

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

Thank you for coming to the 2022 Annual General meeting of Rose Park Community Childcare.

The year that was

As a Service director, I thought that 2020/2021 were difficult years to navigate. Unfortunately, 2022 has proven more so, not just for us as an individual service but for the industry as a whole. Staff shortages have been worrying for all Services nationally. Obviously more of us had COVID this year, plus other illnesses and some had to navigate challenging personal circumstances, leading to extended absences by educators. With all of the absences, I thank God that we haven't had any day where we have been under ratio. I am so thankful to the educators that have worked longer hours as needed, offered to give up days off and the casual educators that have been working much more regularly.

Staffing

RPCC currently employs 19 permanent staff members, including educators, a kitchen manager and management staff. I would like to thank the staff for their commitment to their work, through the good times and the tough times.

Lisa reached her 25th anniversary at Rose Park in July. Lisa continues in her role as assistant director and acting director (when I am on leave). She spends part of her day in the office and part replacing educators for various times as needed. Thanks for sharing some of the load.

Thanks to Em, and Masuma– our babies' team, Kylie, Mariama, and Maddy, our toddlers' team, Sarah, Vic, Tracey and Jess – our Wallabies team, and to Jacinta, Rachel, Karilyn and Deb as they have continued their roles in our Kangaroos room. Payel, Alice (who has joined us on a permanent basis) and Yu-Ting (who has a part time contract) have worked across all rooms this year. And thanks to our Kitchen Manager Kim, the hardest person to replace on site, for all the preparation, cooking, working around allergies that you do. Thanks to Ama and Deb who both fill Kim's role when she is unable to. It's a tough job.

I am also thankful that we have some dedicated casual workers –Lucy, Tahira and Georgie.

In November last year, we said goodbye to Maggie, who left to be in China with family. In January this year, Chelsea decided to move on to become a team leader at another Service. We were able to employ Jacinta as the new Early Childhood Teacher, who was with us as a student a few years ago. Jacinta has done a wonderful job and made some really positive changes to the Kangaroos room. Masuma was successful in winning the position left vacant in the under twos area. She was so pleased to gain the position, even cooking dinner for all of us at an educator meeting in February.

Kylie has continued to evolve the role of educational leader. We now call it a 'leader in quality improvement', even creating a more succinct position description. In the educational leader part of the role, Kylie mentors' educators, researches, undertakes a lot of critical reflection individually and for our team and ensures that we are meeting our requirements for documentation to name a few things. In quality improvement, Kylie is a big help to me, ensuring that we continue to aim for exceeding across all areas of the National Quality Framework. Kylie and I have also begun to rewrite our Quality Improvement Plan. We look forward to sharing that with you when it is ready. Thank you, Kylie, for all you do.

To embed sustainability practices is one of our objectives in our strategic plan. Em and Kylie are still committed to sustainability. Unfortunately, this year with staffing shortages, they haven't had much time to be able meet together, but hoping as things settle down, they will be able to pick up where they left off with new ideas. Thank you both for your willingness.

This year I have been able to update and republish our Reconciliation Action Plan, also known as RAP. Karilyn, Kylie and a parent are willing to be on the committee, but once again with all of the difficulties this year, this has been put on hold. Kylie has been trying for a long time, through her contacts, to have an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person visit our site. So far, we haven't been able to have a visit from anyone, but she is still trying. If you know of anyone that may be willing to come to the site and talk/undertake a provocation with the children for a small stipend, please let me know.

I am thankful to those educators who have the larger roles as mentioned above, but I am also thankful to those educators who do those things that nobody has asked them to do e.g. Karilyn, who puts the bins out every week, Deb who puts away the food deliveries when they come late on a Monday. I haven't mentioned everything/everyone here that happens, but thanks to those who see things that need to be done and do so without fuss.

Due to the industry wide educator shortages, the government has allowed TAFE to begin educating certificate three students again. Also, some RTOs are offering diploma courses for free as they are being subsidised by the government. You may have noticed that we have begun to have students again. This is often a chance for us to see how up and coming educators work on site and if they do a great job, it can lead them to employment with us.

There has been more face to face professional development this year. Some of the topics that educators have attended this year have been: A day with QA 4, incorporating Aboriginal culture, Little scientists, a day with QA 7, language workshops online, first aid, exceeding themes, and leadership.

For the benefit of the team, educator meetings have continued to be about upskilling educators. We have had numerous sessions as a team this year including; National Quality Framework, RAP, educator wellbeing, philosophy review, healthy eating, emotion coaching, cultural competence, communication and child protection.

Utilisation

Utilisation has been a bit different to past years. With COVID or the threat of COVID, parents have been resistant for new children to commence care or parents have reduced their workload, thus reducing their need for care. We had the usual dip in February/March – replacing school leavers. It took a lot longer than normal to build this up. It has also fluctuated a lot, with the COVID changes and parents changing their work habits. We still have a lower attendance on a Friday, but the other days are now in the high 50's.

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 (EECSRSB) at the state level. 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 audited by the Eastern Health Authority late last year and only had a couple of tweaks to do. We are due again in November this year.

Social Inclusion and Fundraising

This year with all that has been happening, we haven't been meeting as a social and fundraising committee. Our dedicated parent Bec's son went to school at the beginning of the year, so she no longer attends the Service. We are very thankful to Bec's long term help in this area. We have not recruited anyone to replace her yet but will look to start up again next year. We had a PJ/Crazy Hair day in the middle of the year, which was fun. Jess has been working throughout the year (when I have been able to give her time), putting together a cookbook from Service and parent recipes. She has almost finished, so look out for that soon. We also organised for a coffee van to come to celebrate the special people in the children's life. It was so nice being outside chatting to parents over coffee or in my case a chai or two. It was great to see parents meeting and connecting with each other.

Board

This year the Board has consisted of Nick as the chair, Emily as the secretary, Nikki as the deputy chair, Michaela as the treasurer, Rachael and Laura. I would like to thank them for their volunteer contribution to the Service and their support of myself in my role. Their role is not an easy one, but this Service has been in great hands throughout it all. This year two of our members have decided not to renominate. I would like to thank Emily and Laura for their commitment to the Board over the last year.

A little while ago, the Board asked me if they thought the educators would be willing to come out to dinner with them as a thank you. The educators jumped at the chance. Although not everyone could make it, a great night was had by those that did. Thank you, Board, for your thoughtfulness.

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

Sarah Rogers
Centre Director
September 2022