



# Gumnut Gazette

Spring  
2017





## A Word from the Approved Providers

**This is our first Gumnut Gazette under the stewardship of our Director Jenny Green. We congratulate Jenny for building on the skillset of all our educators and bringing an unparalleled depth of pedagogical knowledge and leadership to Gumnut Gardens.**

This year our educators have flourished. They have shown a level of initiative, creativity and articulate documentation that makes us proud. Their exceptional work resulted in us being assessed as *"exceeding the national standard"* in the quality standards of *"educational program and practice and staffing arrangements"*.

We have so far been silent on changes to our fees for 2018 because we don't yet know what they will be. Our accountants are looking at different models for us to meet our costs while maintaining high quality early education. There will also be changes to government rebates from July 2018 which may affect our fee structure.

We are undertaking market research as part of this process.

We have slightly changed our branding. Our new logo is a simple gum blossom and gum leaf. The gumnut child is now wearing a more gender-neutral green skirt and the colours are more muted. We'd love to know your response to our new *"image"*.

On a final note, we are sadly bidding farewell to Monica of the Boorai Banksias who is leaving to support a sick family member. We hope she will continue with us in a casual capacity.

**Chris Kimber and Catherine Shand**



## Our New Philosophy Tree

**The Education and Care Services National Regulations require Early Learning Centres to have a statement of their philosophy to guide all aspects of their operations.**

For those interested in words, *"philosophy"* is from Greek words meaning *"love of wisdom"*. It refers to a way of thinking about the world, the universe and society which asks questions about the nature of human thought, the nature of the universe, and the connections between them. This explanation is remarkably consistent with what our educators are working to achieve for your children during their time at Gumnut Gardens.

You might have noticed the new Gumnut Gardens Philosophy Tree on posters in the rooms. It has also been emailed to all families. Our previous Philosophy had grown over time in its volume of words, but had become less clear in its meaning and less effective in guiding our educators in their approach to their roles and in day-to-day activities at Gumnut Gardens.

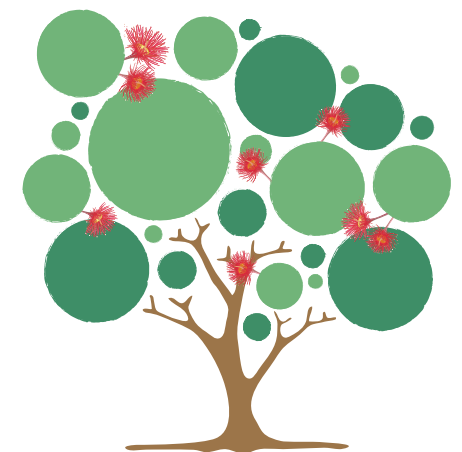
The fundamental principle underlying our philosophy is that Gumnut Gardens will *encourage children to be independent and curious and to develop a sense of well-being and a life-long love of learning in an inclusive, nurturing community.*

We encourage you to read the words in the leaves on the Philosophy Tree posters in the Centre or access it on our website at [www.gumnutgardens.com.au/our-philosophy/](http://www.gumnutgardens.com.au/our-philosophy/) so you understand how we will give life to these words in our approach to the children's learning experiences at Gumnut Gardens.

The Philosophy is a living document. We encourage parents to make suggestions for other items it could include – some of our educators have already suggested a few wording changes!

### Gumnut Gardens' Philosophy

*To encourage children to be independent and curious and to develop a sense of well-being and a life-long love of learning in an inclusive, nurturing community*



# From the Director

## What I value

Gumnut Gardens epitomises all I value and desire for 0-5 year old children in their early years of learning. My personal philosophy: to advocate for children and their learning I can see and experience every day at the centre. I have only been at the centre since February this year, I am enjoying being surprised and delighted by the learning opportunities that are afforded to all children, in addition to the respectful manner in which educators engage, interact and "be" with children.

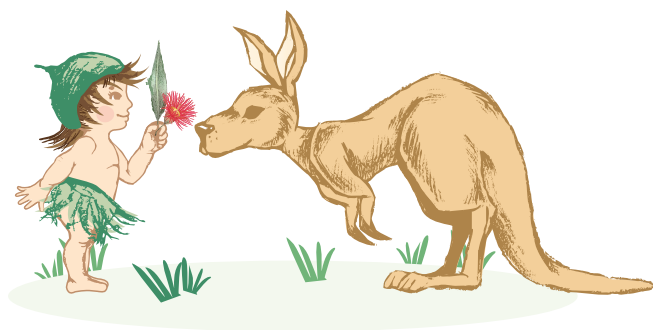
Educational research identifies that play based and experiential learning supports a meaningful learning

program rather than a program that imposes what adults think children should learn or know. This does not mean there is no or little thought given to the provision of the learning environment and program; in fact it is the opposite.

So what I see and experience at Gumnut Gardens in the provision and implementation of learning environments and programs for all children is best described in the adjacent table.

In summation Gumnut Gardens is a joyous and exciting place to "be" for children and educators.

Jenny Green



...bettering the world one child at a time

## The observation



The provision of open ended experiences and resources in all learning environments.

## What this means for the child

To provide play material/resources and environments that are open ended allows the child to design, interpret and decide how they want to play. To allow a child to make decisions re their play says the following to the child: we acknowledge and respect your understanding of how you choose to play and use this resource. This is called the child's *sense of agency*. When a child has the opportunity to practice and experience a sense of agency this contributes to developing their self-esteem.



The design and provision of exciting and "wondrous" play spaces.

The indoor and outdoor play spaces are designed with children in mind to support their developing skills of exploration, creativity and skill development. So what does that mean? For children to want to play in any space they need to be curious. Educators are informed and knowledgeable as to how to create and design environments to engage and create a sense of curiosity and wonder. The back garden is a great example of wonder and curiosity and this space was designed by educators at Gumnut Gardens.



Creating and making time for all children.

For the child they are not hurried or rushed through the day. The individual child's well-being is considered at all times so the routines and timetable are varied and flexible to meet the needs of the individual child. This shows awareness and respect for the individual child.



The development and provision of relevant learning programs.

The early year's curriculum EYLF identifies that educators need to be aware and provide for children's learning dispositions. Learning disposition is defined as: *a habit of the mind*. When we talk about wonder, curiosity, problem solving and other qualities these are the learning dispositions. A child will experience effective learning when their dispositions are engaged. This is very significant for early year's educators; we are laying down the foundations for the child's ongoing learning. Hence there is great relevance and importance in how we support, promote and encourage each child's learning dispositions.



Documentation of the child's learning.

The sharing of the child's day through documentation is a strength of Gumnut Gardens. This is our communication with families about their child's day. In addition, the detailed and informed documentation shared with families tells families the how and what their child is learning and understanding. This is advocacy for the child in practice.

## Boorai Banksias: Toddler Room

### *“What the hand does the mind remembers” M. Montessori*

It is very important that our children have the time and space for the wonder of discovery. This sense of wonder offered by being in nature leads to our children wanting to investigate, learn and to explore – these are the skills of becoming lifelong learners.

Richard Louv suggests that early nature experiences are essential if we are to produce future thinkers and change agents.

We are experimenting with how processes work to observe the transformations that may occur at each phase of a process. Happiness is a process. For toddlers it is an ongoing process of challenges, experiences, and explorations. We know that being outside in the fresh air has amazing health benefits and that planting flowers can be therapeutic. Did you know that gardening has developmental benefits for toddlers?

We have started an indoor garden project as an opportunity to explore processes through various stages so the children learn to be responsible by caring for a plant. They can explore cause and effect (for example, plants die without water, weeds compete with plants).

Through gardening, toddlers can discover the science of plants, animals, weather, the environment, nutrition and simple construction. They experience the importance of cooperation, creativity and nutrition. Other benefits of our project include:

- Encouraging healthy eating
- Understanding processes
- Engaging all of the senses
- Internalising environmental stewardship
- Learning the importance of patience and responsibility
- Fostering a sense of belonging
- Developing maths skills
- Enhancing the ability to plan and organise.

### *The wonder*

*Florence: “Make a hole and then you put some seeds inside and you hide them!”*

*Bailey and Elizabeth: “Hiding, hiding!”*

*Lucas: “Bye bye seeds!” – when he was putting a seed in the hole and covering with soil.*

*Angus: “They are hiding!” (The seeds)*

We connected art and gardening. Zen observed the new plant and then he explored the putinism art. He really enjoyed its sound and the result of his artistic technique on the paper.

Sidney observed our indoor garden and drew some carrots. Florence was analysing some flowers and drew them on her paper.

*Mark: “Carrots, carrots!”*

*Sidney, William and Edward: “Water, water!” (And they took the spray)*

*Liam: “Gentle, gentle!” (While children were touching our plants)*

*Elizabeth: “Can I have a turn?” (Watering)*

**Lucia, Monica and Rachel**

## Gootha Blossoms: The Nursery

### *We Use Water for a Range of Different Purposes!*

As the weather begins to heat up, our learning experiences seem to involve water – it is great at keeping us cool and provides so many different meaningful learning opportunities for the children to explore. It felt natural to pursue an exploration into different ways we use water, as it was involved in so many of our current learning experiences. This has seen Ezra, Fionn and Imogen exploring their mathematical learning (measurement), pouring water between different sized containers in the water trough.

Xavier, Frankie, Ava and Gus have actively engaged with water connecting with their creative expression, experimenting with large stone water painting. This extended outdoors with Alice and Olivia exploring their sense of self and identity, painting the wall mirror with water colour paints, while stopping to look at themselves in the mirror. On one occasion, Alice had pointed to her body parts and said, “eyes...nose...ears...me!” Olivia observed this and copied these actions while looking in the mirror. It was a beautiful example of how children learn through play to scaffold one another’s learning.

We have integrated water play into our home learning dramatic play area, extending the children’s ideas to explore with dolls, adding a bath play scenario. Gus will pretend to squirt “cream” (as he states) over the doll’s head in the bath and sponge the doll. This is just a great example of how children of this age represent their prior knowledge observed in everyday life through dramatic representation.

Stella, Scarlet, Eliana and Freddie use water learning to develop self-help skills. Before meals they are washing their hands (with support) at the sinks. This is an exciting experience for them as they excitedly look at themselves in the mirror, while washing their hands.

Another meaningful way the children are exploring water is through learning about our environment and how we care for it. Each day in the garden they help water our blossoming plants - we remind children “that our plants get very thirsty”.

**Alix, Taz, and Caroline**

## Jarjum Kangaroos: The preschool

We have been investigating the concept of ‘relationships’ where we explore our connections to others and broaden our understanding of the world in which we live.

Through conversation, books and every day experience, we promote kindness, empathy and friendship. It has been wonderful seeing the children’s ideas about this concept beginning to grow and evolve. “Friendship means being nice and sharing,” says Olive whereas Kiara shares, “You don’t say ‘go away’ or ‘you’re not my best friend’.” That’s not kind!”

We have been discussing families in their various forms – “In my house, it’s just my mum and me,”... “I have my mum, my dad, my baby brother Jett, my brother Josh and my ‘ate’ and my dog in my house,” ... We explored the similarities and differences between families – “Do you know that some families have two mums, and some have two dads?”.

We encourage children to explore their sense of identity by offering them the tools to learn to interact with others with care, empathy and respect. We promote their sense of belonging as they investigate concepts of diversity and become aware of connections, similarities and differences between people. Ultimately, our goal is to embed, promote and teach children principles of social justice such as equality, inclusivity and diversity so they develop the ability to recognise unfairness and bias and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness.

**Charlynn, Liesel and Emma**



## New child care package

From 2 July 2018 the "Child Care Subsidy" will replace the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate.

Here is a quick summary. The Child Care Subsidy will be means tested. If a family meets the "work/study" criteria the following will be available:

- Families earning \$65,710 or less receive a subsidy equivalent to 85% per cent of their child care fees.
- From \$65,711 the subsidy tapers so families earning up to \$170,710 receive a subsidy equivalent to 50% of their fees.
- Families earning \$170,711 – \$250,000 receive a subsidy equivalent to 50% of their fees.
- From \$250,001 the subsidy tapers so families earning \$340,000 receive a subsidy equivalent to 20% of their fees.
- Families earning in excess of \$350,000 receive no subsidy.

Subsidies are payable directly to Early Learning Centres so families only pay the difference between the subsidy and the fee charged by the Centre.

## Subsidy caps

- There is no subsidy cap for families earning less than \$185,710.
- There is a subsidy cap of \$10,000 per child per financial year for families earning between \$185,710 and \$350,000.

The subsidy and the caps will be CPI indexed each year. This is a significant change – the cap has remained at \$7,000 per child for many years.

For more information please visit <https://www.education.gov.au/ChildCarePackage>



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