



GOULBURN REGION PRESCHOOL ASSOCIATION Inc.

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Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Date adopted by Board: 22nd October 2018

Date of Review: 2023

Title:	GRPSA Strategic Plan 2018-2023		
Version:	5.2	Approved By:	GRPSA Board
Date Approved:	22/10/2018	Date of Review:	2023
Location:	2018 Strategic Plan 2018-2023 Version 5.2.docx		



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1 THIS DOCUMENT

This Strategic Plan outlines Goulburn Region Pre-School Association's (GRPSA) strategy for the 2018 – 2023 calendar years.

2 PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

The original Strategic Plan was prepared by Charlie Simson of Ampliar Coaching at the request of GRPSA and was adopted on the 4th of February 2015. The strategic plan was reviewed in accordance with its review policy on the following dates: 4th of June 2018, 18th of June 2018, 16th of July 2018, 20th of August 2018 and the 15th of October 2018.

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

- Georgia Morrissey (Chair)
- Concetta Sergi (Vice Chair)
- Kylie D'Aloia (Secretary)
- Hamish Burke (Community Representative)
- Liam Bourke (Treasurer)
- Mewan Dissanayake (Community Representative)
- Kim Fitzgerald (Community Representative)
- Jacquie Monk (Parent Representative)
- Carl Norton (Parent Representative)

Staff:

- Sue Brown (GRPSA 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 Training (DET) [Early Years Management Policy Framework](#) (EYM Framework). The EYMPF outlines the policy and legislative context in which GRPSA is funded and operates, as well as outlining the broader strategic context for early years management across Victoria.

The EYM Framework outlines the responsibilities of early years managers across Victoria. The five foundation outcomes of early years cluster management and specifications that all early years cluster managers must meet are:

Sustainable
and responsive
services

Access and
participation

Quality and
innovation

Highly skilled,
collaborative
workforce

Strong
partnerships

The GRPSA strategic objectives are aligned with these five outcomes.

4 POLICY CONTEXT

This section outlines the policy context relevant to the development and implementation of this strategic plan. For further details regarding DET policies related to Early Childhood provision, see the Kindergarten Funding Guide 2016.

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. Early Childhood Services were able to begin offering 15 hours of kindergarten prior to 2013 if they were ready to do so.



4.2 The National Quality Framework

The [National Quality Framework](#) (NQF) came into effect across Australia in 2012 and was updated in 2017. The NQF introduced 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 Standard (NQS) and the Operational Requirements, which incorporate National Law and Regulations. The Operational Requirements 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. Governance and Leadership

Under the NQS all early childhood services are rated against the seven quality areas in the NQS. Each service is 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.

For more information on the NQS, including the assessment and ratings process see the Guide to the National Quality Framework. In 2018 we are now entering the second round of assessments and are being assessed under the new National Quality Standards as released in October 2017.



5 ABOUT GOULBURN REGION PRE-SCHOOL ASSOC. INC.

GRPSA provides Early Years Management services to 15 Early Childhood Services 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 Early Childhood Services managed by GRPSA are:

- Avenel Preschool
- Barmah Outreach Kindergarten and Barmah Occasional Care
- Colbinabbin Preschool
- Eilleen Taylor Kindergarten
- Euroa Kindergarten
- Katamatite and District Multipurpose Children's Centre
- Merrigum Kindergarten and EC Service
- Murchison Kindergarten and EC Service
- Nagambie Kindergarten and Early Childhood Services
- Nathalia and District Preschool
- Punt Road Kindergarten and Child Care Centre
- Toolamba Kindergarten and Children's Association
- Tungamah Kindergarten and EC Service
- Undera Kindergarten
- Yarrawonga Early Childhood Centre

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 Early Childhood Services which each have a Parent Advisory Group (PAG).

Goulburn Region Pre-school Association Board

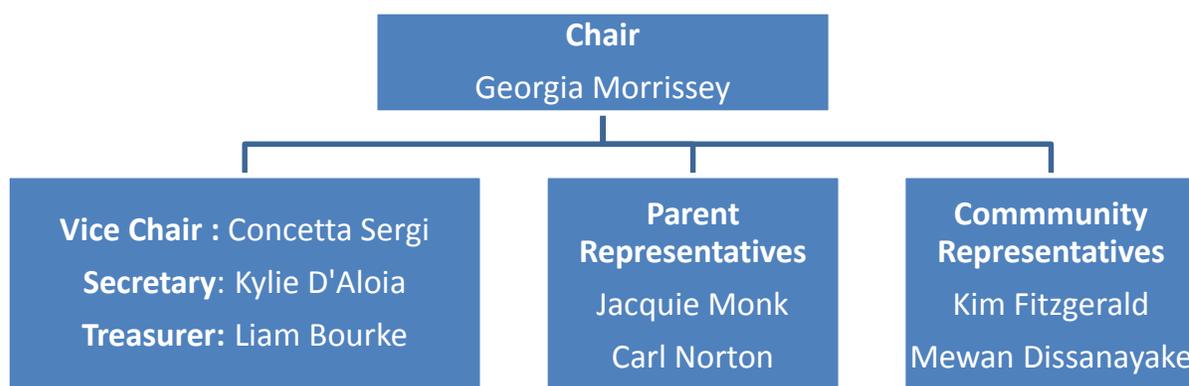
Member Early Childhood Service committees

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



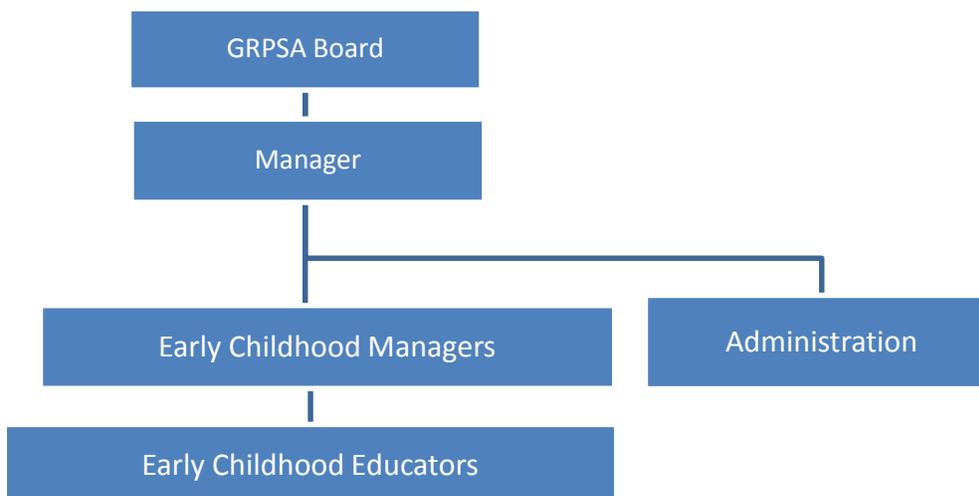
7 BOARD STRUCTURE

GRPSA Board is comprised of parent and community members who have been elected by the members of the Association. Each member Early Childhood Service 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 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 Manager, who is responsible for the operations of the organisation. The 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 CORE VALUES

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





12 STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Be a forward thinking EYM that is innovative and responsive to our core values.
2. Maintain our current services and overall viability of the organisation.
3. Continue to strive for best practice in accordance with industry standards.

13 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This section outlines the strategic objectives for 2018-2023 that will enable GRPSA it to meet its strategic goals of being a forward thinking EYM that is innovative and responsive to our core values, maintain our current services and overall viability of the organisation; and continue to strive for best practice in accordance with industry standards. These objectives are in accordance with the DET Early Years Management Policy Framework.

13.1 Sustainable and responsive services

EYM organisations are sustainable, viable and responsive to children, families and communities. They are built on strong and effective governance and partnership arrangements. The community has confidence in EYM.

GRPSA will maintain economic viability and ongoing sustainability by:

- Conservative financial management and budgeting
- Allocation of adequate resources to governance and management
- Ensuring policies and procedures reflect industry best practice
- Ensuring staff are supported to respond to local community needs

13.2 Access and participation

EYM organisations drive high levels of participation for all children, in particular for those who are experiencing the highest levels of vulnerability and disadvantage.

GRPSA will support centres to create welcoming and inclusive environments by:

- Providing culturally inclusive programs that are responsive to family's needs
- Providing affordable fee structures
- Promoting participation through government subsidised program support to families
- Supporting integrated programs
- Providing families with links to local support services and programs
- Ongoing development and review of inclusive policies and programs



13.3 Quality and innovation

EYM organisations lead a world-class early years system in Victoria by implementing contemporary, evidence-based improvements in teaching and learning, and by sharing knowledge and experience with the broader sector.

GRPSA will support centres to provide and deliver quality programs by:

- Ensuring staff are operating within the National Quality Framework
- Ensure that programs reflect an approved learning framework
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement through critical reflection
- Continuing to support the provision of innovative programs such as bush kinder
- Promoting and sharing innovative practice of staff teams and centres within GRPSA
- Supporting Educational Leaders so that they can build capacity and best practice within their staff teams

13.4 Highly skilled, collaborative workforce

EYM organisations recruit, retain and invest in a highly-skilled collaborative workforce.

GRPSA values and respects their workforce by:

- Recruiting staff that are passionate about early childhood and dedicated to high quality service provision
- Recruiting skilled staff that have a commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration with peers
- Supporting staff to form strong links and partnerships with families
- Supporting staff to share experiences and skills with others, both in centres and within the wider GRPSA workforce
- Providing mentoring, coaching and networking opportunities to all staff to continually reflect and improve on practice
- Conducting regular reviews of employee performance
- Providing opportunities for personal and professional growth and development

13.5 Strong partnerships

EYM organisations collaborate with all EYM partners, community organisations, schools and other early years stakeholders to lead the development and coordination of quality services that improve outcomes for children.

GRPSA develops and maintains strong links with local communities and other professional organisations by:



- Ensuring the GRPSA board is made up of centre parent representatives, community representatives and professionals
- Promoting strong partnerships with maternal health services, local schools to support positive transitions and promoting and maintaining strong partnerships with local councils
- Maintaining strong connections with other EYM services
- Maintaining an ongoing relationship with professional management support services to improve outcomes for children
- Supporting centres to maintain and build strong links with local community groups to reflect community needs and skills within centre programs

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, Euroa kindergarten in 2008 and in 2014 two Cobram centres - Punt Road Kindergarten and Childcare and Eilleen Taylor Kindergarten joined, along with Yarrawonga Kindergarten, giving the cluster a total of 15 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 Training (DET) 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.

In 2009 a Teacher Support Officer position was introduced. The role of the Early Childhood Education Managers to support and mentor our hard working and isolated teachers.

In 2012 all centres offered 15 hours of kindergarten as per the Federal Governments Universal access.

In 2014 a second Early Childhood Manager was employed on a part time basis.

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
- 2009 First Early Childhood Education Manager appointed
- 2010 New constitution and Board of Management established. Governance manual adopted
- 2011 First Strategic Plan developed
- 2013 Marj Earl awarded first Life Membership
- 2014 Eileen Taylor, Punt Road, and Yarrawonga preschools join the Cluster.
- 2015 Strategic Plan re-developed
- 2015 Additional Early childhood Education Manager appointed
- 2017 New constitution adopted
- 2018 Strategic Plan reviewed and updated