



Gumnut Gazette

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Autumn

2018

A word from our *director*

*Increasing the
opportunities for **you** to
participate*

Dear Families,

It is with great pleasure that I return to Gumnut Gardens and it feels so good to see that our philosophy, original values and intent is truly blossoming. I must firstly thank everyone who has been involved in this since 2015.

As we are moving into winter, regular annual calendar events such as NAIDOC Week and National Tree Day will be celebrated. However, the team of staff are as you know, also very creative!

Having read in previous editions of the Gazette about how;

- Educators extend the children's engagement...
- The provision of engaging and relevant experiences...
- Learning opportunities
- Inclusion of celebrations and cultural events

It is evident that the children attending Gumnut Gardens are being provided with all of the above. I hear lots of singing and instruments played. I see the Pre-schoolers march out the door twice a week with faces full of anticipation of what the natural learning environment may provide and I see infants nurtured and viewed as very capable. So we thought it would be appropriate to increase the opportunities where you, as parents/caregivers can attend and participate in various events. Some will be for the whole family others for adults only. In both cases you will have time to ask questions, explore your child's environment more closely or just relax and enjoy something different.

First up is our very own **Vivid**. This will be an early evening event, for adults and children alike. Liesel is heading this one so if you have any lights, fairy lights, expertise or anything else that can be useful please talk to her! The Gumnut Gardens Vivid experience will take place on Friday the 29th of June. More details to follow.

Next on the agenda is an evening where we will be making our very own **Bees Wax Cloths**. This will be an evening event for adults only. A glass of wine or a cup of tea and a nibble will be provided. These bees wax cloths will enable you to reduce your use of plastic/cling wrap when wrapping up perishables. Check those emails as this event will have limited numbers and will take place a week or two after our Vivid night.

Maybe these events can coincide with our big marketing drive (see the Approved Providers email about fee reductions and incentives for you) and you can bring a friend along? As you can see we are inviting you to be part of our community even more.

If you have expertise and/or some other ideas, please feel welcome to bring them to our attention.

Looking forward to introducing myself to all that I have not yet met!

Kind regards,

Mimi

Some Housekeeping...

Many of you may know that the owner of 63 Moore Park Road had sought approval to build 18 apartments with neither parking nor garden on the site. This application was unsuccessful as were subsequent applications to build apartments on the site.

Approval has been granted to build three terraces facing Poate Lane where there are currently garages. The existing home is to remain and garden will separate the house from the terraces.

You may have notice that we have a sound barrier between our premises and 63 Moore Park Road. This will provide significant protection from the noise and dust caused by the construction.

We are in regular communication with The Council of The City of Sydney to ensure that all safety precautions, including asbestos management, are strictly adhered to throughout construction.

Once construction is complete we will seek approval to remove the sound barrier. This will improve the aesthetics of our garden, provide an additional metre's width to the garden and allow for planting of appropriate trees.

From the *Gootha Blossoms*

Dear Gumnut Families,

All of the educators in the Gootha Blossom room would like to welcome all the new additions to the Gootha Blossom family, including Elena, Fern and Humphrey! They have all settled in so quickly and beautifully, adding to the ever changing dynamic of our infants room. With new children beginning in our room, we have also seen the transition of some of our older friends into the Boorai Banksia (2-3 years) room. This month Ezra and Liv will be moving on to new challenges and exciting new learning opportunities, with them both already beginning (and thoroughly enjoying!) their transition visits next door! We also farewell Matilda, who will be moving with her family back to the U.K. She will leave behind only fond and happy memories here for staff and children, although it may be a little quieter without her!

Over the past couple of months, the Gootha Blossom children have been continuing to direct their own learning ideas and motivations. In particular, they have taken a fond interest in our 'Feelings' picture book. This book uses simple face illustrations and one word to describe the feeling, such as angry, sad, happy, excited, surprised, scared, sleepy and silly. This has become a very interactive and expressive way for the children to further their emotional development.



Revisiting this book most days with the children has seen them go from just observing us educators' model and explain the feelings, to now having the children make attempts at these faces too. To develop this learning further, we constantly discuss with the children how they are feeling throughout the day, drawing their attention to what they are feeling presently. If a child falls over, we might say, "That would of hurt, are you feeling sad?" This has then seen many of the children pull the same faces we make when reading the book.

As an extension of this and of another learning direction the children have been pursuing, we have seen the addition of mirrors. During our reading of the 'Feelings' book, we added a large mirror for the children to observe the emotion faces they make. Mirrors have been a recent fascination that the children have used to explore their identity and finding out who they are. We have many mirrors situated in both our indoor and outdoor spaces that are incorporated into their learning. Outdoors we use the large mirror to do watercolour painting on and we will often also find individual children having a moment smiling at themselves in the mirror. We think this could make such a meaningful learning exploration for us to continue to build upon over the next couple of months to support their sense of self and identity development. Right now we are in the process of collecting different types of mirrors or reflective resources to make a mirrored discovery table. If you have any mirrors or reflective items you would like to lend us to add to this learning exploration, it would be muchly appreciated.

Love from all the Gootha Blossom educators,

Alix, Taz and Caroline



An educating community: the wonder of learning with the *Boorai Banksias*

*Fostering
each child's
uniqueness*

During these last few weeks, we have transitioned some of our toddlers into the preschool room and welcomed some infants into our Boorai Room!

To support this, our focus has been to foster each child's uniqueness, as we believe them to be valuable co-contributors in enriching their learning within a social environment. Within our program, we provide many opportunities to develop children's understandings of empathy and respect in relation to their own needs and that of others.

Through Circle Time, we utilise songs, picture books, yoga and meditation to explore the joy in sharing our feelings. It is a time to practice mindfulness, encouraging them to be more attuned and sensitive towards their own feelings and the feelings of others. Through these experiences, we are trying to equip the children with a multitude of languages to express themselves, to listen to others and to make meaning of the world around them.



It has been wonderful to see the peer learning that occurs now that we have newer, younger children in the room. We always encourage the older children to support others, to build their sense of belonging through leadership and role-modelling. This enriches their sense of care for others and develops their ability to see the world from different perspectives.

One of our ongoing investigations at the moment is exploring new resources from Remida (The Creative Recycling Centre of Reggio Emilia, Italy). Our Room Leader, Lucia spent a few weeks on a study tour and has returned brimming with new ideas and understandings. The children have been exploring these materials along with loose parts and lights. These materials are set up in a way that invites children to explore multi-dimensional worlds. Over time, the children have added natural materials such as leaves, pine cones and sticks as well as animals into this play.

We've enjoyed watching how their play and experience with this set up has grown and continues to evolve as they explore role-playing, engineering, construction, musicality and so much more. The experience becomes an exploration of all the senses – what do we see? What can we hear? Are there smells?

By introducing these industrial and recyclable materials to the children, we are exploring sustainability, showing them to see the potential and possibilities in objects. Children are natural researchers, inventors and explorers who are able to learn that from these 'imperfect' materials, we can create beautiful and meaningful things; we can see as well that differences are unique resources.

We would love for you to contribute towards our new project by bringing to school any natural resources or even your ideas to expand our explorations!

With love Rachel and Lucia



From the *Jarjum Kangaroos*

"Children learn about themselves and construct their own identity within the context of their families and communities. This includes their relationships with people, places and things and the actions and responses of others. Identity is not fixed. It is shaped by experiences. When children have positive experiences, they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging. Relationships are the foundations for the construction of identity - 'Who I am', 'how I belong' and 'what is my influence?'"

(Early Years Learning Framework, Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity)

In the preschool, we are very fortunate to welcome a few new faces over the last few months. Liam and Peter are officially Jarjums while Angus and Freya are slowly making their transition from the Boorai Room. We also welcome Roey and his family into our Gumnut Gardens community.

With these changes, we have been focusing a lot on connections and peer learning in our program, specifically reciprocal relationships. How has the arrival of new/younger children changed or shifted the dynamics of the relationships between existing children in our room? Through books, Circle Time discussions and every day conversations, we have been exploring ways to be more inclusive, considerate, supportive and empathetic towards others. With a range of ages in our preschool room, we are finding that the older children are afforded a greater sense of responsibility as they support their younger/newer friends through peer tutelage, understanding their abilities and limitations.



*Building positive
social-emotional
skills*

In doing so, they are able to develop their capacities to nurture and lead. Plus, they are able to build on positive social-emotional skills, expanding their understandings of those around them through role-modelling and teaching. For the younger children, peer-to-peer learning invites them to trial experiences that are slightly more challenging, developing new skills by collaborating with their older peers. We have seen many instances of this whether it's at Bush Kindy where both older and newer children explore climbing trees and boulders, modelling for one another and working at their individual skill levels. In the classroom, we have been doing lots to foster the children's feelings of belonging by involving them in experiences that encourage their sense of agency.

We have been exploring tinkering and sewing recently with the children using real tools such as hammers, nails and sewing machines to create products that they can utilise in their play in the preschool room. In the Jarjum room a lot of our projects and investigations are process driven. This aids the children's comprehension of time; days, weeks and even months, developing patience and delaying gratification as they have to perform multiple steps to see their end result. A small glimpse of this is the time and effort they put in to their Mother's Day gifts; cutting and shredding scrap paper, blending with water, waiting for two days to absorb, adding beetroot juice for colouring, embedding seeds that will eventually yield carrots or flowers after planting and tending with love over time, moulding with clay, waiting for it to dry, learning the traditional technique of batik dyeing with wax, then dyeing with colour, waiting and watching for days with anticipation of what colour the fabric will transform in to, waiting for it to dry, ironing the wax off before finally sewing their gift bags for Mum. If any of our families have any interests, skills or knowledge of an interesting process we would love you to share and learn with us.



Recipe From the Gumnut Gardens *Kitchen*

Pumpkin & Lentil Soup (4 servings)

INGREDIENTS:

1kg Kent Pumpkin—peeled and cubed (3cm)

½ kg Sweet Potato -peeled and cubed (3cm)

1 Brown Onion finely diced

375g Red Lentils (Washed)

2Garlic cloves

Coriander, salt and pepper (some)



Method

Step 1

Heat a large saucepan over medium-low heat. Spray with olive oil spray. Add the onion and cook for 5 minutes or until soft. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute or until aromatic. Add the pumpkin in cubes and cook a little bit more, around 5 minutes. Add 1L of warm water.

Step 2

Take the lentils, add some water until it covers them and bring to the boil in the saucepan. Reduce heat to low. Simmer, partially covered, for 15-20 minutes or until the lentils are soft. Set aside to cool.

Step 3

Take half the lentil mixture into the jug of a blender and blend until smooth. Transfer to the saucepan. Add the rest of the lentils.

Step 4

Place the soup over medium heat and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until heated through. Season with pepper. Ladle among serving bowls. Top with coriander to serve. At Gumnut Gardens we like to serve with homemade bread!

A word from the *Approved Providers*

It seems every cloud has a silver lining. We were very sad to farewell Jenny and all of her experience and expertise. Yet we are thrilled to welcome Mimi back to our fold as she returns to the director's role - a position she held for many years.

Mimi's enthusiasm for sustainability (and food) will soon be obvious with workshops she is planning such as making beeswax wrapping and drum making from recyclables. Jenny will remain a consultant and will provide workshops for our Early Childhood Teachers to meet ongoing requirements for teacher accreditation

Gumnut Gardens is an independent, non-subsidised, stand-alone early learning service. You might not be aware that services such as ours are a threatened species with the increasing number of chain centres and pre-schools attached to private schools. We want to work with families to maintain a culture that recognizes that most learning occurs in the early years of a child's life. We also want to build on our pedagogical practices that accommodate the individual learning styles of all children. We are not an out-of-a-box operation!

After considering family feedback and market research we plan to **reduce our fees**. From 2 July our fees will be:

- Infants \$175 per day (a decrease of \$3)
- Toddlers \$165 per day (a decrease of \$2)
- Preschoolers \$135 per day (a decrease of \$21)

You will appreciate that a fee reduction will place us under some financial pressure. We are working with our new director Mimi and all other staff on innovations to ensure we maintain our high standards. Suggestions from families are, as always, very welcome.

We are aiming for at least 85% occupancy. We are not far from this target, but we are asking for your help to achieve this. The Gumnut Gardens community has mostly evolved through "word of mouth" so we are asking you to "refer a friend" to Gumnut Gardens. As an encouragement, we will **waive four weeks of childcare fees** for one of your children if a person you refer successfully enrolls a child at Gumnut Gardens. We will let you know the details shortly.

Catherine and Chris

The New *Child Care Package*

Hopefully you are all aware that The New Child Care Package will take effect from 2 July 2018. The Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) will be rolled into one Child Care Subsidy. It is means tested and the \$7,000.00 cap on fee assistance will be removed. Instead low and middle income earners will have no cap, middle and high (ish) earners will have a \$10,000 cap. Families with a very high family income will receive no benefits under this Package.

Please visit the following links:-

<https://www.education.gov.au/ChildCarePackage>

<https://www.education.gov.au/families>

Families currently receiving Child Care Benefit and/or Child Care Rebate will need to:

- Create a myGov account if they don't already have one by going to **my.gov.au** and then linking it to their Centrelink online account.
- Check for their Centrelink letters.
- Follow the instructions in their Centrelink letter and go online as soon as possible via **my.gov.au** and complete their Child Care Subsidy assessment or their Child Care Subsidy claim.
- Do this as soon as possible after they receive their Centrelink letter

From 2 July we will charge full fees until families are set up in the new system.

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