

Kids Chat 2 You Project

Closure Report July 2017 – June 2020



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About the project (background)

Access to communication is a human right. An estimated 1 in 500 people in Australia have severe communication disabilities or complex communication needs, with approximately 25% being children (Perry, Reilly, Bloomberg, Johnson, 2002).

In Victoria DHHS funded low tech communication aids for eligible adults (operated by Scope - NECAS) and electronic communication aids for eligible children and adults (operated by Yooralla). All state funding ceased with the roll out of the NDIS.

In 2017, when Kids Chat 2 You was piloted there was no ongoing, government funding to provide low tech communication aids for children in Victoria. Following the pilot, generously funded by Westfield and Bowness Family Foundation, Kids Chat 2 You three-year project was launched, again with funding from the Bowness Family Foundation, along with Scope Board and a commitment to source the remaining funds needed with Scope fundraising activities.

Kids Chat 2 You delivered

Integrating AAC into the lives of children with complex communication needs via:

Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educating attendees• Facilitating connections• Working in partnership with specialists• Industry information sessions• Providing NDIS pathways	Consultations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of communication aids• Practice Support to therapists• Information and recommendations• Remote regional support sessions• Service specific support
Trade Displays <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance at three trade displays	Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handouts• Videos• Blogs (All soon to be available online)

The long-term aim of these resources is to foster an engaged network for speech pathologists and a hub of information for allied health professionals, parents and support workers.

PODD book library established

With the aim to provide the opportunity for children to loan and trial a more complex comprehensive communication book (known as the PODD book).

70 loans have been completed since the library commenced. The loans allowed families to successfully trial and then apply for NDIS funding to purchase the customised communication book their child needed.

Deliverables and Objectives

Deliverables proposed - 2017 Business case	Achievements of Kids Chat 2 You Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-hour workshop (delivered at 33 locations across 15 regions of Victoria). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 470 participants attended workshops delivered at 32 locations (one location less than proposed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual consultations (Screening assessment and recommendations provided to 528 children with complex communication needs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slightly short of target with 512 individual consultations held
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of non-electronic communication aids to the 528 children attending individual consultations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target exceeded with a total of 770 non-electronic communication aids provided to children.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of an additional 207 non-electronic communication aids for children unable to attend a consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of marketing plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up and sustainability of knowledge with families/therapists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 149 individual information consultations were completed, either directly following a workshop, or independently, via Skype or in-person. 349 additional customisation support consultations were provided where participants subsequently received customised communication aids.

Strategic actions proposed 2017 Business case	Achievements of Kids Chat 2 You Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish a viable new business for Scope based on an already established service under the NDIS (Service Development/Financial) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To further establish Scope's current profile as the leader of the provision of non-electronic communication aids in Victoria, and Australia (Service Development/Financial) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide Victorian children (aged 0-18 years) with complex communication needs access to appropriate communication aids, resources and supports (Client Outcomes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist children with complex communication needs and their families to successfully transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and to receive the necessary communication services and supports (Client Outcomes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective achieved

Recommendations to Scope Board

- Note the project has delivered as per the approved project proposal;
- Note the final spend of \$1,188M against approved project budget of \$1,1M
- Notes the lessons learned and related recommendations; and
- Approve the Closure of the Kids Chat 2 You project.

Fundraising

	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20
Bowness Family Foundation	\$200,000	\$100,000	
Scope	\$200,000	\$100,000	
Scentre Group	\$139,619		
Private donor	\$15,000		
Stuart Leslie Foundation	\$25,000		
McKern Foundation	\$30,000	\$5,000	
Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation	\$1,000		
Bequest donor	\$13,972		
William Angliss Charitable Fund	\$2,000		
LMCF Meg and Frank Sims Fund	\$600		
Bell Charitable Fund		\$15,000	
LMCF (misc donors)	\$2,062		
Revenue (NDIS Therapy and communication aids for children)			\$153,000
Funding secured	\$629,253	\$220,000	
Total			\$1,002,253

Financial acquittal

Project budget	\$1,106,360
Funds secured	\$1,002,253
Expenditure	\$1,187,095
In-Kind Support	\$ 184,842



Financial acquittal: July 2017 - 2020

Proposed budget	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20
Project Management and Development	\$ 120,910	60,455	60,455
Administration Assistance	\$14,784	\$14,784	\$7,392
Therapists time	\$110,105	\$64,764	
Travel Costs	\$8,979	\$6,806	
Venue Hire	\$4,650	\$3,300	
Communication Aids	\$375,788	\$230,588	
Equipment	\$8,600	\$3,000	\$3,000
Marketing	\$4,346	\$3,654	
	\$648,162.00	\$387,351.00	\$ 70,847.00
Expenditure			
	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20
Staffing	\$ 483,053.60	\$273,521.32	\$27,505.18
Travel costs & venue	\$ 13,581.34	\$14,358.75	
Communication aids	\$ 174,572.00	\$143,805.77	\$38,661.33
Equipment	\$8,599.98	\$3,582.90	
Marketing	\$2,877.00	\$2,975.71	
	\$682,683.92	\$438,244.45	\$66,166.51

- Fundraising targets were established for the project and were not realised in full.
- Expenditure exceeded project budget primarily for increased speech pathologist time needed to provide additional advice and information supports for families.
- During the final year of the project we generated revenue through fees charged under the NDIS for therapeutic support and communication aids for children.

- The Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre provided in-kind support for the remaining project expenditure.

Evaluation

Evaluation of Kids Chat 2 You through formal research was undertaken in conjunction with La Trobe University, with one article published and another in review.

Research investigated

- The impact the service has had for participants
- Aspects of the service delivery model that allow for the continued provision of communication aids, within a fee for service environment
- Parent perspectives on supporting AAC within an individualised-funding system

Findings revealed

- Parents valued Kids Chat 2 You information on funding pathways, and reported Kids Chat 2 You helped them navigate the NDIS.
- There was an overall increase in the use of AAC nine months after attending Kids Chat 2 You. This included high-tech, low-tech and unaided AAC such as key word sign.
- Implementing AAC across home, school and community contexts is hard for caregivers. Caregivers require proactive support at key times in their child's lives.
- Services and funding are falling short of integrating AAC across contexts. NDIS funding for AAC support and subsequent access to services is inconsistent, for example children may receive funding for AAC, but not speech pathology support, or the reverse

Kids Chat 2 You presented preliminary research findings at the:

- International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) conference (2018)
- Australian Society for Intellectual Disability (ASID) conference (2018)
- Speech Pathology Australia (SPA) Conference (2019)
- International Society on Early Intervention (ISEI) Conference (2019)
- International Association for Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Conference (2019)
- Australian Group on Severe Communication Impairment (2019)

Current Situation

- Scope now promotes NECAS as its Specialised Communication Service.
- Communication Inclusion Resource Centre continues to upskill staff to provide highly specialised support for people with Complex Communication Needs.

In closing

The Kids Chat 2 You project has supported over 800 children with complex communication needs, with access to appropriate communication strategies. The initiative has enabled Scope's Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre to build a sustainable comprehensive low-tech communication aid service for children and adults with complex communication needs nationally. NECAS will continue to advocate to the NDIS for multimodal AAC support for children and adults with Complex Communication Needs. NECAS will promote an integrated approach between home, school and community contexts.