



WOCS HAPPENING?

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE WHEATBELT ORGANISATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Issue 5 May 2008

WOCS AGM – THE 2008 WOCS COMMITTEE

The WOCS AGM was held on the 8th February 2008 in Narrogin.

WOCS Executive Committee members are:

Chairperson: Nicole Thompson [middle]

Secretary: Deborah Clune [left]

Treasurer: Christine Gorton [right]



Kulin Child Care Centre Capital Upgrade Project

The Kulin Child Care Centre has been granted \$20,322 under the (then) Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (now DEEWAR), *Long Day Care Capital Funding Program 2007-08*.

The Kulin Child Care Centre Capital Upgrade Project identified four areas in need of improvement which included; the installation of a reverse cycle heating and cooling system, replacement of a wire mesh fence, a permanent shade structure and some outdoor play equipment. Funding to carry out these projects will benefit staff, children and families by increasing safety measures around the centre, providing the opportunity to program for more outdoor play activities, improving working conditions and creating new learning opportunities for the development of the children's gross motor skills.

The Kulin Child Care Management Committee believe that these upgrades will demonstrate to families and the wider community that the Centre is consistently striving to offer the highest quality of care possible and continuing to meet industry standards in excellence.

Through this funding program the Centre was required to obtain matching funding through either local or state government contributions. As the Kulin Child Care Centre is managed as a delegated authority of the Kulin Shire Council they agreed to support the project through matching 50% of the project cost (\$20,322). A high proportion of this will come directly from the Centre's budget, with the remainder being allocated through Shire (in-kind) labour and also child care committee fundraising efforts.

The Centre is very excited about the planned improvements and looks forward to completing the project over the next 12 months.

Good News from Goomalling Gumnuts

Goomalling Gumnuts has successfully made the transition from Occasional Care to Long Daycare. Parents now have access to the child care benefit and Goomalling has reported increased enrolments. As a result the service has increased opening hours and increased permanent staff / staff hours.



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WOCS Committee Representatives were pleased to attend the opening of the Wongan Cubbyhouse. Amelia McLarty contributes the following article regarding the opening.



Wongan Cubbyhouse Official Opening

In just under two years, the Wongan Hills Childcare Fundraising Committee have raised \$300 000 to build a purpose built building to house their local childcare centre, Wongan Cubbyhouse.

Although Cubbyhouse has been operating in the new building since July 2007, the long awaited official opening finally took place on Saturday 15th March 2008.

The Hon. Brendon Grylls MLA and Senator Ruth Webber, representing Regional Partnerships were in attendance and took part in the official proceedings. Other speakers included the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu and Yallambee who were other major financial contributors to the building, Cubbyhouse President Michelle Latham, Sue Middleton and Shelley McQueen.

Brendon Grylls, a long time supporter of childcare in the wheatbelt spoke about what a momentous achievement it has been to have raised such a large amount of money and have the new building operational in such a short period of time. He also highlighted the plight of centres like Wongan Cubbyhouse in not being able to access the childcare benefit because they are occasional care, not long daycare centres. Having the childcare benefit would make childcare affordable for all families.

Senator Ruth Webber also re-iterated what a marvelous achievement the new building had been and made an undertaking that she would make it her personal commitment to make the childcare benefit available to all country childcare centres.

Cubbyhouse President Michelle Latham outlined the future plans of Cubbyhouse, which included working towards long daycare, in order to be eligible for the childcare benefit. She also took the opportunity to thank Past President Shelley McQueen and Sue Middleton who were instrumental in making the new Cubbyhouse building happen. Their knowledge, determination and sheer hard work were invaluable.

Sue Middleton acknowledged the contribution of two other key stakeholders in the project, local builder Neil Panton and the Wongan-Ballidu Development Group. She also made the point that through all the volunteer work and donations of labour, equipment and materials the new Cubbyhouse building was built for half the true cost of the building. A great achievement for a small country town!

After all the official speeches Senator Ruth Webber and Sue Middleton cut the ribbon and unveiled the plaque to declare the new Cubbyhouse building officially open.

Wongan Cubbyhouse has also been named the "2008 Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Community Group of the Year" for their achievement.

Amelia McLarty, Cubbyhouse Committee





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Mark Glasson Visits Wheatbelt Child Care Centres

Mark Glasson, Acting Executive Director, Children and Family Services, Department for Communities, visited Wheatbelt Child Care Services. This visit provided the opportunity to meet with volunteer management committee members and experience first hand the issues faced by rural services. Staff from the Department for Communities and WOCS representatives accompanied Mark Glasson on the visit.

This was an excellent opportunity to showcase the quality and innovative nature of wheatbelt services. The commitment of volunteers and community in establishing and managing these services was highlighted.

Apryl Longford, Quairading Community Development Officer contributed the following article regarding the visit.



Nola Poland, Sascha Langsford holding Megan Langsford, Mark Glasson, Judith, Andrea Folkard holding Sheldon Langsford and Charlotte Langsford

The Little Rainmakers Quairading

Mark Glasson, Acting Executive Director, Children and Family Services, Department for Communities, visited Quairading on Thursday 21st February 2008 to see first hand the progress of the 'Little Rainmakers Childcare Centre'.

They were joined by the Wheatbelt Organisation for Children's Services representatives, Nola Poland and Children's Services Officer, Andrea Folkard. The Little Rainmakers Childcare Secretary, Sacha Langsford, showed our guests around with the intent of ensuring our application for operation will go through quickly to guarantee we open in second term 2008.

Mrs Langsford discussed the issues with opening the centre with the committee obtaining a working with children check and securing a Manager. It was mentioned the time it has taken to get to this stage, with funding secured in June 2005 and continued commitment of the Childcare Committee, with new members coming on board as parents have left the committee with Children now too old to enjoy the convenience of the Childcare Centre. It is these volunteers who ensure the continued success of our centre.

Mr Glasson seemed impressed that the premise was shared with the CWA.

Apryl Longford

Quairading Community Development



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WOCS' Website

Brendon Grylls, Leader of the National Party, officially launched the WOCS Website at Parliament House on the 28th May 2008. The website has been released to the public and can be viewed by visiting,

www.wocs.com.au



Nicole Thompson, Deborah Clune, Nola Poland, Brendon Grylls, Andrea Folkard and Christone Gorton

Please visit the website to find

- ◆ Information regarding WOCS
- ◆ Resources for child care services and management committees
- ◆ WOCS Newsletters
- ◆ Links to organisations that may be of assistance to child care services and volunteer management committees

The website will continue to be updated, resources added and a photo gallery will be coming soon.

Visit www.wocs.com.au regularly!

WOCS Membership

If you are interested in becoming a part of this vibrant community organisation or are able to offer support the goals of the organisation please contact WOCS or visit our website.

Phone: 9889 0012
Email: info@wocs.com.au
Website: www.wocs.com.au

Child Care Regulations Review

The Minister Sure Ellery has released the report on the Children's Services Regulations Review. The report can be accessed via the department for communities' website,

www.communities.wa.gov.au/DFC

WOCS representatives will be meeting with the department to discuss the regulations review on the 28th May 2008.



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Child Care Accessibility & Support Forum

The WOCS Project Officer worked with the Wheatbelt Area Consultative Committee / Eastern Wheatbelt Early Years Network and Department for Communities regarding the child care needs of North Eastern Wheatbelt communities. The "Child Care Accessibility & Support Forum" was held on the 8th April 2008 in Trayning.

WOCS gave an overview of the organisation and the project officer role. Information was also presented regarding funding, supports and establishing a child care service.

Other presentations included,

- ◆ Department for Communities – overview of the Children's Services Officer role and occasional care
- ◆ Upper Great Southern Family Daycare Scheme (UGSFDCS) – overview of Family Day Care and the role of the scheme
- ◆ Department for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – overview of Linda Acreman's role and Long Day Care including transitioning from Occasional Care.

Twenty five participants attended the forum representing eleven communities. Participant evaluations were very positive.



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"Achieving Access, Equity and Sustainability for Children's Services in the Wheatbelt"