

Minutes of the online Scheme meeting held on Wednesday 24th June via Microsoft Teams

Present: Jorja Clifford, Kim Abbott, Jayne Wiggins, Angelica Sunnucks, Debbie Morey, Jackie Devereaux-McLean, Jackie Mianowski, Karen Masters, Ange Bell, Nikki Mckeown, Jandi Speakman, Mel Swards, Rachel Cutcliffe, Jess Walker, Kylee Mitsakis, Jackie McClymont, Sally Lovell, Shantell Saunders, Leonia Imani, Gabrielle Haley, Linda Spencer, Maureen Taylor, Jonna Vennola, Angela Stanley-Gasparin, Robyn Horner, Tosca Mulder, Lucy Johnson, Tracey Mason, Katrina Stewart

Apologies: Janet Davey, Jodie Murray, Agnes Matthew

General business:

Transition payments – the scheme will receive transition payments from the Commonwealth and although this money has been granted to services to assist in running costs, we have decided to distribute these payments to educators. We are looking at several different ways to see how it can be done equitably, but are currently considering giving \$1.00 per hour per child for actual attendance in care. This will be in addition to both the CCS and parent payments which both start again from 13th July. The transition payments will be made until the week ending 27th September. Ang will email educators a calendar listing the dates of each payment. Calculating payments will be easy for those who use Harmony, but a bit more complex for those who use paper timesheets. More information about this will be available soon. Paying educators this money is a decision made by the scheme as we recognise that the last 3 months have been extremely difficult for educators.

Return of CCS – as of the 13th July ‘free childcare’ finishes, CCS will again be paid to educators and parents are to re-commence paying for their care. Letters have been sent to parents and educators are asked to remind parents to check that their enrolment details are correct through MyGov. We do not have any authority to communicate with Centrelink about families using care. Although parents will supposedly be eligible for up to 100 hours of care if both parents are working, it is not to be assumed that this will actually be the case. Parents should check with Centrelink.

Letter from the Commonwealth re charging of fees – an educator within our scheme has been reported to the Commonwealth Government’s hot line for asking parents to pay for their care. THIS IS NOT PERMITTED. The Commonwealth Government made this ruling as part of their free childcare package and there have been numerous emails sent to educators from the scheme stipulating that educators are not to receive payment for care. Some educators have received gifts such as vouchers and wine. This is not the issue - it is requesting and receiving payment and this is considered as fraud. The consequence of this is that the scheme will be audited, which will mean extra work for both the scheme and for educators. Regardless of what we think of the fairness of the government’s childcare policy, these are the rules and Ang expressed her disappointment and frustration at the educator’s lack of judgement.

Weekly worksheets- are no longer required. Their original purpose was to gather information for additional funding under the Supplementary Payments program and so that Tosca and Robyn knew who was working. Unfortunately, although the scheme has lodged 4 applications for this funding, at this stage we have been unsuccessful.

Fees – neither educator nor scheme fees can be increased until after 28th September. If educators are increasing their fees please have the adjusted fee schedules to the office by the end of August. The scheme’s parent levy will not change and the educator levy will increase by 40 cents to \$25.40 a week. These arrangements will be in place until June 2021.

Maree asked could the admin levy for school age children be looked at. It is currently the same as under school aged children and children who attend care before and after school are often only in care for a short amount of time. Ang said she would follow this up in next year’s budget.

Play sessions – the numbers allowed in venues have changed again as of today and so after consultation with Tosca and with the Council’s occupational health and safety officer we will consider re-opening play sessions in term 3.

Excursions – are now basically back to normal with the 2 square metre restrictions for adults in place. Many parents may be concerned about their children going out on excursions, especially to visit other educators, so please follow the COVID19 plan check with parents and ask them to sign an excursions consent form.

COVID19 testing – if an educator's family members are being tested for COVID19 and the educator does not care from a completely separate area of their home, then the educator must not work until the family member's test results are known. If educators have any concerns then we can ring the hot line on their behalf. If educators have parents who are being tested then their children can still come into care. If educators don't feel comfortable about this they can say that the children can't come into care until the test results are known. This is usually within 24 hours. This advice is from the state government's coronavirus hotline.

Policies – Robyn is gradually reviewing the scheme's policies and asked for any input. Maree asked that the management of an injury to a child in care be reviewed and that parents be contacted by scheme staff when their child has an accident in care. Ang said that she felt that it was really important that there are follow-up phone calls to parents and that she has been doing this when a child has been involved in an accident whilst in care. Robyn will contact Maree for her comments when this policy is being reviewed.

Other business –

Support for families - the Salvation Army's Clarence Doorways program has received funding to assist families to access help, support, counselling and other services. There are fliers in the office for educators to give to any families they think may wish to access these services.

On-line meetings – some educators expressed their appreciation of the on-line meetings and asked would they continue. Ang thought that we may have a mix – some face-to-face meetings and some on-line. She added that the scheme has purchased a Maggie Dent Parent TV subscription that has a wide range of topics and courses and she would like to show some of these at scheme meetings. The training room now has a large TV for our 'screen time'.

The meeting was recorded for those educators who could not attend.

Meeting closed at 8.00pm