

Robe CCOWS

Child Care On Wheels Service



Annual Report
2016-17



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MOBILES

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ROBE CHILD CARE ON WHEELS SERVICE

Known as ROBE CCOWS

The Service

This year CCOWS celebrates fifteen 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 eecrsb (SA National Regulatory Authority) for compliance with regulations.

Mobile Services

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.

The definition of MOBILE services from CONTACT INC. (1993) is:

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 educational programs being offered.

When this definition is applied to the CCOWS service:

- ❖ Isolation refers to those who lack contact with other people, services or resources.
- ❖ In our service we offer the provision of child care as well as educational programs.

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 for 115 places.

DISTANCE is an outstanding difference between offering long day care with a Mobile service, 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 locationmeans 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 each day, 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.

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. Mobiles remain 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.



CCOWS outreach vehicle



Storage trolley

AFFORDABLE CARE

As the Service is funded by the Commonwealth Government, CCOWS is able to offer fees with an inbuilt subsidy.

This means that the fee structure is reasonable in relation to the parent's income.

Funding is accessed from the Commonwealth Government Child Care allocation, and this allows us to maintain the present form of operation

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 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 members 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 by the National Education Reform Agenda.

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



ACCOUNTABILITY

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

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 2016 – June 2017

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Evidence of change is always apparent in our lives. In children's services across Australia, we are experiencing a change which has implications for all families and services involved with care and education for young children. This is a time for Transition towards a new "Child Care Package" which will take effect from July 2, 2018.

The language in the Legislation mainly covers a supportive system for working parents, with little detail included about the educational rights of children.

Children's brains are wired for learning from before birth, the experiences they have in their early years are the foundation for their strengths and skills for the rest of their lives.

Children in their early years are building their own identity, and expanding their understanding of the world. Weekly rhythms, relationships, experiences and continuity or patterns assist children to be confident and calm.

They will come to recognise their individual self and be able to overcome small and big stresses and unpredicted change. If there is too much disruption in their days and not enough consideration of needs from a child's point of view, then there may be anxious or distracted children whose development will be fragmented, limited or impaired.

At CCOWS we believe in equality of opportunity, partnerships, respect and duty of care. We need to ask ourselves "How is our service providing an environment which shows respect to children? How do our days provide the children with opportunities to explore and develop relationships? How does our community embrace the image of children as competent, capable with many resources *from birth*?" So given the new Legislation package, we need to be identifying the strengths and capacities of both our service and our community. There is a need to explore the resources available to assist us through this transition and change. And decisions will need to be made about effective courses of action, in the light of the CCOWS philosophy and the desired outcomes for the children in our care.

The popular mantra that we use now is "We do the best we can, with what we have, where we are." Perhaps we need to add another that says "Keep calm and carry on".

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

Personally, I benefit from the support and consideration offered by:

- Chair Anne Legoe and the members of the CCOWS Advisory Group
- Fellow NAMS executives
- Colleagues from Children's Service Peak Bodies
- Members of the Ministerial Advisory Council

I value the flexibility, concern and commitment of CCOWS staff as we work together to improve the wellbeing of children in our care.

Robyn Paterson
Director Children's Services Robe



The CCOWS Year in Review

Staff is the most important resource of a service

- Staff educators have participated in professional development opportunities provided in training and appraisals for improvement.
- Staff have collaborated with other professionals including health nurses, fire officers, education officers and more.
- A collaborative partnership with kindergarten directors at each site assists a smooth transition for children from CCOWS to kindergarten and school.
- We have fare-welled 3 staff who have departed to spend more time with their families.
- We have welcomed Kate Foreman, a qualified early childhood teacher whose knowledge will be appreciated.
- Besides a background in understanding children's development, the staff have many skills and enthusiastically share their experiences in music, reading, cooking, creative crafts and gardening.



Alana, Wendy, Mardi



Bianca, Shannon, Sue



Bron M, Stefan, Cristy



Kate, Karla



Bianca, Amy, Shannon, Bron W

CHILDREN *are our future*

- Again this year, there has been a substantial group of young children. They provide a challenge for educators who need to cater for their short attention spans. Changing interests and necessary social skills are a consideration when programming activities for each day.
- Our belief that *all* children deserve equal opportunity to play, learn and thrive influences our inclusion and provision for children with special needs Eg. Children with cystic fibrosis, asthma, autism and speech delay. For the educators this means awareness, respect, consideration and supervision.
- CCOWS provides a variety of activities and resources which are available for choice by either gender. It is satisfying to see children choosing to investigate all possibilities.

At the Robe Kindy site

- It has been necessary to trim the mulberry tree after a branch came down during a storm. This "treasure" continues to flourish and there are still plenty of mulberries for muffin baking.
- The outdoor area continues to have a welcoming homely feel with children enthusiastically using the space.
- We are fortunate to be able to share some of the kindergarten play structures which are erected from time to time.

At the Robe RSL Hall site

- The outdoor playspace has been established and will be monitored and improved overtime.
- The RSL continues to be a supportive partner in the developing of this space.

At the Beachport site

- Cooperation and collaboration with school staff enables CCOWS to feel welcome, included and valued at this site.
- Attendance is constantly high, parent – educator relationships are mutually informative and beneficial.

At the Kangaroo Inn site

- CCOWS educators continue to value the welcome and inclusion of the service at this site.
- The improved outdoor facilities have greatly enhanced the program for children.

DAILY OPERATION

the "how"

- Educators review the organisation of daily routines as part of an ongoing challenge to achieve efficient operation. Our service has many influencing aspects to consider:
 - Practically / the cross-section of different ages in the same space effects arrangements for mealtimes, sleeping and room environment setup.
 - Administratively / the number of educators needs to be managed to reflect adherence with the legislated ratios of educators per number of specifically –aged children. Having different children enrolled each day, with varied ages in the same room, means this takes some thoughtful preparation when preparing rosters for staff.
- Each site needs to be safe and secure with risks and emergencies managed by the educators. All sites differ from each other:
 - Physically / different locations, fencing, proximity to roads, hazards (eg.snakes), playspace drainage.
 - Community / ease of access to emergency services, parent's occupations effecting their contact and availability.

Educators need to be vigilant and aware through the day at each site, to ensure safety and security for the children and themselves.

- Children's wellbeing is affected by the balance of the day.
 - Educators try to ensure that quiet times are balanced with vigorous noisy activities/ being inside and playing outside are both important / individual pursuits as well as group sharing/ opportunities for acquired accomplishments and new challenges .
 - Weather and outdoor facilities can influence the flow of the day.



Peace

VEHICLES

are what makes us Mobile

- The Ford Everest continues to assist service delivery to our outreach sites. The area behind the cargo barrier is efficiently stacked with resources and activities each week.

SHED

our shelter from the storm

- The large shed is reorganized when necessary. The consumables including gloves, wipes, tissues, disinfectant and toilet rolls are reordered as necessary and disbursed to sites as required.
- The fire extinguishers in the shed and car are regularly checked.

EQUIPMENT

is a tool for development

- Our equipment includes the necessities for everyday care eg highchairs, cots, sleep mats, food utensils. Continued monitoring indicates when equipment needs to be repaired or replaced.
- Activities are planned, in relation to children's needs and interests, (which are the basis for the education program being delivered). More "loose parts" and open-ended activities are being sought to facilitate children's agency (ability to select or choose).

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

systems for survival



Fire Drill at Beachport site

- Educators are risk aware. They realize there is no substitute for constant, appropriate visual supervision
- First aid training has ensured that all educator qualifications are current.
- Certified supervisors at each site take charge when there is a need to evacuate the premises in an emergency. Practices for premises evacuation are held at all sites.
- Four educators have trained as fire wardens, to be confident in taking charge in event of fire.

TRAINING *for empowerment, improvement and understanding*

- The CCOWS educators enthusiastically participated in sessions based on “loose parts”, which were presented on the annual planning day. Sally Smith (Robe Kindergarten Director) encouraged staff to explore the establishment of “inviting” room environments and the collection and utilisation of loose parts.
- 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
“Loose parts : an invitation to play” with Sally Smith (Robe Kindergarten Director)
 - First Aid training Robe
 - Mandatory Reporting: Child Protection Notification Robe
 - Fire Warden Training Robe
 - South-East Forum,” Play: a right for each child” Mt Gambier
Robyn Monroe Miller / International Play Association Vice President
 - “Towards tomorrow” forum Mt Gambier
 - Ministers Rules (new legislation) consultations Adelaide & Canberra



Staff interaction at planning day



Group discussion at planning day

- Visitors are welcome, and help us to be aware of the quality of our service delivery.
 - ❖ Anne Legoe (CCOWS Advisory Group Chairperson)
 - ❖ Many visitors came to our 15th Birthday celebrations
 - ❖ Members of the Robe Lions Club with Dave Thomas (president) to celebrate the opening of the RSL outdoor play space
 - ❖ Dianne Winton: ecssrb office for compliance inspection
 - ❖ Sharon Smith and Rochelle Lehmann: DET program officers
 - ❖ Coastal Leader Journalists

RSL outdoor play space was established with cooperation and collaboration between parents, RSL executives and the Lion club.

The area was made available for use by the RSL, and a grant from the Lion's enabled the completion and establishment of the play area. Stage 1 has been completed with bollards, sandpit, climbing mound and meadow area. There are fruit trees and vegetable panting. Graham Robinson constructed two large drums from plastic containers, the first of several special features planned for this area.



New RSL Play Space



Making pavers for our Play- Space

The CCOWS 15th year celebration.

A milestone for us. Educators, children, parents, stakeholders and community guests celebrated and sang happy birthday with the children. Guests visited the newly established outdoor area and viewed historical photos and present program documentation.

Guests joined in decorating bollards for the garden. These are visual reminders of the collaboration between the CCOWS service and the supportive individuals and community organisations.



15th Birthday Celebrations



Practicing singing 'happy birthday'

DIRECTOR'S JOURNAL

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

- The Director continued as an invited member of the Ministerial Advisory Council. Members have worked for the last three years with the Federal Minister for Education and Training (Simon Birmingham) and officers from the Department of Education and Training. The Director advocated for the recognition of the needs of rural and remote children. As the new Child Care legislation has been passed, this Council has now completed its term.
- Continued responsibility as NAMS deputy chairperson.
- Accepted the position as Deputy Chair of Inclusive Directions (an organization supporting children and families needing intervention and assistance).
- Called as a witness at the Senate Inquiry at Parliament House, Canberra, regarding the JFCCP bill before legislation.
- Advocated for mobiles by responding to invitation to be a representative at:
 - National Stakeholders Reference Group for the Department of Education and Training Implementation of Jobs for Families Child Care Package.
 - The eecrsb Reference Advisory Group, regarding the physical environments for children's service operations, which has now served its purpose.
 - SA National Reference Group for the Development and Implementation of the Childcare Assistance Package
- Submissions to the Federal Government re:
 - The "Jobs for Families and Child Care Package"(JFCCP), (x2).
 - Response to the draft of the Government Implementation Evaluation Proposal for the new JFCCP.
 - Response to the draft for the CCCF (Child Care Community Fund) as part of the "safety net" for the JFCCP.
- Teleconferences with:
 - NAMS Executive (x6 sessions)
 - Federal DET Children's Initiative Branch re assistance for BBF services(x 2)
 - Price Waterhouse Coopers re the Transition process for mobiles
- Participated in regular meetings with discussions, submissions and reports to:
 - CSN (Children's Services Network, and alliance of SE services)
 - SERCHS (South East Regional Community Health Service)
 - 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
 - Mitch Williams MP
 - Senator Sarah Hanson-Young
 - Skye Kakoshke- Moore (Nick Xenaphon team)
 - Hon Kate Ellis, Shadow Minister for Child Care
 - 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

NQF : National Quality Framework

eca : early childhood Australia

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
Peta Baverstock	Parent representative
Karla Dew	Council representative

CCOWS STAFF

Permanent Staff

<u>Director</u>	Robyn Paterson	DipT (SA Educ), Dip Arts and Education (Adelaide Uni)
<u>Team Leaders</u>	Shannon Whitbread	Dip. Children's Services (Centre-based)
<u>Certified Supervisors</u>	Stefan Kurray Wendy Higgins	Dip. Children's Services Dip. Children's Services
<u>Permanent Part-Time</u>	Bronwen Wilkin Amy Reilly Sue Guyett	Dip. Community Services (Child Care) Dip. Children's Services RPL Recognition
<u>Administration Assistant</u>	Karla Dew	Cert 3 in Children's Services
<u>Casual Staff</u>	Alana Stenner Mardi Brooks Cristy Hann Bronwyn Matthews Kate Foreman Bianca Svic, to study	Dip. Children's Services Cert 3 in Children's Services Cert 3 in Children's Services Cert 3 in Children's Services Bachelor of Education (major in early childhood) Cert 3 in Children's Services

CCOWS ACKNOWLEDGES

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

Robe RSL Kindergarten	Robe District Council Depot Staff
Robe District Council Administration Staff	Marina Cafe
Robe RSL Sub-Branch	Robe Hardware
Robe Library	Robe Police
Robe Pharmacy	Mahalia Coffee
Vic Street Pizza Project	Robe Seafood and takeaway
Loaves and Fishes	Kristal Tonkin Photography

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
INCLUSIVE DIRECTIONS		Mt Gambier, Adelaide
TAFE SA		Mt Gambier
MAC Ministerial Advisory Council		Canberra

This report prepared by Robyn Paterson, Director Children's Services, July/August 2017

CCOWS correspondence to: PO Box 1, Robe, SA 5276
Telephone: (08) 8768 2003 Facsimile: (08) 8768 2432