



Gowrie

LADY GOWRIE CHILD CENTRE • NSW

ANNUAL REPORT 2010



CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT.....	1
MESSAGE FROM THE CEO.....	1
STRATEGY ONE.....	2
STRATEGY TWO.....	8
STRATEGY THREE.....	8
THE FUTURE.....	12
FINANCIALS.....	14
STAFF AND MANAGEMENT.....	16
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	16

President's Message

The past year has been a very important one for our organisation, as it marks the final year of our first Strategic Plan and a review of the Board's governance and related constitutional issues. The Board has taken time this year to reflect on its own role in leading the organisation and in positioning Gowrie for the future. This included some self examination in relation to key issues such as strategy and skill and it has also involved some suggested constitutional changes that will be taken to the 2010 AGM.



The Board has overseen a significant year for Gowrie, with the restructure and reconfiguration of the Senior Executive consistent with the priorities of the Strategic Plan. We enter 2010/2011 in a much stronger position and ready for the next Strategic Plan, which will build on the innovation and strategic development of the last 3 years.

We thank Ruth and the Gowrie team for their hard work during this past year and look forward to the year ahead and our second year Strategic Plan.

Dr Clive Morgan

Ceo's Message

2009/2010 has been a challenging, but positive year for Gowrie. During the year we realigned our executive structure to ensure that we now have an Executive Director for Children's Services, who has strategic and operational responsibility for the delivery of the Gowrie childcare services, crèche services and other related projects. This has ensured a high level strategy and accountability for our core activity, providing quality early childhood education and care.



We have also built on our strengths with the Indigenous Professional Support Unit, to deliver some new and innovative projects and build on our social justice credentials and strong experience working with Aboriginal children and families.

Our financial reporting and systems have been improved, something that needed to be done and which has subsequently positioned us well for the next financial year.

Gowrie staff have continued to deliver the broad range of services for which we're known and to deliver new and innovative partnerships with organisations, including Burnside and NIFTY New South Wales.

Our recent success with Government funding and grants demonstrated Gowrie's high standing as an early childhood organisation and the ongoing innovation and energy within. We have worked as a strong team during a time of change and challenge.

I am very proud to lead such a diverse and collaborative organisation and I am looking forward to the next Strategic Plan in 2011, where we will detail our vision for the next three years.

Ruth Callaghan

The year 2010 marks the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres' in 1940 by Lady Zara Gowrie, the wife of the tenth Governor-General of Australia. Lady Gowrie Child Centre NSW provides direct services to children and their families in the form of Long Day Care, Occasional Care (crèches), After School Hours Care and Vacation Care. We have a strong and proud history in social justice and innovative practice, training and professional development for the early childhood sector as well as information and referral services for families and early childhood professionals. Gowrie also provides a broad range of specialist projects that support the diverse needs of infants and young children, their families and communities.

Throughout 2009/2010 Gowrie continued to deliver a comprehensive range of early childhood education and care services and specialist projects to thousands of children, families, communities and early childhood education and care professionals across NSW and the ACT. Our major activities has continued to include:

Long Day Care Services at the Gowrie Child Care Centre, Erskineville; Nanbaree Child Care Centre (managed by Gowrie on behalf of the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet); John Mewburn Child Care Centre (managed by Gowrie on behalf of the NSW Department of Corrective Services);

Out of School Hours Care and Vacation Care (Erskineville Public School);

Crèche Services and Mainstream Placement Program (on behalf of NSW Adult Migrant English Service);

Early Childhood Intervention Line which is a telephone information service funded by NSW Human Services' Ageing, Disability and Homecare, to provide parents, carers and professionals with information and assistance in relation to children with a developmental delay or disability;

Child and Family Information Line which is a telephone information and referral service funded by NSW Human Services' Community Services, which provides information about a range of early childhood and childcare services, health and welfare services, and other services relevant to children and families;

Training, Professional Development and Special Events for the early childhood education and care sector, including training and accreditation support services delivered by Gowrie on behalf of the Professional Support Coordinator for NSW, Children's Services Central;

Indigenous Professional Support Program NSW/ACT (funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations) provides professional support, advice, training and professional development to Aboriginal-run children's services within NSW/ACT;

NSW Central West and NSW West Inclusion Support Agencies (funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations) assist childcare services to build the knowledge and confidence they need to provide an inclusive childcare environment for all children that is consistent with physical, cultural and linguistic diversity;

Library and General Resource Pool (funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations through the Professional Support Coordinator, Children's Services Central).

This year marks the third and final year of the current Strategic Plan and this report reflects on some of our achievements under that plan.



This year marks the third and final year of the current Strategic Plan and this report reflects on some of our achievements under that plan.



Gowrie is known historically for its focus on social justice and its child-centred approach in service delivery and project work. This year saw us building strongly on this history to develop new partnerships and projects to assist children and families, the early childhood education and care sector as well as the professionals working within it. As a result, Gowrie has increased its presence in external policy and practice forums and developed a number of new projects.

Families at the Centre: Negotiations with Australia's Mixed Market in Early Education Care

The CEO worked closely with Professor Deborah Brennan from the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales in relation to a national research project, "Families at the Centre: Negotiating Australia's Mixed Market in Early Education and Care".

This research project will bring together a range of welfare and early childhood organisations throughout Australia, including Gowrie NSW, Early Childhood Australia, the University of Leeds, UK, Mission Australia and our sister Gowrie Centres in South Australia and Queensland, to examine the policy levers effecting quality early childhood education and care and the ways these affect the choices families make in accessing child care. The project has received funding from the Australian Research Council and Gowrie will be making a significant financial contribution of \$15,000 each year for the next three years from 2010/2011.

Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Best Practice and Innovation Project

In late 2009, Gowrie was one of only eight organisations across Australia, and the only one in New South Wales, granted "innovation funding" from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

The Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Best Practice and Innovation Project was developed by Gowrie in its role as provider of the Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU NSW & ACT). The Project provides a "sister service" opportunity by partnering a Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service (MACS) with a non-Aboriginal childcare centre in the same locality to create an environment which supports the mutual exchange of ideas and experiences.

The Project has increased the capacity of Aboriginal childcare educators to work collaboratively with non-Aboriginal services to support engagement with local Aboriginal children and families. In broader terms, it has provided a local focus on "closing the gap". The Project has also enabled non-Aboriginal childcare services to acknowledge and work with Aboriginal services in an experiential way, prompting them to reflect on their own practice.

Gowrie is delighted to announce that it has successfully gained support through the PSC NSW (Children's Services Central) to deliver this Project in a further seven regions in New South Wales and the ACT during 2 010/2011.

We would like to acknowledge the DEEWR for its financial support of the Project and the importance of trying new approaches in closing the gap for Aboriginal children and families.





The Project has increased the capacity of Aboriginal childcare educators to work collaboratively with non-Aboriginal services to support engagement with local Aboriginal children and families.

DVD: Starting School, Stories from Parents of Children with a Disability

In September 2009, Gowrie, in partnership with the then Department for Ageing, Disability and Home Care, launched the DVD Resource “Starting School, Stories from Parents of Children with a Disability”. This resource draws on the lived experience of six families who have children with a disability, to provide practical advice in relation to the transition to school for children with developmental delays or disabilities. It sets out how families and carers have worked with schools to ease the children’s transition to a mainstream school environment in a respectful and appropriate way.

Presented by Paralympian Amy Winters, the DVD includes topics such as:

- advocacy;
- choosing a school;
- planning ahead; and
- starting school.

In the period from September 2009 to March 2010, more than 3,000 DVDs were issued to public libraries, schools, interested individuals as well as health and welfare organisations working with parents and families of children with disabilities.

The success of this resource re-emphasises the importance of inclusion in early childhood education, care and school settings, and the work that Gowrie will continue to undertake in this area.

Tender for the Adult Migrant English Program

Gowrie has worked for many years in partnership and as part of a consortium with the New South Wales Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES) in providing crèche care for recently arrived migrants and their children. This contract has been a very important one for Gowrie and has enabled us to assist a range of children (aged 6 weeks to school age) in the four crèche settings at Burwood, Bankstown, Hornsby and Surry Hills as well as through the Mainstream Placement Program.

This new tender provides an opportunity to build on Gowrie’s quality services and to potentially diversify and grow the program, depending upon the outcome of this tender. Gowrie is known for its work with children and families from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and the opportunity to participate further in these programs in the future is welcomed.

Although the outcome of the tender will not be known for some time, Gowrie will continue to build on its practice in this area and its work with the research community to ensure an appropriate, effective service model for the present and the future.

In 2009/2010 over 1200 children were placed by Gowrie through the crèche and mainstream AMES project and 560 of those were placed in Gowrie-run crèches with 657 in mainstream services.

The demand for this program, particularly in relation to mainstream placement, continues to grow and emphasises the importance of providing safe, culturally appropriate and high quality services to our migrant community.





The success of the DVD re-emphasises the importance of inclusion in early childhood education, care and school settings, and the work that Gowrie will continue to undertake in this area.



An important part of Gowrie's Strategic Plan has been acknowledging the work of our organisation in supporting and influencing others in the early childhood sector through our training and professional development activities, and through partnering with other organisations, both within and outside the sector. This year we engaged with the broader Human Services sector in delivering useful, relevant projects and events to early childhood professionals and others working with children.

The restructure of our organisation acknowledged this by creating a permanent role of Executive Director Sector and Consulting. During the year, Gowrie's reinvigorated engagement with other agencies was recognised through the Executive Director being approached to Chair NIFTY New South Wales, the State branch of the National Investment for the Early Years "Investment for the Early Years", a coalition of organisations advocating for the importance of the early years of life with Government and with other professionals.

The involvement with NIFTY has been important in broadening our involvement in a range of activities relevant to young children and their families, beyond the early childhood sector and into government and other non-government agencies. We look forward to contributing to the NIFTY Conference in 2012 as part of this involvement.

Collapse of ABC Learning

A major event this year that impacted Gowrie and the entire early childhood education and care sector, was the demise of ABC Learning, the private Stock Exchange listed childcare provider.

The demise of ABC Learning raised a whole range of issues within the sector, not just in terms of policy and service delivery but the importance of the values and processes underpinning early childhood organisations. Gowrie has worked very strongly and closely with other major early childhood providers in New South Wales including KU Children's Services, SDN Children's Services and Uniting Care, to advocate for not-for-profit children's services and the importance of high quality early childhood services for all.

The changes to the sector as a result of ABC Learning's collapse have been profound and have led to a strong re-engagement around the values of early childhood education and care and the way in which government policy and support of early childhood organisations effects daily service delivery to children and families across the country. One of the great positives out of this was the emphasis on the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Agenda through the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) reforms. Gowrie has strongly and warmly welcomed these government policy changes and the prominence of early childhood education and care as a key government policy area of national importance.

Special Events

Gowrie partnered with a number of other organisations this year to showcase and demonstrate the research base around children in their early years. This was particularly undertaken in relation to infancy and attachment and the role of early childhood educators in fostering positive developmental outcomes for all children from their very early days through to school age. Ron Lally, a United States based researcher and world renowned expert in infancy and brain development, led a dynamic forum hosted by Gowrie NSW and the Benevolent Society for a range of organisations, examining the research evidence around brain development and how this can be effectively applied to early childhood pedagogy and practice in a quality childcare environment.

Gowrie was also delighted, once again, to host Iran Siraj Blackford from the United Kingdom, who showcased her work in relation to school readiness and her innovative work around sustained shared thinking. This approach to pedagogy and learning is based on the lived experience of children and educators working together in a learning environment to solve problems, discuss issues and investigate the world. This session, which also included Professor Collette Taylor, an eminent Australian early childhood researcher, was very well attended and showcased Gowrie's capability in working with a range of other organisations to bring about special events for the sector.



This year we engaged with the broader Human Services sector in delivering useful, relevant projects and events to early childhood professionals and others working with children.



Throughout the year, considerable work has been undertaken in relation to Gowrie's back office functions such as Corporate Services, Finance and Human Resources, to ensure that our processes and accountabilities provide a secure base for the future and for the further development of the organisation.

A key element of re-orienting our organisation was aligning the Executive structure with the core business functions of Gowrie, that is, Children's Services, Sector and Consulting, Corporate Services, Finance and Human Resources. The Executive Structure now reflects these main elements of the organisation and has provided a solid foundation for the coming years.

As Gowrie has grown, we have placed greater emphasis on the financial systems and processes within the organisation which has led to their reassessment and to the introduction of a more rigorous management style. The year provided an excellent opportunity to work with our auditor, our external accountant and our staff, to ensure a solid and effective financial base to build upon for future growth and development.

A major investment was made this year in identifying a new Head Office for Gowrie in order for staff based at Zetland and at Erskineville to be relocated to one central environment. A property was located at 215 Euston Road, Alexandria and these premises will be fitted out in the next financial year to meet Gowrie's future needs and the entire Head Office will be relocated to this new address.

This has been an important structural and cultural shift for the organisation as a single, centralised Head Office will enable us to explore the beneficial synergies between work areas and individuals.

This year also saw a significant upgrade of Gowrie's IT platform, ahead of the move and the relocation of Zetland and Erskineville to the new Head Office. This involved investigating appropriate business relationships for a new IT provider and a move from two IT platforms on Apple Mac and on PC to one PC platform, enabling more effective information services and better connections with off-site Gowrie activities including Western New

South Wales, Dubbo and Bathurst.

Parallel to this project, we have also been engaged with a major project to re-design Gowrie's website to better reflect the diversity of our organisation and the wide range of activities that we are offering to the early childhood sector, to children and to families.

The new website will be operational in 2011 and will include an extensive overview of our organisation and the services that it delivers.

During the past year, and particularly in light of Gowrie's Strategic Plan, the Board initiated a governance project to reflect on its own processes and capabilities. This was led by consultants from In Corporate, who assisted the Board with an extensive survey and self-reflection focused on reinvigorating the Board's role within the organisation and the next Strategic Plan. This also included some proposed amendments to the Constitution to modernise the organisation and to reflect some of the more basic changes arising from the Board Governance project.

During the year, as part of its re-engagement with external funding bodies and with partner agencies, Gowrie applied, and was successful in most of its applications, for external funding and grants with an overall success rate of over 85%. This has been a major achievement for the organisation and one of the grants received, the Premier's Community Building Partnership Grant, has assisted in an upgrade of Gowrie's original building at 1 Elliott Avenue, Erskineville. This has been very timely and much-appreciated assistance in Gowrie's 70th Birthday Year and has enabled us to undertake some much-needed maintenance and repairs to the building. In the longer term, the Erskineville building will continue to house the Gowrie Childcare Centre and it is also intended that, as the building is gradually upgraded and refurbished, it will provide a stronger hub of activity for the local community, not just for the childcare centre, but through partnerships and projects with other organisations.





Gowrie applied, and was successful in most of its applications, for external funding and grants with an overall success rate of over 85%.

Gowrie is first and foremost a provider of quality early childhood education and care. All our other programs and activities are based on this fundamental activity and our expertise in working with children and families. Gowrie's strength lies in its diversity which is evidenced by the fact that, for an organisation of its size (approximately 120 employees), it is engaged in a breadth of projects across a range of areas of expertise.

An important part of Gowrie's first strategic plan and the work of the last few years has been to acknowledge the range of programs and services that the organisation either directly delivers or is involved in with partner organisations.

The strategic plan deliberately targeted areas to develop and expand on which included, for example, our partnerships with universities and with other human service agencies beyond the early childhood sector. We are also focused on building our internal capacity for grant and tender writing and the success of this is clear with the high success rate of this work in bringing new funds and projects into Gowrie.

This year we have successfully extended our partnerships and worked in new areas and this will continue to be Gowrie's future. The next strategic plan will take us into new opportunities based on a creative approach to partnering within the early childhood education and care sector and beyond.

Growing Our Quality Services and Continuing to Innovate

Partnerships in Early Childhood Program – For the last few years Gowrie has worked with the Benevolent Society in participating in its Partnerships In Early Childhood (PIEC) Program. Through staff development and support for parents, PIEC aims to improve the quality of early education and care, and in so doing, enhance children's social and emotional development.

The program has been delivered in Gowrie's John Mewburn Child Care Centre, which is managed on behalf of the Department of Corrective Services. The focus is on building nurturing and supportive relationships between children and the adults who care for them within the early education childcare setting and at home. Among its many findings, an independent evaluation of the program by the University of NSW in 2010 found:

- The social and emotional development of children attending participating centres improved. Peer problems decreased and children's prosocial behaviour such as helping and sharing increased;
- The quality of care improved as evidenced in staff interactions with children and children's involvement in the centre; and
- Successful collaboration with non-government organisations and local councils was vital to the success of the program.

The Centre staff and families have benefited from the new opportunities and skills that this has provided and Gowrie will continue to participate in this important program until its completion in 2011.





Gowrie is first and foremost a provider of quality early childhood education and care and our expertise is in working with children and families

Financial Report

Board of Directors & Office Bearers

The Directors in office during the financial year were:

Dr Clive Morgan

President

Ms Alison Gould

Vice-President

Ms Tracey Young

Vice-President

Mr John Hilton

Treasurer

Ms Annette Michaux

Secretary

Dr Julie Parle

Director

Ms Melissa Roughley

Director

Ms Sylvia Turner

Director

Ms Belinda Edmunds

Director

Board Meetings were held on 3 July 2008; 7 August 2008; 4 September 2008; 16 October 2008; 13 November 2008; 4 December 2008; 5 February 2009; 5 March 2009; 2 April 2009; 7 May 2009; and 4 June 2009.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 13 November 2008.

Acknowledgements

Gowrie benefits from the expertise, partnership and financial assistance of many organisations. In particular, we would like to thank Gilbert and Tobin for their generosity in providing us with Pro Bono legal services.

The Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the State Government Departments of Community Services and Ageing, Disability and Homecare continued to be important sources of funding for Gowrie in 2008/2009.

Another important collaboration has been with Children's Services Central, the Professional Support Coordinator for NSW. Gowrie receives funding from CSC for QIAS, the Library, In-Service Training and the Specialist Equipment Pool.

We would also like to thank all the non-government organisations and Universities who have continued to partner with us on specific projects and special events to share their expertise with good will and generosity. We look forward to continuing to work with you in 2009/2010.

Finally, we would like to thank the families, children and communities we work with every day.



Recycled
Supporting responsible use
of forest resources
www.fsc.org Cert no. SCS-COC-00802
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council



Gowrie
LADY GOWRIE CHILD CENTRE • NSW

Level 3, 215 Euston Road
ALEXANDRIA NSW 2015
PO Box 6385
ALEXANDRIA NSW 2015
Tel: (02) 8571 9711
Fax: (02) 8571 9790