

KCCCC

KENSINGTON COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CO-OPERATIVE



Annual Report 2020



The purpose of the Annual Report is to:

- provide an overview of the Co-operative's operations for education and care;
- communicate how the centre is performing;
- highlight key achievements;
- highlight performance and statistics; and
- provide a summary of KCCC's financial position as at 31 December 2020.

If you would like further information on any aspect of this report please contact the centre at info@kccc.org.au.

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ANNUAL REPORT 2020

This report presents progress towards achieving the objectives of our strategic plan and the Kensington Community Children's Co-operative (KCCC) vision and aims for the future.

OVERVIEW

KCCC is unique in its co-operative model. We are a not-for-profit community-based model governed by a committed group of parents with extremely dedicated and qualified staff.

We offer education and care to children from 6 weeks to school age as well as Sessional and Integrated Kindergarten programs. We are a 140-place centre with over 60 dedicated staff.

HISTORY

KCCC was established in 1982 in Henry Street, Kensington as a 35- place long day care centre. In 1996, when demand far exceeded the capacity of the Centre, the City of Melbourne (CoM) built the facilities in Altona Street, alongside the existing kindergarten. The service relocated to its current 140-place facility, which includes 80 places for 4-year-old funded Kindergarten.

MISSION

KCCC is a not-for-profit community organisation that values and supports children and their families. We provide quality early childhood education which helps children grow, develop and learn in a safe and stimulating environment. Our natural setting is an integral part of our program and we encourage and foster sustainable practices.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Children's strategy: Maintain our excellent early learning standard and continue to innovate as a leading benchmark for the sector.

Community strategy: Foster a sense of community and deeper appreciation of the wider world around us.

Future strategy: Continue to evolve to meet the current and future needs of contemporary families and/or the wider community.

Team strategy: Further embed a culture of continuous learning and professional development, where staff feel valued, heard and respected.

VALUES



Individuality, Inclusion and Innovation



Play and Experience-Based Learning



Health and Wellbeing



Indigenous Culture



Diversity



Connection to Nature

KCCC

From the General Manager



Karen Mills
General Manager

The year 2020 goes down in the history books, and no one could have predicted the outcome. The year started off well, KCCC had their PD day, Welcome BBQ and I was excited to start at KCCC. We had heard of a virus which was very contagious – called the CORONAVIRUS. Towards the end of March there was a very real feeling that our lives were about to change.

We were in a developing Pandemic, which affected everyone, across the world.

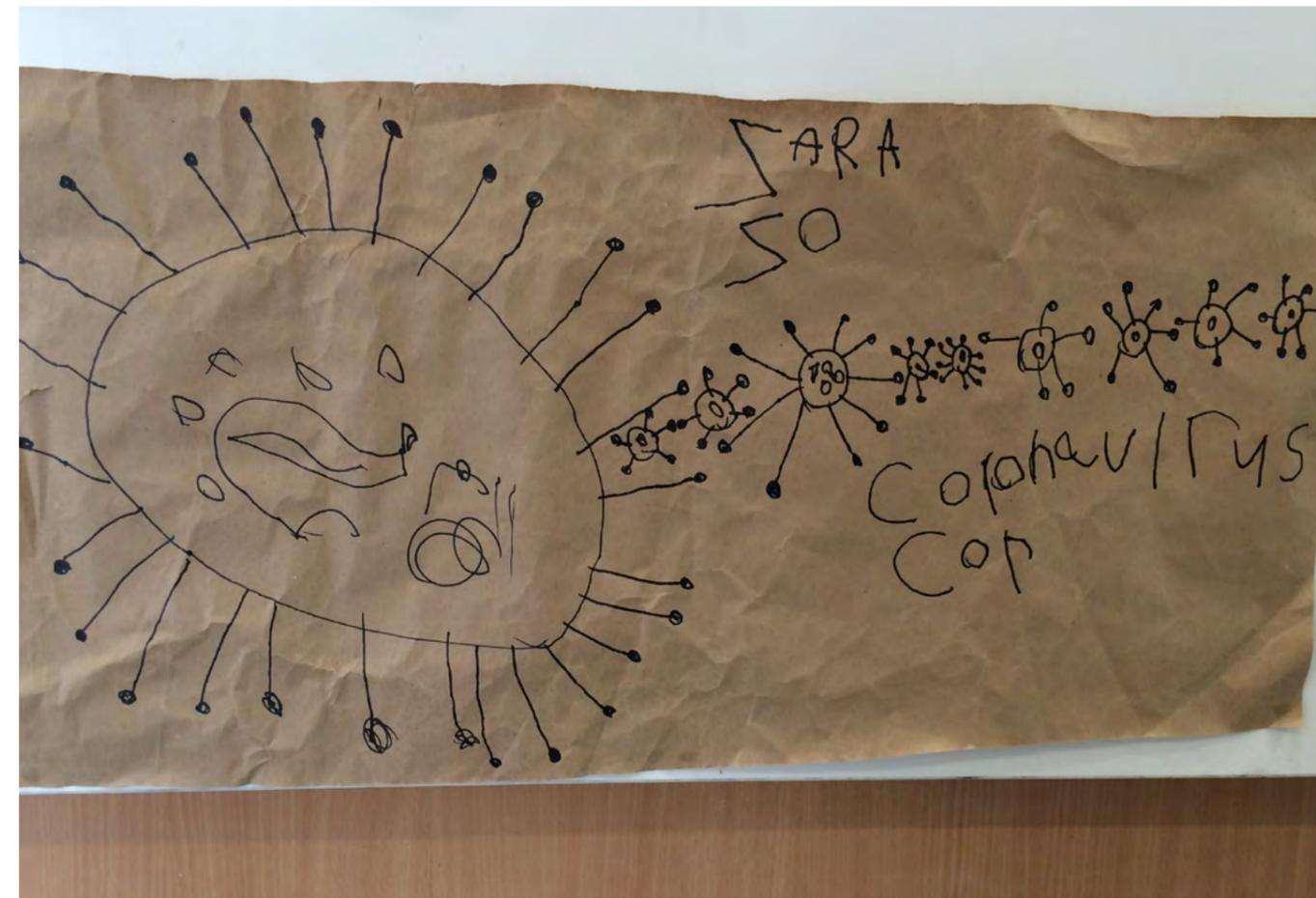
Many of us:

- became very aware of social distancing;
- became Zoom experts;
- stopped and listened to the government daily updates;
- had a new appreciation for the nurses, doctors, educators, supermarket staff, police and many others who were deemed as “essential workers”;
- got used to “home schooling” and the impacts of this;
- became up close and personal with our facemasks;
- became very aware of our 5km radius, and we learnt about a ring of steel, which stopped everyone from travelling to the country;
- learnt about “Work Permits” and “Permission to Attend Childcare”;
- experienced toilet paper shortages, food shortages and panic buying; and
- focused on sanitisers and cleaning – to name a few!

Many of our families and staff team were separated from their families, either because they lived in another suburb, another state or overseas. Many people had to deal with personal struggles; it certainly wasn't an easy year for anyone.

At KCCC we adjusted to the forever-changing environment, and we focused on keeping the children and families connected in line with the restrictions at the time. Due to the financial stability of KCCC and the ongoing support from the government, we were able to maintain all of our staff team and their hours, to reduce the stress on our team. We were also able to waive the costs of childcare for our families, if they were not able to attend – to reduce the stress on parents and ensure that they had care to return to as restrictions lifted. Our teams adapted well to the use of Zoom, and led online learning for the children, so they could connect when they were not even allowed to leave the house to go to the playground.

As the number of children attending dropped, we halved our team, and half worked from home and half worked from the service. Our team at home focused on Professional Development, which built on their skills and kept them connected. Our Pedagogical Leaders, Kavita Bali and Karen Bonson, prepared and led training packages which were complemented with professional development provided by selected providers. The teams were supported with daily catchups and offered the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) line for support. We had some fun times with pyjama day, shared lunches, gifts of gratitude, Christmas with a difference, and then enjoyed our family breakfasts when restrictions allowed. We all kept each other going in the tough times.



We saw an ever-changing environment which required flexibility and adaptability. At KCCC we witnessed:

- resilience develop in children who were supported during tough times;
- our teams continue to develop their skills which was represented in the confidence of their room set ups, and the growth of their programs;
- a focus on gardens and yards, as the teams and the children developed their skills and confidence and they have been looking spectacular;
- the meaning of Community as our families all worked together to support each other during the year; and
- many team members give their all when they were experiencing particularly tough times of their own.

Although the programs at KCCC had to change in 2020, we are hopeful that, in 2021, we can

return to our excursion program, and the dividing wall in the yard can be removed. We will re-forge our Community Connections which needed to be put on hold for 2020 and continue to grow as we hopefully emerge out the other side of the pandemic.

Thank you

I need to thank our families and children for being patient and flexible throughout 2020. I need to give a special thank you to the Management Team and Board who have put many extra hours into KCCC, to ensure that everything ran as smoothly as possible. A big thank you to the staff team who worked through very tough times and kept smiling every day, providing a safe, happy, learning environment for the children. Thank you to the City of Melbourne and Department of Education and Training who have provided exceptional support and advice.



Our Pedagogical Leaders, Kavita Bali and Karen Bonson, prepared and led training packages which were complemented with professional development provided by selected providers.

KCCC BOARD

Kate Zimet – Message from the Chair

It has been a pleasure stepping into the role of Chair since August 2020 and I am proud of our Centre's achievements in this time. The Board has worked hard to support KCCC since that time and I thank each Director for their contribution.

KCCC is lucky to have the leadership and kindness of our General Manager, Karen Mills throughout this period. Karen recently marked her one-year anniversary as General Manager and, on behalf of the Board, I congratulate her on her numerous achievements in that time. If you have not met Karen yet, I encourage you to stop by and say hello during pick up or drop off.

Karen, with the strong support of the management team, faced unique leadership challenges since commencing at KCCC, including successfully managing the Centre's response to Covid-19, supporting staff to work from home and continue their engagement with the service, and maintaining rapid and ever-changing communication with families as Covid-19 issues evolved throughout 2020 and into 2021.

Our educators including our early childhood teachers have shown strength, creativity and resilience despite the uncertainties of Covid-19

and delivered quality care and learning programs for our children. I also congratulate them on embracing and working with new technologies during the lockdown period.

Despite the uncertainty of 2020, KCCC remains in a strong financial position and I thank the Board, the management team, educators, other support staff, families and the community for their continued support of the service throughout this time.

Some highlights since August 2020 include:

- the momentous return of most children and educators to the service in late September 2020 following Victoria's Stage 4 lockdown;
- enjoyable end of year Room Breakfasts with coffee cart and snacks, which enabled families and staff to reconnect in person;
- barefoot bowls for staff at the start of the year along with first aid, epilepsy and child protection training to support team building and professional development; and
- a new menu, and weekly menu updates, which the children have embraced!

This year I look forward to working with the Board and the KCCC community to support the centre with a strong focus on reconnecting with each other and our community.



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KCCC BOARD

KATE ZIMET – CHAIR. Benjamin (Tea Tree/Acacia) and Sara (Gumnut)

Kate has been a member of KCCC since 2018, and joined the Board in 2020. Kate has been Chair of the Board since August 2020. Kate has enjoyed getting to know fellow Board members since that time and working to support Karen Mills, General Manager at KCCC.

Kate now has two children at KCCC - Sara in the Gumnut Room, and Benjamin in Tea Tree/Acacia. Kate values the nurturing and tireless work of all the educators who support her children, and, by extension, her whole family. This commitment by the staff and the management team continued in 2020 despite the challenges of Covid-19 and 2021 has been promising so far! Kate hopes that families will have greater opportunities in 2021 to get to know other families, educators and staff across KCCC.

In her professional life, Kate is a barrister at the Victorian Bar (practising as Kate Burgess) advising on civil disputes including

employment and industrial law, common law and commercial law. Kate has advised and appeared in a range of employment and industrial matters including unfair dismissals, underpayments claims, general protections, discrimination claims, workplace investigations and proceedings concerning the protection of confidential information and disputes about other terms and conditions of employment including redundancy claims. Kate also has significant experience in personal injury litigation. Kate has also appeared before disciplinary boards and in inquiries.

Prior to coming to the Bar, Kate worked at Slater and Gordon Lawyers. She also clerked for a judge in the Supreme Court of Victoria in both the trial and appellate jurisdictions of the Court.

Prior to moving to Kensington in 2013, Kate enjoyed living in other cities including New York and Washington DC.



EVETTE CASTLE – TREASURER. Spencer (Wattle)

Evette has been a member of KCCC since 2019 when her son Spencer, 3, joined the Yarragum room as a 10-month-old. Watching him grow and develop as well as having a lot of fun and building relationships with the other children and carers has been truly amazing and a credit to the KCCC team. Hence, Evette wanted to give back to the community that is doing so much for her and Spencer, by joining the Board in August 2020 and taking on the role as Treasurer.

Evette is a qualified CPA with experience supporting senior leaders and executives across a diverse range of industries and types of organisations including energy, property and

legal, as well as a mix of ASX listed and private equity. Her experiences include management and board reporting, statutory reporting, investor results presentations, business planning and forecasting, scenario planning, system and process improvements and business partnering. She is passionate about adding value and contributing to the organisation's success.

Outside of work Evette enjoys spending time with family and friends, keeping active with Spencer, wandering the streets of Kensington with the dog in toe from playgrounds to the river to the diggers and trains, keeping his inquisitive mind occupied.



KCCC BOARD



SIAN SUMMERS – SECRETARY. Sylvie (Acacia) and Rafferty (Alumni)

Sian and her family joined the KCCC community back in 2016. She loves living in Kensington – particularly the community spirit, the history, the diversity, the parks and the abundance of good coffee.

Sian and her partner John truly value the care and support their family receives from the team at KCCC and have formed some great friendships with the Educators and other families over the last few years. Being on the Board, since 2019, has provided her the opportunity to give back to the KCCC community and support the children, families and educators in a purposeful way.

Sian works as a management consultant in a professional services firm. Her days typically involve supporting clients across private, government and not-for-profit sectors with transformation planning and delivery and the design of strategic workforce solutions.

Growing up in the fine pastures of New Zealand, Sian has since spent time living and working in the UK, US, Brazil and Argentina – and now calls the wonderful city of Melbourne home.



JAMES WATSON – DIRECTOR. Jude (Wattle) and Evie (Alumni)

James is the proud father of Evie (Alumni) and Jude (Wattle). He and his wife Ally have lived in Kensington for 10 years and love the village feel of the suburb, the crippling house prices and being gently lulled to sleep by the late-night tunnelling works at South Kensington station. Having had two children attend KCCC, James is passionate about ensuring the co-operative's continued success and sustainability and maintaining its friendly and inclusive atmosphere.

In working hours currently, James can be found at his kitchen bench wearing tracksuit pants, Explorer socks and a formal shirt during countless videoconferences in his role at the

Department of Health (updated due to COVID-19). In this role, James oversees the performance, service development and quality and safety of mental health services throughout Victoria. The skills James has developed in his career will help in identifying any potential areas for improvement in KCCC and maintaining the high level of care that his own kids have already received from the excellent educators and staff at KCCC.

James spends his spare time being aggressively out-negotiated by his daughter, getting eye-gouged by his son and extracting pieces of Lego from that really sensitive spot in the arch of his foot.

ANTHONY TRANTINO – DIRECTOR. Max (Apple Tree) & John (Alumni)

Anthony is dad to 7½ year old John and 4½ year old Max. He and his wife Ali moved to Kensington some years ago because they really love the community focus in a suburb so accessible to the city.

Anthony works in the energy industry as an Operations and Engineering Manager for a company that provides consulting services to many of Victoria's construction projects. He has strong skills in contractor management, cost control, and building team capabilities and is driven by delivering great outcomes for his customers.

Anthony grew up on a 300-acre cattle farm in Gippsland and moved to Melbourne after studying Mechatronic Engineering. He brings an abundance of practical skills; he and his boys love rolling their sleeves up, putting on their tool belts and getting stuck into a good working bee!

After 5 years at KCCC and 4 years on the board, 2021 will be Anthony's last year of being part of the KCCC community.



VIRGINIA WILLS – DIRECTOR. Keith (Tea Tree and Acacia)

Virginia has been a member of KCCC since 2017 and joined the Board in 2019. She currently works full-time as an industrial officer at the United Firefighters Union. Prior to that, she was a paralegal for 10 years in law firms and community legal centres, while obtaining law and accounting qualifications.

Virginia and her partner have one child named Keith (4 years old) who is in the Tea Tree Room 3 days per week and the Acacia room 2 days.

Virginia's board experience includes current membership on the management committee of the Melbourne Community Toy Library, a position she has held for the last year.

She is enthusiastic about contributing what she can to her local community and our wonderful KCCC.



BEN KNIGHTON – DIRECTOR. Charles (Acacia) and Louis (Gumnut)

Ben has been a member at KCCC since 2018, and joined the Board in 2020. He is the proud father of my two beautiful boys – Charlie (Acacia) and Louis (Gumnut). Ben brings 15+ years of experience developing highly effective integrated marketing communications for some of the world's largest and most iconic brands including HSBC, Unilever, Nestle, Vodafone and NAB.

Ben started his professional career in advertising agencies in London and relocated to Melbourne in 2013 to work for Australia's largest communications network, Clemenger BBDO.

Ben moved to work at NAB and has held a number of leadership positions within the Marketing team, most recently heading up the Brand Communications team. He is also a recent graduate of the highly selective and internationally renowned leadership program The Marketing Academy Scholarship.

Ben and his family have been blown away by their involvement with KCCC so far, and all the team who work there.



KCCC BOARD



KIRI MARTYN - DIRECTOR. Ella (Apple Tree), William (Banksia)

Kiri has been a member at KCCC since 2019, and joined the Board in 2020.

Kiri is passionate about giving children a great start in life, and appreciates this opportunity to give back to the wonderful KCCC community. Kiri and her husband Cam continue to be impressed by the nurturing care and diverse education Ella and William receive at the centre. Recently arrived baby Zoe is already on the waitlist of course!

For ten years Kiri enjoyed a career as a Physiotherapist in the Public Health sector, mainly working in the areas of Aged Care and Rehabilitation. More recently she made the shift to work as a Care Coordinator at Western Health. For the past six years she has worked

as the Senior Clinician in a team focussed on assisting patients to navigate the health system and supporting complex patients. Kiri's experience as a clinician in the public health sector, along with her passions for early childhood development and the welfare of our elderly community members will inform her input as a member of the KCCC Board of Directors. She also hopes to be a voice for Healthcare and other essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In her "spare" time - Kiri enjoys keeping fit with CrossFit and running, eating out, travelling and watching the Performing Arts. In reality, Kiri daydreams about such pursuits while wrangling three small children to cafes/ playgrounds within walking distance of home.



NICK LAURIE - DIRECTOR. Theodore (Acacia) and Antigone (Banksia)

Nick has been a member at KCCC since 2018, and joined the Board in 2020. Nick has enjoyed working with the other Board members and getting to know the centre's carers and management team better through his role.

Nick has Teddy in Acacia and Tig in Banksia. The care and interest shown by all the staff at KCCC in supporting and encouraging the children's learning and development is exceptional, especially considering the particularly difficult year (and counting) we've all experienced dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. As greater opportunities for interaction with members and stakeholders re-emerge in the coming months, Nick looks forward to the centre maintaining its high standards and communicating its message to the community it is a part of.

Nick is a senior solicitor at Corrs Chambers Westgarth lawyers specialising in large-scale construction and infrastructure disputes,

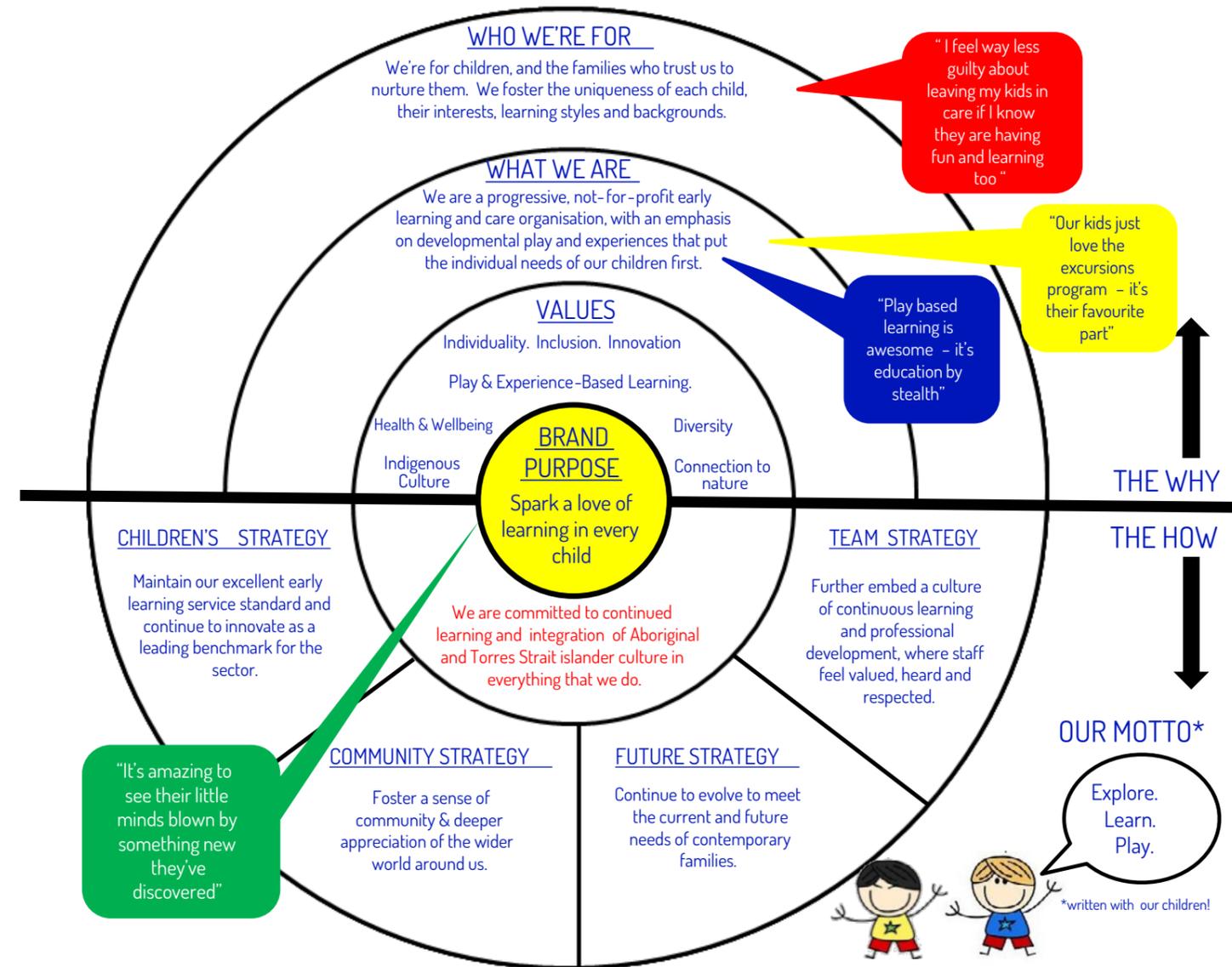
including commercial arbitrations. His professional role requires providing concise, accurate and commercial advice to clients in a range of industries, as well as managing disputes on behalf of clients. After taking extended parental leave to care for both Teddy and Tig, Nick is passionate about balancing family and work responsibilities and now works part-time to facilitate this. The quality and sustainability of KCCC has been an essential element of Nick's ability to live these values.

When not working, Nick enjoys watching movies and learning about animals with his kids, and discussing both with his friends and family in as much detail as they can tolerate. Nick also has a similarly enthusiastic interest in craft beer (but the kids don't have much to contribute on that subject).

Nick and his family have lived in Kensington since 2016. Before this, Nick lived in such varied places as North Melbourne and Nairobi, Kenya.

KCCC STRATEGIC STEERING WHEEL

2019 - 2021



COVID-19 IMPACTS

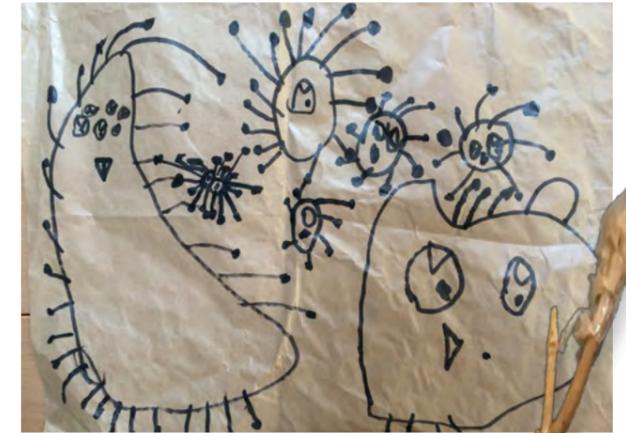
2020 was a year like no other. The sudden onset of the coronavirus pandemic in March required KCCC to quickly learn, adapt and change. We responded to restrictions and recommendations made by the Victorian Government, the Department of Health (then known as the Department of Health and Human Services – DHHS), and the Department of Education and Training. KCCC implemented a variety of new programs and procedures as the year progressed, often with little notice.

We are proud that we were able to support the community by providing high quality education and care during very uncertain times. We had to work through the practical day-to-day requirements to ensure the service remained as safe as possible. We also had to work through the financial requirements to ensure the centre was in a financially viable position. It was a team effort, with contributions from our Board, staff team, and families, to ensure we could support the children.

LEARNING AND COPING

We were mindful of the impact that such uncertain times may have had on the children, so we ensured we discussed these in the rooms and provided a welcoming environment and ongoing reassurance.

Some rooms discussed what the coronavirus might look like and we displayed the children's drawings in the foyer. One of our children



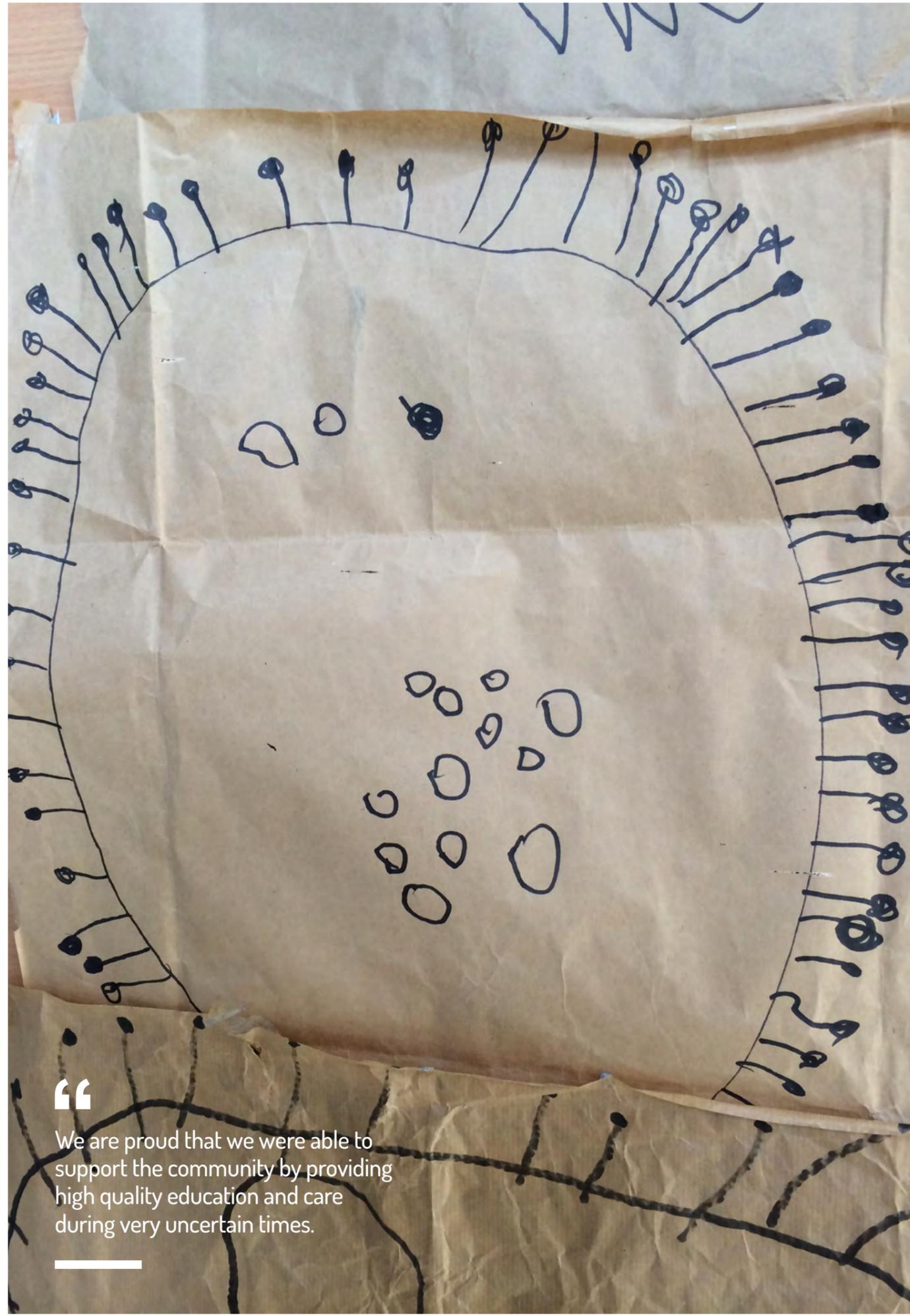
invented a fishing rod to "catch" the virus – we love the ingenuity! We read books about face masks, practiced good hygiene and talked about how to keep ourselves safe.

Lots of attention was paid to wellbeing and relationships, as these are the core of our usual program but particularly poignant during the pandemic. We considered the people the children were close to, those they were able to see and those who they were missing.

STAYING CONNECTED

From early in the pandemic, we implemented virtual learning sessions via Zoom, for children who were isolating at home. They were able to remain connected to their educators and peers, whilst sharing stories and having fun. It was a way to create some normalcy and stability for the children during quite unusual circumstances.

For families who chose not to participate in the Zoom sessions (they could be noisy when parents were working from home!), the rooms sent letters and resources to remind the children that we were thinking about them.



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WORKING FROM HOME PROGRAM

During quieter times at the service as a result of many families choosing to self-isolate, we were able to continue to support our staff through a Working from Home Program. A team of educators and teachers remained at the centre, whilst another team completed an in-depth program of professional development at home, mentored by a Pedagogical Leader. Details of the program and its key outcomes can be found in the Professional Development section of this report.



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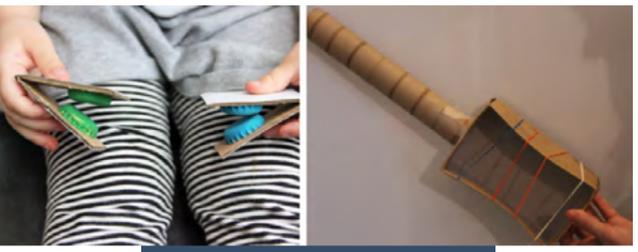
HIGHLIGHTS 2020



Imelda's Zoom setups



Hayley's Zoom setups



Homemade instruments- Ashley and Nick



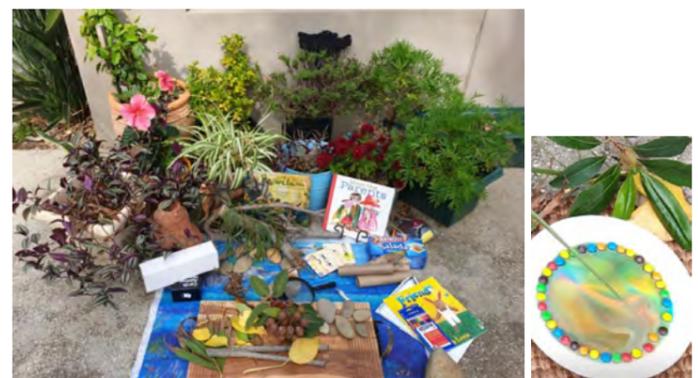
Edible paint- Natalie



Painting with natural materials- Eldre



Stick families- Nicole



Indy's Zoom setup



We remember Lizzy - May 2020



Germination of mung beans



Banksia Room Experiments growing plants



Banksia created lamps



A gift of gratitude Thank you

It has been difficult for everyone during these times. Our team have come in every day and provided care, education, and stability to the children attending. They have been adaptable and implemented risk minimisation strategies across the service. As a Thank you to our team, we created a "Care Package" for each member.



Resus my bub- CPR lessons with kinder kids held by Erin Church November 2020



KCCC RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP)

2020 saw our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) come to a completion and the beginning of a new RAP for 2020-2021.

For KCCC, having a RAP aligns with the values and the goals on our strategic plan, and supports our efforts to weave Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our program. The RAP acts as both a sign of our commitment and a guide to our practice. Indeed, there are over 5,000 Early Childhood services who have a RAP, which reveals the sector's recognition of the contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and contemporary knowledge play in our society. We, like other Early Childhood services, believe that in teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history, we can create a greater understanding of our First Peoples.

rapidly improving Zoom skills. It was a great way to bring the families into our rooms, as their absence was a big loss for a large part of the year. The rooms did a wonderful job of making their spaces special; fancy tablecloths, floral arrangements, lemons, mint, and some beautiful tea sets were laid out, giving much delight to the senses.

The Morning Tea for Culture, suggested to us by Educator Nicole Sullivan, fitted perfectly with both our RAP and Healthy Together work. It was a chance to bring our community together around the important things in life, family, friends and connections and at the same time raise nearly \$2,000 for a worthy cause.

WURUNDJERI TRIBE

Rebecca from The Wurundjeri Tribe spent time in some of the rooms in 2020, followed up with another visit in 2021. One of the resources Rebecca drew on was "Welcome to Country" by Aunty Joy Murphy, a book that is a firm favourite and much-used resource at KCCC. Using this familiar resource helped the children connect with Rebecca as they shared their understanding of the book. Rebecca delved deeper into the meanings of the story and illustrations, pointing out such things as the scar trees, the use of tools and the stories of native animals, including Bunjil and Waa. The children engaged in songs and games, which included transforming themselves into native animals, jumping, flying, and slithering around the room. Rebecca showed them several artefacts, and many tried on the possum skins and threw the marngrook. Our educators took inspiration from these sessions to enhance their programs.

FIRST NATIONS BEDTIME STORIES

The virtual world also held some opportunities for children to experience stories read in both English and first languages. KCCC took part in the First Nations Bedtime stories, whereby the children accessed the stories told by Aboriginal Elders, which were available at KCCC and at home. The children were fascinated by the language and Dreaming tales from this series and were quick to pick out their favourite stories, which they asked to hear again and again.

MORNING TEA FOR CULTURE

The 'Morning Tea for Culture' initiative was organised by the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) to raise funds for Aboriginal children in care. KCCC signed up for this event as a great way to come together, albeit virtually, using our newly acquired and

'IN MY BLOOD IT RUNS'

Many of our RAP actions such as, 'Take Action Against Racism', 'Staff engagement with the RAP' and 'Explore Current Affairs and Issues', inspired us to purchase 100 viewings of the film 'In My Blood It Runs'.

The film tells the story of Djujan, an Aboriginal boy, who lives with the ever-present threat of child detention. Djujan has a disconnection with the Western style schooling and his great connection to the land, which the title alludes to, the country runs in his blood. It is a tale of much love and his relationship with family, in particular his Grandma is joyful to behold.

In September 2019 Djujan became the youngest person at age 12 to address the United Nations Human Rights Council. As part of the impact campaign for the film, he and his family presented the film to delegates of the United Nations. This is what he said:

"Werte. My name is Djujan, I am 12 years old. I am from Arrernte and Garrwa Country and I have travelled here from Australia. Adults never listen to kids - especially kids like me. But we have important things to say. I came here to speak with you all because our government is not listening. I am in a new documentary, In My Blood It Runs. In this film there are some messages for you. There are some things I want to see changed:

I want my school to be run by Aboriginal people who are like me and understand me. I want the adults to stop locking up 10 year old kids in prison. I want my future to be out on land with family, strong in culture and language. I hope you can find a way to make things much more better.

Thank you - I hope you enjoy my film." (In my Blood it Runs)
We had a great number of educators and families view the film and the team used our StoryPark conversation as a forum for further discussions.



We are products of our childhood; the health and creativity of a community is renewed in each generation through its children. Perry

Over the course of 2020, the team showed their commitment to this work by continuing to seek out information, build on their professional development and share conversations to support their own learning. Over the past two years our RAP community of practice meetings have been a useful source of information sharing, but as 2020 placed a pause on these face-to-face meetings, we had to find other ways to bring about this knowledge sharing and discussion. Our 2020 working from home studies were a key factor in this, as were several initiatives which included families and experiences for children, which helped us achieve many of our RAP actions.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK AND NAIDOC WEEK

The themes for NAIDOC week and National Reconciliation Week (NRW) resonated with the team in 2020. NRW's theme "In This Together", decided on pre-covid, seemed more apt in light of the pandemic; we certainly were "in this together" and the different connotations for this were not lost on us. The NAIDOC week theme, "Always was, always will be", linked to our own considerations of how to care for the environment and the big issues facing us all with climate change. These themes were also a source of discussion and reflection in our working from home professional development and our grant work.

NATIONAL SIMULTANEOUS STORYTIME

The teams explored different aspects of our RAP work as relevant to their programs, for example, revisiting the room Acknowledgements and the meaning of Reconciliation. Reconciliation Australia's title

"Narragunnawali", which means "alive, wellbeing, coming together and peace", was also much explored with the children during 2020.

This work influenced our choices for National Simultaneous Storytime, when as a group we decided to change the book that we read. We selected the book "Benny Bungarra's Bush Clean-up" by Sally Morgan. It is becoming a bit of a tradition to engage in this national event and on 27 May at 11am we gathered in small groups in our hubs, and read the same book at the same time, which helped to give the children the feeling of doing things simultaneously.



HEALTHY TOGETHER

We have an incredible Healthy Together achievement program that we follow at KCCC. When the pandemic hit in April, the focus of the program shifted from physical health to social emotional health and wellbeing of the children, families and staff. This attention was integrated in our working from home professional

development, where we learned and practiced the Principles of Self-Regulation, by Canadian Philosopher and Psychologist, Stuart Shanker. We worked on integrating the five principles of Self-Reg in our everyday lives, along with the programs we were delivering online. The five principles and practices of Self-Reg are:

Self-Reg Principle	Self-Reg Practice
Principle 1- Reframe the behaviour	I read and reframe stress behaviour in myself and others
Principle 2- Recognise the stressors	I figure out stressors that I can reduce or remove to lower my stress
Principle 3- Reduce the Stress	I take action to lower stress by reducing and/or removing stressors
Principle 4- Reflect and enhance stress awareness	I know what "calm" feels like, and I am aware when I am experiencing dysregulation internally.
Principle 5- Respond with personalised ways to support restoration and resilience	I maintain balance as part of a healthy Self-Reg lifestyle. I take time to restore.

As the pandemic and the lockdown progressed, the Self-Reg principles became our trusted 'go to' tools. Mental health and wellbeing became our first and foremost priority. We sent action for happiness monthly calanders to staff and families and used them as wellness prompts within our programs.

Gardening became a big platform to practice mindfulness and it tied very well with our Sustainability Grant. To support and promote mental health and wellbeing and to provide a virtual platform to socially connect, we hosted a Morning Tea for Culture. We raised funds for Aboriginal children in care and it tied very well with our RAP.

We also built our virtual community keeping in mind the Art of Gathering Principles by Priya Parker.

We needed both purpose and connection to keep us grounded and hopeful and maintain our mental wellbeing . Purposeful gatherings became our way to connect and be together socially even when it was physically not possible. We believed that being intentional about the way we gather will build communities of change.

It might be Zooming with the children to deliver the program, catching up with each other over reflective dialogue for our professional

development, or connecting with families over a cup of tea. The idea behind all this was to grow resilience, hope and purpose.

Our virtual gatherings became a vessel for us to connect and debrief and it kept us together, connected and sane in the uncertain and stressful times that we found ourselves in. We gave our gatherings a purpose, we reflected on our current challenges both personal and professional, we became intentional about our actions and interactions and worked collectively towards mental and physical wellbeing.



“The way we gather matters. Gatherings consume our days and help determine the kind of world we live in, in both our intimate and public realms. Gathering – the conscious bringing together of people for a reason- shapes the way we think, feel, and make sense of the world.” Priya Parker

CHILDREN'S YOGA

For children, yoga is an active, dynamic, imaginative, fun, energising, as well as relaxing, and calming activity. The children practiced poses, breathing exercises and meditation in an age appropriate and engaging way that is fun and insightful.

All these activities helped the children in our care to build confidence and self-esteem, connectedness, emotional intelligence, and improved their focus and concentration. Additionally, the children also further developed their sense of balance and coordination, respect and teamwork, and also taught them about self-regulation.

The children have shared their views about what they think the benefits of yoga involve, as well as the creation of some fun yoga poses:

Austin: It makes us strong!

Ada: We need to have much energy!

Imelda: I can relax and concentrate!

Imogen: Fun!

Cara: I want to be a rabbit and frog!

Charlotte: I feel just relax!

Ada: I feel busy!

Cara: I feel strong!

Austin: We do the crab jump!

Ada: Look at me, my butterfly is yellow and blue!

Austin: Look at this, a tree pose, put your foot like this!



SUSTAINABILITY

The main components of our sustainability project were encouraging biodiversity, introducing native species to the garden, and developing a compost system.

ENCOURAGING BIODIVERSITY

A big part of our grant has been auditing the creatures that come to our garden, so that we can measure and encourage diversity. An area for creature hunting, identification and recording was created near Apple Tree room for this purpose. This included binoculars for collecting or representing found data. We used books for identifying and exploring possible creatures found in the garden. A variety of bug hotel pictures were used to explore designs and properties of spaces that mini beasts thrive in. Loose materials such as bamboo, rocks, sticks, leaves and a wooden box for designing and modelling ideas and inviting children to unpack learning through creation and play.

COMPOSTING

We were invited to join our compost endeavours with the Kensington Compost Hub. Jacquie and Ken, along with the rest of the compost hub team, will be helping us implement our compost bays and tailor them to our individual needs. We look forward to this

starting in 2021 and we prepared for this work by studying composting systems and permaculture during our work from home.

The children showcased their desire to recreate the worm farm, most notably, Odessa and Kit from Apple Tree and Joe from Acacia. Next to the worm farms we positioned a table for their exploration - tubs, soils, our worm book, a compost book, cardboard and trowels. The area was used for exploration of healthy soil and the integral role creatures like worms have in building this soil, while also using our waste to do so.

"I love our wormies 'cause they do hard work for us" – Joe

"The worms are just so cute. And they, you know, help our plants to grow" – Odessa

"I like their big, big, big, big bottoms" – Maxime

GARDEN RE-IMAGINING

Simultaneously, we began to explore "what it is we want our garden to be". This was an opportunity for our whole community to have a say on our outdoors. We looked at the following questions: What do we need? What works well? What are everyone's roles?

Tom from Tea Tree has explained his desire for "more flowers because they make our place more beautiful" while Keien designed the garden with more seeds. (see below) "I like to see seeds".

Ryan from Apple Tree created a rainbow machine that ice cream goes into and it shoots out flowers for a rainbow garden.



INTRODUCING NATIVE SPECIES

Over 2020 we explored different species of native plants and linked them to Aboriginal histories, our place and land here in Kensington, their properties (including medicinal and health benefits), their role in the ecosystem and how to care for them.

We also began to explore the new native plants that arrived as we set to work on our grant. These included:



Dichondra



Samphire (sea asparagus)



Pig Face



Native Violets

BUG HOTELS

Sustainability grant and resources



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

WELCOME BBQ

In February 2020, we held our annual Welcome BBQ with great success, as over 250 children, family and staff attended. It provided families and staff the opportunity to catch up in a fun, relaxed and jovial environment.

We were fortunate to have Wurundjeri Elder, Ron Jones, to lead the Welcome to Country and it was fantastic to see all our families and staff engaged. We also officially opened the refurbished Yarragum yard.

The children were major contributors to the running of the event designing the maps for everyone and leading their families to the different stalls including the interactive wildlife display, jumping castle, fossil dig, RAP stall and Healthy Together stall.

We also collected donations throughout the day and were pleased to have raised over \$650 which we donated to the Red Cross Bushfire Relief.



Hope in the Community

PRESENTATION FOR MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY

Our relationship with Melbourne University continued to grow over 2020, despite us not being able to have any students attend past March. The university have sent many wonderful students and we have learnt a lot about current theory and research through our relationships with them. We were able to build on our relationships with Melbourne University through a presentation for the pre-service teachers. We shared our insights on working as a team and the many partnerships with one another, families and children. We shared ideas on how we work with our frameworks to support children to be active agents in their learning and our role in partnering children as teachers and learners. Our grant work was a big part of the discussion and something that held a lot of excitement for our team in 2020.

REVERSE ADVERT CALENDAR

In December we participated in the Reverse Advert Calendar initiative for MSFIN (Mums Supporting Families in Need). Their aim is to ensure that no family goes without their basic needs being met. This resonates very deeply with the community values of KCCC. Our families and educators generously donated necessary items and we were able to donate a total of 24 hampers for this cause.

FAMILY BREAKFASTS

Family Breakfasts were held in December, as our way to say thank everyone for their support and contribution in such a different year. Restrictions had eased a little to allow small groups to gather. We all enjoyed muffins, banana bread and some fruit, whilst parents and educators enjoyed a coffee.

METRO TUNNEL PROJECT

KCCC were invited to be involved in providing some inspiration for the design of the flood wall that is to run along Childers Street, as part of the Metro Tunnel Project.

We used recycled materials for the children to just draw some designs for the flood wall. We had lots of art materials out in the garden. Children drew on a big long row of boards/card and massive long roll of paper. The children were provided with the introduction and provocation for the work, so that they understood where it was going and why.

INTERGENERATIONAL CHOIR

At the start of the year, some of the children from our Kindergarten room worked with the Intergenerational Choir. The children certainly enjoyed sharing the joy that comes from singing collaboratively, and furthermore the relationships that grew through this experience. We were proud of the children's willingness to step into a new space with new people. We saw the benefits of the different mixture of age groups and cultural backgrounds (children and adults) that made up the Intergenerational choir. Music, movement, and song seems to be a perfect space to support these relationships.

HOPE IN THE COMMUNITY

KCCC actively participated in delivering messages of hope in the community. The children from various programs wrote messages for the community. The messages are displayed on the windows facing outwards and on our fences. This has provided children with an opportunity to be active participants in the community and share their messages and art.

GIVING TUESDAY

Our team decided to join a global non-for-profit initiative called Giving Tuesday. The organisers state: "We believe that generosity has the power to unite and heal communities in good times and bad. A global threat like COVID-19 touches every person on the planet, and it presents an opportunity to come together as a global community." Ideas range from supporting local businesses to helping those who are vulnerable.

Apple Tree recorded a song to send to the Intergenerational Choir, that they have been working with. We used room resource budgets to support local businesses and we sent letters to the children at home who were self-isolating.

LYNCH'S BRIDGE AGED CARE FACILITY

KCCC has been working closely with the residents of Lynch's Bridge for last three years and facilitating an intergenerational program. Due to restrictions, we could not continue our program in 2020, but to maintain the connection the children from all the programs have written letters, made art work, drawings and paintings. These were delivered to Lynch's Bridge along with a native plant, symbolising hope, growth, resilience and connection to country.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Karen Bonson



Kavita Bali

To say that 2020 was challenging, may be a bit of an understatement, it was certainly a journey that began with a great deal of uncertainty as we wondered how it would impact our children, families and one another. Working with children we are always aware of the need for flexibility and to expect the unexpected, 2020 perhaps accelerated this and called on the team to show their capacities for taking on new challenges. As early childhood professionals we are used to ongoing learning, as the new research and theory informs and shapes our thinking and practice.

As the lockdowns and restrictions changed, we decided to use the time to engage in professional development. Pedagogical Leaders, Kavita Bali and Karen Bonson, drew together some materials and resources, linking these to our context. The teams were split into two groups, who alternated working at the service and working from home. Kavita and Karen had a group each and were on hand to host Zoom reflective discussions and to provide individual feedback to everyone.



Our professional development work on self-regulation supported us to think about what this means in our context, encouraging us to not only tune into the emotions of each child, but also to be self-aware.

SELF-REGULATION

Kavita drew up a program based on her own studies, focusing on self-regulation, which for early childhood professionals is a vital part of our thinking. We understand that supporting children to recognise their feelings and emotions and have our guidance and support regarding self-regulation, is not only important for their wellbeing in early childhood but can have a lifelong impact. Research reminds us of the significance of the early years in relation to brain development and therefore we play an important role, in partnerships with families, to tune into how children engage with the world; to identify their stressors and soothers. Our professional development work on self-regulation supported us to think about what this means in our context, encouraging us to not only tune into the emotions of each child, but also to be self-aware.

LEADERSHIP

We spent time exploring what leadership looks like in Early Childhood and reflecting and unpacking what constitutes effective leadership. We looked at the many layers of leadership and how we can all be leaders. We discussed how children take on leadership roles and how frequently 'children as leaders' is based on them showing kindness and support for others. We felt how kindness was a relevant trait for leaders in our field and how we lead best through our skills and interests. We looked at leaders we admired and the traits we wished to develop.

ENVIRONMENT

Our environmental work gave us plenty of time to share current knowledge and to investigate and research information. We looked at permaculture and pollinators;

compost and critters; waste and native wildlife. Outdoor Pedagogical Coordinator, Hayley White, shared a wealth of resources to build our knowledge of nature and to make us think about how, our individual efforts, when joined together, can make a big difference. We shared ideas on how to implement our grant and the important role of auditing the current waste, plants and bugs.

There was such a buzz around this work, and a real coming together of ideas, skill sets and general energy and enthusiasm. The team were eager for the children to be empowered and lead the project: to share their ideas on what the garden has and lacks. Children were part of the decision making, from where the plants should go to engaging in the monitoring and maintaining of the plants and insects. All this work sits perfectly with our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), as we seek to build and grow our relationships and sense of community; the garden work appeared to be a perfect place to do this.

HEALTHY TOGETHER

A focus on wellbeing and the pandemic linked to our Healthy Together work and there were many examples of support and kindness within the team and in our work with children. Hayley directed us to a podcast about 'stonework' which highlighted how natural materials, play, role play, creative work and storytelling support children to make sense of the world, express and share their ideas and problem solve. These tools and ideas were then privileged in our program, as we tune in to how the children adapted and provided them with opportunities to engage in work that is achievable, through being open-ended and offers time to become absorbed in their work.



It was amazing to see how flexible the teams were in 2020; they faced the crisis with a great deal of courage, not only by coming to work with smiles on their faces, but also in trying out these new ways of working.

RAP

We explored resources that support our work with children, looking at the likes of Bruce Pascoe's "Dark Emu" and Aboriginal agriculture. This linked to our work in the garden, as we looked at murrumbidgee crops, which the teams later planted. Bias and racism were explored through a range of materials and discussions.

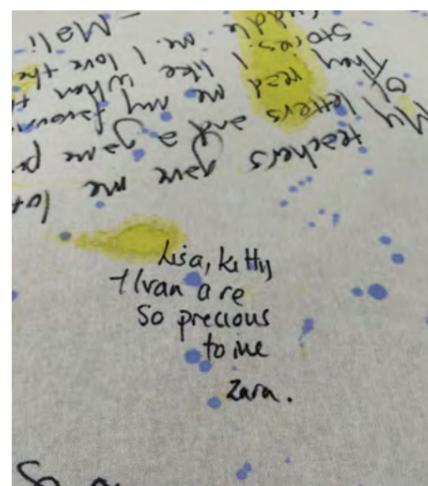
The materials were also connected to what was happening in our community and the wider world. Considering the land and what is on our doorstep; being bound to home and work made us take notice of the little things; looking out the window to the plants and creatures we share this world with. These thoughts all led to our RAP and Sustainability work, focusing on the backyard and what is around us is a therapeutic way forward through this crisis. The slowing down and taking time on the practical skills of cooking and gardening were things that seemed to emerge from the Zoom sessions. It was amazing to see how flexible the teams were in 2020; they faced the crisis with a great deal of courage, not only by coming to work with smiles on their faces, but also in trying out these new ways of working.

OUR STAFF



KCCC has a dedicated team of 60 full-time, part-time and casual staff members. This includes bachelor qualified teachers, diploma qualified room leaders, and diploma and certificate III qualified educators. Our team are encouraged to grow their skills and in 2020 we congratulated Pauline Cummins on completing her Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and Sehrish Fahim for completing her Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care.

Our educators and teachers showed great resilience over the last year. They adapted to the ever-changing procedures and practices as a result of COVID, whilst delivering high quality programs to the children across the service.



We watched our team bravely come to work each day, with positive attitudes and being open to new ideas. They provided reassurance to the children throughout the pandemic, even when they were often experiencing personal upheaval or uncertainty. The team took on two large challenges – virtual learning and working from home. They established a program of Zoom sessions to stay connected to the children who were unable to come to the service. The working from home gave the team opportunities to work together in small groups, exploring the same resources and questions, then sharing their thoughts in Zoom catch up meetings.

In late 2020 we farewelled Educator Cherie Duncan, who resigned from the centre for health reasons, after an impressive 28 years' service. We thank Cherie for her service to the centre over the years and wish her well in her retirement.

In September, the centre celebrated Early Childhood Educator's Day. KCCC provided a morning tea for all staff at the centre and displayed quotes from the children about their educators. This gave the educators an opportunity to reflect on why they work in the profession.

We thank the whole team for their hard work throughout 2020 and hope that their efforts have strengthened the community as a whole.

CAPITAL WORKS

Capital improvements during the 2020 year were limited due to the uncertainty and restrictions presented to the service as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Changes to limit the impact of possible positive COVID-19 cases included the installation of temporary fencing in our yard; the creation of working hubs and additional staff room spaces; and investment in cleaning and hygiene equipment through the service. We were also fortunate to be able to invest in new technology for the rooms to support the provision of children's programs remotely and the ongoing planning processes completed by our Educators.

Investment in general equipment and resources, upgrading furniture as well as items such as rugs, baskets and cushions was also possible towards the end of the year.

More significant works have been held over for the 2021 year and we now look forward to the replacement of kitchenettes and flooring in several of our rooms, together with improvements in our laundry and main kitchen area due for completion in the first half of 2021. This work, made possible through the support of the City of Melbourne, will see our spaces become more vibrant and safer. The removal of fixed lockers will also provide us with flexibility in the rooms to create new and varied spaces that best meet the needs of our children.



2020 FINANCIAL COMMENTARY

The financial result for Kensington Community Children’s Co-operative (KCCC) in 2020 was a \$331k surplus (2019 \$67k). Operating revenue for the 12-month period January-December 2020 grew 9% to \$4.6 million and the Co-operative’s asset base continued to grow as prior year earnings were retained for future risk management and development opportunities.



2020
\$331,000
SURPLUS

OPERATING
REVENUE
GREW 9% TO
\$4.6 MILLION

2020 REVENUE

From early 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic led to unforeseen funding and operating activities for the service.

The Free Childcare initiative was in place from late March until mid-July during which time no fees were charged to families and funding was received through the Child Care Subsidy system and the JobKeeper initiative.

Low attendance levels, and a short period of closure due to positive COVID cases, largely continued from July until the easing of restrictions in greater Melbourne in late September. During this time, no fees were charged to families where children did not attend the service, however, Child Care

Subsidy and Transition Payment funding continued to be received for these enrolments.

Since the progressive easing of restrictions from 28 September 2020, KCCC has continued to maintain strict operational controls to minimise the impact of possible COVID-19 cases at the service. Enhanced cleaning, social distancing, masks, temperature checks and working hubs being some examples. We have been fortunate to largely maintain our high enrolment rate throughout the year, which together with continued government support through the Recovery Package in place until early 2021, has enabled KCCC to achieve a strong result that sees us well placed to face the uncertainty of COVID-19 impacts in the years to come.

2020 OPERATING EXPENDITURE

Labour costs represent the most significant portion of expenditure at KCCC, and we strongly recognise that it is our quality staffing group that enable us to provide innovative and high-class programs for our children.

In 2020 during periods of low attendance, and a short closure, staff at KCCC were provided with the opportunity to complete professional development from home and continue to receive all employee entitlements. It was a key focus of the Co-operative to continue to support our staff during this time of uncertainty and while the work environment was not the usual one, we are proud to have been able to adapt our working arrangements and use the opportunity for further professional growth.

Other operating expenditure to ensure sufficient cleaning and standards of hygiene; and to deliver our programs in new and risk minimising ways; were also a focus of the 2020 year. Initiatives including the creation of “hubs” to minimise our exposure to possible COVID cases; the introduction of temperature checks and COVID screening processes; the provision of masks and sanitiser; and the development of online/remote programs for our children and families are all examples of expenditure unique during the year.

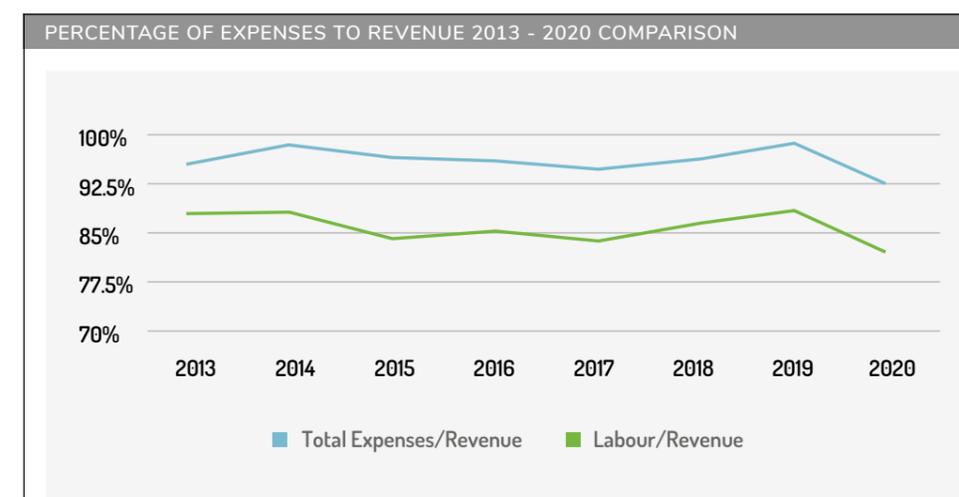
We thank both the City of Melbourne and the Department of Education and Training for their

additional support in implementing some of these initiatives, as well as the flexibility and the enthusiasm of all our staff and community members to make them a success.

As always prudent and considered purchasing practices for other discretionary expenditure items that support the day to day running of KCCC remained. Through the funding support received, however, upgrades to room equipment and children’s resources were made possible as we returned to our programs in the later part of the year.

The regular support and contributions received from the City of Melbourne in running our service is a critical contributor to our annual financial outcome. From rental assistance through to maintenance and cleaning services, this support enables us to maintain our facilities and environment to a high-quality standard and focus our resources on the educational programs offered each day to our children.

The chart below illustrates expenditure as a percentage of revenue from both a total and labour only perspective. The lower percentages achieved in 2020 has resulted in the year-end surplus which provides us with security heading into the new year faced with COVID-19 uncertainties and allows us to consider future development and investment opportunities as a service.



2020 FINANCIAL COMMENTARY

OCCUPANCY

KCCC has been fortunate to maintain high levels of occupancy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. High occupancy will always be a key focus for the service as it drives both financial viability and ensures we are making available to our families as many places as possible - serving our communities needs for early childhood care and education to our maximum capacity.

A thorough and informed waitlist management procedure and timely enrolment processes ensure all spaces that become available at KCCC are filled as quickly as possible. Overall KCCC is a 140-place per day centre offering programs for children aged between 6 weeks

and 6 years old. There are 9 children's rooms at the service with varying size capacities and age groups as outlined in the tables below.

During 2020, average occupancy was just below 98% for the year in the long day care rooms at KCCC. Since 2015, this average level of occupancy has remained over 96% and is well above the 73% national average reported for Q3 2020¹. Again, it is thanks to the maintenance of occupancy at this high level that KCCC's financial result has also been stable and encouraging in the last few years.

In total 274 children, from 218 different families, attended KCCC at some time during 2020.

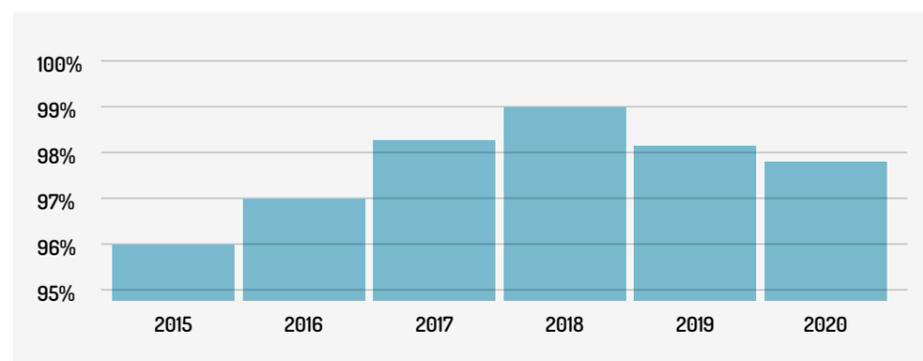
2020 LONG DAY CARE ROOM CAPACITY PER DAY

Yarragum	Babies	12
Gumnut	Toddlers	12
Wattle	Under 3 year olds	12
Banksia	Under 3 year olds	10
Waratah	Under 3 year olds	16
Boronia	3-5 year olds	16
Acacia	3-5 year olds	16

2020 KINDERGARTEN CAPACITY PER DAY

Tea Tree and Apple Tree Rooms	4-5 year olds (Sessional and Integrated Kindergarten)	46
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AVERAGE ANNUAL OCCUPANCY (LDC) 2015 - 2020 COMPARISON

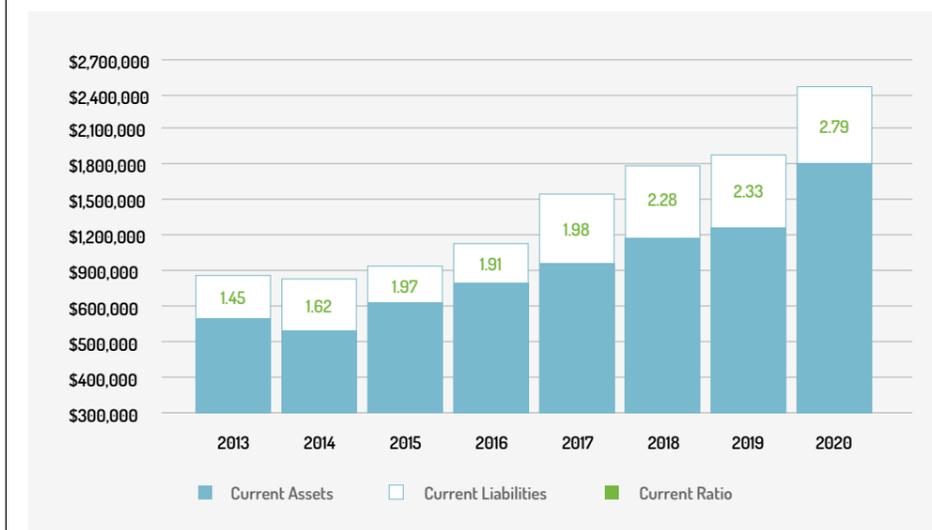


LONG TERM FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Current Ratio represents KCCC's ability to repay its financial obligations by calculating our percentage of current assets compared to current liabilities. Management of our future benefits and future obligations ensures we continue to be in a position where we have financial capacity to meet our business requirements and informs our decision making around investment in other areas of the service.

The chart below shows KCCC's current ratio has continued to grow over the last 8 years and sits at a strong 2.79 at the end of the 2020 financial year. After facing the operating risks that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, our strong current ratio provides security and greater certainty that the service can manage potential challenges such as this and continue to provide a viable and successful service for our community into the future.

CURRENT ASSETS/CURRENT LIABILITIES RATIO 2013 - 2020 COMPARISON



THE FUTURE AT KCCC

The unique and unprecedented situation faced by the service in 2020 led to the introduction of regular operating processes and restrictions we may never have once thought possible. This has seen us behave in a more agile and flexible manner to continue to provide a supportive quality program for our children and families and is something the service is proud to reflect upon.

Capital improvements during the 2020 year were not significant due to restrictions to visitors to the service as well as the need to focus on basic business operations as the pandemic unfolded. However, as the year progressed and we returned to more normal operations, investment in resources and equipment were a focus towards the end of the year.

As we now enter a new year with more normal operating practices, we are looking forward to the replacement of kitchenettes and flooring in several of our rooms, together with improvements in our laundry and main kitchen area. This is being made possible through the support of the City of Melbourne and we are grateful for their continued investment in our service.

Moving beyond the 2020 year, KCCC will continue to identify growth and improvement opportunities for the service. A small, budgeted net surplus for 2021 allows us to continue to provide a high-quality education and care program for our children while balancing the financial implications for our families.

¹ Early Years Research – 2021 Australian Early Education and Care Annual Report eyr.org

