BURRA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT
2014

CONTEXT

Name: Burra Early Learning Centre
Director: Sarah Stoddart
Site number: 6661
Region: Upper Mid North Partnership

Staffing:
Director 0.5 & Occasional Care Director 0.1
2 x Teacher 0.5 & 0.1
ECW2 - Universal access 0.1 Term 3 & 4
2 x Funded Occasional Care ECW2's - 8.15hrs & 4 hrs p/w
Finance Officer 2hrs p/w
ECW2 employed for Preschool support on a needs basis.

Learners:
* Average eligible Preschool children 18-20
* All eligible children could access 15 hours of Preschool
* Bus facilities with extended care available to children living outside the township.
* Out of Hours School Care at Burra Community School offered to Preschool children, numbers permitting.
* Funded Occasional Care: birth - 5 year olds on Monday.
* Preschool support offered for children with additional needs.
* Playgroup on Friday mornings offered at the centre.
* A funded Play-centre also offered in the nearby towns of Hallett/ Mt Bryan, Farrell Flat and Booborowie.

Local Community:
Burra is an old copper mining town situated in the Mid-North with a population of approximately 1200 people.
Burra boasts a wide range of amenities; including, a supermarket, hotels, cafes, pharmacy, local hospital, galleries and retail outlets. Small business, farming and local government provide the main source of employment.
Children access Burra ELC from nearby towns including; Booborowie, Hallett, Mt Bryan and Farrell Flat.

2014 Highlights

* International Mud Day
* Harmony Day
* Pirate Day
* Book Week
* Mother’s Day/ Dad’s Day
* Date Night
* Melbourne Cup
* Transition visits to and from R/1 Classes
* Wheel-a-thon
* Library visits
* Police visit
* International Simultaneous Story time
* Responsible Pet Education at Burra CS
* Cultural Inclusion day at BCS
* Playgroup Open Day
* Facebook page
* Hallett/Mt Bryan and Farrell Flat Playcentre visits
* Local walks around the town

Excursions:
* Rigg’s shearing shed
* Hallett/Mt Bryan Playcentre
* Butcher Shop
* The Valley’s Kindergym and Pool
* Visit to all Children’s House
* Mintaro Maze and The Garden Room
* Farrell Flat Playcentre
* The Cranky Bear Performance - Tanunda
* AGL Wind farm visit and office
* Clarke’s Plane

RELEVANT HISTORY SCREENING
All volunteers including; Governing Council members, gardener, cleaner, contractors and parent helpers completed a DCSI screen ensuring compliance with DECD. All staff are currently compliant with DCSI screening.

GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT 2014

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairperson’s report for 2014 for the Burra Early Learning Centre.
A sincere thank you to all Governing Council members, parents and friends who supported our centre including the following committee members; Kareena Opperman, Julia Clarke, Kate Wadlow, Emily Schuppan, Jaimee Haitana, Jayde Thamm, Kathryn Baker, Sandy Edwards & Natalie Morris.

We would like to say thank you to the staff; Sarah Stoddart, Elise Thomas, Felicity Mudge, Katherine Stoddart, Anna Friebel and our volunteer, Shona Mayne for creating and maintaining a friendly, stimulating and safe environment for our children and providing them with support and a high level of care throughout the year; they all played a vital part in our children's lives assisting them to grow and learn. This was demonstrated through the year by our interactions with staff and the qualities our children showed at home.

Some highlights for 2014 included numerous excursions which our children thoroughly enjoyed; the removal of ‘the tree,’ which has created a greater and safer play environment and new sand being added to the sandpit.

We had some very rewarding fundraising efforts including; Wheel-a-thon which raised $776 through sponsorship and the children received bike licences; the show bag stall at the Burra Show with a profit of $1693.44 and the Christmas and Easter raffles raising $814.90, to name just a few.

We saw the approval for a Rural Care service which will commence in January 2015, which is an exciting new venture forward for our community and is hopefully embraced and well utilised.

On behalf of the 2014 Governing Council committee I would like to thank the dedicated staff of Burra ELC and hope 2015 will be another exciting and successful year. I encourage us all to work together, as when we do, great things are achieved.

Yours Sincerely

Kimberley Tippett, Chairperson, Burra ELC Governing Council.
## CLIENT OPINION

In Term 4 a survey was sent out to all families accessing the centre under the headings of the 7 Quality improvement areas of the National Quality Standards. As a result positive outcomes and areas for improvement are outlined below.

**QA1 Educational Program and Practice:**

Excursions and the use of the outdoor environment were positive outcomes and families indicated a stronger focus on teaching/learning within playtime and knowing expected outcomes of programs.

Promotion of children’s development and learning through play is and will continue to be provided in a range of ways including: newsletters, ILP interviews, Parent Easy Guides, profile books, information sessions and Governing Council meetings.

**QA2 Children’s health and safety:**

Children’s emotional and physical wellbeing were being catered for at the centre including healthy practices through sunscreen application and notices for infectious diseases.

Improved measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of children outside including; sand on paths and more regular risk assessments. These will be implemented as a priority in 2015 and documented accordingly.

**QA3 Physical environment:**

The outdoor environment is fantastic with a wide range of activities and areas for exploration being offered. More shade is needed and more awareness of caring for the environment. In 2015 a priority for our centre is to plant more trees and offer more sustainable practices including; growing vegetables and caring for chooser.

**QA4 Staffing arrangements:**

Children and families feel supported and cared for by current staff and the child/staff ratios are great.

Primary care groups were programed early in the year but little evidence was seen and introduction of new or casual staff would be beneficial to families for familiarity.

Preschool routines and knowledge are a priority for 2015 and as a result, primary care groups will not be included. A review of this process may be implemented later in the year.

A greet and meet for families and staff will be offered early in the year.

**QA5 Relationships with children:**

Staff interact positively with both children and parents and siblings are also included.

Children’s wellbeing is catered for especially if there are feelings of anxiety and parents are invited to stay until they too feel secure. No areas for improvement were outlined in the surveys.

Continued support for families and children will be a high priority to ensure everyone feels safe and secure and great relationships are established.

**QA6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities:**

Communication and community involvement is great.

Continued advocacy of current services to ensure a positive outlook within the wider community is a priority in 2015. Advertising and staff advocacy for the centre will be integral to the success of our new Rural Care service and the continued Preschool and Playgroup operation.

**QA7 Leadership and service management:**

Governing council is well attended, however more opportunities for parents to manage the meetings, and gaining knowledge of governing council processes and preschool operation will need to be a priority. The service will need to ensure a positive organisational culture where educators are valued and all stakeholders understanding of the service’s goals and expectations.

## INTERVENTION and SUPPORT

Three children at Burra ELCC received speech and language support. Private speech pathologists, DECD speech pathologists, Disability coordinators and Healthy Families support staff including; speech pathologist, occupational therapist, behaviour management personnel and dieticians were all involved in supporting children at Burra ELCC.

The outcome and continued support was integral to the children’s success in their development of speech and language. All three children will continue to receive support at school.

A successful grant from Variety SA and the Family Literacy Program enabled the centre to purchase a sound field system to support one Aboriginal child with a hearing disability. The system is of benefit to all children and staff at Preschool.

### Feeder Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site number - Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0269 - Farrell Flat Primary School</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>0600 - Booborowie Primary School</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<td>99.9</td>
<td>100.1</td>
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As the data shows there was an increase in enrolments in Term 4 due to a new family arriving in the community. A continued priority to promote the centre and all its services is a key objective in 2015. Attendance is a high priority for our centre to ensure that all families eligible for Preschool attend on time and regularly throughout the year. Processes are in place including offering transport; early arrival and late pick up for families needing support for preschool attendance. Due to this our attendance is always on par or above the current state attendance percentage. In 2015 a 93% attendance goal will be key action for pre-schoolers at Burra ELCC.
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Strengthening partnerships with the wider Preschool community

Quality Improvement Area 6
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Home visits
Strengthen links within the community.
Develop a comprehensive transition program from birth - Reception for all families.
Develop stronger partnerships with local feeder school leaders and staff.

Quality Improvement Area 1
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & PRACTICE
Develop individual learning plans.
Devise assessment strategies and a weekly resource planner.
Investigate the reading component of TROLL.
Conduct family audit.
Investigate 'Learning Stories.'

OUTCOMES:
To ensure that ALL children’s wellbeing is catered for in the Preschool program.
- Staff investigated ‘The Family Audit’ (developed by Mary Scales, 2001, Lady Gowrie CCC, Adelaide), beginning with what we knew about each family. As a result each staff member had a number of families that they connected with, ie: personal notes in communication books, informal greetings and chats and phone calls as necessary. The family audit will continue to be a priority in 2015.
- Smaller primary care groups were introduced to the program for more intentional teaching and for the transition to school program. Given that the Preschool component was small, the primary care groups were used as the need arose. Whole group activities proved more beneficial for children’s learning. At the beginning of 2015 staff have agreed upon a whole group approach with a focus on basic routines, expectations and familiarisation of the site and relationships.
- The purchase of an iPad has provided us with an additional reporting tool. We were able to use the iPad for continued development of Learning Stories and photo evidence of children learning through play. The iPad proved invaluable for children receiving Preschool support with the use of educational apps and games. Many other children used the device for a range of activities including, photo stories, games, videoing etc. A need for additional technology resources will be a priority in 2015.

All children improve by 2 levels in oral language in reading and writing.
- Oral language has always been and continues to be a priority in our centre. We were unable to access the TROLL program due to a region wide database fault. As a result we needed to gather literacy information about each child. We introduced the initial sounds component of Jolly Phonics and we focussed more on name recognition and writing. Oral language, reading and writing will all continue to be focus priorities for children’s language learning. Promotion of oral language through use of the microphone, ‘Me box,’ photo stories and children’s own sharing will be utilised. Reading will be introduced through a new library system which will enable children to borrow regularly and continuation of writing practice will be an everyday occurrence.
- A component of our regional transition process was gathering information about children’s dispositions. Preschool teaching staff documented using the Disposition checklist any information relevant to each individual child’s development. This information was shared with junior primary staff and used for developing individual learning plans. The information gathered and the conversations between staff were very useful to ensure a smooth transition from Preschool to school. Staff will continue to use the Disposition and the You Can Do It checklists in 2015.

To extend the daily observation sheet to include child participation and specific activities.
- Daily anecdotal and child observations are recorded by staff to provide insight into possible programming ideas and foci. The information provided from these observations was extremely beneficial for all staff to monitor children’s ongoing interests and wellbeing. It also provided planning and programing ideas and opportunities.
- Individual learning plans were and will continue to be developed for each child, as required by DECD, reviewed termly in consultation with families, and used for summative report writing.
OUTCOMES

Extend and increase communication and understanding between Preschool and schools:

- regular meeting dates were established to ensure professional relationships and sharing of information was achieved to reach common understandings and expectations. Through this initiative staff from both sites gained a greater respect and understanding of each other and site priorities. Continued meetings will ensure a collaborative and cohesive relationship.

Facilitate successful transition processes, inclusive of families and an agreement between staff to ensure a positive transition:

- A transition program was established and agreed upon by the Upper Mid North partnership. Prior to this initiative Burra ELC & BCS had embarked on a successful and extended transition in 2013. Commitment was sought from all sites within the partnership to ensure consistency was achieved. Collaboratively, Burra ELC and BCS devised a transition program incorporating all the recommended timelines and guidelines and included site specific programs.

In addition Burra ELC offered a pre-entry program which began in Term 3. Families were encouraged to attend the initial visits to ensure children’s wellbeing was being catered for. As the program progressed each family was offered continued pre-entry visits until the end of the year.

In summary the extended transition proved extremely successful for children, families and staff. Staff noticed an increased confidence in the children, in particular, knowing and feeling comfortable with the staff, being familiar with the site and showing knowledge of routines. Transition for Preschool children graduating to school in 2016 will begin early in 2015 with the Preschool visiting the library; combined special occasions; JP classes coming for a play; Staff from BCS visiting the Preschool to join in activities and an invitation from BCS for the Preschool to access facilities including the gym and pool throughout the year.

Establish stronger links with ALL families and provide a welcoming and supportive environment for ALL families:

- A number of initiatives were introduced to establish stronger family links including: each morning and afternoon a staff member would greet and engage families as they arrived at the Preschool; communication books were provided to all families; family profile sheets and the ‘Me” box were used to gain greater knowledge of family structures and interests; text messages and photos to parents during and after Preschool hours were utilised to keep parents informed of activities throughout the day and an open day for families in the region as well as Preschool staff attendance at Playgroup and Occasional care sessions were offered.

Feedback supporting these initiatives was positive and included the support families felt when arriving at Preschool and receiving photos of their children during play at Preschool. These initiatives also enabled staff to gain a greater understanding of families to ensure everybody felt supported and valued. Staff were also able to offer additional support to those families and children in greater need.

Home visits were not introduced in 2014, due to a greater focus on transition processes, however they continue to be an initiative that the staff at Burra ELC are keen to investigate in the future.

As a majority of the families are new to the centre in 2015 a continued focus on establishing great relationships with families is a priority, with a strong focus on friendships and collaborative planning and community involvement.

An improved understanding for families of Preschool processes and expectations:

- reporting at Governing Council meetings and distribution of minutes to all families using the 7 Quality Areas for Improvement.

- articles highlighting play and learning at Preschool in local paper and school newsletter and community display boards with examples of children’s learning.

Introducing the 7 quality areas was a way of familiarising parents about the NQF within a Preschool setting. To add value to this process in 2015 staff will not only be reporting to the improvement areas but at each meeting at least one element highlighted in the site Quality Improvement Plan will be assessed. This will enable parents and community a more collaborative approach to continually improve the site and service.

More advocacy of the wonderful services available at Burra ELC will continue with advertising and sharing of events within our centre.

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FUNDRAISING 2014

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Donation</td>
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<td>Wheel-a-thon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raffles</td>
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<td>Show</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
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<td>Flower Kits/Honey</td>
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<td>Less $5784.85 expenditure</td>
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<td>Total raised</td>
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NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

Snapshot of RECOMMENDATIONS in 2015

- Rural care operation and skilled staff
- Performance management
- Time management and administrative tasks
- Governing Council expertise and core business collaboration
- Teaching and learning using the regional Disposition document
- Numeracy and Literacy everywhere!
- Outdoor learning environment
- 93% Preschool attendance.