

KCCCC

KENSINGTON COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CO-OPERATIVE



Annual Report 2022



Acknowledgement of Country

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we learn, play, educate, nurture, and connect with one another.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



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Kensington Community Children's Co-Operative (KCCC)

Child Safety Commitment

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative is committed to being a child safe organisation. We defend childhood as a valuable stage of life in its own right, which we honour, celebrate and treasure. We seek to understand each child's identity and heritage and support their wellbeing by being culturally responsive.

We are committed to the rights of all children to feel safe and be safe at all times, to always acting in the best interests of each child and we have zero tolerance of child abuse.

We are committed to ensuring our team are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour; acceptable responses and warm, trusting and reciprocal interactions when working with children and families.

We actively manage the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury and harm.

Annual Report 2022

The Board and Management of Kensington Community Co-operative is pleased to present the Annual Report for the 2022 financial year. This report outlines the Co-operative's progress towards achieving the objectives of our strategic plan and the KCCC's vision and aims for the future.

The purpose of the Annual Report is to:

- provide an overview of the Co-operative's operations relating to 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 2022.

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

Overview

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative is a not-for-profit community-based early childhood education and care service. 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 70 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 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 and 70 places for 3-year-old kindergarten.

KCCC Strategy

KCCC, in consultation with the community, is in the process of developing its next strategic plan. We thank staff, families and sector representatives who have provided input. Though the strategy is yet to be finalised, we are pleased to share our emerging direction, including a summary of the draft purpose, values, strategic direction, priorities and philosophy. The full strategic plan will be finalised and released in coming months subject to further consultation and engagement.

Message from the Chair and General Manager

2022 was a year of re-engaging and reconnecting within our KCCC community. KCCC also continued to set the standard as a leading service in our community and maintained its Exceeding rating following the assessment and rating process conducted by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) in November 2022. This outstanding achievement would not have been possible without leadership, quality teachers and educators, dedication and collaboration across the entire workforce, with the support of our families and carers.

An Exceeding rating means (see <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/assessment/exceeding-nqs> for additional information) that practice throughout the service is:

- embedded in service operations;
- informed by critical reflection; and
- shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

According to ACECQA:

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community when educators actively seek input, guidance and feedback from children, families and the community. Meaningful engagement with families and/or the community helps to shift thinking, shape ongoing practice and foster a culture of inclusiveness and sense of belonging for all.

This captures the essence of our practice at KCCC. Our educators including our early childhood teachers

are the backbone of our service and we congratulate them on their resilience and commitment to deliver quality care and learning programs for our children. Despite the financial results for 2022, KCCC remains in a strong financial position and we thank the Board, the management team, educators, other support staff, families and the community for their continued support of the service during the difficult pandemic recovery period.

In 2022, the service was initially led by Megan Newton in the position of Acting General Manager until the appointment of Suzie Mansell as General Manager, who commenced in late March 2022. Megan has shown immense commitment to our service and community and we thank her for her service.

Some highlights in 2022 include:

- receiving a significant Building Blocks Grant to support the refurbishment and expansion of our service;
- fundraising events including the movie afternoon fundraiser and the tea towels fundraiser featuring childrens' art;
- multiple working bees; and
- a joyous family picnic and end of year celebration in JJ Holland Park.

In 2023, we will be focused on the refurbishment and expansion of the service along with returning KCCC to a balanced budget. We also 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.



Suzie Mansell
General Manager, KCCC



Kate Zimet
Chair of the Board, KCCC

KCCC Reconciliation Action Plan

At KCCC we are committed to continue to respectfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, knowledge and cultures into our everyday programs and practice. As part of this journey, we implemented our third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) during 2022. This RAP was updated to reflect our progress, through our continued action we commit to working in ways that reflect the rich diversity of the First Nations People.

Our aim is to:

- Continue creating a culture where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People feel welcome and respected as members of our early learning community.
- Through these connections, and by talking and actively listening together, we will respectfully foster the sharing of knowledge, as we recognise that understanding is gained, and relationships are sustained in this way.
- We will continue to ensure that First Peoples' voices and languages are actively heard in our programs.
- Our commitment to caring for country plays a big role in our programs and thinking and will continue to be a focus in the implementation of our RAP.

Our KCCC community will continue co-learning and co-teaching, making our reconciliation journey of togetherness. This RAP goes deeper in positioning KCCC as allies for Aboriginal people.



Actions

- Displaying a formal Acknowledgement of Country sign in our entrance.
- Rewilding project, adding more native plants to build our knowledge of traditional uses of native plants.
- Each room takes a turn to read a First Nations story to everyone in the garden. We have alternated the days, so everyone has the opportunity to hear one. These sessions have been very successful and well received by the children.
- We have purchased authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational resources and ensure we acknowledge the artists/creators.
- We have incorporated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our daily programming and experiences for children, in line with the Early Years Framework.
- Thinking about our role with young children and what we explore, looking at different perspectives and stories.
- Teaching the children about the Kulin Seasons to learn about country.
- We consulted with the Education Officer at Reconciliation Victoria to read our RAP and support us to explore Anti-racist teaching and cultural safety, as we unpack child safe standards.
- We participated in the VACCA Morning Tea for Culture, and our generous families helped us to raise \$910 for VACCA. The children helped bake a range of foods for the breakfasts and there was a big focus on using things we had grown in the garden and native bush foods.

KCCC DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN: 2023 - 2026



Our purpose

Our purpose is to empower children to be lifelong learners connected to community and culture.



Our values

Our values reflect our commitment to excellence in all that we do:

- **Learning** – we pursue the highest quality outcomes for children and their families
- **Community** – we care about our community and invest to build connection, participation and belonging
- **Inclusion** – we are intentionally diverse, culturally intelligent and act with fairness and respect
- **Collaboration** – we work as a team and with others to be greater than the sum of our parts
- **Innovation** – we encourage creativity and strive for continuous improvement and excellence



Our strategic direction

We are committed to providing the highest quality early childhood education and care with and for our community. That means stretching ourselves to meet the expanding needs of children, families and community stakeholders within the expectations and requirements of an evolving sector.

Our proposed strategy outlines KCCC's commitment to proactively grow and adapt to ensure we remain a meaningful and valued part of the Kensington community for many years to come.



Our strategic priorities

Over the next three years, KCCC will work to achieve five strategic priorities:

- **Growth** - advance and sustain our provision and capacity to meet community needs into the future
- **Quality** - be recognised as a high-quality service known for its innovative and adaptive pedagogy
- **Workforce** - establish a reputation as an employer of choice in the sector
- **Community** - further strengthen our collaborative relationships with families and community
- **Governance** - better align our governance and operations with sector standards and best practice

KCCC Philosophy

All early childhood education and care services are required to have a statement of philosophy in place which is reviewed on a regular basis. We have recently reviewed and refreshed our philosophy. Our refreshed philosophy outlines the purpose and principles under which we operate as a service.

KCCC statement of philosophy

Kensington Community Children's Cooperative (KCCC) is a not-for-profit community-based early childhood service for children from six weeks to school age. We offer an integrated service delivery that seeks to provide coherency to locally connected services that support children and families to thrive in an ever-changing world.

We acknowledge that we are on Wurundjeri country and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded in this country. We acknowledge that all Australian children have a right to know and value the history and current context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the stories of the land on which they live. We genuinely commit to discussing Aboriginal people's history, culture, and spiritual connection to the land. We pay our respects to Aboriginal elders, both past and present, honoring their deep spiritual connection with this land and the rich knowledge and culture they share. We aspire to become culturally intelligent by fostering relationships with Aboriginal people and organisations.

Children have diverse ways of learning and knowing, and each child's strengths, ideas, culture, competencies, curiosities, and interests are the foundation of our curriculum. Our image of the child is that of a child with rights who participates as a citizen through their relationships with humans, nature, and materials. We seek to understand each child's identity and heritage and support their wellbeing by being culturally responsive. Each child has had unique and diverse experiences, and we welcome their questions, thoughts, theories, and ideas to create wonder, motivate learning and stimulate the imagination.

We honour the National Quality Framework (NQF) and recognise that play is a critical and essential context for young children's learning. We recognise our professional responsibility to ensure that all children have opportunities to engage in learning experiences designed with intentionality. We uphold each child's right to agency and balance this with experiences that develop self-regulation skills.

Children are born connected with family, community and culture and the relationships they develop in the early years are formative and crucial to their sense of belonging. We embrace diversity, value inclusion, and seek equity. Warm and responsive relationships between children and educators foster wellbeing, confidence, resilience, and courage. We strive to broaden each child's connection with the world by supporting them to build relationships with our staff, children, and the wider community.

We are committed to developing collaborative and respectful relationships with families and acknowledge families' diverse perspectives, values, beliefs, and aspirations for their children. Educators honour every family and consider their perspectives,

culture, language, traditions, and lifestyles. We seek ways to develop learning communities to build shared understandings of each other's expectations and to build on the strength of each other's knowledge. We communicate honestly with families to develop trust and provide information to support them in their parenting role.

We advocate for children to be visible, vocal, and active in the local community and actively seek to foster community connections. We offer learning experiences for children to venture into the community and warmly invite families and community members to share their rich experiences with the children in the centre. We listen to our community as a catalyst for learning and seek to honour the social and cultural events that are important to them.

Careful thought and consideration are given to the importance of the physical, social, and temporal environments. Contexts are structured to create many possibilities to empower children and staff to work collaboratively. Learning environments are essential to our stakeholders, and we commit to ensuring that these learning contexts for children, families and staff are contemporary and relevant.

We seek to promote three dimensions of sustainability; environmental, social, and economic. We utilise sustainable practices in our quest for children to develop a deep connection and appreciation for the natural environment. At the same time, we introduce them to some of the delicate and complex challenges communities face, locally and globally. We seek continuous improvement in all aspects of sustainability.

Our staff are integral and essential to the quality of the programs we offer, and we acknowledge their professionalism. We recognise the importance of their work with above award wages and ongoing professional learning to support critical reflection and continuous improvement. We encourage collaborative leadership that goes beyond formal leadership positions to include leadership by children and educators; we seek to cultivate mutually responsive relationships.

Kensington Community Children's Cooperative embraces excellence and contemporary practices and fosters collaboration between and with children, families, and the community. We are committed to providing contexts that develop a culture of lifelong learning so every child can maximise their full potential.



We embrace diversity, value inclusion, and seek equity. Warm and responsive relationships between children and educators foster wellbeing, confidence, resilience, and courage.

GOVERNANCE - KCCC BOARD INFORMATION

KATE ZIMET - CHAIR

Sara (Waratah 2023) and Benjamin (Alumnus)

KCCC has been a central part of Kate's life in Kensington since her son, Benjamin, first attended KCCC in 2018. Her daughter, Sara, has attended KCCC since 2020 and in 2022 she was in Acacia Room. Kate values the consistent, nurturing and tireless work of all the educators who support her children and, by extension, her whole family. Kate joined the Board in August 2020 and has thoroughly enjoyed working closely with other parent directors to advance KCCC's strategic interests and ensure it is serving the needs of families, staff and the broader Kensington community.



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.

Kate is a lawyer in her professional life and currently works for a government agency. She has significant experience in civil disputes, including employment and industrial law, common law and commercial law. She was a barrister for 9 years practising across personal injury, employment and industrial and commercial law before moving recently into a litigation role for government.

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 and walk her new dog Peggy!

SIAN SUMMERS – SECRETARY (RETIRED MAY 2022)

Sylvie (Apple Tree 2022) 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. Sian retired from the Board in May 2022.

EVETTE CASTLE - TREASURER

Spencer (Apple Tree 2023)

Evette has been a member of KCCC since 2019 when her son Spencer, now 5, 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; 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 as Treasurer.



Evette is a qualified CPA with experience supporting senior leaders and executives across a diverse range of industries and types of

**BELINDA FURSE – SECRETARY
(SINCE MAY 2022)**

**George (Waratah/Tea Tree 2023)
and Scarlett (Alumna)**



Belinda and her family joined the KCCC community in 2016. Belinda grew up in country Victoria and loves living in Kensington – particularly because of the beautiful families and community spirit.

Belinda is so grateful for the wonderful care, support and commitment from the KCCC staff and management team.

Being on the Board will provide Belinda with an opportunity to contribute to the KCCC community and support the children, families and educators in a meaningful way.

Belinda is a senior lawyer turned well-being coach, fitness professional and speaker. Belinda spent most of her legal career working at a leading Australian law firm. As a personal injury litigation lawyer, she gained a deep understanding of workplace injuries and the importance of creating a mentally healthy workplace. Throughout her work in Australia and the UK, she witnessed many lawyers and leaders struggle with stress, anxiety and burnout. In January 2020, Belinda founded a corporate health and wellbeing company. Belinda inspires lawyers every day to make lifestyle changes that will help them have increased energy, happiness and motivation!

During downtime Belinda loves gym workouts, meditating, spending quality time with family and friends and exploring Melbourne cafes.

ADAM CLARKE – DIRECTOR

Callum (Apple Tree 2023)



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 (Apple Tree 2023) and
Theodore (Alumnus)**



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). In 2022 Teddy was in the Apple Tree room which he loved. Nick joined the KCCC Board in August 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.

SARAH MCCARTNEY – DIRECTOR
**Frederick (Wattle 2023), 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 the 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 (Waratah 2023) 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 2023) 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.

SAM BUCKLY – DIRECTOR

Matilda (Apple Tree 2023) and Isabelle (Wattle 2023)

Sam has been a Kensington local since 2019 and a KCCC board member since 2022.



Sam's oldest daughter Matilda commenced with KCCC in the Banksia room in early 2021 and his youngest Isabelle started in 2022 in Yarragum.

Since day one, Sam's daughters have loved every minute of being part of the KCCC community and his desire to join the board was driven by a sense of wanting to give back to the community and help drive the centre forward to best suit the needs of the Kensington community.

Professionally, Sam works for the Australian Football League (AFL) in the Commercial and Stadium areas and he has worked across various roles in Entertainment, Sport, Venues and Technology over the last 15 years.

On the weekend, you'll find Sam and the kids likely running and scooting around the local parks, enjoying everything that our lovely community has to offer.

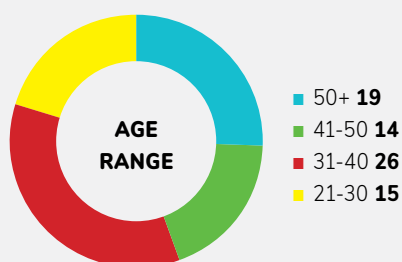
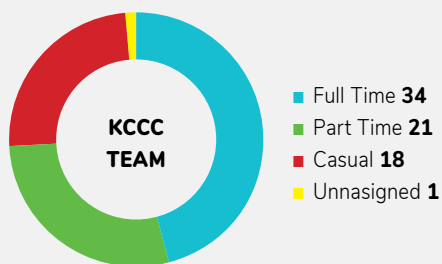
WORKFORCE

Proud reputation as an employer of choice in the sector.

The KCCC team includes just over 70 full-time, part-time, and casual staff members.

We are fortunate to have a team that is culturally diverse, with a range of qualifications and experience who all share a commitment to the education and wellbeing of children and families. The diversity of our team reflects the community that we work with in Kensington.

Our team includes educators who have worked at KCCC for less than one year, to 26 years, with the average tenure across the service being 6 years. The graphs below profile some aspects of our team:



This year we started a traineeship program as a pathway for people who have an interest and dedication to complete Certificate 3 or Diploma of Education while working. Thi Thy Tien (Tien) Dang is our first trainee completing Certificate 3 studies. We are off to a great start with this new initiative, which is something we will expand in 2023 to ensure we are adapting and expanding our workforce for our future needs.

We would like to acknowledge the team members who have been completing further studies during the year. The following educators completed a Diploma of Education and Care:

- Tasmin Christi
- Guilherme (Gui) Gulabek Tidon
- Jillian Pozzi

The following educators completed Teaching studies:

- Naya Kim (Grad Dip)
- Rekha (Ray) Nair (Bachelor)

Professional Development

All staff training day. CARE training.

Thanks to the generosity of our families, our whole team were able to get together for a Professional Development Day. The Library at the Dock was a lovely setting for the event, giving us a great view of the harbour. Seeing everyone together, was a reminder of what a large team we are and occasions such as this are so valuable in supporting our teamwork.

The mood was upbeat and many of the team expressed their gratitude to have such a day. On top of this, a lot of the team have shared how the CARE training felt quite unique, as it focused on educator/teacher wellbeing.

Seral and Julie took us through the day. The training provided us with a range of mindful techniques to support us to be the best we can be in our work. It reminded us that our wellbeing is important, for ourselves and for the children and families. We looked at our roles as professionals, and together we considered, that, even though we are human and can get frustrated at times, we need to learn to use

techniques to support us to remain professional and the adult in the room. We know that our communication and behaviour impacts all of those around us, which means that children can be impacted positively or negatively by our actions and behaviours.

This work aligns with our QIP, which has a strong focus on relationships. We have reflected on self-awareness, that we are in a privileged position to be with children in these important years of their lives. We noted and committed to making a positive difference to children's lives. Our QIP addresses the need for this to be consistent across the whole team. The QIP also identifies how team interactions can impact wellbeing and we are committed to ensuring that team members feel comfortable and safe when coming to work. Again, this is an area of our QIP that we are working on. At our team meetings we have continued to reflect on how the CARE training has influenced our work and we have more sessions of CARE training to come. We are aiming to embed these ideas and practices in our work, which is evidence-based on preventing teacher burnout.

January Professional Development days

On 6th and 7th of January the team returned to the service, to prepare for the year. The Town Hall was used for training as we updated our first aid, anaphylaxis, asthma, and CRP training. We had training at the service for Child Safe Standards, which has recently been updated to increase our awareness of child protection, better understand our roles in reporting and increasing the practices and processes around being a Child Safe organisation. The Child Safe Standards have been added to our QIP and in each aspect of our work, our goal is to ensure children's safety is a priority. It is important that every member of our team is aware of the role they play in this.

We have plans for increasing our training and reviewing our practices, policies and procedures in line with these changes and the Family Violence and Information Sharing that was also new in 2021.

Our plans for team professional development were slightly changed, as we tried to keep Covid safe,



We explored how to reconnect with families, as we had missed having families in the rooms and with the ongoing reception pick-ups and drop offs.

shifting our initial plans to work in two groups to working with each new team. The teams were given time to get to know one another, work on the room set ups whilst our pedagogy leader engaged with each group for a professional development session. This work was based around our QIP.

The teams were encouraged to discuss and explore the relevance of our work on Benefit Mindset, Steve Munby's insights on leadership; Bruce Pascoe's and other Aboriginal perspectives explored over the past few years and our work on self-regulation. All these ideas were linked with our service Philosophy and guiding documents.

We also looked ahead to plans to relate to our SRF, such as the sharing library and how we plan to make use of the many different languages spoken at the service.

Another key aspect of our PD day was to consider how our teams were going to reconnect with the community, following two years of no excursions and lockdowns. Teams were invited to think of new projects for 2022 and consider who, what and why they might wish to connect with over the coming months.

We explored how to reconnect with families, as we had missed having families in the rooms and with the ongoing reception pick-ups and drop offs.

Jess and Carolyn were joined by Dave (compost creator) and they kindly gave each team a refresher on our waste management system. Each room has three buckets for compost, worm farms and bokashi bins.

School Readiness Funding

Using Music

Once again our School Readiness Funding has provided us with some wonderful professional development training. Using Music helped us to dig deep into what we already know, taking the songs that we regularly use and adapting the words to support different contexts and purposes, for example we all used a familiar tune to construct a song to support children with transitions, play or relationships. The training focused on the different uses of music, particularly around language development and social and emotional wellbeing. The team had a great deal of fun in the training, as we were often up dancing and singing. It was a wonderful reminder of how lucky we are to work with young children and have fun with them.

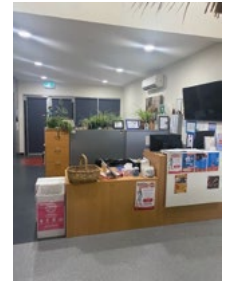
<https://www.usingmusic.com.au/>. Kitty, Ivan, Colleen, Hayley, Melanie, Cheryl, Phoebe and Indi attended this training.

Puppets

The members of our team who have undergone the Puppets for Social and Emotional Learning training, got together to create some resources for the rest of the team. They have put together some clips to share their learning.

They also discussed the names, characteristics and uses of each puppet, thinking carefully at avoiding stereotyping them. They have come up with interesting characters which will support the team to work with the puppets to fit the needs of their programs. We are currently making books to go with the puppets.

Our remaining SRF money from 2021 was used on the purchasing of books for a sharing library. We



carefully selected a range of books: different languages; anti-racism; neurodiversity; celebrating difference; exploring different celebrations and cultures; children's rights and agency; and there is even a book about the pandemic. We will be establishing a sharing library by making a list of all the books we have at the service and creating tools to support reading with children.

We thank and acknowledge 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 2022 in a professional and committed way. Congratulations on achieving another Exceeding rating for the service through your focus on quality education and care.



We thank and acknowledge 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 2022.



QUALITY

A high-quality service known for its innovative and adaptive pedagogy.

Achieving an Exceeding National Quality Standards rating by the Australian Children's Education and Care Authority (ACECQA) was a highlight of the year at KCCC. This is the second time in a row we have been awarded this high rating. The first time was in 2016. The rating of Exceeding means going above and beyond what is expected to meet the quality standards. This assessment reflects the journey KCCC has taken to enhance services for children and families within our community and our strong practices throughout the centre.

Summary comments from the Assessment and Rating Report

"The service has created an inclusive and welcoming environment, with strong reciprocal relationships on display, formed through respectful interactions with children, families and community members. The team of educators were passionate, self-motivated, and dedicated to providing high quality education and care to the children attending the service. The educators' creativity was evident during the visit, with a variety of thoughtful activities for the children to engage with."

"Across the service the commitment to eco learning and nature pedagogy was evident with all the rooms providing free flowing access to the outdoor spaces and engaging in learning about the natural environment. The voices of all children were prioritised, highly valued, and respected throughout the service and respect for children's agency and their decision-making processes were apparent."

"The service demonstrated strong links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and histories, with an active Reconciliation Action Plan."

"The service identified getting into the community as one of their strengths, with regular outings to nearby JJ Holland Park and 'The Venny' as well as excursions and community walks."

"On the patio children were extracting colours from warrigal greens, beetroot, cabbage and celery to make their own paint, with the educator proudly articulating what led to the experience and the learning and development opportunities that it presented."

"The service leadership team spoke of 'slower pedagogy' and this was echoed by the educator team who described the importance of taking time for children to learn and discover in their own time, with progressive meal and rest times allow for children to go at their own pace."

"The service demonstrated strong links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and histories, with an active Reconciliation Action Plan, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander books, resources and artwork throughout the service and Acknowledgement of Country and Aboriginal Storytime led daily."

“ The service demonstrated strong links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and histories.

"Educators consistently considered and promoted the agency of each child, supporting each child to make a range of choices and decisions to influence events and their world. Project work was a popular aspect of the program, with subjects being selected in consultation with children to extend on their participation, learning and development."

"Educators fostered meaningful engagement with families, actively seeking their views and voices and using this information to extend children's learning with families invited to join on excursions and regular outings, such as bird watching in JJ Holland Park."

"The service demonstrated a deep commitment to understanding, building, and maintaining trusting relationships with children. Educators were observed on the same level as children playing, sharing laughter, engaging in conversation, and were observed respond to children's requests for assistance and comfort with genuine respect and care."

For families, this means greater individual care for children, and better support for children's learning and development.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE ACECQA STANDARDS

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety

Quality Area 3: Physical environment

Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Quality Area 7: Leadership and service management

THE EXCEEDING THEMES ARE:

**1.
PRACTICE IS
EMBEDDED
ACROSS THE
ORGANISATION.**

Practice is embedded in service operations when it occurs consistently, frequently and intentionally as part of an ongoing process that is understood and implemented by all educators across all aspects of the program.

**2.
PRACTICE IS
INFORMED BY
CRITICAL
REFLECTION.**

Critical reflection involves a deep level of regular and ongoing analysis, questioning and thinking that goes beyond evaluation and review. Critical reflection informs practice when the continuous reflection of all educators, individually and together, influences decision-making and drives continuous quality improvement.

**3.
PRACTICE IS
SHAPED BY
MEANINGFUL
ENGAGEMENT
WITH FAMILIES
AND / OR THE
COMMUNITY.**

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community when educators actively seek input, guidance and feedback from children, families and the community. Meaningful engagement with families and/or the community helps to shift thinking, shape ongoing practice and foster a culture of inclusiveness and sense of belonging for all.

COMMUNITY

Priority - further strengthen our collaborative relationships with families and community.

Football Fridays

In 2022, KCCC connected with the community through our Friday Football program. The football group are members of many of the community networks, whose meetings Suzie engages with. Like our connection with The Venny and the local schools, it is a worthwhile community connection for KCCC.

Day one was interesting, as heavy rain began to fall just as we started and it certainly was heavy rain, with the children all needing a change of clothes and as did many of our team. The team bravely gave the children the choice of continuing or ending the session, and the children chose to carry on.

The sessions are about encouraging children to try different physical skills, which help the brain, as the children focus on controlling the ball through different games. It has been interesting to see which groups and individuals engage and who needs a bit more prompting from the team. The team's enthusiasm and engagement also playing a key role.



Walking for Mental Health – 24 to 28 October 2022

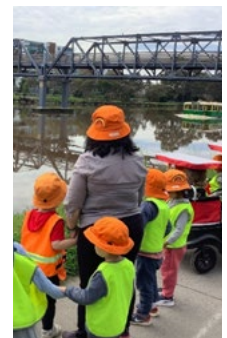
This was an Achievement Program initiative, which several families signed up and raised money for.

ECOLN- As part of our School Readiness Funding, a group of the Kinder team, Jess, Colleen, Karen, Hayley, Phoebe, Kitty, Indi and Karen had two days of training with the Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network (ECOLN). The first day of training helped us to look at our own context and unpack what is important in our nature pedagogy. It is really about us using minimum resources and tuning into how children engage with nature, recognizing that some children need more support than others. The second day was a visit to a beach kinder down in Ballnaring. It was a wonderful day out to observe how the children interacted with the space and how the team supported them to explore the spaces. There was a wonderful mixture of rituals that had emerged over time, such as the 'screaming hill' named by children and a space where children run downhill screaming as loudly or quietly as they choose. There was openness to the unexpected, such as the arrival of the arborists cutting down some tree branches. The children were knowledgeable about the environment.

The training has been a great source of discussion and thought, we have been able to share with the teams. We had a final session in October where we assessed some of our excursion spaces and considered the practicalities of bush/river kinder for KCCC.



End of year food collection for Kensington Neighbourhood House Pantry





Excursions



End of year party with families

North Melbourne Footy Visit

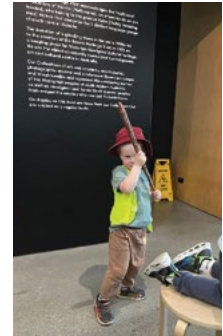
We were lucky to have Nicole, one of our wonderful parents and Alex from North Melbourne Footy club visit the service. Ruby, the North Melbourne mascot delighted just about everyone, particularly the Yarragum children who, after a little initial uncertainty, really enjoyed Ruby's visit. All the rooms took turns to go out to the park and practice their hand balling, kicking, and passing. It was a great opportunity to practice their ball skills and some of the skills that come with working in a small group, such as turn taking. We also made some 'Thank you' bunting and some date balls.

School Visits

The kinder teams liaised with the local schools and enjoyed trips to Holy Rosary, along with a visit to Kensington Primary. The teachers have also been contacting the other schools, as there are a few children going to other schools, to offer visits to see the children at the service.

Morning Teas for Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

Our generous families helped us to raise a fabulous \$910 for VACCA. The morning teas were a



The teams made frequent visits to the local neighbourhood, the Maribyrnong river and further beyond to Scienceworks and Federation Square.

wonderful opportunity to bring families back into the service and it was well attended. The team were pleased to spend time with families. The children helped bake a range of foods for the breakfasts and there was a big focus on using things we had grown in the garden and native bush foods.

Each room took turns to read a First Nations story to everyone in the garden, on alternate days, so everyone gets to hear one. These have been very successful so far.

Excursion Program

The teams made frequent visits to the local neighbourhood, the Maribyrnong river and further beyond to Scienceworks and Federation Square.

The teams have been looking at their nature pedagogy through excursions and using these to see how children interact with the natural environment with limited resources, perhaps just a book or some baskets for collecting things.

The children in Banksia enjoyed an excursion to Marvel Stadium. They had a tour of the stadium and some behind the scenes spaces. Mimi led the

excursion, as it was her dad, Sam Buckley, who gave the tour. It is always interesting to visit family workplaces and see what they are doing whilst the children are here.

There was an incursion with the Port Phillip Eco Centre on 12 July 2022. They set up in the Bali hut outside Boronia and children were free to come and go as they pleased. They went through the session 3 times, which gave everyone a chance to engage.

The Waratah Room has been exploring different parks and the food forests. The kinder rooms have had incursions from Professor Eric and Thingle Thoodle, who taught the children about road safety.

Bunnings

Our environmental group reached out to Bunnings community engagement team for some help with our garden. Suzie from Bunnings worked closely with Colleen and Carolyn to decide on which area of the garden to focus on and to continue to plant natives to attract native bugs and creatures to the garden. We shared a list of natives that linked to Dean Stewart's Lost Lands Found. Suzie and Bharti from Bunnings came and worked with the children to plant all the new grasses and natives just out the back of the reception area. With the plants firmly embedded in the soil, tan bark was added. Some of the children had fun with the hose and buckets of water to give them a good drink.

The wonderful helpers at our working bee added a finishing touch by digging in some logs to edge off the planted areas.

Working Bee

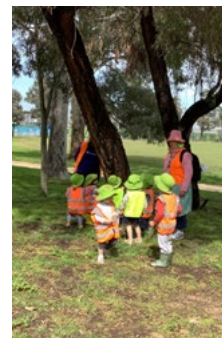
The families once again gave us great help at our working bee, which was a hive of activity. The generosity of the families is a really wonderful aspect of being at KCCC. We managed to clean up windows, walls, and other spaces. Some of the wooden blocks were given a sanding and the sheds were tidied up to make new outdoor classroom spaces for the children. The large shed now has a tinkering/tool space and an art area. The smaller shed will be used to support our nature pedagogy.

School Students

We were lucky to have 6 more students from Simmonds College attend the service and we were impressed by their engagement with the children. The students have shown a great deal of respect in their interactions around KCCC and have made a positive impact on the children, who are very excited when they arrive.



Working Bee



Environmental Group

The group consulted with children to find out what is important to them in relation to the garden. This work is important in building the skills across the whole team, to deeply listen to children; support their agency and rights; keep children safe. Part of supporting children's safety, is for them to be able to voice their thoughts, opinions and to think critically. By having relationships with children which are based on learning together and shifting the power imbalance, helps children to be able to feel empowered in their choice and decision making. This is a key factor in child safety. By listening to children, through asking questions, play and observations, we hope to build on our garden work to create a space that is designed and valued by the children.

GROWTH

Advancing and sustaining our provision and capacity to meet the community needs into the future.

In October 2022, we received exciting news that we were successful in obtaining a Building Blocks Grant from the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA), which means we have secured \$600,000 to upgrade some of the facilities at the centre. This great news was shared with us by Sheena Watt MP, who visited KCCC to announce this funding.

The grant, along with funds contributed by the centre, will be used to upgrade our rooms and

facilities, expand our capacity to provide education and care, and to meet greater local need for places. We will expand and reconfigure some of the rooms to align them to current child/educator ratios, create more flexible educational spaces for kindergarten programs by installing moveable walls and increase the outdoor space. This will enable KCCC to use our existing space more effectively, which will result in an increase in our capacity by an additional 22 places in 2023 and beyond.

PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE

The Early Years Framework for Australia defines Pedagogy as 'Early childhood educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning.'

Our role in early childhood education and care is to ensure children achieve positive outcomes and pedagogy is an identified key lever for improving children's outcomes. High quality pedagogy and practice delivered by our team of educators provides children with strong foundations for lifelong learning connected to community and culture.

Kensington Community Children's Cooperative embraces excellence and contemporary practices and fosters collaboration between and with children, families, and the community. We are committed to providing an environment that supports a culture of lifelong learning so every child can maximise their full potential. Our pedagogy and practice are based on our KCCC Philosophy and the approved Early Years Framework for Victoria. It underpins our approach to children's learning, development and wellbeing. In 2022, the highlights of our Pedagogy and Practice included:

Aboriginal people's history, culture, and spiritual connection to the land

At KCCC we are committed to continue to respectfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander perspectives, knowledge and cultures into our everyday programs and practice. As part of this journey, we continued to focus on our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) progress and this was reflected in our pedagogy and practice.

- We planted more native plants in the garden and discussed these with the children, talking about traditional uses of each plant and even sharing some lemon myrtle tea, since then the teams have been doing similar experiences with the children, including cooking experiences using native plants.
- The teams explored National Reconciliation Week themes, by looking at what it means to be Brave and make Change and were able to link these ideas to areas of their programs. The educators and children explored what it means to be a hero, particularly in relation to caring for the world and to weave these ideas into work on being NAIDOC heroes.

A focus on sustainability, nature and connection to country

Our focus is on setting a meaningful intention for nature pedagogy. Moving through what children already know, think and are curious about and providing opportunities to foster their imaginations. We consulted with the children to understand how the children use the garden, what are the special places that matter to them and how they use it. Our

aim is to rewild the garden, to create exciting spaces for children, but we need to know from them, what that means.

- We looked at how we can use the garden space to engage children with water, mud, and sand, as they recognize their role in supporting children's innate affinity with the natural world.
- We mapped the garden with the children and then used an application on the iPads to help identify all the plants in the garden. The children had loved doing this project and using the application, which has many interesting tips on caring for the plants and also stories and poems about different plants.
- The children and educators worked in the garden, tending the compost and worm farms.
- The team embed sustainable practices in their program both in teaching about it and in living it, for example making great use of the recycle station and other open-ended materials, which support children to use their imaginations and to be successful in their work, exploring their imaginations and creativity through the use of clay, boxes, and fabrics.
- The children considering the impact of littering and what that means to the creatures we share the planet with. They thought of ideas for reducing, reusing and recycling, including embedding everyday practices with the waste management systems.

Nurturing lifelong learning, children's emotional wellbeing, identity and culture

Children have diverse ways of learning and knowing, and each child's strengths, ideas, culture, competencies, curiosities, and interests are the foundation of our curriculum. Each child has had unique and diverse experiences, and we welcome their questions, thoughts, theories, and ideas to create wonder, motivate learning and stimulate the imagination.

- We introduced a puppet program to support children's social and emotional development. The children discussed the names, characteristics and uses of each puppet, they invented interesting characters and we made books to create a story about each puppet.

- We used role play as an important and rich learning space for children, as it provides children with a safe place to play out their experiences and knowledge of the world. Children work collaboratively to build on the narratives and for the play to work they share their imaginations, creating different characters.
- We worked on emotional regulation using the zones of regulation, where children can describe their feelings in relation to different coloured zones. This has been supported with the use of puppets to help children express a range of emotions, recognize that all emotions are valid, and consider ways to help with big emotions.
- We explored the use of music and how children engage and respond to different sounds, styles and their music making with non-musical instruments. This also aligns with their focus on using recycled/reusable materials for their art and role play.
- Our National Simultaneous Storybook, Family Tree inspired us to look at where each child sits in their family; different types of families and how we were all babies once. This work built on ideas of identity and recognises children's strengths, uniqueness and celebrating difference.
- We explored different cultural celebrations to reflect what is important to children and their families in our community through inclusive practice and education.

Collaboration between children, families, and the community

We focused on further strengthening our collaborative relationships with families and community.

- We were excited to embark on our excursion program again and reconnecting the children with their neighborhood and nature. We visited the local schools, the neighbourhood house, JJ Holland Park, the river and other local parks and gardens. The kindergarten program also enjoyed a regular program at The Venny, the Museum and Scienceworks.
- We were able to have many more social events with families again, including morning teas, evening events, fundraisers and working bees.

Many examples of our pedagogy and practice are included in the Room Highlights.



ROOM HIGHLIGHTS

● Yarragum

Our project this year explored children's connection to nature and creative expression. We looked at how the environment inspires the children and their interactions and the benefits of art and connecting to land. Through our time spent in the garden we learned that those children seem to enjoy fully immersing themselves in art and nature experiences using all of their senses to learn about the world around them. When we spent time gardening together, we learned about caring for country and the interconnectedness of it all. Interacting with the garden has become a natural part of their day.

We embedded nature into our artwork to explore how different materials inspire how we create. By providing different forms of creating, children have the opportunity to feel in tune and express themselves in a genuine way. We were able to look at the way the creative process was more important for the children than the end product, how art is found in everything they do, especially when engaging with nature.

● Gumnut

June 2022

We loved using lots of natural materials within our program. We used clay and natural materials to extend our learning about birds. We had an emu egg along with the story "Edward the Emu" to provide some creative inspiration for the children. This experience provided lots of teaching opportunities as we investigated different species of birds, the nests that they built, the colour and sizes of their eggs and where they lived in the world. I love the nest that was made by one of the children, lots of fine motor skills also developing as the children learn to manipulate the clay.

May 2022

Our garden provided lots of teaching opportunities for the children throughout the year. From nurturing and tending the garden to delighting in some of the

herbs and vegetables that grew in our garden beds. It was lovely that we could then use our garden produce to engage the children in cooking experiences. Here the children are getting ready to make some stir fried noodles using the choko's picked and collected from our vine. Cooking experiences enable us to teach about healthy food choices, math and social and language skills.

April 2022

Our program focused heavily around birds last year. This was an interest of a particular child that took flight within the room. We used the story book "Birds build nests" to scaffold this learning, educators would frequently read this story to the children in both large and small group times. Water colour paints were provided for the children to express their creativity during this learning.

October 2022

Educators continually like to reinforce respect and care for our natural environment. The children of the gumnut room participated in a variety of different gardening experiences throughout the year. Here the children get ready to plant some new outdoor plants in our garden bed. You can often observe the gumnut children digging, watering and tending to the garden. The plant identifying app has intrigued this group of children as they learn to identify some of the shrubs and plants in our garden.

September 2022

The doctor's dramatic play set up was an extremely popular area for the children of the gumnut room last year. It was a wonderful way to help the children make sense of their world, particularly their Covid world. The children were able to explore different identities through role play and express themselves freely. It was wonderful to observe groups of children collaborating with one another and sharing ideas and scripts. We were extremely fortunate that one of the gumnut parents brought in some real medical equipment for the children to explore.





● Banksia

It is wonderful to have an opportunity to go to excursions. Children showed interest to go out and following all the safety instructions as all of us went for exploring. Dogs were running around, birds were singing and chirping on the tree, trains were whistling peoples were walking or exercising which make all of us curious about what we can observe around us. Children are waves hands for people and trains and collected lots of natural object from excursion.

To offer children the opportunity to connect with nature Banksia room used repurposed used plastic milk bottles to grow herb. It helps children to learn how to take care of their seeds each day so the plants will be healthy, educator of Banksia room created daily checklist for children to run through and children developed a good understanding of the role they can play in taking care of plant.

The Banksia room children had lots of fun playing using clay over last year. They using some different shapes tools and very innovative. When were they making something, they felt very proud of them-self and showed to peers.

Children sometimes observed a prism of rainbow colors reflected onto the floor and decided to paint a rainbow and that experiences inspired them to do different type of art work such as mixing color then paint and magnetic process art.

● Wattle

Interest in Dinosaurs and Volcanoes and our Sensory science project to create mud volcano model and experiment of Lava eruption by mixing various ingredients and see the chemical reaction happening.

We used throughout the year recycled materials for our art and craft projects and used recycled loose parts and children were able to learn aspects of sustainability in our environment and families contributed through sharing some of these resources.

Gardening was another big project Wattle children explored together with educators in 2022, we had lots of excursions to explore native plants in our local environment and visits to food forest to

connect our gardening project with local community and get some inspirations. Families supported by donating various seeds to grow.

● Waratah

What a great group discussion! It was so delightful to see everyone participating in such a rich discussion, and to hear so many different thoughts and theories about the stick insect and the snail.

Jonty, Isobel, Marcelle, Elia, Saraia, Ben and Eli using the magnetic tiles, creatively designed different structures and constructed alongside some very imaginative storytelling, 'house and big house' 'swimming pool'

Our whole group of children in the Waratah room were accompanied by educators Mai, Gloria, Muthu, Elva, and Nick on a trip down to the Maribyrrnong river. The children had a great time exploring the local nature and landscape by listening to the



Wattle children explored together with educators in 2022, we had lots of excursions to explore native plants in our local environment and visits to the food forest to connect our gardening project with the local community.



humming birds, smelling the fresh air, and identifying the different types of wildlife animals! The children also had a chance to taste the local and native salt bushes that grew along the footpath. We were also lucky enough to observe and watch a lovely tram boat passing along the river!

Our little friends explored a new community space named as 'The back gate' and seeing all the animal mosaics which was near the women peace garden. We stopped at few places on the way and on the way back to admire the nature especially flowers with colours and noticed that the way we walked to home.

We introduced a group of children how to make the salt dough using our very basic ingredients, such as flour, salt and water. This experience leads the children to acquire lot of basic skills in cooking, literacy and numeracy. It also a great way to learn how to work cooperatively with peers and turn taking.

Later a group of children requested again to make a volcano in the sandpit and have seen some fun eruptions of lava. They showed great cooperation in helping to build the volcano, using the shovels to dig up the sand, and using their hands to tap and mould

the sand. They had a great discussion about what will happen if we stay too close to the volcano.

A small group of children ventured to an excursion to our local park as we strolled around the park, we noticed the smiles and happiness as children engaged in small group settings.

"We hear an aeroplane", "We can see the skate park", "There's the metro train, going to the city", "That one is a Magpie", "There are some birds in there", "There is a dog".

● Boronia

Word Bird

The educators in the room wanted to explore new words and also the concept of "word" and a "words" features. So we introduced WORD BIRD, he's a big chicken puppet that explores new words with the children.

It's time to look at the word and for the educator to say it. The educator might make WORD BIRD look very proud about laying the egg- or possibly exhausted. The word is shown and stuck on the



We introduced a group of children to making salt dough using very basic ingredients, such as flour, salt and water. This experience helped the children to acquire lots of basic skills in cooking, literacy and numeracy. It was also a great way to learn how to work cooperatively with peers and turn taking.







With the recent flooding that occurred in our local community it has sparked a lot of conversation and discussion amongst the children. They took part in an experiment hypothesising and testing out their own designs to create a flood wall.



board and said clearly to the children. The educator now leads a discussion about the length of the word, the start sound and letter at the start. The children are encouraged to say the word slowly, and the educator makes sure All children can say the word correctly as saying the word is an important part of the learning process. For words with more than one syllable, the word is clapped out as the word is said. WORD BIRD'S beak would be opened and closed will each syllable too.

After exploration and discussion of the word, it is re-written and stuck to the WORD BIRD wall. The current word is used lots throughout each day and the children are praised specifically for using WORD BIRD'S new word.

Some Brains

Some brains encouraged us all to look for our strengths and to understand that brains are like fingerprints- uniquely, wonderfully ours.

We introduced a factual and beautiful book that provides children with insight into themselves and others.... All children need to feel supported, included and understood.

Some brains take us on a journey of all different types of ways people and children can think and act, from what they like to do to what they like to eat. It teaches children that we are all different and importantly that it is okay to be different in the way we use our brains.

Here the children were asked to draw their brains and what they were thinking?

Some brains teaches children and adults that my neuro is not typical, what a cool part of me!

Floods

With the recent flooding that occurred in our local community it has sparked a lot of conversation and discussion amongst the children. They took part in an experiment hypothesising and testing out their own designs to create a flood wall.

We imagined the crumpled paper in the middle as our houses and worked on designing a flood wall to see if it could help prevent our houses from getting flooded. It was interesting to see what materials the children selected and how differently they built the walls. They cleverly learnt from other's designs, thinking about what worked and what didn't.

We brought the experiment to the sandpit, instead of working independently we split into two groups and the groups collaborated to build a flood wall. No materials were provided so they had to search around the yard to see what we could use. The children found mud, sand and tan bark to make their flood walls, each group came up with quite different designs.

● Acacia

In Acacia kinder, we had such an incredibly rich excursion program that enriched and built on our program. It really provided opportunities for new interests to bloom and new ones to spark. We were lucky enough to visit the museum, the Maribyrnong river and surrounding wetlands, the Koorie heritage trust and the NGV. Each location had its own specific enrichment for each and every child. We also got the opportunity to pair with Boronia room and go to the neighbourhood house to play games with members of the community. Both the community and the children got so much out of the experience the adult and elderly community members really appeared to enjoy teaching the children about numbers while playing bingo together



● Apple Tree

Creating a sense of belonging for all children and their families in the Apple tree kinder learning environment is a top priority for our program since we know it is essential for children's learning and development. Our goal was to establish a program that was safe, secure, inclusive, and fluid, in which we followed the lead of the children and their interests through play-based activities and experiences.

We have given children opportunity to thrive, develop confidence, curiosity, and critical thinking skills, and we have empowered them to ask questions. The program included music and dance, literacy and numeracy, and nature learning.

Children were interested about experimentation, creating, and taking on outdoor difficulties. Their favourite excursion program included The Venny, Science Works, Museum, and Newell's Paddock and JJ Holland Park. Going out in nature and learning about the wider world has shown to have beneficial social and emotional advantages for children.



We were lucky enough to visit the museum, the Maribyrnong river and surrounding wetlands, the Koorie heritage trust and the NGV. Each location had its own specific enrichment for each and every child.



● Tea Tree

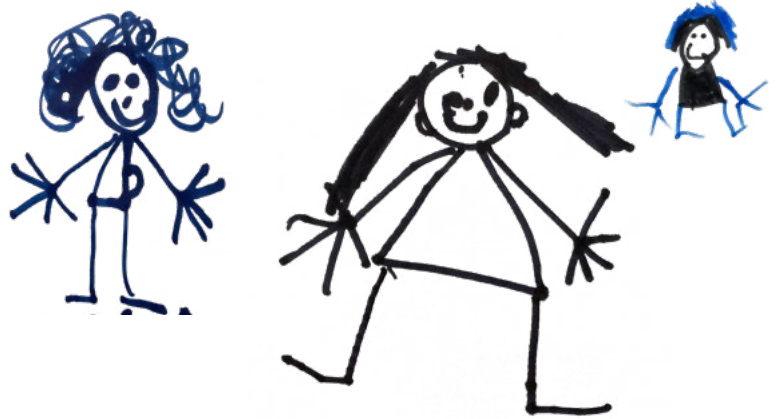
Our Native Garden

We planted our native myrnongs / yam daisies, which grew into thick tubers. We talked about how we can harvest and eat the tubers when they have grown. We noticed how it was flowering and all thought it was a good sign. We saw our native grasses that we are calling hairys. We gave them some fresh vermicast from the worm farm to nurture them back to good health. We also planted a lot of loose seeds that we had – thyme, poppies, sage and some sunflowers in their own very large pot.

Nature

We learned about the cycle of rain with Zahra through looking at steam. We used fabric and string to test the theories to who how the wind works.

We learned there are multiple ways of showing ideas, discussion, drawing, creating and movement ensures all learning styles are all included. Engaging with cause and effect, observational skills and design through machine development helps build scientific skills.



We saw our native grasses that we are calling hairys. We gave them some fresh vermicast from the worm farm to nurture them back to good health.



2022 FINANCIAL COMMENTARY

The financial result for Kensington Community Children's Co-operative (KCCC) in 2022 was a \$242k deficit (2021 \$2k surplus). Operating revenue for the 12-month period January-December 2022 increased 3.3% to \$4.5m due to an increase in attendance levels for Long Day Care. Labour costs increased 8.8% due to the annual award increase of 4% and increased casual staffing due to post pandemic higher leave.

2022 Revenue

In 2022 revenue increased as the service was open all year without any centre closures or the impact of lockdowns, therefore there was no waiving of fees as we had done in 2021 to support our families that couldn't attend during lockdown. It also meant we didn't receive any COVID-19 pandemic funding.

In 2022 Long Day Care Parent Fees has increased, this has been partially offset by a reduction in Government funding. Also, kinder revenue was up \$55k due the roll out of funded 3-year-old kindergarten commencing for 5 hours per week.

2022 Operating Expenditure

Expenditure increased in 2022 across labour and operations due to an increase in attendance, inflation and the cost of living. Labour continues to be the largest operating cost, increasing 8.8% attributable to the annual award increase (4%) and a further 4.5% increase predominantly for casual staffing to backfill significantly due to higher leave requirements post pandemic.

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.

Chart 1 presents expenditure as a percentage of revenue from both a total and labour only perspective. The percentage increase experienced in 2022 has been driven by increased labour levels due to staff utilising leave post COVID-19 pandemic.

Occupancy

Chart 2 shows that during 2022, average occupancy was just below 97% for the year in the long day care rooms. Since 2015, this average level of occupancy has remained over 96%.

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 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 267 children, from 214 different families in the Kensington community attended KCCC at some time during 2022.

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 charts 3 and 4.

CHART 1 PERCENTAGE OF EXPENSES TO REVENUE 2018 - 2022 COMPARISON

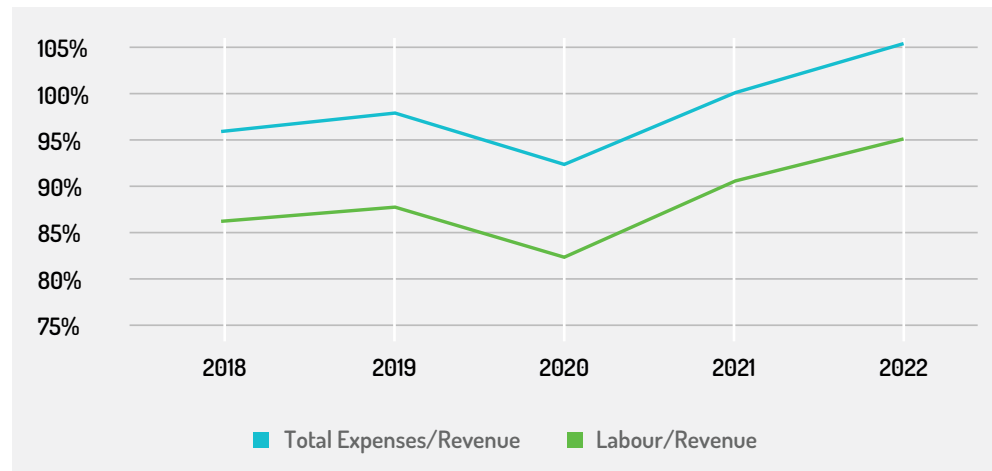


CHART 2 AVERAGE ANNUAL OCCUPANCY (LDC) 2018 - 2022 COMPARISON

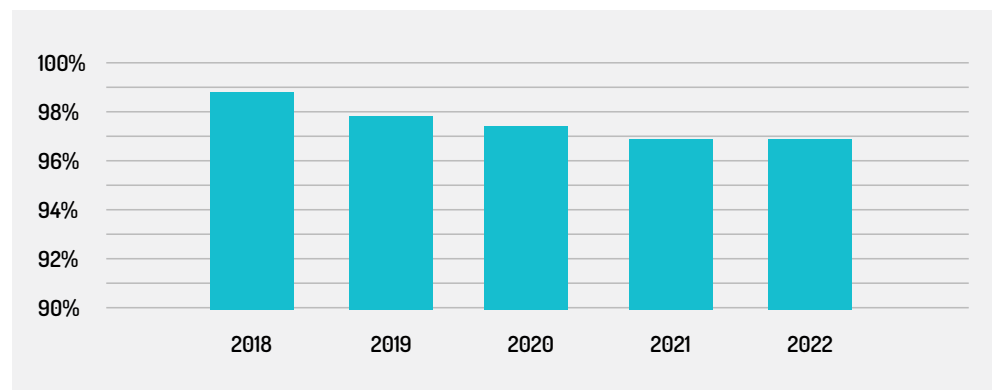


CHART 3 2022 LONG DAY CARE ROOM CAPACITY

Yarragum	0-1 Years	12
Gumnut	1-3 years	12
Wattle	1-3 years	12
Banksia	1-3 years	8
Waratah	1-3 years	16
Boronia	3-Year-old Kinder	16
Acacia	3-Year-old Kinder	16

CHART 4 2022 KINDERGARTEN CAPACITY

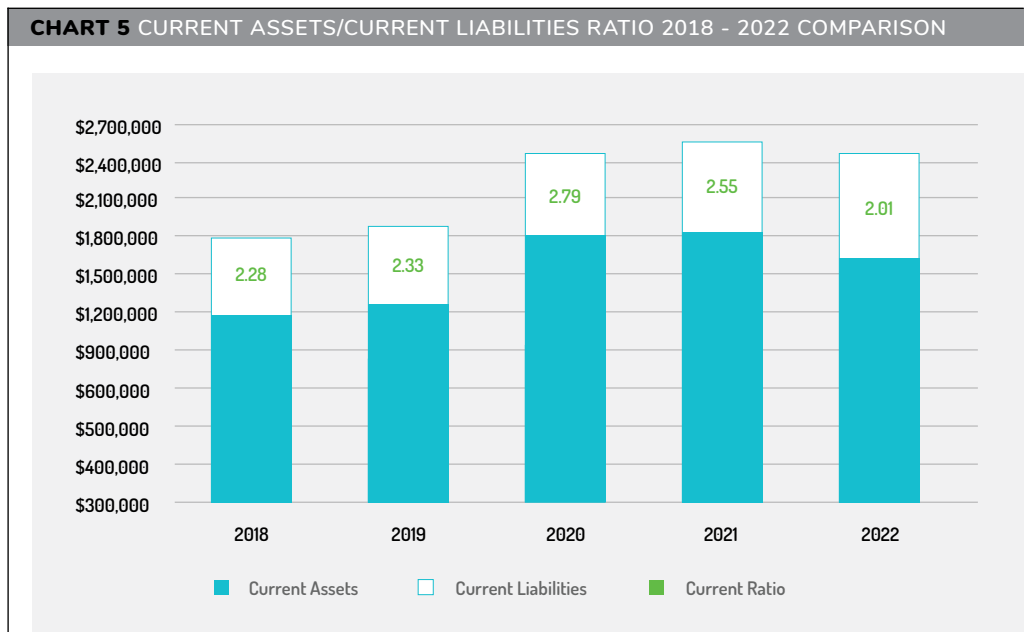
Tea Tree	4-5 year	18
Apple Tree (Sessional and Integrated Kindergarten)	4-5 years	30

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 a 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.

Chart 5 shows KCCC's current ratio has fallen in the last 12 months, however, continues to be above the metrics target.



The future at KCCC

In November 2022 KCCC was successful in obtaining a government grant for expansion of the centre to provide additional kinder places to support the Free Kinder program. The expansion works will take place over the course of 2023 and will not only provide additional places but also flexibility in the structure of rooms as well as a facelift across the centre.

KCCC will continue to focus on investment in resources and equipment to support our programs and enhance the education and care provided to our children.



