

## General Manager's Report - Annual Report 2016

2016 for South Canterbury Kindergartens was a year of constraint with enough pleasing progress to maintain momentum and offer satisfaction for me as General Manager.

Our limitations, particularly in relation to property are the direct result of inadequate government funding of the early childhood sector. Despite this challenge, we continue to provide high quality education for all the children in our care. We do so in buildings that are safe, of sound repair and of good condition but with the increasing demands of the public for buildings to be modern, new and with sophisticated features, we face a challenge as we contemplate the next two decades.

We are resolute in our philosophy that all staff must be fully qualified and registered teachers, knowing that every child deserves the high quality education that this belief affords. Consequently, the salary component of our budget is significant and justified. This is not usually the case in the private sector of early childhood education. The frustration for me, and I'm sure this is shared by our teachers, is that the general public is very much unaware of the differences within the sector and assume that all ECE centres are funded and operated in the same way. Promoting our uniqueness in a way that does not compromise our professionalism continues to be a focus of our marketing.

It is increasingly obvious that the government is not going to lift the level of funding for ECE in the foreseeable future. It is important therefore that we remain positive in our approach and ever optimistic that in time a government will acknowledge the overwhelming conclusion of Otago University's longitudinal study that that best way forward for a healthy nation of people is to invest early in children and their families. Our efforts in 2016 were focused on the areas of development that were not so dependent on financial input. We embraced this challenge and were delighted with the progress we made.

Kindergarten teaching teams, with the direction and support of our Senior Teachers, Raewyn and Lyndell, made changes to planning and assessment practices. Consistency of practice across all kindergartens is a goal we are close to achieving. The introduction of Educa, the online child portfolio was a major step in the recording and communication of each child's learning. Parent and whanau feedback and their engagement in their child's learning has been enhanced as a result.

We continued to engage outside facilitators to provide Professional Development for staff during the term breaks. A new initiative to tap in to the experience and skills of our own staff saw a number of teachers presenting workshops at our own 'in house' Professional Development Day in October. We will look to repeat this opportunity in the near future.

The staff bus tour to all kindergartens was perhaps the most practical of all PD opportunities in 2016. The interchange of ideas and the opportunity for staff to showcase their uniqueness was invaluable and reaffirming.

Two published booklets, Staff Induction and a Parent Committee Handbook have been useful publications, both ensuring due process is followed, leading to consistency of practice across the Association.

Much background work was undertaken to establish two Communities of Learning (CoLs) in the Timaru region. Of significance for us is the welcoming and uncontested inclusion of ECE in both CoLs. We have all seven of our Timaru kindergartens named specifically in one of the two CoLs. Having ECE, primary and secondary sectors all sitting around the same table has the potential to provide a

more seamless pathway for students. Deciding on a set of agreed outcomes for students in our region is an exciting prospect.

I wish to acknowledge the huge contribution our Head Teachers make to the success and effectiveness of our association. Their's is an increasingly responsible role, one that is not easily left at the kindergarten gate. Head Teachers are integral to the smooth running and development of their respective kindergartens and our association. I thank them for their work and high level of commitment. Twizel and Rata Kindergartens' work over the previous 18 months resulted in two excellent Education Review Office reports testament to their dedication and delivery.

While property maintenance continues, we were not able to embark on any major property development in 2016 which was a little frustrating. My thanks to Colin for all his work and contribution to the positive team approach.

There were several new developments within the administration office. Central to these were the introduction of MYOB as a new financial management system, the shift to a new financial year that better coincides with our funding drop and a revamped filing system. My thanks to Hazel and Annemarie for their work as administrators.

We are indeed fortunate to have an experienced Governing Board, ably led by Gavin. Of note is that all members have a tertiary qualification in either education, finance or philosophy, collectively offering us a range of skills and the wise counsel required of a governance role.

In conclusion, our association is in very good heart due in the most part to the commitment of everyone to do their best for children in our care. We accept that this is a huge responsibility and a real privilege.

Dave Hawkey

General Manager