



GOULBURN REGION PRESCHOOL ASSOCIATION Inc.

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Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc. (GRPSA)

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Strategic Plan 2015-2018

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1 THIS DOCUMENT

This Strategic Plan outlines Goulburn Region Pre-School Association's (GRPSA) strategy for the 2015 – 2018 calendar years.

2 PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Strategic Plan was prepared by Charlie Simson of Ampliar Coaching at the request of GRPSA. In developing this document GRPSA Board held an out of session strategy meeting on Wednesday 1 October 2014, further reviewed the plan at the November Board meeting and in January 2015 a special meeting was held to finalise the plan.

The following Board members were in attendance at the strategy session, or subsequent meetings and provided feedback on this document:

- Cecilie Munro (Chair)
- Kathleen Caldw (Vice Chair)
- Concetta Sergi (Treasurer)
- Georgia Morrissey (Community Representative)
- Sheana Guthrie (Parent Representative)
- Debra Ellis (Community Representative)
- Kim Fitzgerald (Community Representative)
- Mathew Jones (Community Representative)

Staff:

- Sue Brown (GRPSA Cluster Manager)
- Robyn Trickey (Early Childhood Education Manager)
- Corina McLeod (Early Childhood Education Manager)

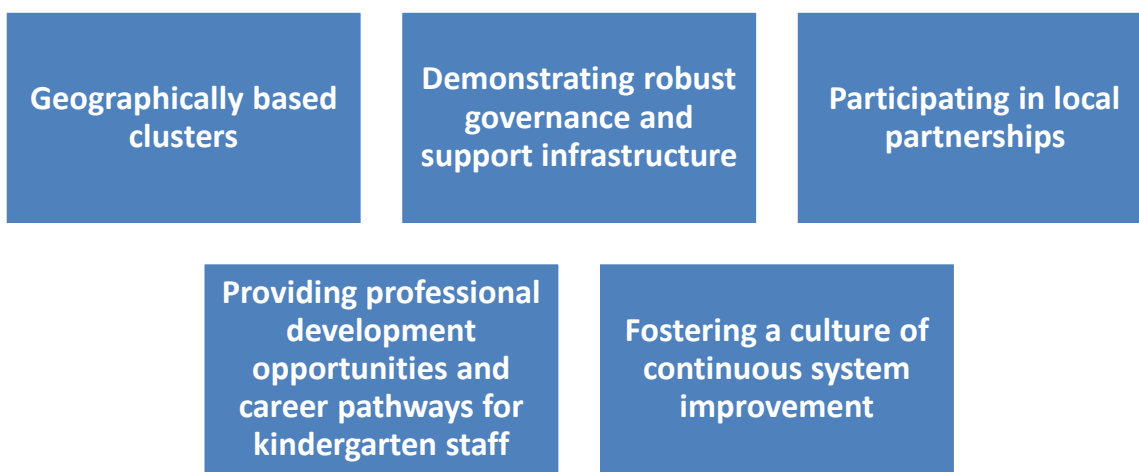
3 RELATED DOCUMENTS

This Strategic Plan should be read in conjunction with the **GRPSA Governance Policies and Procedures Manual**, which outlines the agreed operating guidelines and decision making arrangements for the organisation.



This Strategic Plan has been developed in accordance with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) [Kindergarten Cluster Management Policy Framework](#) (KCM Framework). The KCMPF outlines the policy and legislative context in which GRPSA is funded and operates, as well as outlining the broader strategic context for cluster management across Victoria.

The KCM Framework outlines the responsibilities of cluster managers across Victoria. The five key components of kindergarten cluster management and specifications that all kindergarten cluster managers must meet are:



The GRPSA strategic objectives are aligned with these five areas.

4 POLICY CONTEXT

This section outlines the policy context relevant to the development and implementation of this strategic plan. For further details regarding DEECD policies related to kindergarten provision, see the [Kindergarten Guide 2014](#).

4.1 Universal Access

Beginning in 2009, following the Council of Australian Government's National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, the universal access policy came into effect in Victoria. The policy provided all children with access to a funded preschool program in the year prior to school. Initially, all children were able to access 10.75 hours a week of pre-school, with the aim that this would increase to 15 hours per week by 2013. Kindergartens were able to begin offering 15 hours of kindergarten prior to 2013 if they were ready to do so. For further information see [DEECD Universal Access to Early Childhood Education Overview](#).

4.2 The National Quality Framework

The [National Quality Framework](#) (NQF) came into effect across Australia in 2012. The NQF introduces a new quality standard to improve education and care across long day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten,



and outside school hours care services. The NQF contains two key elements: the National Quality System (NQS) and the National Law and Regulations (NLR). The NLR sets out the minimum standards, enacts the NQS and outlines the provisions for services to register to provide approved early childhood education and care.

The NQS sets the standards for quality in early childhood education and care, as well as providing a system for assessment and rating of all early childhood services against the [seven quality areas](#):

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management.

Under the NQS all early childhood services will be rated against the seven quality areas in the NQS. Each service will be awarded a rating against each quality area as well as an overall rating. There are [five rating levels](#) within the national quality rating and assessment process:

- Excellent rating – awarded by ACECQA
- Exceeding National Quality Standard
- Meeting National Quality Standard
- Working Towards National Quality Standard
- Significant Improvement Required.

The introduction of the NQS is occurring progressively from 2012 – 2020. For more information on the NQS, including the assessment and ratings process see the [Guide to the National Quality Standard](#).

5 ABOUT GOULBURN REGION PRE-SCHOOL ASSOC. INC.

GRPSA provides cluster management services to 15 kindergartens in the Goulburn Region.

The Goulburn Region covers an area of approximately 1200km² in Victoria's north central corridor. The region runs from Yarrawonga in the North East, to Barmah in the North West, Colbinabbin in the South West, Avenel in the South and Euroa in the South East.

The 15 kindergartens managed by GRPSA are:

- Avenel Preschool
- Barmah Kindergarten and Occasional Care
- Colbinabbin Preschool
- Eileen Taylor Kindergarten
- Euroa Kindergarten
- Katamatite Kindergarten
- Merrigum Preschool



- Murchison Kindergarten and Early Childhood Service
- Nagambie Kindergarten and Early Childhood Service
- Nathalia Kindergarten
- Punt Road Kindergarten and Childcare
- Toolamba Kindergarten
- Tungamah Kindergarten
- Undera Kindergarten
- Yarrawonga Preschool and Occasional Care

For a history of GRPSA, including when services joined the cluster arrangements, see section 14.

6 ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

GRPSA is overseen by a Board consisting of community and parent representatives. The Board oversees the management of the 15 kindergartens which each have a Parent Committee (Venue Parent Committee).

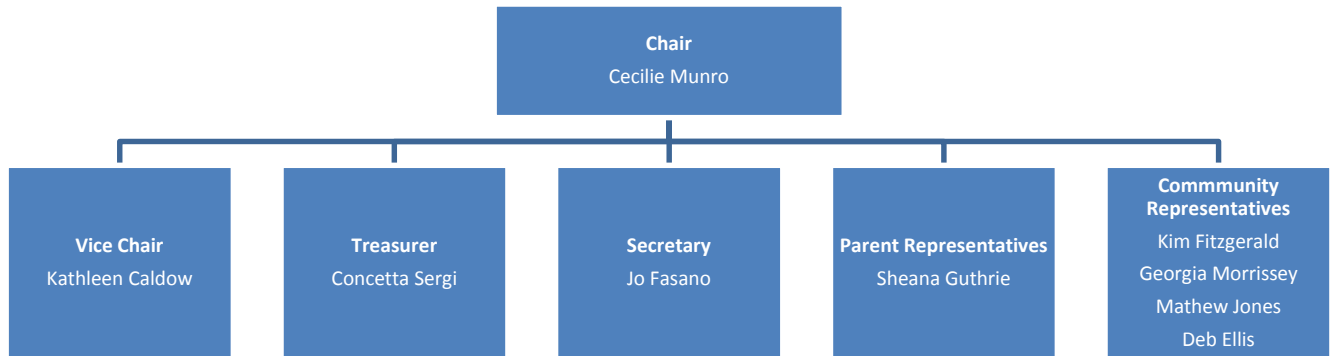
Goulburn Region Pre-school Association Board

Member kindergarten committees

Avenel, Barmah, Colbinabbin, Cobram & District Childrens Services, Euroa, Katamatite, Merrigum, Murchison, Nagambie, Nathalia, Toolamba, Tungamah, Undera, Yarrawonga

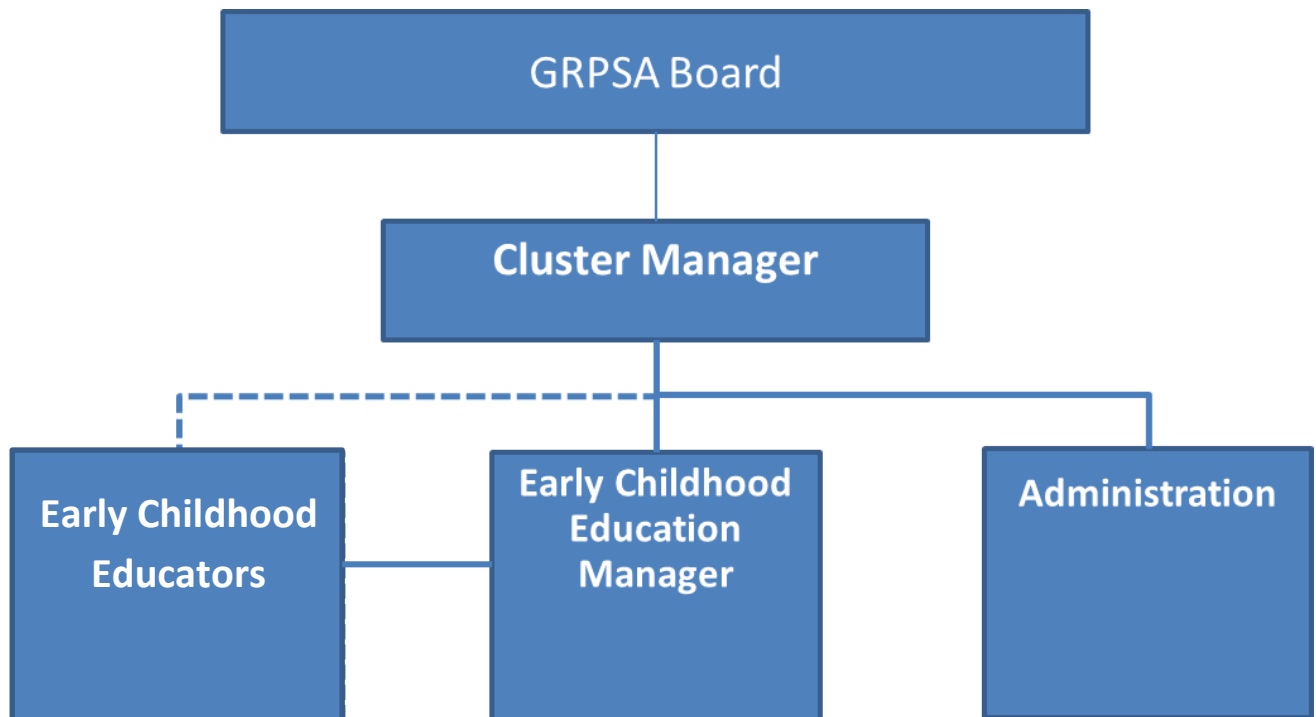
7 BOARD STRUCTURE

GRPSA Board is comprised of parent and community members who have been elected by the members of the Association. Each member kindergarten is represented by an Authorised Representative. The Authorised Representatives elect Board Members at the AGM to oversee the management of GRPSA and to delegate authority to the Cluster Manager to manage the operations of GRPSA. For a detailed description of Board authority and responsibilities see **GRPSA Governance Policies and Procedures Manual**.



8 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

GRPSA is overseen by a Board, with authority delegated to the Cluster Manager, who is responsible for the operations of the organisation. The Cluster Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of GRPSA with all powers, discretions and delegations authorised, from time to time, by the Board.





9 VISION STATEMENT

GRPSA will ensure the provision of quality early childhood educational programs in rural Victoria.

10 MISSION STATEMENT

GRPSA will deliver high quality early childhood services where:

- **Children are** actively engaged, confident learners who are willing to have a go
- **Families** feel welcome to stay and confident to leave
- **Staff are** dedicated, enthusiastic, professional and strive to continuously improve their practice.

11 STRATEGIC GOAL

By 2018 all kindergartens within GRPSA will exceed the NQS as assessed by the GRPSA Management Team.

12 CORE VALUES

GRPSA is an ethical organisation that promotes the following core values for staff, children, families and the community:

Inclusion

Respect

Open and Clear
Communication

Continuous
Improvement

13 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This section outlines the strategic objectives for 2015-2018 that will enable GRPSA it to meet its strategic goal of having all services rated as exceeding the National Quality Standard. These objectives are in accordance with the DEECD Kindergarten Cluster Management Policy Framework.

13.1 Geographically based

The GRPSA will maintain links to local government, including:



- City of Greater Shepparton
- Shire of Campaspe
- Shire of Strathbogie
- Moira Shire.

In particular, GRPSA will connect with local councils to maintain alignment with municipal early years plans and other plans as they become available. Key municipal planning documents include:

- [Greater Shepparton Best Start Early Years Plan 2011-2014](#)
- [Shire of Campaspe Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017](#)
- [Shire of Strathbogie Healthy Children and Families' Plan 2012-2014](#)
- [The Moira Shire Early Years Plan 2011-2014](#)

In addition, regular contact with member kindergartens will be maintained by the Management Team.

13.2 Demonstrate robust governance and support infrastructure

GRPSA will ensure that it remains a viable, ethical and strong entity through implementing and monitoring the governance policies and procedures outlined in the GRPSA Constitution and the Governance Policies and Procedures Manual.

A review of the Governance Policies and Procedures Manual is a priority for 2015.

A review of the Constitution will be a priority for 2016.

In addition, GRPSA will provide strategic and leadership support to member kindergartens and their Venue Parent committees with regard to:

- Governance models
- Staff employment and support
- Strategic and operational planning
- Regulatory and licensing administrative requirements
- Budgetary and financial requirements.

13.3 Participate in local partnerships

In addition to maintaining strong connections with local government (as outlined in section 13.1) GRPSA will ensure strong connection and engagement with families as a priority for 2015-2018.

A key component of this objective is for all families to have equal and fair access so all children can participate fully in a quality early childhood education.

Links with local early childhood services, including Maternal Child Health Services and schools will be cultivated and promoted.

GRPSA will continue to maintain positive relationships with other KCMs in the area.



13.4 Provide professional development opportunities and career pathways for kindergarten staff

The ongoing development of staff within GRPSA services will be a key strategic objective for 2015-2018. The development and improvement of staff skills will be key to achieving the strategic goal of having all services exceeding the National Quality Standard by 2018.

In particular GRPSA will:

- Provide professional support and encouragement to staff to continue learning
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement and reflective practice
- Provide a safe and positive environment for staff to try new, innovative approaches and receive valuable feedback
- Ensure that employment arrangements for staff are supportive of their wellbeing and professional development.

13.5 Foster a culture of continuous system improvement

In addition to ensuring that staff within GRPSA kindergartens are supported to continually improve GRPSA will:

- Foster a culture of service excellence amongst member kindergartens
- Ensure innovation and best practiced is acknowledged and promoted
- Pay particular attention to working with the families of vulnerable children; to eliminate barriers to attending; to feel safe, welcome and cared for while interacting with GRPSA services.

As a priority for 2015 – 2018, a workable quality assurance system will be developed and in place.



14 APPENDIX A – HISTORY OF GRPSA

Goulburn Region Pre-school Association (GRPSA) established a travelling service in 1988 to provide kindergarten programs to children living in isolated areas. Trained kindergarten teachers drove to the rural communities of Reedy Creek, Strath Creek, Colbinabbin, Barmah, Longwood, Kotupna and Highlands to provide a preschool program for children in the year prior to starting school. Fluctuating enrolment numbers meant that these centres were unable to operate on a break even basis each year on their own, but as part of a cluster they were able to continue to operate even in years of low enrolment numbers and meet the needs of their communities.

In 1994, GRPSA provided kindergarten programs at Barmah, Colbinabbin, Merrigum, Murchison, Toolamba, and Undera. Katamatite joined a few years later. Avenel joined in 2003, followed by Tungamah in 2004, Nathalia and Nagambie in 2007 and in 2008 Euroa kindergarten joined, giving the cluster a total of 12 centres.

In the 1990's GRPSA was managed by a Committee comprising one representative from each preschool. This management committee met at the offices of the Department of Human Services (DHS), now Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) in Shepparton. In 1997, GRPSA appointed its first paid manager. Prior to this the administrative work performed by the association was done by the parents who had volunteered to be on the Committee of Management, with support from Shire of Rodney, and Department of Human Services.

In 2002, as a result of the Kirby Report, the State Government called for applications for Group Employment Funding (Kindergarten Cluster Management was initially called Group Employment). This initiative provided resources to support groups of four year old kindergarten programs being brought together under the management of a single organisation, the purpose of which was to reduce the administrative and management burden on kindergarten parent committees, strengthen the management and delivery of community-based kindergarten programs and provide kindergarten staff with professional employment arrangements. GRPSA was successful in obtaining this new funding and as a result in 2003 was able to offer 10 hours of funded preschool in all of its centres.

In the 2007-2008 State Budget funding of \$6.2 million over four years was allocated to support and expand kindergarten cluster management in Victoria. The cluster management grant was increased from \$5,600 to \$7,000 per location per year in July 2007, with further increases in subsequent years.

In May 2008 the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development announced a \$2.83m package of funded initiatives to assist cluster management organisations strengthen governance arrangements within their organisation and to promote innovation and place based examples of best practice. This led to a governance review of GRPSA and in 2010 a new constitution was approved establishing a Board of Management for GRPSA, this provided an opportunity for community members to be appointed to the Board, and reduced the number of parents required to be represented.

Key Dates

- 1988 Goulburn Region Preschool Assoc. Inc established as a travelling service
- 1994 Running of GRPSA transferred to the users of the services
- 1997 First paid administrator appointed
- 2002 Kirby Report & funding for cluster management



- 2004 Review of operating procedures and adoption of a venue service agreement
- 2008 The number of members increased to twelve. Review of governance and new constitution
- 2009 Enterprise Care Pty Ltd engaged to provide advice on governance
- 2010 New constitution and Board of Management established. Governance manual adopted
- 2011 First Strategic Plan developed
- 2012 Strategic Plan endorsed
- 2013 Marj Earl awarded first Life Membership
- 2014 Eileen Taylor, Punt Road, and Yarrawonga preschools join the Cluster.

15 APPENDIX B - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

15.1 Board

15.1.1 Responsibilities

- Have the appropriate skills and expertise to act as a board member
- Have knowledge of the services provided by and the operations of GRPSA
- Maintain an independent perspective
- Have an understanding of the key issues affecting member preschools.

15.1.2 Tasks

- Act in the interest of members and GRPSA
- Determine the strategic direction of GRPSA
- Approve key governance policies
- Employment and appointment of the Cluster Manager
- Advocate on behalf of member preschools.

15.2 Tasks delegated to management staff

- Recruit and select employees and Early Childhood Education Managers
- Manage funding agreement
- Ensure licensing and regulation compliance
- Professional development of employees
- Conduct performance review of all employees
- Collect kindergarten and fun group fees.