

CENTRE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

This is the first time that I have been able to say welcome to the Rose Park Community Childcare AGM. I can't believe all that has happened since we changed our name, it seems incredible that it has only been a year. I would like to thank you for your support of myself as the director and of all that has happened in the Centre over the last year.

Challenging year

2020 has certainly been a year of challenges for Australia and the world. We started with the bush fires in Australia making a Centre donation to help the animals affected by the fire, extending on our philosophy of care for the environment.

And then COVID-19 hit, affecting the world. Those initial few months created a lot of uncertainty for each individual person and for many businesses including ours. Thankfully the government was able to help our sector with funding, helping us to remain viable. I would like to thank all of our parents for being so open to the many changes and not complaining during that difficult time. I would also like to thank the staff for also being so flexible with the almost daily adjustments and carrying out all the new requirements.

Staffing

The RPCC currently employs 16 permanent staff members, including educators, a kitchen manager and management staff. A Centre can only be as great as the staff that it employs. I would like to thank the staff for their incredible dedication to their work, through the good times and the tough times.

I would like to thank Lisa for her continued role of assistant director and acting director (in my absence) of the site. She has dedicated over 23 years to this Centre. A real achievement for someone working in this sector

Thanks to Em, Jess (for part of the year) and Chelsea– our babies' team, Kylie, Mariama, and Sylvia, our toddlers' team, Sarah, Vic and Tracey – our Wallabies team, Rachel and Karilyn have continued their role in our Kangaroos room and we welcomed Maggie as the new ECT in July. Jess and Deb had continuing employment this year across all rooms. As we have been so busy during the latter part of the year, Payel has come on Board in a short-term contract role. And to our Kitchen Manager Kim, who works tirelessly to keep all of your children fed.

Vic has welcomed Chloe to her family this year, taking 6 months off. Chelsea and Deb stepped into the role whilst Vic was away.

This year we said goodbye to Kim from the Kangaroos, who left to undertake some full-time study. Jacinta one of our regular casuals left in February as she was able to gain full time employment at another Centre.

I am also thankful that we have some dedicated long-term casual workers –Alice, Tijana, Maddy, Lucy, Siobhan, Serine and Neha.

This year we made some changes to the Educational Leader role. With the increased amount of expectation through the National Quality Framework and our current work with the preschool room, we have changed the role to be a Quality Improvement Leader. Kylie has immersed herself in the new challenges. Thank you, Kylie.

An important part of the National Quality Framework is the emphasis on sustainability. Em and Kylie have continued to progress the centre in this area. They love the idea of upcycling, which you will see some of their creations around the site. Thank you both for your commitment.

The Centre continued to have students from TAFE, universities and schools last year and we have begun having TAFE students again in the last couple of months. This not only prepares the next group of workers for the industry but helps our educators to be able to teach others, thus honing their skills.

As part of our budget over the past year, staff have continued to receive professional development training in many areas – although more online e.g. First Aid and CPR, fire training, NQF, programming, children's behaviour, child safe environments and the learning environment.

Utilisation

Each year there is normally a dip in late January/February when the school children leave. This year, we only had a small drop off in numbers and were able to keep our bookings at a higher level. This helped us when the government were working out the funding due to COVID-19 as the fortnight that the funding was based on was unusually high for us. Due to the free childcare, I am unable to show you the full utilisation as our software system won't produce the report for the whole free childcare period. We dropped by approximately 50% for a few weeks, but then numbers slowly came back. As a number of you would know we are now at capacity and have been for a while and look like we will be until the end of the year.

Licensing and Compliance

The RPCC is regulated under the National Quality Framework (NQF), Education and Care Services National Regulations and Education and Care Services National Law which is administered by Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) at a national level and Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board (EECSRBSB) at the state level. The Centre had a short visit from licensing in late July. They spent an hour looking over a number of areas. We did well, with only a couple of minor things coming up. We as a team are continually working on ways to improve the quality of our service. We are well on the way to achieving the goal of Exceeding National Standards.

The Centre's Food Safety Program was due to be audited by the Eastern Health Authority earlier this year, but due to COVID it was cancelled. It has not been rescheduled as yet.

Nature Play

Can you believe that it was a year ago that we finished the outdoor area? The last year has seen the area flourish with lots of plant growth and some additions to the environment. It is definitely the number one thing that new people comment on when they come into the Centre. We were able to get a grant for a raised garden bed, which is in the Wallabies room. Well done Sarah and Tracey for accessing that. Karilyn has also organised a small worm farm for us. Thanks Karilyn.

Community Library

Em has recently set up a new community library. The idea is for the children to bring their old books and to take another loved book from the box.

Social Inclusion and Fundraising

One of our working groups at the RPCC is the social inclusion and fundraising working group. This year we have had to put the meeting of this committee on hold due to COVID. We couldn't meet physically and didn't want to ask any parents for money as things were difficult enough for some people. Kylie and I recently spoke to the CEO of the Hutt St Centre and we are hoping to do a fundraiser with them next year. Ama is also looking at linking us with a school in a village in Africa. It is exciting for us to be developing links with the wider community.

Board

This year the Board has consisted of Josh (for part of the year), Paul, Emily, Nick, Daisy, John, Jason and Emily S (for part of the year). Jess was our staff representative part of the year. I would like to thank them for their support of myself in my role. Their role is not an easy one, but this Centre has been in great hands throughout it all. This year three of our members have decided not to renominate. I would like to thank Daisy, John and Jason for their commitment to the Board over the last year.

We, as a Board and staff team, look forward to a continued focus on quality improvement and having input from our families. It makes such a difference to our childcare community when we have input from parents/caregivers and their families. Without your valued and continued support, we would not be where we as a Centre are today.

Sarah Rogers
Centre Director
September 2020