



AUGUST 2016 NEWSLETTER

## Message from the Board

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this edition of the Children's Services Newsletter. The months of June and July have been an incredibly busy time. The establishment of the 48 place long day care centre on site at the new Integrated Centre for Children and Families and the relocation of the support services to the new site was completed. The property known as Glenora in North Hobart has been home to Lady Gowrie Tasmania for 25 years now and the Board look forward to sharing with everyone soon, what the next life for Glenora will hold. We are hoping to expand the current Campbell Street program to accommodate unmet demand for education and care.

The move into the purpose built offices in South Hobart provides LGT with secure tenure into the future, while also providing a base from which we can continue current and future community work throughout Tasmania. A part of this community work will include providing a base for the Inclusion Support Program.

Being awarded this contract by the Australian Government was an important milestone for the organisation and one that allows us to retain our valuable staff from the previous government contracts that expired on the 30th of June. In support of the ISP contract, dedicated staff will be working from the Fredrick Street property in Launceston, and a new base that has now been secured in Burnie.

The opening of the Integrated Centre in South Hobart signifies a new and exciting stage in the rich story of Lady Gowrie Tasmania. The Integrated Centre has been a goal of the organisation for many years now, with the opening seeing the realisation of that goal. The Honourable Will Hodgman MP, Premier of Tasmania, a previous attendee at the Battery Point centre, officiated at the opening with many friends, colleagues and supporters of Lady Gowrie Tasmania.

While the Integrated Centre is an important milestone for the organisation, it is timely to remember that this investment back to the community would not have been possible without the long standing services that the organisation already provides. It is through the hard work of staff, strong financial management by many Board Directors over the years, that the organisation was in a position to be able to fund this entire project. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank everyone for their ongoing efforts to ensure that all Lady Gowrie Tasmania services are quality services that deliver positive outcomes for children, families, education and care professionals and the broader community

As I write this article, the outcome of the Federal election is now known. With the Coalition to govern for the next term, the progression of the Jobs for Families Child Care Package will be monitored by key stakeholders. The package if endorsed will lead to changes within our sector, principally through the childcare funding model. Irrespective of the outcome, the Board has reaffirmed its position to advocate for the best interests of children throughout any consultative process.

At a local level, the State Government review of the Education Act has resulted in a proposal to lower the school starting age. The article in this newsletter by the CEO Ros Cornish outlines the proposal and the concerns not only by Lady Gowrie Tasmania but many with the community. Please consider the implications of the change particularly in respect of the impact on very young children and express your view to government representatives.

Please stay safe over the final month of winter and the Board and I encourage you to visit the Integrated Centre in South Hobart should you be in the area.

**Chris McGuire**  
Chair – Board of Directors



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## Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Families and Friends,

The State Government undertook a review of the Education Act in 2015. Lady Gowrie Tasmania responded to the draft through a submission and followed up with a response to the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) of the Education Bill.

The Government plan to table the Bill for endorsement in the spring sitting of parliament – probably September. Many changes within the Bill are fully supported by Lady Gowrie Tasmania. However, the organisation has great concerns about the proposed lowering of the school starting age.

The Bill proposed from 2020 the first compulsory year of school (Prep) will be for children aged 4 ½ years with the follow on effect that Kindergarten enrolments commencing at 3 ½ years. Whilst Kindergarten is not a compulsory year 98% of Tasmanian children attend.

The organisation believes this earlier starting age – particularly the Kindergarten is not in the best interests of children. This view is based on many years of experience and supported by evidence based research. Such research was quoted in both the original submission and response to the RIS.

LGT believes:

- A structured school environment, whether play based or not, is inappropriate for children as young as three and a half.
- The school environment is inevitably structured, with times allocated for library, music, lunch, morning tea, physical education and other day to day scheduled activities. These activities are scheduled for ALL children and are not designed to meet the individual needs of children.
- Children who are three and a half need to be in secure, nurturing environments as opposed to a formal school setting.
- Maturation of children varies however the typical three year old is not toilet trained, wears a nappy, or has multiple toileting accidents throughout the day. They have a day time sleep, carry a comforter- teddy or blanket, and are developing self-regulation and self-confidence. They have developing motor skills, and need constant guidance, support and compassion. Can a formal school setting meet the individual needs of this cohort?
- National and international research states that children of this age learn best in play based environments with choice and self-directed play, as opposed to a regimented program.
- Forcing children into learning that requires them to master skills that their brain is not yet developed enough to understand, can impair healthy brain development and induce excessive stress in the child.
- Some teachers in Kindergarten do not have specialist early childhood qualifications/degrees (Birth to 8). Teacher assistants may have Certificate 3, but this qualification may not include the core units to supporting a child's development.
- Class sizes and ratios in the structured school environment do not replicate those in an early education and care setting – 1:10 as opposed to 2:25 (or higher) in schools. The Government indicate that the average class size is 18 – however we know that many classes are much greater than the average. The average is determined as some school have low Kindergarten numbers – particularly rural and remote schools with composite classes.
- There will be huge pressure on Outside School Hours Care services; three and half year-olds will be with children up to the age of 13, in after school care and school holiday care, usually in school halls or gymnasiums that are not appropriate for three year old children.
- The “patchwork” of care for children created by an earlier school starting age - before school, kinder, after kinder, afterschool care etc. National and international research states that the more transitions a child has throughout the day / week the more negative impact on children's social and emotional development and wellbeing. Key determinant of quality is consistent adults providing education and care – a child under this model could have up to many different adults in four or five different settings.
- School facilities are not designed for the three and a half year old. Kindergarten rooms do not have nappy change facilities, appropriate toileting facilities, sleep/rest areas, dedicated outdoor play spaces or appropriate supervision during lunch breaks etc.
- Kindergartens in Tasmania are not assessed under the National Quality Framework and although there has been much conversation about meeting the standards; this has yet to occur. Education and care (child care) services have operated since 2012 under the National Quality Framework and are assessed independently.

Secondary to the changes is the potential impact on education and care services. The proposed change to the 375 services statewide, including 118 Long Day Care services.

- It is estimated that education and care services will lose over 3,700 children to formal school as a direct result of this change. This represents over 30% of children who attend child care services.
- This does not include the birth to 3 year old children who will be lost when services are forced to close, where this could increase to over 50% or 5,500 children Birth to 5.
- All services will be forced to downsize affecting their viability and impacting on the accessibility and affordability for working families.
- There are 54 services that are at high risk and will be most likely forced to close completely.
- There will be between 480 and 720 individual jobs losses across the state.
- Fees will increase as education and care for the younger cohort is more expensive to provide.



- These service closures will mean that some communities will not have access to education and care at all, which will impact on families' ability to work or study.

The economic impact of the points above have broader implications for the economy when we consider the suppliers and small business that are supplying goods and services to the education and care sector and the flow on effect for workforce participation.

The data above do not including the impact on the Family Day Care sector which will be significant, as their viability will be affected in a similar way. We estimate that further 140 – 220 jobs could be lost within the Family Day Care sector if services are affected in the same way.

The Government identified that one of the reasons for the proposed changes was to support access by vulnerable children and families as early access to school has the potential to enable learning difficulties to be identified and rectified early. The school system is currently struggling to offer referral and follow up services for children enrolled in the first years of school who are experiencing difficulties. With an increase of children in the education system this adds further pressure to an already high demand system.

Early childhood education and care services have access to the Australian Government funded Inclusion and Professional Support Program. As one element of this program, Inclusion Support Agencies work collaboratively with education and care providers and early intervention services to appropriately support the individual needs of children.

Families of children displaying developmental delays within early childhood education and care services are supported through a referral process to relevant agencies for developmental assessment before transitioning to Kindergarten. Inclusion Support Agencies support early childhood education and care services to build their capacity to provide a quality inclusive environment for all children including those children with additional needs. Early childhood education and care services are eligible for Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) to increase educator ratios and more appropriately meet the needs of all children including children with disabilities/delays. Access to this level of inclusion support within early childhood education and care services ensures children have access to vital early intervention programs.

Vulnerable children might benefit from earlier access to literacy and numeracy programs. However, there is no evidence that forcing young children into instruction in these areas in a school environment would be any more beneficial than quality support for early learning in education and care settings and existing family support programs.

#### Summary:

There is a very real risk that too early enrolment in the school system will result in immature children being forced into academic learning too soon and that there might be a 'push down' of the formal school curriculum. Enrolment on age, irrespective of 'readiness' may well result in early school failure, especially for boys. Pressure for early achievement of academic benchmarks, with children being compared to peers on norm-referenced assessment measures, is inappropriate when young children's development varies so significantly in the rate, pace and pattern.

Should part time Kindergarten be offered below four years of age, young children are likely to experience multiple settings each day, each week, each term – home, child care, before and after school and vacation care and part/full day school. Such a patchwork of education and care arrangements does not foster a strong sense of belonging in a setting, attachment to a stable care giver, or opportunities for an educator to come to know and work closely with each child and family. Is this in the best interests of the child?

It is important that key stakeholders, service providers, educators and families consider the impact of lowering the school starting age and make contact with the Minister, their local member of parliament, members of the legislative council to express their concerns about the proposal to lower the school starting age. The best outcome is an amendment to the Bill to ensure young children as central to the decision making process.

We all must be the voice for young children as this proposal has the potential to impact on their health, wellbeing and long term educational outcomes. Act now in the best interests of children.

Please feel free to make contact for any further information or to discuss this matter more fully.

Until next time...

**Ros Cornish**  
Chief Executive Officer





## Veggie pikelets

These scrumptious pikelets are packed full of healthy vegetables that your children won't even notice. Whip them up for afternoon tea or pop into lunch boxes for a tasty and nutritious snack.

### Ingredients

- 2 cups (300g) self-raising flour
- 6 eggs
- 4-5 cups of mix vegetables, finely chopped or grated
- 1/2 - 1 cup grated cheese
- drop of milk
- olive oil
- sour cream, to serve

### Method

1. Mix flour, eggs, veggies and cheese together in a large bowl. Add seasoning, then add enough milk to the mixture until it is slightly runny.
2. Heat a frying pan with a small amount of olive oil and drop a tablespoon of the mixture into the pan, patting into a neat circle.
3. Cook on a medium heat until golden on each side.
4. Serve with sour cream.



## Button Batteries - A Little Known Risk

We use electronic devices every day without giving them a second thought. However, did you know that there is a hidden danger inside many of these devices that poses a serious risk for children?

Powerful coin-sized button batteries are found in many common household devices such as remote controls, watches, keyless entry car remotes, flameless candles, calculators, singing greeting cards and other electronic devices. Children often have easy access to these devices and many parents/carers are unaware of the dangers as many devices come with the batteries already installed.

When swallowed, these button batteries can get stuck in a child's throat and cause severe burns and long term damage to their airways.

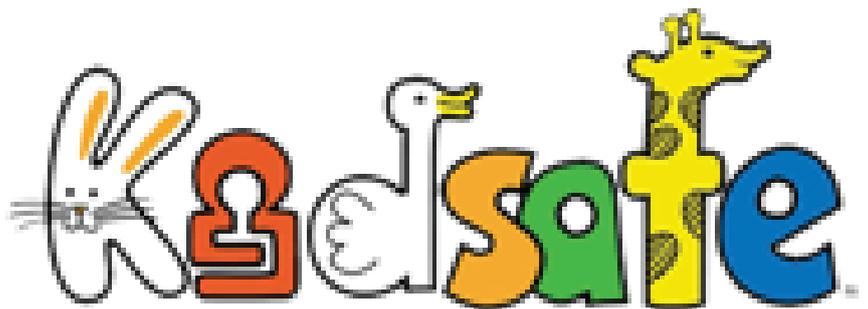
In Australia, around 20 children a week present to an emergency department with a button battery related injury. Children under the age of 5 years are at the greatest risk.

To prevent button battery related death and injury:

- Look in your home for any items that may contain coin-sized button batteries.
- Place devices out of sight and out of reach of children.
- Keep loose or spare batteries locked away.

If swallowing or insertion of a button battery is suspected, call Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26

Tell others about this threat and share these steps.



THESE TYPES OF DEVICES MAY CONTAIN COIN-SIZED BUTTON BATTERIES





## Early Learning: Everyone Benefits Campaign

A new national campaign called Early Learning: Everyone Benefits, supported by key national organisations committed to quality education and care, aims to demonstrate to state/territory politicians and the broader community that quality early learning for children makes a quality future for Australia.

Australia's investment in early learning is well below that of other OECD countries. One in five vulnerable children commences school behind their peers developmentally and this number doubles in the case of Aboriginal children. Increased investment in quality early learning is essential and in later life reduces the dependency on welfare, increases employment opportunities, improved health outcomes and importantly contributes to good citizenship.

Early learning means the vital stages of children's development from birth to age five, including brain development, motor skills, communication, social and emotional well being – all of the skills needed for lifelong learning. Early learning occurs in formal settings (early childhood education and care) but also at home and in relationships with family members, caregivers and educators. The Every Learning Campaign recognises that the main vehicle for children's learning is PLAY.

While some recognise the importance of quality early learning, many within the community including politicians do not understand or value to importance of early learning for children under five years of age. The first five years of every child's life can unleash a lifetime of potential. Families are encouraged to visit the website [www.everyonebenefits.org.au](http://www.everyonebenefits.org.au) to learn more about the benefits of early learning, along with how to engage in this campaign.

### Campaign supporters include:

Early Childhood Australia

Uniting Care Australia/KU Children's Services

The ParentHood

Murdoch Children's Research Institute

C & K

Benevolent Society

Early Learning Association Australia

ARACY

Goodstart Early Learning

Early Childhood Management Services

SNAICC

Australian Community Children's Services

Family Day Care Australia

Reggio Emilia Australia



## NAIDOC WEEK Participation and Partnership with The Australian Taxation Office

Lady Gowrie Battery Point were approached by one of their current families whom works at the Australian Taxation office to participate in a display to celebrate NAIDOC week.

The Runnymede and Kelly Rooms had discussions within their programs to assist in the corporation of NAIDOC celebrations.

In the Runnymede room educators held discussions with the children about Aboriginal art work. They also viewed and explored a range of example Aboriginal art works.

Educators explained to the children that the artwork tells a story.

Together they discussed and spoke about the colours and what they might signify and the pictures that were in the art.

The children viewed pictures of snakes, lizards, turtles, with dots, lines, and patterns featured on the pictures.

Educators asked the children if they would like to do some of their own art works that tells a story like the Aboriginal art works.

The Kelly Room have been focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history as a part of their program leading up to NAIDOC.

The children have been reading stories, listening and playing music and exploring Aboriginal artwork. Through these experiences the children have been involved in discussions around the different way the stories were illustrated and how the illustrations can tell the story without reading the words.

The Kelly Room were interested in the idea of being able to tell a story just through a drawing so they decided to have a turn at drawing their own stories.

As a result of these experiences a selection of children's art works were sent for display during NAIDOC week at the Australian Taxation Office located in Collins Street Hobart.

The display of artworks were a great attraction to many of the staff employed at the Australian Taxation Office, with many laughs and conversations occurring whilst they explored the children's creations and read the stories that went with them.



Tess: I am going to have a kangaroo in my picture it is bouncing to where Aunty Kate and Uncle Phil live. When the kangaroo gets there I think it might do some boxing. I am going to add a tree and the things at the bottom need to be brown and they help the tree stand up. I think it will be a blue kangaroo, and orange to colour his ears. The kangaroo is going to have some spots here and maybe some more here.



Archie: I am going to have a sun I think an orange sun. The sun is going to burn the whole world.



## Nindethana Frederick Street Vacation Care *Connecting With Nature*

Nindethana is a Girl Guide campsite located at Deviot. Surrounded by nature, we knew it would be a fun day, but we had no idea just how much FUN we would have together. As soon as we arrived we had a quick morning tea and began our bush walk. This was by no means an ordinary bush walk! First, we climbed, balanced and hopped our way through an obstacle course. The children helped each other to move through the course. We moved quietly so that we wouldn't frighten away any animals or birds that we might come across. We walked carefully as we observed the different types of fungus on the ground and even up high in the trees. We talked about how the environment determines the type of fungus that will grow in it and how different they looked. Some were tall and skinny, some looked like coral and some looked like plates up high. We could hear and see a Kookaburra that wasn't afraid to be to near to us, and we could see the paths that animals had made through the bushes. We wondered if perhaps these had been made by a wombat.

After we had walked for a while, we came across a meeting site. We sat on the wooden benches and were still. We closed our eyes and listened to the wind in the trees, the nearby water moving and the birds that were hiding from us. This brought us to the end of our bushwalk, we separated in to two teams and gathered what we needed to light our campfire.

toasted marshmallows over the fires. There were many conversations being heard about which way toasts them better, hot and fast so that they burn on the outside or slowly so that they lightly toast and become very runny?



The children were asking to do the walk again but, sadly had run out of time. We left Nindethana at 3.30pm, with the children asking if this is a place we would could come and visit again.

We talked about fire safety and the different layers we would need to light our fire – tinder, kindling and firewood, and what each of their purpose was for the fire. When we returned to our teams campfire spot, we began building our fires. Using a flint, our groups may have become a little competitive, timing how quickly we could get our fires to light. We became excited each time we noticed sparks and a little smoke, however after each team had been attempting to light the fire using the flint for more than 30 minutes, the time came to bring out the matches. Our hot dogs had been cooking during the morning in a slow cooker, but our rolls were still a little cold. So, we toasted them very carefully over the fire. They tasted better than ever before, with the taste of the campfire on them. After lunch we then



## HOPPEL

# A collaborative project between Lady Gowrie Tasmania and University of Wollongong

The Early Start Research Institute (ESRI) at the University of Wollongong has initiated a collaborative research project exclusively with Lady Gowrie Tasmania. This project, known as HOPPEL, is trialling as an innovative online professional learning program for educators promotes physical activity and positive healthy eating behaviours for young children within childcare services. Fifteen Lady Gowrie services are involved in the project – ten from the South and five from the North. The 15 services have been divided into three groups or 'clusters', each comprising of five Lady Gowrie services. Currently two of the 'clusters' (10 services) are actively participating in the 12 week study with the third 'cluster' to begin the program in September.

This project is divided into two stages. The first stage requires educators to attend a face-to-face training session. This face-to-face session focuses on how to promote physical activity and healthy eating among the children they educate and care for in their service. The second stage requires these educators to share and collaborate programming ideas in an ongoing online professional learning environment. Web based resources are available to assist educators in promoting physical activity and healthy eating behaviours among children through educational play-based opportunities in the services daily routine.

The aim of this program is to increase physical activity time for children whilst they are in the services, as well as to promote healthy eating behaviours. Whilst young children appear active, a large percentage of young children are not meeting National physical activity guidelines and there are many simple things that can be done to increase healthy eating behaviours. To date more than 70 educators and nearly 300 children are involved in the program. Educators have provided positive feedback and are benefiting from the opportunity of collaborating with other services to further increase the quality of educationally based physically active and healthy eating opportunities within each service

This research has the potential to reshape the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities for educators' within the early childhood sector, therefore increasing the quality of educational programs offered to young children. This program has been designed to supplement and support the National Quality Framework that governs the quality of education and care offered in all licenced childcare services in Australia.

The major benefits of this study for parents and children will be improved quality of physical wellbeing programs offered at all Lady Gowrie services throughout Tasmania. This project aims to equip educators with greater skills and knowledge in the area of physical activity and healthy eating behaviours of young children, and provide educators with ongoing support by a research institute dedicated to improving the physical well being of young children.





## Northern Services Contact Numbers / Email

### Long Day Care Services

#### Alanvale

6348 1390  
alanvale@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Norwood

6336 6971  
norwood@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### University

6324 3731  
uninorth@gowrie-tas.com.au

### Outside School Hours Care Programs

#### Frederick Street VAC

6348 1390  
alanvale@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Launceston Preparatory School ASC

6336 6971  
norwood@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Norwood ASC

6336 6971  
norwood@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### University ASC Mowbray

University VAC Campus  
6324 3731  
uninorth@gowrie-tas.com.au

### Occasional Care Program

#### Frederick Street Pre-School Program

6348 1390  
alanvale@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Head Office

'Glenora' Building  
229 Campbell Street, Hobart  
6230 6800  
info@gowrie-tas.com.au  
www.gowrie-tas.com.au

## Southern Services Contact Numbers / Email

### Long Day Care Centers

#### Acton

6248 5644  
acton@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Battery Point

6214 0380  
batterypoint@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Bowen Road

6211 0340  
bowenroad@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Campbell Street

6230 6881  
campbellstreet@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Kingston

6229 1901  
kgcc@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Integrated Centre for Children and Families

6230 6805  
integratedcentremanager@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### University

6226 2088  
unisouth@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Fahan

#### Richmond

#### South Hobart

#### Swansea

#### Oatlands

6230 6805  
ldc@gowrie-tas.com.au

### Outside School Hours Care Programs

#### Albuera Street ASC & VAC

#### Bowen Road ASC

#### Brighton BSC, ASC, Vac

#### Glenorchy ASC

#### Goulburn Street ASC

#### Lansdowne Crescent BSC, ASC & VAC

#### Mt Nelson ASC

#### Richmond ASC

#### Rosetta ASC

#### South Hobart ASC

#### Taroona ASC & VAC

#### Warrane ASC

6230 6806  
oshc@gowrie-tas.com.au

### Family Day Care

#### Family Day Care Scheme Pre-school Program

6223 3238  
fdcadmin@gowrie-tas.com.au

#### Head Office

346 Macquarie Street, Hobart  
6230 6800  
info@gowrie-tas.com.au  
www.gowrie-tas.com.au

## Christmas Closure

Services will close at normal time on  
Friday 23rd December/reopen  
Tuesday 3rd January 2017.

Please note the following exceptions:

Oatlands - close on Friday 23rd December/  
reopen on 9th January 2017

Swansea - close on Friday 23rd December /  
reopen on 9th January 2017