

Message From The Board

As some of you will have heard, over the last few months we have been recruiting for a number of vacant positions on the Gowrie Board. Whilst we always endeavour to manage succession planning of the Board carefully, the unexpected departure of two of our Board members late last year has resulted in the remaining Directors carrying a heavier burden than usual.

Whilst the recruitment process has been a long one, I would like to commend my fellow Directors, particular the members of the Recruitment Sub-Committee - Melanie Bonde and Jane Hanna, on what has been a thorough and comprehensive process.

I'm very pleased to announce, that based on the quality of applicants received, we have been able to fill all the available vacancies on the Board, and recruit an excellent cross section of skills.

Will McShane, a chartered accountant with MyState Financial will add additional finance expertise to the Board, and has already "volunteered" to join the Finance Sub Committee.

Meagan Avery, a Solicitor with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission will bring valuable knowledge not only of all aspects of the law, but specifically the organisations compliance obligations.

Chris McGuire, a Maritime consultant, brings extensive experience in both corporate governance and risk management.

These skills, combined with those of the existing Board members, will see the Board well placed to deal with the challenges that lay ahead. I look forward to working with Will, Meagan and Chris and the rest of the Gowrie Board over the coming months.

In the past few weeks we have seen increasing media coverage of child care fees and the rising cost to families. Our organisation is acutely aware of the impact fees have on families, and we are proud we have been able to maintain the current calendar year fees at 2011 levels. The Chief Executive Officer article in this newsletter provides a further insight on this matter.

I recently presented to the Hobart City Councils Parks Committee the Lady Gowrie Tasmania proposed west Hobart development, and I'm pleased to advise the council has given us landlord approval to proceed with this proposal. The next stage in the process will be a planning submission, including public consultation on the proposal.

And in late breaking news as I write this article, Ros Cornish, the CEO has advised us that our tenders have been successful to continue as the Inclusion and Professional Support Program providers for the three elements of the program for the early childhood industry in Tasmania for a further 3 years. This is an excellent result and another vote of confidence in the excellent work of the Gowrie team. Congratulations to all the teams involved.

Scott Adams
Chairman

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Message From The Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends

As I write this editorial, there has been much in the press recently regarding child care costs. Research undertaken by United Voice (the child care union) indicated massive increases in the cost of care over the past year with Tasmania being the nation's highest at 16% despite educator wages not increasing. This report resulted in great local media interest and to prepare for one interview I sought some rationale for this increase.

In doing so, it became evident that many providers in Tasmania have absorbed the increases for some time in an attempt to minimise fee increases. However, this is no longer possible with many providers increasing fees consistently over the past two years.

Just as households are faced with increased cost of living so is education and care operators. As well as increases in energy, food, health and hygiene goods, toys and equipment....education and care operators have faced mandatory changes which now incur recurrent costs which previously did not apply. Such changes include the requirement for services that provide meals/snacks to hold a food business license from their local government. This one requirement has resulted in additional costs – not just the license fee, but also to meet the requirements educators must have food handling training, services must undergo an annual audit by an external specialist, facilities and equipment upgrades, and increased documentation – all which incur ongoing operational costs.

This together with other regulatory requirements such as first aid, including specialist training in Anaphylaxis, CPR and Asthma Management, Occupational Health and Safety requirements which include trained responsible officers on each site and trained personnel to support return to work plans and soon to be implemented tagging and testing of electrical equipment, all bring additional ongoing operational costs to service operators.

Child care has changed dramatically over the past decade....it has moved from a 'cottage industry' to a sophisticated education and care business. Government funding is mostly directed to families through child care benefit and child care

rebate to reduce the cost of care with no direct funding to services. Services operate on a business model and are now more highly regulated than ever before through licensing and quality assurance systems. Given the important role education and care services play in the lives of young children, these regulations and standards are essential and Lady Gowrie Tasmania has been a strong proponent of these changes.

Despite the reported increases, as mentioned by the Board Chair report, Lady Gowrie Tasmania is cognisant of the impact on families of increases in fees. Whilst the 16% increase in fees has been reported in Tasmania, Lady Gowrie Tasmania has retained the current fee levels in 2012 despite the implementation of the National Quality Framework which stipulates improved adult to child ratios for the under 2 cohort and increased educator qualifications. A comparison of competitor fee schedules indicate Lady Gowrie Tasmania fee levels are well within the market force with some services up to \$15 per day higher than our daily fee.

The retention of the current fee schedule is even more commendable given Lady Gowrie Tasmania wages and conditions for educators are significantly higher than Awards standards. Furthermore, where possible we have operated at improved adult to child ratios for the infant cohort for many years and the organisation has a 'two manager model' for child care services to support underpinning and career pathway which result in increased costs.

Clearly the economy of scale and centralised organisation systems result in efficiencies and this together with the due diligence of the Board and Management Teams in the area of financial management has also enabled costs to be contained. Being a community based organisation governed by a voluntary Board who are committed to reinvesting surpluses back into the organisation and its services means there is no pressure to produce profit for shareholders or owners.

One example of such investment is the commitment of resources to upgrade an undeveloped area at the Battery Point site. This space on lower ground floor will support the delivery of a specialist early learning program for preschool aged

children with the flow on effect of smaller group sizes for the other cohorts. The contractors are due to complete this \$160,000 development at the end of June.

Another example is the contribution of resources to support the upgrade of the outdoor play spaces at Bowen Road and the University South services. Contractors will commence in August at Bowen Road and then move on to the University site.

Perhaps one of the significant developments since the organisation purchased the Acton Centre some five years ago is the proposed development of a Child and Family Centre in West Hobart. The Board has been negotiating with the Hobart City Council to access land for the development and this was approved last month. Whilst the usual planning and development application process is to follow, the Board is confident that this development will progress. The Centre will include a 50 place long day care centre, a training centre and importantly a range of services to support families and children. The commitment of significant resources to this development demonstrates the organisations commitment as a social enterprise and working in partnership with the Hobart City Council to contribute to their social inclusion strategy.

Finally, I am pleased to advise that Minister Kate Ellis announced that the organisation has been successful in tendering for the Federal Government Inclusion and Professional Support Program for the period 2013-2016. Lady Gowrie has delivered the three elements of this program for the past two contracts and now with the success of the current tender process it means that the organisation has delivered this program since its inception. This is a true demonstration of the capacity and capability of the organisation to deliver services on behalf of government at a high quality standard.

As is always the case I welcome any feedback or comments on any aspect of our services. Feel free to make contact: ros@gowrie-tas.com.au/62 306801

Until next time...

Ros Cornish
Chief Executive Officer



Favourite Recipes

Lamb and Noodle Hot Pot

500g cubed lamb, trim away excess fat

1 onions, chopped or grated

1 green apple, diced, skin on

1 carrots, diced or grated

2 sticks celery, chopped

1 tsp curry powder

1 x 440g tins lamb and vegetable chunky style soup

1 large tomato

250g small shell pasta, cooked and drained

Method:

1. Combine in large saucepan all ingredients except pasta.
2. Bring to the boil,
3. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 45 minutes or until tender
4. Stir in cooked pasta, reheat and serve.

Vegetable Slice

1 onions, chopped or grated

2 slices lean ham, chopped

2 carrots, grated

2 zucchini, cubed and grated

1 capsicum, chipped

2 sticks celery, chopped

1 cups (300g) grated cheese

1 cup corn kernels

2 cups self raising flour

6 eggs

1/2 cup milk

Method:

1. Beat milk and eggs together.
2. Combine all ingredients.
3. Pour into greased baking dishes
4. Place in moderate (180C) oven 50-60 minutes until set.

Lose the Biggest Loser from Kids TV screens

Article contributed by Karen Fontaine

As brash and as hard to ignore as the militant trainers who whip its obese contestants into shape, Channel Ten's *The Biggest Loser* has pervaded Australian television screens since its debut in 2006.

With a 7.00pm timeslot, it's aired well before children have gone to bed, and experts say it's doing their self-esteem and body image no favours.

Contestants are screamed at, tempted with fatty food and secretly filmed in their most intimate moments.

Experts say watching this is not only unsuitable for children, it contributes towards shaping damaging perceptions of a disease for which rates in Australia have doubled over the past 20 years.

What children see when they watch *The Biggest Loser* Professor John Dixon, head of the Obesity Research Unit at Monash University, who has devoted his career to understanding and treating the "serious, relapsing disease" of obesity, says children form pejorative views against obesity from a very early age. They think children who are obese are silly, dirty and lazy, he says.

"These shows might be entertaining for some mums and dads but the message is wrong and children will carry those perceptions about obese people and their issues throughout life," he warns. "Of course if you have a weight problem as a young child, it will be doing horrendous damage to your body image and self-esteem with the whole feeling that you brought this on yourself. And nothing could be further from the truth."

Margarita Tartakovsky, associate editor at www.PsychCentral.com and writer of the body image blog *Weightless*, says the danger of shows like *The Biggest Loser* is that children learn to associate their worth with their weight.

"They learn the only way to be attractive, happy and healthy is by losing weight and conforming to society's thin ideal," she says. From these shows, kids learn to watch their food intake like a hawk, Tartakovsky says. "They learn that you're bad if you eat junk food or other foods, and you're good if you watch your portions

and count your calories. And even worse, they learn that if they're overweight, too, they're undesirable, unattractive and unworthy and they must do everything in their power, including dramatically cutting their food intake and exercising until they're ready to collapse, to correct their supposedly wrong selves. These are very dangerous messages."

Is there anything to gain by watching? Some TV critics have suggested that the enduring appeal of *The Biggest Loser* is because the contestants are wrestling their own demons as much as they are dealing with their obesity. "The message we are given," one reviewer wrote, "is that you don't get to be this massive just because you like cakes and pies... This allows viewers to empathise."

"Rubbish", says Professor Dixon. "You could get any group of 20 people and put them in a room and you would have a lot of demons. These people have a serious medical condition. It's not their fault; they didn't bring it upon themselves, and it's not due to a lack of willpower or compliance. Try as they might, at least 90 per cent of these people will gain all of their weight back within four to five years, most of it within 12 months. I mean, have you ever seen a follow-up show?"

It's important, she says, for parents to figure out what their children are taking away from these programs. "When talking to their kids, it's also important for parents to emphasise that people can be healthy and beautiful in all shapes and sizes," she says. "They can even use a flower analogy. There are tons of flowers; one flower isn't more beautiful than another. They're all beautiful in their own ways."

Parents can also underscore that genetics play a prominent role in how we look – that is, some of us are short, others tall, some are thin, others are bigger; it's not natural or healthy for everyone to be skinny. "And that the key to true health is engaging in healthy habits – not in losing weight," she says.



Tips to keep your kids healthy this winter

It's that time of year when the cold weather can wreak havoc with your child's immune system. A healthy diet filled with powerhouse foods such as vegetables, fruits, lean meats and herbs could be all that's needed to prevent the winter blues and help little ones stay energised, healthy and alert this winter.

If your child's diet is not quite up to scratch he may lack the key vitamins, minerals and antioxidants needed for a strong immune system.

Encouraging your child to consume a varied diet with foods containing immune boosting properties may help him fight nasty colds and infections that come his way.

A varied diet including a variety of fruits and vegetables and enough protein rich foods such as eggs, lean red meat, poultry, fish and legumes is the aim. However, there are some foods with the X-factor that are packed with immune-boosting phytochemicals. Add these to the plate to give extra immune-boosting clout.

Drown both colds and fevers in plenty of fluids including water, soups, broths and fresh fruits and vegetables so little ones don't get dehydrated

Don't let the cold, wet, winter weather stop your kids being active, rug up and spend time in the fresh air.

Keeping sick children at home

While it is sometimes okay to send your child off to care with a mild cold there are many occasions when you should keep your little one at home, when making your decision at the beginning of the day ask yourself these questions:

- Will my child be well enough to comfortably and happily participate in the activities of the day?
- Will my child's care provider be able to care for my child without it affecting their ability to look after the other children?
- Will my child pass the illness on to their playmates if I send them in today?

In addition, if your child displays any of the following symptoms you should always keep them at home until you have the all clear from the doctor or until the symptoms lessen and the child seems well enough to return to care:

- A temperature and/or fever accompanied by a behaviour change and other signs of illness such as lethargy, persistent crying or breathing difficulties.
- Signs of severe illness such as uncontrolled coughing, breathing difficulties, wheezing, persistent crying and/or lethargy.
- A respiratory illness such as bronchitis or influenza.
- Vomiting and or diarrhoea, they should not return to child care for a minimum of 48 hrs.
- Any sort of rash, especially when accompanied by a fever or behavior change.
- Mouth sores that cause drooling.

Vegetables and Fruit - Tips for Families

All vegetables and fruit are healthy. In particular brightly or dark coloured red and green vegetables and fruit, and legumes in all forms such as dried, canned and cooked should be encouraged. Vegetables and fruit may be eaten raw or cooked, whereas legumes such as haricot beans, red kidney beans, soy beans, chickpeas and lentils are most safe when cooked.

The benefits of fruit and vegetables:

There are many reasons for everyone to enjoy eating a wide variety of vegetables and fruit. Vegetables and fruit provide important vitamins such as vitamin C and folic acid. They also have other plant substances that are thought important to help prevent certain diseases.

Encourage your child to eat more fruit and vegetables:

The first step is for you to eat and enjoy vegetables and fruit every day. It is important to keep offering vegetables and fruit in a variety of ways, as children eat what is familiar to them. Never assume that your child dislikes a particular fruit or vegetable. The next time you offer it may be the day they decide to try it. Children's tastes do change with age.

The five key steps to success include:

- Involve your child in food preparation and planning.
- Make eating good food enjoyable.
- Pay attention to presentation.
- Include fruit and vegetables wherever possible.
- Keep trying!





Is your home winter fire safe?

Tasmanian Fire Service recommends this simple safety checklist to help keep homes fire safe this winter. Make sure you and everyone in your household follows the following safety advice:

- Most importantly, have an adequate number of suitable smoke alarms installed throughout your home and make sure that you test them regularly.
- Make sure you and all your family know two safe ways out of every room in your home.
- Have a written home escape plan in case of fire and practice it regularly.
- Never ever leave cooking unattended.
- If you have a fireplace in your home make sure the chimney is clean.
- If you have a fireplace always place a screen in front of it when in use.
- Check electric blankets for damage or frayed cords before placing on the bed.
- Take care to keep curtains, tablecloths and bedding away from portable heaters.
- Keep wet clothing at least 1 metre from heaters or fireplaces and never leave unattended.
- If you use a clothes dryer make sure you clean the lint filter each and every time you use it.
- Only use one appliance per power point and switch off when not in use.
- Always extinguish candles or any other open flames before going to bed.
- Always handle candles or any other open flame with care.
- Store matches or lighters in a secure place not accessible to young children.

Winter Fire Safety Tips

- To test an electric blanket lay it flat on top of the bed, then switch it on for five minutes before putting it on the bed for use to confirm it is okay.
- Use only authorised installers of fixed heating appliances.
- Oil, gas or wood heating units may require a yearly maintenance check.
- Only use fuses of recommended rating and install an electrical safety switch.
- If possible, in the kitchen keep a fire extinguisher and fire blanket placed near the exit.
- Never leave burning candles or any open flame unattended.



child safety
is no accident

4 AUGUST 2012
NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND
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Current Practice at Frederick Street Preschool

Lady Gowrie Frederick Street Pre-School was fortunate to have the support of the owner of the property, Launceston City Council, to have some alterations undertaken in the outdoor play space.

Asphalt was replaced, new garden beds installed along with tree planting, and removal of the old, unused sandpit. In doing so, Educators and children decided they could recycle the wooden frame for another garden bed.

Everybody was involved from each day's group. Together everyone enthusiastically raked and transferred leaves and dirt to fill the garden bed. Stepping stones were carefully placed to construct a pathway through the garden. These were also recycled from our ancient, deceased walnut tree which had to be removed by the Council due to it being unsafe due to

sections dying. Children were empowered by the role they played in creating a stimulating outdoor play environment. The children also learnt about the value of recycling.

Children found a large branch in the yard which was added through the middle of the garden bed and across the stepping stones. This instantly became a bridge for the dinosaurs which the children had added. Some of the girls decided they wanted space in the garden for themselves so it was agreed upon to creating a dinosaur /fairy garden. Appropriate plants were added by the children to help create this interactive and inclusive play environment.

Further investigations will see the children learning about dinosaurs and creating their own fairies. It will also involve

discussions about reality and make believe, exploring the differences between in order to gain an understanding between the two.

This experience reflected one of the key characteristics of the Early Years Learning Framework – Being. The EYLF describes Being in early childhood as a Time for children to be, to seek and make meaning of their world recognising the significance of the here and now in their lives.

This experience was the opportunity for children to build and maintain relationships with others and engaging in life's joys – play! Play that enhanced curiosity and creativity, allowed for expression of each child's uniqueness and interests and actively construct their own understanding and learning.



Children's Services Pedagogical Leader



My name is Kim Jones and I have been employed in the child care/ education and care sector for about 29 years. Most recently I was the Transition Leader with the Education and Care Unit, Department of Education. I have also worked in both long day care and family day care. My

husband and our two adult children, aged 19 and 21, live in Mangalore in the southern midlands, along with our numerous sheep, dogs and pet kangaroos. In my spare time I like to read, relax, socialise and occasionally garden. I am very excited to be working for Gowrie in the role of Pedagogical Leader and look forward to meeting many of you over the next few weeks.

Cheers for now

Kim

ANNOUNCEMENT

Lady Gowrie Tasmania will enter into a long term partnership with the Fahan School for the provision of child care services at their Sandy Bay campus. This partnership will commence at the end of August 2012 and the organisation look forward to working collaboratively with the school community into the future.

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR CLOSURE PERIOD 2012/2013 - ADVANCE NOTICE

To provide advance notice to families and client, I now advise that Lady Gowrie Tasmania programs will close on Friday 21 December 2012, reopening on Wednesday 2 January 2013.

Ros Cornish
Chief Executive Officer

Keep Warm!



Northern Services Contact Numbers / Email

Long Day Care Centres

Alanvale

6348 1390
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Outside School Hours Care Programs

Frederick Street VAC

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Launceston Preparatory School

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Norwood ASC

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University ASC Campus

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Occasional Care Program

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Outside School Hours Care Programs

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ASC

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