



ROSE PARK

Community Childcare

CENTRE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

Thank you for coming to the 2024 Annual General meeting of Rose Park Community Childcare. Thanks to the parents who have been able to attend in person, the educators that have stayed after their shifts and for those who signed a proxy vote. I know that across many community organisations, it is hard to get people to be involved in the Annual General Meeting to make quorum, but it is critical part of being involved in a community organisation.....I sincerely thank you.

Highlights for the last year

There have been many highlights at Rose Park Community Childcare over our time since the last AGM. Here are just a few:

In October 2023, Kylie and I were able to attend the Early Childhood Australia Conference in Adelaide. Each year, the conference moves from state to state, attracting childcare educators from across the country. We were able to get a part sponsorship from CCCSA but were thankful that the Board were happy to have the rest of the fee covered by the Service, even giving us one night in a hotel and dinner.

For those with Facebook, you may have seen the many posts that are put up containing all that we do at Rose Park, mainly posted by Kylie our resident wordsmith. We often post how we embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our curriculum. Because of this, Kylie was contacted by the Koori Curriculum, an Aboriginal Early Childhood consultancy organisation, to do a 'takeover' of their social media page for a week, showcasing Rose Park. Well done to both Kylie and Em, who put the posts together.

At the end of last year, the social and fundraising committee organised a Christmas picnic for families at Morialta. Even though the forecast was for rain, which didn't eventuate, it was well attended by families. It was a lovely relaxed time for families and educators. It allowed all, the time to chat in a casual setting, while the children played happily.

In the middle of the year, we submitted some documentation to the Inclusion Support department of the Gowrie, showing all that we do regarding Inclusion. We were awarded with a certificate in all five areas of being Inclusion Aware.



CHILDHOOD | CARING | COMMUNITY | INCLUSION | CONNECTION

Em and Kylie, as the sustainability committee, submitted a nomination to the Burnside Council Sustainability Awards. The nomination showcased some of what we do in terms of sustainability and the environment at the Service. Kylie, Em and I attended the award ceremony and were surprised when we were announced as one of the runners up. It was a lovely surprise. We received \$500 prize money. We will be putting that towards a water tank for the Service, which we are currently getting some quotes for.

In recent months, we have had visits from Jack Batty, the Shadow Assistant Minister for the Environment and Heritage and member for Bragg and Mira El Dannawi, member of the Legislative Council for South Australia. We met Jack at the Burnside Council awards and invited him to come and visit. He enjoyed marshmallows around the fire on his visit. Mira visited on Early Childhood Educator Day and brought appreciation certificates for all educators and a basket of goodies.

As we are a community-based service, we include provocations associated with the community wherever possible. The Service has had visits from 2 separate fire trucks, thanks to the roles in the MFS of two of our fathers; been on numerous local walks; focussed on the Olympics – with two of our educators having competitors that they know, participate; collected blankets for the Adelaide Lions Club to distribute to those that are homeless and collected items for Share the Dignity, organised by Katya.

As you can see, our Service is becoming more visible in both our local and wider community. We also have a lot of our visitors (and families that may have had to move elsewhere) say that they have never come across another service like ours. We recently had a family who had moved and was trying to find alternate care for their child close to their new home. They said that we had ‘ruined them’ when it came to childcare, as there was nowhere like us. Partly this is due to the outdoor renovations that past and present families contributed to – a beautiful space. But it also can be attributed to the hard work of our Board, educators and positive words from our families to others in their circles.

Staffing

RPCC currently employs 21 permanent full time or part time staff members, including educators, a kitchen manager and management staff. I would like to thank the staff for their commitment to their work, throughout the last year.

This year has shown us that COVID is not the only illness around. I am not sure whether it is because things are as normal as they can be post pandemic, but many other illnesses have become prevalent throughout the wider community. We have had a lot of educator and child illness during the last few months especially. This has led us to having to access agency staff for the first time in 7 years to cover educators’ absence. The industry is still recovering from staff shortages through the COVID years, so there are not as many casuals still as there was pre-COVID. One day I even had agency say that they had no-one. We had a few children that ended up being away, so it was fine.

We welcomed back Mariama and Vic from maternity leave this year, after they spent time at home with their new babies. Congratulations to them!

Lisa has continued to work mostly in the office over the past year. She is often the person on the phone or responding to your emails. Lisa coordinates many of the administrative requirements of the service, like immunisations and allergies. She has also this year completed a course in Food Safety, along with Kim. Lisa also completes a lot of the jobs that you don't see or know need to be done. Thanks Lisa for all you do.

Kylie continues to work in her role as a leader in quality improvement. Her wealth of knowledge is an asset to the Service. Kylie and I have continued to meet offsite when possible to have some uninterrupted time to thrash out new ideas and strengthen current ones. One of Ky's goals was to set up a Junior QIP committee, which happened earlier this year. The children have had their voices heard and seen the results of what can happen when they speak up. Kylie loves to critically reflect and educate those around her both, as a Service and to the wider childcare community. I know that attending the ECA conference late last year was a bucket list item for her. Thanks for all you do for the Service and industry.

Thanks to our Kuula/under twos team consisting of Kylie, Em, Maddy, Ama, Georgie and April. Alice also spends a lot of time in this area, but can also be seen across the Service. You will also see Payel, Deb and Yu-Ting work across the different rooms. Thanks Alice, Deb, Payel and Yu-Ting for being so flexible. Sarah, Vic, Tracey, Jess and Tahira – our Wadlha/Wallabies team, and to Jacinta, Corina, and Karilyn as they have continued their roles in our Tarnta/Kangaroos room. Thanks to our Kitchen Manager, Kim, for all the preparation, cooking and working around allergies that you do. Thanks to Deb, Ama and Lisa who have filled Kim's role when she is unable to. It's a tough job. We have needed to call in an agency cook for a few blocks of time this year, as Kim has had some well-deserved leave.

I am also thankful that we have some dedicated casual workers –Ying, Hannah, Sabia and Sitwat. Unfortunately, we have said goodbye to some educators over the last year. Rachel, after finishing some accounting studies went to work in a school in an administrative capacity. She had worked here for more than 20 years. Masuma left late last year to become a team leader at another Service. Soodi, who had only been with us a short time, but was a hard worker, moved to Perth.

One of the objectives from our strategic plan is to embed sustainability practices. Em and Kylie meet together when possible and look for any improvements that can be made. As I mentioned earlier they nominated us for the Burnside Council Sustainability Award in which we came runners up. They are always thinking of how we can be more sustainable. Thank you both for your commitment to sustainability and the environment.

Recently we reviewed our Reconciliation Action Plan, also known as RAP, which has now been published on the Narragunnawali website. Karilyn, Kylie and Sarah, one of our current parents, and myself are part of that committee. We have been able to tick off a lot of the actions that we had agreed upon last year. It also shows how we embed Aboriginal perspectives though the everyday curriculum. There are ongoing provocations designed and resources purchased to show Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives throughout our curriculum. The children and educators have made a few trips to Pakapakanthi/Victoria Park to explore. We have still been unable to link with an Aboriginal elder, so if you know of anyone with Aboriginal heritage 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. Kylie has been able to talk to a few of her Aboriginal friends when we are needing some advice.

Thanks to Jess, Maddy, Jacinta, as well as one of our parents, Katya, for being on our Social and Fundraising Committee. We hadn't done as much this year with this committee as we had been waiting for the renovations to commence. Some of the highlights have been – last years Christmas picnic, a Mother's Day raffle and Book Week celebrations. We have recently had another meeting, so watch this space for what we have planned.

Thanks to all of those educators that may not have a role on one of these committees, but work tirelessly behind the scenes. These things that you do, are important too and help the Service to run smoothly and make our days easier.

Some of the professional development topics that educators have attended this year have been: ECA conference, first aid, child safety, food safety, infants and toddlers.

As a team, at educator meetings, we have had numerous sessions including; National Child Safe Principles, gender bias and the National Quality Framework.

Recently you may have heard about a government funded pay rise for educators from December 2024. There are a few requirements that we have to meet, which we are currently working through. It is great for families as they won't need to pay for it, but it is very exciting for educators as the industry has often been undervalued. The industry come under the banner of low paid workers in the community. A much needed and deserved boost to educator pay packets.

Utilisation

The utilisation for the Service has remained in the mid to high 50's across the year, which has been fantastic. It is a constant juggling act for Lisa and I to try to meet current family requests, to have spaces for upcoming siblings if possible and then work through our waitlist. Thank you for your patience in this area.

Licensing and Compliance

RPCC continue to meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF), Education and Care Services National Regulations and Education and Care Services National Law at the national level and Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board (EECSRSB) at the state level. We were last assessed under the NQF in 2017. We continue to undergo quality improvements, as this is something that we strive for whether they come to assess us or not.

The Service'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. As I mentioned earlier, Lisa and Kim have attended workshops in food safety.

Board

This year the Board has consisted of Rachael as the chair, Angela as the secretary, Shannon as the deputy chair, Mick as the treasurer, Katya and Agustina. They come to meetings each month and read numerous emails and documents throughout each month. They make some difficult decisions, wanting the best outcomes for you as association members and your children. They are your advocates. 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.

The Future

Although we have been working on it for years, we feel that we are close to commencing renovations. There have been lots of hurdles, which we have worked through. I am hoping that this time next year, the completed renovations will be in the highlights section of my report.

I have been attending some online consultation sessions regarding 3-year-old preschool. This idea was born as part of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood. This will be staged between 2026 and 2032. Metropolitan Adelaide will be in the later stages. While it is very early in the planning stage and the government certainly don't have all the answers and I definitely don't, this is something that we will be working towards in the future.

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
Service Director
September 2024