



Balharry Memorial Children's Centre Annual Report 2015



1. CONTEXT

Preschool Name:	Balharry Memorial Kindergarten/Balharry Memorial Children's Centre	Preschool Number:	6502
Preschool Director:	Michele Oliver Terms 1&2 Acting Director Ruth Vander Hoek Terms 3&4	Partnership:	Tatiara-Wratonbully

Balharry Memorial Kindergarten and Rural Care is a stand-alone preschool/child care service in the small rural community of Lucindale, South Australia. We provide a range of services including preschool, child care and playgroup. We offer sessional preschool in the kindergarten and long day care in the Rural Care service.

Staffing 2015 –

There were a couple of changes to staffing in 2015. In the kindergarten Michele Oliver took leave for Terms 3 and 4 and Ruth Vander Hoek was appointed Acting Director. In July, Kerena Simpson won a Permanent SSO position at the school and Roanna Vincent was appointed ECW for terms 3 and 4. The kindergarten was funded for 0.4 Early Childhood Worker and 0.5 Director. This was increased to 0.6 ECW with Universal Access funds (0.1) and funds from the Global Budget Additional Admin/Leadership grant (0.1) and 0.8 Director for Universal access (0.1) and additional leadership time for rural care (0.2). The kindergarten operates a five day fortnight, with full days Tuesday and Thursday each week and Wednesday each fortnight. Full days assist with access as many children live out of town and access the school bus to attend.

In the Rural Care, Richanda Fiegert reduced her hours of work to 22 hours per week and Hayley Miller worked 5.5 hours (one day) per week. Casey Weaver continued to work 27.5 hours per week. An additional 3 hours per week was used to fund planning/programming time for the educators.

2. REPORT FROM GOVERNING COUNCIL

Written by Eliza Handbury, Governing Council Chairperson

Sitting down to write this report has highlighted to me what a significant and at times challenging year the centre has had. But in true Lucindale spirit we have risen to each of these challenges and provided an exceptional early child care experience for all children attending the centre.

At last year's AGM a 10 person committee was elected and these committee persons have all contributed to a well functioning and proactive governing council who have made the year a success.

At the 2014 family night we recognized and awarded our volunteer of the year Amanda Carter with a plaque to thank her for her contribution to the centre and playgroup over many years.

We then started the 2015 year with enrolments at the kindy following the downward trend of the last year or so, we have finished with 8 children attending the universal access minimum of 15 hours over a 5 day fortnight.

Director, Michele Oliver, worked with the council to ensure a suitable and safe improvement to the car parking, footpath and bus bay areas.

In May the staff, Michele, Kerena, Rich and Casey worked very hard for the Assessment and Rating. Their hard work was recognized by achieving "exceeding" or "meeting" rating on 6/7 standards. The

whole team should be congratulated and recognized for this achievement. The overall rating was however, through no fault of our centre staff, unfortunately brought down to “working towards” due to staffing arrangements being applied that have been waived for “Rural Care” Centres. The appropriate waivers have been received from the department and Rural Care continues to meet all its staffing obligations as it always has.

In July, the committee approved the change of name of our centre from Balharry Memorial Kindergarten and Rural Care to Balharry Memorial Children’s Centre.

This change of name brings the two aspects of the centre, the kindergarten and rural care, into the one name and recognizes the close ties within the centre.

Towards the end of Term 3 we learned that after 20 years of commitment and passion to the Kindergarten Michele Oliver was taking a well deserved 6 months long service leave. This coincided with our Early Childhood Worker Kerena Simpson accepting a permanent position at the school.

Much to the relief of all involved with the centre we were lucky to welcome two equally passionate Early childhood educators, Ruth and Roanna, to the centre and as testament to both Michele and Ruth, the transition has been very successful. Together with our Preschool support workers, Kerri and Hayley, Ruth and Roanna have implemented some wonderful programs for the children;

The Vegie Garden and Mud Kitchen have been an excellent result of a parents working bee

Kerri’s Cooking Class

Ruth’s guitar and singing sessions

Are just a few of the experiences the children are currently enjoying.

The Rural Care continues to provide a service to the families in our community that is without rival. The educational and social experience you provide for the children of all ages is exceptional. On behalf of the committee and the parents I heartfully thank Casey and Rich for the kindness, care and professionalism you have both put into your roles over many years.

We also wish Rich all the best of luck as she embarks on new work opportunities in Naracoorte. Thank you for your years of commitment at Rural Care and we will be very sorry to see you finish up at Christmas.

As we come to the end of the 2015 school year we look forward to what 2016 will bring for this wonderful early learning centre we as a community are so fortunate to have.

We sincerely thank Ruth and Roanna for coming and embracing this centre and the children as though it were your own.

And we recognize the contribution Michele Oliver has made over the years and wish her well as she extends her long service leave for another 12 months.

3. HIGHLIGHTS 2015

- Completion of the National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating process conducted by the *Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board of SA*, with 4 out of 7 areas rated as Exceeding the National Quality Standard.
- New cubby house for rural care
- Mud kitchen and redeveloped vegetable garden in kindergarten.

- Changing the name of the centre to Balharry Memorial Children's Centre to be more inclusive of all services at the site.
- The design and acceptance of a new logo to match the new name.

4. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The report on the Quality Improvement Plan was written by Michele Oliver with contributions from Ruth Vander Hoek

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

Goals:

- To give all children a great start, Children will be powerful learners in numeracy and literacy.
- Educators have current knowledge and understanding of literacy and numeracy indicators and how children learn through playful pedagogies
- Educators have developed their skills to notice recognise and respond to children's learning, document the learning and use these skills to create an effective planning cycle
- Educators understand curriculum frameworks and different ways of documenting learning

Children's Numeracy and Literacy learning has been identified by DECD as a priority

- As a consequence of this, educators went to a number of training and development sessions to become familiar with the new indicators for numeracy and literacy and were involved in partnership meetings around the results plus programme of development.
- Literacy and numeracy was been integrated into all aspects of the learning program
- Outcomes for children have been recorded in their Statements of learning
- Experimented with using observation sheets to include literacy and numeracy indicators

Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups was identified by educators as an area to continue to develop their knowledge.

- Educators have continued to strive for a planning cycle that is clear. Reflections of children's learning and development form the basis of the programme.

NQS Assessment and rating report –exceeding the national quality standard. This reflects the level of good practice at this site.

Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety

Goals:

- Update Bushfire Plan and other safety policies in line with DECD guidelines.

Outcomes:

The Bushfire Plan was updated in term 1 and then at the end of term 2 the department advised sites that all sites needed to submit evacuation and invacuation plans on a same template. This was done in term 3 with some changes to the existing plans. Since then children have been practicing these. New, more effective whistle sirens have been purchased.

NQS Assessment and rating report – meeting the national quality standard

Quality Area 3: Physical environment

Goals:

- Children have independence, creativity and persistence learning dispositions and engage more fully in learning experiences.
- Flexible learning environments both indoor and out to engage children in quality learning across the curriculum
- Children understand the principals of sustainability and have an interest in gardening and healthy living.
- The centre has consistent practices and can share these practices with others.
- Children have the opportunity to develop their social skills and develop competence through dramatic play opportunities

Outcomes:

We have created flexible learning environments both indoor and out to engage children in quality learning across the curriculum. The children's engagement in these spaces has been monitored and changes with assistance from the children have frequently been made to stimulate interest and enthusiasm in their learning. The new rural care cubby house has been installed and mural painting almost completed. At a recent working bee parents constructed a mud kitchen, which has proven to be popular and enhances their role playing to increase their sense of being and belonging.

A Sustainable Practices Policy has been formulated and procedures are in place and are promoted across the site and community on a daily basis as part of site routines for staff and children. Children and the Balharry community have been involved in Nude food days, reduction of waste, worm farm for scraps and recycling.

The children now have a productive garden and are beginning to harvest what they have grown and to use it in cooking.

A new cubby house was purchased and built in the rural care outdoor learning area. This involved parents and community members building and then painting the cubby house. One of the parents runs an art class at the local school and the painting of the cubby was a project over several terms. The children enjoyed the new space and the new home corner furniture which complemented it. The space supports children developing their social competence.

NQS Assessment and Rating report – Exceeding the national quality standard

Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements

Goals:

- Maintaining and updating educator qualifications and skills
- In 2016 all educators in rural care will have to have a Diploma in children's services

Outcomes:

Our service has been actively supporting educators to do this during 2015. All educators are updated with opportunities for training and development and are actively encouraged to attend. All educators have updated their CPR qualifications this year. A Commonwealth training grant for rural care, was used to support educators to attend training.

Two of the educators working in the rural care service have their Diploma in Children's Services and one was actively working towards their Diploma. In the kindergarten, the Director has an approved 4 year Early Childhood qualification and the ECW educators both had their Diploma of Children's Services.

NQS Assessment and rating report – working towards the national quality standard. It was identified, by the assessor, that we were not meeting the standard for Staff qualifications (due to one educator not having completed a Diploma of Child studies although they were actively working towards their qualification) and also the staff child ratio when Out of School Hours Care children were present. It is to be noted that the centre was working within the DECD Rural Care guidelines at the time. The Rural Care state program applied for a waiver as a consequence of the rating. The waiver is in place for 12 months until November 2016.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Goals:

- Following the Marte Meo training in 2014, educators wanted to continue to develop their skills in building relationships with children. In 2015 the children in rural care were younger and the educators wanted to build their skills in working with babies.

Outcomes:

Educators extended their knowledge by attending a variety of training sessions.

- Casey and Richanda attended a Circle of Security information session at Naracoorte and shared what they had learnt with other educators.
- Richanda and Roanna completed a 7 module working with children with disabilities on line course
- Richanda, Ruth and Roanna attended the early years forum – theme was mindfulness for children and educators

NQS Assessment and Rating Report – Exceeding the national quality standard

Quality Area 6 :Collaborative Partnership with families and communities.

Goals:

- Educators engage with families to improve the outdoor area and connect with the community.
- Children have an interesting and exciting learning environment
- Improved ways of engaging families in the programme and children's learning
- To improve relationships with the local school and other educators
- To build on and extend current relationships with local community groups

Outcomes:

- The centre was involved in a lot of community events through 2014 and continued to promote the centre by being involved in Community events throughout 2015 eg Lucindale Show; Lucindale Field days; visit to local Emergency Services, Post office etc. Lucindale Area School open day; Book fair held at the Centre where community members were invited to join us for a special book day.

- At the AGM the new name 'Balharry Memorial Children's Centre' was endorsed to be more inclusive of all services provided.
- During the past 6 months there has been trialling of new ways to incorporate both services (kindergarten and rural care) in daily programmes. At present educators are reflecting on documenting ways to do this in a more structured and planned way in 2016.
- Transition to school was identified as an area that needs further discussion with families, school and preschool educators in 2016. With the implementation of Same Start for preschool and school, transition programs need to reflect the needs of the children and take into account the expectations of families and educators.

NQS Assessment and Rating Report – Exceeding the national quality standard

Quality Area 7: Leadership and service management

Goals:

- Educators induction folders and information are updated to reflect the DECD requirements to support educators when starting at this site.
- Commitment to continuous improvement

Outcomes:

A new induction checklist has been developed by DECD. Induction processes to reflect these changes have been put into place. It was very obvious to the 2 new educators who started in the middle of the year that this induction process was very comprehensive and that the processes used for managing the service extremely thorough. It has been a pleasure to be involved in such a well organised site for a short term stay.

In terms 1 & 2 we underwent the Assessment and Rating process for the first time under the National Quality Framework. The educators worked very hard to ensure that the service was ready for this process. Our site received 'Exceeding' in 4 out of 7 quality areas, which we were very proud of.

The Director attended a review process for the Tatiara- Wratonbully partnership in May. This was also a first for the Partnership. The review focused on how the partnership was supporting all children and students to achieve Literacy and Numeracy outcomes and what schools and preschools were doing to help children and students who needed additional support.

Michele Oliver (Director) was nominated in the SA excellence in public education awards for Leadership.

NQS Assessment and Rating Report – Meeting the national quality standard

How funding was used to support the familiarization of the Indicators of Preschool Literacy and Numeracy

The following goals were identified in the Quality Improvement Plan for 2015:

- Educators demonstrate their knowledge and skills of Powerful Learning through playful pedagogy

Goals of the project for Educators and Leaders to:

- explore play as a pedagogy and process for learning
- Use play as an opportunity to make evidence based decisions about children’s learning and development
- understand the role of dispositions in learning
- build continuity of learning – with a focus on literacy and numeracy (indicators to be used)
- improve knowledge of literacy and numeracy development including vocabulary/concept knowledge and more complex sentence structure

The educators attended a variety of training and development sessions during the year aimed at developing their knowledge of the Literacy and Numeracy indicators and their implementation in the preschool. This knowledge was used to develop programs during the year that supported and encouraged children’s literacy and numeracy learning and at the end of the year, Literacy and Numeracy outcomes were included in the children’s Statements of Learning.

The training had a focus on ‘Powerful learning through playful pedagogy’ and focused on areas of play that support children to develop dispositions to become powerful learners. Loose parts play, book making, story tables and block play were areas that were developed and expanded on during the year and provided lots of opportunities for children to develop persistence, creativity, critical thinking, curiosity and communication skills.

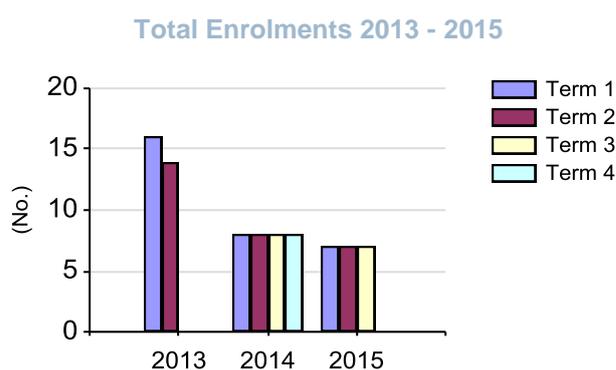
5. INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

During the year, three children were supported through the DECD Support Services preschool support funding programme. Kerri McWaters and Hayley Miller implemented programs supplied by the DECD speech pathologist and other specialist programs provided by families and private support personnel.

6. STUDENT DATA

6.1 Enrolments

Figure 1: Enrolments by Term



Enrolment by Term				
Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2013	16	14		
2014	8	8	8	8
2015	7	7	7	8

Based on person counts in the two week reference period each term.

Excludes pre-entry.

Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems

Our enrolments remained low for the year with only one additional enrolment in Term 4 taking the number of eligible enrolments to 8. This is a current trend that will continue into 2016.

6.2 Attendance

Figure 2: Attendance by Term

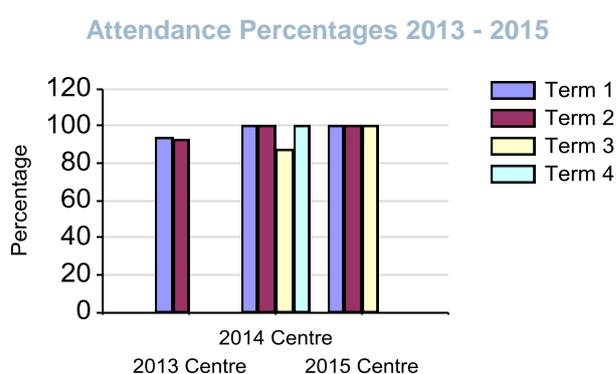


Table 2: Attendance Percentages 2013 - 2015

Attendance Percentage				
Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2013 Centre	93.8	92.9		
2014 Centre	100.0	100.0	87.5	100.0
2015 Centre	100.0	100.0	100.0	
2013 State	88.7	88.0		
2014 State	90.0	88.9	86.1	87.1
2015 State	90.5	88.5	86.3	

Based on attendances recorded in the two week reference period each term, and calculated to an average unadjusted daily attendance (deemed attendance). Attendance percentages are based on the calculated deemed attendance (integer), divided by the number of enrolments. Excludes pre-entry Note: Figures have been revised for previous years, using integer deemed attendance not decimal.

Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems

Attendances were well above state average. The data for term 4 that we analysed, showed that this continued for the whole year. Our difficulty is that if children are away they cannot 'make up sessions' at another time, also if they are sick for one day they miss two sessions as we run a full day program not ½ day programs.

6.3 Destination – Feeder Schools

Table 3: Feeder School Percentage Data 2013 - 2015

Feeder Schools				
Site number - Name	Type	2013	2014	2015
0749 - Lucindale Area School	Govt.	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

Based on the percent of children currently enrolled who will attend school in the following year, where the expected school is known.

Due to rounding totals may not add up to 100%.

Source: Term 3 Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems

All children enrol at the local school.

7. CLIENT OPINION

A formal analysis of the data provided was not completed. Two surveys were returned out of 7. Both of those surveys were very positive with all responses in the Agree or Strongly Agree area. Comments included:

“Programming is thorough, appropriate to the cohort and contains a variety of learning opportunities to engage a range of learners”

“Students are supported to do their best and reach their own milestones. They enjoy a variety of learning experiences and are assisted when required to develop their skills.”

“Reporting occurs every term and is a great way of sharing success, progress and achievements. Would also appreciate info on what we can do at home to support learning, social development etc.”

“Regular Governing council meetings allow all to be heard and have input. Active listening ensures parents have a ‘voice’ in the preschool,” and “We are very pleased with the programming, planning and delivery of learning opportunities for our child. She has developed confidence, has a strong sense of place and pride in her achievements due to thoughtful planning and professional execution by teaching staff.”

8. Rural Care

Staffing: Casey Weaver and Richanda Fiegert continued in their positions during 2015, as permanent staff members and were joined by Hayley Miller who worked one day a week (contract).

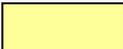
Utilisation rates: Rural Care attendances need to meet the required utilisation rates of 3.9 or above for viability of the service. During 2015 we exceeded this expectation. Well done to the rural care

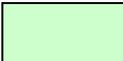
staff for actively promoting the service to the community! It was good to again see the consistent use by school age children during the year. Utilisation table provided by DECD.

WEEKLY AVERAGE (calculated over 5 days)

2015	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3	WK 4	WK5	Average for month	
JAN		5.9	6.5	4.3		5.5	
FEB	4.3	4.6	4.3	4.7		4.5	
MAR	4.9	4.4	4.3	4.2		4.5	Public Holiday Mon Wk 2
APR	4.2	4.3	4.6	5.2	5.0	4.7	Public Holiday Fri Wk 1, Mon Wk 2
MAY	4.6	5.0	4.7	4.6		4.7	
JUN	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.2	4.4	Public Holiday Mon Wk 2
JUL	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.5		4.5	
AUG	4.6	4.3	4.6	4.4		4.5	
SEP	4.9	4.1	4.5	4.3	4.9	4.5	
OCT	5.6	4.3	4.3	4.1		4.6	Public Holiday Mon Wk 1
NOV	4.4	4.0	3.6	4.8		4.2	
DEC	4.5	4.1	3.9	3.7		4.0	Public Holiday Fri Wk 4, Mon & Fri Wk5

 Centre closure

 School Holidays

 Centre closure during school holidays

Rural care report written by Casey Weaver:

Rural care commenced on 12th January and started off busy with great utilisation during the holidays. Enrolments and utilisation were good throughout the year with approximately 16 families using the service.

Our focus in 2015 was to improve our outdoor learning environment, making it more inviting for children to learn, play and engage in social interactions. Our main aim was to improve the cubby house. We spent time gathering information, sample pictures ect before choosing the right one. It arrived as a flat pack and with the help of some parents, educators and community members, the old cubby was dismantled and the new one erected and painted with an undercoat. One of the parents is an artist and she was asked to help paint the cubby house. She agreed to do this and made it part of a project for her art class, for school children. This project ran over a couple of terms and the end result looks great!

Rural care also developed sensory and vegetable garden where the children were involved in the building, planting and planning cycle. This also involved the caring and upkeep of them. The vegetable garden produce was used in cooking activities and extra vegetables were sent home with families. These projects will continue to grow in 2016.

9. ACCOUNTABILITY

The site uses a document process provided by DECD to record all screenings and to make sure that all relevant personnel have a current screening. This record is kept on the Administration computer. All Governing Council members, staff and contractors paid for by the site are asked to complete the Relevant History Screening process.

A copy of the DECD Relevant History Screening Summary for Site Leaders document is filed with hard copies of current screening clearances and a summary page of all persons that require clearances currently working or volunteering at the site. This file is securely stored in a locked filing cabinet.

10. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

	Funding Source	Amount
1	Grants: State	\$257972
2	Grants: Commonwealth	\$6642
3	Parent Contributions	\$2470
4	Other fundraising and donations	\$5444

End of Year Profit and Loss Statement as per attached document

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the families (and especially the Governing Council members) who have helped out this year, at the centre, at working bees or fundraising. We would not be able to achieve everything we do without you and we have appreciated your support.

Thank you to all our wonderful educators—Kerena, Casey, Richanda, Kerri and Hayley as well as Ruth and Roanna in terms 3&4, who work with dedication and enthusiasm and are all a pleasure to work with!

We said farewell to Kerena Simpson but welcomed Roanna Vincent as ECW at the kindergarten. Ruth was Acting Director for Term 3&4 and we thank her for her dedication to the centre during her time with us. At the end of the year and we also said farewell to Hayley Miller and Richanda Fiegert from rural care. We wish them all the best for the future.

Thank you to our regular relief staff, we really appreciate their efforts as it can be difficult sometimes to find relief staff for annual leave days, sick days, training and meetings.

Thank you to all the wonderful children for their enthusiasm for learning who, after all, are the reason we are here!

With many changes occurring over 2015 and into 2016, I would like to wish all at Balharrie a great year!

Regards,

Michele Oliver (Director)