



APRIL 2022 | ISSUE 1

NEWSLETTER

HERITAGE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE



Director's report

BY VICKI

First school term is over and what an eventful term it was.

Unfortunately, I was away for most of it and could only sit at home (recovering) and watch as we went through room closures due to covid and all the paperwork that involved. I hope you all enjoyed reading the daybooks as much as I did. I loved seeing how the children settled into new room environments and eagerly took on new learning adventures. It is great to be back at work and a part of the team again. A big thank you goes to Katie and the team for taking on the extra load while I was away.

Over the last few years there has been a lot of talk as to the future of Heritage Early Childhood Centre building and I am pleased to put these conversations to rest with the decision of ANU to undergo further renovations to the childcare centres on campus, which will see us homed here at Lennox Crossing for many years to come.

ANU intend on completing hail repairs to all the childcare centres over the next few years. This is a chance to enhance our centre with internal and external upgrades. All centres require work such as roof replacement, possum-proofing, hydraulic upgrades, electrical upgrades, ceiling, wall and floor replacements, and hazmat remediation, such as remove any asbestos in the walls and ceiling spaces, and once and for all, removal of lead paint.

In the meantime, please be reassured that testing has been carried out by Hazmat Construction Control and that the hazardous materials in the spaces are not airborne and the spaces are currently safe. However, once works commence, the materials will be disturbed and will require specific hazmat teams/specialist trades to remediate.

While works are undertaken at each centre, that centre will be required to occupy a temporary building for the duration of construction works (approx. 20 weeks per centre). This

specifically designed building will be located in the upper carparking area opposite the Crawford School building and next to UPCCC. Temporary parking has been allocated behind building I (see map on last page).

Construction Control has engaged a heritage architect who will assist in the design of additional works/reconfiguration of the centres' interiors, and ensuring external work is suitable under our heritage and regulatory guidelines. Due to heritage listing of all the centres, the centres' exteriors will be restored to their original condition and appearance.

If all this goes to plan Heritage Early Childcare Centre will move into temporary accommodation around this time next year. Heritage Educators have had a look over the proposed layout of the temporary accommodations and had an opportunity to help with the planning of the internal building. We have faced many challenges over the last few years and this one is very doable with a wonderful outcome for Heritage.

Educational leader's report

BY KATIE

Yuma everyone!

It seems like only yesterday that we were wishing our families a safe and Happy Christmas/holiday break. Now, we are already hurtling towards the end of April, with the Autumn leaves, crisp mornings and winter layers pulled out and at the ready.

At the end of 2021 we released our annual quality Area Survey which collected your feedback until the end of March. This has helped us reflect on how the year went, what we are doing currently and looking ahead to the future and how we can continue to offer the best quality care and learning for our gulumpany (community). From a lot of the feedback so far we can

see we are all missing the face to face contact that was lacking during the past couple of years and finally it feels like the clouds are beginning to part and we are coming to a more positive sunny place where we can begin to return to normal.

Settling in our new families and supporting transitions throughout Heritage has been a huge focus over the past few months. By this time of the year we can see weeks/months of hard work pay off as children have developed a strong sense of belonging which is intrinsic as a secure base for our children to learn and thrive. We hope the recent parent interview catch ups (via phone with educators) has allowed families some extra time to debrief about their child/ren and create some future goals with Heritage. This brings our focus toward our next programs within our rooms which will broadly encourage building children's self-help skills, sense of gulumbany, confidence, resilience and communication (of course with a big focus on using nature which is one of the best teachers!). If you would like to share your thoughts on Heritage transition/settling practices please jump onto our latest survey.

Our Nature Based Programs have been given a fresh inject of knowledge and enthusiasm with two of our preschool team attending a 3 day Nature play workshop in March this year. The preschool daybooks and video summary on google classroom are wonderful ways to see the amazing ideas already in action (stay tuned for more info in this newsletter from the preschool team).

Looking ahead to the busy mid-year time for events, thanks for all of those that attended our AGM event (which is our first event of the year), this is an essential gathering for setting up our parent management committee for the year. For your calendar, we would love families to please take note and get involved: coming up we have Reconciliation Week, the Walk-a-thon and we have also replaced Mother's day with a more inclusive "Nature Play Family Day" Event. We can't wait to see you there!

In 2022, we wish to continue building our knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Heritage has re-established a relationship with Duncan Smith and Jakida Smith from Wiradjuri Echoes. Duncan and Jakida began their monthly visits in March this year to impart traditional knowledge through song, dance and language to our children and educators at Heritage.

We will also be exploring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture with our Educator Training Day this year. Please take note that Heritage will be closed on Friday the 15th of July for this event. Our Philosophy embraces the idea of a community of learners at Heritage, and the educator training day is huge way that we, as a centre stay relevant, reflect, improve and implement

positive change. This year's training day will be no different, with the inspiring teachings from Jessica Staines of the Koori Curriculum. Jessica will look at challenging our ideas of Embedding Aboriginal Culture within our programs, build our knowledge and perceptions of Aboriginal Art and take a look at our ideas of cultural celebrations/inclusion.

It's looking like a very exciting year so far and we look forward to walking this path and sharing these exciting events (and more) with our wonderful Gulumbany.

*Yuma: Hi/Hello in Ngunawal language. *Guluumbany: Community in Ngunawal language

Educator Training Day 2022 - Friday 15 July HERITAGE WILL BE CLOSED

Welcome to our new Early Childhood Teacher

BY JUEJIN

Hi everyone, my name is Juejin Huang and I am excited about joining the Heritage family.

I come from Guangdong, China, so Cantonese and Chinese are my native languages. Previously, I have studied Human Resource Management and Organisational Psychology and Psychiatry in England.

My passion in human potential and individual development in general psychology has led me to the field of education, and the particular interest in those critical years of early childhood development has taken me on the amazing journey of getting to know young learners and working with them.

I obtained my teaching qualification from the University of Melbourne in 2018 and have been working as an Early Childhood Teacher ever since.

Personality wise, I am an enthusiastic, energetic and lively introverted extrovert who is driven by the satisfaction experienced while learning new things and gained by accomplishment/growth.

I am looking forward to meeting all team members, children and families.





Nature play leadership course

BY HANNAH

Back in March, Kirsty and Hannah were lucky enough to be sent to the Gold Coast for a 3 day 'Bush Kindy Leader Course' provided by Nature Play QLD. Heritage first realised the benefits and exciting activities that could be had through Nature Play in 2018, when we attended a one day staff development course on 'Forest School'. This was a great introduction to the direction we wanted to take the centre in, prompting each room to get out on regular walks, and explore more outdoor play. Our educators were eager to further their knowledge and skills, however due to COVID-19 we had to put this dream on hold, so when we realised that we would be able to attend this year we jumped with joy at the opportunity!

Being held in a beautiful community parklands in Nerang, Kirsty and Hannah excitedly arrived, unsure of what to expect, and an open-mind. Day one was spent mostly going through documentation such as learning outcomes, the pedagogy behind Nature Play, various definitions and theorists, centre philosophies, and the many, many benefits of Nature Play. Simple parts of our everyday routine suddenly had so much more meaning, such as child-led play, co-learning with the children, and their sense of agency. Over the next two days we were able to engage in practical learning – lighting fires, using tools, tying ropes, making shelters, climbing trees, exploring the land, writing risk-benefit assessments, making swings and so much more. On the final day we visited Clearview Early Learning Centre, which strongly believes in Nature Play, surrounding their whole curriculum around it.

Loose Parts was a topic that really stood out to us, as this is a theory of play that we already value so much. We began to reflect on our Big Garden and the resources we provide – we have a construction area and a sandpit, but we can have so much more. They suggested providing big rocks, large sticks, tyres and bricks, which immediately brought fright to many of the other attendees' faces. The benefits outweigh the risk, they reminded us. Kirsty and Hannah discussed how the Preschoolers are capable of noticing danger and detecting when a game is unsafe, and quickly come up with rules and safety guidelines to keep everyone safe. Hannah then noticed Kirsty's face spark up with excitement as she mapped up an

idea to gradually transform our garden into a loose parts exploratory space.

Our discussion headed in the direction of 'Risky Play', where they asked us, "Is it risky play? Adventurous play? Challenging play? Or an authentic childhood?". A simple question such as this was an eye-opener to us all, as we often label various gross motor activities as 'risky play', when in reality they are simply activities that every child enjoys to explore – jumping, climbing, balancing etc. We had a group discussion about how this kind of play is safe once the educators support the child to manage their own safety, often by helping complete a verbal risk assessment. For example, if you want to jump off this rock, what is below you? If you want to climb this tree, what could be in the tree? It is the educator's role to support the child to feel safe. This led us into physically helping children. When discussing tree climbing Hannah asked, "At what point do you help them down?", "Never" the hosts responded, she continued by explaining that's not to be unkind, and if the child was in danger it would be different, but how will they learn to get down if we always get them down?, we can use verbal support to guide the children. *"Research states that outdoor and risky play teaches children to learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy..." (Judy Klein 2016, Ball, Gill and Spiegel 2008).*

On our final day we were lucky enough to join Clearview Early Learning Centre for a walk to their nearby 'Bush Kindy site' to observe how the children engage and explore here. This is a site they are very familiar with, meaning the children only required a quick refresher of the boundaries and a short safety discussion. The children headed off in various directions, towards the four educators – one by the river side, one at a tree, one in the rocks, and one prompting group collaboration. We noticed that the children required no resources from the centre, as they were so engaged and calm in this environment. A group of the children invited Hannah into a rock 'ice cream shop', while Kirsty discussed with one of the educators some more information on the activities done on site, time spent here, number of children etc. Once returning back to the course, we were then able to participate in lighting fires, using saws, drills and whittlers, tying up a shelter, and making rope games. We were able to see the benefits in practice, the skills coming forth, and the excitement in the educator's faces. Kirsty and Hannah returned to their hotel, called Vicki and talked her ear off about the plans they had to incorporate these new skills into the program.

We arrived back at Heritage the following week and immediately started to make a change to how we do our daily routine. We swapped out our plastic food in the home corner with leaves and herbs, we took our large table out of the mud pit to allow more space to freely play, we added pipes, branches and tyres to our construction area, also allowing these resources to be moved around the garden, made crate 'trolleys' for transporting, cut the ropes in our rope climbing environment, and overall encouraged more outdoor play. We were very eager to share these ideas with our colleagues, Rocio and Tina, who jumped straight on board and joined in our excitement. We were so pleased with the immediate positive response from the children, noticing them exploring new activities as well as new relationships throughout the first few days. Once we were confident and comfortable with how the children were interacting and engaging outside, we slowly introduced more 'risky play' activities to challenge them. Educators provided a slack line, parachute games and tents, climbing trees, chances to use saws on wood and bamboo, rope courses, and chances to use a flint to light a cotton-ball fire. Educators didn't want these to be 'one off' activities, or something we randomly decide to do, but rather a part of our daily or weekly routine. We explored the environments close to the centre, revisiting them often as a chance to inquire about the changes of season. When it has rained, we went out in full wet weather gear to explore a nearby 'stream', even going barefoot to engage in a sensory experience. Children have shared with us their desire to use the fire to cook food, prompting us to cook potatoes, Colombian 'arepas', and minestrone soup. Through these activities, as well as many more, we have seen the Preschoolers' confidence, curiosity, resilience, social skills, and sense of belonging all increase, and they have met each new activity or experience with positivity and excitement.

As a way to accurately show the children's response and involvement in these new activities, the Preschool educators decided to provide short videos on Google Classroom of the children. Some of the videos show unstructured play, while others revolve around one activity such as lighting a fire or a big walk. We have been filming and making these videos in collaboration with the children, as they love to watch the videos back and point out their friends. We realised that resourcing loose parts can involve community contributions, and we are very thankful to Tim, Rupert's Dad, who has been helping us source sticks, rocks and branches for us to use in all different ways. We would love to continue involving all families in our program, and if you can help out, please let us know.

The Preschool room is currently running their 'Become Nature Explorers' program, which incorporates all the wonderful things we have been doing recently, with the hope to expand and further the knowledge and skills. Kirsty and Hannah are also teaching the educators at Heritage some simple activities and experiences to take into the Toddler and Nursery rooms. We will be working as a collaborative team to ensure the benefits of Nature Play are felt across the whole centre, and all families are able to share in our excitement and joy of the direction we wish to take Heritage.

(Please note: Bush Kindy, Forest School and Nature Play are all very similar concepts - we are choosing to call our experiences 'Nature Play' although they cover all these philosophies)



Bluebells' report

BY ERANGA & TITI

We hope you all had such a wonderful and safe holiday. We warmly welcome our new children and families to Bluebells family and we are sure that we will get to know you as the year rolls on as there will be many opportunities to do so. For those of our returning children and families for 2022, we also extend our welcome and thanks for making our Bluebells what it is.

It has been an absolute delight being a part of your child's learning journey and we have really enjoyed getting to know your beautiful children. Most of the children have settled really well. For many children, the childcare experience is the first time the children have been away from their family. Therefore, it is understandable that it may take some children longer than others to build trust and confidence in this new adventure.

The transition group have adjusted well into the toddler room with new changes and routines, making trustful relationships with educators and peers. Our Belonging program really helped the children to navigate their way around the indoor and outdoor environment in a positive and supportive way. Educators were able to be present in the moment and support the children in each step of the routine.

We embedded our forest learning activities, exploring surroundings at Heritage and ANU and also, visits to the community garden and composting area bringing sustainability into our daily practices. It was great to see our educators encouraged children to be part of our community events, celebrating Chinese New Year, harmony day and Easter.



Educators put their effort to bringing Indigenous culture into our practices, continued to learn songs and learning the Acknowledgement of country.

We would like to give our special thanks to Max's family and Anna's mummy (Ksenia) who spent their valuable time with us sharing their culture on Harmony Day.

We have reached the end of our Belonging program; we would like to introduce our new program focused on the EYLF outcomes 3 and 5. "The Wellbeing and Communicator program". This will be developing children's understanding of emotions, physical and mental health and developing verbal communication skills.

Lastly, thank you so much for being a part of our Bluebells family. We are so excited and looking forward to the many days ahead of caring and scaffolding your children in learning while they play! Also, we welcome your input into our program and encourage you to join with us to share your culture and special talents with Heritage family.

A big congratulations to Titi for recently completing her Diploma in Early Childhood Education



Wattle/Grevillea's report

BY DRAGANA & FATIMA

Hi toddler families,

The time is flying, and we could not believe it is already time for our first newsletter of the year. We will start by welcoming all our new children and their families into the toddler room as well as our returning children and their families. We would also like to say a big thank you for all your support, understanding and trust and we promise you that we will do our best to continue supporting you and your child/ren the best way we can throughout the year.

The last couple months had different challenges for all of us as we needed to adapt to many changes, we are so proud to see our toddlers thriving in their new environment. Our Belonging program supported our toddlers so well from the end of last year, resettling back after "lockdown", children reconnected quickly with educators and peers. Setting up environments based on their interest and needs, being there for them and engaging in meaningful conversation with them daily helped them feel safe/secure and a sense of belonging, and confidently engage with peers and their environment.

At the beginning of this year, we went through a big transition across Heritage. Many children from Nursery became toddlers and we had so many new children join us from outside of Heritage. Educators from the Nursery and parents shared information about children and the toddler team used that information to create environments and plan intentional teaching activities to meet every child's needs and stretch their knowledge further through inquiry-based learning. We were thrilled to see how they all quickly became familiar with their new social and physical environments and explored it with confidence. We noticed many of our toddlers showing interest in walks and exploring nature, different creative experiences were set up daily for children to express their creativity in open-ended ways and learn about the world around them. Construction, role play, vehicles, trains, different sensory activities was something that our toddlers showed interest in. They were also provided with an opportunity to share their identity and culture with us and learn about other cultures and different ways of being and doing.

We finished up our "Belonging Program" at the end of March and summarise our observations. Based on this, we recently

carried out flexible parent-teacher interview over the phone and updated all of you on your child's progress, discuss our new program and plan the future goals together with you. We would like to thank you all for allowing some spare time and sharing with us your child's goals, interests, routines, etc. Putting it all together we decided that our new "Wellbeing and Communication" program would be the best approach to support us to meet the needs of each individual child in the toddler room. Our goal is to create environments for toddlers in which they can confidently express themselves towards educators and peers, learn about different emotions and how to express them appropriately, strengthen their gross and fine motor skills so they could explore their environments with confidence and become independent to do everyday tasks. Educators will use a range of teaching strategies based on every child's needs and learning abilities.

We would like to thank you all for ongoing support and looking forward to the exciting year ahead.



sharing experiences from the preschoolers and table activities - linking to EYLF outcome 1: children have a strong sense of identity, and outcome 2: children are connected and contribute to their world.

We recently have done a phone call catch up with families about your child's journey this year, this included any goal setting and things you are working on at home, as well as an introduction to our upcoming program.

Our 'Becoming Nature Explorers' program will be our focus over the next few months, pursuing four outcomes. Being socially responsible/respecting the environment, making contributions to active community participation, having strong social and emotional wellness and taking responsibility for our own health and physical wellbeing. As the name suggests, the intent of this program is to continue take the starting steps in our Nature Play adventure and find our basis through interests and inquiry to where this will take us (please have a read through our 'Nature Play' article by Hannah for further insight).

Learning on the land has bought us many learning journey's so far, we look forward to what is ahead!

Banksia's report

BY KIRSTY

Where do I start! The Banksia group have hit the ground running this year.

Looking back, it wasn't too long ago that we were welcoming our new preschoolers to the room and all quickly got settled into the year.

At this stage, we had a focus on 'belonging' - as in any room, it is important for the children to feel secure before they are confident expressing themselves and thriving in their environment. This learning, along with the addition of our recent Nature Play experiences, have shown that our preschoolers are doing exactly that - thriving!

Setting the expectations of the room early on gave us the opportunity to quickly deep dive in to furthering our learning in the direction the preschoolers were wanting to. This learning happened through more structured group times,





Explained: balancing Child Care Subsidy

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT - DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT

At the end of each financial year, Services Australia reconciles family payments, including Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This is to ensure families receive the correct amount of assistance for the year.

Families need to confirm their income after the end of the financial year for this to occur. This process is called balancing.

Approaching deadlines:

The end of financial year marks two important deadlines for families:

- the first deadline for confirming 2020–21 income
- the second deadline for confirming 2019–20 income.

Families must take action by 30 June 2022 to avoid losing CCS or incurring a debt.

2019–20 financial year:

Most families confirmed their 2019–20 income before the first deadline on 30 June 2021.

Families who haven't confirmed their 2019–20 income must do so by 30 June 2022.

If they don't, they may need to pay back all the CCS they got for 2019–20.

More information about debts is available on Services Australia's website.

They will also lose their CCS and Additional Child Care Subsidy eligibility from the first CCS fortnight of the 2022–23 financial year.

You will need to direct these families to make a new claim if they wish to get a reduced fee again.

Families can only claim CCS again once they have:

- confirmed their income, and
- repaid any current or previous child care related debt, or
- entered into a repayment arrangement.

Families who miss the second deadline will also miss out on any top up of CCS for which they may have been eligible.

2020–21 financial year:

All families must confirm their 2020–21 income before the first deadline on 30 June 2022.

If they don't, their CCS will stop. This means they'll need to pay full fees when they use child care.

Services Australia can start a family's CCS again, but only after they've confirmed their income. This means families may miss out on CCS.

How to confirm income:

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can complete an Advise non-lodgement of tax return using their Centrelink online account through myGov or through the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app. They'll need to do this even if they've already told the Australian Taxation Office they don't need to lodge.

If a parent separates from their partner, Services Australia will also need their ex-partner's income.

If a parent is concerned that their ex-partner won't lodge their tax return by the deadline they should call the Families line.

PHOTO DAY

coming Soon



Tuesday 28th and Thursday 29th of June

Death cap mushrooms in the ACT: avoid wild mushrooms

ACT HEALTH

Dear Proprietor

Death Cap mushrooms are growing in the ACT. They can grow anywhere in our region, at any time.

Death Cap mushrooms are one of the world's deadliest mushrooms. Since 2002, there have been four deaths and several poisonings in the ACT due to Death Cap mushrooms.

All parts of the Death Cap mushroom are poisonous and eating part of a mushroom can cause death. The poison cannot be removed from the mushroom; cooking, soaking, freezing, peeling or drying does not make them safe.

It is hard to tell the difference between a Death Cap mushroom and an edible mushroom, even for experienced collectors. For this reason, the Health Protection Service advises that food businesses should not use mushrooms collected from the wild. All mushrooms should be purchased from commercial suppliers.

As a food business, you must ensure food for sale is both safe and suitable for human consumption.

If a person eats part of a Death Cap mushroom they must seek urgent medical attention at a hospital emergency department, even if they do not feel sick.

I trust that food businesses will take this matter seriously.

Yours sincerely

Victor Martin

Executive Branch Manager

Health Protection Service



Transitioning Survey

Attached is the link for a new survey for families. This is to gain feedback on how we have gone with the transition and settling of children into their new rooms. We hope to continue improving on our practices and anonymous feedback from these surveys will help us to develop goals for the future.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/THBHS6N>



NATURE PLAY FAMILY DAY

instead of mother's day, we would like to
celebrate **all family members** of our heritage
community by providing a fun nature play
afternoon!

when: 9 may from 3:30-5:30pm

who: parents, carers, grandparents, (all
welcome to join)

**we will be providing experiences from
'nature play' such as flinting a fire, rope
courses, nature art, and cooking on the
campfire - all guided by educators!**



Heritage Early Childhood Centre

Walk-a-thon Week

You're invited to join us for our annual 'Heritage Walk-a-thon'. Join your child's group at locations on ANU for morning tea and a programmed activity. Family members and grandparents welcome!

BANKSIA GROUP

(preschoolers)

TUESDAY

14 JUNE 2022

TIME & LOCATION:

announced closer to date

- SWING SET UP
- NATURE ART
- SLACK LINE
- LUNCH & YUMMY "SOMETIMES FOODS"

WATTLE & GREVILLEA GROUP

(toddlers)

WEDNESDAY

15 JUNE 2022

TIME & LOCATION:

announced closer to date

- MUSIC
- NATURE ART
- BOOK READING
- MORNING FRUIT & FUN TREATS

BLUEBELLS GROUP

(nursery)

THURSDAY

16 JUNE 2022

TIME & LOCATION:

announced closer to date

- YOGA
- MUSIC
- MORNING FRUIT & YUMMY SNACKS

