

HERITAGE NEWSLETTER



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

We would like to congratulate our Heritage community for a truly special Graduation and End of Year Celebration. It took many moving parts and a huge team effort to make this day such a big success. Many of our educators (and even members of educator families) put in extra time before, during and after the event to make it a special day for all. Thank you for coming along, we hope you enjoyed the result!

We would also like to congratulate our preschool team. The educators shared that they have never had a group so excited about graduation (and graduation practice). This came through so strongly with such a feeling of complete joy as they sang and celebrated alongside their friends. It was wonderful to look around and see our departing preschoolers having completed their first step in their education and ready to make that next big leap on their primary school journey. It is widely known that the first five years of a child's life are the most important, as it is the most critical period for learning and growth. Many Preschoolers started their learning journey with us in the Nursery and Toddler room. So, we would like to acknowledge not only the great job our preschool team have done but also the amazing job and team effort it takes to build trust at the beginning and the meaningful partnerships we have made with families along the way.

Fee Increase for 2024: In 2022 and 2023, the Heritage Committee set substantially lower-than-normal increases for attendance fees to support those families going through financial hardship with bank interest rates and cost of living expenses. Additionally, this year, educators in the sector were given a larger (and well-deserved!) mid-year award wage increase. Therefore, the higher-than-expected wage increase and lower attendance fees have meant Heritage will face a significant financial loss this year. Many centres around Canberra decided to raise fees in the middle of the year, coinciding with parents receiving a higher rebate from the government. The fee for 2024 will be set by the committee at our Special General Meeting, but it is expected to be a bigger increase than the previous year. Please turn to page 2 for our treasurer's report.

Drop-off procedures will change for all rooms: We will be inviting all families to drop off inside as of next year. This might be a big change for some children to adjust to, so it is usually best to develop a predictable drop-off routine for your child and listen to the great advice of educators to help with this big adjustment. We also have some fantastic resources/strategies to assist when a child is going through separation anxiety.

We can't wait to see you in 2024! Heritage will re-open on Tuesday 9th January. Some families have been asking about the date transitions will happen between rooms. We will be saying our final farewells to any graduating preschoolers on Thursday, 25th January. The February transition will occur in the first week of Feb (Monday, 29th January).

Looking forward to next year being the best year ever!

- Vicki

Summer Holiday Closure

Close of business 5:45pm

Friday 22 December 2023

Reopen 7:45am

Tuesday 9 January 2024





TREASURER'S REPORT

As the country has grappled with the cost of living crisis over the last 12 months, the Early Childcare Sector has been no exception. Heritage has managed significant increases in running costs, including the much needed Early Childcare sector wide pay increases in July. Unlike a number of other centres, the Committee made the difficult decision not to raise fees mid-year and instead we have funded the shortfall from cash reserves built up from prior years. The forecasted loss for 2023 will be over \$100,000.

Heritage will be looking to raise fees next year to \$165 per day to return the budget to a balanced position. This will bring Heritage's fees in line with other exceeding centres in Canberra.

The proposed Heritage budget for 2024 has been carefully constructed and will continue to strike the balance between a lean budget whilst continuing to invest in what makes the Centre such a wonderful place - the educators, the room ratios, and the educational programs.

To ensure the financial sustainability of the Centre and update the fees for 2024, we will be holding an Annual General Meeting on Thursday 18 January to pass the new budget. I'd love to see you all there, and would welcome the chance to discuss the Centre and the finances in more detail. Transparency is important to the committee, and it would be great to discuss how we can make 2024 another fantastic year.

- Neil

HERITAGE YEARLY SURVEY

2023-2024

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/D328RKG>



EDUCATIONAL LEADER'S REPORT

Summing up some of our achievements this year:

Heritage has continued to nurture a relationship with Wiradjuri Echoes in 2023, this year all rooms were able to benefit from Duncan and Jakida's sessions. They also joined us for additional events, helping to bring in the beginning of our year, acknowledging country with wise words, dance and celebration for our January Meet and Greet. They also joined us for an adult-only session of Truth Telling in the lead-up to Reconciliation Week. Hopefully, you enjoyed these additions to our event calendar this year.

Our commitment to looking after our environment (both plants and animals) has been extended even further in 2023. Our children have been very active in visiting and caring for our gardens, firstly creating the Yumulandi Garden, then working alongside Arianne from our Neighbouring community garden. The Thrive Kitchen garden has come along in leaps and bounds, as our children took over a whole garden bed and have been able to share their harvests for cooking experiences, offering produce to our families to take home. New animals have also been added into our care, with the big fish tank arriving this year and the baby chicks (now adults and thriving in their enclosure outside). These animal additions sparked a lot of inquiry and learning about these species throughout the entire centre

Our Bluebell Room's potential to get out and about has been extended with a 4-seater pram (in addition to the 6-seater pram we already have). This allows our younger children to go out and about to places outside the fence, enjoying these experiences regardless of the children's age/mobility. We have also purchased walkie-talkies to use across the centre. This helps when we are utilising all the different environments across the centre with small groups or improving communication when we are out and about.

Our families were offered a similar experience to our Educator Training Day, with Louise Porter doing an evening session for families this year. Offering positive guidance tools for children to help nurture their positive self-esteem and support adults to change/challenge old-fashioned discipline techniques.

What's in store for 2024: Heritage continues to have some exciting things in the pipeline.

Minibus: Our minibus should be arriving early next year and be ready for adventures in our community with our preschool age children. This will help us to take our Nature Play and Community outreach to the next level.

Intergenerational Program: With our own minibus delivery on the horizon, we began reaching out to aged care facilities to set up an intergenerational program. We hope this is something we will be able to do fortnightly with our older age groups in 2024.

Free Three-Year-Old Preschool Program: Heritage has also volunteered to be part of the free three year old preschool program. This is an exciting new initiative that the ACT is trying out to help support all children to have the best start to their Education.

Educational Summary & Documentation Overhaul: From now on, Heritage will be changing our educational summary to a shorter "learning report" format. This will allow the educators to use the broad outcomes of the Early Years Learning Frame (EYLF) alongside more specified development learning with the learning trajectories. Our changes this year have had a very positive response from our community, with only a few small tweaks reflected by our educators or suggested in feedback from families.

We are so excited for 2024!

- Katie and Kirsty



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HERITAGE'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Join us for this year's AGM, an essential event for the running of our centre.

Date: Thursday 18th January 2024

Time: 4:45pm - 5:45pm

Don't miss this opportunity to be an active member of our community!

There will be MUSIC, FOOD, and a chance to socialise with other families.