

HECIS is supported by committed leadership through our Committee Executive and Management staff who will be relied upon to guide us through the future.

Resources and Financial Management

Treasurers Report

The financial reporting period for HECIS is 31st December of each year.

Funding for *Communities & Justice* is acquitted as at end of calendar year each year (30th June).

HECIS Financial reports are prepared and audited by **mtwo accounting partners**, and are presented at the AGM in the following March (unless postponed to a later date). The full financial reports for 2025 are available for viewing at the HECIS office.

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Playgroup Coordinator's Report

AGM/ Management Committee Meeting - Term 1 summary, 2026

Program

- Programming for playgroup continues to reflect the five principles of the Early Years Learning Framework as well as links with the interests and developmental needs to best support the children and age group currently attending.
- The booking system implemented last year continues to work efficiently, with the current families enrolled attending regularly and consistently. Bookings are made either by face book messenger, phone or email enquiry. The capped number of families booked in to attend allows us to best support the children and their families in a safe and comfortable environment.
- Two educators are always present during playgroup for safety and best practice around child protection policies, most often Mel and Luly, with Cass on premises and as a backup educator.
- Record keeping for Start Strong Pathways Statistics (Playgroup) has been updated by Cass and Mel to ensure accurate documentation is upkept to adhere to our guidelines for funding access.
- This term one to date we have nine families enrolled and attending consistently with nine children total. One family has moved their child onto preschool; we have another family joining us in the coming week bringing our total to ten families.
- From the nine families attending this year one family have been referred to our HECIS assessment team for an upcoming child's developmental assessment. We currently have one family continuing to access HECIS educational supports

Compliance

- Prior to playgroup commencing each week a HECIS workplace health and safety checklist is completed as per policies.
- All attendees sign in and out of playgroup on the HECIS Playgroup Visitor Register.
- All new families are individually guided through a playgroup orientation process upon enrolment.
- All attendees fill in a playgroup intake enrolment form each year or when starting playgroup.
- A fire drill/ emergency evacuation is completed during each term of playgroup.

Training/Workshops/Information sessions

- HECIS staff are in the process of completing and updating child protection training.

Playgroup staff

- Mel Foreman is the Playgroup Coordinator and is supported by the Lily Mitchell (playgroup Assistant) and is overseen by Cass Gill, HECIS Coordinator.

WHS

Sink holes in the Sofffall on the sandpit area top and side and an ongoing issue (have been fixed before but are a trip hazard). In the process of being booked in to be addressed.

