

Queanbeyan & District Preschool Association

Annual Report 2023

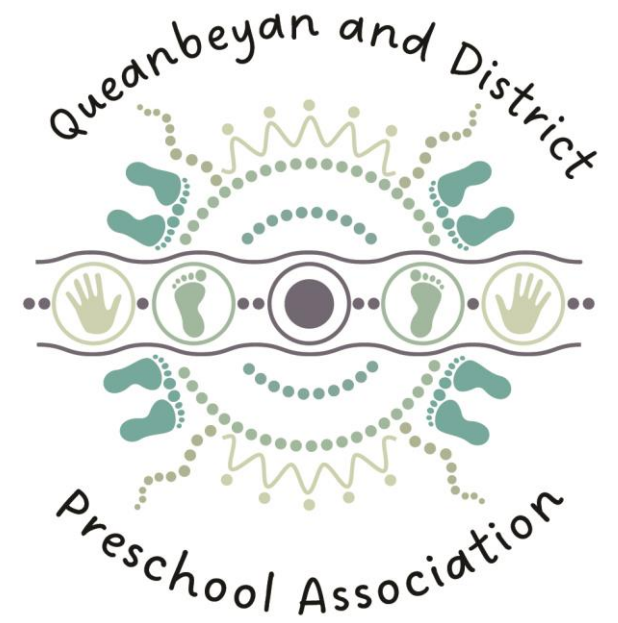






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Acknowledgement of Country

Queanbeyan & District Preschool Association acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land in which we play, live and learn, and guide the young leaders of tomorrow. We recognise the traditional custodians' connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to First Nations peoples and their culture, and to Elders past, present and emerging.



Management Committee

Name:

Tobi Edmonds
Nicole Bowles
Jessica Hicks
Neha Thakkar
Matthew Sant
Sam Crawley
Krystle Keller
Ivana Spasov
Bianca Flint
Ashleigh Daly
Jill Thompson

Position:

Chair
Vice-Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
General Member
General Member
General Member
Parent Representative
Committee Member
Executive Officer; Public Officer; Teacher Representative
Finance & Business Manager (resigned July 2023)

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

2023 Chair Report

Welcome -The purpose of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is to report on the previous year's business activities, challenges and successes and also to offer opportunities for new and returning family or community members to join our QDPA Management Committee for the coming year.

2023 was another busy year for the Preschool Association. We started the year with a new Executive Officer Ashleigh Daly, who quickly fitted in with the association and with her background in Assessment and Rating (A & R) under the National Quality Framework set about implementing a program of systematic audits of each preschool to make sure that we were ready for any A & R visits would be successful. Two of our preschools had A & R visits in 2023, Mura and Waratah. Both achieved an overall rating of 'Meeting' the National Quality Framework but in many categories were rated as 'Exceeding'. This was a great result and a big thanks to Ashleigh, Carly, Jo and their teams, who pulled out all stops to demonstrate to the assessors how great our preschools are.

We finalised our strategic plan which will provide a direction for the organisation for the next 5 years.

In August 2023 Jill Thompson our Financial Officer, left the team. Jill was a huge advocate for affordable quality preschooling for children and kept our finances in good order to achieve that. The departure of Jill put and increased workload onto Ashleigh, who had to pick up many tasks including payroll and the migration of our whole financial system onto 'Xero'. Recruiting the Financial Officer role has been difficult and as an interim measure the association employed Jess McQualter as a bookkeeper until a new Financial Officer can be appointed.

As a committee we are really proud of the work that our staff do. They make each of these campuses incredible centres for learning and launch our children into schools with bigger minds than when they arrived. We cannot thank them enough for the work that they do. This is my last report as Chair. I would like to thank all the staff at all the preschools for their support over the last 5 years as well as the volunteers on the committee who have brought so much experience and knowledge from their own careers and everyday lives to make the magic of QDPA happen.

One of the things that the Committee focusses on interacting with parents. You are the ones who elect the committee, so we always welcome your thoughts and engagement. Without your involvement there would be no association and these valuable places of learning would not exist.

Tobi Edmonds

QDPA Management Committee Chair



2023 Treasurer Report



[For Financial Year Ending 31st December 2023](#)

Qeanbeyan District Preschool Association (QDPA) is proud to provide quality preschool education to the Qeanbeyan region through its four preschools at Karabar, Harris Park, Waratah and Mura.

The Financial Accounts of QDPA for the period ending December 31, 2023, have been audited by Vincents Audit Pty Ltd in accordance with the relevant accounting standards and the Australian charities and not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

The organization's total surplus for the year 2023 is \$591,626, up from \$318,993 in 2022.

This shows an overall annual surplus of \$209,633.

The surplus is a result of increased operational income from Mura preschool at full capacity, surplus from the "affordable preschool program" covering the operational expenses, club grants, fundraising, and interest earned.

The overall financial position remains strong with current assets of \$2,542,946 to cover the current liabilities of \$1,710,631.

Funding & Grants:

QDPA receives income in the form of parent fees, funding from the NSW Dept. of Education, Club grants and Community grants. This funding is used for operational expenses, training & professional development of educators, supporting special needs, and providing a safe learning environment to our children.

Other Income:

Each preschool individually runs fundraising events during the year. These funds are utilized in donations to charities or healthcare foundations, to help procure additional classroom resources such as books/art material and playground equipment.

Highlights of the year 2023

- All the preschools are operating at full capacity with a reduced waitlist.
- Received positive outcomes for Assessment and Rating against the National Quality Standards by NSW Dep. of Education for Mura and Waratah Preschool.
- Jill, our Finance Manager resigned in June after which Ashleigh, our Executive officer ably supported us till we found Jess, our bookkeeper. We thank Jill for all her hard work and her dedication to QDPA and appreciate Ashleigh's commitment towards QDPA.
- Upgrades were made to the furniture and resources at Waratah, giving it a fresh look.

Recommendation for 2024

In September 2023, a deficit was projected for 2024 due to the increased operating expenses and upcoming facilities upgrades. As a result, the committee voted to increase the fees set in 2023 from \$37 per day to \$38 for non-equity families and from \$12 per day to \$13 for equity families/concession holders.

Gratitude

Finally, I would like to thank Narelle, our Admin Officer, for her hard work and support throughout the year to keep this organization connected with the community. I would also like to thank Jess, our bookkeeper, for helping us get our financial records UpToDate.

A big thank you to Ashleigh for her on going dedication to our cause.

Last but not the least, I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to all our preschool directors and educators for their tireless efforts and dedication towards delivering QDPA's operational goals.

On a personal note, this is my last time presenting the treasurer's report at QDPA and I would like to take the opportunity to thank each and every member of the association for this honour. I would like to personally thank Jessica, Nicole and Toby for their help and guidance during my time here. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Thank you.

Neha Thakkar

Treasurer - QDPA

2023 Business Snapshot Report



378

Preschool places provided



\$81,339

Received in successful grant applications to improve facilities and curriculums



\$43,893

Fundraised and donated by Association members to assist with upgrades and new resources



150%

Increase in income from 2022 as a result of fee relief funding, grants and fundraising in 2023



Queanbeyan and District
Preschool Association

2023 Executive Officer Report



2023 was a wonderful year of achievements and success with both Mura Preschool and Waratah Preschool going through their Assessment and Rating process, and both receiving a rating of “meeting” the National Quality Standards.

Karabar Preschool was successful in their community grant application which seen some significant work be undertaken in the playground with new softfall being installed. This grant then allowed for more additional capital works to be undertaken which included a new kitchenette to be installed providing a more functional space for the educators and children.

2023 also seen the NSW Government initiative of affordable preschool commence, offering fee relief to families who opt in. QDPA had a large uptake of this fee relief funding from families, significantly reducing out of pocket costs for families and children to access preschool.

QDPA also introduced the first inaugural awards to recognise the achievements of the staff. These awards were peer nominated and nominations were judged by members of the committee to determine the winners of each award category. Director of the year went to Miss Jenny Farnhill (Karabar Preschool); Educator of the Year went to Grace Forbes (Karabar Preschool) and Michelle Parkes (Mura Preschool); Educational Leader of the Year went to Prabin Subedi (Harris Park Preschool); Rising Star of the Year went to Katelyn Judd (Karabar Preschool) and Innovation in Pedagogy and Practice went to Janell Foster (Mura Preschool).

We farewelled some long-standing QDPA employees in 2023 – Holly Sutor-Fogarty, Rebecca Martin and Jill Thompson, and were fortunate to recruit some fabulous new employees to the Association! We were proud to support the career development of Joanne Crammond to Teaching Director at Waratah Preschool following Holly’s departure.

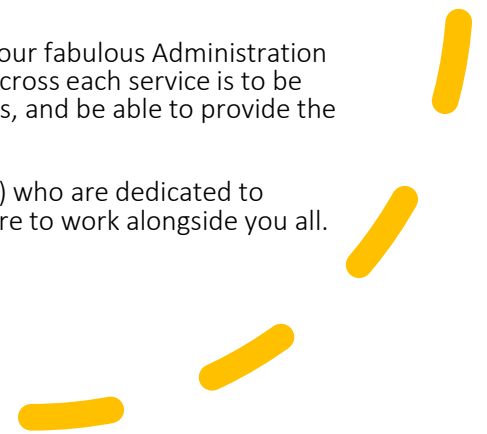
In 2023, the committee committed to providing all employees an additional 3% above award wages as well as an additional 5 personal leave days (pro-rata) which was much welcomed and appreciated by Association employees. QDPA also finalised the strategic plan for the next 5 years, as well as updated the Association’s constitution – two very significant documents to lead the direction of the Association forward.

I would like to thank the 2023 Management Committee, and especially share the Association’s gratitude to some very long-standing executive members who will be farewelling the Association at the upcoming AGM – Tobi Edmonds, Nicole Bowles and Neha Thakkar.

A sincere thank you again to the team of Director’s (Jen, Jo, Carly and Dorcas) as well as our fabulous Administration Officer, Narelle - the commitment to high quality early education that is demonstrated across each service is to be commended to each of you – without this wonderful team, QDPA would not be what it is, and be able to provide the reputable service to the community.

A heartfelt thank you also must extend to our team of educators (permanent and casual) who are dedicated to enriching the lives of the children within each of our services. It continues to be a pleasure to work alongside you all.

- Ashleigh Daly



2023 Mura Preschool Report



2023 was a very successful year with Mura Preschool undertaking their 12month Assessment and Ratings Visit. All new services are required to undertake this process 12months after opening a new service. We were provided a Meeting Rating with exceeding themes throughout and exceeding rating in QA3 Physical Environment.

Our service has continued to build upon its quality improvement plan in 2023. Our service has focused on updating our professional knowledge using the newly released Early Years Learning Framework V.2.0 (EYLF V2.0). We have looked at the values and practices that this document now reflects and as such completely focused on updating our Mura Preschool philosophy with input from families and communities and Educators through discussions and surveys. Our service felt the need to keep our philosophy alive, which included specific practices and approaches that were presented to our existing and new team members in the form of the Mura Preschool Positive Practices Document. This was a way to align our philosophy with our expectations in practice when working with children. In addition to this work, our service has also focused as a staff team on delving deeper into the concept outlined very clearly in the EYLF V2.0 of Play Based Learning following the release of the ECA Statement of Play at the ECA conference this year. We have conducted several learning sessions around this over the year and this evidence journey is documented in our project books for Mura Preschool.

Our out of gate excursions continue to see our children in 2023 getting out to the local parklet, the oval and to the nature belt along our boundary line near Waratah Preschool. Karabar Preschool came to visit us, and we also went to visit them. Waratah Preschool joined us for a fundraising "Confidence Course" on the Tigers Oval through our continued community relationship with them. We have used the oval for many events this year. Mura continued to host the New Parent Group onsite each Wednesday morning for NSW community health. We ventured out to a successful National Zoo and Aquarium and Questacon excursion and we had many in service visits such as the local library, QPRC with Emery and the Mully the Platypus, DJ Sue disco, Diwali celebrations, Duncan Smith from Wiradjuri Echoes, Reconciliation BBQ to name a few.

Christina Cake was the recipient of a scholarship from the Department of Education to enrol in her Bachelor of Education and she was also appointed Educational Leader on a trial basis which was approved as ongoing for 2024 and supported by several professional development webinars and courses.

The ECA conference in Adelaide was a highlight for our QDPA directors that attended as well as gaining some amazing presentations and networking opportunities. Our team has also completed Munch and Move, Kids and Traffic, Food Safety supervisor, sustainability, and child protection courses throughout the year.

We used a QPRC building refund from the purchase of the property to fund physical improvements and had a lovely new sand pit in the Cooma Street Garden complete with a water pump. This has been an amazing addition to our physical improvements. You will see children in this space daily digging up holes, making sand pools and lots of other creative items.

Our service organized several profitable fundraisers including Gunnadoo Pies, Easter Raffle, and an association election day cake stall that supported ongoing purchases of resources and equipment across Mura Preschool.

- Carly Smith-Beeson
Director



2023 Karabar Preschool Report

2023 was a year that provided lots of different things to the many different people who have become part of our Karabar Preschool family.

In relation to Children: We had another wonderful start to our year, with the children settling into preschool beautifully and forming relationships quickly with both peers and Educators. We consistently put this relationship building down to our extended orientation process which we believe is a huge positive for children, families and Educators. We engaged in a variety of new learning experiences across the year including Bush Kinder sessions at Molonglo Gorge and Mulligans Flat reserve as well as building our local relationships with Kindy Gym at PCYC and excursions to local and ACT attractions such as The National Zoo and Aquarium, the Botanic Gardens and local primary schools in promoting transition to school processes. The extension of our indoor/outdoor program and addition of more loose parts saw our outdoor space utilised for a variety of play which promoted interests, challenge and relationship building. We have enjoyed collaborating with both Mura Preschool and Waratah Preschool across the year for many of these special events (which reduces the cost burden, builds relationships and strengthens the sense of connection across our QDPA services). Educators continued to engage with the Childsafe Standards and Karabar Preschool (along with QDPA) completed the Child Safe Self-Assessment process, and Educators updated their training in relation to the Childsafe Standards and the SAFE Series (personal safety/protective behaviours program).

In relation to Families and Community: We continue to see relationships come to the forefront for families (as well as children) as seen through the many friendships that develop during the children's time at preschool. As this holds true for our approach to children, it is equally important for families to develop these same relationships and sense of belonging to our service. We were well supported by families for any special events that we held across the year from BBQ nights, to breakfasts, joining us for excursions or attending family picnic nights. We have enjoyed our continued relationship with local organisations such as the Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire & Rescue, and visits from local emergency services such as NSW Police and NSW Ambulance were hugely popular. A big 'thank you' to those families who joined in our Philosophy Review meetings which provided feedback around our Philosophy to ensure that families can see our Philosophy in action, each and every day they walk into our space. We also established a relationship with the Child Studies class at Queanbeyan High School and were able to share some excursions together (and look forward to continuing this relationship in 2024). We achieved our playground upgrade through our successful application to the Community Partnerships Program with the installation of rubber softfall in our playground (replacing the mulch).

In relation to Educators: We had planned for some changes in our staffing roster with Miss Katelyn coming on board at the start of 2023 (but also having a pre-booked overseas holiday for part of Term 1/2) – we were and are very lucky that we have consistent casual Educators to step in at these times, and we thank Miss Bethany for jumping in to cover Katelyn's leave. At this point in the year, Miss Bec received some exciting news that she was successful in a fulltime position in a government role which would see her finish up at preschool at the end of Term 1. This exciting news was turned upside down as Miss Bec received a breast cancer diagnosis. Thankfully, Miss Bec has come through this devastating period in her life and has received the 'all clear' with her diagnosis, and she now comes to visit us at preschool to share her knowledge and experience around Aboriginal culture. We saw Miss Grace join us at the end of Term 1 (stepping into Miss Bec's role), which was a very easy transition for Grace and for us, as she has worked with us 1 day a week previously covering my Directors release. I would like to thank my amazing team of Educators for everything they do for Karabar Preschool. We are a small team – we are like family – and I couldn't do what I do without their continual support and commitment.

In relation to Curriculum: Our team spent a great deal of time reflecting on our curriculum approaches across 2023 with our utilisation of the OWNA platform for programming. We experimented with options and alternatives around the platform in our desire to move towards digital programming. As we approached mid-year, and after undertaking further professional development around the concept, combined with reflective meetings with our Executive Officer, we decided that this approach wasn't the right fit for us – and we reverted to our much loved (adapted) Floorbook approach, which we have continued on with into 2024. We drafted a Curriculum Strategies document to prioritise our processes around programming and documentation (which we will take forward into 2024).

In relation to Management: We continue to be well supported by both our Executive Officer (Ashleigh Daly); our dedicated group of volunteers who make up our Management Committee; and Administration Manager (Narelle Westerhof). Each year I talk about these amazing people being the only other people I know who are as multi-skilled and multi-talented as the people I work with, each and every day. We have appreciated the continual feedback from our Executive Officer through the undertaking of regular Quality Area audits and opportunity to provide and receive feedback through policy and procedure review, performance review meetings and regular catch-up meetings throughout the year. Our Executive Officer has provided support and feedback as our service transitioned across to the Self-Assessment Working Document, providing feedback around our Key Practices and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as part of our preparation for our Assessment & Rating in 2024. On behalf of the Karabar team, I would like to thank Ashleigh Daly (our Executive Officer), our Management Committee and Narelle for all their amazing efforts and support. Thank you also to each of our preschool Directors who are a great support and source of information across the year.

- Jenny Farnhill
Director



2023 Waratah Preschool Report

In 2023, Waratah Preschool experienced a series of transformative developments and advancements. These changes commenced with the temporary departure of the Teacher-Director in January, resulting in the establishment of a six-month contracted role for the position. Subsequently, in July, the resignation of the Teacher-Director paved the way for the acting Teacher-Director to assume the position permanently.

Over the course of the year, enhancements were made to the infrastructure of the building demonstrating our commitment to providing a conducive learning environment. These improvements included the installation of a new roof, an upgraded heating system, and the implementation of new blinds throughout the premises. Additionally, security measures were enhanced with the installation of secure coded doors, ensuring the safety of our children and staff. Furthermore, internal spaces were enhanced to support our educational mission, with upgrades to the educators' office and the introduction of new dividers in the children's bathroom to enhance privacy. Complementing these structural improvements, investments were made in new tables, chairs, and educational resources, enriching the learning experiences of our children, and fostering a dynamic educational setting.

Waratah Preschool was successful in securing a NSW club grant totaling \$6750. This funding was allocated towards enhancing our outdoor learning environment through the addition of innovative wooden resources aimed at fostering risky play. These newly acquired resources not only offer opportunities for children to engage in physical challenges but also enrich their overall learning experiences. The introduction of these elements has been met with enthusiasm from the children, who are actively embracing and enjoying the enhanced outdoor area. Additional enhancements to the outdoor environment at Waratah Preschool have included the deliberate replacement of the mud pit with a purposefully designed risky play area. This newly installed feature comprises various elements such as wooden stepping logs of varying heights, a dynamic wobbly bridge, and fresh tanbark surfacing. These improvements were made to promote physical engagement and cognitive development for our children, aligning with our commitment to providing enriching learning experiences.

Throughout the year, Waratah Preschool successfully integrated the PALS program (Play and Learning to Socialise) into our curriculum. This structured 10-week program is designed to cultivate children's social skills through a diverse array of engaging activities such as puppetry, interactive games, songs, and narrative storytelling. Spanning the duration of the program, children are introduced to a range of age-appropriate scenarios and practical strategies. These include but are not limited to, managing emotional responses, fostering empathy, navigating social interactions such as turn-taking and sharing, as well as effectively regulating emotions and sharing thoughts and ideas. These topics foster the holistic development of our students, reinforcing essential life skills in a nurturing and supportive educational environment.

Throughout the year, we participated in a series of community engagement initiatives, facilitating enriching experiences beyond the confines of our preschool. One Endeavor involved organising a food drive to support members of our local community in partnership with St. Benedict's. This collective effort allowed us to personally deliver the donated food items, instilling in our children the values of compassion and community service. Additionally, we also participated in various excursions. We visited Queanbeyan Public School for the annual Teddy Bears Picnic, where the children had the opportunity to interact with and watch a performance held by the kindergarten children. We embarked on a journey to Molonglo Gorge with Karabar Preschool, immersing the children in a unique opportunity to connect with the natural environment and appreciate the cultural significance of our country. Fostering connections with our neighbouring preschool Mura, we engaged in collaborative activities, for example, gathering on the oval for playful exchanges and mutual enjoyment and holding a combined confidence course challenge fundraiser. These shared experiences provide the opportunity to enhance holistic education while emphasising community engagement, cultural appreciation, and social integration.

As the Director, Early childhood Teacher and Educational Leader of Waratah Preschool it is essential to remain up to date with current practice, theory, and research to provide the best possible learning environment and outcomes for the children attending. During the year I was provided the opportunity to attend two conferences. The Early Childhood Australia Conference in Adelaide alongside Ashleigh our Executive Officer and Carly Director of Mura, and the Intergenerational Symposium in Brisbane with a fellow educator. For the duration of these conferences, I was engaged in learning about Gender Identity, Inclusion, social justice, the benefits of engaging in an Intergenerational program for both children and older Australians and strengthening pedagogy, practice, and leadership skills. These enriching experiences have not only expanded my knowledge base but also equipped me with practical insights and strategies to further enhance the educational journey at Waratah Preschool. This ongoing commitment to providing a nurturing and progressive learning environment will foster holistic growth and development for all children.

Towards the conclusion of the year, Waratah Preschool underwent the Assessment and Rating process, which proved to be a constructive and rewarding experience for all stakeholders. We are pleased to announce that Waratah achieved an overall rating of "Meeting" with an achievement of five exceeding elements throughout. This outcome reflects our dedication to maintaining high-quality standards in early childhood education and care. We are proud of the collaborative efforts of our team and the positive impact this achievement will have on the ongoing development and success of our preschool community.

I extend my sincere gratitude to Ashleigh Daly and the Directors of Mura, Karabar, and Harris Park preschools for their unwavering dedication and support. Furthermore, I wish to express my appreciation to the management committee for their commitment and efforts in ensuring the ongoing success of Queanbeyan and District Preschool Association.

Lastly, I extend my thanks to the dedicated members of the Waratah Team for their work in providing an inclusive, and nurturing learning environment for the children and families that attend Waratah.

Joanne Crammond

Teaching Director Waratah Preschool



2023 Harris Park Preschool Report



Following collaborative discussions with educators and children regarding the focal points of our sustainability program, we reached a consensus on expanding our understanding of worm farming and cultivating our own produce. This initiative enables children to engage in picking, eating, cooking, and sharing the produce with their families. Debbie volunteered to pilot this project with her class, which proved successful. We further engaged families by offering warm tea with a voluntary dollar coin donation, which was reinvested to sustain the project. This venture has been fruitful, involving both children and staff, and it continues with this year's families and children across all four classes. Excursions to Questacon in Term 2 and the Canberra Zoo Aquarium in Term 3 were the children's highlight. Most of their voices reflected on how it was fun to go on the bus, seeing the animals at the zoo and having fun with hands-on experiences they took part in at Questacon. These excursions were a great follow-up learning to the interest of animals most of the children had and the fun science experiments they did at preschool. **PALS Program** (*Playing & Learning to Socialise*) continues to drive part of our social skills program with the children. All four classes implemented and embedded the PALS program to their practice last year and have begun the program for this year. PALS program continues to help develop confidence, independence, social skills in our children. It is a beneficial program that will continue to be embedded in our practice annually.

After great reflections regarding the safety and wellbeing of our children and families, we installed a new solid gate and fencing around the entrance to Harris Park to ensure our children, staff and families are always safe. In our ongoing efforts to engage families in our health and wellbeing program, we organized another successful obstacle course event. Through collective participation, we raised an impressive \$6,249.10, which has been allocated toward enhancing our veranda space. This much-needed upgrade aims to create a more engaging and welcoming environment for children, staff, and families alike. We're pleased to report that the revamped veranda space is currently being fully utilized and enjoyed by all, providing our preschool community experience. As a part of our sustainability initiative, which includes activities like maintaining a worm farm, we're dedicated to fostering environmental awareness among our children. Each class has been actively involved in tending to their garden beds, cultivating produce that they can grow, harvest, and enjoy firsthand or utilize in cooking lessons. The abundance of strawberries has been a delightful treat for all to share. In particular, the Kookaburra class took pride in harvesting their carrots, generously sharing them with their families. Meanwhile, the Kangaroo class seized the opportunity to create spinach rolls using fresh spinach from their garden beds. Additionally, we've extended the spirit of sharing by providing some of our garden produce to our Harris Park families, ensuring everyone can enjoy the fruits of our sustainability efforts.

Investing in our new veranda space stands out as a significant achievement for us. This engaging area has quickly become a favourite among the children, who make the most of its offerings. Our educators take great pride in this space and use it as an opportunity to instill values of respect and sharing among the children regarding the resources provided. Utilizing funds from the obstacle funds, we acquired essential resources including a spacious craft table with seating benches, storage tables, and an array of small loose part animals, construction materials, and building resources. These additions have greatly enriched the learning experiences of our children, fostering creativity, collaboration, and responsible resource utilization. We applied for Community grant and were successful in our application for \$5000. This grant was used to repair the plumbing and drainage of our current riverbed Funds was also used for landscaping.

We welcomed Cherie Constable and Prabin Subedi our new educational leader who joined the Harris Park Team. All staff have settled well into their new roles and teams. Amy McDonald has also returned from maternity leave and working three days a week with the Gecko class.

Participating in Clean Up Australia Day and attending the Recycling Talk facilitated by the waste management team from Queanbeyan council proved to be valuable experiences for our preschool community. These activities sparked meaningful conversations among the children, highlighting the importance of environmental stewardship and how everyone can contribute to preserving our planet. Building upon these experiences, we extended our learning through incursions, utilizing them as educational tools to teach children about the significance of waste management. Through interactive sessions, we educated the children about the purpose of different coloured bins and the proper disposal of various types of waste, empowering them to make environmentally conscious choices. Celebrating Harmony Day was a great opportunity for our children, staff, and families to come together and celebrate each other around some delicious, cooked meals, fruit and vegetable platters and some mouth-watering sweets. Our educators and children brought everyone together by singing and performing three multi-cultural songs that also involved our families. It was great to see everyone celebrating who they are in a relaxed environment.

We conducted our first online parent information night towards the end of last year as another way of networking and collaborating with our families. The purpose of this meeting was to relay information about what we provide as a not-for-profit community-based preschool, how families can help support our preschool and what we educators and teachers provide for our families and children's education. The information night also gave the families an opportunity to ask those frequently asked questions in a safe space which everyone benefited from. In an effort to immerse the children in Indigenous traditions, we organized a session focused on crafting traditional Indigenous animals and dolls, we invited Ronnie Jordan, A Kalkadoon Pitta Pitta Woman who is also the owner of 'Culture on The Move.' Our collaboration with Ronnie remains instrumental as we integrate her valuable insights to enrich our programs. By incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, we aim to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Indigenous culture within our service. Both staff and children enthusiastically participated in Crazy Long Sock Day, contributing to fundraising efforts for the 'Sleep Bus' initiative, we raised \$194.50 towards this great course. Over the years, Harris Park Preschool has worked closely with St Benedict's Homeless shelter. We involved Harris Park children and families in donating unperishable food donations for those in need. Our recent visit and donation last year was the biggest yet. Father Michael and Elaine were very appreciative of the generous donation from the children and families. We concluded the year with another fantastic turnout from our families, gathering at the playground for a memorable evening. The atmosphere buzzed with families enjoying dinner together and engaging in lively interactions. The children were thrilled with balloon making and face painting activities provided for their entertainment. Amidst the festivities, they cherished moments spent with friends and family. It was also a special occasion for our staff to express gratitude to our families for their continued support and involvement in our preschool and QDPA. The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the arrival of Santa, who made a grand entrance aboard a fire truck, much to the delight of the children. During our annual Footy Colors Week, the children arrived at preschool adorned in their favorite sports colors, representing a diverse array of sports such as netball, soccer, football, NRL, AFL, basketball, ballet, and more. It proved to be an exciting couple of days delving into discussions about various sports teams not only in Australia but worldwide. These conversations sparked exploration into basic mathematical concepts like colors, patterns, shapes, symbols, and pictures. To elevate the experience, we arranged for a special visit from Victor the Viking of the Canberra Raiders Club, much to the delight and surprise of the children. Victor engaged with the children through play, dance, and even kicking balls, leaving a lasting impression on our Sporting Colors Week festivities. As a service, we participated in the Reconciliation Walk organised by the Queanbeyan council around Queanbeyan. Our four classes as well as some of our families joined the walk showing the community spirit which made it special. We returned to preschool where the staff and children cooked damper and marshmallows over the fire. This was a great follow up experience, that included some Indigenous perspectives into our programming that week.

We have been proactive in engaging our families in our Quality Improvement plans, encompassing qualities 1 through 7. The invaluable feedback received from families in 2023 has strongly reinforced our practices throughout the year. Moreover, the continuous family feedback has also contributed significantly to the review of our Philosophy earlier this year, affirming the alignment between our values and their experiences. Since the recruitment of our new educational leader, the staff has enjoyed ongoing support tailored to their individual needs. Through collaborative efforts between the staff and the educational leader, goals have been pursued collectively. This seamless practice has been sustained thanks to the unwavering support from Dorcas and Ashleigh, as well as the insightful training suggestions provided by our fellow director colleagues. Following the completion of our wall painting project, we now have two interacting hallways designed to engage our families. The walls display the seven National Quality Standards and our Quality Improvement Plan that continues to guide and refine our practices. This visual integration serves as an additional avenue for networking with our families, visitors, and educators, fostering a platform for collecting valuable feedback.

Dorcas Hancock
Director



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Executive Officer: Ashleigh Daly

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Waratah Preschool

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