



Annual Report 2024-25

ABN: 736 670 57590

ACN: 652 000 149

Approved Provider ID- PR—00003911

Operating from 360-370 Whitelock St

Deniliquin, 2710

River Region Early Education acknowledges and pays respect to the original custodians of this land and recognises their continuing connection to lands, water and communities.



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Executive Summary 2025

River Region Early Education Limited

ABN 73667057590

A company Limited by Guarantee. Australian Company Number 652000149

A community managed early childhood service provider # PR-00003911

Locations

362-370 Whitelock St Deniliquin 2710	49 Noorong St, Barham 2732
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Services

Deniliquin Preschool- SE 00007099. 49 licensed places
Deniliquin Childcare Centre- SE 00007098. 55 licensed places
Deniliquin Mobile Service- SE 00014785. 25 licensed places (operating in Pretty Pine, Blighty, Wanganella Conargo and Bunnaloo)
Barham Early Learning Service- SE 00006556- 73 licensed places
Deniliquin Toy Library

Staff

87 active staff members, 32 Full Time, 55 Part time.

Children

77 Deniliquin Mobile Service,
130 Deniliquin Preschool,
123 Deniliquin Childcare Centre,
106 Barham Early Learning-(56 childcare, 55 preschool)
Total 408 children

Utilisation rates

Deniliquin Mobile Children's Service- 79% of 25
Deniliquin Preschool 98% of 44
Deniliquin Childcare Centre 97% of 55
Barham Early Learning Service 82% of 62

2024-2025 Board of Management

Chair- Emily Small (GM review committee)	Zara Durnan- (GM review committee)
Vice Chair- Melanie Kennedy (GM review committee)	Johanna Murphy
Secretary Jessica Donaldson	Sarah Lahy
Treasurer- Ben Chartres	Sarah Hooke
	Emily Thomas

About River Region Early Education

Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision

Educating rural children from the mind and heart

Our Mission

To create safe, happy stimulating environments in rural communities where children are supported to reach their potential and learn life long skills

Our Values

Nuturing

We care for and help the development of children, families and educators in our Centre

Inclusion

A diversity of people feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and can contribute their perspectives and talents at our Centre

Empathy

We have the ability to understand and share the feelings of others

Integrity

We are honest and have strong principals

Joy

To be in our Centre creates feelings of great pleasure and happiness

Passion

We have an intense enthusiasm for the work of early childhood education

Our Philosophy, Vision, Mission and Values were developed in active collaboration with our entire community in 2017. They underpin all of our practices and are a reference point for policy and practice review, as well as tools for critical reflection.



Our Philosophy

Our home is the wide-open plains of the Riverina on the land of the Wamba Wamba Perrepa Perrepa / Wemba Wemba Barapa Barapa people. We pay our respects to the original custodians of this land and recognise their continuing connection to lands, water and communities.

We welcome everyone, we approach all aspects of our service with integrity and value social responsibility, respect for our environment and continuous improvement.

Our natural landscape is one of farming and open spaces shaped around waterways. **Generations of children and families have grown through their participation with our services.**

We have a deep commitment to the value of early childhood education and understand the ripple effect it has on children, their families, and communities. Early childhood education supports children to establish their sense of identity and connection to their world, to be confident and involved learners and communicators and to build a strong sense of wellbeing.

We recognise that it takes a village to raise a child and we work collaboratively to support children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

Our village believes that:

- Children are capable, and inspirational,
- Families are the foundations of children's learning, and
- Educators are nurturing, empathetic, and passionate.

We provide safe spaces where children have a sense of belonging and can connect and contribute to their world.

We believe that early education is about igniting a passion for lifelong learning.

Our approach to teaching is collaborative, reflective, and intentional.

It puts children at the centre of learning and celebrates play and the natural environment, in all weather, to support children to be curious, collaborate and be adventurous.

We believe that childhood is a time for joy, and we help each child feel valued and confident that their voice is heard.



**River
Region**
EARLY EDUCATION

2022 - 2027 Strategic Plan

Our Vision

Educating rural
children from
the mind and
the heart

Our mission

To create safe,
stimulating
environments
in rural
communities
where children
are supported
to reach their
potential
and learn life
long skills

Quality

To develop: state of the art learning environments; best educational practice; and collaborative relationships with children's families and the community to provide quality educational practice for children

Strategies to achieve this goal

- Develop a system to track outcomes for children
- Develop Business Cases for infrastructure projects to meet demand for places
- Make significant improvements in indoor and outdoor environments
- Reflect on and embed feedback from Family engagement surveys
- Inclusion support strategies including funding and training is provided to services
- Funding is sourced to support children with additional needs

Workforce

To be a career of choice that supports, sustains, and grows a skilled and engaged team to ensure continuity of quality education

Strategies to achieve this goal

- Increase the number of Early Childhood Teachers and Diploma educators by supporting training further study
- Develop and implement a workforce strategy to increase the satisfaction retention of educators
- To support all educators and staff to develop their skills through professional learning and mentoring
- Establish & support early learning network
- Implement systems/ software to improve the induction and maintenance of HR records

Partnerships

To build collaborative partnerships with external organisations for the benefit of children and the centre

Strategies to achieve this goal

- Develop an understanding of opportunities for relationships with
 - Allied Health
 - First Nations communities
 - Out of home care sector
 - Family support services
- Develop & implement a Reconciliation Action Plan
- Survey families about barriers & where we can add value

Sustainability

To educate children to care for our environment and implement strategies to reduce the impact of climate change on the organisation

Strategies to achieve this goal

- Investigate & implement strategies to reduce the carbon footprint of our business
- Continue to teach children to implement local sustainability practices

Governance

To be a financially viable organisation which advocates for quality rural early childhood education to ensure ongoing access for children in our community

Strategies to achieve this goal

- Recruit and train suitably qualified and experienced board members
- Develop financial processes/ tools to monitor and track financial performance
- Develop a brand and promotion strategy which represents all of our services and communities and allows for future growth of the organisation
- Increase communication with/ representation on peak bodies
- Diversify our offering to meet family and community demand

Completed by Emily Small, Board Chair

Thank you for the opportunity to be chair of River Region Early Education for a fourth year. I am sad to say that this will be my last year on the board of River Region Early Education. I have thoroughly enjoyed my 6 years working with the organisation and specifically Felicity Michael. It has been a pleasure to work with such an incredible community advocate for early education. Your continuous drive to do what is best for the needs of our children, our community and our region has taught me the importance of quality leadership. I have learnt a lot from you, and I am so thankful you are at the helm of River Region Early Education; we are in good hands.

This year has been another fantastic year for the organisation with plenty of highlights. There have still been a few challenges this year, especially around waitlists and availability of early education, but as always, the team has been working tirelessly with the same determination we have always seen. We are so lucky to have a professional, caring, and hard-working team and we are thankful our children are in your capable hands.



Organisation highlights for the year (2024-25)

The team have worked diligently on the quality and administration system this year. The improvements to the reporting tools to the Board have increased accountability and the board's ability to identify and mitigate risk throughout the organisation. Thank you to the administration team for all your hard work.

It has been an extremely challenging year for the community regarding childcare availability. The Board has been focusing on examination of our place in the market (competitive analysis) and how we can respond to the shortage of childcare places in Deniliquin and Barham. This has led discussions with Edward River and Murray River LGA to develop strategies moving forward. Both have been very supportive, identifying that the availability of childcare places is a major factor in the economic prosperity of the community.

RREE was successful in receiving the Federal Government Worker retention payment for childcare services. This has seen workers in this service receive a 10% above the Award pay increase from December 2024. We continue to work with peak body CELA to advocate for a similar funded package from the NSW government. Our organisation wouldn't be what it is without our amazing educators and staff, and we are so thankful for them and glad they have been acknowledged with this pay rise.

Once again, the development of a motivated and qualified team has continued. In the 2024-25 year we have supported 5 educators to complete Certificate III and 5 educators to complete Diploma.

We are also supporting 11 people undertaking Cert III (including 3 School based trainees), 11 people undertaking Diploma and 5 people undertaking their Bachelor. This requires an investment of resources to provide time for study and practical training.

The organisation has continued to invest in improving facilities at all of our services. From erection of shade sails, fencing, solar panels, bike tracks and toys. We hope you are as proud of our facilities as we are.

Thank you to our incredibly talented staff for your hard work, commitment and diligence which are what make River Region Early Education such a great organisation to be part of. A special mention to the leadership team, Nominated Supervisors Tammy Cairnduff, Amy Sturman, Heidi Plant, Rachel Barker and Emma Barker who filled in for Dimity Bloomfield whilst she was on maternity leave, Business Services Manager Claire Nolan and Quality Coordinator Kate Butler you have all gone above and beyond to keep the organisation running at the high standard we have come to expect.

I want to say thank you to the board members for their hard work and dedication to River Region Early Education. It has been a great year. We are unfortunately farewelling Ben Chartres who has served on the Board for the last 6 years. We are going to miss your perspective and input but thank you for all the time you dedicated to this role. We are very lucky to have such a capable and talented board, and I look forward to seeing who will step into the positions once Ben and I step down.

Once again thank you for giving me the opportunity to be on the board of such a professional and community driven organisation. I look forward to seeing what next year brings. Emily Small

Completed by Felicity Michael, General Manager

Progress in Strategic Goal Areas - Operational Plan

Strategic Focus for the year (2024-25)

Strategic Goal 1: Workforce: - *To be a career of choice that supports, sustains, and grows a skilled and engaged team to ensure continuity of quality education.*

Results: Measure: Employee Engagement Survey Net Promoter Score was very high at 66% (up from 62% in November 2024) and showed increases across most services.

Achievements:

- Implementation of TANDA payroll & Human Resource management software
- Review of Position Descriptions
- Development of the Educational Leader working group- to foster innovation and quality educational practice across the organisation
- Implementation of the Child Safe Standards to our Human Resource tools and practices
- Focus on employee wellbeing by the WHS group

Strategic Goal 2: Sustainability - *To educate children to care for our environment and implement strategies to reduce the impact of climate change on the organisation.*

Achievements:

- Sustainability policy reviewed with input from all stakeholders
- Solar panels installed at Barham Early Learning Service and Deniliquin Childcare Centre

Strategic Goal 3: Partnerships - *To build collaborative partnerships with external organisations for the benefit of children and the centre*

Results: Measure: Family Satisfaction Survey Net Promoter Score for the organisation in May 2025 (a question asking if the respondent would recommend the service to a friend or family member) was very high at 82% (up from 79% in 2024).

Achievements:

- Local Aboriginal language program offered to children in Deniliquin Preschool and Deniliquin Childcare Centre by Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre
- Meaningful community connections fostered in all services through incursions and excursions

Strategic Goal 4: Quality: *To develop: state of the art learning environments; best educational practice; and collaborative relationships with children's families and the community to provide quality educational practice for children*

Results: All services rated as Meeting the National Quality Standard.

Achievements:

- Professional learning day in Version 2 of Early Years Learning Framework and implementation across the organisation
- Addition of Conargo as a venue of the Deniliquin Mobile Children's Service
- Development and implementation of Self-Assessment tools to assist Quality Improvement
- Development and implementation of an asset management plan for the organisation.

Strategic Goal 5: Governance. *To be a financially viable organisation which advocates for quality rural early childhood education to ensure ongoing access for children in our community.*

Results: Gross Profit Margin = (Operating income-operating expenses)/ operating income) at June 2025 is - 0.1% (June 2024 7.5% due to bringing in BELS assets)



Achievements:

- Competitive analysis completed for the organisation to guide future strategic direction
- Development of business case for future directions of the organization including additional childcare facilities to meet demand.
- Development and implementation of risk management framework including policies and risk register

Acknowledgments

- The RREE Board for executing their role as the Approved Provider with diligence, professionalism and care. Particular thanks to outgoing chair Emily Small who has dedicated many hours to the support, advocacy and wellbeing of the RREE team.
- The Leadership team composed of our Nominated Supervisors, Quality Coordinator and Business Services manager who have advocated and collaborated for the children, educators, staff members and families of their service.
- Our developing leaders- the second in charge and lead educators who have embraced leadership development opportunities with a growth mindset
- Our Educational Leaders who have worked together and with their teams to ensure that all children are provided with quality learning
- The administration team, who work tirelessly to ensure the compliant and efficient operation of our organisation.
- The educators and staff who work so hard every day for the children in their care.

Completed by Kate Butler, Quality Coordinator and Grants Officer

Role Overview

The Quality Coordinator and Grants Officer is responsible for coordinating organisation-wide quality improvement programs to support the delivery of safe, efficient, effective, accessible and appropriate early childhood education services. The Quality Coordinator oversees the development and review of policy and procedure, systems, tools and resources that support individuals and services to meet regulatory and legislative requirements and deliver a quality service. The Quality Coordinator works with nominated supervisors, educational leaders, Workplace Health and Safety representatives, administration staff and the Business Services Manager and General Manager to achieve outcomes.



Focus for 2024-25

2024

Policy and procedure review (access and input)

Access to policies and procedures improved for Mobile staff and Board members by creating a policy folder in Google Drive that is updated as part of the policy review cycle.

Family input into policies collected through small surveys for key policies. Questions are plain language and ask for families' view, strategies and experiences about relevant issues, such as balancing child safety with adventurous play (Risk Management Policy), how family culture is reflected in learning spaces (Inclusion Policy) and how to balance taking photos with engaging with children during play (Photography Policy).

Six orientation handbooks have been created that contain key policies to give new employees access to key documents throughout their first six weeks.

Enrolment and orientation of children and families

Digital enrolment forms created for all services so that application information feeds directly into XPLORE child enrolment management software.

All enrolment and orientation forms and checklists reviewed, and non-digital enrolment forms provided as fillable PDF documents as a response for family survey feedback.

Priority of access guidelines reviewed and approved by the Board and tracking spreadsheets created to facilitate administration oversight of wait lists.

Self-assessment and compliance

Major review of service self-assessment against the National Quality Framework with four elements based on a mock assessment and rating for each quality area.

Elements include self-assessment checklists, educator reflections, children's voices and a Nominated Supervisor summary.

A compliance calendar provides a framework for required self-assessment, audits, checklists and risk assessments for each month and a Compliance and Continuous Improvement Register tracks completion of tasks. The Register also has a tracking sheet for each service to track actions that come from self-assessment and compliance.

Meetings held with Nominated Supervisors each month to check completion of tasks and support preparation for the following month.

2025

Risk management framework

The risk management framework identified in 2024 formalised with the development of the Risk Management Policy.

Templates created and support for services to develop and review annual risk assessments for indoor and outdoor environments, sleep and rest, regular excursions, visitors, safe arrival and transport.

Risk assessment has been integrated into planning tools for excursions, incursions and special events. Risk Management Policy and attachments provide guidance on dynamic risk management and providing support for children to be adventurous whilst maintaining safety. This includes a risk-benefit assessment in the child risk assessment form, used for new and non-regular activities.

Educational program and practice

Consultation with the Educational Leader Team and services to review educational program and practice procedures and tools.

Review of tools for assessing developmental milestones to reflect ACECQA examples and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) 2.0.

Tools for Individual Learning Plans and Individual Behaviour Support Plans reviewed to reflect sector advice.

Supporting services to improve systems and tools

The review of and improvement of systems and tools is ongoing and can be part of continuous improvement and critical reflection or prompted by incidents or policy review.

Key updates include supervision plans, shade audits, Mobile bush fire action plan and Deniliquin Childcare food safety program.

Adaptation of audits and checklists for the Mobile service to online tools, including open and close checklists, daily hygiene schedules and building and equipment audits.

Completed by Claire Nolan, Business Services Manager

Role Overview

The Business Services Manager is employed to assist the General Manager with the financial management of the River Region Early Education. They are also responsible for the planning and coordination of the administrative functions of the business. They also lead, develop, and manage the Administration Team, including the Toy Library, to ensure smooth operations for the facility. And are required to act as the Assistant Manager in the absence of the General Manager.

There are 5 dedicated members of the Administration Team including: Business Services Manager, Administration Officer, Accounts and Enrolment Officer, Payroll and HR Records Officer and the Toy Library Coordinator. This team also includes the Support Staff and independent contractors.



Focus for 2024-25

2024

End of Financial Year Audit

A successful end of financial year and audit process was completed with the auditor finding no areas of concern throughout the organisation. They found all policies and procedures, internal audits and compliance with regulations to be in order.

Toy Library

A Toy Library cull was done in July 2024, this was the first one for over 5 years, with excess toys donated to services and then the remainder sold off to current members. We have increased revenue from the memberships from \$4169 in the previous financial year to \$4666 with the introduction of two-month trial memberships. Toy Library has continued its partnership with the New Parents Group and continues to provide vouchers for the New Parent Packs.

2025

Cost Minimisation

In a time where costs are increasing, we have focused on trying to minimise these across the services whilst still maintaining the quality our families expect. We have been able to work closely with businesses in our local communities, both in Deniliquin and Barham and set up some great partnerships looking at our kitchen and cleaning suppliers.

Worker Retention Grant

Applications for the Early Childhood Worker Retention Grant opened late in October 2024. Supporting documentation was required by the General Manager on wages and on costs for each of the eligible services. In May 2025 we received the grant and were able to back date this payment to our eligible staff from 02nd December 2024 to present.

Start Strong Funding

In May 2025 our third-party software announced changes in the way we needed to apply Start Strong Funding to family accounts. This was a lot of work, which is still ongoing, behind the scenes to set up individual children's accounts, programs for each service and allocate staff to these programs, to be compliant.

Acknowledgments

As always, thank you to the Administration Team who have adapted to all the challenges over the past year. Their continued commitment, passion and integrity towards the children, families and co-workers within our River Region community has been commendable.

I would also like to acknowledge our amazing Leadership Team who I have the pleasure of working with daily. We work with an amazing brains trust who are always willing to adapt and reflect to achieve the best outcomes for our families.

Completed by Heidi Plant, Nominated Supervisor / Educational Leader

Service Overview

The Deniliquin Preschool is a part of River Region Early Education, a not-for-profit service, offering a high-quality preschool program to children aged 3-6 years in the Deniliquin local and surrounding area. We operate 40 weeks of the year, offering a 7.5-hour day 8:15-3:45 and After Preschool Care (APSC) hours until 5:15pm every afternoon.

Program - The Early Years Learning Framework (V2, 2022) principles, practices and outcomes continue to underpin the high-quality Preschool programs for children, valuing relationships, play and intentionality.

Our service offers 3 separate age groups to cater to the developmental needs of specific ages, providing children with up to 600 hours of quality Preschool in their year before school. We are a two-unit service, each unit consisting of up to 22 children per day. APSC caters for 15 children in a permanent or casual capacity each day.

Our service partners with Dysons Bus service to support isolated families/children with access to our service- in 2025 this is utilised by 11 children/families.

In 2024/2025 the NSW Government start strong funding continued to provide fee relief for 3-6 year old children who used our services for 15 hours per week. We continued to charge fees for our APSC hours- offering both casual and permanent options and hours outside of the start strong funding e.g., single or third day. In 2025 due to the continued high demand for enrolments, our third day option is still a stand-alone group for children aged 4 - 5 years. This has increased the number of children and families utilising the service.

Our enrolment pattern and roster provide continuity for children and families. This provides children with consistency to build relationships, support children's wellbeing and learning to reach quality outcomes in the program. Each unit's program is delivered by a 4-year trained early childhood teacher, a diploma qualified educator, and one assistant educator, with one other assistant educator funded to support the inclusion of children with High Learning Needs in the programs.

Children: 130 children, 34 permanent APSC enrolled places across the week

Educators: 14 educators (8 part-time, 6 full-time) and 2 support staff

3 -Number of people studying for a qualification

0 -Number Cert III trainees

0 -Number Diploma Trainees

3- Number of people studying other qualifications 1 Dip but not as a traineeship; 1 Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood Teaching, 1 Bachelor of Education

Leadership structure: 1 Nominated Supervisor (P/T), 1 Educational Leader/ ECT, 1 2IC (WDWC)

Service focus for 2024-25

2024

QA 1 and the Quality Improvement Goal: Play and Intentionality: *Educators will act with intentionality in play-based learning, and this will be evident in their educational program and planning cycle*

This period saw a deepened understanding of intentionality versus intentional teaching and its connection to play-based learning. Educators embraced documenting their practices with purpose, guided by the EYLF v2 framework. Lead educators successfully developed intentional play-based goals, while EL and NS explored the floor book approach, with NS initiating a small trial. A new ILP format was also trialled and integrated into programming and documentation processes, enhancing overall educational practice.





EYLF v2 informs Educational Program and Practice



Georgia supporting a child in their construction play

2 QA 4 and the Quality Improvement Goal: Passion

Projects-Passion Projects - By end term 4, every educator will have implemented/engaged in a project in the service that they have skills/knowledge or are passionate about.

This period saw strong educator initiative and collaboration across various projects. Multiple excursions were planned, implemented, and evaluated independently. A veggie garden project fostered teamwork and child engagement, while indoor resource zones helped identify gaps, particularly in book resources. Changemaker challenges sparked critical reflection and will continue into 2025. Child leadership groups were trialled with positive feedback. Relaxation spaces, were introduced thoughtfully, including a diffuser trial. Be You was launched, and outdoor champions led a Munch & Move refresher, resulting in a 2025 improvement plan.

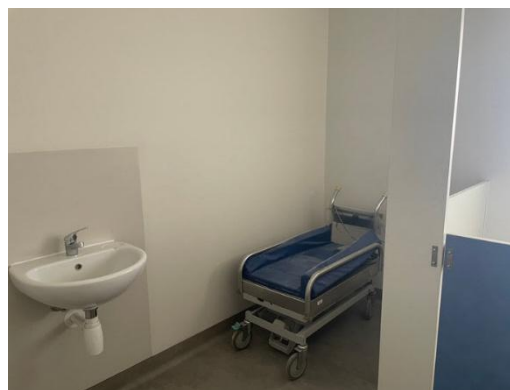


An excursion to Waring gardens playground

2025

QA 3 and the Quality Improvement Goal: 2 Improving our learning environments to promote curiosity, creativity, play and inclusion

Bathroom and nappy change facilities in the Pelicans room were upgraded, improving access for all children needing toileting support. Collaboration with KU led to increased use of visual supports across the environment, enhancing communication and inclusivity. The team also promoted the value of play within the broader community by participating in the UN Day of Play, using posters and newsletter content to raise awareness and celebrate the importance of play-based learning. These initiatives reflect a commitment to inclusive practice, community engagement, and continuous improvement of the learning environment.



New bathroom changing facilities

QA1,4,7 and the Quality Improvement Goal: 1: Increasing our knowledge of assessment (children's learning and service self-assessment) to share with our community

This period focused on strengthening assessment and reflective practice. Educators revised and began using updated developmental milestones and explored the Floorbook approach to support assessment as learning. Tools were developed to support "distance travelled" conversations, and opportunities for mentoring and coaching were provided to deepen understanding of children's learning progress. A highlight was the organisation-wide training day with Catharine Hydon and inservice training with our Community Health Speech and Occupational Therapists, which further enriched this focus. Revised self-assessment tools also helped capture more diverse voices, informing ongoing improvements and enhancing practices across the service.

Highlights for 2024-25

Highlight 1

Sustainability practices have been strengthened through our daily routines and the establishment of the colored bin system and processes we have in our rooms to support children learning how to sort their food scraps, paper and waste throughout the day.



Sustainability- waste sorting

Highlight 2

Cultural competence was strengthened through our partnerships with Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre. In 2024, Yarkuwa visited two days per week to undertake local language activities. In 2024, our team further embedded an Acknowledgement of Country in each of our programs with children, and in service meetings.



"Lipquils" Echidnas made from clay



Acknowledgement of Country around the campfire

Highlight 3

This year marked an opportunity to recognise the contributions of our colleague Helen, who after 41 years retired for some well-deserved long service leave at the end of 2024. A farewell event was held to show appreciation and gratitude. The Helen Campbell Scholarship was established. Helen has been welcomed in to share storytelling and dramatisations with the children and the children (and team) have adored these valuable language and creative experiences, and we love that she is still able to be involved in the service.



Recognising contributions -Helen Campbell Scholarship

Highlight 4

Community Excursions- regular and one-off excursions were planned by all Lead and assistant Lead educators, supporting our children's connection to our community and sense of agency. We visited Southwest Music, Toy library, the town library, Waring Gardens, Harry Pepper coffee shop, St Michaels School, the town Christmas Tree and Edward Public School.



Figure 8 Children borrowing toys from toy library

Highlight 5

Munch and Move internal PD - Outdoor champions renewed their training and ran a professional development refresher with the team on non-term day- sharing and refreshing on our knowledge in implementing programs that foster fundamental movement skills and healthy eating.



Figure 9 Munch and move- fundamental movement skills

Community involvement

Special Events- Our Calendar of Events ensures events are planned with continuity and support from across the organisation and community.

Special Persons events are always a highlight throughout the year and well supported with positive feedback from all. We celebrated Harmony Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day and End of year Celebrations.

Partnerships with Schools- We continue to have ongoing incursions and excursions with our local schools, teacher visits, orientation visits, and information sharing through transition to school statements to support children's transition to school.

Partnerships with the Wider Community: Deniliquin Inaugural Show - our Preschool children partook in the crafts exhibition, displaying group murals tied to the show theme. A music incursion with Nikita from South West Music Regional Conservatorium was interactive and fun, supporting children's development. Language Incursions with Yarkuwa were ongoing throughout the year. Our ongoing partnership with Dysons supports children's attendance and access to quality EC education.



Refurbished rocker from the rocket park makes a welcome addition in the playground



South West Music Incursion

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Preschool team, administrative staff, and support staff for their unwavering commitment and passion in providing a high-quality service to our children, families, and community.

A big thank you to our General Manager, Felicity, for her inspiring leadership and nurturing guidance, as well as to the dedicated leadership team at RREE for their continued passion and support.

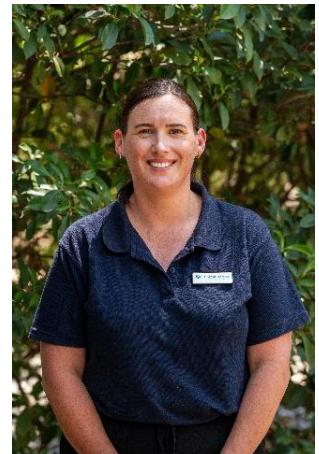
And most importantly, thank you to the children, families, and broader community - *you* are the reason we show up each day. You are at the heart of everything we do, and your presence reminds us that strong communities are built through supported families and nurtured children who are given every opportunity to thrive.

Completed by Emma Barker, Acting Nominated Supervisor / Second in Charge

Service Overview

Deniliquin Childcare Centre is licensed to provide care and education for up to 55 children per day, Monday-Friday from 8am-6pm. Our Centre is divided into four rooms and children are grouped as follows:

- Puggles/Lipkwil (0-1 year old)- 8-10 children supported by 3-4 educators per day. The current total of enrolments for this age group is 18 children.
- Possums/Pana (1-2 year old)- 12 children supported by 4-5 educators per day. The current total of enrolments for this age group is 21 children.
- Joeys/Kurre (2-3 year old)- 15 children supported by 4-5 educators per day. The current total of enrolments for this age group is 27 children.
- Wombats/Pirmity (3-5 year old)- 18-19 children supported by 4-5 educators per day. The current total of enrolments for this age group is 54 children.



We are a catered service with daily meals available for children cooked on site in our Kookaburra/kurng-kurng kitchen. We also offer casual bookings, when available to children enrolled at a River Region Early Education service.

Children: We have a total of 123 permanent enrolled children in the service, from 95 families and 4 children on the casual list with 1 child utilizing the casual bookings.

Educators: We have 26 contracted educators employed at the service - 10 full-time, 16 part-time and 1 casual educator. We have 1 permanent cook and 2 casual support staff at the service.

- 3 school-based trainees studying their Cert III
- 3 Cert III trainees
- 3 Diploma Trainees
- 1 studying Bachelor of Early Childhood teaching



Leadership structure: Currently there are 2 part time Acting Nominated Supervisors/Second in Charge and an Educational Leader. In September we expect the Leadership structure to return with a Nominated Supervisor over 5 days and 2 part-time Seconds in Charge.

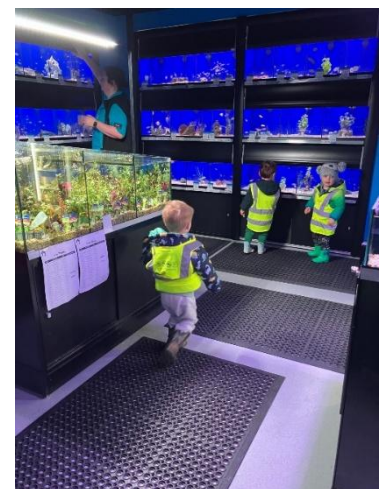
Service focus for 2024-25

2024

QA 1 One documented critical reflection and follow up per room per quarter on play intentionality and children's agency

Reflection booklets were established for each room to bring to team meetings, that document any reflections from leadership or educators and the follow up ideas and programs/actions. Our Educational Leader regularly added prompting questions to the reflection booklets for our educators to provide more in-depth critical reflections on the children's progress in their rooms. We saw these critical reflections improving with a difference in the way the reflections were being written and helped the educators in the room to evolve from writing that something was good or bad.

We achieved this goal and have had an elevation in our critical reflection practice throughout each room with the educators seeking to provide regular improvement within the program in each age group.



Possums/Pana excursion to Pets Domain

QA 6 Establish at least one community connection for each age group, focusing on early literacy and/or language skills

The Yarkuwa language program saw 2 staff members from Yarkuwa come into Childcare weekly and teach the Wombats/Pirmity and Joeys/Kurre children some Wamba Wamba and Perrepa Perrepa language by learning songs like head shoulders knees and toes and participating in various arts and crafts.

Wombats/Pirmity group also had multiple excursions to The Library and to Coffee Oasis to collect coffee grounds from the café for their worm farm. The Intergenerational program was again successful in 2024 which sees a collaboration between the local high school, the childcare centre and the senior living community. The children and the high school students demonstrated strong connections and valuable interactions with the residents and staff.

The Joeys/Kurre also attended the Library and invited Grandparents of the Joey's children, Mr H from the high school and Kate from the admin team to come and sing some songs and play guitar to the children.

The Puggles/Lipkwil group occasionally went for a walk in the pram around the block, with the children watching the trucks drive by as well as looking at all the birds.

2025

QA 6 Increasing family involvement and/or satisfaction with engagement in service and service decisions:

A survey went out to families at beginning of the year to collect feedback and ideas regarding special person's events. We hosted families for multiple successful events such as Harmony Day/Grandparents week, Easter hat parade and easter treasure hunt, Special Person's/Mother's Day and Pyjama week with Possums/Pana hosting a teddy bears picnic. We have had amazing attendance and family participation at these events and received great feedback from families.

We have planned for an upcoming Red Nose Day fundraiser food stall and a Father's/Special Person's day celebration.

QA 3 Outdoor play environments support/celebrate play, curiosity, creativity, wonder and inclusion for all:

After PPP discussions, 2 outdoor companions were appointed with a section for gardening that was intended for a passionate educator to contribute to. We saw educators accessing the Outdoor program on Storypark and have been adding monthly reflections; the program is going well, however we would like to achieve greater engagement from all educators.

Munch and move training was completed with a Fundamental Movement workshop at a team meeting and resulted with posters being displayed in the Big Yard for quick reference of games and activities.

A large play tyre was added to our outdoor environment from a donation, and we were successful in getting a Health and Development grant with funds being intended for a basketball hoop, obstacle course as well as crash mats or large blocks.

Highlights for 2024-25

Highlight 1

Team resilience

This year has brought many changes and transitions for us at Childcare and our team has risen to each one, remaining calm and showing flexibility and dedication. Despite staffing changes, room swaps, and periods of extended leave and absences, our educators worked together to maintain smooth daily operations and provide children with continuity of care. We saw educators embrace new roles and responsibilities, showing adaptability and commitment to growth. Our educators demonstrate resilience, teamwork and a strong focus on the wellbeing and continued learning of children.



Highlight 2

Professional growth and traineeships

This year we currently have numerous educators undertaking both Diploma and Certificate III traineeships with some successfully completed during this year and some very close to finishing.

Many of our educators are committed to further study and are also working in lead and assistant lead roles while undertaking their diploma traineeship which sees educators strengthen their knowledge, confidence and leadership in practice. Their dedication ensures that children and families benefit from a skilled and continually developing team.



Highlight 3

Recurring Excursion to Orana

It has been another successful year of participating in the Intergenerational Program organised in conjunction with Deniliquin High School and Orana. The Wombats/ Pirmity children are developing strong connections and having heartwarming interactions with the High School students, Orana residents and staff. Through this program we have also seen an interest from the High School Students in the Early Childhood Educator profession.



Community involvement

- Red Nose Day Disco Event at Childcare for Families, Children and Educators
- Christmas concert and Art show at Childcare to celebrate the year with our Childcare community
- Deniliquin Show art entries
- Harmony/Grandparents and Special persons week
- Mother's/ Special Person's Day events
- Intergenerational Program with Deniliquin High School and Orana
- South West Music mini musicians incursion
- Reconciliation Week - group collaboration artwork in the foyer
- Excursions in the wider community to Pets Domain, Vet Clinic and Library
- Hosting Deniliquin High School students for work experience
- Continued visit from Allied health professional to the service



Acknowledgements

We would like to sincerely thank all the leadership team who have supported us throughout this year of transition.

Felicity, thank you for your patience, understanding and faith in us as we navigated the responsibilities of dual roles. Your support has enabled us to provide stability and calm for the team during this time of change.

To Kate for her over and above assistance and knowledge with policies, procedures, audits, risk assessments and self-assessments. Thanks also to Claire for her valuable assistance with support staff and continued checking in on our service. A special thank you to our administration team, Mel, Kylie and Caitlin whose daily support ensures the smooth running of our service.

Finally, we acknowledge the amazing group of educators we have at Childcare. We thank their passion and dedication to creating a playful, supportive and inclusive education and care service for our community.

Completed by **Tammy Cairnduff**, Nominated Supervisor

Service Overview

The River Region Early Education Mobile Children's service (SE-00014785) is privileged to educate children in rural and remote communities surrounding Deniliquin.

We currently service Pretty Pine, Blighty, Wanganella, Conargo and Bunnaloo, providing childcare and preschool, running five days a week at venues.



Children: Our Mobile community consists of 77 permanently booked places across all venues from 44 families. We are funded through

- NSW Department of Education Preschool funding
- NSW Department of Education Long Day Care Funding
- Department of Education and Training (Commonwealth) Community
- Childcare Fund viability Funding
- Department of Education and Training (Commonwealth) Childcare Subsidy Service

Educators: Our staff comprises of an Early Childhood Teacher (full time) also a part time working 1 day a week, a Diploma Educator, 2 x Certificate 3 Educator who are studying Diploma and 2 Cert III trainees. The team of dedicated educators prepare equipment and resources, travelling daily to our communities providing unique and interesting educational experiences tailored for each individual child.

Day (Places)	Pretty Pine (25)		Blighty (25)		Wanganella (25)		Conargo (15)		Bunnaloo (25)	
	Child	Ed	Child	Ed	Child	Ed	Child	Ed	Child	Ed
Monday	15	4								
Tuesday			16	5						
Wednesday					15	3				
Thursday							12	4		
Friday									19	5

Leadership structure: Tammy, Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader, WHS Officer, Lead ECT, and our 2IC is Katie Nilsson. Tammy, Katie and Mellie are Responsible Persons at venues.

Service focus for 2024-25

2024

QA6.2.3-for each service at Mobile to partake in 1 Excursion or Incursion by 30 June 2024 extended to December 2024

We had success in the first half of 2024 with our excursions and incursions, so we decided to continue on with a visit from Wanganella Fire Brigade, teaching us everything about the fire truck and Anna from the council visiting all venues to teach us about recycling. Overall, we had a lot of success with this goal, building relationships with the community and enriching the children's learning and giving them a sense of



Wanganella country fire brigade incursion

community and belonging.

QA1.2.1-For each educator to consistently/every program implement play-based learning experiences with intentionality by 30th June 2024. Extended December 2024

Mobile educators really benefited from this goal, we learnt many new strategies and collaborated on some wonderful ideas for programs, which we learnt through our training as a team. We programmed with purpose, engaging experiences tailored to support our individual children's learning goals using their interests. Educators gained knowledge on how this fosters curiosity, creativity and critical thinking by embedding intentional teaching moments with meaningful play.

2025

QA6- For the Mobile Team to develop a system for communicating the “days play” to families and embedded by July 2025.

From reflections Mobile wanted to set up a way to communicate a few photos and words about their children's day at Mobile without this getting mixed up in Storypark documentation. We have decided to use Playground, Xplor. Starting with 1 educator taking the lead to experiment first, then upskilling all educators with the process. Teaching new educators in the team small examples of documentation with meaning in a sentence or two. Helping them become familiar with the EYLF V2, and also to be a part of the team, enjoying sharing children's learning.

QA1-Embed Critical Reflection in Program and Practice to improve children's outcomes and intentionality (learning) by November 2025.

Educators participated in half-hour training in staff meetings, gaining knowledge many areas and then putting them into practice. We have created a safe space where educators feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, challenges, and success without fear of judgement. We are supporting each other using collaboration in problem-solving to address daily challenges, with the goal of improving experience and outcomes for our children.

Highlights for 2024-25

Highlight 1

Opening our service at the Conargo school presented us with a lot of amazing opportunities to join in with the school children, book week was one of these. Parading in their costumes with their new school friends, developing new relationships. We gathered together for our storytelling, sharing our favorites, “Room on the Broom”, “Peter Rabbit”, and the “Gruffalo”, fostering a love for reading and storytelling.



Highlight 2

Mobile has introduced a dynamic calendar of celebration days, through Mellie's passion for engaging children in diverse experiences like Sustainability Day, International Dance Day, Picnic Day, and World Bee Day. This project fosters a sense of belonging and respect for diversity, aligning with the Early Years Learning Framework. Our Mobile educators collaboratively plan and lead these events, ensuring inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. Children benefit by exploring various cultures and traditions, enhancing their social and cognitive development. These celebrations encourage curiosity, empathy, and community awareness, enriching their learning journey through meaningful, hands-on activities.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
1st Jan 2nd Jan 3rd Jan 4th Jan 5th Jan 6th Jan 7th Jan 8th Jan 9th Jan 10th Jan 11th Jan 12th Jan 13th Jan 14th Jan 15th Jan 16th Jan 17th Jan 18th Jan 19th Jan 20th Jan 21st Jan 22nd Jan 23rd Jan 24th Jan 25th Jan 26th Jan 27th Jan 28th Jan 29th Jan 30th Jan 31st Jan		1st March 2nd March 3rd March 4th March 5th March 6th March 7th March 8th March 9th March 10th March 11th March 12th March 13th March 14th March 15th March 16th March 17th March 18th March 19th March 20th March 21st March 22nd March 23rd March 24th March 25th March 26th March 27th March 28th March 29th March 30th March 31st March	1st April 2nd April 3rd April 4th April 5th April 6th April 7th April 8th April 9th April 10th April 11th April 12th April 13th April 14th April 15th April 16th April 17th April 18th April 19th April 20th April 21st April 22nd April 23rd April 24th April 25th April 26th April 27th April 28th April 29th April 30th April	1st May 2nd May 3rd May 4th May 5th May 6th May 7th May 8th May 9th May 10th May 11th May 12th May 13th May 14th May 15th May 16th May 17th May 18th May 19th May 20th May 21st May 22nd May 23rd May 24th May 25th May 26th May 27th May 28th May 29th May 30th May	1st June 2nd June 3rd June 4th June 5th June 6th June 7th June 8th June 9th June 10th June 11th June 12th June 13th June 14th June 15th June 16th June 17th June 18th June 19th June 20th June 21st June 22nd June 23rd June 24th June 25th June 26th June 27th June 28th June 29th June 30th June
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
1st July 2nd July 3rd July 4th July 5th July 6th July 7th July 8th July 9th July 10th July 11th July 12th July 13th July 14th July 15th July 16th July 17th July 18th July 19th July 20th July 21st July 22nd July 23rd July 24th July 25th July 26th July 27th July 28th July 29th July 30th July	1st August 2nd August 3rd August 4th August 5th August 6th August 7th August 8th August 9th August 10th August 11th August 12th August 13th August 14th August 15th August 16th August 17th August 18th August 19th August 20th August 21st August 22nd August 23rd August 24th August 25th August 26th August 27th August 28th August 29th August 30th August	1st September 2nd September 3rd September 4th September 5th September 6th September 7th September 8th September 9th September 10th September 11th September 12th September 13th September 14th September 15th September 16th September 17th September 18th September 19th September 20th September 21st September 22nd September 23rd September 24th September 25th September 26th September 27th September 28th September 29th September 30th September	1st October 2nd October 3rd October 4th October 5th October 6th October 7th October 8th October 9th October 10th October 11th October 12th October 13th October 14th October 15th October 16th October 17th October 18th October 19th October 20th October 21st October 22nd October 23rd October 24th October 25th October 26th October 27th October 28th October 29th October 30th October	1st November 2nd November 3rd November 4th November 5th November 6th November 7th November 8th November 9th November 10th November 11th November 12th November 13th November 14th November 15th November 16th November 17th November 18th November 19th November 20th November 21st November 22nd November 23rd November 24th November 25th November 26th November 27th November 28th November 29th November 30th November	1st December 2nd December 3rd December 4th December 5th December 6th December 7th December 8th December 9th December 10th December 11th December 12th December 13th December 14th December 15th December 16th December 17th December 18th December 19th December 20th December 21st December 22nd December 23rd December 24th December 25th December 26th December 27th December 28th December 29th December 30th December

Highlight 3

Mobile has many special visitors but our favorite this year had to be without a doubt Tom Cruise—the horse! Charlie's mum, Kylie, kindly brought her friend Tom to Mobile so the children could meet and pat him. The children were full of curiosity, watching him closely as he stood on the other side of the fence. Some were eager to get up close and give him a gentle pat, while others observed from a little distance, feeling a mix of excitement and caution.

Meeting Tom Cruise provided the children with a unique hands-on experience that supported their social-emotional development, curiosity, and confidence. Engaging with a large animal allowed them to navigate their feelings, from excitement to hesitation, as they decided whether to observe from a distance or step forward to pat him.



Highlight 4

We were very lucky to have been a part of the Conargo donations from the Big Bash, who called in at the school and delivered some toys for the children. Our new Conargo school friends noticed when going through their toys they had some that were for age groups 3 and under. They thought that it would be nice to give them to their day care friends, and they could play with the Mobile children using them as well. We were very grateful for their kindness.



Highlight 5

Nature Play Week is an annual event in Australia dedicated to encouraging children and families to engage with the natural environment through outdoor activities. Mobile is blessed with amazing outdoor environments at each of our venues and the children get very excited for our bush walks taking full advantage of them especially celebrating Nature Play Week. Our children show their inquiring minds at work through this unstructured play in natural settings, which leads onto further learning with them following through with their interests in the environment.



Community involvement

Through continuous effort and outreach, Mobile strives to build lasting community relationships. These past 12 months, we were lucky enough to have visits from South West Music who introduced children to the joy of music through interactive activities, building children's creativity and communication skills.

During Harmony Week, we celebrated diversity by inviting families to share the story "Family Tree," showcasing to the children how community is connected.

The local country fire services visits provided valuable lessons on fire safety, teaching children about emergency procedures and the role of firefighters.

A local council representative come to visit and engaged children in discussions about sustainability and recycling, encouraging environmentally responsible behaviours.

These community engagements not only build children's learning experiences but also strengthen the bonds between our Mobile service and the wider community, creating a supportive and enriching environment for all.

Acknowledgements

I'm privileged to work alongside this incredible Mobile team—your dedication and passion for delivering exceptional care and education to our community are truly inspiring.

To our Administration team: thank you for keeping us supported and running smoothly while we're out in the field. We couldn't do it without you.

To our Quality Coordinator and leadership team: thank you for generously sharing your knowledge, ideas, and guidance - your support has been invaluable to our team's success.

And heartfelt thanks to our General Manager for your leadership and support. Your approachability, mentorship, and commitment have helped us all grow as professionals.



Completed by Amy Sturman, Nominated Supervisor

Service Overview

We are a preschool and long daycare service which is funded by CCS, ACCS, Start Strong Fee Relief and parent GAP Fees.

- Our preschool sessions are 8:15am-3:45pm with both BPSC and APSC available to families – run from the daycare room.
- Long daycare sessions are 8:00am – 6:00pm.
- BPSC 8:00am-8:15am and APSC 3:34pm-6:00pm

We run a School Holiday Program during term holidays.

- School holiday sessions are either:
- Short day – 8.15am-3.45pm
- Long day – 8.15am-6pm
- Casual day requests are taken for children with existing enrolments.

Children: Licenced number: 73

Rooms: 2 preschool rooms and 1 multi-age group long daycare room

- Possums 3- & 4-year-olds: 25 children
- Kookaburras 4–5-year-olds: 32 children
- Dragonflies: 56 children

Total children across the service and families: 106 children and 85 families

Educators:

Preschool – 9 educators in total – 1 is on maternity leave

- Full time – 4
- Part time – 5

Daycare – 10 educators in total

- Full time – 4
- Part time – 6

The service has 0 casual educators

Number of people studying for a qualification

- Cert III trainees: 3
- Diploma trainees: 7
- People studying other qualifications: 1 Cert III (renewal for new Dip requirements)

Leadership structure:

1 Nominated Supervisor

1 Second in charge (2IC)

1 Educational Leader

4 Early Childhood Teachers (ECT) and 4 Lead Educators (1x ECT maternity leave)



Service focus for 2024-25

2024

QA1 - Critical Reflection Element 1.3.2- Play Based Learning and Intentionality

Focus on reflection of the program to be made inclusive to ensure that all educators are able to consistently contribute and extend upon children's learning. and children's voices are being represented.

This project was supported by the educational leader with the implementation of EYLF 2.0 tags & planning. Training by KU Inclusion Support Agency on scaffolding was also undertaken to support the inclusion of all children.

QA6 - Community Engagement Element 6.2.3 Connections

Focus on ensuring that children of all age groups are able to participate in excursions in incursions to increase connection to their community. Projects that supported this goal included the Bush bus, visits to Local businesses, visits from local services and collaboration with local farmers.

2025

QA1 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Perspectives Embedded.

Focus on ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded into our daily routines and fortnightly program.

What does this look like? It is naturally integrated into everyday rather than just specific weeks or events. Educators are knowledgeable, children are knowledgeable, resources reflect perspectives. Evidenced in children voices and interests, program, excursions and incursions, resources on floor, educator reflections Example projects: Resources Training EL Collaboration, KU Inclusion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion Hub – Michelle, team meetings and connecting with Country, networking locally, services, external services. Child's voice, extending their interest, research intentionally.

QA 6 –Strengthen Communication with Families

The focus of this project was to support each educator to identify and implement a strategy for communicating with families based on a personal strength. Educators have been supported to develop confidence in ways to communicate, each educator is confident in communicating with families Family satisfaction with communication increases, evidenced in PPP records, observations of communications, documentation of communication, family survey results, PPP goals and discussions. Training was provided on identifying strengths e.g., team meetings, complete planning day activity (questions), growth mindset training, current projects e.g., floor books, daily reflections, APSC communication strategy, development of individual philosophies, networking e.g., other services, professional partnerships.

Highlights for 2024-25

Highlight 1

This year educators have embedded daily reflections across all learning environments that have supported families to receive more detailed information about how the day. They focus on the highlights of the day, spontaneous moments, areas of children's development supported and sharing any relevant information e.g., UN Day of Play

Highlight 2

2025 Health and Development Participation grant - Category 2 funding
Category 2 focuses on upskilling educators and teachers in relation to the HDC program, such as preparing to take

Daily reflection

Date: Tuesday 8th July

Room: Dragonfly Room

Author: J O'Keefe

Weather: chilly, windy, rainy; creative

Welcome to week one of the NSW and VIC combined School holidays! Our Dragonfly children were able to experience life in the slow lane today.

Grant Spending Plan

Service	Barham Early Learning Service	Date	June 2025
Grant funding	Health & Development participation grant	Amount	\$6000

part in the program or building capacity to support children's health and development. Services can use the funding to:

- cover travel and relief time costs to enable educators and teachers to attend health and development check workshops and engage with training resources or related professional learning,
- bring in an allied health worker or other professionals to support children's health and development by providing educators and teachers with professional development, specialised education programs or support to embed suitable cohort-wide strategies, and
- arrange the provision of resources to support children's development. Resources will need to support cohort-wide engagement.

Highlight 3

Continued connection to our community, engaging with local businesses and members of the community to be involved in intentional teaching e.g., fire brigade, Special Persons Week e.g., Foodworks donated apples for families to make fruit kebabs, Rainbow Serpent project e.g., community supplying sustainable items to use, local flower donation for a family competition



Highlight 4

'Good news story' – KU Inclusion asked BELS to be a part of their annual 'good news story' – selecting a service that has developed in a particular area of inclusion growth in collaboration with the agency. BELS was chosen for the extensive work they have done in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in their program. Part of this achievement was supported through 2 educators attending the ECA Rural, Regional, Remote conference in Hunter Valley – extreme experienced that is very well appreciated!!

Shifting Mindsets from Exclusion, Segregation, and Integration to Inclusion <i>Reflections and comments evidencing shifts in thinking and practice. Examples that represent the important work Inclusion Professionals do everyday.</i>			
A story of where the service started...	Where did practice and thinking start? What did the IP do to engage the service? What window of change did the IP notice?	What changes did the service make towards inclusion? How did the IP support these changes?	...and where they are now.
Barham Early Learning had identified that they wanted to grow in their engagement with, and inclusion of, Aboriginal perspectives. <i>There was no to ensure integration into the program wasn't forced or stand alone and interactions were knowledgeable and meaningful.</i> They were eager to make connections with community members but finding this to be a challenge. They were also finding it difficult to build their knowledge of local culture, practices and language.	Despite these barriers, in May 2024 the service used their Strategic Inclusion Plan to begin to think of ways to broaden educators' knowledge and increase inclusion in their program. In late 2024 the IP joined a project with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hub and invited Barham ELC to take part. They eagerly jumped at the opportunity to invest more intentionally in this area of their inclusion practice.	In October 2024, the IP, together with Michelle Hamilton from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hub, met with the director and educational leader of the service. Together they explored the current areas of confidence and knowledge, identifying the possible barriers as well as the opportunities. The director recognised their limited knowledge, having migrated from overseas. The educational leader brought a wealth of knowledge from another area across the border, however had been hesitant to share out of respect for the land on which the service was placed. Together, they reflected on the land: the children from the service travel across, and the opportunity to share about other countries and lands, while continuing to seek knowledge and connections locally.	This gave the team the confidence to start. The director encouraged the team to shift their mindset and get comfortable as learners, <i>documenting our "distance travelled"</i> . The educational leader started sharing her knowledge. Together with the children they reviewed their acknowledgement of country, increasing its relevance to the children and incorporating reference to the river, a key aspect of the land they are on. Educators have set personal goals to build their knowledge, engaging in their own learning to confidently share with the children. Team meetings have been used to encourage educators' sharing, with the director identifying "less avoidance" and a more natural inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives, seen/heard through educators' language, program and resources. This has led to meaningful engagement locally, including the discovery of a scar tree in town, and <i>pinning maps to display their respect and inclusive intentions</i> . Educators are sharing their knowledge with families, bringing the community on the journey. The service continues to invest in meaningful connections and relationships, eager for increased engagement and knowledge sharing. While they work towards this <i>long term</i> goal, they continue to <i>listen, learn and grow, step by step</i> .
TM: F. Take the first step – looking for the opportunities "If it wasn't for that first meeting, we wouldn't be where we are..." - Director			



Highlight 5

Front yard set up – the completion of our new front fence and set up of the marquee and front yard set up was finalised in Feb 2025. This front yard has really supported our team to implement our philosophy:

"Our approach to teaching is collaborative, reflective, and intentional. It puts children at the centre of learning and celebrates play and the natural environment, in all weather, to support



children to be curious, collaborate and be adventurous.”

It has also encouraged community connections and intentional teaching opportunities e.g., road safety.

Community involvement

- High school focus program and sharing the space. Supporting children to become familiar with the school environment leading up to their school transition – brought forward for 2025 to Term 2 very successful approach to the children’s transitions.
- Barham Fire Station
- Police station
- Foodworks donations
- Meadow bloom flower farm
- Library
- Donations of resources from the vets, doctors, hospital, and op shops
- Koondrook CFA
- Special persons celebrations
- Barham Garden Supplies
- General members of the community
- KU visits
- Michelle Hamilton from KU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion Hub
- Primary school teacher visits

Acknowledgements

We would firstly like to acknowledge our families, children, educators and community for their ongoing relationships and collaboration, there is no BELS without them. We are proud and delighted to be qualified professionals who play such an important role in ensuring our life-long learners are provided with quality growth and development opportunities. Our educators work tirelessly and with great passion every day to care for our children. Thank you for all your research, participation in training, growth mindsets, fresh ideas, nurturing practices and being the professionals you are.

Secondly, we would like to acknowledge Admin for their unwavering continuous support for our services. The immense amount of work they put in to ensure each service is successfully supported with EVERYTHING admin – it’s a bonus that they are joyful and pleasant to speak to on any occasion.

Thirdly, we would like to acknowledge Kate our Quality Coordinator. Kate has refreshing thoughts and ideas, a good eye for clear formats and is the listener that we all strive to be. Thank you for helping us develop systems for all areas continuous improvement and tracking.

Fourthly, we would like to acknowledge the Board for their background support, approving policies and procedures, strategic planning and commitment to our services.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge Felicity. Felicity is the absolute backbone of our organisation and not only is she always professional, but she also shows her genuine care and commitment. We all agree that without Felicity our organisation wouldn’t be the same. Thank you for guiding, coaching, organising, counselling and ensuring that our organisation is one of high quality with children, families, and staff at the centre. We acknowledge the HUGE amount of work you put into our organisation – HUGE.

Completed by Penny Gallpen, Toy Library Coordinator

Service Overview

The Toy Library is a toy lending service for River Region Early Education and the local community.

We currently have 1218 toys in our collection with a replacement value of \$77,198.

Over the 2024-2025 year:

- 330 toys were withdrawn – 296 retired in the toy cull, 20 damaged/missing, and 14 combined with other toys to make sets, or to add to a similar toy.
- 47 new toys purchased from the Forest Hill \$2000 Grant.
- 24 toy donations were accepted and accessioned.



There are 140 memberships on our mailing list in the following categories:

- | | |
|----------------------|----|
| • Duty Members | 23 |
| • Non-Duty Members | 26 |
| • Group Members | 7 |
| • Trial Members | 4 |
| • New Parent's Group | 72 |
| • RREE Services | 8 |

Over the year there have been 1010 member visits resulting in 2491 toys loaned and 2445 returns



Highlights for 2024-25

Toy Cull

It was decided in May 2024 to undertake a large cull of toys in order to free up space and reduce the clutter on shelves. I started with a list of all toys that had not been borrowed in the previous 2 years and assess possible reasons (Eg: too old, damaged, missing pieces, surplus or simply overlooked). In June I worked through the Beginner toys section and noticed different toys being borrowed with fresh packaging and more space. This was going to be a long process, so in July 2024 we had a working bee on the weekend and removed all remaining unborrowed toys on the list. Thank you to Claire, Kate and Kylie for coming in to help remove 296 toys from the shelves. These went into the meeting room and were offered to all Services. Remaining toys were sold off to families until the stragglers were offered for free or a gold coin donation.

There were 130 puzzles on the cull list. I decided that some of these may have been overlooked since we had so many. I rescued around 50 quality wooden puzzles to see if they still had borrowing appeal. Some were given a new bag and label, and some were combined to make a set. This, combined with better visibility, has increased their appeal to members.

Forest Hill Grant

In August we received a grant of \$2000 from The Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies. Thank you to Kate for submitting the successful application. It was used in 3 main areas:

- To replace our outdoor balance equipment which was very old and ready to retire
- To create some 'Explorer Boxes' of beginner toys for developmental stages from 5-12 months
- To create some 'Imaginative Playboxes' for our 3 years plus members

By utilising Toy Community discounts and October toy sales I was also able to purchase some other replacement toys with money saved. There were 47 new toys accessioned in total and they all have been extremely popular.

Toy Library Survey

The Quality Coordinator created a survey around the Toy Library Service in March. The survey received 26 responses. Almost all questions showed high satisfaction, particularly for the following:

- The role and qualities of the Toy Library Coordinator, Penny Gallpen, who is consistently welcoming, knowledgeable and supportive of families.
- The affordability and ease of membership and volunteering.
- The Toy Library as a welcoming and safe space for children and families.
- The good condition of toys and the ease of finding suitable toys to help children with developmental needs.

Results will be analysed and addressed in the next 12 months.

New Parents' Group

Each term I meet with the New Parents Group at Intereach to give an overview of the Toy Library and discuss the developmental importance of play, as well as the benefits of joining.

There were 25 new mums in attendance over the year, of which 7 have joined to date. There were 18 new memberships over the year from past New Parents Groups. For those that do not join, I send out a periodic email to remind them we are here. There are currently 6 emails sent out over 4 years to keep us in mind, as it is common for families to join once a second child arrives.

Information and a voucher are also given to Deniliquin Hospital for the New Parent packs.

There have been 15 Trial memberships (2 months non-Duty for \$20) purchased over the year. This includes grandparents and visiting families or one-off party borrowing.



Party hire



New playsets



Beginner play

Acknowledgements

I have enjoyed working as a part of the Admin team who continue to be extremely supportive and solution oriented. It also makes a huge difference to our members to be able to access the Toy Library outside of my hours.

Penny Gallpen

Toy Library Coordinator