St Peters Child Care Centre & Pre-School Committee
Agenda & Reports

22 February 2021

Our Vision

A City which values its heritage, cultural diversity, sense of place and natural environment.

A progressive City which is prosperous, sustainable and socially cohesive, with a strong community spirit.

City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters
175 The Parade, Norwood SA 5067

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City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters

17 February 2021

To all Members of the St Peters Child Care Centre & Pre-School Committee

Committee Members

- Cr Evonne Moore (Presiding Member)
- Cr Kester Moorhouse
- Ms Georgia Brodribb
- Ms Simone Munn
- Ms Christina Belperio

Staff

- Sharon Perkins (General Manager, Corporate Services)
- Alice Parsons (Director, St Peters Child Care Centre & Pre-School)

NOTICE OF MEETING

I wish to advise that pursuant to Sections 87 and 88 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, the next Ordinary Meeting of the St Peters Child Care Centre & Pre-School Committee, will be held in the Staff Room, St Peters Child Care Centre, 42-44 Henry Street, Stepney on:

Monday 22 February 2021, commencing at 5.30pm

Please advise Sharon Perkins on 83664585 or email sperkins@npsp.sa.gov.au, if you are unable to attend this meeting or will be late.

Yours faithfully

Mario Barone
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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VENUE Staff Room, St Peters Child Care Centre & Pre-school

HOUR

PRESENT

Committee Members

Staff

APOLOGIES

ABSENT

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

The St Peters Child Care Centre & Pre-School Committee is established to fulfil the following functions:

- *to provide feedback on the St Peters Child Care & Pre-School Centre's Strategic Plan and Business Plan;*
- *to undertake general oversight of issues related to child welfare, programming and safety of the Centre; and*
- *to execute such powers as the Council may lawfully delegate to it.*

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ST PETERS CHILD CARE CENTRE & PRE-SCHOOL COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2020

2. PRESIDING MEMBER'S COMMUNICATION

3. QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

4. QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

Nil

5. WRITTEN NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

6. STAFF REPORTS

6.1 DIRECTORS QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT – DECEMBER 2020

REPORT AUTHOR: Director, St Peters Child Care Centre & Preschool
GENERAL MANAGER: General Manager, Corporate Services
CONTACT NUMBER: 8366 4585
FILE REFERENCE: qA61019/A109675
ATTACHMENTS: A

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this Quarterly Report is to provide information in respect to the following:

- Provide feedback on the Centre's Strategic Plan and Business Plan prepared by Centre Management for the Child Care Centre.
- Undertake, under the direction of Council and on behalf of Council, the general oversight of issues related to child welfare, programming and safety of the Centre.
- To execute such powers as the Council may lawfully delegate to it.
- To do anything necessary, expedient or incidental to performing or discharging the functions of the Committee as listed in the terms of Reference or to achieving its objectives.

This report provides the Committee with a status report on the activities of the St Peters Child Care Centre & Preschool to 31 December 2020.

BACKGROUND

The Centre has been in operation since 1977. The Centre is licenced to accommodate 105 children per day, however to ensure the high quality of care the Centre is known for is maintained, the number of available places has been capped at an average of 94 places per day, increasing to 105 places on Wednesdays and Thursdays during Term Three (3) and Four (4) to meet demand. The Centre provides care for babies from six (6) weeks old through to children aged up to and including five (5) years of age.

The key activities completed during the Quarter ended December 2020, together with actions completed in previous Quarters, as required by the Centre's Strategic and Business Plans, are included in the Discussion Section of this report.

RELEVANT STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & POLICIES

This report informs the Council on the St Peters Child Care Centre & Preschool activities and supports Council attaining:

Outcome 1: Social Equity: A connected, accessible and pedestrian-friendly community

Objective 1: Convenient and accessible services, information and facilities.
Strategy 1.2: Maximise access to services, facilities, information and activities.
Strategy 1.3: Design and provide safe, high quality facilities and spaces for people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities.

Objective 4: A strong, healthy, resilient and inclusive community.
Strategy 4.2: Encourage and provide opportunities for lifelong learning.
Strategy 4.3: Provide spaces and facilities for people to meet, learn and connect with each other.

The operations of Childcare Centres and Preschools are governed by the National Quality Framework. The Centre's policies and procedures are reviewed and updated over a twelve (12) month to two (2) year period, in line with National Quality Standards and the Centre's Continuous Review Policy.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

EXTERNAL ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Nil

SOCIAL ISSUES

The Centre actively promotes a policy of inclusion for all children and their families.

The information provided in the report has no direct social issues which need to be considered.

CULTURAL ISSUES

Not Applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Not Applicable.

RESOURCE ISSUES

Not Applicable.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Not Applicable.

COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS

In response to the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions, operations at the Centre are progressively being modified. To minimise the risk of COVID-19 and to ensure that staff and families are continuing to adhere to the public health advice, we are currently:

- requesting all families, both adults and children, undertake hand hygiene by either washing their hand or using hand sanitiser upon entry and exit of the Centre;
- maintaining physical distancing requirements of 1.5 metres;
- limiting the number parents and carers collecting children from their respective rooms for end of day pick up at any one time to two (2) parents;
- continuing the outside sleeping (weather permitting); and
- while not required as the Centre was not required to close, the Centre has prepared a COVID Safe Plan and have communicated this to the families and carers.

Morning drop offs at the Centre ceased on 20 December 2020, with families delivering children to their respective rooms. This is to re-build stronger family relationships, which were impacted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONSULTATION

- **Committee Members**
  Not Applicable

- **Community**
  Not Applicable

- **Staff**
  Not Applicable

- **Other Agencies**
  Not Applicable

DISCUSSION

Child Numbers

The Centre is licensed for a maximum of 105 children daily; however to ensure a high quality of care, the daily attendance numbers are capped at an average of 94 long day care places per day. Based on current staffing levels, the Centre has capacity for up to 28 under two (2) year old, up to 30 two (2) to three (3) year old and up to 36 over three (3) year old. The mix of the numbers per age group may change on as needs basis. The average number of children for which services were provided for the December 2020 quarter is detailed in Table 1 below.

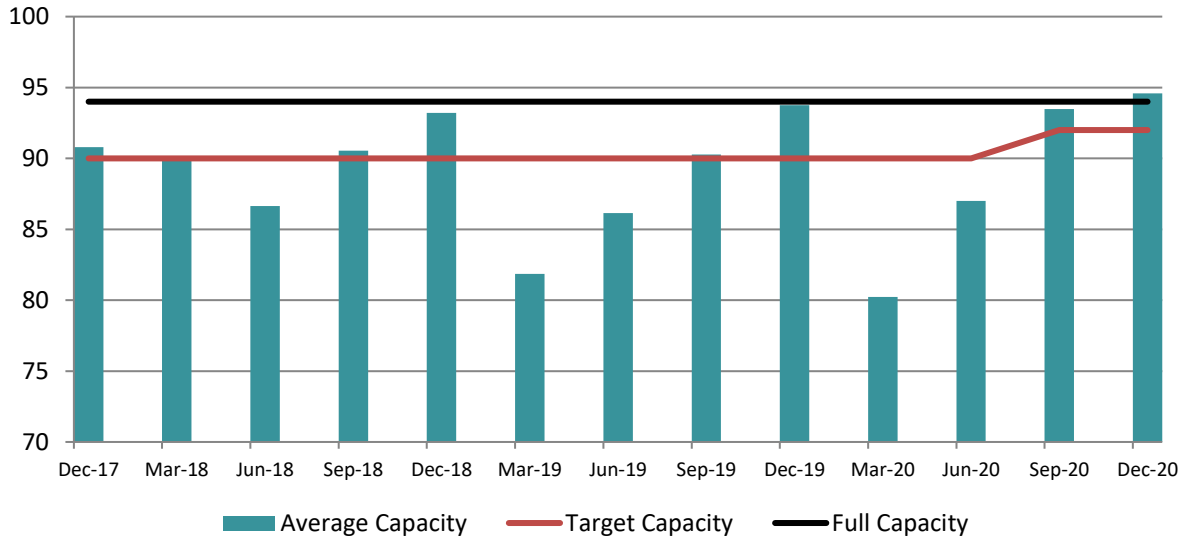
TABLE 1 – CHILD NUMBERS

Age of Child	Staffing Ratio	Number Allowed at the Centre (maximum)	Number of Children - Average for the Quarter	
			This Year	Last Year
Under Twos (2) *(6 weeks - 24 months)*				
Emerald Room	1:4	12	12.39	11.91
Ruby Room	1:4	16	15.98	16.57
Over Twos (2) *(2 years to 3 years)*				
Aquamarine Room	1:5	15	14.63	13.64
Diamond Room	1:5	15	15.36	16.70
Over Threes (3)				
Amethyst Room *(3 years to 4 years)*	1:10	18	16.93	16.95
Preschool *(4 years to 5 years)*	1:10	18	20.39	18.00
Total		94	95.68	93.20
Budget		**-**	**92.00**	**90.00**
Number of sessions where 92 children attended for the quarter			**41 days out of a total of 61 days**	**45 days out of a total of 60 days**
Average attendance – Year to Date				**94.58**

As detailed in Table 1 above, the December 2020 Quarter is above the budgeted capacity. This follows the traditional trend of attendances building during the September and December Quarters. While the average daily attendances for the December 2020 Quarter were above the desired full capacity of 94, to maintain the Educator to Child ratios, casual shifts were reallocated to meet the demand for care.

As detailed in Figure 1 below, the March and June Quarters traditionally have low attendance numbers, while the attendance numbers for the September and December Quarters have has exceeded budgeted attendances. For the 2020-2021 Financial year, the target capacity has been set at an average of 92 daily attendances places.

FIGURE 1: CHILD NUMBERS



Educator to Child Ratios

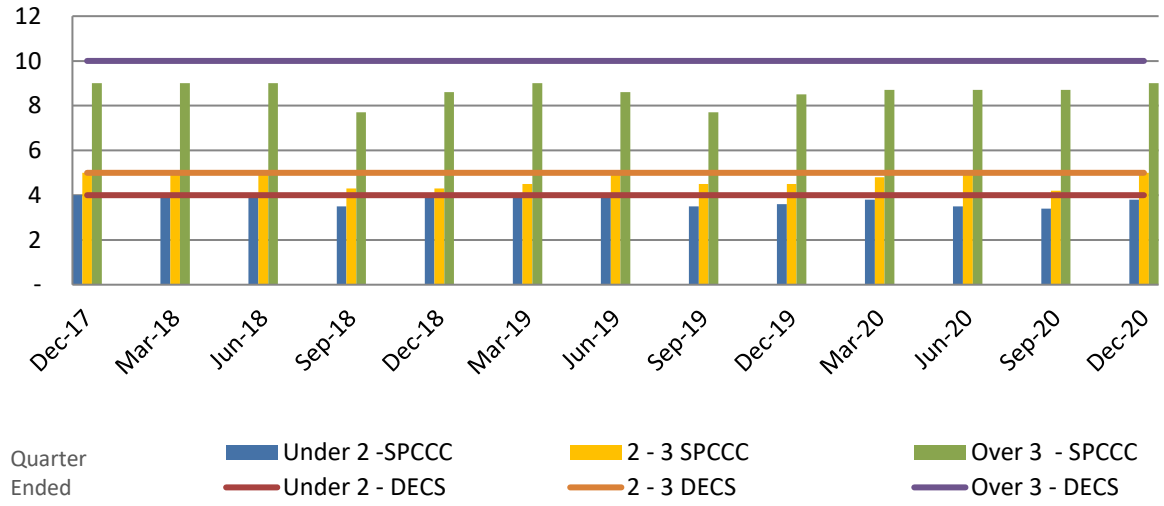
The Centre is required by the National Quality Standards to maintain a minimum Educator to Child Ratio at all times. The minimum Educator to Child ratios are detailed in Table 2.

TABLE 2 – MINIMUM EDUCATOR TO CHILD RATIOS

Age Grouping	Educator to Child Ratio
0-24 months	1:4
25 months – 36 months	1:5
37months to 5 years	1:10

As illustrated in Figure 2 below, The Centre has exceeded the minimum child to staff ratios for the December 2020 Quarter in the 3 -5 year age range only.

FIGURE 2: STAFF TO CHILD RATIO



Staffing

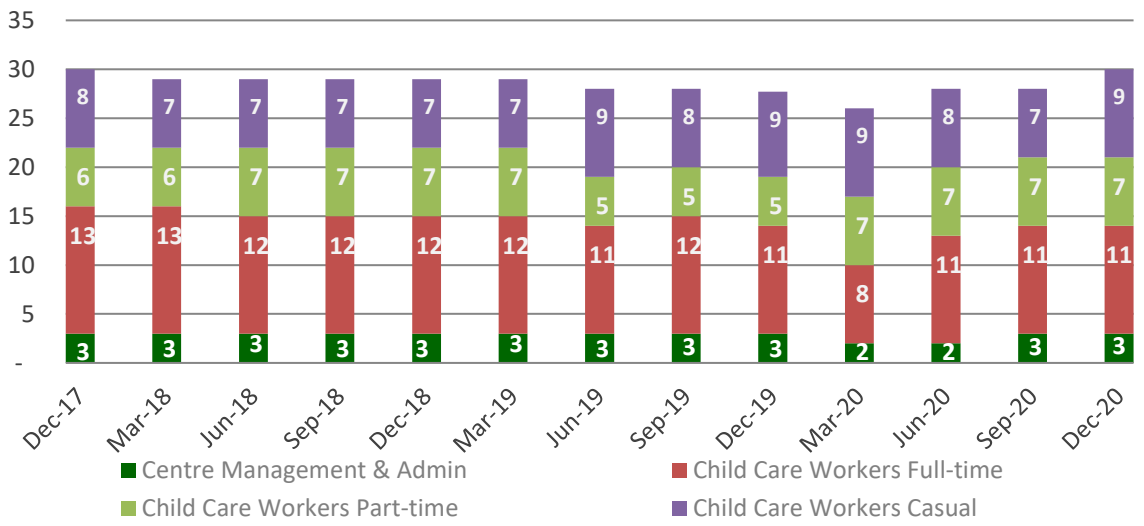
To ensure that the Centre meets the required staff to child ratios, the Full-time Equivalent Educator positions required are:

- Under 2's 5.00 FTE
- 2 -3 years 5.00 FTE
- Over 3's 4.00 FTE

To ensure the ongoing continuity of care, during periods of staff absences, permanent staff are supported by a pool of Casual Educators who back fill planned and unplanned absences, vacancies and short shift cover for lunch breaks and Centre open and closes. Not only does this ensure that children are cared for by familiar Educators when their primary care givers are absent from the Centre, it ensures that operational costs are maintained, as there is less reliance on engaging temporary contract staff through temporary contract labour hire agencies to cover absences.

As shown in Figure 3 below, there is one vacant Full-time position. This vacancy has arisen due to maternity leave. A recruitment process is currently being undertaken to increase the number of Educators within the casual pool.

FIGURE 3: STAFF NUMBERS BY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY



Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Funding can be claimed for every four (4) year old child who remains at the Centre in the twelve (12) months prior to full-time schooling and has access to fifteen (15) hours of preschool services, providing the child is not accessing a preschool service from another external service, such as a Department of Education Preschool or Kindergarten.

For the year-to-date period to December 2020, the Centre has received $11,075 under the Universal Access Scheme for the children utilising the Centre for the pre-school service. Pleasingly, the number of families that have been utilising the service for pre-school services has increased from seven (7) to eight (8). The funding has been used to offset the salary costs of the Early Childhood Teachers.

National Quality Standard

Staff practices, policies and procedures are continually reviewed in line with the new National Quality Standards and a Quality Improvement Plan has been completed. The Centre has undergone a round of Rating and Assessment. The Centre received an overall rating of 'Meeting' under the revised framework.

The seven (7) areas identified under the National Quality Standard are:

- Educational program and practice
- Children's health and safety
- Physical environment
- Staffing arrangements (including the number of staff looking after children)
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Leadership and service management

The Centre has been rated as 'Meeting' the standards set under the revised The National Quality Framework which came into effect on 1 February 2018, having met all of the forty (40) of the elements.

While under the National Quality Standards, the Centre is to be regularly assessed, the details of the timing of the next review are unknown.

Strategic Plan

The Centre's Strategic and Business Plans have been approved by the Committee and the Council. The Centre's Business Plan established Key Result Areas/Targets. The achievement of the outcomes up to December 2020, are contained in **Attachment A**.

OPTIONS

Not Applicable.

CONCLUSION

The St Peters Child Care Centre & Pre-school is recognised as a leader in the provision of high quality child care. It is expected that this will continue. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Centre, along with other Childcare Centres experienced a significant decline in attendance during the height of the pandemic. As the State has contained the health impacts of COVID-19 attendance numbers have been increasing. The Centre on average for the December 2020 Quarter had 95 children accessing the service on a daily basis, with an expectation that this will be maintained throughout the year.

COMMENTS

Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received and noted.

Attachment A

Directors Quarterly Report – December 2020

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St Peters Child Care Centre & Preschool

Strategic Plan Update

TARGET 1		
Key Results:	**Achievement of meeting National Quality Standard**	
Performance Indicator:	Rating for all 7 Quality areas	
Targets:	Achievement of Meeting National Quality Standards in all seven areas.	
The KRA actions and outcomes were:		
Actions		**Outcome**
• Develop & review Centres QIP (Quality Improvement Plan)		• The Quality Improvement Plan is a 'living' document which is constantly reviewed and is currently displayed next to quality area display boards to encourage Parents and Carers to participate in the process by submitting ideas.
• QIP to support a Meeting rating in the Rating and Assessment Report		• A "Meeting" rating has been achieved in all 7 Quality Areas of the revised National Quality Framework on the 10 October 2018
• Implement actions developed within the Centres Quality Improvement Plan		• Continuously being reviewed to document outcomes achieved and progress made. • Client Survey distributed bi-annually to obtain comments from Parents and Carers in relation to the Quality Areas.
TARGET 2		
Key Results:	**High standard of programming**	
Performance Indicator:	Annual customer survey rating	
Targets:	High standard reported in bi-annual customer survey	The survey was distributed in June 2020
The KRA actions and outcomes were:		
Actions		**Outcome**
• Programs to be user friendly and easy to read.		• The program has been extended to include clear intentional teaching and to demonstrate how programing and learning is linked within the Centre. • The Educational Leader has two (2) hours per week allocated to assist rooms with any programming questions and or current research. • "Journey", a programing app has been implemented throughout the Centre.
• Provide opportunities for families to comment on programs, be involved in children's learning & children's developmental progress.		• End of Term reports and children's folders were sent home to Parents and Carers in November 2020. The feedback received from Parents and Carers will guide individual goals for the remainder of the year. • Each program displayed includes a parent comments section.
• Induction & training to ensure current practices & programs are current with new theories & legislation.		• The Centre participated in three (3) meetings where best practice and Centre operations was discussed. • All Team Leaders met twice (2) to discuss the goals for 2021. • One (1) Educator is studying towards their Diploma in Children Service's.

City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters

St Peters Child Care Centre & Pre-School
Strategic Plan Update

TARGET 3	
Key Results:	**High standard of child care facilities**
Performance Indicator:	Number of urgent maintenance requests
Targets:	Nil urgent maintenance requests
The proposed KRA actions and outcomes were:	
Actions	**Outcome**
• Budget to reflect funds required to maintain building and equipment.	• Budget for 2020-2021 was developed to ensure that the funds required continue to be available. • No urgent maintenance requests are outstanding.
• Capital projects identified to ensure current facilities are maintained and upgrades of facilities implemented.	• The Centre is currently in the design phase to upgrade outside area of the under two (2) year old play space.

TARGET 4	
Key Results:	**Optimum customer service and satisfaction**
Performance Indicator:	Biennial Customer Survey Results
Targets:	High rating reported in biennial customer survey
The proposed KRA actions and outcomes were:	
Actions	**Outcome**
• Biennial customer satisfaction survey seeking parent feedback on how the Centre is meeting families' needs and expectations.	• Survey undertaken in June 2020. The results of the Survey are currently being consolidated.
• Develop strategies & implement actions addressing feedback from customer satisfaction survey	• Issues raised from the Survey will be addressed in conjunction with the continual review of the Quality Improvement Plan (Plan), to ensure that the Plan reflects changes and improvements to services and practices which aim to achieve positive outcomes for families.
• Email Parents about any changes to the service, for Parent input and invitations to join in advents	The following information has been emailed to Parents and Carers: • the Centre Newsletter which was distributed in December 2020; • updates in relation to staff movements; • notice of upcoming special events; • information regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic; • Casual bookings & changes to permeant bookings; • Enrolment information for 2021.
• Provide opportunities for parent involvement through formal & informal events, fundraising, policy reviews & programming.	• On-going, 'The Smith Family' recycling fundraiser. • 12 October 2020 to 16 October 2020, Book week • 17 October 2020, Family Photo day – Shoot SA • 26 October 2020 to 30 October 2020, United Nations Day Celebrations • 9 December 2020, Graduation- Kindy class of 2020

City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters

St Peters Child Care Centre & Pre-School
Strategic Plan Update

TARGET 4 (continued)	
• Comparison of existing Centre fees & services offered with other nearby providers is reviewed & implement opportunities as appropriate.	• Fee and service comparison completed in February 2020.

TARGET 5	
Key Results:	**Positive relationships with other educational organisations.**
Performance Indicator:	Continuation of visits by educational organisations.
Targets:	Maintain positive relationship.

The proposed KRA actions and outcomes were:

Actions	**Outcome**
• Continue to implement annual benchmarking with other community based Child Care Services.	• Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, benchmarking visits have been suspended.
• Continue to implement special events & source local community resources within the learning curriculum.	• 12 October 2020 to 16 October 2020, Book week • 17 October 2020, Family Photo day – Shoot SA • 26 October 2020 to 30 October 2020, United Nations Day Celebrations • 8 November to12 November 2020, NAIDOC week learning • 11 November 2020, Remembrance Day • 9 December 2020, Graduation- Kindy class of 2020 • 9 December 2020, Christmas celebrations day.
• Continue to access professional support & existing partnerships with Lady Gowrie Training & Resources, Inclusive Directions, DECD.	• Lady Gowrie is currently being accessed to assist in providing support for three children with learning and development issues.

OTHER BUSINESS PLAN ACTIONS

Develop a succession plan for all staff

Objective: Continue to provide a stable staff environment

Actions	**Outcome**
• Develop staff training programs to work towards professional development goals and career advancement to support the succession plan.	• All Staff training, which is currently being undertaken, reflects the Council's EMPOWER Personal Development System to identify the skills required to support transition to the National Quality Standards. • A professional learning plan has been developed and training arranged to support the achievement of EMPOWER goals and the Centres Quality Improvement Plan.
• Continue to recruit highly qualified and experienced staff. Note.	• The Centre currently has five (5) Early Childhood Teachers, nine (9) Diploma Qualified Educators & five (5) Qualified Assistant Educators • The Centre currently has one (1) Educator who is working towards a Bachelor in Early Childhood Education level qualifications or above.
• A succession plan to be developed and will be reviewed annually.	• Developed and reflects the new staffing plan.

6.2 2020 CUSTOMER SURVEY

REPORT AUTHOR	Director, St Peters Child Care Centre & Preschool
GENERAL MANAGER:	General Manager, Corporate Services
CONTACT NUMBER:	8362 1832
FILE REFERENCE:	
ATTACHMENTS:	Nil

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with the results of the Customer Survey which was undertaken in June 2020.

BACKGROUND

To ensure that the needs of the children are being met and to guide the Centre's Quality Improvement Plan, Educators require information on children's routines, interests, learning goals and family culture. Families and carers also need to have open communication with the Educators so that they can seek information about how their child is developing as well as having the opportunity to participate within the Centre and their child's development.

Regular customer surveys are undertaken to gain feedback from families regarding the education and care which is provided to their children. The survey was emailed to all families (approximately 158 families) utilising the services of the St Peters Child Care Centre & Preschool. A total of 65 families (41% response rate) responded to the survey.

The results of the survey will be used to support the Centre's Quality Improvement Plan and identify any areas for improvement under the National Quality Framework. The Centre's Quality Improvement Plan is an ongoing plan which supports continuous improvement throughout the Centre.

RELEVANT STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & POLICIES

Not Applicable.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

EXTERNAL ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Not Applicable.

CULTURAL ISSUES

Not Applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Not Applicable.

RESOURCE ISSUES

Not Applicable.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Not Applicable.

CONSULTATION

- **Committee Members**
  Not Applicable.

- **Community**
  The Survey was conducted via an online Survey and paper based. All families (158) currently utilising the Centre were provided with the opportunity to respond. Of the 158 families, sixty-five (65) responses were received. The response rate is consistent with previous surveys which have been undertaken.

- **Staff**
  The survey questions were determined in conjunction with the Centre's Educators.

- **Other Agencies**
  Not Applicable.

DISCUSSION

The questions contained in the survey assist in providing direction for the Centre and the Centre's Educators, on how to guide and achieve quality results in the seven (7) areas that complete the National Quality Standards (NQS).

Communication

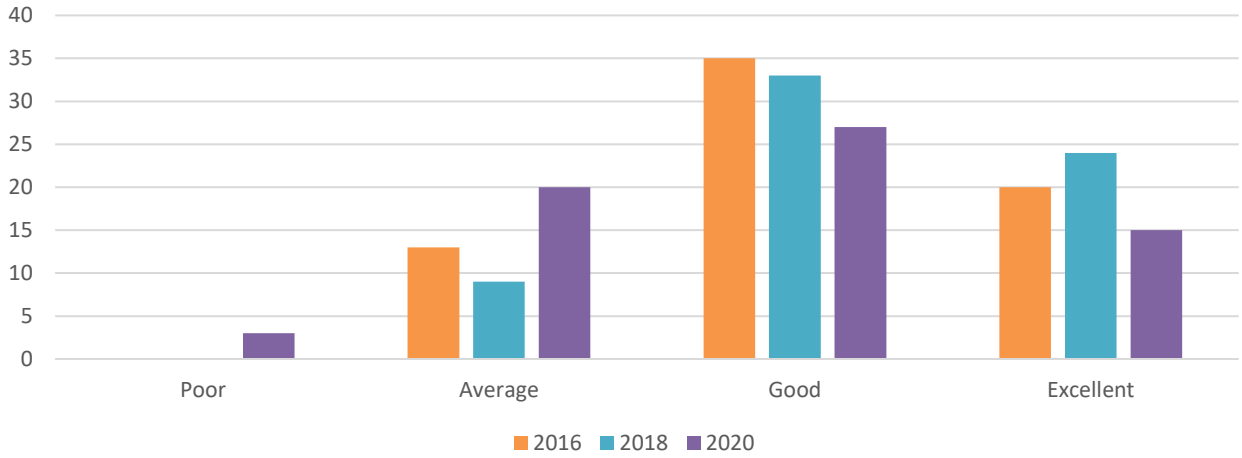
Communication between the Educators and the families is a consistent factor throughout a number of the Quality areas, standards and elements within the National Quality Framework.

Due to the importance of communication, a number of the survey questions focused on the sharing of information. Communication and the sharing of information is essential to building a comprehensive Quality Improvement Plan for the Centre which supports the seven (7) Quality Areas of the NQS.
Communication is essential to building effective relationships, education and keeping children safe, areas which are covered in Quality Areas: 1,2,3,5 and 6 of the Standards. These Quality areas guide the Centre to achieve a holistic, energetic Centre and to work towards a rating of "Meeting".

SHARING OF INFORMATION

As detailed in Figure 1 below, over 75% of the families who responded to the survey believe that they are provided with opportunities for the sharing of information between the families and the Centre's Educators. However, given the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions that were in place during 2020, the reduction in the effectiveness of information sharing with families and carers is not surprising. In order to limit the number of people coming into the Centre, the main restriction put in place was the Centre door drop-off and pick-up, which inhibited the normal information sharing between the Educators and families and carers, which was reflected in the comments provided as part of the survey.

FIGURE 1: SHARING OF INFORMATION



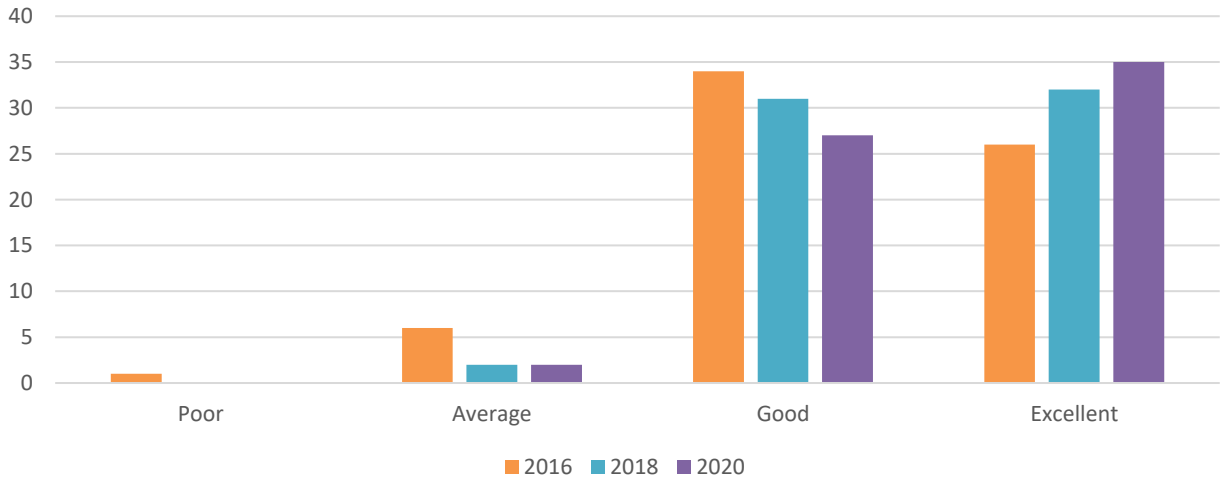
Families and carers were also provided the opportunity to provide specific comments about the sharing of information and the specific comments included:

- "It has been harder with door drop offs, as we are often unable to speak to the staff in the room"
- "COVID 19 restrictions have made this difficult."

QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to sharing information, it is important that Educators are able to provide adequate age appropriate activities for children to promote early education using the Early Years Learning Framework. As detailed in Figure 2 below, families and carers are satisfied with the level of activity provided for their children.

FIGURE 2: EDUCATING THROUGH PLAY



Families and carers were also provided with the opportunity to provide specific comments about the sharing of information and the specific comments included;

- "I believe so. Again, really difficult to know specifics over the past few months "

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH EDUCATORS

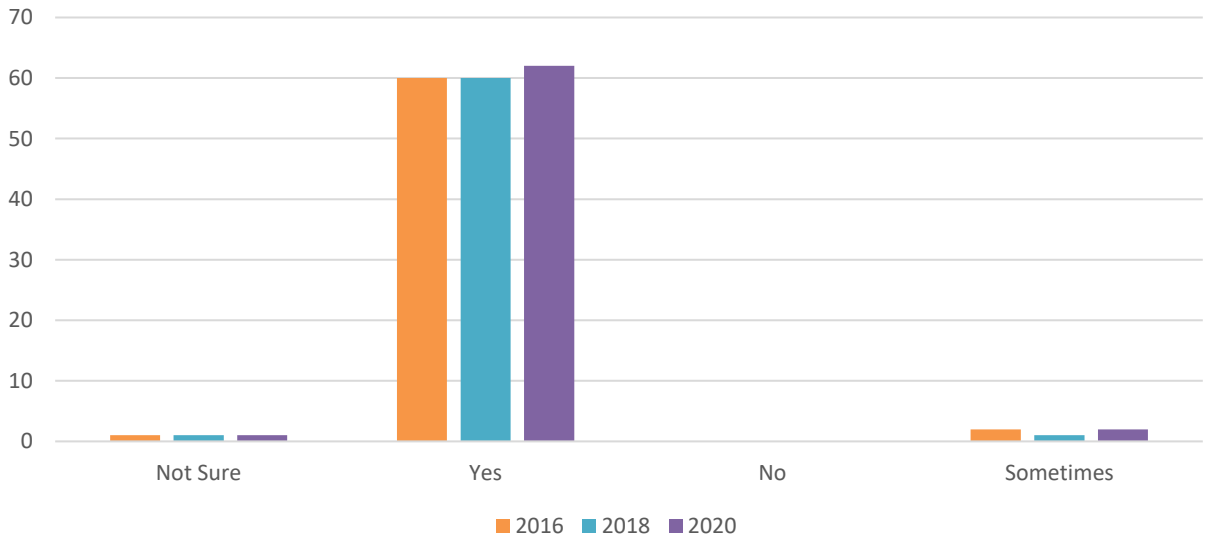
A fundamental part of a child's development in the Early Years Learning Framework is to form secure bonds and trusting relationships with their Educator's.

This year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the physical distancing restrictions put in place, morning drop-offs and afternoon pick-ups were taking place at the Centre door. Therefore, cand carers were not in the positions to see the relationships between their child and the Educators. As such, this question was omitted from the survey this year. The question assessing the children and Educator relationships will return in future surveys.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Another important aspect of a child's development and learning is to encourage the children to display a degree of independence and exploration. As detailed in Figure 4, over 90% of respondents believe that the Learning environment and approaches which are provided at the Centre promote independence, exploration and learning through play.

FIGURE 3: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



PLAY SPACES

This area focuses on natural areas within the younger children's outdoor play space.

Adding a range of sensory areas and natural items into the outdoor play space, encourages children to have a sense of inquiry, with the freedom of the outdoors. Families and carers were asked what elements they would like to see in this area.

Families and carers were given the opportunity to provide specific comments about the activities provided for their children and specific comments included:

- "I would like to see some toys in different materials, such as wood and metal"
- "Keep the trees, more timber and natural materials, race track for trikes"
- "We love the shade of the beautiful big trees, sandpit and open space to run and ride, perhaps some grass or gardens".
- "More equipment for the younger ones to practise gross motor skills- equipment climb or jump from"
- "Climbing things (e.g. stepping stones), more plants and trees, maybe a separate bike track to make it safer"

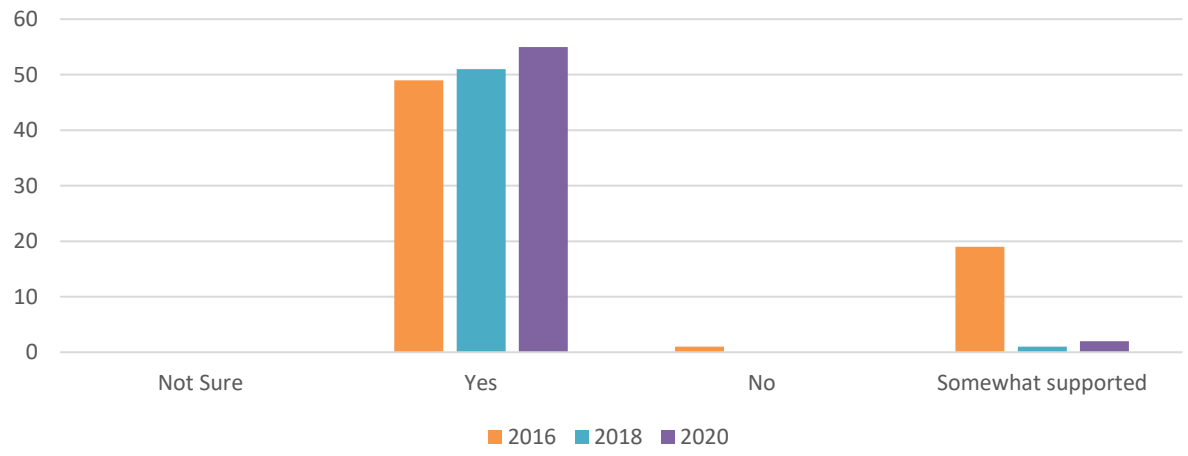
- "There is a bit too much concrete & soft fall rubber. It might be nice to have it laid out with some more natural flooring. The way you're able to currently set up play spaces interchangeably is good though. It's hard to want to commit to one single set up"
- "More creative play areas - mud kitchens. More climbing, mats for active play"
- "Ensure there is water play, sand play, painting area, some vegetation, sun/rain shade, climbing activities and room for groups to sit outside when the weather is nice for reading and activities."

TRANSITIONS

It is important that both children and their families and carers feel when transitioning from room to room. It is recognised this is an unsettling time for some and Educators endeavour to make this a more natural "flowing" transition between learning environments provided at the Centre. This assists in supporting the "Meeting" rating from the National Quality Standards in Quality Area 5, Relationships with Children and Quality Area 6, Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities.

As detailed in Figure 6 below, Over 90% of the respondents felt that transition visits have been handled well.

FIGURE 4: TRANSITIONS



Families and carers were also given the opportunity to provide specific comments about the transition process provided for their children and specific comments included;

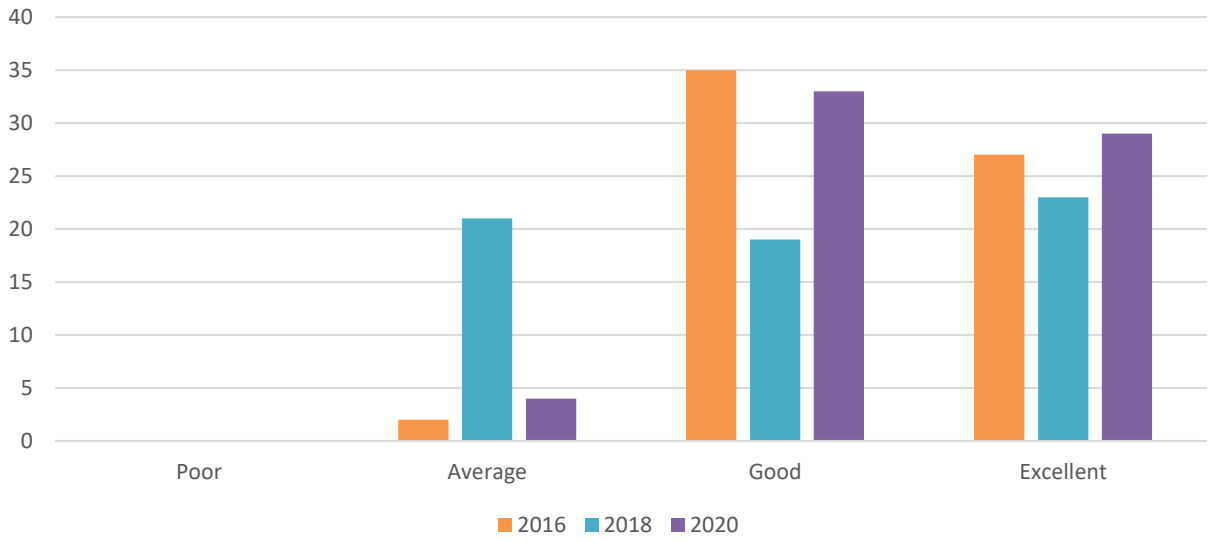
- "The transition between rooms was great and the children often already know some of the other Educators which assists. It was difficult to anticipate when positions would become available and align children's days in care".
- "The transition period meant we could not access information about our child day, nappies or activities. We didn't get any updates and could not speak with Educators during restrictions"
- "Have been waiting for my child to transition up a room for 6 months, she is well beyond the development level of the other children in her room".

In addition to some of the key aspects of the National Quality Framework, a number of more general questions were asked about certain aspect of the Centres operations and services. Areas included, daily menus, social media and the additional family involvement.

MENUS

The Centre provides morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea on a daily basis. Families and carers were given the opportunity to rate the Menu.

FIGURE 5: QUALITY OF MENU



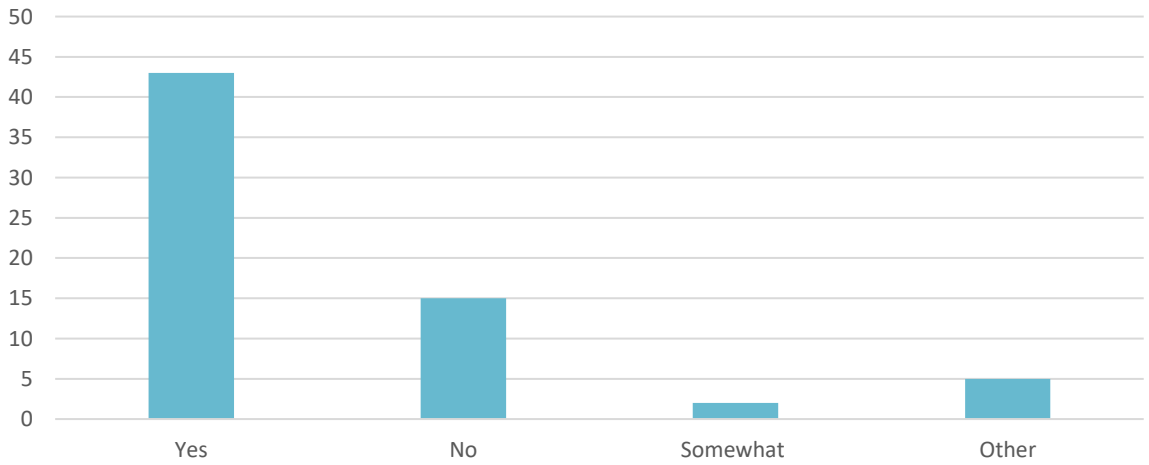
Families and carers were also given the opportunity to provide specific comments about the activities provided for their children and specific comments included;

- "Breakfast should be considered"
- "Fantastic menu, lots of variety"
- "I have never seen the food and portion sizes but the menu is good"

COMMUNICATIONS APP

The learning communications app "Journeys" was introduced in January 2020. Families and carers were asked if they have found the app to be an improved method of communication and what other information they would like to see.

Figure 6: COMMUNICATIONS APP "JOURNEYS"



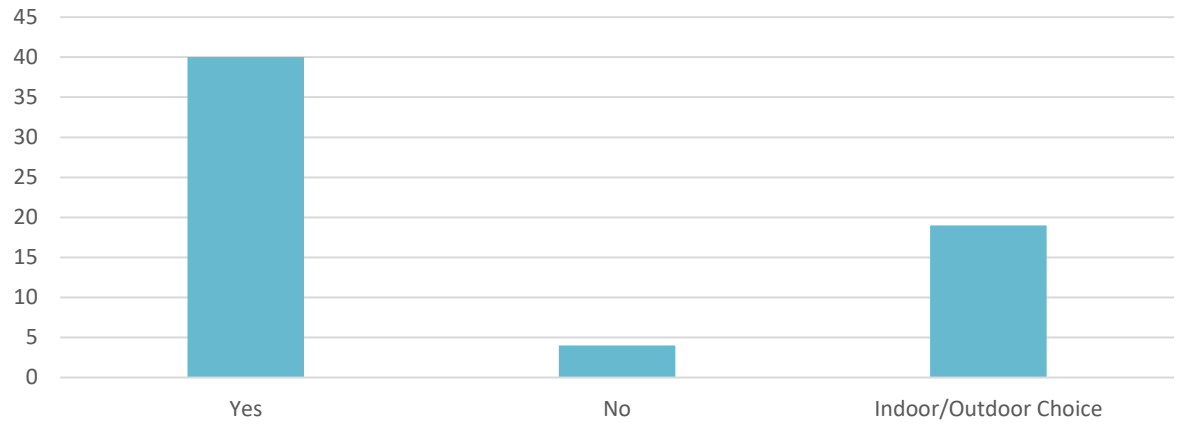
Families and carers were also given the opportunity to provide specific comments about Journeys:

- "It been a frustrating transition as there have been glitches and it's not particularly 'User friendly"
- "I'm very pleased with the content being posted on the app."
- "Its updated most days, but the sleep/eat and nappy charts are hit and miss"
- "It's great seeing photos daily but because it is such short-form communication I feel like there is less information about what the kids are up to and my child's progression"
- "It would be great to be able to communicate back to the Educators. They have sent notes or observations but with no way to reply to them until pickup or drop-off and with the current arrangements sometimes even that is difficult."
- "It's good seeing what the kids/rooms are up to each day. Maybe if there is any constructive feedback this could be provided in here as we don't always get to speak to the Educators"

SLEEPING OUTDOORS

Sleeping outdoors has many health benefits including improved sleep. During the COVID-19 pandemic this option was offered to families to assist with the reduction in the spread of germs through an open air space. Families and carers were asked if they would like us to keep the outdoor sleeping option to continue for their child.

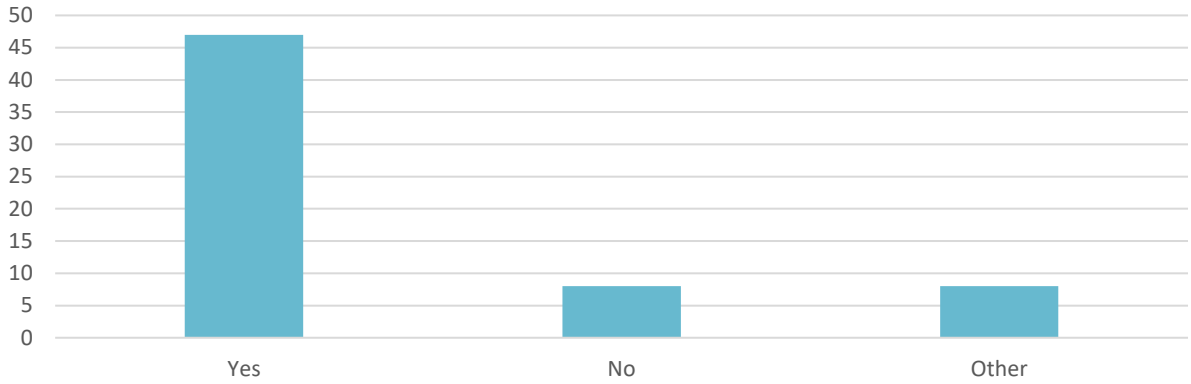
Figure 7: SLEEPING OUTDOORS



DOOR DROP-OFFS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, morning drop-offs and afternoon pick-ups at the Centre door were introduced. A number of families and carers requested that the morning drop-off be maintained. Families and carers were asked if they would like us to maintain the morning drop-offs at the Centre door, with afternoon pick-ups within the room.

Figure 8: DOOR DROP-OFFS



Families and carers were also given the opportunity to provide specific comments and some of these are provided below:

- "It is nice to have a quick and easy drop off but there are occasions when talking to the Educators in the morning would be beneficial"
- "The COVID drop off/ pick up option is excellent for older kids as it promotes so much independence. However, this then needs to be balanced with a better sharing app so you know what the kids have been doing/working towards, struggles re friendship groups, etc."
- "The drop off has been efficient but there needs to be opportunities to speak to Educators if this process remains in place"
- "I do not wish for the drop off pick up at the front to continue as we have had no interaction with carer during this time"
- "It's helpful for actual drop off and pick up but not for interacting with staff and receiving feedback on your child. Maybe there could be one or two days a week where parents pick the kids up from their room to help with this if the drop off continued as is? I like being able to see inside and connect with the staff"

In response to the results of the survey, the following issues have been actioned:

- Maintaining the morning drop-off at the front door for children has been trialled, while the afternoon pick-up remained in the rooms. However, it has been identified that messages from families and carers are not effectively being passed on to the Educators within the room. In addition relationships between families and carers and the Educators are not as strong as they had been in previous years. Relationships between families and carers and the Educators is highly important therefore it has been decided not to permanently implement morning drop-offs at the front door.

- Requests regarding to the development of the younger play yard where submitted during the planning of the new yard. The concept plan was distributed for consultation in early February 2021 and meetings are in process for the final planning stage.

- The app "Journeys" for sharing information has received a mixed response. As such, an alternative app is being trialled which includes additional functionality and is considered to be more user friendly.

- Sleeping outdoors when weather permits has been adopted permanently with the results continue to be very positive. Families and carers still may request their child sleeps inside, should they wish.

OPTIONS

Not Applicable.

CONCLUSION

Overall the results of the survey have been positive and supportive of the current practices. The results, including the various comments made, have also allowed Educators to reflect and remove or minimise some of the barriers that may have been facing some families and carers. Staff are always seeking to improve and are willing to implement changes where needed to meet family and operational needs.

COMMENTS

If you have any queries relating to the information within the report, please contact the Councils, Director St Peters Child Care Centre & Preschool on 8362 1843.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received and noted.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

(Of an urgent nature only)

8. NEXT MEETING

Monday 24 May 2021

9. CLOSURE