

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

“WELCOME CHILDREN”



Bubup
Womindjeka

Family and Children's Centre

Our Centre Philosophy

Our philosophy is developed in collaboration with our children, educators, and families, which reflects and upholds our beliefs and values. It is our purpose to ensure that our curriculum, environments, and relationships enable children and educators to have equitable opportunities to grow and reach their potential.

We embed a safe, inclusive educational environment where everyone is valued and respected.

We advocate for the rights and voice of each child irrespective of ability, age, gender, race, language, culture, or economic status.

We understand that families are the child's first and most influential teachers and are committed to working in partnership together to achieve best possible outcomes for their child.

We recognise that children develop dispositions for learning in the early years that are fundamental to the building blocks for lifelong success.

In relation to children, we:

- Acknowledge that children learn best through play and having meaningful opportunities to explore, discover, create, improvise, and imagine.
- Foster the agency and capabilities of each child by promoting a strength-based approach to learning and development.
- Guide children's development of social awareness, self-regulation and resilience building through relational pedagogies.
- Recognise that children have different learning styles, are competent contributors to their own learning and will be supported to make choices and decisions.
- Focus on child-led, developmental-appropriate experiences and rhythms that enriches their unique learning and growth.
- Interact with care and understanding of gender equity and respectful relationships, where imagination is unlimited, and children can be anything.
- Instil an appreciation for our environment and inspire ways in which we can care for the land through sustainable practices.

In relation to families and community, we:

- Use critical reflection, ongoing professional learning, and research to broaden our knowledge and inform our teaching practices.
- Work as a team, guiding and assisting each other and demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Highly value the importance of using the natural environment to enhance the educational program and develop sustainable practices.
- Balance intentional teaching with child directed learning to build a rich and purposeful curriculum.

In relation to families, we:

- Value collaborative partnerships with families and draw on families' individual perspectives and expectations to guide our understanding of their child.
- Provide tailored information and resources based on their unique needs and circumstances in the best interests of their child's learning journey.
- Believe in a holistic approach by partnering with community services to ensure a harmonious delivery of care and support.
- Provide families with opportunities to contribute to the program and take part in centre decision making.
- Seek opportunities to be involved, share our knowledge, and engage with local and wider communities.

In relation to educators, we:

- Use critical reflection, ongoing professional learning, and research to broaden our knowledge and inform our teaching practices.
- Work as a team, guiding and assisting each other and demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Balance intentional teaching with child-led learning to build a rich and purposeful curriculum.
- Build professional and collaborative relationships that are based on trust, respect and integrity.
- Respect and value the diverse cultures, beliefs, and unique strengths that each educator brings to our learning community, which enriches the educational environment and fosters a sense of belonging for all.

Our educational practices are guided by both the National and Victorian Early Years Curriculum Frameworks and the National Quality Standards. Throughout our organisation we embed the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics.

We respectfully acknowledge the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land upon which our service is located. In paying respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of its history, we acknowledge their proud and resilient cultures; ongoing connections to land, waters and sky.

***“We thank the traditional owners
For letting us share their land.
We promise to look after it,
The animals, people and land.
Hello Land, Hello Sky, Hello Me & Hello Friends”***

Our Vision, Purpose and Values

We strive to deliver our shared vision and purpose based on the values of the centre and to guide our decision making and planning.

Our Vision

An inclusive community that supports the development of engaged, capable and confident young learners.

Our Purpose

To provide an integrated family focused community centre where all children and educators have equitable opportunities to reach their full potential.

Our Values

Integrity - We act with transparency, professionalism, and consistency. Our relationships are respectful and reciprocal and are built on trust, authenticity, and ethical interactions.

Inclusion - We acknowledge and respect that everyone has their own culture, beliefs, and strengths contributing to our rich and diverse community, creating a sense of belonging.

Collaboration - We work in partnership with all stakeholders to make decisions that are responsible and fair. We recognise and value the interconnectedness between our children, our families, our educators, and our integrated centre community.



Our Strategic Goals

1. Driven by customers

Provide an excellent Care and Education service

- Provide exemplary educational practice based on a philosophy of continuous improvement
- Achieve an overall exceeding rating in the National Quality Standards
- Deliver an educational program that prioritises lifelong learning
- Provide affordable services
- Be the #1 employer of choice (pay, training, culture)

2. Support every family

Supporting the whole family through the provision of integrated services

- Provide families with opportunities to be involved and contribute to service decision making
- Understand the needs of our community and provide the appropriate services in particular to vulnerable families and children with additional needs
- Enhance our relationships with partner on-site services using multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary ways
- Develop community relationships and seek opportunities to engage with local and wider community services

3. Championing sustainability practices

Setting the benchmark for sustainability in EYC centres

- Transform our practices to minimise our environmental footprint, cultural, social, financial, administrative and environmental
- Teaching children to become environmentally responsible and respectful. Sustainability education to be embedded within the curriculum and part of every day
- Partnering with sustainability focused organisations and businesses to advocate for heightened community awareness
- Replace paper-based processes with digital alternatives/methods

4. Review and develop our services

Determine the optimal use of BW FCC's resources in meeting current and future needs

- Assess the desirability and feasibility of various potential enhancements to our programs
- Identify and evaluate opportunities to share our knowledge, skills and resources across the COPP and Early Childhood profession

5. Maintain high performance

Be a high performing, innovative and forward looking organisation

- Building and nurturing technology competencies in our staff to drive efficiencies
- Digitising processes to promote high and consistent levels of service
- Enhancing financial reporting and robust forward planning to support organisational solvency while maintaining value for money services



Governance Structure

The Membership of the Board for 2023

President: Gilda Howard

Vice President: Adrian Naudi*

Secretary: Alisha Burns and Malaya Toll*

Treasurer: Alexander Lord

Council Member: CR Peter Martin

General Members: Troy Hoggan
Jamie Grant
Katrina Jojkity
Rachel Haggett
Bernadene Voss*

Sub Committees

Leadership Liaison Committee:
Convenor – Gilda Howard
Member – Adrian Naudi*

Finance Committee:
Convenor – Alexander Lord
Members – Jamie Grant, Rachel Haggett
and Adrian Naudi*

Risk Committee:
Convenor – Katrina Jojkity and Tim Norman*
Members – Jamie Grant, Bernadene Voss*
and Malaya Toll*

Consultative Committee:
Convenor – Alisha Burns

People and Culture Committee:
Convenor – Troy Hoggan
Member – Peter Martin

Governance and Appointments Committee:
Convenor – Gilda Howard
Members – Alisha Burns and Adrian Naudi*

**These roles were held within the 2023 period*

Centre Leadership Team



Kellie Connor
Executive Officer



Lease Cowen*
Director of Education



Michelle Wilson*
Director of Education



May Kanjanathamrongkul
Human Resources Coordinator



Sam Aloï-Carlus
Enrolments Officer



Avinash Ramudu
Business Manager

Education Leadership Team



May Kanjanathamrongkul
Program Co-ordinator



Sam Aloï-Carlus
Program Co-ordinator



Poornima Sangar
Program Co-ordinator



Michelle Wilson*
Program Coordinator
Inclusion Support Officer



Amanda Chong*
Program Coordinator
Inclusion Support Officer



President and Executive Officer's Report

It is a pleasure for us to again write to provide an update on the 2023 year for Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre.

The organisation has continued to develop and improve our early childhood education and care programs and the capacity of the board to lead the organisation.

The organisation welcomes the recognition of the value of early childhood education and care (ECEC), with the planned expansion of these services by the State government through the Best Start, Best Life reforms. This included the roll out of increased hours for 3 year olds and the continued expansion of increased hours for 3 and 4 year old kindergarten between now and 2030.

These reforms will have an impact on infrastructure, staff requirements and organisational strategic planning processes. While some of these changes will be longer term, we have begun the process of planning for these reforms. During the year the board embarked on a strategic planning process with our new strategies commencing in 2024 and providing us with opportunities to prepare for the required changes in our service delivery and staffing requirements.

This year the board has focused on effectiveness, this involved conducting a review of and making changes to ways we meet and how we work. A review of our meeting structure has resulted in the amalgamation of two of our committees.

We have worked with the City of Port Phillip (CoPP), we renewed our lease and continued to advocate for families and children in our community, while strengthening the board's governance abilities.

In response to an identified need, we trialled a before & after kindergarten program during 2023 and due to its overwhelming success, it has been moved into a permanent delivery model, providing more services to our community.

2023 was a year where we have seen continued enhancements in the delivery of programs to our children and the families. We are excited to announce that this culminated in our service receiving Exceeding National Quality Standards in early 2024 under the national accreditation program for Early Childhood Education and Care.

We would like to say thank-you and acknowledge the hard work, professionalism and dedication displayed by all BWFCC staff members during 2023. It is the staff at BWFCC who continue to make Bubup the success it is. BWFCC staff continuously display their professionalism, positivity, adaptability and commitment to the children and families.

We would like to acknowledge our integrated working partners – the Maternal and Child Health Nurses, Better Health Network and Playgroups. These services all contribute to the Bubup community and are an integral part of our service. We would also like to acknowledge the Families, Youth, Children & Divisional Performance Team at the City of Port Phillip who provide advice and assistance in service delivery – in particular Felicity Leahy, Wendy Morris Smith and Brittany Brimmer who we work closely with.

Thank you to all staff and the Board for working together to make this another successful year as we look forward to celebrating our 10th anniversary of the establishment of BWFCC in 2024.



Gilda Howard
President



Kellie Connor
Executive Officer





Director of Education Report

Our Centre Philosophy Review

Upon updating our Quality Improvement Plan, it was acknowledged that it was timely to be reviewing our centre philosophy. The leadership team determined an important part of this process would be the inclusion of the child's voice. We started this process by surveying and observing children throughout the service to understand what they viewed as important and relevant to their world.

For younger children, the educators gathered observations and photos of the children - capturing how they engage with the environment, their peers and educators, what they show they value from their decision making and perspective. These were then created into floor books to display the children's contributions.

For older children, some of the questions posed to children included - *'What do you like about coming to Bubup?'* *'How do you feel when you arrive at/come to Bubup?'* *'How could we make Bubup a better place?'* *'How do we help to take care of the environment?'* *'What do you learn about when you are at Bubup?'*

The children's responses were documented and created into floor books including children's illustrations of their ideas and contributions. Video content of the children's responses to these questions was also documented.

Families and stakeholders feedback regarding the philosophy review was collected by sharing a survey, some of the questions posed included - *'What are your values & beliefs for Early Childhood Education and Care, and do you feel that Bubup fosters and supports these?'* *'Do you feel welcome and a part of the Bubup community?'* *'How would you describe Bubup and what is your favourite thing about Bubup?'*

Our educators' contributions to the philosophy review were shared in 2 different ways - The first was by having each team take time out of the room to critically reflect and unpack our practices, to see how these aligned with our philosophy - the questions posed included *'Where were we at when the previous philosophy was written?'* *'Where are we now?'* *'What are our values?'* *'What are the embedded practices?'* *'What has changed?'* The responses and ideas were documented for insight into where each person and team was at.

The second way was by having each team member contribute their thoughts and ideas by writing these down on post-it notes and adding these to posters displayed in our meeting space. The posters included the questions of *'What would you add, change or remove from our current philosophy statement?'* *'What do you believe are the most important values and ideas in our current philosophy?'*

Once all the feedback from children, families, stakeholders and educators was shared, the educational leadership team collated the responses and carefully considered how they would be reflected in the new philosophy, the educational leadership team then took time to wordsmith the statement to ensure it reflected the current view, values and beliefs of those who contributed to the review and the new philosophy statement was created.

Community Excursions

It was a goal for the kindergarten programs to explore opportunities to be involved in additional outings/ excursions in the local community. Each team unpacked what community outings would most benefit their learning program and engaged with local groups and services about what spaces are available and appropriate to visit. From term 3 2023, all kinder teams began regularly taking out small groups of children (approx. 7-10 children at a time) to local parks, book shops, libraries and on community walks. Through these outings, our relationships with the community have become stronger and reciprocal with the local library even calling us to inform us of and invite us to local events.

In our Nursery and Early Years Program we continued to implement our Bubup Bush program. Small groups of children visit the bush areas of Lagoon Reserve to explore and connect with the environment within our local Port Phillip community. The focus of Bubup Bush is to provide a child-led program, from start to finish to enable children to facilitate their own learning, uninterrupted by the thoughts and direction of others. We visit the community created bush garden at Lagoon Reserve, right next door to Bubup. The children attend in groups of 4-8, one room at a time and are supervised by educators from their room with 1 educator to 2 children so this is usually 2-3 adults, the kinder children attend as a class. The visit is usually from 1-2 hours and led by educators in each room supported by a Program Coordinator. The bush allows the children to encounter many adventures such as freely exploring the landscape, crunching through dry leaves, climbing over logs and trees, viewing wildlife and enjoying the unique pleasure of being in an open and special place and doing so safely whilst being supervised.

Kinder Sports Day

Throughout the year, the Bouddi and Tiddlik kindergarten worked collaboratively with the kinder families creating a transformative experience for our kindergarten cohort, fostering a strong sense of community and unity among the kinder children at Bubup. It was rewarding to witness the children and families working together, cooperating, having discussions and building connections with each other fostering a spirit of togetherness. One of the highlights was a sports day that was held at the end of term 4 in 2023 to celebrate the end of the year. Bouddi and Tiddlik children participated in sports experiences in the weeks leading up to the event including activities such as tug-of-war, water relay races, obstacle courses and three-legged races. The children invited families to join in on the sports day, creating their own invitations and brainstorming how best to pass them out to their families. The Kinder families were invited to observe and even participate in some of the games on the day including the three-legged races. These activities provided a unique opportunity for the children and families to learn from one another, share their individual strengths, and appreciate the talents within our kindergarten community. As we reflect on the collaborative journey within the kinder learning environment and with kinder families, it is evident that these shared efforts have not only created lasting memories but have also nurtured a sense of belonging and mutual respect among the children and families.

Community Celebrations

We were pleased to offer many of our community celebrations throughout 2023, including our welcome BBQ, Mothers and Special Friends Day, Siblings Day, Father's Day and Special Friends Day, Grandparents and Special Friends Day, Book Week, NAIDOC week, and a whole service End of Year Celebration Event. As an educational team, we are mindful of how we promote and celebrate days of significance. Days of cultural, educational and environmental significance are acknowledged and celebrated in a manner that is respectful and inclusive of our diverse community, sustainable practices and our children's varying ages and development. We apply a child centred lens to all calendar events, ensuring that days of significance are led by children and driven by process rather than product. These significant celebrations create a feeling of belonging and develop a sense of community amongst families, educators and children. It also provides an opportunity for children to develop respect for diverse values and beliefs as they learn about practices which may be different to their own.



Lease Cowen
Director of Education



Human Resources Report

In 2023, Bubup Womindjeka continued its commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive work environment while embracing technological advancements to streamline HR processes. This report outlines key achievements, areas of focus, and ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing employee engagement, diversity, and overall well-being.

Staff Engagement

The results of the 2023 staff engagement survey conducted by Community Child Care Association indicate that Bubup Womindjeka continues to excel in fostering a positive and engaging work environment. With an overall staff engagement score of 84.0%, surpassing the benchmark average of 80.5%, Bubup Womindjeka demonstrates its commitment to providing supportive conditions for staff growth and satisfaction.

Diversity and Inclusion

Bubup Womindjeka prides itself on maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and respectful workplace environment. With staff members spanning various age groups, genders, and cultural backgrounds, Bubup fosters a rich learning experience for both staff and children. Upholding the values of diversity and inclusion remains integral to Bubup's values and aligns with its overarching mission of creating a sense of belonging for all.

Implementation of HRIS System:

Bubup embarked on the implementation of the HR Information System (HRIS), Employment Hero, towards the end of 2023. This initiative aims to empower both staff and HR professionals with efficient tools and resources to streamline administrative tasks and enhance overall operational effectiveness.

While celebrating our achievements, Bubup Womindjeka acknowledges the importance of continuous improvement. Bubup has a continued dedication to nurturing a positive, inclusive, and engaging work environment. Through strategic initiatives and ongoing efforts to address areas of improvement, Bubup remains committed to supporting the growth, well-being, and satisfaction of its valuable workforce. Thank you for all staff's dedication and contributions to the success of Bubup!



May Kanjanathamrongkul
Human Resources





The Kindergarten Program Report

Critical Reflection

Critical reflection has been a large driving force behind our educational program and practices this year. Questions such as “Who is this practice advantaging and disadvantaging?” and “What is the experience for the child?” have led to a lot of small changes in our educational program. We have also seen an increase in positive engagement from the children who attend both our integrated and sessional kindergarten programs through consistent practices, critical reflection, and collaboration across the two kindergarten environments.

All Come Out to Play

In April 2023, we participated in ALL Come Out to Play! - a fun and interactive music experience covering themes of gender equity, respectful relations and equal treatment and opportunity are shared through song, dance and story. All 4 year old children were given an opportunity to participate in this group experience, some chose to join in more than once! The kinder team also participated in an in person training around gender equity and our role in teaching respectful relationships in the early years run by Helen Rimington from Drummond Street Services and Nancy Lee Merzel from Playgroup Victoria.

Trauma Informed Training

In August 2023, the whole kinder team engaged in Trauma and Attachment Theory and Practice professional development through Kids First. This training focused on relational pedagogy, attachment theory and styles, early brain development and trauma and its relationship to development and learning. With our entire kinder team participating in this in person training, we were able to create some consistent, evidence-based strategies to implement into our educational program, enhancing the outcomes for all children.

Kinder Community Excursions

The second half of the year brought an opportunity for regular outings into the community through our kinder community excursions. Based on the children’s ideas and interests and influenced by local events, the children regularly went into the community in small groups to local parks, libraries, and bookstores. A highlight of the kinder community excursion was a scavenger hunt to Gasworks Park where the 4 year old children worked collaboratively with the 3 year old children to find different man-made and natural items around the park. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship with the community as we start our regular community excursions in term 2 of 2024, offering even more opportunities to build our confidence as a group and individually to venture out into the community.

Inclusion

Inclusion continues to be a big part of our kindergarten program. We recognise, promote and practice inclusion. This year, we continued to work with key workers who were able to support us with strategies, resources, staffing and other key knowledge that look towards promoting and fostering inclusive practices for not only a particular child but for all children within the kindergarten program. These key workers include child psychologists, preschool field officers, speech and occupational therapists, paediatricians, and inclusion support professionals. We are committed to supporting every child and recognise all children as having a right to attend kindergarten at Bubup.



Michelle Wilson

Kindergarten Program Coordinator
Inclusion Support Coordinator





Treasurer's Report

During 2023 our centre has had a continuing focus of ensuring we provide the best environment for our educators to support the children in the centre's care, this has been at the heart of all our financial decisions we have taken. This focus was recognised recently by Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) in rewarding BW FCC an exceeding rating for the care we provide as a centre.

Our occupancy and attendance at the centre has been very strong throughout 2023 at more than 95% throughout the calendar year to 31 December 2023. BW FCC recorded a financial surplus of \$102,056 for the year ended 31 December 2023. We continue to focus on investing in the future of our service, meeting community expectations and ensuring we remain viable in the longer term.

During 2023, BW FCC spent the majority of our expenses on staff which are the most important part of our service and over \$40,000 in upgrading our program resources and children's books. We continued to budget \$12,000 in hardship payments to support vulnerable families, however this resource was not required in 2023.

Our Team

Firstly, I would like to thank our Business Manager Avinash Ramudu who has worked diligently throughout the year, whilst balancing his dual roles as Business Manager and Head Chef of our kitchen. His focus on managing the business was important to efficiently managing our finances month to month.

A big thank you to Kellie Connor, our Executive Officer, who has again led a strong team and effectively implemented the strategic recommendations of the Board during the year which have impacted our centre. This year is my 5th and final year as the Treasurer of the Centre and it has been a pleasure to work with Kellie over this tenure.

We had strong continuity on the finance committee in 2023 and I would like to thank my fellow finance committee members Rachel Hagggett and Jamie Grant for their valuable contributions. The importance of these roles in ensuring the strong financial management of the centre cannot be underestimated, and it is this that allows the educators and staff to perform their roles to the best of their ability each day.

Our EYP

Our Early Years Program (EYP) continues to provide education and care for children from 3 months to 5 years and is at the core of the service we provide. The EYP continued to be well attended during the year. We are again proud to be one of the most affordable centres in the City of Port Philip community in our annual benchmarking of fees. We increased our fees from 1 January 2024 by \$8 or a little over 5.88% from \$136 per day to \$144 a day, at a rate lower than our increasing costs, with a CPI increase of over 6% over the last 12 months.

- In our 0–3 years programs, we provide a 1:3 staff: child ratio ahead of the regulation ratio which is 1:4
- In our 3+ years program, we provide a 1:6 staff: child ratio ahead of the regulation ratio which is 1:11

These initiatives cost an additional circa \$500,000 per annum to implement. We continue to balance these decisions which we view as important as a centre, and as a previous parent at the centre myself I have been able to see how this directly benefits children, our team and the BW FCC community.

Our sessional kinder

Our 3-year-old kinder and 4-year-old kinder programs continued to thrive throughout the year to 31 December 2023 and are highly regarded in the local community. We offer 56 places for 4-year-old kinder and 28 places for 3-year-old kinder. This offering went through many changes from state government announcements and with the objective of providing the best service to parents, we offer an additional before and after kinder care program which breaks even whilst supporting working parents, to make kinder drop off and pick up possible for many given life's commitments and the balancing act required of parents. This has been an important initiative of Kellie as the Executive Officer and the Board. This was run as a pilot in 2023, for which I asked for your support, and now forms a permanent part of our Program.

The focus of our kindergarten continues to be ensuring we are offering a quality program that prepares the children for school in the future.

Looking to the future

In 2024 we will continue to invest in the care we provide through our most important asset, our staff. We will not rest on our laurels, and our continued focus will be ensuring our financial stability continues in 2024 and we continue to support parents placing their trust in our centre's care of their children. In 2024 we will welcome a new Treasurer and I will ensure that this transition is well supported by myself and our Finance Committee and Board. Our mission is well supported by fellow Board members and the strong leadership and dedication of our centre President Gilda Howard.



Alexander Lord
Treasurer



People and Culture Committee Report

We are delighted to present the annual report of the People and Culture Committee for the year 2023. We are honoured to share our journey towards fostering a vibrant team and community culture and ensuring the well-being of our team members and the children they care for and educate.

Our committee operates with a clear mission: to cultivate an inclusive, supportive, and empowering environment for our staff, children, and families. We envision a workplace where every individual feels valued, respected, and motivated to contribute their best towards the holistic development of our young learners.

In line with our strategic goals, we have achieved significant milestones:

1. Recognising how integral our staff are to the operation of BWFC, we have prioritised initiatives to support their growth, well-being, and engagement.
2. One of our strategic goals continues to be the employer of choice in the early childhood education sector. We have moved towards this aim by offering salaries at least 10% above the award wage, ensuring competitive compensation for our dedicated staff.
3. Our commitment to creating a supportive and rewarding work environment has resulted in low staff turnover rates and retention within our team.
4. To gauge the satisfaction and engagement levels of our staff, we conducted an external staff engagement survey to gather feedback, identify areas for improvement, and celebrate successes.
5. As part of our efforts to prioritise work-life balance and well-being, we introduced an additional week of annual leave for our staff, providing them with more opportunities for rest, rejuvenation, and quality time with their loved ones.

While celebrating our achievements, we acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. Maintaining our position as an employer of choice requires ongoing commitment and investment in our people and culture initiatives amidst evolving industry dynamics. We must continuously evolve our strategies to address emerging needs and trends in staff development, engagement, and retention.

Looking ahead, our committee is committed to advancing the following priorities:

1. We will continue to invest in our staff through ongoing support, recognition programs, and professional development opportunities to nurture a culture of excellence and growth.
2. We will explore innovative approaches to attract and retain top talent, including targeted recruitment efforts, competitive benefits packages, and career advancement pathways.
3. We will further enhance our well-being initiatives, including mental health support, wellness programs, and flexible work arrangements, to ensure the holistic wellness of our staff.

In conclusion, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, families, and the community for their unwavering support and commitment to our shared vision. Together, we will continue to elevate our team culture and make a positive impact on the lives of our children and the broader community.



Troy Hoggan
People and Culture
Committee Convenor





Governance and Appointments Committee Report

Members of the committee: Gilda Howard & Adrian Naudi

The committee had a very productive year ensuring the governance practices of the board are current and fit for purpose, while conducting recruitment of new board members and ensuring timely succession planning.

Several operating documents were reviewed throughout the year, including the online Board Member's manual, policies and procedures.

Some of the highlights of the Committee's work were:

Board recruitment

The committee conducted recruitment and were pleased to recommend two candidates to the board. Rachel Haggett and Katrina Jojkity joined during 2023 and have contributed to the success of the organisation through their participation on committees and sharing of expertise.

Our board positions have been very stable however we were very sorry to farewell our Vice President Adrian Naudi, who has been responsible for driving a lot of our governance initiatives. He has guided the board through establishing new processes due to changes in regulations and identified enhancements we can employ to strive for excellence in our governance work.

Whistleblower services

Under Australian law, an increasing number of organisations were required to implement a Whistleblower policy and reporting mechanism. The G&A recommended that the organisation put further systems in place to report serious breaches of standards, ethics, regulation, and law, allowing risks to be mitigated and the organisation to be protected. Work was undertaken by the committee to source these services and the board has since approved and implemented these enhancements.

Review of board members time commitment

The Committee reviewed the ways in which board members and management's time and expertise were being utilised, this was driven by the evaluation of the board's performance in the Annual Board evaluation.

Several changes have been implemented to the frequency and modes of meetings, the structure of committees, the content of reports and expectations of reporting. These changes will be reviewed to identify any enhancements.

Review of Board's effectiveness

In September 2023 G&A led the review of the board's committee structure and gained approval to realign the structure of some of our committees. This led to the alignment of the Consultative Committee responsibilities into the People & Culture Committee.

Parents and carers and their extended families are an important Stakeholder for the organisation. While management has daily contact with families the Board has a responsibility to ensure we have meaningful engagement of stakeholders, their interests are understood and considered by the Board. Through the development of new roles for the committees we have ensured continued direct access to board members.

G&A will continue this work into 2024 with an emphasis on board performance.



Gilda Howard

Governance and Appointments Convenor



Consultative Committee Report

Bubup Womindjeka Family & Children Centre's Consultative Committee is composed of parents and users of the different services BWFCC provides. It is convened by a member of the BWFCC Board of Governance in line with the organisation's constitution.

The committee is designed to facilitate communication between families/users of Bubup's services and the BWFCC Board of Governance. This allows the Board to work with management to continuously improve the services offered.

In 2023 there were representatives on the committee from long day care, sessional kindergarten and playgroups. Meetings were held online throughout the year and after children's bed times to allow as many parent representatives as possible to attend.

The feedback and focus for the first half of the year primarily involved the transition for children into their new rooms. It is a large adjustment for some children and parents going into the older rooms or adapting to the new routines of the kinder program. The feedback from the parent representatives and parents attending the centre helped management communicate more effectively and address any concerns early on.

The second half of the year saw very little feedback coming in from parents or the room representatives. The correct escalation path for parents through to the management team meant very few parents had constructive feedback for the meetings. They were however a great opportunity to get positive feedback from the users of the centre that the board were very happy to hear and be able to congratulate the EO and her team on their fantastic performance. There also continued to be very favourable feedback for all of the special celebrations that the centre facilitated for families such as the welcome BBQ and Grandparents' day.

The Consultative Committee was originally set up during a time of significant change at Bubup Womindjeka to allow the board an avenue to understand how parents were experiencing the centre. Due to the reduced feedback and effective management processes, the board decided to absorb the Consultative Committee into the People and Culture committee at the end of 2023. Room reps will still be implemented for each room to provide an additional communication channel for parents as well as facilitate a sense of community via private parent WhatsApp groups. The People and Culture committee will complete annual surveys to the users of the centre to ensure feedback and opportunities are captured and give the board confidence that Bubup Womindjeka continues to provide valuable services to families.



Alisha Burns
Consultative Committee Convenor





The Risk Committee Report

In 2023, the Risk Committee played a crucial role in supporting the Board and Management in navigating a complex and challenging operational environment, ensuring the achievement of strategic goals for our families and the wider community.

The Committee, composed of three Board members (Adrian Naudi, Katrina Jojkity, and Jamie Grant), the Executive Officer, and the Director of Education, began its term with a focus on enhancing oversight and management of risks.

The Committee circulated its terms of reference to the board for the annual risk review, culminating in its formal adoption at the November board meeting. This proactive approach to risk management and governance highlights the Committee's commitment to effectively address potential risks.

Notably, BW FCC actively worked with the Council concerning the major works in Lagoon reserve and The City of Port Phillip's new waitlist system. These engagements demonstrate a dedication to safety and ensuring a sustainable pipeline of children. The Management team collaborated closely with digital vendors to provide Cybersecurity training to the finance manager and executive team. Additionally, a critical incident response plan for cybersecurity breaches was developed, further emphasising the organisation's commitment to safeguarding its digital assets.

Overall, the Risk Committee's actions reflect its dedication to promoting effective risk management practices within the centre. By proactively identifying and addressing potential risks, the Committee ensures that strategic objectives are met while prioritising the safety and well-being of our families and the broader community.



On behalf of the Risk Committee, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Board members and the entire BW FCC team for their unwavering dedication in ensuring the safety and well-being of our community.

Dr Katrina Jojkity
Risk Committee Convenor





Playgroup Report

We had a total of 14 Playgroups in 2023 and with around 376 families attending over the weeks.

Due to the increase of baby Playgroups in 2023, we added in more resources for younger babies as the groups were becoming larger.

Community Connections

I attended 2 Network meetings and we held one throughout 2023 for Playgroups and Toy libraries, this was a great opportunity to share any achievements and any challenges groups were facing. It was also a nice way to meet other members of the City of Port Phillip community and to be able to network with similar services.

We continued working alongside the Maternal and Child Health Nurses by organising a talk at the end of each New Parent Group. This then provided the opportunity for each New parent group to start a playgroup, where the group could continue meeting up in a safe and supportive environment.

We had Mini Maestros come out and offer 3 trial sessions during school holidays for our playgroups. This was a great opportunity for Mini Maestro to share with the community what they offered during the school terms. This was a great way to support the local community to increase their enrolment numbers after COVID 19.

Families gave lots of positive feedback in regards to the Welcome BBQ and End of the Year Celebration at Edwards Park and said they really enjoyed it.

Cultural and Language Playgroups

This year Dutch Playgroup have had a lot of younger families enrol, to support this they had picked up an earlier timeslot as well to support the families' routine times.

Japanese Playgroup will commence in 2024 as a double timeslot as well to support children's interest in their program and to be able to have more learning time for the children and families to connect.

We welcomed a German Playgroup during the mid year and they will be continuing on in 2024.

Sustainability in Playgroups

We continued being committed to our sustainability practices throughout the year, by using loose part materials in play during Playgroup sessions.

Recommencing in 2024

We have 10 playgroups returning in 2024, 2 new playgroups starting and 3 Playgroups merging together with similar age children to meet families from the community.



Jessica Fielder
Playgroup Coordinator





Maternal and Child Health Services

Throughout 2023 the Maternal and Child Health Service (MCH) delivery was pleased to return to full capacity, seeing families face to face for their key age and stage (KAS) visits.

Our team of MCH nurses are so fortunate to work together with the wonderful staff at Bubup Womindjeka Family Services. Our utilisation of the beautiful, shared courtyard space and playgroup rooms has further enriched the overall experience, fostering a nurturing environment for both nursing and childcare activities.

Towards the end of 2023, we farewelled some wonderful nurses, Colleen and Leanne who collectively worked over 38 years of nursing between them. We celebrate their remarkable careers and the positive and memorable impact they've made on the families and community in CoPP. We are very pleased to welcome Emma Backman, Micaela Momsen and Phoebe Keogh who will be working alternate days at BWFFC. The recent changes in staff have been implemented to enhance the continuity of care for our families and reflect the needs in our community.

In 2023, Bubup Womindjeka had a total of 183 birth notices and 189 enrolments.

This indicates a slight decline when comparing to previous years in 2022 which had 211 birth notices. This decline has prompted MCH to adapt to the changing needs of our community, and at times allowed for more flexibility within our service.

Throughout 2023, CoPP MCH continued to offer various services in addition to the KAS appointments to help facilitate early childhood development and community connection.

New parent groups run regularly, allowing families to connect and share experiences in early parenthood. Often these groups continue in the form of a playgroup, occupying the beautiful space at BWFFC. We are so fortunate to have the BWFFC staff on site to assist in the prompt organisation and facilitating these playgroups into action.

Our monthly food talks at South Melbourne remained very popular in 2023, offering anticipatory guidance around the introduction to solids and healthy eating for infants and toddlers. This is a very relaxed, social and informal way that parents can discuss any food related questions.

MCH continued to offer breastfeeding support services, with face-to-face weekly appointments for mothers by our lactation consultant based at Middle Park. These breastfeeding services aim to empower mothers with knowledge and confidence around feeding their baby.

In 2023 Sleep and settling talks were held to promote healthy sleeping habits for infants and young children. Our expert nurses offer age specific and evidence-based approaches to help families establish routines that are optimal for healthy child development. These sessions were offered online, face to face or even as an outreach if families required.

The MCH nurses at Bubup Womindjeka are looking forward to 2024, continuing to support the families in our local area and working collaboratively with the BWFFC team.



Phoebe Keogh
Maternal Child Health Nurse



Bubup Womindjeka-BHN Integrated Service Project 2023

2023 marked 10 years of partnership and collaboration between Bubup Womindjeka (BW) and the Child Youth and Family team at Better Health Network (BHN - formerly Inner South Community Health or Star Health). With a focus on early intervention and prevention, we have again been able to achieve positive outcomes for families and the BW community. Working closely with the kindergarten educators and maternal child health nurses on site at BW, we were able to further enhance our practice, and ensure that staff were confident in referring families to BHN and other local health and wellbeing services. The continued commitment to strengthening the partnership and integrating services at BW is indeed a great achievement for all stakeholders.

In 2023 the partnership between BHN and BW continued through:

- Provision of initial one-off face-to-face or online consultations with a child psychologist (for parents referred by BW educators, MCHN and through BW playgroups).
- Follow-up sessions, involving observation of a child in the kindergarten room, and consultation with educators and support staff.
- Delivery of school readiness funding (SRF) sessions focused on building the capacity of kindergarten educators in the areas of communication and language development, access and inclusion, and social and emotional wellbeing.
- Support to refer families to BHN and/or other local health services, including the NDIS.

Plan for 2024

It is our intention to continue work with the BW community and to keep on strengthening our partnership as we have done over the past 10 years. The model of service provision will remain the same as in 2023 with provision of initial consultations and follow-up observation sessions, and delivery of the SRF Program. We truly value the partnership between BHN and the BW community and look forward to working together again this year



Gabriela Hercman
Clinical Psychologist
Better Health Network



Life Member - Bernadene Voss



During 2023 the organisation acknowledged the commitment of one of the founding board members of Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre by conferring on her a Life Membership of BWFCC.

Bernadene has been a volunteer member of the Board since inception and is Bubup's longest serving member. She has made a significant leadership contribution to the service, to former and current leadership and employees, as well as to the community that it serves.

She was instrumental in guiding the Board and the Bubup Leadership team through its most significant challenges, including the very establishment of the service, through significant changes in leadership and the prolific impacts of a pandemic as well as the subsequent labour and economic impacts to the service.

She has been an enduring advocate not only for the service, but also the early child education and care sector and for families during and beyond her service on the Council of the City of Port Phillip.

She has provided guidance to past and present members of the Board and shown genuine passion and commitment to the adoption of best practice governance and utmost integrity.

Gilda Howard
President





Bubup Womindjeka

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre is a community run, not-for-profit organisation providing integrated early learning and care services to the community.

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre is committed to promoting a safe, equitable environment that supports a sense of belonging and respect. We advocate for the rights and participation of each child, throughout our organisation we embed the Child Safe Standards.

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Yalukut Weellam of the Boon Wurrung people and pay our respects to their elders of past, present and future.

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre

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