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## ROBE CHILD CARE ON WHEELS SERVICE Known as ROBE CCOWS

### **The Service**

*This year CCOWS celebrates sixteen years of operation.*

*The service is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.*

*The Robe District Council acts as Approved Provider for the service.*

*The service is accountable to the eeccrsb (SA National Regulatory Authority) for compliance with regulations.*

### **Mobile Delivery**

Robe CCOWS was the first MOBILE Child Care service to be established in South Australia. Lateral thinking and creative problem-solving skills have been required to guide planning through research, trial, to implementation and operation.

Though the new Child Care Legislation classifies the service as a centre-base child care, in fact CCOWS still has a mobile form of delivery with a central office.

*"Mobiles provide an itinerant service for children and families living in isolated communities or disadvantaged localities, or where a stand-alone service is not viable. A vehicle is used to transport staff, equipment and appropriate materials to these localities as an integral part of the child care and educational programs being offered."*

CCOWS interprets being isolated and having disadvantage as :  
*community members who lack contact with other people, services or resources.*

### **Our PHILOSOPHY**

To create an early childhood service that values children's learning, respects children's rights, and understands the critical nature of connection between families and early year's educators in delivering the best experience for children.

### **Statement of Purpose**

Robe CCOWS aims to provide accessible, affordable, quality care and education to children between 6 months and 5 years in a long day care setting, to facilitate a positive difference for the wellbeing of children and families in Robe and the surrounding districts.

The Management and staff of CCOWS acknowledge the Bunganditj people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we operate our services. We remember their ancestors with respect and continue to work towards reconciliation and justice for aboriginal people.

## OVERVIEW OF THE SERVICE

The CCOWS office is located at the Robe Council.

The CCOWS service presently operates at four different venues over a five day week.

- ❖ **The Robe RSL Kindergarten** on Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 8.30am until 5.15pm.  
This venue is presently capped at places for 20 children, but may accommodate more.
- ❖ **The Robe RSL Hall** on Wednesday and Thursday from 8.30am until 5.15pm.  
This venue is presently capped at places for 20 children, but may accommodate more.
- ❖ **At Beachport Primary School in the CPC room** on Wednesdays from 8.45am until 5.00pm.  
This venue is licensed for 15 children.
- ❖ **And the Kangaroo Inn Area School CPC Centre** on Thursdays from 8.45am until 5.00pm.  
This venue is licensed for 12 children.

There are 127 possible places available each week, with a current waiting list at each site.

DISTANCE is an *outstanding difference* between offering long day care with Mobile delivery, compared to that of a traditional Centre.

Distance presents challenges to the service in both communication and the nature of a day's work.

### COMMUNICATION

- The Manager is at a different location from the service operation sites.
- The staff members live far from each other, the venues and the office.
- The families travel long distances to reach the service.
- The challenge for *staff* to find an opportunity to meet together and exchange information and ideas is *always* apparent in Child Care, where attention to children is the first priority. *But* in a working **week** where staff do not all work on the same day, nor at the same site, and the Manager is in a different location ....means that it takes persistence and ingenuity to maintain a bonded, enthusiastic and committed staff team.
- Informing and interacting with *families* is a challenge when children do not attend consecutive days in care, and parents work in remote locations e.g. at sea, in vineyards, on farms. Having blank spots in mobile phone reception adds to the communication challenges.
- We constantly aim for improvement in communication between staff members, families and staff, staff and Manager. Newsletters, communication books, message pouches, e-mail links, Slide-shows and family visits are some of the methods with which we communicate.
- Distance affects timely communications between stakeholders, government departments, training organisations, and the service. This can leave a short lead in time for administration.

### NATURE OF A DAY'S WORK

The staff drive long distances to;

- meet at the CCOWS shed
- load activities into a vehicle / or trolley (if needing to use the trailer).
- hitch the trailer to a vehicle( when required)
- drive to a site
- unload and set up premises for the day (temporary fences, changing tables, portable cots, activities and administration needs)
- then care for the children
- pack up
- leave the premises as they were found
- put equipment/trolleys back into the vehicle/or trailer/or small shed
- return to the "home" shed (sometimes 55kms, through kangaroo country)
- park the vehicle and unload the activities.....that makes a LONG day.
- after that many staff have a long drive home.

Adequate breaks are taken so that fatigue does not become a risk factor.

## The CCOWS Purpose

CCOWS aims to provide accessible, affordable, quality care and education for children between six months and five years in a long day care setting, to facilitate a positive difference for the wellbeing of children and families in Robe and the surrounding districts.

### ACCESSIBLE CARE

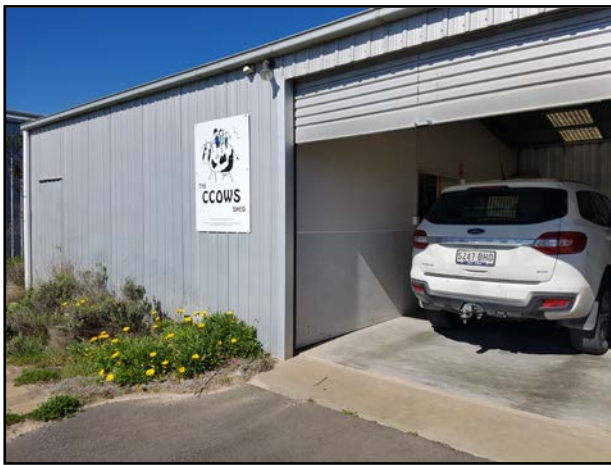
The vehicles, trailer and trolleys are essential for the CCOWS model of mobile delivery. The vehicles are housed in a purpose-built shed at the Council Depot, along with shelves of equipment.

It is from this shed that staff select equipment and set out to travel to different venues to set them up so that they will then meet licensing regulations for child care.

Negotiations have enabled CCOWS to store some trolleys with equipment at the sites.

This means that the trailer does not need to be taken on every day of service, to every site.

This facilitates more flexibility with routine and daily rosters.



CCOWS outreach vehicle in shed



Storage Shed

Parents *bring their children* to the venue.

The mobile model of service has helped bring child care to many families who were unable to access any form of child care previously. There is still an unmet need for child care in surrounding towns and Districts. Many families still need to travel considerable distances to reach CCOWS.

For isolated, disadvantaged and/or rural families, other forms of children's services such as *crèches, farm and in-home care, family day care* may be an alternative way to supplement care, but only if they are accessible. Mobile delivery remains an innovative and effective way to bring long day care and other assistance (such as health and social services) to these families. Mobilers know that we are the "first point of contact" for many families, and we recognize the potential of offering information and knowledge about other organizations which may support and assist them.

### AFFORDABLE CARE

After July 2, 2018 the service will receive funding from the Australian Government in a different form. The service and parents will need to make changes to meet the requirements to access "child care subsidy funding".

Educators and administration will guide and assist parents through the new registration and enrolment procedures.

Having a myGov account and continually updating Centrelink of any changing family circumstances will be some of the new expectations for parents.



## QUALITY CARE

Engagement between staff and children improves the educator's knowledge about the interests, capabilities and needs of the children. In that *engagement*, the quality of the interaction determines the facilitation of wellbeing, trust and respectful, responsive relationships.

The balance of activities and a structured flow to the day allows flexibility to meet each child's particular needs.

This is assisted further by team leaders and staff, who recognize each child as an individual and respond to his particular stage of development, while also introducing him to the social skills he will need with others.



## QUALITY EDUCATION

Staff educators assist the team leaders and qualified supervisors to program for the child's growth of understanding and skills. Programming incorporates EYLF (the Early Years Learning Framework), which is the curriculum recommended in the new Child Care Legislation.

CCOWS embraces the National Quality Standards as a guideline for daily operation and improvement. Observation of children informs the ability of educators to select activities, challenges and timetables which are appropriate and relevant for each child.



## ACCOUNTABILITY

CCOWS is accountable through the CCOWS Advisory Group, to the Robe District Council (the Approved Provider) for effective, efficient management.

CCOWS is accountable to the Commonwealth Government (through the Australian Government Department of Education and Training) for both the financial and operation management.

CCOWS works with an ongoing Quality Improvement Plan, and at regular intervals throughout the year submits outcomes, budgets, financial statements, utilization reports and funding acquittals to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

Funding renewal depends on satisfactory compliance with agreed standards of performance.



**July 2017 – June 2018**





## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This year there has been a profound change in the way children's services across Australia are funded. It would satisfy me, if there were apparent changes to benefit children and families living in the rural and regional parts of our country. Though the 'child care subsidy funding' may have assisted some families, others have found the process of change to be overwhelming.

We see the benefit to children being in care when there are trained, caring educators who are making sure that they focus on children and assist them to be ready for life's journey, as they work towards achieving the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework.

There are 5 outcomes...

*Outcome 1: Children to have a strong sense of identity.*

Just watching children in the dress-up or home corner, having fun with the doctor's kit or the pretend hair salon, building, creating, cooking and dancing...demonstrates to us that they are trying out everything, and finding what they prefer and finding out what happens when they co-operate, and what happens when they don't! It's the start of growing into the person they are comfortable being.

*Outcome 2: Children to be connected with and contribute to their world.*

How important it is to have the experience of existing and being with others! In rural areas this social contact helps develop sharing, co-operation, self-assertiveness, empathy and awareness. We believe that developing respect for others and the environment are life-long skills.

*Outcome 3: Children to have a strong sense of wellbeing.*

We only have to witness children being welcomed, watch them as they greet their friends and rush to their preferred educator to tell them their latest news or to have a hug....to see that the children know that they matter. Children do not observe, learn or interact appropriately when they are anxious or upset, they need to feel secure and comfortable with others and their surroundings.

*Outcome 4: Children to be confident and involved learners.*

This is where experienced educators 'come into their own'. They have the ability to recognize what a child is already capable of and invite him to explore and further develop his curiosity, interests and skills. Sometimes the way the room environment is set up makes me wish I could stay and play. Our favourite words to hear are 'I can', 'I did', 'I'll try', and 'watch me'.

*Outcome 5: Children to be effective communicators.*

We have grandmas, mothers and qualified educators on our staff, who know that children communicate with expressions, cries, body language, signs... as well as words. We know one of the most important aspects of communication is *listening*- that's *hearing with attention*.

Our educators are planners, partners, providers, supporters who guide children as they begin to achieve these *outcomes*. It would be reassuring to think the new legislation will not diminish the opportunity for children to experience services, which assist families to ensure their children have confidence and resilience to enjoy their life-long learning journey.

Article 4 in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states, '*The government has a responsibility to make sure children's rights are protected. They must help families to protect children's rights and create an environment where each child can grow and reach their potential*'.



**Robyn Paterson**  
**Director Children's Services Robe**

CCOWS appreciates the collaboration, respect and assistance it receives from families, friends, colleagues, departments and stakeholders in Local, Regional and Federal areas.

Personally, I value the positive support and consideration offered by:

- My dedicated Administration Assistant, Karla Dew
- Chair Anne Legoe, and members of the CCOWS Advisory Group
- Robe District Council CE, Roger Sweetman
- Fellow NAMS executives
- Colleagues from Children's Services Peak Bodies
- Members of the Implementation and Transition National Reference Group

## The CCOWS Year in Review

### Staff is the most important resource of a service

- Again, we have had changing circumstances affecting the continuity or "constancy" in staffing. Educators are flexible in their response to changes. The service is conscious of the importance of "familiar/ or known" educators helping to assist the feeling of security for children.
- CCOWS has welcomed Ellie who is working with us while completing a Bachelor of Early Childhood, and we have Victoria Camino completing work experience while studying for a Diploma. Amy Reilly will be beginning maternity leave in August and we wish her well as she welcomes her second child.
- Educators have met regularly at staff meetings, attended appropriate forums and have continually updated required skills with training.
- Educators consider their roles, and participate in Professional Development appraisals with the Service Director. This has assisted in determining areas of improvement for individuals and the service.
- Staff endeavor to find the balance between maintaining caring routines and facilitating developmental experiences for children. This can be a challenge when there is a mixture of ages (from 6 months to 5 years) sharing the same space.
- We appreciate the diverse skills and approaches which our educators bring to the service.



Wendy, Amy, Stefan and Cristy



Ellie and Bronwen



Bronwyn, Alana and Karla



Bianca, Shannon and Sue

### VENUES *are where we offer a safe, happy environment*

#### **At the Robe Kindy site**

- The children benefit from the facilities which are continually being monitored and enhanced at this site.
- The CCOWS children who transition to Kindergarten here, will already have a feeling of 'ownership' of this site.

#### **At the Robe RSL Hall site**

- The outdoor playspace continues to grow. More changes are planned for this area.
- The RSL continues to be a supportive partner in our occupation of the premises and the developing of the outdoor space.

#### **At the Beachport site**

- The school community and parents welcome and appreciate the service provided.
- Responsive and co-operative relationships are a feature between educators and parents at this site.

#### **At the Kangaroo Inn site**

- CCOWS educators and children enjoy the freedom to choose between different outdoor experiences available.
- The small indoor area needs ingenuity in organization of the space, to facilitate sleeping and busy activities for children, to occur all at the same time.

- Some children's activities provide unexpected outcomes. We smile when we observe boys in the Hairdressing play corner and putting dolls to bed; and we are happy to see girls playing with the "diggers" and sliding in our mud patch.
- It is aspirational for children to have the choice to be busy either inside or outside. It takes forethought and organization to work towards this access (with heavy doors and giant puddles sometimes intervening!)
- Appropriate understanding and care for each child is made possible by the educator's knowledge and awareness of children and their families.
- We have much enjoyment observing the "firsts" for children; first steps, first tower building, first completed jigsaw, first 'voluntary sharing'. Some of these we manage to capture with photos, but more than likely they are shared with parents as anecdotes at 'pick-up' time.



## DAILY OPERATION

### *the "how"*

- Parents provide food for the child's day. Educators need to be aware of children's individual dietary requirements. Educators sit with the children to monitor their comfort and safety during eating times. Awareness of children's allergies and sensitivities ensures there is no 'random sharing' of food.
- As part of sustainability studies within our community, children are encouraged to think about their actions and how they affect their surroundings. Children have taken short walking excursions around their sites, observing and talking about details of things they have noticed. Recycling, respect and dependence on each other and the environment are topics we encourage in conversations.
- The children have enjoyed a variety of construction, making and creating activities. Exploration with magnifying glasses and overhead projectors is popular and of course one of the favourite co-operative experiences is cooking. This year we have cooked (and eaten) pizzas, banana cake, pikelets and apple crumble (using apples from our own apple tree.)



Picking apples from our tree



Peeling apples for crumble



## VEHICLES *are what makes us Mobile*

- Both vehicles are serviced and maintained according to recommended standards.
- Drivers of these vehicles have taken part in 'defensive driving training'.

## SHED *our shelter from the storm*

- It is a continual challenge to maintain order in the 'Big CCOWS shed'. Particularly as our mobile delivery leaves little time to devote to this task. Thank you to Team Leader Shan, for her organizational skills.
- Vermin and frogs are visitors to our storage areas and are controlled with appropriate discouragement.

## EQUIPMENT *is a tool for development*

- After continued use, and moving from one site to another, we have needed to replace and replenish our stock of activities and resources.
- Replacement of worn sleep-mats has been a necessity.
- Educators are skilled at presenting activities and equipment in different ways to capture children's interest.
- With outdoor play taking an important place in a child's development, we are reviewing the outdoor needs at each site.



## WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY *systems for survival*

- We are sensitive to the physical differences at each of our sites and conscious that we do not own the sites. The RSL site has internal wood and glass doors which recently blew back upon themselves and stuck. This was as a result of an extreme wind gust coming in the front door. No one could enter or leave through that doorway, but fortunately the RSL had someone to rectify the situation for us.
- Fresh sand will be provided for the RSL sand pit as enthusiastic digging has reached the weed-mat base.
- Evacuation procedures are regularly practiced at each site.
- Visual supervision remains the most important contribution to child safety.
- Educators update their training in the required skills of First Aid, CPR and mandatory notification.

- The Annual CCOWS Planning Day, had “Change” as its focus. The main aspect concerned the Legislative change to be implemented on July 2, but we also embraced changes to service delivery routines and educator’s life balance. The impact of the legislation to on-floor responsibilities, was part of the consideration in discussions about improved performance.
- Staff professional appraisals have featured the review of responsibilities for each educator’s position. Improvement plans were agreed upon, for each educator.
- Staff educators have participated and attended training in the following areas:
  - *CCOWS Planning Day* *Robe*  
*Changes, particularly skills for mentoring parents through Transition.*
  - *Fire Extinguisher training, with Michael Wilkin.* *Robe*
  - *WHS Risk information, with Deputy RDC CEO Nick Brown* *Robe*
  - *PwC forums / systems for Transition* *Adelaide and Sydney*
  - *DET forums re new Child Care Legislation* *Adelaide*
  - *Implementation and Transition National reference Group* *Canberra*



- Visitors are welcome, and help us to be aware of the quality of our service delivery.
  - ❖ Anne Legoe (CCOWS Advisory Group Chairperson)
  - ❖ Sara Murby from Gowrie SA ( Mt Gambier branch)
  - ❖ Members of the Robe RSL Executive
  - ❖ Julia Jenkins and Pricewaterhouse Coopers representatives
  - ❖ Coastal Leader Journalists

- During the last year we supported these events; Loud Shirt day, Odd Sock Day, Pyjama Day, Crazy Hat Day, Football Colours day, and celebrated Teddy Bears Picnic



- At Robe we have shared many events with the Kindergarten children and their staff.
  - A visit from George the Farmer was an interesting and interactive session. This was a very relevant presentation for the children, as many are from families involved in the primary industry or food preparation.
  - Jack and Molly presented an enjoyable music program, with children relishing their ability to participate.



- Michael Wilkin from the Robe Council demonstrated the use of fire extinguishers to the educators and children.
- We took advantage of the dirt patch in the RSL outdoor space to celebrate "International Mud Day". Each year the benefits of outdoor experiences are celebrated around the world on this day .



- Parents shared an informative evening forum , "Toddlers and Big Feelings" . Presented by CAFHS, all present agreed the information was interesting, practical and useful.



During the year the Director has represented CCOWS in the following way.....

- The Director continued as an invited member of the *Implementation and Transition National Reference Group*. Members have worked with the Department of Education and Training regarding the recommended processes for satisfactory service transitions to the new Child Care Subsidy Legislation. The Director advocated for the recognition of the needs of rural and remote children, families and services. This group will continue to meet until the end of 2018.
- Continued responsibility as NAMS deputy chairperson.
- Completed the position as Deputy Chair of Inclusive Directions (an organization supporting children and families needing intervention and assistance), in June; after successful negotiation for the confirmation of Inclusive Directions as a subsidiary company of The Benevolent Society.
- Was called to appear as a witness at the Senate Inquiry at Parliament House, Canberra, regarding the CCS Legislation.
- Advocated for mobiles by responding to invitation to be a representative at:
  - SA National Reference Group for the Development and Implementation of the Childcare Assistance Package
  - SA Stakeholder consultation re the ECE Expert Panel "Achieving Excellence through Equality".
  - TAFE workshop for the "Industry Assessment Validation".
- Submissions to the Federal Government re:
  - The "Child Care Package Legislation"
  - Response to the draft of the Child Care Provider Handbook
  - Response to the draft for CCCF safety net
  - Response to the draft tool for CCCF for former BBF services
- Teleconferences with:
  - NAMS Executive (x6 sessions)
  - Price Waterhouse Coopers re the Transition process for mobiles
  - Federal BBF branch of DET, fortnightly sessions
- Participated in regular meetings with discussions, submissions and reports to:
  - CSN (Children's Services Network, and alliance of SE services)
  - SEDA (South East Childcare Director's Alliance)
- Promoted CCOWS through media:
  - Articles in the Robe Community Newsletter, CCOWS Chit Chat (parent's newsletter)
  - Reports to Council Elected members, CCOWS Advisory Group and Staff.
  - Coastal Leader (Regional newspaper)
  - Interviews with ABC regional station
- Worked with staff to review the CCOWS Quality Improvement Plan document.
- Discussions , information, communication shared with:
  - Tony Pasin MP
  - Rebekah Sharkie MP
  - Senator Amanda Rishworth
  - Cathy McGowan, Independent MP

Please note:

NAMS: National Association of Mobile Services for Rural and Remote Families and Children

EECSRSB: Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board

ECE : Early Childhood Education

CCCF: Community Child Care Fund

CCS: Child Care Subsidy

BBF: Budget Based Funded

DET: Department of Education and Training



## The CCOWS ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

*Whose governance is appreciated*

Anne Legoe	Chairperson
Roger Sweetman	CE, District Council of Robe
Robyn Paterson	Director Children's Services
Wendy Higgins	CCOWS staff representative
Melissa Gibson	Parent representative
Karla Dew	Council representative

## CCOWS STAFF

### Permanent Staff

Director Robyn Paterson DipT (SA Educ),  
Dip Arts and Education (Adelaide Uni)

Team Leaders Shannon Whitbread Dip. Children's Services (Centre-based)

### Permanent Part-Time

Certified Supervisors Stefan Kurray Dip. Children's Services  
Wendy Higgins Dip. Children's Services

Educators Bronwen Wilkin Dip. Community Services (Child Care)  
Amy Reilly Dip. Children's Services  
Sue Guyett RPL Recognition

Administration Assistant Karla Dew Cert 3 in Children's Services

### Casual Staff

Alana Stenner Dip. Children's Services  
Bianca Svic, to study Cert 3 in Children's Services  
Bronwyn Matthews Cert 3 in Children's Services  
Cristy Hann Cert 3 in Children's Services  
Ellie Rusden, studying Bachelor of Education

## CCOWS ACKNOWLEDGES

### *Appreciation for the assistance and cooperation received from the ROBE Community including...*

Robe District Council Administration Staff	Robe District Council Depot Staff
Robe RSL Kindergarten	Marina Cafe
Robe RSL Sub-Branch	Robe Seafood & Takeaway
Robe Library	Mahalia Coffee
Robe Pharmacy	Vic Street Pizza Project
Robe Hardware	

### *Appreciation to these Agencies, Departments and Organisations for their support...*

AGDET	Australian Government Department of Education and Training	SA and Canberra
SERCHS	South East Regional Community Health Services	Mt Gambier
SEDA	South East Director's Alliance	Southeast SA
CSN	Children's Services Network Group	Limestone Coast
EECSRSB	Education and Early Childhood Services Standards Board	Adelaide SA
NAMS	National Association of Mobile Services	across Australia
GOWRIE SA		Mt Gambier, Adelaide
TAFE SA		Mt Gambier
IT	Implementation and Transition National Reference Group	Canberra
PwC	Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Transition Mentors	Melbourne

*This report prepared by Robyn Paterson, Director Children's Services, July/August 2018*

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