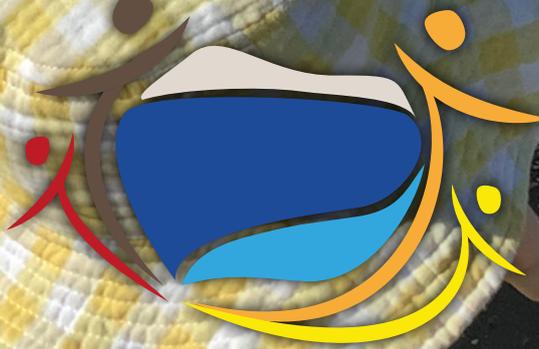


2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Bubup
Womindjeka
03 9676 8400

“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:

- 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 team members 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, using a floorbook approach to capture children's voices and spontaneous play, shaping a rich, holistic and responsive 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 team member brings to our learning
- Community, which enriches the educational environment and operational systems whilst fostering a sense of belonging for all.

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the Kulin Nation. We pay respect to Elders, both past and present and acknowledge their proud and resilient cultures, and ongoing connections to land, sea 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 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.

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

Our Team

Retain and foster a skilled and diverse workforce who deliver responsive and innovative early childhood education and care.

- Workforce Strategy
 - Attract
 - Retain
- Professional Learning
- Skills development – qualification

Our Practice

Demonstrate exemplary practice in early childhood education and care, working in partnership with families and the wider community.

- Achieve Exceeding National Quality Standards in all areas
- Pro-actively supporting vulnerable families and children in the local community
- Promote innovative inclusive practice and uphold the rights of the child
- Enhance our professional collaborative relationships

Governance

Provide excellent governance for the organisation.

- Support to Board Members
- Maximising board expertise and time
- Measure performance
- Strengthen external relationships

Business Development

Maintain the long-term viability of our integrated children and family service by being proactive and agile and in line with our Values

- Viability metrics
- Infrastructure investment
- Program delivery review



Governance Structure

The Membership of the Board for 2025

President: Gilda Howard

Vice President: Carly Molloy

Secretary: Peter Martin

Treasurer: Rachel Haggett

General Members: Troy Hoggan
Jo Powell
Damon Hauenstein
Billy Girdwood

Sub Committees

Leadership Liaison Committee:
Convenor – Gilda Howard

Finance Committee:
Convenor – Rachel Haggett
Members – Damon Hauenstein and Peter Martin

Risk Committee:
Convenor – Billy Girdwood
Members – Carly Molloy

Leadership and Culture Committee:
Convenor – Peter Martin
Member – Carly Molloy

Governance and Appointments Committee:
Convenor – Gilda Howard
Members – Jo Powell

Centre Leadership Team



Kellie Connor
Executive Officer



Andrea Ng
Director of Education



May Kanjanathamrongkul
Human Resources Coordinator



Ebony Johnson*
Business Manager



Jesse Jem Barrera*
Enrolments Officer



Michelle Wilson*
Enrolments Officer



Tracey Young*
Enrolments Officer



Avinash Ramudu*
Business Manager

Education Leadership Team



Andrea Ng
Director of Education



May Kanjanathamrongkul
Program Co-ordinator



Poornima Sangar
Program Co-ordinator



Michelle Wilson*
Program Coordinator



Jessie Clark*
Program Coordinator

**These roles were held within the 2025 period*



President Report

Throughout this very challenging year for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), sector, it has been rewarding as the board president to see what a resilient and resourceful organisation we are.

There have been several National and State incidents of child abuse within group settings across Australia. We have been quick to review processes, revised systems and continue in educating our families and staff on our expectations around child safety and our practices.

This is not something we can just do once, but it is seen as an ongoing comment to the care of our children that we continue to be vigilant when it comes to the safety of all children in our care.

During 2024 our service achieved an exceeding rating under the National Quality Standard, however with our continuous improvement approach we have been focusing on areas that we can continue to improve. Staff have access to extensive professional training opportunities, and TAFE courses, and the board continue to ensure teaching materials, equipment and resources are available to all staff and children.

I want to thank two of our board members who will be leaving in March 2026. Jo Powell who has been an invaluable member of the Governance & Appointments Committee and Troy Hoggan who leaves the board after 8 years and has been awarded a Life Member for his commitment to the organisation.

I would like to thank our main stakeholders, our children, our families, the City of Port Phillip and the Department of Education for your continued support and the encouragement you provide to our staff.

Finally, a huge thanks to our staff, their leader Kellie Connor who shows exceptional leadership qualities and to all our staff across the service. Regardless of the position they have, they are always professional and committed to the children and families of our service.



Gilda Howard
President

Executive Officer Report

It is a pleasure to provide an update for the 2025 year for Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre.

BWFCC has continued to develop and improve our early childhood education and care programs with a particular focus on our educational programs and child safety. Child Safety is always at the forefront of everything we do however it was front and centre throughout the year due to several National and State incidents of child abuse within group settings across Australia.

Some of the safety initiatives that were conducted in 2025 were:

- *Reviewed and updated BWFCC's Commitment to Child Safe Standards*
- *Reviewed and updated BWFCC's Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Introduced the BWFCC Child Safe Mascot initiative*
- *Introduction of a dedicated state-wide Early Childhood Workforce Register*
- *Development of the Digital Technologies and Online Environment Policy*

We held a number of successful family functions throughout the year:

- *Welcome BBQ*
- *Mother's and Special Person's Day celebration*
- *Father's and Special Persons' Day celebration*
- *Grandparent's and Special Persons Day celebration*
- *End of Year BBQ*

All of these events are always well attended and it is wonderful to see so many children and families enjoying these functions. We value the strong community at BWFCC and the relationship we have with the children and the families.

I would like to say thank-you and acknowledge the hard work, professionalism and dedication displayed by all BWFCC staff members during 2025. As always it is the staff at BWFCC who continue to make Bubup the success it is. Our dedicated educators go above and beyond to educate and care for all children and provide support for our families. Our staff are the backbone of Bubup. Our staff turnover rate remains low at an average of 8.6%, which is significantly below the sector average. For this we are very grateful as it allows us to provide an early childhood education and care centre that can develop long term relationships with our children and their families.

During the year we supported 14 of our staff to study their Bachelor of Education, with four completing their qualification. We supported seven staff to study their Diploma of Education, with five completing their qualification. We are proud of this commitment to provide opportunities for our staff to learn and grow with us.

I would like to recognise our Centre Leadership Team, Education Leadership Team and Administration Support Team who enable us to deliver a high-quality service for all children and families.

I would also 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. It was extremely beneficial to have Chloe, the Lead Family Worker from the City of Port Phillip work onsite at BWFCC one day per week to support families.



Lastly, I would like to thank the BWFCC Board members who very generously volunteer their time to provide insight, oversight and foresight of Bubup Womindjeka's governance and operations. I would also like to say thank you for the overwhelmingly positive support they offer me in my role as Executive Officer. It is a pleasure to work alongside them.

Kellie Connor
Executive Officer



Director of Education Report

At BWFCC, we believe in the power of continuous improvement and reflective practice. We are deeply committed to not only meeting but exceeding the expectations of our children, families, and the broader community. The past year has been one of progress, with significant developments across many areas of our service. This report highlights the key initiatives, achievements, and changes that have shaped our work over the past year and sets the stage for our future direction as we continue to provide a nurturing, inclusive, and high-quality environment for every child.

QIP Review Process

A cornerstone of our commitment to ongoing improvement has been the comprehensive review of our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). This year, we took a deeper dive into evaluating our practices, reflecting on what has been working well and where we can further evolve. Teams across the service engaged in critical reflection through individual room meetings, where everyone had the opportunity to share their insights. This process was not just about identifying areas for improvement, but also about celebrating the strengths of our team and the rich learning experiences we provide for children.

From these discussions, we were able to set clear, measurable goals for the year ahead. One of the goals within Quality Area 1 (Educational Program) is to enhance the visibility of the program cycle within our curriculum planning. Rather than focusing solely on learning outcomes, we are intentionally placing greater emphasis on celebrating the learning process itself - the progress, growth, and learning journeys children experience as they engage with their environment, peers, and educators.

Children are an integral part of this process and are actively involved in decision-making related to their learning and environment. In particular, our older children contribute their ideas and perspectives through a child's lens as part of their inquiry-based learning. This includes sharing thoughts about our physical environment, participating in discussions around ideas, evaluation, and modification, and collaborating with educators to bring these ideas to life. Children take great pride in seeing their visions realised, and we consistently strive to design and adapt our physical spaces based on their insights, feedback, and evolving interests.

This shift in practice has enabled us to create a curriculum that is more responsive, inclusive, and holistic- one that is grounded in children's voices, interests, and ongoing inquiries. By making the learning process more visible and honouring children's agency, we aim to foster deeper engagement and support children to develop a strong sense of ownership over their learning journeys.

QIP goals formed

In our QIP goals, we have also placed a strong emphasis on fostering cultural awareness and respect. Through our "Care for Country" initiative, we continue to embed First Nations perspectives into our curriculum, ensuring that children develop an understanding of sustainability, environmental awareness, and Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, and doing. These cultural elements are not just embedded in our programs but are also celebrated through events and activities that help children connect with the richness of Aboriginal culture. This approach strengthens our commitment to providing a curriculum that is inclusive and reflective of the world in which we live.

Designing our holistic curriculum

The redesign of our curriculum template last year reflects this new approach, evolving into a living document that guides not just the delivery of learning experiences, but also our ongoing critical reflections. It serves as a tool for educators to document children's progress, set learning goals, and adjust teaching strategies to ensure every child receives the support they need. This dynamic approach aligns closely with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), ensuring that our programs remain meaningful, individualised, and inclusive. It also underscores our commitment to making the curriculum not just a tool for teaching but a collaborative process that evolves with the children's interests and developmental needs.

Child Safety-wellbeing Initiatives

Child safety remains at the forefront of everything we do at BWFCC. In 2025, we undertook a comprehensive review of our child safety procedures, ensuring that they are not only in line with the highest standards but also effective in fostering a culture of safety throughout the centre. One of our centre-wide Child Safety Initiatives was well-liked by children and their families upon introduction in 2025 and continues to be a cornerstone of our program, helping children understand their rights, boundaries, and the importance of safety in their everyday lives. A key part of this initiative is our mascot and journal activity, where children take home a personalised social story to reflect on safety concepts. This initiative has proven to be an engaging way to spark important conversations at home with their caregivers and has empowered children to develop practical life skills that will serve them well into the future.

Bubup Beach Excursion

A particularly exciting development that we have been working towards in 2025, has been the introduction of our Bubup Beach Excursion. This initiative, part of our ongoing work with Bubup Bush, offers children the opportunity to connect with nature and engage in real-world exploration. The beach excursions are an extension of our curriculum, providing a hands-on, immersive experience that not only fosters social skills and resilience but also deepens children's understanding of their local environment. These excursions have proven to be invaluable in promoting environmental awareness and building a strong sense of community as children explore their natural surroundings with their peers and educators.

Our New Policy – Digital Technologies and Online Environment

Year 2025 has also seen the introduction of a new Digital Technologies and Online Environment Policy. In line with current guidelines from the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority and recommendations from the Rapid Child Review, this policy ensures that our use of technology remains safe, respectful, and educational. We are committed to fostering a positive digital environment for children, equipping educators and children with the tools to engage with technology responsibly while protecting their online safety and privacy.

As we look ahead to the next year, our commitment to excellence remains unwavering. We will continue to refine and develop our practices, ensuring that we provide a high-quality, inclusive, and safe environment for all children. Our focus will remain on creating a curriculum that is responsive to the needs and interests of each child, ensuring they have the opportunity to explore, grow, and learn in a way that is meaningful and engaging. We are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and look forward to another year of growth, collaboration, and achievement.

We are grateful for the continued support of our families, staff, and community partners. Together, we are creating an environment where every child has the opportunity to thrive and reach their fullest potential.



Andrea Ng
Director of Education



Human Resources Report

The 2025 reporting year shows steady progress in workforce stability, enhancements to our HRIS system (Employment Hero), and staff engagement. We have focused on strengthening performance review systems via the Employment Hero platform, maintaining staff retention, supporting staff wellbeing, and aligning workforce practices with the National Quality Framework.

Performance Review Implementation – Employment Hero

In 2025, Bubup used Employment Hero as the platform for conducting annual staff performance reviews. This replaced the previous paper based system with a more efficient digital process.

As this was the first year of using the platform, some challenges, adjustment and communication were expected. Despite this, 94 per cent of staff completed their annual review through Employment Hero. This is a strong result and shows good staff engagement and leadership support.

The system has improved accountability and record keeping. Staff and supervisors can now easily access goals, feedback notes and development plans at any time. This supports ongoing performance discussions instead of limiting conversations to once a year.

In 2026, We will strengthen the process by introducing team goals around term 2. This will help link individual goals to the overall service Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Refresher training will also be provided so staff can use the platform with greater confidence, including tracking professional development and future career pathways.

Staff Turnover

Bubup's staff turnover rate for 2025 averaged 8.6%. This compares positively with national early childhood education and care estimates, where turnover is commonly reported between 25 and 35 per cent. Recent national workforce data from the 2024 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census (released 2025) shows that average tenure at current service remains relatively short for many paid contact staff, with some service types reporting average tenure around 5–6 years. This data highlights that high staff turnover continues to be a challenge across the sector. In this context, maintaining turnover at 8.6% reflects a stable and supportive work environment.

Lower turnover benefits children and families through continuity of care, reduces recruitment and training costs, and strengthens team relationships. Stability within educator teams is also critical for maintaining consistent, high-quality educational programs and fostering the positive culture and expertise Bubup values.

Workforce Tenure Profile

When grouped into broader categories, 56% of Bubup staff have worked at the service for up to four years, reflecting good recruitment and onboarding in recent years. A further 21% have been with Bubup between four and eight years, while 17% have worked at the service for eight years or more. This group of long-serving educators is a strong asset, bringing experience, deep understanding of Bubup culture, and providing valuable support within teams.

National workforce data from the 2024 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census (released 2025) shows that, across Australian ECEC services, average tenure at current service remains relatively short for many paid contact staff, with most staff having fewer than four years of tenure. Compared with this benchmark, Bubup's proportion of staff with more than four years of service demonstrates strong retention and highlights the stability of our workforce.

This balanced mix of newer and experienced staff supports mentoring, succession planning and ongoing quality improvement.



Staff Engagement and Working Groups

In partnership with the Director, HR supported the relaunch of three working groups focused on Sustainability; Reconciliation Action Plan and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and Children and Staff Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

Each group developed clear values and focus areas aligned with the organisation's philosophy and quality standards. This approach encourages shared leadership and allows educators to actively contribute to service improvement.

A key initiative from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Working Group is the establishment of a dedicated Staff Wellbeing Room. The room is currently being finalised and is expected to be available for staff use in 2026. This quiet space will provide staff with a calm environment during breaks, supporting mental wellbeing and reducing workplace stress. It will also strengthen compliance with updated Child Safe Standards by ensuring personal mobile phone use occurs outside children's learning environments.

Supporting staff wellbeing strengthens morale, reduces burnout risk and contributes to improved retention.

Worker Retention Program

Bubup has formally registered to participate the Worker Retention Program by the Fair Work Commission. As the program is externally established and includes specific eligibility and compliance requirements, clear communication with staff has been essential. HR supported Kellie, Executive Officer, to ensure employees understood the purpose of the program, eligibility criteria and potential benefits. Participation in the program reflects Bubup's proactive approach to supporting workforce stability and meeting sector obligations.

Conclusion

Overall, 2025 has been a year of steady progress in workforce stability, digital improvement and staff engagement. The successful implementation of Employment Hero, a turnover rate well below national estimates, and a strong tenure profile demonstrate Bubup's commitment to workforce sustainability.



May Kanjanathamrongkul
HR Coordinator

References

Australian Government Department of Education. (2025). *2024 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census report*. Australian Government. <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood>

Jobs and Skills Australia. (2023). *Labour Market Insights: Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Data*.



Kindergarten Program Coordinator Report

Throughout 2025, our Kindergarten program was intentionally designed to extend children's learning beyond the classroom and into the wider community. Guided by the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), our program prioritised experiential, inquiry-based learning that supports children to build knowledge, confidence, independence, and a strong sense of belonging. Excursions and community engagement played a central role in our curriculum, enriching children's understanding of the world around them while strengthening their school readiness skills and lifelong dispositions for learning.

Community Excursions and Learning Beyond the Classroom

Across the year, kindergarten children had regular opportunities to engage with the local community through thoughtfully planned excursions. These experiences were not incidental; they were intentionally embedded within the curriculum to support children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Excursions provided authentic contexts for learning, allowing children to apply their knowledge in real-world settings, develop confidence in unfamiliar environments, and practise essential life skills such as following routines, listening to instructions, problem-solving, and navigating public spaces safely.

A strong focus of our excursion program was supporting school readiness. Being out in the community encourages children to develop independence, resilience, self-regulation, and communication skills - key capabilities for a successful transition to school. Children practised managing their belongings, participating in group discussions, negotiating with peers, and adapting to new expectations. These experiences directly align with VEYLDF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing and Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners.

Farm Kinder Program – A Highlight of 2025

The highlight of the year was the Farm Kinder Program, where each child participated in a full-day, hands-on farming experience. This immersive program offered rich opportunities for learning through direct engagement with nature and sustainable practices. Children explored concepts such as composting, the greenhouse effect, sustainability, animal care and ecosystems, planting, and the role of farming in our society.

Through caring for animals, planting seeds, and observing natural processes, children developed an understanding of interdependence between people, animals, and the environment. These experiences planted the seeds of scientific thinking, environmental responsibility, and respect for living things. Learning from Farm Kinder was extended back into the kindergarten classrooms through an inquiry-based approach, where children's questions, theories, and ideas shaped ongoing investigations.

Educators worked alongside children to deepen understanding, foster curiosity, and support meaning-making, ensuring learning remained intentional, relevant, and child-led. VEYLDF Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world and Outcome 4.

Intergenerational Learning - Koonwarra 3-Year-Old Group

The 3-year-old group participated in an ongoing weekly excursion to a local aged care home every Friday. These visits provided valuable intergenerational learning experiences, fostering empathy, respect, and meaningful relationships. Children engaged in shared activities such as conversations, songs, art experiences, and simple games, building confidence in social interactions and developing an understanding of community roles.

Over time, strong bonds were formed between children and residents, supporting children's sense of belonging and emotional development. These regular visits helped children practise communication skills, develop patience, and learn to recognise and respond to the emotions of others. This initiative strongly supported VEYLDF Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity and Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators.

Bubup Beach Excursion Program

Towards the end of the year, significant planning and collaboration took place to successfully implement the Bubup Beach Excursion Program. Behind the scenes, the kindergarten teachers and myself, as Program Coordinator, carefully identified and assessed risks to ensure children's safety and wellbeing. The program was introduced through three trial rounds, utilising clear boundary points and small groups of children with the ratio of 1:5 and up to approximately 14 children at a time, before gradually extending to the full group.

This staged approach allowed educators to build confidence and enhance their skills in supervising diverse groups of children with varying needs, behaviours, and personalities within a public environment. Children were explicitly taught about public safety and excursion expectations using social stories and visual supports, giving them an understanding and context before taking them to a new environment in a group setting. As a result, children demonstrated increased confidence, awareness, and responsibility while navigating outdoor and community spaces.

Floor Book Documentation and Collaborative Practice

A key feature of our program was the use of the floor book approach to documentation and planning. Floor books enabled educators to work collaboratively as a team to capture children's voices, ideas, questions, and learning journeys in an interactive and visible way. This approach supported planning for and with children, ensuring the curriculum remained responsive, intentional, and meaningful.

By valuing children's perspectives and involving them in decision-making, educators fostered a strong sense of agency and ownership over learning. Floor books also strengthened reflective practice among educators, supporting consistency, shared understanding, and continuous improvement across the program.

Overall, I am pleased to report that the 2025 Kindergarten program was rich, dynamic, and deeply grounded in community knowledge and connection. Through community engagement, excursions, inquiry-based learning, and collaborative documentation, children were supported to develop the skills, dispositions, and confidence needed for future success. Our program not only nurtured children's current interests and capabilities but also laid the foundations for lifelong learning, resilience, and a strong sense of identity as they transition into the years ahead.



Andrea Ng
Kindergarten Program Co-ordinator



Treasurer's Report

During 2025 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 the financial decisions we have taken.

Our occupancy and attendance at the centre has continued to be very strong throughout 2025 at 99.5% throughout the calendar year to 31 December 2025. BWFCF recorded a financial surplus of \$212,985 for the year ended 31 December 2025. 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 2025, BWFCF spent the majority of our expenses on staff which are the most important part of our service and over \$60,000 in upgrading our program resources. We continued to budget \$1,000 in hardship payments to support vulnerable families, however this resource was not required in 2025. In 2025 the centre opted into the Victorian Worker Retention Scheme which provides a 15% wage increase over two years to early childhood educators.

Our Team

Firstly, I would like to thank our Business Manager Avinash Ramudu who continued his diligent work through the first half of 2025 whilst balancing his dual roles as Business Manager and Head Chef of our kitchen. Avinash departed the centre with the well wishes of the Board and Management team in July to take up a new role. Following his departure we were lucky enough to welcome Ebony Johnson back to the centre to take over as Business Manager. Ebony can be relied upon to provide timely and accurate monthly financial information to the Board, enabling us to make informed strategic decisions in the best interests of the centre. Ebony's transition back to Bubup has been seamless for the Board and the reporting we rely upon.

Once again Kellie Connor, our Executive Officer, has led a strong team and effectively implemented the strategic recommendations of the Board during the year. It continues to be a pleasure to work with Kellie whose strong financial acumen is very much appreciated. We had strong continuity on the finance committee in 2025 with Damon Hauenstein continuing on as a committee member and whose strategic insights are really impactful. Peter Martin also joined the finance committee at the end of 2025 and we look forward to his experience in the education sector deepening the committee's knowledge. Finally, Gilda Howard our President sat on the finance committee and as always brings invaluable strategic insight.

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 2026 by \$6 or 4% from \$150 per day to \$156 a day. This is at a rate lower than our increasing costs, and only slightly above a CPI increase of 3.8% over the last 12 months. The centre continues to take pride in the fact that it runs above minimum ratios in all rooms. 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 \$600,000 per annum to implement. We consider this an important part of the support and care we aim to show our staff and children in making the centre a wonderful place to work and thrive.

Our sessional kinder

Our 3-year-old kinder and 4-year-old kinder programs continued throughout the year to 31 December 2025 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. We continue to offer a before and after kinder care program which supports working parents and allows our community to access our kinder programme in a way that aligns with the EYP hours.

Looking to the future

2026 sees a commitment from the board to further invest in the care we provide through our most important asset, our staff. We will continue our focus on ensuring our financial stability continues in 2026 and we continue to support parents placing their trust in our centre's care of their children. Our mission is well supported by fellow Board members and the strong leadership and dedication of our centre President Gilda Howard.



Rachel Haggett
Treasurer



Governance & Appointments Report

During the year the committee continued to work on several topics including;

1. *Reviewing current policies & developing required new policies*
2. *Assess useability/suitability of Teams*
3. *Update/develop board operating documents*
4. *Board recruitment*

The committee consisted of Jo Powell and Gilda Howard.

The ability for the board to function well was the reason for the review of the IT systems. This review commenced in November and will continue into 2026. The Board's policy platform was reviewed and several new policies developed and approved by the board.

Throughout the year the committee completed several major pieces of work including the review of the board handbook, the establishment of a Stakeholder Plan, and a Safety Messaging Plan.

The committee commenced recruiting for new board members in October, interviews have been completed and the board is hoping to make appointments in early 2026. The committee will continue recruiting throughout the year.

Focus has also been on reviewing the board performance and continuous improvement. The annual benchmarking survey was completed by all eight Board members in October 2025. The results reflect strong alignment on governance effectiveness, strategic oversight, and operational visibility. All members agreed that Board reporting provides visibility on the progress of the strategy and its key initiatives. Members involved in the strategic planning process confirmed the program was successful, with accreditation serving as a strong endorsement. Opportunities were identified around board induction, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and identifying sustainability opportunities. Plans for improvement will be put in place for 2026.

The Board farewells Jo in March 2026, her participation on the board and the G&A committee will be greatly missed. Congratulations on completing your term on the BWFC board. Your insights, considerations, and effort have been a hall mark of your time on the board.



Gilda Howard
G&A Convenor

The Risk Committee Report

The Risk Committee supported the Board throughout 2025, providing focused oversight of the centre's risk framework during a period of heightened sector scrutiny and regulatory change. The Committee met formally during the year, with additional out-of-cycle discussions convened to respond to emerging risks, particularly in response to the widely reported child safety issues impacting childcare centres in Victoria.

A continued focal point for the Committee in 2025 was child safety and safeguarding. In response to developments across the early childhood sector, the Committee undertook a detailed review of the Risk Register to ensure it more explicitly addressed risks associated with child safety and potential harm. This work resulted in the introduction of further child safety risk items, strengthening alignment with regulatory expectations and reinforcing child safety as the pillar of utmost importance in BWFC governance.

The Committee also oversaw the finalisation of a Crisis Response Policy and the establishment of a formal Crisis Management Committee. This work clarified decision-making authority, escalation pathways and communication protocols to ensure the Centre is well prepared to respond decisively and transparently.

Consistent with its annual cycle, the Committee conducted a review of insurance coverage and environmental risks, including consideration of historical soil contamination and the extent of available insurance protection. While insurance coverage for historical contamination remains limited, the Committee is satisfied that the Centre is appropriately insured across all key risk areas.

The Committee continued to assess financial and operational risks arising from the introduction of new government schemes and policies, in particular the implementation of the worker retention payment and the subsequent reconciliation of its related payments. Other areas of focus for the risk committee in 2025 were cyber security, emergency management planning, both resulting in the adoption of relevant policies.

The Risk Committee gives thanks to management for their proactive engagement throughout the year and remains confident that the Centre's risk framework continues to support the safety, sustainability and long-term resilience of BWFC. The Committee is assured that risks are being identified, monitored and managed effectively in a manner consistent with the Centre's values, regulatory obligations and strategic objectives.

I would like to thank my fellow Risk Committee members for their considered contribution, the Executive Officer and management team for their diligence and responsiveness, and the BWFC Board for its ongoing engagement and support in strengthening the Centre's risk governance.



Billy Girdwood
Risk Committee Convenor

Life Member - Troy Hoggan



Troy first joined the Bubup Womindjeka Board in February 2018 and has been on the Board for circa 8 years. Throughout that time he has held several positions during his tenure on the Board. These have included the roles of President, Vice President, Convenor of the People and Culture Committee and as a Finance Committee member in his capacity as President. Troy has shown a willingness and commitment to contribute in all these roles over an extended period of time.

During his tenure as President, he guided the Board through a number of organisational challenges for which his skills and experience made him suitably qualified for:

- Firstly, a review of the Centre Operations and the existing structures and subsequent changes. This was driven by necessary changes at the time, and handled with diligence and thoroughness. This included his interactions with multiple staff members and Board members.
- Leading the Board appointment of a new EO, which included that the Board had a unified strategy and approach in the approach to appointing a new EO.
- The advocacy for the establishment of the new role Human Resources Coordinator, which upon reflection has proven to be an excellent decision.
- He led the organisation in navigating operations throughout the Covid 19 pandemic period which included the ongoing close relationship with the CoPP which was of importance. The messages to the organisation and families were clear and consistent during the periods of 'lockdown'.
- These situations required an immense amount of time and expertise, during uncertain and unique circumstances.

Troy likely holds the record for holding the longest Board meetings in specific circumstances, some finishing close to midnight!! But it should be noted that all of these were entirely necessary and important. His focus and attention to detail have always enabled all the necessary decisions to be taken.

Troy is always one for process and ensures that decisions are recorded, that we have quorum and for ensuring the motion is explicitly clear. After his period as President it could be observed that members of the Board would defer to Troy for matters of order, quorum and decisions, which he always helpfully leaned into.

Troy has regularly demonstrated a number of the skills and attributes for the roles he has held on the Board over an extended period, these align with the organisations values and purpose and have included:

- Ethical and Transparent - Throughout Troy provided sound and knowledgeable advice while being considered and decisive. His leadership ensured the board made ethical and transparent decisions. The outcome of both these situations was extremely positive with the organisation emerging with enhanced governance structures, a sound reputation, increased accountability, and improved children's program in place.
- Respectful and Accountable - Troy's approach has always been respectful and accountable, while modelling ethical behaviour and working towards achieving the organisations goals. Examples of this include where Troy makes himself easily understood and approachable to all centre staff and families.
- Considered and Inclusive - Board members have observed that Troy ensures that all views are considered around the table and that a matter is resolved before the next course of business is attended to.

As a local resident, living the distance of a football oval away from the centre, and having had his youngest child at the centre Troy has embodied commitment over eight years, it is with pleasure and thanks that we nominate Troy for a Life Membership of BWFCC.



Gilda Howard
President



Alexander Lord
Life Member



Playgroup Report

We had a total of 12 Playgroups in 2025 with around 140 families attending over the week.

Community Connections

I attended Network meetings with 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.

Families really enjoyed the Welcome BBQ and End of Year Celebration at Edwards Park and said they it was a great way to meet other families.

We offered all playgroups a fruit platter to help support Playgroups celebrate Mothers and Fathers and special person weeks, which families were very thankful for and enjoyed celebrating these events during their Playgroup sessions.

Sustainability in Playgroups

During the year we continued using loose parts and re using boxes to continue encouraging children to learn more about sustainability during each Playgroup session.

Cultural and Language Playgroups

This year Dutch and Japanese Playgroup continue to use a double timeslot to support their age group and this has allowed the children and families to have more learning time as well as to support the families' routine times.

Recommencing in 2026

We have 11 playgroups returning in 2026 and one new playgroup starting after finishing their new parent group.



Jessica Fielder
Playgroup Coordinator

Maternal and Child Health Service Report

In 2025, the City of Port Phillip Maternal and Child Health Service continued to deliver the MCH Service to the community at Port Phillip including the 10 Key Age and Stage consultations and new parent groups. A total of 163 birth notices were received, and 159 children were enrolled into the service. The nurses at the centre conducted 1,787 consultations during the year.

There are 2 MCH Nurses who work at Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre who are highly skilled and cover all days of the week, ensuring excellent appointment availability and continuity of care.

If an appointment is required, please call the MCH admin line on 9209 6766 or email mchadmin@portphillip.vic.gov.au.

Outreach Pilot Program:

Launched in 2025, the Outreach Program is a new initiative that allows for children to receive their Key Age and Stage appointments in a familiar childcare setting with the Outreach MCH nurse who visits once a family has booked an appointment. This provides the option for children to have their developmental assessment.

If you would like to take this option up to have your child see the Outreach nurse please contact the Bubup Womindjeka staff who will assist with this process.

New Parent Groups:

Every six weeks, a new parent group starts at Bubup Womindjeka, helping families connect and share experiences in early parenthood.

Many groups evolve into playgroups, using the provided space at BWFC.

Other Programs offered:

The MCH team also runs:

- Sleep and Settling Outreach program
- Breastfeeding Support Service
- Food Talks (held at Middle Park MCH Centre)
- Nature Play & Supported Playgroups for vulnerable families

For more information, visit the City of Port Phillip website under the Maternal and Child Health page [Maternal and child health - City of Port Phillip](#)

Looking Ahead to 2026:

We're excited to continue supporting families and working collaboratively with the BWFC team.

Alisa Smarrelli

Maternal and Child Health Acting Team Leader – City of Port Phillip



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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