



Balnarring Preschool & Infant Welfare Association

Learning and Living with nature



Gareeal Reflections May 2021

During the Easter break one of our Gareeal team and their family moved house and we sadly had to say goodbye to Harvey and his family and we wish them all the best for a happy and wonderful future in their new home and town. It has been lovely reconnecting with all Gareeal Group during term 2. We have been busy revisiting our boardmaker schedule and kinder routines in the first few weeks of term to help children settle back in. This has also allowed us to change and adapt the program layout and children have been comfortable and managed playing outside first and all session, spending longer periods inside and having family and VIPs visit us at kinder as well. The children have adapted amazingly well are growing in confidence each week.

This term we have been focusing on building children's interactions and connections with peers and seeing beyond the self. This is important not only for their belonging and confidence but also in building children's friendship and social skills and emotional skills as well. We have been using our 'All About Me' pages to listen and hear about children in a large group at snack time. Lisa, Kim and I will support 1 -2 children to share their sheet by asking questions and encouraging peers to think about who the child is (name) and what they like or do that is the same as them. This helps children to feel more connected and get to know others; helping them to connect and recognise others and develop empathy for others. It also helps to build the identity, wellbeing and confidence of the speaker who is celebrated and recognised for who they are and what they enjoy by the group. We also continue to support interactions between children in small groups and have stepped up children thinking about peers they could ask for help.



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Building friendship skills during our kinder year is very important. We help to support these skills by teaching them explicitly and supporting children in various ways such as modelling language or actions in activities they are engaged and interested in. Messy play is a big hit with Gareeal group and they love getting in the dirt and getting messy. Gareeal children have really been connecting with each other through their joint interest in messy play. It has been a wonderful way in which children are showing and learning how to join in play with others, work cooperatively, share and turn take and listen to each other with support and encouragement.



Story telling - Indigenous cultures are amazing storytellers who share and transfer cultural meaning, knowledge and much more through generations via many means including oral stories. Storytelling is important for children's literacy skills and helps to build vocabulary, sentence and story order and understanding, creativity and imagination. This term I have been engaging children in various different forms of storytelling rather than just picture stories. We do this at

group times, in small groups and at various activities like playdough or construction. We have done oral stories with nature and puppets as well to share ideas, things we have done (reflections) and to recount more traditional stories like red riding hood and the 3 Billy Goats Gruff. We will continue to engage children in oral storytelling throughout the whole year to help children become storytellers too.

This term we were fortunate to be able to celebrate the wonderful women in our lives through our VIP celebration day at kinder and with some special surprises we made which we hope you loved. It was wonderful to share our kinder and some of our favourite activities with our VIPs. It really supported children's confidence, wellbeing and belonging having you come and



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play and we loved having you join in our favourite songs and dances at kinder. We spent time during our kinder sessions making you a colour candle and special card. It helped to build children's social and emotional skills as we spoke in small groups about love and happiness, fun and kindness. We talked about what makes our mum special, what we love doing with her and why we love her. We were learning to be thankful and grateful and show care and love for others.



Smudge sticks - we learnt that although not an Australian Indigenous activity they are made by other indigenous cultures in the world like Nepal. We used our senses to look, touch and smell different native plants, herbs and leaves from Australia.

We talked about the smells and yarned as we made our smudge sticks together. We are looking forward to drying them and then burning them to bring relaxation, wellbeing and calm.



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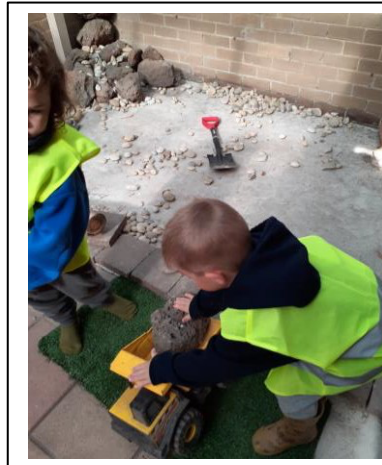


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Gareeal love role play and have been enjoying many of our imaginative play spaces at kinder. The grocery shop is a hit and children have been learning new language whilst exploring the ideas of buying and selling. It has also encouraged lots of wonderful and rich peer interaction opportunities. They have also enjoyed spending time in the fairy garden and in the playground as various different workers like road workers, builders, crane operators, diggers, sailors etc. There have been vast and varied discussions and sharing of knowledge on different jobs and roles and equipment needed. Children have shared insights and communicated, cooperated, connected and showed kindness as they include others and take turns with support.



Our love for cooking and creating in the cubby café in Gareeal has lead us to not only explore cooking and our understanding of making food but we are also beginning to discuss how the trees and plants are alive. We have decided that we can take what trees drop and gift us and take only a little of the tree no more then what we need for our cooking. This is an



important message because we need trees to produce air to breathe, food and medicines. The first people of Australia acknowledge the importance and equality of trees with humans in their culture, recognising both rely on the other to exist.



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Children have been continually encouraged to actively care for all living things. Each session we spend time caring for the chickens and in the vegetable garden. We also help the children to begin to take second looks and closer looks at what they are seeing, doing or exploring. We are encouraging them to be explorers and observers just like scientists. They are talking about and making observations and comments about what the chickens are doing or eating and beginning to take notice of the smaller details like the ladybug on the leaf, spider webs, or a snails trail.

Many of you have enjoyed receiving the reflection after the session via text message so I will continue to send this weekly. Please feel free to look at the reflection book when you are at kinder during the session or to have a look at your child's art book which we keep at kinder for some of their special work. We have lots of exciting adventures planned for the rest of the term and we are looking forward to seeing you at kinder soon.

THANKS, JILL

Dates for the Diary!

- Friday 28th May - Coolart Homestead and Wetlands Walk - please note permission for this walk will be required prior to leaving your child. Details will go out this week
- Friday 11th June - Reserve Walk - (rescheduled)
- Friday 18th June - Reserve Walk
- Friday 25th June - Mud Day at kinder - families join us at 1:30pm in their mud gear!



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