



# 2022 Annual Report



**COMBINED  
PRESCHOOLS**  
of Southern Grampians

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# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

## OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Combined Preschools of Southern Grampians is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We have a zero tolerance of child abuse.

We understand our legal and moral obligations to manage concerns and report allegations, safety and wellbeing concerns to authorities.

We are committed to the cultural safety of all children including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Gunditjmara, Djab Wurrong and Jardwardjali peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land across south west Victoria where we live work and play.

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



## FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CPSG acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



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# ABOUT US

Combined Preschools of Southern Grampians Inc. (CPSG) is an incorporated association and an Early Years Manager (EYM) responsible for the enrolments and service delivery at eight (8) kindergartens across the Shire of Southern Grampians. CPSG is funded by the Department of Education and Training (DET).

## CPSG IS THE APPROVED PROVIDER OF THE SERVICE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- ◆ Ensuring compliance with the National Law
- ◆ Hiring and managing appropriately qualified staff and supporting their professional development
- ◆ Ensuring service viability and acquitting funding to the Department
- ◆ Ensuring delivery of a high-quality educational program, aligned with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework; and
- ◆ Other operational requirements

CPSG supports our educators and provides them with the opportunity to develop strong community links and a quality program that recognises the individual needs of the children and families who access our service.

CPSG is a not-for-profit incorporated association and the legal entity responsible for conducting all business of all the kindergartens it manages, including the employment of the Executive Officer, Finance Officer and all the kindergarten staff, as well as ensuring compliance with all laws, and regulations.

## 2022 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

President	Alysia Sanderson
Secretary	Sonia Gillingham
Treasurer	Chelsea Miller
Board member	Phoebe Stewart
Board member	Lauren Davis
Board member	Wendy Ryan
Board member	Leah Brebner
Executive Officer	Tracey Gould
Minute Secretary	Natalie Templeton
Financial Advisor	Jodie Brewster, Brewster Walsh Waters Partners

## OUR MISSION

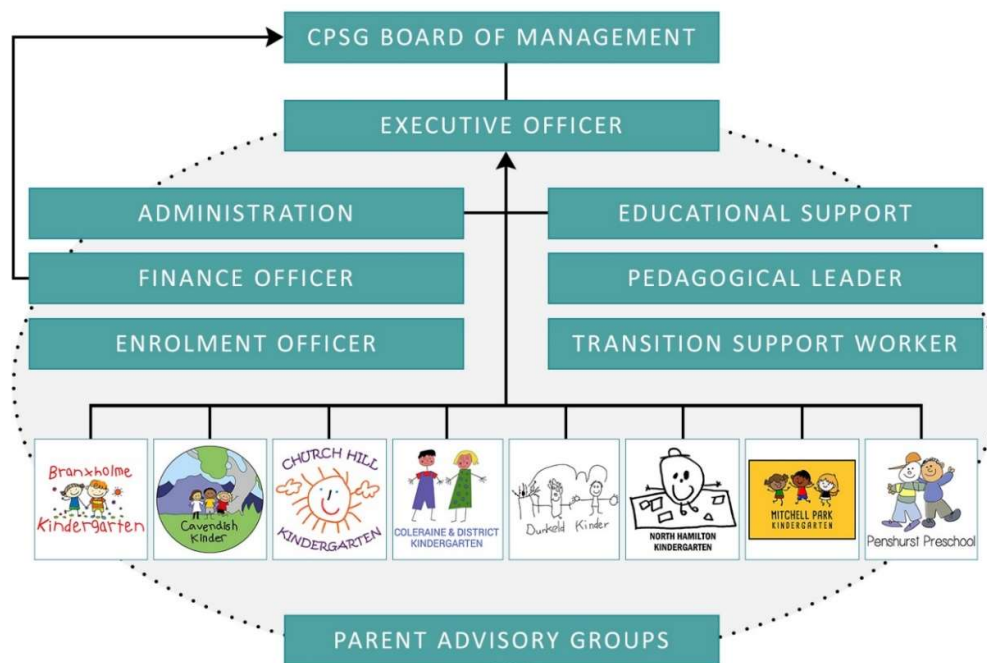
To deliver best practice early education that is inclusive, accessible and responsive to the needs of our children, families and our unique communities.

### HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS:

- ◆ By providing educational programs and practice that are child-centred, stimulating and maximise opportunities for enhancing and extending each child's learning and development.
- ◆ By safeguarding and promoting the rights, health, safety and wellbeing of all children.
- ◆ By creating dynamic and diverse learning environments.
- ◆ By supporting our early childhood professionals to deliver high quality early education and empowering them to develop relationships with children that are responsive, respectful and promote the children's sense of security and belonging.
- ◆ By establishing and maintaining collaborative and responsive partnerships with families, communities and stakeholders.
- ◆ By taking an active role in caring for our environment and contributing to a sustainable future.

By providing effective leadership and governance with a focus on continuous improvement and best practice.

## OUR ORGANISATION





# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



To my fellow members of the CPSG Board of Management - all busy mums, I thank you for selflessly volunteering your time. Special thanks to our Treasurer, Chelsea and Secretary, Sonia.

Attracting replacement Board members is always challenging. I encourage the incoming board to continue to work on this. I can speak from experience that it is rewarding. I can recall wondering what ever I had gotten myself into when I first put up my hand back in 2011 when my eldest started 3-year-old kinder.

Doing time as both Secretary and President throughout the intervening years, as all 5 of my children completed their kindergarten years, has been enriching. I have learnt a lot and watched the organisation grow and mature to be the streamlined operation it is today. Then have taken the skills and confidence I have learnt on to School Council at my kids' primary and secondary schools and other community organisations.

I thank Tracey and Natalie for all their hard work in this regard, being ably assisted by Carolyn and Karen.

As always, we extend our thanks to our amazing educators. As mums we understand a little of how exhausting your role must be.

The multiple improvements occurring at various kindergarten sites is ongoing, the most major being an almost total revamp of the Mitchell Park site. I am very excited to watch this unfold.

The hardest decision to be involved in during this year was putting the Branxholme Kindergarten into recess for 2023. Our family have made memories there for two generations since an older cousin of mine was amongst those in the first year of operation. I am realistic in acknowledging that this decision was necessary, but I think I can speak for everyone in the hope that the fortunes of the Branxholme Kindergarten can somehow be turned around for the sake of the wider community.

I envision more hard decisions needing to be made into the future also as parents choose long day care with more days of operation over kindergarten. Promotion of the school readiness benefits of kindergarten may be necessary as well as restructuring what we have traditionally offered.

I move on from these memorable kindergarten years with a somewhat heavy heart but also a sense of excitement as my youngest child transitions to school.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**ALYSIA SANDERSON**  
CPSG BOARD PRESIDENT



All children have  
the right to feel safe  
and be safe  
all of the time

Acknowledgement  
Gunditjmarra People  
Gunditjmarra People  
of the Mar-Nation  
Let the land speak  
Thank you for sharing  
The land, animals, and sky.

Vanilla

Kayden

Ahliia

Ahliia

Vanilla

Ahliia

Jesse

Tom



# TREASURER'S REPORT



2022 saw me newly appointed as Board Treasurer. The Treasurer role includes reviewing the financial statements provided by the Finance Officer for the Board, approving the weekly financial transactions and as an active member of the Finance Subcommittee. The Finance Subcommittee is made up of two Board Members – Phoebe Stewart and myself, Executive Officer – Tracey Gould, Financial Advisor - Jodie Brewster and Finance Officer - Carolyn Desmond, with Wendy Ryan joining late in 2022. Every two months, the Subcommittee receives a range of reports that cover the income and expenses of the organisation. Part of our role is to monitor the Actuals v's Budget, provide feedback on prepared budgets and review the recommendations from Auditors. Recommendations are then made at the next monthly Board meeting if necessary.

With the resignation of Beccy Wishart in 2021 (who came to the Board with an Accounting background), the decision was made to seek an external financial expert to provide financial oversight and support to the Board. Jodie Brewster from Brewster Walsh Waters Partners has been retained to ensure that financial management and reporting systems are in place. Jodie came to us with not only financial expertise, she has fulfilled committee roles at a Portland Kinder. This provided an added level of expertise and knowledge for which we are very grateful.

This year a change to the CPSG financial and budgeting years occurred after careful consideration. A change was made to the CPSG Constitution to alter the financial year to each period of 12 months, ending 31 December. This means that the budget and reporting periods have now changed to a calendar year, rather than the traditional financial year. This aligns better with the manner in which CPSG receives their funding and operates their business as it all relates to actual kinder enrolments. 2021/2022 was the last financial year audited, with a 6-month period (July to December 2022) to be audited in February 2023, before moving onto the Calendar year.

McLaren Hunt complete the independent financial audits and provide recommendations. These reports show a loss for the period of \$82,513. This is primarily due to DET recouping a considerable portion of the funding that had been paid in advance during COVID, in this financial year. Increases in wages and cleaning costs have also all contributed to this. CPSG is in a good financial position to weather these additional costs. To the date of this report, no other matters or circumstances have been raised which would have a materially adverse effect on the financial health of the kinder.

A late 2022 promise by the Victorian Government saw a return of “Free” Kinder for 3- and 4-year-old children resulted in a delay in the preparation of the 2023 Budget as we waited for the finer details to be released. This budget is due for presentation to the Board as I write this.

The redevelopment of the Mitchell Park Kindergarten via, predominately, a funded Government grant, has been an exciting project to follow. Due to the scope of this project, a separate account was set up to better visualise the incoming grant money against the outgoing expenses.

A major approved expense was the purchase via funding grants and CPSG surplus funds of the Rentokill Virus Killer Air purifiers. These have been installed in each kinder and will not only have a positive influence over

COVID management, they will also assist in reducing the causes of allergies, coughs and colds. There will be an ongoing cost to manage these.

The Board received financial training by Alex Richardson from Brewster Walsh accounting firm in February 2022. This training will be an annual event to ensure that incoming Board Members are able to read and understand financial statements and budgets to further safeguard the finances of the organisation.

Board participation and in particular, my role with the Finance Subcommittee, has been an immensely rewarding experience. It has provided me with a chance to stretch my financial knowledge and an interest outside of my normal day to day. Participation is not onerous, the monthly Board Zoom meetings are conducted expertly by our Board Chair. The bi-monthly in person Finance Subcommittee meetings are interesting and provide a deeper level of insight into the inner running's of a kindergarten cluster. I strongly encourage all families to consider applying to become a Board member and play your part in providing a progressive environment for your pre-school children to learn and grow.

## CHELSEA MILLER

CPSG BOARD TREASURER



KINDERGARTEN PROVIDES A LITERACY RICH ENVIRONMENT AND FOSTERS CHILDREN'S LOVE OF BOOKS WITH LENDING LIBRARYS AND A VERY WELL STOCKED BOOKSHELF



WORKING HARD TO PREPARE FOR PLANTING VEGETABLE SEEDS AND SEEDLINGS

PHOTOS: CAVENDISH KINDERGARTEN

# EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

We commenced the year again under a cloud of COVID, and while the flow of information about testing, isolating, etc., was not as frenetic as we have seen in previous years, it still impacted our services, families and children. We are sincerely grateful to our families for their continued efforts in working with us in keeping our children and staff safe and we acknowledge how difficult it has been for them not being able to enter the kindergarten during the last three years. On a positive side, the children have been wonderfully resilient and extremely independent in getting themselves settled into their day, which has been a delight to see.

Early this year the Board adopted a new Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 with the key pillars of success being:

- Access and participation
- Exceptional workforce
- Sustainable organisation and services
- Engaged families and communities

Our strategic objectives align with the Early Years Management performance monitoring and improvement activities that are required under the Service Agreement with the Department of Education and Training, but most importantly, to improve learning and development outcomes for children. We will look forward to sharing our achievements as we go along.

A key highlight of our year has been the substantial building works completed at most of our services, following our successful grant applications through the Victorian State Government's Early Childhood Refurbishment and Minor Works program grants program.

- Cavendish Kindergarten was awarded \$18,307 for the installation of two new garden sheds, with the children enjoying being to access their equipment themselves for the playground
- Church Hill Kindergarten received \$4,300 to refurbish the children's bathroom and install privacy screens on the doors
- Dunkeld Kindergarten received \$16,685 to upgrade and enclose the foyer and install bag lockers for the children
- North Hamilton Kindergarten received \$12,955 for replacing the old part of the roof
- Penshurst received \$36,445 for a foyer addition, and new painting and flooring throughout

Design has reached completion for our Mitchell Park refurbishment, for which we have been awarded \$680K, and a further \$200K being awarded under the Building Blocks Inclusion stream for a new playground and landscape. The project is currently out for tender, and while the significant increase in building costs is going to cause us some concern, we can't wait to finally see this project commence.

We also received ventilation grant funding from the Victorian State Government in Term 4 of 2021, with a minor top of in Term 1 of 2022. This funding was used to partially fund new shade sails at Cavendish, Church Hill and Dunkeld, and for building modifications (doors, new windows and flyscreens) at Coleraine, North Hamilton and Penshurst. The Board subsequently approved a further investment of around \$50,000 towards the purchase of air purification units which have been installed at each service. These units, while being 99.9% effective in killing the COVID-19 virus, will also improve air quality for allergy sufferers too.



## STAFFING HIGHLIGHTS

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The end of 2021 saw us farewelling Debbie Millard, from Dunkeld Kindergarten, after 24 years of service. We have also farewelled Maree Hadden, from Coleraine Kindergarten, after 21 years of service.

We have implemented an awards program in recognition of years of service. The following awards were presented at the end of 2021:

- Debbie Millard – 24 years
- Annie Linke – 21 years
- Maree Hadden – 21 years
- Christine Wildgoose – 20 years
- Amelia Ball – 18 years
- Renee Johnson – 13 years
- Kim Burgess – 11 years
- Nicole Collins – 10 years

There is a lot of work that goes on behind the services in delivering quality early childhood education and care. I thought I would highlight some of the significant highlights and challenges from this last year.

## WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

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The industry is continuing to be crippled by chronic workforce shortages – and that was before the announcement of the new 4YO kindergarten reform.

We have continued to be involved in the Wimmera South West Early Childhood Strategic Workforce Working Group which was set up to drive a collective response to workforce challenges across our region. The aims of this group were to:

- Create an aspiration to study early childhood
- Create opportunities to study early childhood – which we have done by taking on two School Based Apprentices at North Hamilton Kindergarten, who are working towards their Cert III in Early Childhood Care and Education
- To maximise use and retention of existing workforce



REBECCA LINKE  
YEAR 12, BAIMBRIDGE COLLEGE



ZOE STORRIE  
YEAR 10, GOOD SHEPHERD COLLEGE

It has been a wonderful way to collaborate and support services and EYMs across our vast region and there has been some interesting and creative solutions and partnerships embedded on the back of this work

ELAA remain in continuous consultation with the government at all levels to ensure supply of a highly skilled workforce for the long term

### Free Kinder

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In June this year, the Victorian State Government announced an ambitious \$9 billion commitment to expand kindergarten programs across the State. This is part of their ongoing reform to the early years in Victoria to ensure every child gets the best start in life.

From 2023 free kindergarten programs will be available for all Victorian three- and four-year-old children at participating services

### Pre-prep – 4YO kindergarten reform

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Over the next decade, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will transition to ‘Pre-Prep’ – increasing to a universal 30-hour a week program of play-based learning for every four-year-old child in Victoria. Pre-Prep will be delivered through both standalone kindergarten services and long day care centres

50 Victorian government-owned and affordable childcare centres will be established. These centres will be built in locations across Victoria that have unmet demand and will make it easier for families to access childcare.

These reforms build on the 3YO Kindergarten reforms, which continues as planned and will lift children’s outcomes, save families money, increase access and support women to return to the workforce.

### New Child Safe Standards

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New Child Safe Standards came into effect from 1 July 2022. These Standards are a set of mandatory requirements to protect children and young people from harm and abuse.

The new Child Safe Standards have been grouped into four areas:

- Children and families
- Leadership, governance and culture
- Staff, educators and volunteers
- Risk management and compliance

We have already been doing considerable work to update our systems, practices and policies to comply with the new standards and this work will continue throughout the next year.

### Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

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Information sharing and service collaboration are vital in identifying risks early and facilitating early and appropriately targeted support. The Child Information Sharing Scheme, known as CISS, builds upon and complements existing child and family wellbeing and safety responsibilities and practices.

The aim of the CISS is to facilitate services to work together to:

- identify children's and family's needs and risks
- promote earlier and more effective intervention and integrated service support; and
- improve outcomes for children and families.

The CISS also supports ECTs, educators, leaders and ECEC services to better perform their roles and responsibilities by increasing the instances in which they can share information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children

All our ECT staff will complete the CISS training before the end of the year, with the balance of our educators completing an information session early next term.

So what lies ahead?

We are still receiving a number of late enrolments, and with limited places available and some of our programs already full for 2023, this is proving a bit of a challenge.

The Mitchell Park refurbishment will be a big component of my workload next year, but we hope to be able to be up and running in the new facility for 2024. Just haven't quite worked out where we will be relocating to in the interim!

Work will commence on rolling out the new 4YO reform, although until the Government announces the rollout plan, it is a little hard to prepare at the moment. What we do know is that Hamilton will be short about 50-60 places, so we are already having discussions with DET about potential building scenarios.

Workforce will continue to be a challenge, but we are already planning ahead when we need to increase our 4YO programs to 30 hours per week. Changes will also need to be made to the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers Agreement to accommodate the increased kindergarten hours, and discussions on the new VECTEA 2024 have already commenced.

I would like to thank the CPSG Board and its Subcommittees, our staff, families and children for their support for CPSG in 2021/22. We would like to thank Alysia Sanderson, who is stepping down from the role of Board President, which she has held for the last two years, although her involvement with CPSG started way back in 2011 where she has held various positions throughout this time. We would also like to thank our Treasurer, Chelsea Miller, who has held this position for the last year, during which time has overseen significant strengthening of our organisation's financial capabilities and viability.

For those who are new to CPSG, we hope you will consider joining our Board and being part of what will be some very challenging, but exciting, times ahead.



TRACEY GOULD  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# CAVENDISH KINDERGARTEN

## STAFF

MERRYN COUGHLIN & ALICIA LEWIS

We have had a wonderful year at Cavendish Kinder starting off with 10 children and welcoming two new children and their families to our group in the second half of the year. We were very excited to get back into some community events this year, including working with the Primary School to run the Family Café at the Red Gum Festival, a beautiful Community Lantern Walk and more recently, the Cavendish Fleece and Flower Show. One of the nicest community things we did this year was invite people to contribute to our Rainbow Gum for the Red Gum Festival sculpture competition and we had hundreds of leaves all created (from recycled milk bottles) and donated by many members of our community.

We've really noticed this year what a difference having children for two years of funded kindergarten makes and it's wonderful to have a group heading off to school who are so confident, resourceful, and inclusive as well as a small number moving into 4-year-old kinder next year - ready to show our new three year old's how it's done! This is really one of the great benefits of a combined 3- and 4-year-old group.

Our School Readiness Funding allowed us to welcome families to participate in a workshop called Learn to Draw, Draw to Learn and we had an excellent attendance and great feedback on this.

We were also lucky enough to receive a grant to install two purpose-built sheds to ensure our program and materials are accessible for children of differing developmental levels. A lot of behind-the-scenes work goes into the securing and organising of grants, and we thank Tracey for her support, hard work and patience in seeing this project through. Added to this the installation of a new shade sail to allow us to maintain a mostly outdoor program in the fresh air, has made a huge difference.

With the trickiness of the past few years we have really focused on children's well-being this year and ensured that Cavendish Kindergarten is a safe and nurturing place for all. A place where everybody is welcomed and valued as individuals and celebrated as part of our group.

We would like to say a big thank you to all our children and families, our active Parent Advisory Group and the many community members who have helped us out in various ways throughout the year.

We are very lucky to have the support and guidance of Natalie Templeton whose role as our Pedagogical Leader has been invaluable for this year. Trish Taylor has also been a great support and we have appreciated her kindness and dedication to advocating for children and families in their transition to school and into the kindergarten environment.

Thank you also to Tracey Gould (our fearless leader) whose continued commitment to CPSG ensures our organisation is running smoothly and always striving for improvement.

Lastly to the CPSG Board, thank you for volunteering your time to support our kindergartens. We (literally) couldn't do it without you!



OUR BEAUTIFUL "RAINBOW GUM" FOR THE CAVENDISH RED GUM FESTIVAL SCULPTURE COMPETITION WITH HUNDREDS OF LEAVES CREATED BY OUR CHILDREN, FAMILIES INCLUDING GRANDPARENTS, AUNTIES AND UNCLES, AND MANY COMMUNITY MEMBERS



OUR NEW TRACTORS REQUIRE A BIT OF MAINTENANCE, LUCKILY, WE HAVE SOME EXPERT FARMERS ON THE JOB WHO KNOW THEIR WAY AROUND AN ENGINE!



WE PROVIDE A LITERACY RICH ENVIRONMENT AND FOSTER CHILDREN'S LOVE OF BOOKS WITH OUR LENDING LIBRARY AND VERY WELL STOCKED BOOKSHELF





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OUR COMMUNITY LANTERN WALK WAS WELCOMED BACK WITH MUCH EXCITEMENT, SOME DELICIOUS SOUP AND SOME BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED LANTERNS



THROUGHOUT THE YEAR WE INTRODUCE A RANGE OF CREATIVE ART MEDIUMS AND TOOLS. OUR COLOUR MIXING PALETTE PROMOTES ALL KINDS OF LEARNING AND AMAZING CREATIVITY



OUR GARDEN IS LOOKING BEAUTIFUL – HERE'S TWO OF OUR CHILDREN DISCOVERING THE VERY FIRST DAFFODIL



LEARN TO DRAW, DRAW TO LEARN FAMILY WORKSHOP AS PART OF OUR SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING





# SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING



NATALIE TEMPLETON, PEDAGOGICAL LEADER

Mitchell Park, North Hamilton, Coleraine & Church Hill Kindergartens all benefited from the support of an Additional Educator at their service this year. This extra educator provided release time for teachers to focus on individually planning for vulnerable children and assistance in meeting the needs of their families. The Additional Educator’s presence in the program increased social and educational interactions with children through integrated teaching and learning approaches which enhanced learning and developmental outcomes for all children.

The Transition Support Worker Role was partially funded under the SRF menu item of Family Support Worker. Staff have found this the most value use of SRF funding this year as they have been supported and guided in their engagement and interactions with families.

Nine of our staff participated in the professional development of Wings to Fly this year. This menu item is a strengths-based approach to social and emotional wellbeing for children. It is designed to support early years educators to optimise their practice in order to improve overall outcomes for children. The Wings to Fly approach builds upon educators’ skills and strategies by developing a greater understanding of brain development in the early years, attachment and the way to build relationships that support children’s resilience and wellbeing.



FINE MOTOR SKILLS - WHILE CHILDREN ARE BUSY ROLLING, POKING AND SQUISHING PLAYDOUGH, THEY STRENGTHEN THE LITTLE MUSCLES IN THEIR FINGERS AND HANDS



# TRANSITION SUPPORT WORKER



TRISH TAYLOR

The Transition Support Worker has played an integral role in supporting children and their families within the CPSG Organisation in 2022. The TSW role has evolved significantly over the past two years and the value that it has instilled into the organisation has been evident in a number of ways. These have included:

- successful transition into kindergarten and on from kindergarten
- supporting children with additional needs with resources and accessing support to therapy; and
- supporting educators to write ECEI and KIS applications to support and include children with complex medical needs, disabilities or those from a vulnerable background to thrive in the kindergarten setting.

The TSW role has also increased communication and collaboration between other organisations including South West Health, Western District Health, Maternal Child Health, MPower and the Stepping Stones to School Program. Building relationships with these services has increased support for vulnerable families in gaining access to kindergarten, NDIS therapy and school enrolment. This has also supported the educators in capacity building and developing their understanding and knowledge on the best ways to include and support all children within a service.

The creation of an effective network (Transition Partnership Network) between kindergarten and foundation teachers was established in 2021 and continues to see positive outcomes in the transition space. The TSW has been able to collaborate with schools to support transition for children moving onto prep, including enrolment and support for vulnerable families which has then provided the opportunity for more children/siblings to be enrolled in the kindergarten service as a result of these established relationships. The children requiring a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten and their parents/carers have also been supported on ways to make their second year as successful as possible.





# CHURCH HILL KINDERGARTEN

## STAFF

NICOLE COLLINS, RENEE JOHNSON, SARAH LOWIN  
ADDITIONAL EDUCATOR – SALLY GAY

Here we are again at the end of another busy year. 2022 has flown.

This year's group has been a happy and settled group who have grown and flourished through the year gaining independence, creating friendships and learning through being inquisitive and asking many questions.

This year we have been lucky enough to explore the butterfly life cycle with our Swan plants giving us MANY caterpillars to observe and learn through. We are also currently learning about the Frog life cycle through observing our tadpoles.

This year's group has had many favorite activities that have been repeated and recreated many times over the year. Play dough has been loved all year. We have explored this with natural items (gumnuts, leaves etc.) explored popular themes such as dinosaurs, farm animals, easter, Halloween, cooked our own playdough as a group, created cakes, biscuits and pizza with playdough along with a million other things the children have imagined and created. Currently playdough is in our home corner and they are "cooking" food for each other.

Painting in all its forms has also been popular this year. We have painted spring flowers, our imaginations from a group meditation, autumn trees, many rainbows and whatever else their imagination brought. We have explored blowing paint across paper, painted with rollers, scrapers, cars, marbles, toothbrushes and whatever else we could find.

This year has seen increased time outside which the children embraced. We brought more of the usual 'inside play' items outside and the children enjoyed the best of all worlds. While outside the group has spent a lot of time climbing and swinging across the monkey bars and we had the opportunity to observe the children's gross motor skills strengthen and their confidence group in mastering their bodies. Water has been loved all year in the sandpit and over winter the children began leaving buckets out to catch the rain between sessions and during sessions.

This year we were also excited to welcome back incursions with visits from the Dental Health Nurse, learnt about living safely with pets. The Melbourne Museum came and taught us about dinosaurs and Shelly from wicked Wildlife taught us about our native animals. To finish the year, we are very excited to welcome out families back with a special person's day and our family friendly Christmas break up.



ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE GAMES AT KINDER IS 'DUCK DUCK GOOSE' WHICH WE PLAY OFTEN. HERE A CHILD YELLED "WHO WANTS TO PLAY DUCK DUCK GOOSE" AND MANY REPLIED WITH "ME!" THE CHILDREN ARRANGED THEMSELVES INTO A CIRCLE WITHOUT ADULT ASSISTANCE AND THEY WERE DISCUSSING WHO IS THE "DUCK DUCK GOOSER" AS THEY CALL IT.



DURING BOOK WEEK WE EXPLORED MANY DIFFERENT STORY BOOKS THROUGH PLAY SPACES AND PLAY EXPLORATION. HERE WE SET UP A PLAY SPACE BASED ON THE BOOK 'THE TIGER WHO CAME FOR TEA' ELIJAH AND PHOENIX ARE HAVING TEA WITH THE TIGER.



THE CHILDREN WERE INSPIRED BY THE BOOK 'MIX IT!' BY HERVE TULLET AND SPENT MANY SESSIONS EXPLORING CREATING DIFFERENT COLOURS WITH PAINT PALLETS. HERE EDIE, LILA, JOEL AND TAYLOR ARE CREATING DIFFERENT COLOURS USING THE PRIMARY COLOURS.



LILA, MYF, HARPER AND THOMAS ARE EXPLORING PAINTING SPRING FLOWERS. TO PRACTICE OUR FINE MOTOR SKILLS, WE WERE CREATING PICTURES OF WATTLE WITH POM POMS AND PEGS. CHERRY BLOSSOM PICTURES WERE CREATED WITH FINE BRUSHES.

# DUNKELD KINDERGARTEN

## STAFF

Alice Milne & Kim Burgess

What an incredible year at Dunkeld Kindergarten. However, scarce the sun has been, the kinder still shines with warmth, beauty and growth through our amazing little humans. Whether it's building giant block towers, gardening, cooking, messy finger painting or pretending to be pirates or dinosaurs, the children are always busy and engaged in the program.

Throughout the year the Obstacle course has been a constant, ever-changing interest for the children. There are always opportunities for climbing, swinging, balancing, and sliding. Although a lot of gross motor skill development takes place on the obstacle course, so does lots of play. There have been sloth dragons' dens, queen castles, animal traps and goats trip trapping across a bridge. What creative and imaginative children!

**Music and Dance** – Music, singing and dance has featured heavily in our program this year, with the children taking a great interest in learning songs to sing and dance to. We have been lucky enough to have regular music lessons from Mrs Mac, the famous Dunkeld music teacher. She comes most fortnights with her giant bag of instruments for the children to explore. We would like to extend a big thank you to Heather Macgugan, who volunteers her time at the kinder. It has been a wonderful experience.

**Bush Kinder** – The excitement in term two for Bush Kinder to begin was electric. The four-year-old group explored the Grampians national park by going on lots of bush walks full of discovery and wonder. In spring all the wildflowers came out and the children used their flora and fauna books to identify the different types. So many orchids! We also had encounters with shingle back lizards, wallabies, kurrajongs, cockatoo's and lots of echidna holes (unfortunately no echidnas). Instilling this love and appreciation of nature from a young age can help create a generation who respect the planet and feel connected to the world around them.

It has been great to embed aboriginal perspectives into our program, and what a great opportunity to do this through Bush Kinder. The children co-wrote an Acknowledgement of Country that we sing every day, to pay our respects to the first custodians of the land. Thank you to Dunkeld Racing Club and Glenelg Hopkins CMA for being our ongoing Bush Kinder sponsors.

**Excursions** – There was barely a week (in semester 2) where the children didn't go for a walk around town to visit a particular place of interest. The children have been to the bakery, Arboretum, General store, fire brigade, the park, the local creek, Library truck, lamb feeding, and visits to the Grampians National Park. The children are also regulars at Dunkeld Consolidated School, where they were invited to participate in the Book parade, A science performance and Music through the Age's performance. We would like to say a big Thank You to the local community for opening your doors to the Kinder children and to the school for their ongoing support.

The children have also been invited to The Royal Mail Garden by Robin Wickens (Penelope's Dad) where they will be able to taste freshly grown fruit and vegetables.



Excursions invite children interact with the world around them. Being out and about in their community helps children to learn about their immediate environment. They are also able to practice life skills such as road safety.

Thank you to the community, parents, and children of Dunkeld for making 2022 a fantastic year for all.

I'll finish with a message for the Class of 2022...



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#### CHILDREN'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO GARIWERD COUNTRY

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*Thank you for the land, trees, plants, animals, birds, fish, insects,  
water, grass, wood, sand, dirt and mud.*

*We acknowledge the Djab Wurrong & Jardwadjali people  
on whose land we live and play.*

*It is now our job to help to look after it all.*



PENELOPE AT THE GENERAL STORE FIND THE INGREDIENTS FOR CREPES



THE CHILDREN CARRYING LIBRARY BOOKS BACK TO KINDER



ON THE WAY TO THE BAKERY



BUSY MAKING HOUSES AT KINDER



FEEDING SAM'S LITTLE LAMB FROM HIS FARM



MAKING FRIENDS AND HAVING FUN

## BUSH KINDER



GOING ON A BUSH WALK



NIXON LOOKING FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF BIRDS AT BUSH KINDER



NED AND TOBY AT THE DUNKELD ARBORETUM CLIMBING THE BIG LOGS NEAR THE SAWMILL



# MITCHELL PARK KINDERGARTEN

## STAFF

AMELIA BALL, JODIE TOGNON  
ADDITIONAL EDUCATOR - SARAH LOWIN

Once again 2022 has been a year impacted by COVID. With parents dropping their children off at the gate, it has been a real challenge to develop family connections. With the introduction of our Allied Health Playgroup, parents have been able to attend with their children and other siblings, providing an opportunity for informal yet comprehensive chats in a safe space. The upside of children being dropped at the gate has resulted in a noticeable overall resilience within the cohort. The children are far more confident and independent.

Through the process of completing Transition Statements, an area of focus is how children will react in new and unfamiliar situations and surroundings. Taking everything into account, this is an unknown due to the lack of incursions and excursions. This presents a challenge in regard to school readiness.

On a more positive note, we have had a wonderful year at Mitchell Park and we have been focusing on “WOW” moments that to some may appear insignificant but are actually amazing. Taking the time to savor every little win has seen us flourish as educators and provide positive, supportive, inclusive and loving environment for each and every child in our care.

It is with a tinge of sadness that we farewell our four-year olds’ as they move on to the next adventure in their educational lives. Many of them have been with us for three years.

On a very positive note, we are all extremely excited about our planned playground and building renovations. The indoor space will be stripped and relined with the addition of a secure entrance foyer and a revamped bathroom/toilet area. I have been actively involved in each phase of the planning process which has allowed me to incorporate some of my own ideas, colors and concepts. The outdoor area design has been overseen by a specialized landscaping company from Melbourne and again I have had the opportunity to be actively involved in the design brief. Plans include a nature-based play space featuring vegetable gardens, an orchard, a chook shed, quiet nooks, a dry riverbed, an indigenous garden and a fire pit surrounded by a yarning circle. Other features include a mud pit, a sand pit a bike track and a versatile “fort” structure. So exciting!!!!!!



COOPERATION AND  
COLLABORATION



DESIGN, CONCENTRATION AND  
PROBLEM SOLVING



EXPLORING AND EXPERIMENTING  
WITH LOOSE PARTS

# CULTURAL INCLUSION



## CRYSTAL MASTERS

*The Cultural Inclusion Project Officer has been a short-term project working with CPSG on the strategic priorities for implementing Marrung Education plan and increasing staff cultural awareness, competence and confidence.*

*Using a Cultural Audit tool template that was modified from a previous tool created by the Koori Engagement Support Officers (KESO), I undertook kindergarten visits as a springboard to formulate a baseline for what CPSG is already doing. During these visits the environment was looked at, educational resources discussed, library itemized and discussions with staff took place, giving an overview on the barriers or challenges felt by staff in terms of implementing cultural perspectives and their understanding of the Marrung plans.*

*All the services had some beautiful resources, displays and a foundation to build and extend upon in terms of Implementing a cultural perspective, with some staff just lacking confidence or motivation.*

*After completing the audits, I met and consulted with a variety of Aboriginal community members and professionals such as a prominent local Elder, Koori Education Support Officer, Koori Pre-school Assistant (KPSA), the Cultural Healing Officer from Mackillop Family Services, Winda-Mara Aboriginal Cooperation staff, Budj Bim rangers and the Traditional Owner groups of the local areas to gain an Aboriginal perspective and additional information.*

*Examples and demonstrations seen within centers is that there exists a high level of visibility of cultural displays and local history for culturally inclusive learning environments. And CPSG's paid access to the Koori Curriculum webinars also supports the idea of their being so many available resources to the public, that Educators have all the "ingredients" and as professionals in their field, make their own "recipes" with their strengths and knowledge. Pushing people outside of their comfort zone to challenge their own ideas and expectations and the realization that they can utilize each other and their experiences for a successful and creative way to embed cultural perspectives in their centers.*



*Cultural Awareness training was presented at a recent Quality Improvement Plan meeting, however some staff were unwell so I would encourage another session with reflective practice windows in the future. One of the great outcomes of that training was that I could use the idea of myself as a lover of Japanese culture and history, but how I would never 'teach' it as I am not Japanese. Instead, I can research and learn as much as I can about it and share it passionately to anyone who wanted to listen.*

*Finally, all the work and outcomes from my time with CPSG have contributed to the concepts and awareness required for the development of a working group to put together the Reconciliation Plan, ensuring that the past few months of conversations, challenging questions and ideas will support staff to not only implement a cultural perspective into their programs, but reflect on their own understanding and ideas about how to embed first nations learning opportunities in future.*

PHOTOS: HERE CRYSTAL IS USING LOCAL OCRHE ROCKS TO SHOW THE CHILDREN HOW TO GRIND THEM UP, ADD WATER AND MAKE SOME NATURAL PIGMENT PAINT



# NORTH HAMILTON KINDERGARTEN

## STAFF

BANDICOOTS - CHRIS WILDGOOSE, TAMARA MIBUS, KATRINA MACPHERSON

POSSUMS – HEIDI WALSH, ANDREA COATES, YULI MCCASKILL

ADDITIONAL EDUCATOR – SALLY GAY

INCLUSION ADDITIONAL ASSISTANTS – BIANCA HIGGINS, NICOLE EDDIE, CRYSTAL MASTERS

### “BANDICOOTS” FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

The children have had a reasonably settled year and have progressed well towards being ready for school. We will be welcoming back four of our number for a bonus year before they are ready. The only real challenge for them has been health – quite a few had prolonged cold and flu absences, but that seems to have settled now. Educators have also had a health challenged year with themselves and family members, but the team have done well to keep the ship afloat whilst others were away, especially during Term 2 when I was on extended leave.

Some of our highlights this year have been the Museum Victoria visit, Dress up Day for Children’s Book Week, Science Week and Footy Colours Day. We’ve had visits from the Dental Health Clinic, the Police and Bingo Jack’s Magic Show which were all memorable. The children have been thoroughly delighted recently when the team incubated chicken and duck eggs. Holding the fluffy younglings was an immensely popular and enjoyable activity. Overall, we have enjoyed most the days when we were able to make full use of our wonderful facilities and be outside and active if we wanted to. Sandplay, mud play and parachute play remain popular activities as always.

The children have now had the majority of their school visits and we await Step Up Day where our children will spend the day at school and the upcoming Bandicoot group for 2023 will visit for their orientation. Our current children still have an excursion to the Miniature Train as well as our Treasure Hunt at the gardens, and will finish the year with a Graduation Ceremony and Mini Concert at PJ’s Playhouse, as well as a kinder party with Santa in December. I wish to express my deep appreciation for Tracey, Nat and Trish who have been a tremendous support for myself throughout this year. The Management team do a fantastic job coordinating all the people and children and we thank them for all that they do.





## “POSSUMS” THREE-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

We have had a busy and productive year; the children are now demonstrating their ever growing social and emotional skills in their interactions with each other and educators. They continue to show us each day how confident and capable they are at meeting their own goals and sharing these achievements with peers and educators.

We have had several days/weeks including dress up days, literacy week and science week.

We linked Indigenous Literacy Day and our Colours/Footy day by reading the book Marngrook (“game ball” the Aboriginal football game).

Science week - the highlight was making butter and then getting to eat it after lunch on rice cakes.

The journey we took with hatching the chickens and ducks was just amazing, our group was very lucky to see both the chickens and ducks hatch during our sessions.

Once again, the outdoors has been a favourite and such an amazing space to learn and grow in.

The children have had a wonderful start to their Kindergarten journey and will continue into their second year to extend on this year’s foundations of learning. Some returning to the Possums group, many to begin with Miss Chris in the Bandicoots group and a few others moving to other services.



BABY DUCKS



POSSUM SKIN USED TO MAKE MARNGROOK



BABY DUCKS



POSSUM SKIN USED TO MAKE MARNGROOK

# PENSHURST KINDERGARTEN

## STAFF

LAURA HILL & ANNIE LINKE

This year we have had many projects and changes to Penshurst Kindergarten. In January 2022, our new entry foyer and locker area was completed, with children gaining their own accessible space to put their belongings. This has also provided a better flow for parents and children upon arrival in the mornings and has reduced congested areas and standing outdoors in the rain. The kindergarten interior was also repainted throughout, giving us a brighter and fresher look and our fifty-year-old floor coverings (both carpet and lino) were also replaced. All this work was funded by a grant through the Victorian State Government's Early Childhood Refurbishment and Minor Works Program.

At the end of term one, Aimee Jacobsen joined our team as a Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) Additional Assistant, who has been a wonderful addition to the staff team for 2022.

This year our goal has been to reestablish and revamp our yard space with the children. We established a Bush Tucker Garden Project in Term 2 with the children, in collaboration research and ideas from local Indigenous Parks Ranger and our local Grampians Garden Center in Hamilton. This has been an addition to our mud kitchen (developed in 2021), involving lots of Australian native bush tucker and sensory herbs, smells, tastes, and textures. The children have enjoyed cooking and creating experiments with the new play space. In addition, we also revamped our veggie patches and garden, which the children have enjoyed planting seedlings and reaping the rewards of their produces (including snow peas, French beans, bush berries (blue berries), carrots, strawberries, celery, and corn). Many children are excited to pick the produce and cook with it at kindergarten. Wednesdays evolved into our cooking day, with families also contributing favorite recipes from home.



LUCY PEELING POTATOES TO MAKE POTATO CHIPS,  
FROM OUR STORY "THE POTATO PEOPLE"



VANILLE PLANTING NATIVE HERBS IN OUR SENSORY  
BUSH TUCKER GARDEN

Mid-year we held our Pie Drive Fundraiser, to purchase a new couch and furniture for our new foyer/ locker area. The Pie drive was a great success within our local community, and we raised over \$500.

In Term 3, Jen McDonald joined us on placement as part of her Bachelor degree requirements. Tash Nepean, who is studying towards her Certificate III in Children's Services, also joined us one day a week on placement and this will continue throughout most of next year. We also held lots of kindergarten in-house events and celebrations, including: Pyjama Day, Crazy Hair Day, Footy Colours Day, Teddy Bears Picnic Day, show and tell box, cooking damper in a camp oven on a small fire/ roasting marshmallows, and What do you want to be when you grow up? Dress up day.

In Term 4, with visitors and small excursions beginning to re-open with the relaxing of COVID restrictions, children have received visits from their local Police officer, ambulance and paramedics and fire brigade. We also explored the old art of letter writing, posting letters to our families at the local post office and learning our home address.

School transitions are commencing in Term 4, as well as organizing a Christmas Raffle Fundraiser, in hope with support from our local community and small businesses donations. The aim is to raise money to build a dry riverbed creek in addition to our hand pump which was installed in 2021.



COOKING DAMPER AND ROASTING MARSH MELLOWS ON OUR CAMPFIRE



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOUR GROW UP? DRESS UP DAY







