

Whitehorse Pre School Association
Cluster Management Information Evening
Minutes

Wednesday 16th June 2010

7.30 pm

Forest Hill Horticultural Centre, Jolimont Road, Forest Hill

Present: WPSA Management, WPSA Executive Committee, Barriburn Preschool, Benwerrin Preschool, Birralee Preschool, Blackburn Preschool, Burwood Heights Kindergarten, Eastmont Preschool, Florence Rd Preschool, Heatherdale Preschool, Indra Preschool, Katrina Preschool, Larch St Kindergarten, Pope Road Kindergarten, Rangeview Preschool, St Augustine's Kindergarten, St Peter's Kindergarten, Terrara Preschool, Warekila Preschool, Wattle Hill Kindergarten, Woodhouse Grove Kindergarten, Leanne Mits & Fiona Brown (WKG)

Apologies: Box Hill Sth Preschool, Holbury Children's Centre, Nunawading Kindergarten, Parkmore Preschool, Donna Matthews (WELS)

Absent: Box Hill Nth Primary Kindergarten, Dr Stanley Cochrane Kindergarten, Friend St Kindergarten, Mt Pleasant Kindergarten, NewHope Baptist Kindergarten, St James Kindergarten, St Scholastica's Kindergarten, Surrey Hills Baptist Children's Centre, Taralye Kindergarten, Vermont Kindergarten

Meeting Open: 7.43pm

Order of Proceedings:

7.43pm - Opening address by Lindsay Oldfield, WPSA President

- Intro to the evening by Lindsay
- Thanks to WPSA from Fiona regarding sponsorship of the KPV conference. Said it was invaluable
- Thankyou card received from Pat Brown regarding the gift presented at the last AGM in recognition of her many valuable years of volunteer service as our Community Advocate

7.47pm – Presentation by Nadia ??, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

- Information packs (slide handouts) available for collection at the conclusion of the evening
- Presentation focused on Kindergarten Cluster Management & Early Childhood Reform
- Discussed the journey towards Cluster Management; the responsibilities of Cluster Managers; and the policy framework

- 47% of community kindergartens are governed and supported by Cluster Management
- Discussed a number of key early childhood reforms including the National Quality Framework and Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework

7.55pm – Presentation by Lisa Paton, bestchance Child Family Care

- Not for profit organisation based in Glen Waverley
- Provide a number of programs including Kindergarten Cluster Management
- 18 kindergartens currently including 2 in Whitehorse City Council area
- Aim is to relieve the pressure on staff and parents
- Why Cluster Management – to reduce inconsistent mgt of staff due to committee changes; to manage the numerous legislation changes for staff; staff benefit from being part of a larger organization; staff entitlements are managed and provided in full; opportunity for staff to salary package, reducing tax and increasing take home pay; provide a relief bank for staff
- Bestchance is the actual employer
- Base their service on a partnership model - parents continue to play a key role
- No further costs incurred compared to costs incurred as a stand-alone kindergarten. Essentially no fee for the service, all covered via the government grant

Q&A

- One contact from bestchance for a kindergarten to liaise with
- On-site at least once a term, or more frequent if required
- Committee and teachers get a say in hiring new staff. Bestchance and a committee member involved in interviews
- Process to be Cluster Managed via bestchance takes approximately 3 months from committee passing a motion to bestchance commencing involvement
- A bestchance rep can attend AGM's if required
- They don't assist with grant applications – that is still a committee responsibility
- Kindergartens still set budgets, purchase consumables, set fee structures etc
- Can provide lunch break cover – cover break at one kinder than drive to the next to do the same etc
- Don't move staff against their will
- Advertise job vacancies internally first (within cluster members/staff) then external

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8.25pm – Presentation by Jacinta Barnes, KU Children Services

- Cluster Management is about acknowledging that things are much harder to manage - licensing, regulations, Universal Access, time pressures are higher, all this by volunteers that are dealing with staff with concerns regarding a high degree of change
- Not for profit organization, but do obviously cover costs
- Operate 150 services, most in NSW, most standalone preschools
- Operate the service completely – therefore the kinders don't have a committee, more a parent advisory group
- Acknowledge that in VIC the kinders are looking at something more like bestchance
- KU is employer and licensee and tailors service to what each committee wants, not a one size fits all model
- Collects fees on kinders behalf, pays for staff, PD etc then passes remainder back to kinder
- For some kinders KU create the budget

Q&A

- No kinders in Whitehorse region at this stage
- Full fee service, therefore govt funding not enough to cover costs, so there is a fee dependent on each kinders operation
- Need 5 kinders in the Whitehorse area to join KU to be considered cluster managed

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8.45pm – Q&A to panel from the floor

- Govt supports via \$7400.00 per annum per kinder, plus a \$1,500 initial grant
- There is a huge focus on the importance of early childhood development
- Bestchance is currently the only cluster manager available in Whitehorse City Council
- No plans by department to have kinder teachers employed by the Education Dept
- Per capita funding is increasing to support kinders and Cluster Managers

8.57pm – Thanks to guest speakers by Kim Illarietti

9.10pm - Close