



KENSINGTON COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CO-OPERATIVE



Annual Report 2021



VALUES



IN RELATION TO CHILDREN:

We value the uniqueness of each child, their interests, learning styles and backgrounds. Children are successful, competent and capable learners.



IN RELATION TO FAMILIES:

We recognise and value the primary role that families play in their children's lives.



IN RELATION TO STAFF:

We value all staff at KCCC, acknowledge their commitment and support their continued professional growth.



IN RELATION TO OUR COMMUNITY: We value strong partnerships with members of our community, show respect regardless of background and acknowledge their role in our service.

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ANNUAL REPORT 2021

The Board and Management of Kensington Community Children's Co-operative is pleased to present the Annual Report for the 2021 financial year. This report outlines the Co-operative's progress towards achieving the objectives of our strategic plan and the KCCC vision and aims for the future.

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 2021.

OVERVIEW

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative is distinctive in its co-operative model. We are a not-for-profit community-based service governed by a committed group of parents with extremely committed 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.

KCCC provides a safe and nurturing environment in which we stimulate enquiry, invite discussion, engage the senses and offer choices for children to learn, discover and grow. Our natural setting is an integral part of our program and we encourage and foster sustainable practices.

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 existing premises, 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 70 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.

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

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

From the General Manager



Megan Newton
Acting General Manager

2021 was another year full of challenges and change as we continued to navigate our way through the Coronavirus pandemic.

We had hoped and wished 2021 was going to allow us to regain some normalcy within the service and the community. However, this was not meant to be. Throughout the year we responded to and adapted to the ever-changing restrictions and lockdowns that were made by the Victorian Government, Department of Education and Training and Department of Health.

We were able to provide children opportunities for continued learning by offering zoom sessions, provide families some financial relief by waiving gap fees for absences during the permit restricted period, and offer work from home opportunities with a focus on professional development for our educators.

Despite the pandemic, we were pleased to have social opportunities for the staff and families to meet. We had Welcome Breakfasts at the start of the year and concluded the year with the End of Year party in the park. Our graduating kindergarten children were also able to have their graduations in their rooms with their families.

Mid-November, we said farewell to our General Manager, Karen Mills, after 21 months

at KCCC. Karen joined us at the end of February 2020 and had a brief moment to settle in before she was welcomed with the unknown and ongoing challenge that was to be the Coronavirus pandemic.

Andrea Brereton stepped into the role of Acting General Manager as the Board continued the process of finding a suitable replacement. Andrea's leadership during her short time in the role was second to none.

I would like to thank our families, children and educators for their patience, flexibility and continued support throughout the year. Thank you to all the volunteers on the Board for all the hours you have contributed to support and ensure the continual smooth operations of the service. Thank you to the City of Melbourne and the Department of Education and Training for your support through another challenging year. Lastly, I would like to thank the Management Team for all the extra hours they put in throughout 2021 and their ongoing dedication to KCCC. Many evenings, weekends and even Christmas Day, were spent contacting and notifying families and staff to ensure the timely identification and communication of Covid-19 close contacts.

We also said farewell to a number of staff...

Sara Stefani – 2.5 years of service
James Scrimgeour – 2 years of service
Laila Rahman – 8 years of service
Hollie Martin – 17 months of service
Kavita Bali – 3 years of service
Bridie Keane – 7.5 years of service
Tessie Delimar – 5.5 years of service
Cathy Huang – 5.5 years of service

We would like to thank everyone for their contributions to KCCC as it would not be the service it is today without their passion and input.

In Memoriam



In early 2021 we were sad to announce Hoa Rose Nguyen had passed away on the 31st January. Hoa Rose had worked at KCCC for over 10 years. Hoa was always happy and bubbly, passionate about the children and friendly and caring to all families and educators.

CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Kate Zimet

Another pandemic year has passed and I am proud to say that KCCC continues to set the standard as a leading service in our community. This would not have been possible without the strong leadership and tireless work of the management team, educators and other employees throughout the year, with the support of our families and carers.

Despite the continuing uncertainty of the pandemic in 2021, 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.

Our outgoing General Manager, Karen Mills, with the strong support of the management team, continued to successfully manage the service in the changing environment of the pandemic in 2021. Under her leadership, the centre continued to achieve operational excellence and financial growth and stability, ensuring a strong future for the service, its educators and local families. Karen was instrumental in introducing and implementing Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for 2022, which is a valuable program for the community in Kensington.

I also acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Andrea Brereton and Megan Newton who each performed the role of

Acting General Manager in late 2021 and early 2022, following Karen's departure. Andrea and Megan have shown immense commitment to our service and community and I thank them for their service.

The Board was very pleased to recently announce the appointment of Suzie Mansell to the role of General Manager. Suzie commenced at the service in late March 2022 and I encourage anyone passing by to stop, say hello and welcome her to our KCCC community.

Some highlights in 2021 include:

- the return of most children and educators to the service in October 2021 following an extended lockdown that restricted access to childcare;
- enjoyable end-of-year morning tea celebrations in the rooms, which enabled families and staff to reconnect in person;
- kindergarten graduation celebrations in the yard to thank kindergarten teachers and educators and wish our kinder children well for school in 2022.

In 2022, I look forward to working with the Board and the KCCC community to expand our connections with each other and our community through a range of social and fundraising activities.



Another pandemic year has passed and I am proud to say that KCCC continues to set the standard as a leading service in our community.



KCCC BOARD

KATE ZIMET – CHAIR. Sara (Acacia) and Benjamin (Alumnus)

KCCC has been a central part of Kate's life in Kensington since her son, Benjamin, first attended KCCC in 2018. She now has a second child at KCCC – Sara in the Acacia Room. Kate values the consistent, 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 has continued in 2021 despite the challenges we have all faced

this year due to coronavirus.

Kate's other hat involves working as a barrister at the Victorian Bar (under the name Kate Burgess), practising in civil disputes, including employment and industrial law, common law and commercial law.

Kate has enjoyed living in other cities, including in New York and Washington DC, but now calls Kensington home. In her spare time, she likes to play tennis and travel.



EVETTE CASTLE – TREASURER. Spencer (Acacia)

Evette has been a member of KCCC since 2019 when her son Spencer, now 4, joined the Yarragum room as a 10-month-old. Watching him grow and develop, as well as have a lot of fun and build relationships with the other children and carers, has been truly amazing and a credit to the KCCC team; therefore, 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 of 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 tow from playgrounds to the river to the diggers and trains, keeping his inquisitive mind occupied.



SIAN SUMMERS – SECRETARY. Sylvie (Apple Tree) and Rafferty (Alumnus)

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.



KCCC BOARD



ADAM CLARKE – DIRECTOR. Callum (Acacia)

Adam is an extremely passionate, engaged and active parent within the KCCC community who wishes to give more to the organisation through using his extensive organisational leadership skills to contribute to the Board.

Adam is a career manager with over 20 years' experience in senior management roles within the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, including his current role as Director at Adam

Clarke Consultancy Pty Ltd.

Adam has a proven track record of success in each role that he has occupied – all the way back to his time in the State swimming team racing against Kieran Perkins for a spot in the Olympic team!

Adam aims to enhance the delivery of early childhood education to every child that attends KCCC.



NICK LAURIE - DIRECTOR. Antigone (Banksia) and Theodore (Apple Tree)

Nick and his family have been members of KCCC since 2018 when Teddy joined the Yarragum room as a troublesome baby "Speedy Gonzalez" (in the words of his educators at the time). Teddy is now in the Apple Tree room which he loves. Nick joined the KCCC Board in 2020.

Nick has particularly valued what a supportive, safe and stimulating environment Teddy has experienced at KCCC under the care of so many wonderful educators.

Nick, his wife Heidi and Teddy welcomed baby Tig to their family in 2019. Tig entered the Banksia room in 2020 and has quickly made herself known across the centre during her visits to Teddy and keen interest in when each

room has their snack times.

Professionally, Nick works as a senior lawyer at law firm Corrs Chambers Westgarth. He acts for clients in the construction and resource industry in large scale project and infrastructure disputes, specialising in arbitration. At work, Nick is especially passionate about promoting flexible working and diversity in the legal profession. He works part-time, so he can split care-giving of the kids with his wife Heidi.

Nick has contributed his skills in law, risk management, strategic planning, communication and governance to the Board since 2020. His main driver for joining the Board is to contribute these skills to KCCC and the wider Kensington community.



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 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.

SARAH MCCARTNEY – DIRECTOR. Frederick (Banksia), Lucien and Beatrix (Alumni)

Sarah has been part of the KCCC community for eight years and believes that KCCC holds a special place in the Kensington community.

Sarah is an experienced communications and marketing professional and executive leader. She has broad experience in business, governance and commercial management and has chaired and served on many steering committees, strategic advisory groups and

industry associations during her 20-year career.

Sarah values the importance of early years education and the impact this has on school years and into adulthood. She also acknowledges the positive impact KCCC has, and continues to have, on her own children and recognises the wonderful commitment and hard work of all the educators.



SOPHIE O'CONNOR – DIRECTOR. Matilda (Boronia) and Harriet (Alumna)

Sophie is a Kensington local and has been a member of the KCCC community since 2017.

She and her family love being a part of KCCC and its thriving culture. Harriet attended the centre through to school age and Matilda is in the Boronia room.

Sophie is a strategy and public policy professional with expertise in the education sector. She began her career in education policy at the Departments of Education and Premier and Cabinet, working on a range of funding and regulatory reforms. She then

transitioned to management consulting where, for the last decade, she has worked with a diversity of public and non-profit clients to help set their strategic agendas, respond to changing policy environments and improve their performance.

Outside of work, Sophie loves to spend time with family and friends in and around Kensington. You'll find her in local Pilates classes, running groups and at any and all cafes and playgrounds.



SHARU VARGHESE – DIRECTOR. Alex (Gumnut) and Isabelle (Alumna)

Sharu and her family have been part of the KCCC community for the last 6 years since her daughter Isabelle started in Yarragum, and began round 2 with her son Alex in 2021.

Sharu and her family came to Melbourne in 2014 and they are loving everything that Melbourne has to offer. She is an IT professional with over 12 years of experience providing technology consulting for various industries, specialising in data and analytics.

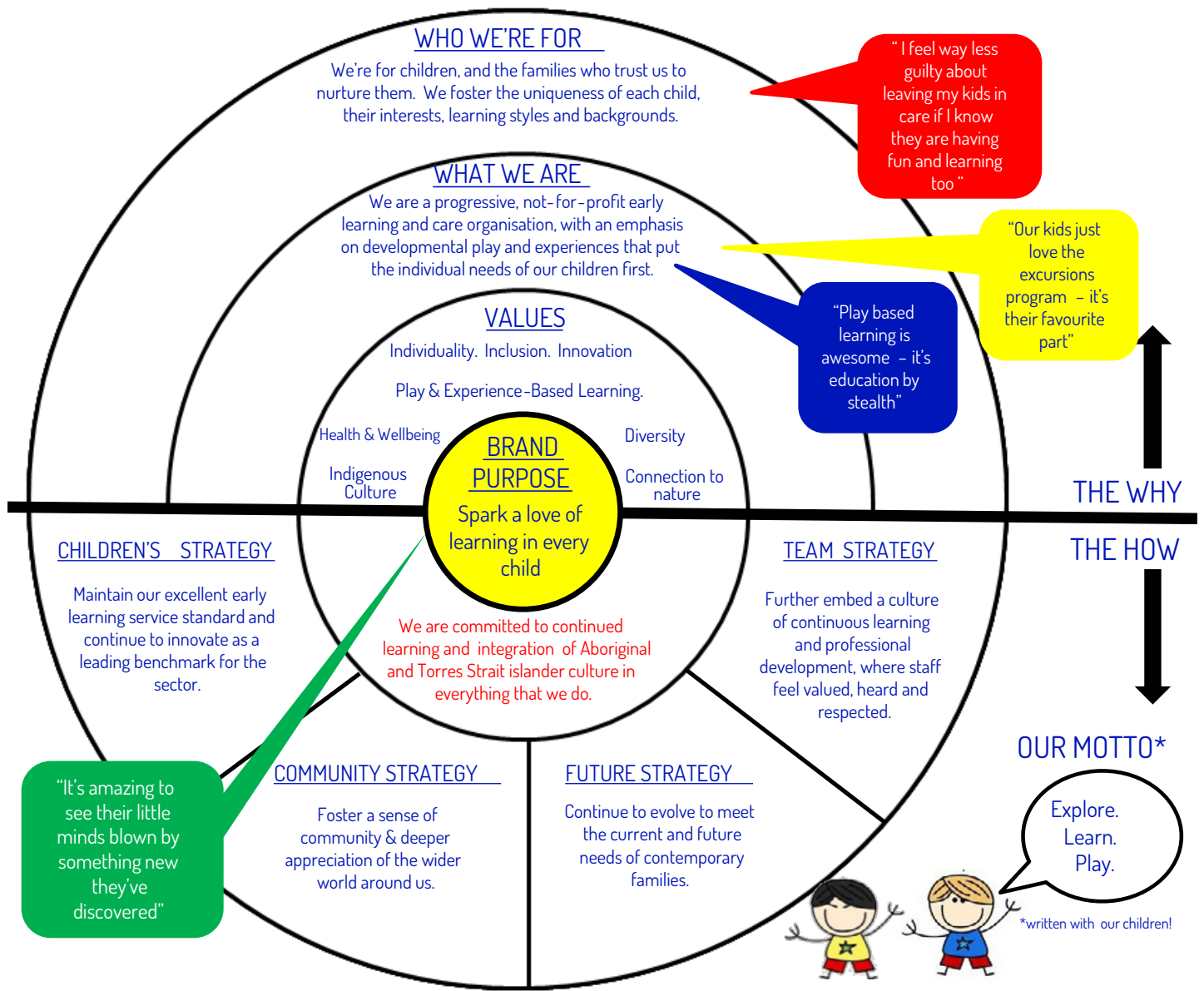
She loves the sense of community that

KCCC nurtures and feels lucky to be part of it. She has been an active member, previously serving on the FaCE (Fundraising and Community Engagement) committee in 2019. She has also organised and volunteered for various Indian NGO's through the years, helping to raise and manage funds.

Sharu is very keen to contribute in making sure that KCCC continues to become a centre that the community is proud of and children love.



KCCC STRATEGIC STEERING WHEEL



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN GROUP 2021

In 2021, KCCC's RAP group continued to seek out ways to ensure that Aboriginal knowledge, perspectives and history become embedded in our everyday thinking and practice. Our work involved both simple actions, such as adding a carefully considered acknowledgement to our emails, and bigger projects, such as looking at how to teach from an anti-racism lens.

One area of the RAP that proved challenging in 2021, like many things impacted by lockdowns and COVID, was connecting with Aboriginal peoples. We recognised the difficulty in building authentic relationships, which require time, patience and listening. We therefore sought other ways to hear First Nations People's voices, through their stories online and on paper. Books, professional development modules, and podcasts became useful sources of information and knowledge. First Nations Bedtime Stories were once again used in our programs, where the children heard Aboriginal voices, languages, and wisdom on how to live in the world.

Books were a great avenue for our pursuit of knowledge, which included purchasing books for KCCC's Library and the rooms, and also establishing a RAP Book Club. Every 3 months, the group selected a children's book and an adult book for anyone wishing to participate. Books included in this venture were Bruce Pascoe's 'Dark Emu' and Tony Birch's 'White Girl', alongside children's books 'Welcome to Country' by Auntie Joy Murphy and 'Family' by Auntie Fay Muir. Plans to have book club catch-ups were scuppered by COVID, particularly as we had aimed to host these face-to-face, since we were conscious of the general all-round fatigue of online meetings. There were a very small number of participants but, as with all events and ideas, the group felt that, if it makes a difference to just one person, then it is worthwhile. The RAP group has strong hopes of reviving this in 2022 and linking it to KCCC's lending library work.

Much of the RAP work in 2021 informed the service's grant and environmental work. The group looked at our roles and responsibilities in caring for the land that has been nurtured over thousands of years by Traditional custodians. Insights from Bruce Pascoe inspired us to plant native plants and also to think about Aboriginal land management practices. KCCC now has many native plants in the garden, which in turn attract native bugs and they in turn attract native birds. Indeed, the flora and fauna in the garden changed throughout 2021.

"If we separate children from nature, we separate them from wonder" (Pascoe 2021)

As the educators considered how they would incorporate Aboriginal knowledge into their programs, professional development from The Koori Curriculum provided them with many ideas and supported their thinking, both regarding STEM and in our use of Bush Tucker; for example, they considered what to grow in terms of native foods; the idea of only taking what you need; and seasonal foods for mealtimes and cooking programs.



Books were a great avenue for our pursuit of knowledge, which included purchasing books for KCCC's Library.



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KCCC also turned to our garden for Sorry Day, commemorated on 26th of May, by having a special planting of 3 native Hibiscus plants, the national symbol for Sorry Day.



Reconciliation Action Plan

KCCC also turned to our garden for Sorry Day, commemorated on 26th of May, by having a special planting of 3 native Hibiscus plants, the national symbol for Sorry Day. The native Hibiscus is a symbol of the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The lockdowns benefited the service in one way, through our working from home program, as they gave educators time to dig deep into thinking about the action "Teach against Racism". This led to some interesting discussions and insights and provided the space to explore a range of resources, helping us to unpack how to thoughtfully plan, program and think about bias and racism and what this might look like in our work with young children. The service explored many articles and books, as well as television programs, such as 'The School that tried to end Racism' and 'The Truth about Racism'. Delving into this work helped us to feel that we were successfully meeting the intentions of our second RAP.

"Every child should be able to see themselves, their identities and cultures reflected in the curriculum so they can fully participate in learning and build their self-esteem. As the First Peoples of this country and the world's oldest continuous living cultures, it is fundamental to cultural inclusivity to recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are different from mainstream cultures and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people occupy a unique place in Australian history and culture." (VAEAI)

Finally, as the year drew to a close, the group put together the vision and actions for KCCC's third RAP. The vision was updated to reflect the progress that had been made in achieving our goals and the growth in our thinking. The new RAP goes deeper in positioning KCCC as allies for Aboriginal people.

THE KCCC COMPOST HUB

We were delighted to be offered the opportunity to connect with the Kensington Community Compost Group: another wonderful organisation of Kensington locals, pooling their strengths to make Kensington a community that cares for the environment.



The KCCC Compost Hub

Throughout the year, we watched Dave set up our compost hub, which is one of the four trailblazers for Kensington, with the Town Hall, The Venny and the Food Forest being other compost hub locations. The hub is Dave's own prototype and his mastery of repurposing materials was inspirational. The environmental representatives worked closely with Dave to understand the compost system and how to maintain it. We were keen for there to be a good team of compost champions, to support the success and longevity of the hub. The garden bed was relocated by a great group of families at our Working Bee to make way for our compost station and Jess was on hand to help Dave with the construction. Dave had some wonderful conversations with the children about the hub and will remain on call to support us with the hub in 2022.

With one of the purposes of the Sustainability Grant being to support our waste

management, the compost hub went a long way to supporting our program. The teams created a 3-bucket system for each room, utilising the same 3 buckets, so that children and adults know what goes where. There is a worm food bucket, a compost bucket and a bokashi bin bucket, as Jess kindly spent much of her working from home time constructing our bokashi bin station, which made good use of some of the palettes and signs given to us by the Metro Tunnel project. The Environment room representatives took responsibility for the maintaining and managing the waste process, and children began to become experts on waste management.

To celebrate our compost hub, we had a week of talking and dressing compost-style and, on a suitably wet and muddy day, we held the official launch of the hub. Compost-filled buckets were swung and the first load of compost was placed in bin one.



ENVIRONMENT 2021

2021 saw the completion of KCCC's work on the Environment Grant. The last of the monies were spent on an abundance of native plants, books and other resources for children to learn in and about nature. Our Working Bee made a huge difference, as flower beds were moved and old book shelves upcycled into two incredible bug hotels (fit for a queen bee!), the installation of the compost hub and the start of us getting serious about our waste.

The environmental group looked at how their work could connect to their room projects. The grant work helped the service to think about children as a part of the world and the interconnectedness of living things. There were certainly many synergies between the work of the Environment Community of Practice group and that of the other community of practice groups, as we considered what it means to care for country (RAP) and the benefits of nature play for children (Healthy Together). Synergies with the room enquiry projects were evident in a range of ways, and included seed-plate-compost, care for the environment and skill sharing; looking at the sounds of nature; Wattle and Waratah thinking about food that we grow and use foods and having meals outdoors. The grant and environment work helped us to think about children as a part of the world and the interconnectedness of living things.

PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE



STUDENTS AND UPSKILLING

Once again, 2021 was a year where KCCC welcomed a number of students from universities and other training providers. Our team were once again keen to support student placements, as they recognise how valuable placements are for anyone who is studying to be an educator or teacher.

Many students had spent a lot of time online during the pandemic and some had their placements cancelled, limiting their opportunities to work with others. Our team stepped up to the task of welcoming them to the service and created reflective spaces for students to learn, grow and teach. Educators valued the two-way learning in these relationships, as they share their insights and feedback, whilst learning about the student's engagement with current research and theory.

FUTURE TRACKS

In 2021, we looked at ways to support any members of KCCC's team wishing to upskill, which included engaging with the team at Future Tracks. Andrea, Kavita, Jess, Ashley, and Karen met with Future Tracks to find out what support they could offer our service. Future Tracks have a team of mentors who have connections with university and training providers and these mentors work with Early Childhood professionals upskilling to a Bachelor degree. The shortage of Early Childhood teachers in Victoria means that KCCC's engagement with this program has the potential to support all children throughout the state, by helping increase the number of ECT's. We look forward to building on this in 2022.

NATIONAL SIMULTANEOUS STORYTIME

Once again, for the fourth year, the whole service engaged in the National Simultaneous Storytime. Reading the same book at the same time supports a love of literacy, which we know has a great impact on children's language, comprehension and life-long learning.

Having the whole team out in the garden in small reading groups was a great way to show what simultaneous means and created a pleasant space to enjoy the book. This year's book 'Give Me Some Space' by Philip Bunting, was about Una, who from a young age wanted to be an astronaut. The story ended with the beautiful idea that, "Earth....is the only home we have got. It is our mission to take care of the Earth". The event led to some interesting space experiences in the programs.

CHILDREN'S HANDBOOK

2021 saw the updating of the children's handbook. This is one of the most important documents at the service, as it is a wonderful guide made by and for children. A huge thank-you to all the children who generously shared their knowledge, ideas and skills with us. The document was sent out with the orientation forms and helps children who are new to the service understand what it is like to be at KCCC. The children shared tips on what happens at KCCC, offering their wisdom, kindness and advice on being a part of the KCCC community.

INFORMATION NIGHTS

Information nights are an important time for the families to meet the teams for the new



Whole service sewing station
set up by Carolyn and Nicole

year. These were particularly significant in 2021, as educators had missed out on so many opportunities to be with families, due to the restrictions during the pandemic.

There was a good turnout for these events and almost the whole team made themselves available to meet with the families. Team discussions prior to the events focused on the importance of these being the start of key relationships and partnerships with families. The more relaxed conversational style helped to facilitate a back-and-forth manner, with information shared and questions being answered collaboratively. The team consciously supported families to ask as many questions as they needed and used the “Thinking Lens” to be open to ideas, seek information, and get to know the families’ differing perspectives. The meetings supported the idea of mutually getting to know one another and for us to engage in deep listening. Participants deliberately positioned themselves in circles to support the idea of having a conversation, rather than being talked to. The nights where they were able to be held outside really enhanced this conversational style.

WEBINARS FOR CHILDREN

As 2021 had turned many things from face-to-face to online, not only did the team have regular Zoom sessions with the children who were at home, there were also some online incursions.

Zoo Webinars

Chris Humphrey from Macedon Ranges Zoo, Zoomed into the service and to children’s homes to give the low-down on the animals in his care. Chris linked the learning to our area, letting us know what we might meet on our walks around Kensington and the things we might do to care for wildlife, such as picking up dog poo!

Resus My Bub

Erin Church once again ran a wonderful online session of ‘Resus my Bub’, where the children engaged in learning about how to perform CRP and what to do in an emergency. Erin went through the process of how to call an ambulance and what to say to the operator. She also went through some basic first aid, whereby many teddies were bandaged. Erin hosted the sessions in a very thoughtful way, empowering the children to feel in control of what they can do to help in such situations.

Sewing Station

As the Apple Tree children had spent much of 2020 learning the skills and techniques of sewing and design, Carolyn, Nicole and Van set to work setting up a whole-service sewing station. The station is located outside of Wattle and has two sewing machines, many pieces of fabric and patterns. Through the support of the Banksia team, many of the educators and children were able to work on their own designs and learn how to use the sewing machines. The children thought of many things they would like to create and designs from bees, to tails to tablecloths were all drawn, cut out and stitched up. This was an excellent example of skill sharing and the many talents of our team.

PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PEDAGOGY

One of the key priorities at KCCC is a commitment to ongoing professional development and recognising our role as ongoing learners. We owe it to the children to learn alongside them and about them, which means that our learning never ends.

For 2021 this learning began in January on the service’s two child-free days, where staff updated their First Aid, CPR, Allergy and

Anaphylaxis, and Child Protection training. These are important and practical courses that demonstrate that children's safety, health, and wellbeing remained a priority for KCCC in 2021.

EARLY START DENVER MODEL TRAINING

Several of the team engaged in the ESDM training which supported them to consider ways of working with children on the Autism Spectrum. The model is one that is responsive to each child and fits with KCCC's philosophy. The training enabled educators to go deeper into thinking about inclusive practice, providing a plethora of strategies and ideas that support all children and provide an inclusive program. The team who engaged in the training used the rest of the year to trial different strategies and the training informed many of our conversations. The team linked this with KCCC's School Readiness Funding programs, where we liaised with Co-health professionals and held some in-depth conversations and case studies. Thinking about what all children need to have an inclusive and equitable life has been something we addressed in many of our discussions in 2021.

NATURE PLAY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In line with all our work on the Environment Grant, KCCC's Environmental Representatives were invited to engage in a weekend of Professional Development with the Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network.

The team spent their Friday online, listening to and soaking up the wisdom of the likes of Bruce Pascoe and other experts who spoke beautifully about children's biophilia and our role in nurturing this. The group were inspired by what was shared, and this not only provided practical ideas for their programming, but influenced their thinking about how they might document the voices and actions of children.

The Saturday was spent in Melbourne's magnificent Botanical Gardens, where educators listened to experts such as Bush Kinder Doug, who again helped us to consider both the practicalities of Bush Kinder programs and also the benefits. Taking a stroll through the gardens and, searching for different plants, including the Murrnong, helped the group to think about how to work up-close with nature and reminded educators to continue to stop

and engage with children when they notice the tiny and everyday aspects of the natural world. Indeed, taking a walk into Yarragum is a great reminder of how much delight children can take from the things that surround us each day, such as bird song or a fallen leaf.

The PD fitted perfectly with the work the Environmental group had been doing and hope to do in the future; it certainly aided thinking about how educators view the garden and for excursions. It was also relevant to many of the questions and ideas that had come up in the team's appraisals, as nature pedagogy matters at KCCC.

CONCEPTUAL PLAYWORLDS

Following on from the 2020 working from home program, dialogical reading and storytelling, the team were offered some online professional development from Monash University on Marilyn Fleeher's 'Conceptual Playworlds'. Educators from different teams took the time to do this self-paced course. Conceptual Playworlds are about using story and drama to explore concepts, in particular STEM concepts. It involves teams working together to create drama experiences with the children, using books and stories that are relevant and interesting to the cohort. The educators involved were able to brainstorm ideas and come up with relevant stories to use in their programs.

SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING

The Department of Education and Training opened School Readiness funding (SRF) for Early Childhood Education and Care services in our area. The SRF provides a menu of professional development items to support teachers and educators in the Kindergarten rooms to upskill and work on areas of practice that are relevant to their cohort and context. The amount of funding was decided through a careful application process. From community data and our observations of the impact of the pandemic, KCCC chose to focus on Social and Emotional, and Language items from the menu.

The funding proved to be helpful to the team, who engaged in online sessions with Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists from Co-Health. These sessions enabled the team to think about what might be impacting or influencing children's thinking and learning.

The team engaged in some wonderful training using puppets to support emotional and social development and these were embedded into the programs. Children's engagement with the puppets provided opportunities for them to discuss emotions, look at relationship challenges and to support children to share their ideas. The teams carefully wove any issues that arose in the rooms into the lives of the puppets and played these out for the children, positioning them in the role of problem solvers.

Cultural diversity and inclusion were explored through other menu items, giving the educators plenty to think about in relation to unconscious and conscious biases and assumptions. Overall, the SRF helped us go deeper into thinking about what it means to be a part of our community and how our programs can enhance community participation and collaboration.

ROOM PROJECTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

For KCCC's PD day, the service consulted with Catharine Hydon, a highly experienced Early Childhood consultant, and Theresa Raulin, a psychotherapist. Prior to the day discussions were had regarding how to move from theory to practice and a plan was developed to embed all the professional development work into daily practice. The consultation and subsequent

professional development session with Catharine, resulted in each team engaging in a 6-month Practitioner Enquiry project. The work with Theresa helped to build on the work of the Healthy Together group's focus on mental health and wellbeing and the service's work to support children's resilience.

The teams began by brainstorming a 'niggle', or area of practice they wished to build on, and created a question to help them to go deeper into exploring this. The questions were measured against SMART goals and evidence was gathered in the form of observations of children, team reflections and unpacking of relevant research.

Thanks to all the families, the whole-service professional development day for July 2021 was a success. COVID, of course, played a role by restricting venue options and stranding one of the presenters in Queensland, but the team adapted to the familiar online components that had become a feature of 2021. The teams were well-prepared for the sessions and it was with a good degree of pride that we watched them share their ideas and projects in their groups.

Therese's session complemented all the work that Kavita had been doing in 2020 and 2021, in relation to self-regulation and resilience. Therese focused on Attachment Theory, which was important to KCCC's work as it helped us to consider the children we care for and their attachment figures, and the role the service plays in this. The session also provided time to consider the impact of lockdowns on the children, ourselves, and families.



Thanks to all the families, the whole-service professional development day for July 2021 was a success.

PRACTITIONER ENQUIRY PROJECTS

The projects supported the teams to work collaboratively on an area of practice that they wished to explore or refine. They enabled educators to zoom in on the detective work that they do each day: how they watch and notice what each child is telling them, picking up the clues, considering what they already know and sharing perspectives on what they are seeing. This work has supported the team to consider how they deeply notice and respond to children, and how to include children and families in the documentation and planning for their programs. They discussed their Story Park posts and whether or not the questions they ask families and the way they write invite conversation, and ways for families to share their perspectives.

PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE – ROOM UPDATES

YARRAGUM

Inspired by how children made use of music and sound, both as music makers and in their responses to it, the Yarragum team decided to use music/sound as a lens for their enquiry project. The Yarragum team had been noticing the children's use of sound-making and the important role that music and song played in their room, including how it could 'change the whole mood of the room'. They titled their project – 'Not just background noise- can music bring our community together?'

The team were conscious that often music, particularly children's songs, is only played for young children without purpose or thought and their project set out to change this. They aimed to dig deep into children's roles as sound and music makers and look at the learning aspects of music, highlighting the importance of fun and children's sense of curiosity and wonder. A further aim of this project was to bring in members of the community, and this was done through exploring different musical genres. The team looked at how music could ignite a sense of community and they worked hard to bring people together physically and mentally. Luckily, the pandemic allowed for some periods where others could be invited into the room, and children and adults from different rooms brought their musical skills to Yarragum. At other times, COVID prevented mixing; however, this enabled the educators to hone in on how each child and the cohort engaged with music-making. Most importantly, the team got their wish, as at the end-of-year family event the participants made music together. Furthermore, the team created a children's book about the different sounds that each child made.

One wonderful example of how the team used the project to engage in deeper noticing and thinking, is the story of the roller door. Donna has told of how, over the years, the children always bang on the roller door, something she has now tuned into and is seeing less as 'just a noise' and more as children's self-expression and exploration of sound and music-making. The infants reminded us that you



Yarragum

can make sound and music using just about anything. The telling of this story revealed the team's great openness to new learning and honesty in how their thinking has changed. This is one of the joys of working with children.

GUMNUT

With the team's strengths and interests in cooking and gardening, the Gumnut cooking enquiry project seemed an obvious choice, particularly as they had noticed how much cooking the children did in their room home corner, sand pits and mud pits. The team decided to embed a cooking program into their room that highlighted the skills gained from cooking, supported healthy eating habits and attitudes towards food, linked to the grant work of "seed – plate – compost", and to bring the community together through a love of food. At the end of the year, they had created a book that shared the room community's favourite recipes and the stories behind them.

The team began by collating many observations around the children's knowledge and thinking about food and cooking. It soon became evident that the children knew a lot, as the team witnessed cooking techniques and sand recipes that were clearly influenced by the

children's experiences at home. The educators listened to children's comments and conversations about where food comes from and what is 'healthy' and welcomed both the facts and fictions in these discussions!

The team made good use of the garden, planting and tending food, and using these in their cooking. Children's interests in cooking spread to and from home, with some children even sharing their recipes on Story Park. The room also furthered their connection with home, with the help of their chef puppet Manu who, with his cookery book, headed off to everyone's house to share a meal or cook together. Manu came back with plenty of information about the different foods, mealtimes and cultural practices from the Gumnut community and also a wealth of recipes for the Gumnut Cookery Book. Manu's journey helped the team to have a greater understanding of the practices, habits and values at each child's home. The team very much succeeded in embedding cooking into their everyday practice.

BANKSIA

Banksia were inspired by a bee who was a regular visitor to their room. The children's fascination with the bee, and their varying responses to it – which ranged from fear to excitement – inspired the team to think about how they could program inclusively and responsively to the different ideas and learning styles in their room. The team mulled over how they could use the bee to unpack the intentionality and spontaneity of their teaching.

They looked at the different levels of teacher involvement in children's play and how intentional teaching sat both 'in' and 'on' the moment.

The team's journey of the 'bee project' led Banksia to unpack a range of research and theory on learning and teaching styles. They carefully discussed, planned and documented the various ways in which they responded to the children's differing ideas, interests, skills and learning styles.

The project involved thinking about how each child engaged in the program: their skills, knowledge, and ways of being. They noticed and reflected on how children's responses changed as the project progressed, including their responses to everyday materials, such as the flowers that sat on the meal table which the children began to see as important to the bee for nectar and pollen. The team observed the children's evolving knowledge of bees and bee behaviours, and how this elicited conversation and connections amongst the group. The 'waggle dance' was often seen in the yard, as the children role-played being a bee, and their understanding of how to be a bee was enhanced by telling stories, bee art and singing bee songs. Over time the children became quite expert on bees and were able to express this in their own different ways, from those who wished to know facts and information, to those who wished to touch and watch the bees in the garden, and others who preferred to express their bee ideas through the creative arts. The team were able to appreciate the role they had played in this project.

"Children bring their different ways of learning and need time to think critically, problem solve, experiment, and collaborate. Children need time and advocacy, to understand, acknowledge and self-regulate their emotions, for this learning to occur, children need, "frequency, intensity and duration of experiences" (Hunter, 2019)." (KCCC Philosophy)

WATTLE

The Wattle team delved into mealtimes and looked at how they could make these as responsive to children as possible. Their aim was for mealtimes to be calm and engaging rituals that weave into the day, not interrupting the flow of play or children's focus. They hoped that mealtimes could be something that brought the children together and create opportunities for conversation, agency and interdependence



Gumnut

skills. The team decided that trialling progressive meals could help them to achieve this goal and, by the end of the project, this had become the practice in the room.

The Progressive Meal enquiry project evolved over time and the educators were able to recognise that the unrushed nature and intimacy of small groups at the meal tables supported a calm and relaxed environment. The enquiry project seeped out into all areas of practice, as the team spent time reflecting on their work. The room experienced a domino effect, moving from progressive meals to the overall pedagogy, practice, and delivery of the program. The educators and children looked at the world through the lens of sustainability, mindfulness, and co-dependency. The project moved in multiple directions, but the intentions remained the same: that of 'being immersed in the present moment'.

The project stretched out into other areas of practice via sewing and cooking experiences. Educators and children used the sewing station to create place mats and used the produce from the garden to enhance their cooking. Nature Pedagogy took root within the program where the educators grew and cooked different types of vegetables and herbs for the meals and cooking experiences in the room. The project enhanced children's hands-on engagement with the garden and supported learning and knowledge-sharing about seeds, sowing, tending to the soil and plants, and the different sensory delights of plants and food. The team explored slow pedagogy which correlated to their progressive meals project and looked at meals around the world and in the homes of their room community. The project culminated in a book for the children about the different experiences the children had engaged in from the one enquiry.

"Evolving programs and pedagogy are in place in our service, as seek to learn about and respond to the individual and groups of children in our community. We tune into what is happening in the world of Early childhood, and to local and global events. We understand our community we will change and grow, and so too will our pedagogy" (KCCC Philosophy)

WARATAH

The Waratah community took a look at mealtimes in the room. Their practice had been to all come together for mealtimes, and this had merit in its intention of bringing children



Wattle Project

together as a group; yet, on reflection, the educators noticed that it meant that children's valuable play was interrupted and could lead to mealtimes being disruptive. They decided that they would like to see mealtimes be part of the general flow of the day and for children to have agency, choice and joy at these times.

Through a Progressive Meals enquiry project, the team were able to focus on the different ideas, values and practices of the team. Having a diverse team meant that the project was a useful tool to view and unpack their pedagogy, which they recognised strongly influenced mealtimes and other areas of practice. The team found that the key to moving the project forward was by looking at the strengths and skills within the team and using them to their fullest potential. The project resulted in the team deeply reflecting on their life experiences, the environments where they grew up, the social values that were instilled in them and the ways in which their thinking influences their pedagogy and practice. By using the KCCC philosophy, values and beliefs, they thought through how their practices could evolve and grow, and were able to shake off values that no longer served them.

The Thinking Lens provided a framework to the team to look within themselves, seek children's perspectives, carefully observe the influence of the environment, collaborate and share ideas amongst themselves and reflect on actions, programs, and pedagogy that responded to their community and context.

Through the process the children picked salad from the gardens to add to their cooking and meals, acquired an understanding of turn-taking and patience, built on their self-help skills and sat with the educators in small groups, engaging in thoughtful conversation, at beautifully set tables.

The team pulled this journey together into a clip which they shared with their families at the end of the year.

BORONIA

The Boronia team chose to look at kindness and emotions, to see if an emphasis on such things could make a difference to the sense of community in the room. They were conscious of the impact of COVID on children's relationships and they hoped that working through this lens could support children's resilience. The team moved from having a kindness tree to celebrate children's acts of kindness, to using puppets and specific stories and strategies to build children's emotional literacy and their community connections.

The project allowed the team to observe the children through the lens of kindness and emotional expression, which in turn resulted in planning with the intention of supporting the children to express, recognise and share their emotional literacy, explore strategies to support self-regulation skills, and build on children's ideas of what it means to be a community member. Through the project, the team noticed an impact on the group: children's emotional literacy increased and there appeared to be greater attention paid to collaboration and exploration of kindness. The educators heard children express and articulate a wide range of emotions to one another and to the team. One child's description of "lust" ("this is when you don't have a house and you really want one") or even new emotions such as "Comfty, which is when you have been spinning around and then you get tired from all the wriggly and fall asleep", were evidence that children were not only able to articulate the mental impact of emotions, but also the physical impact. Puppets became a much-used tool in the room and they observed many of the children telling the puppets about how they were feeling and using them to problem-solve challenges.

The Boronia project was a useful tool for the team to find out more about what the children

were feeling and this led to some interesting discussions about rewards and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The team also explored the Thinking Lens to unpack and document their work.

ACACIA

Acacia looked at the dynamics of their room and its diversity of wonderful minds. They decided to focus on group times for their project, as they had been grappling with how to make this part of the program interesting and inclusive of everyone. This was a brave choice, as it was something that the room already did well, but they wanted to see if there were other possibilities for this part of everyday practice. Their overall aims were to make group times inclusive, diverse and fun.

The team began by gathering data about each child's ideas and interactions at group time. They reflected on what was working well and what they might refine. They looked at the interests of the children and the ways in which the children liked to work. Through careful observation, data gathering and many reflective group discussions, the Acacia team were able to trial a range of different group times. Over the course of 6 months, they were able to unpack what worked well and had some wonderful successes, where they could see all children deeply absorbed in their group work. Songs, movement and physical games supported many of the children to engage with this part of the day. Some group times were hands on, such as cooking experiences or experiments, and there were group times inside and outside as well. The team remained open to new ideas, took inspiration and feedback from the children and found that they learnt a lot about the children as individuals and as a group through the enquiry process. The team also found the enquiry project supported their planning and teamwork, as it led to plenty of collaborative work.

"We are reflective of our children and families through our pedagogy, programs, and events, which we endeavour to explore in ways that are inclusive, thoughtful, and educational. We strive to acknowledge and celebrate our differences; recognising that our community is enriched by the many ways of being and doing in its midst. Through learning about one another, we seek understanding, which can lead to empathy and connection." (KCCC Philosophy)

APPLE TREE

Apple Tree looked long and hard into the possibilities for their inquiry project. Being a new and larger team, they contemplated how they might learn about team work, what it means to be in a team and the ingredients for successful team work. After many discussions and by capturing a lot of data from observations of the children, the team were able to link relevant research articles to help work out where their project might lead. The process of finding a SMART enquiry project was one that helped the team learn about themselves and one another. The group came together on the question of how to use strengths and community skills to support its growth, collaboration and resilience, and thus the Strengths project emerged.

The project enabled Apple Tree to look at themselves and the children through a positive, strengths-based lens. They were determined that the children would play an active role in the enquiry and this was achieved through a carefully planned program. The children engaged in discussions and documentation of the project, looking at their own and each other's strengths. This process took time and care.

Families were invited to join the project and they shared their thoughts about their child's strengths. This information was combined with the children's conversations, and artwork was collated to make an Apple Tree Book of Strengths. The team found the use of the Thinking Lens, and the nature of project itself, supported them to work more collaboratively. They made careful choices in their use of books and resources to support the project. The team found that celebrating the children's strengths supported the children to think about the tools they could use to navigate the world. They were conscious of the impact of the lockdowns and how children's relationships had been interrupted, as well as the overall disruption to their kinder year. By focusing on the children's strengths, the team helped them to consider how they might also manage the transition most of them made at the end of the year, to school.

TEA TREE

The Tea Tree team, were keen to support children with their relationships and emotions. This is something that is always important in

the Early Childhood landscape, but even more so with the years of COVID. Many children had seen little of their peers during lockdowns and had had to manage a wide variety of relationship changes due to various attendance patterns at particular times of the year.

The Tea Tree team worked on their social emotional project and utilised puppets for this purpose. Puppets were used as a tool for strengthening social relationships as well as delivering meaningful emotional literacy to the children. A beautiful partnership developed between kinder and the families, and the educators shared this skill with the families as well. Zoom sessions acted as both an engagement tool as well as an educational tool for parents. The team felt that this would bring a consistent approach to learning and development for the children.

The team took their time to consider each child, making detailed observations of their relationships, strengths and challenges. The puppets acted as a tool for problem-solving the children's challenges, and for supporting the children to critically think and problem solve relationship challenges and to consider their own emotions, as well as those of their peers. The team noticed how much the children would engage with and share their thoughts with the puppets, even spending quiet times consulting a puppet or making their own puppets.



PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE – WORKING FROM HOME

WORKING FROM HOME

Once again, the lockdowns meant that the team needed to remain flexible and 2021 provided more time for KCCC staff to work from home. There was a shift in thinking about this, as staff had not only become more familiar and comfortable with how to work from home, but also the ongoing impacts of the pandemic meant that many of the team enjoyed being able to have some time at home to fully think about their practice. The work from home program was developed by Kavita and Karen. Kavita continued to draw on her work on self-regulation and wellbeing and the team revisited many of the ideas from 2020, this time linking the work to specific children and groups of children. The work linked with much of the Healthy Together group's focus on mental health, and with the work the kindergarten teams were doing with the School Readiness Funding.

Karen drew on the professional development that the team have been doing over the past couple of years and linked this with the service philosophy and practitioner enquiry projects. Inspiration from Steve Munby, Ash Buchanan and Brene Brown were important elements that helped educators consider leadership, culture and community. A large part of the working from home materials addressed teaching from an Anti-Racist lens, which linked to RAP actions and to KCCC's overall philosophy of tackling bias

in all its many forms. The time at home enabled the team to think deeply and have some robust conversations on their Zoom meetings. The team handed in their work each evening and were provided with timely feedback.

"We take responsibility for how we show up and how we participate in the lives of others and the life of society" Buchanan 2021

Following work done with Catharine Hydon, the working from home program supported the team to look at their room projects in a variety of ways. They mulled over the data they had collected and considered how to document and share the projects, and how audience influences these considerations. Many of the teams created different forms of information-sharing for children, families and other professionals, such as the books that Wattle, Gumnut, Apple Tree, Banksia and Yarragum made or the film footage that Acacia, Waratah, Tea Tree and Acacia captured. The thinking and recording of the enquiry projects was strongly influenced by work done on Pelo and Carter's 'Thinking Lens', which was a dominant theme in the service's professional development program in 2021; it was used in meetings and working from home, and influenced the new philosophy and planning work.

"participating in a community that learns.... calls forward and strengthens in us the capacity to be in discourse with all sorts of perspectives" (Pelo and Carter, 2018)

Exploring the Thinking Lens linked with the aims of many of the team's appraisals and overall ongoing thinking about how educators document and plan for and with children. A shift in thinking began to be seen, as well as the influence these ideas had on how the team document, as the Thinking Lens encouraged them to consider their bias/assumptions, engage in responses as opposed to reactions, step into children's shoes, check the environment, seek out and listen to other perspectives and use these considerations to guide them in their actions. It reminded everyone that, when we are thinking we are at our best; we can never know exactly what children are thinking and why they are doing what they are doing but, by being thoughtful, drawing on a range of perspectives and being open to possibilities, we



Working from home in 2021 also gave educators time to collaborate with team members from different rooms and some rich conversations and knowledge-sharing occurred.



are more likely to understand. Recognising this need to be vulnerable, open and flexible can be difficult, so we congratulate the team on how they approached the work and the year that was 2021. We witnessed team's openness to unpacking their everyday practice, which came with a great deal of bravery and professionalism, as they recognised that, as ongoing learners, they can also refine and modify their work.

Working from home in 2021 also gave educators time to collaborate with team members from different rooms and some rich conversations and knowledge-sharing occurred. The team's enthusiasm and generosity in supporting one another was a joy to see and much of the work showed a willingness to go deep into their thinking, with some team members exploring way beyond the materials provided. It was a pleasure for

Karen and Kavita to read.

"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make" Jane Goodall

Working across teams provided useful opportunities for everyone to share relevant ideas and provide mutual support, even adding to one another's projects. Such collaboration was also reflected in the service, as teams at times had to come together to share rooms. The team were appreciative to be working and recognised how privileged they were to be seeing the children, many of whom were not seeing other family members or many other community members due to the lockdowns. Working together helped the team to think about the important role we play in children's lives, particularly in times like the pandemic.

MANDY COOKE

We welcomed back Mandy Cooke, who had engaged in research at the service in 2019, to one of our staff meetings. Mandy had been looking at risk-taking in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and her research findings were of great interest to KCCC's staff. Mandy had not simply wanted to look at risk in terms of risky play and supporting children to assess their own risks, but also at risky conversations and practice. Mandy also talked about the risk of engaging in research and the fact that some people did not want to participate, as they did not agree with the idea of risk in ECEC.

Mandy described how many ECEC practitioners take regular risks in relation to the conversations they have with their teams, as they reflect on and critique practice. She also talked about the risks in our programming in relation to the idea that we make decisions about what we choose to teach and also what we leave out. The team discussed how risks are taken in exploring "big issues" with children, such as the environment and climate change, which can be confronting topics. The key is in how this is done and, like all things adults do, say and show children, it needs to be done thoughtfully. It was lovely to have Mandy back to share her findings and to help inform our thinking, as her work aligns with our philosophy and values.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Biggest Morning Tea



Working Bee in May

WELCOME BREAKFASTS 2021

Coming together at the beginning of each year is an important part of our commitment to our community. It offers us an opportunity to welcome our new families, allowing them to meet each other and get to know our service; it also provides a chance for ongoing members of KCCC to reconnect.

After having many social restrictions in place during 2020, our ability to host a large welcome event was restricted at the beginning of 2021. However, our Welcome Breakfasts became a COVID responsible way for us to celebrate and gather to acknowledge and celebrate the beginning of the new year.

WORKING BEE IN MAY

The May Working Bee was a resounding success, and it was wonderful to see so many families at the service. All the tasks we had wanted to achieve were done including the creation of magnificent bug hotels; the establishment of a space for our compost hub; and much needed general tidying and sweeping of yards and our surrounding spaces. The energy and joy families brought to the morning was amazing and another example of the concept of community upon which our service is based.

BIGGEST MORNING TEA / EPILEPSY - FUNDRAISERS

As a service we also focussed on contributing to broader initiatives in our community. In March we conducted an awareness day and fundraiser for the Epilepsy Foundation on their Purple Day, while in July we participated in the Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea. Not only did these events give us an opportunity to contribute to worthy causes but they also provided a chance to come together as a KCCC community.

METRO TUNNEL

Our relationship with the Metro Tunnel Project continued throughout 2021 and provided us with ongoing and timely information around the project's progress and any potential impacts on our service. We have been grateful for the communication the Project has maintained with us throughout the works.

Following our children's contributions to the design of the flood wall running along Childer's Street, we were excited to see the creative design, based on the local community's close connection to JJ Holland Park which has been progressively revealed through a palette of green tiles as the year has gone on.

We have also been willing recipients of



Epilepsy Foundation Purple Day



Metro Tunnel



Participate Kensington

resources from the project no longer required which we have been able to re-purpose at our service. Old traffic signage to incorporate in our own yard, as well as wooden pallets that have been converted into our bokashi station, have found new and meaningful uses at KCCC!

PARTICIPATE KENSINGTON

The Participate Kensington program recognises the impact COVID lockdowns have had on the time spent in our neighbourhoods - enjoying local spaces and discovering new parts in our local area to treasure.

We were thrilled to support the City of Melbourne's consultation with the community late in 2021 where they sought thoughts on ideas and opportunities for Kensington and what makes it so unique through their Participate Kensington postcards. We completed postcards in the rooms with teams, working hard to gain children's ideas (such as having 'more orange cats' in Kensington!) and also invited the City of Melbourne to attend our end-of-year whole-service picnic where they talked to a great many families about the project.

From 700 contributions received, 26 draft community priorities have been identified and are now open for further feedback and from the community.



FOOD DRIVE

Through the Kensington Neighbourhood House Christmas food drive, our staff and families generously contributed pantry staples to the McCracken Street Food Share Pantry.

This end-of-year drive provided our community a chance to participate in a local initiative whose concept is for people to "give what you can and take what you need".

OUR PEOPLE

KCCC has a dedicated team of around 60 full-time, part-time and casual staff members.

Many of our employees have been with the service for a number of years and bring true community connectedness to their roles as they see families grow and move through their early years education and care experience.

Our committed team includes Bachelor qualified teachers, Diploma qualified room leaders, and Diploma and Certificate III qualified educators. As we expand our 3-year-old kindergarten programs from 2022 and beyond, Bachelor qualified staff will become part of more rooms at the service and will continue to support and enhance the quality of the programs run by KCCC.

We congratulate Hayley White and Phoebe Wong who both graduated as Early Childhood Teachers in 2021 and look forward with

excitement to the completion of other staff members currently undertaking further study in this area.

2021 continued to present new challenges to our workforce, as changing procedures and practices continued to occur thanks to COVID-19. As we had done in 2020, we provided certainty and consistency for our children and families whilst delivering programs in flexible and unique ways - virtually, remotely and face to face.

At the end of the year, we farewelled our General Manager, Karen Mills, after 21 months of support and commitment to KCCC. The unprecedented challenges faced during her time with us, thanks to the pandemic, were immense and her leadership and guidance during 2020 and 2021 were invaluable. We wish Karen all the best in her future endeavors and thank all other staff who finished their time with KCCC during the year including Kavita Bali (Pedagogical Leader); Hollie Martin (HR Manager); Bridie Keane (Receptionist); Teresa Delimar (Educator) and Laila Rahman (Kitchen Hand).

As always, we thank our whole team for their hard work and dedication to KCCC each and every day. They have continued to be here to meet the care and educational needs of our children and their families throughout 2021 in a professional and committed way.



CAPITAL WORKS

We were immensely fortunate to have the support of the City of Melbourne on a major capital improvement project for the service in 2021.

The replacement of kitchenettes in many of our rooms, together with new flooring; a complete refit for our laundry; and the installation of new doors on our kitchen pantry were completed in June.

The work has provided us with refreshed and vibrant rooms, basins and taps at children's levels for the development of independence and agency and amazing new storage capacity. We are extremely grateful to the City of Melbourne for their investment in our service.

General equipment purchases for our rooms were also made to ensure our facilities remained at a high-quality standard and provide inviting settings for our children. New couches and rugs, together with in-room storage units, lockers and display shelves were among the items purchased during the year. An outdoor umbrella for our Yarragum yard has also been installed to ensure a safe and comfortable outdoor space for our youngest children to play and learn.

The purchase and installation of a new telephone system was also completed in 2021. This has seen improved reliability and quality for our telephone communications which is a critical component of our service.



2021 FINANCIAL COMMENTARY

The financial result for Kensington Community Children's Co-operative (KCCC) in 2021 was a \$1.8k surplus (2020 \$331k). Operating revenue for the 12-month period January-December 2021 contracted 4.5% to \$4.4 million due to a reduction in Government funding that had been received in 2020 as part of COVID-19 support programs.



2021
\$1,800
SURPLUS

OPERATING REVENUE
CONTRACTED 4.5% TO
\$4.4 MILLION

2021 REVENUE

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to present an unpredictable environment for the service to operate in. Restrictions on attendance at ECEC Services in Greater Melbourne were reinstated from late August until early October, resulting in lower attendance levels. During this time, no fees were charged to families where children did not attend the service, however, Child Care Subsidy funding continued to be received for these enrolments.

Since the easing of restrictions towards the end of 2021, 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. While a number of the stimulus measures in place to dampen the economic effect of the pandemic in 2020 were discontinued and not reinstated during the subsequent wave, the length of restrictions did not place a significant burden on the service.

2021 OPERATING EXPENDITURE

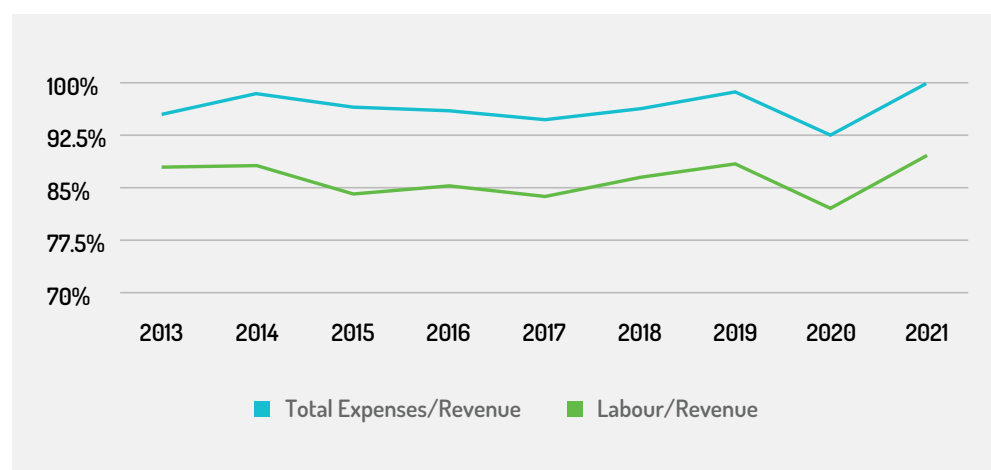
Expenditure trends have remained consistent for the service in 2021 and have again seen Labour costs continue to account for the majority of our spending.

Thanks to the support provided by the City of Melbourne in relation to property rental, cleaning and maintenance services, we are fortunate to be able to have lower operating costs than we may otherwise face. General operating expenditure is focussed on providing

resources and equipment to support our children's programs, driven by children's interests and a commitment to sustainable and socially responsible purchasing practices.

The chart below presents expenditure as a percentage of revenue from both a total and labour only perspective. The percentage increase experienced in 2021 has been driven by lower levels of revenue received from COVID-19 support packages.

PERCENTAGE OF EXPENSES TO REVENUE 2013 - 2021 COMPARISON



2021 FINANCIAL COMMENTARY

OCCUPANCY

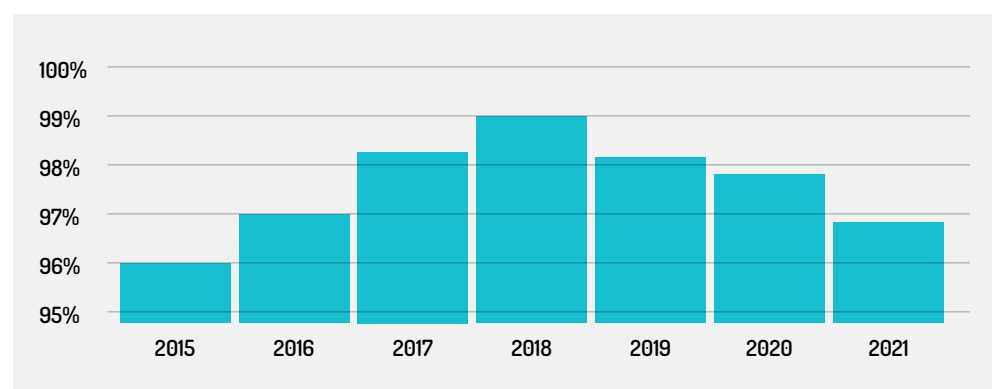
During 2021, average occupancy was just below 97% for the year in the long day care rooms at KCCC. Since 2015, this average level of occupancy has remained over 96% and is well above the 71% national average reported for Q2 2021.¹

High levels of occupancy are critical to the service remaining as financially stable as possible. As a not-for-profit service, annual budgeting processes seek to achieve a break-

even result, which relies heavily on maintaining high levels of occupancy to maximise revenue. High occupancy also ensures that we are making available to our families as many places as possible and serving our community's needs for early childhood care and education to our maximum capacity.

In total, 269 children from 213 different families in the Kensington community attended KCCC at some time during 2021.

AVERAGE ANNUAL OCCUPANCY (LDC) 2015 - 2021 COMPARISON



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 of varying capacities and age groups, as outlined in the table below:

2021 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

2021 KINDERGARTEN CAPACITY PER DAY

Tea Tree and Apple Tree Rooms	4-5 year olds (Sessional and Integrated Kindergarten)	46
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LONG TERM FINANCIAL VIABILITY

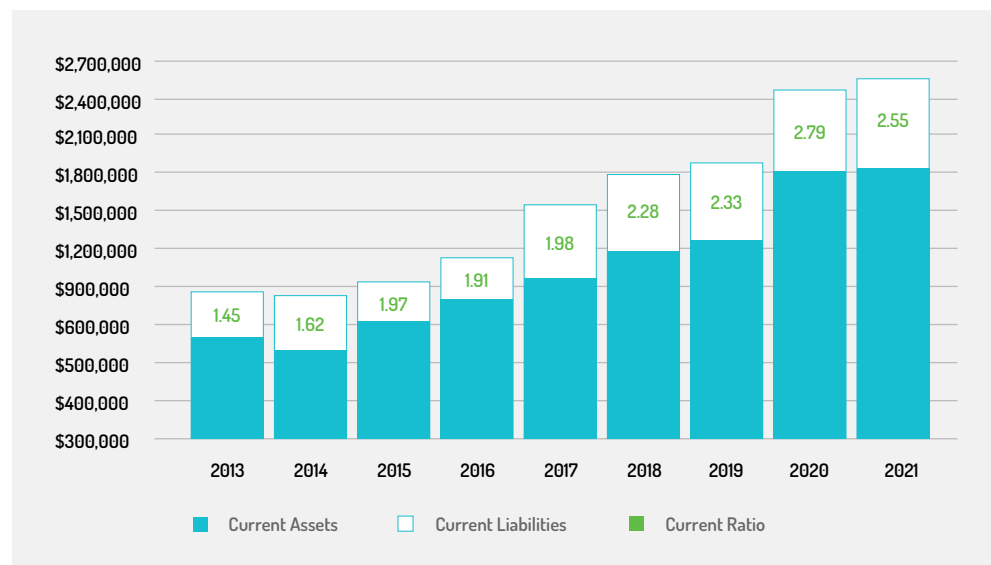
KCCC's ability to repay short-term obligations is measured and monitored on an ongoing basis through the Current Ratio calculation. As a service we aim to keep this measure above 2.0 to ensure we have the capacity to meet our commitments, as well as some allowance to absorb sudden operational changes such as those presented during the COVID-19 pandemic. A current ratio greater than 2.0 supports decision-making around investment in other areas of the service.

The chart below shows KCCC's current ratio has fallen slightly in the last 12 months; however, it continues to be strong at 2.55.



Despite restrictions, the service has achieved a break-even result financially by the end of the year and continued to provide supportive quality programs for our children and families.

CURRENT ASSETS/CURRENT LIABILITIES RATIO 2013 - 2021 COMPARISON



THE FUTURE AT KCCC

2021 continued to present KCCC with service restrictions and the need to implement new and unique operating processes to support the safety measures in place for our whole community. Despite restrictions, the service has achieved a break-even result financially by the end of the year and continued to provide supportive quality programs for our children and families.

As we look to the future and start to live with COVID-19 as part of our ongoing lives, we will continue to adapt and develop to accommodate restrictions and operational impacts as they arise. This will include a continued focus on investment in resources and equipment needed to support our programs and enhance the education and care provided to our children.

