

Governing Council Chairperson's Report 2016

2016 has been an eventful and wonderful year for Somerton Park Kindergarten.

A newly elected Governing Council together with the Director conducted nine meetings throughout the year. All of these meetings were full of lengthy discussions involving detailed planning for the year ahead.

Initially our aim was to educate families on why our focus was on fundraising and why that needed to be our focus. It was important to us to break down how much funding the kindergarten received and where these funds go and then what is left for everything else that needs to be paid for. We felt that it was imperative to educate families about why we were asking for their support.

Our discussions promptly focussed on fundraising with the aim to improve our outdoor learning environment for our children and future children attending our kindergarten after we had to say goodbye to our beautiful old trees.

We planned a full year of fundraising events and aimed to focus on those that were going to maximise funds for the kindy and minimise hours required by volunteers.

Here are the amazing results from our fundraising events:

VIP Day - \$1392
Tea towels - \$688
Bunnings BBQ - \$2006
Disco - \$510
Obstacle-a-thon - \$1028
Entertainment books - \$410
Tupperware - \$406
Credit Union Lottery - \$998
End of year raffle - \$1063
Subway - \$291
Wine Commission \$182
TOTAL = \$8974

Our kindergarten was assessed against the National Quality Standards and National Regulations in July 2016. All 7 sections of the review achieved a rating of Exceeding National Standards. In section 7 it was recommended that the service set a timeframe for ongoing review of policies and ensure policies are readily available to families and staff.

This meant that kindergarten policies needed to be reviewed by governing council members. Formal discussions were then undertaken at council meetings. It was agreed that policies about skin protection, behaviour and healthy food would be circulated to all families in their welcome pack at the beginning of the year.

We held an extremely interesting and informative Nature Play information session at kindy to educate families on what our plan was for our yard. This enabled all families to be brought up to speed on where we were headed with our outdoor learning environment improvements.

We made some progress in this space throughout the year with the soft fall bark chips being topped up. We had a load dumped in our yard and then saw many staff, children and families spread it throughout the yard! We also had many plants donated by a very generous grandfather. These were also planted by staff, children and family members.

A grant application to Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges was submitted in July 2016. We found out later in the year that our grant was approved which was wonderful news! This means that we received \$1,871 from NRM to be spent on a specific project in our outdoor space.

While we have been busy organising fundraising events, we have also been working with LCS Landscapes to design and plan our outdoor learning environment improvement. LCS Landscapes offered to design our outdoor space improvements for free.

We had an excellent meeting with David Forte from LCS that involved ideas from our children and was attended by staff and two GC members. A plan was created and now needs to be executed.

The initial focus is on the planting of mature trees to offer future shade solutions to our yard. The second project is to focus on water play and some additional looping pathway elements to begin to define the areas and provide something exciting for the kids. The third focus is to install a significant shade structure over the deck area. This project will be ongoing and requires prompt attention of the 2017 governing council to keep things moving. It is going to be amazing and children in the wider community are going to love it!

Thank you once again to all children, staff, families and council members for such amazing support in 2016. None of what took place in 2016 could have been possible without your support and we very much look forward to seeing the changes in our outdoor space happen in 2017, as we start spending the money raised.

At the same time as raising funds for our kindy we have had some wonderfully fun events for our children. We know that there have been happy memories made that will be kept forever!

Thank you to all children, staff and families for the generosity and overwhelming support you have given our kindy in 2016. None of this could have happened without your hard work and passion for our community.

Finally, I would like to thank the amazing governing council members I have had by my side for the year! Your dedication, enthusiasm, willingness to volunteer time and ideas, as well as your friendship, has meant that 2016 was a wonderfully successful year for our governing council and the wider kindergarten community.

Warm regards,

Kristy de Poel
Somerton Park Kindergarten
Governing Council Chairperson 2016