

## Thinking about and supporting your child with Transitions and Changes: *it's been happening all year.*

Dear Families, in this newsletter I would like to share these thoughts with you about how what has been happening within the preschool program has been supporting your child to become more confident, to see change as OK and the unexpected as possibilities for further understandings and learn towards new ways to know. As our thoughts become increasingly focused on what happens next year, the changes ahead and the next transition in your child's life is a journey please know that they do not make this alone or without thought and planning. The relationships your child has developed within their groups (beyond their families) with those they trust throughout the year have offered them both a sense of belonging and security as well as intentionally teaching each child towards change. We have been helping each child to explore their feelings, to be challenged to move beyond what they know, be brave as well as learn supported by each other and to know the excitement and wonder, as together we anticipate and experience the unknown. Everyday there within many of the learning experiences and environments, both planned for and unexpected within the programs the group have actively come to know 'change' as part of everyday life. Feelings of uncertainty, anticipation, wonder, excitement, and their possibilities are all explored, expressed, acknowledged, and discussed in conversations, through many questions, drawings, artwork, story books, story making and telling.



*Learning with Country offers many ways to know change, to be challenged and to learn with the possibilities of the unknown and unexpected.*



Term four at Balnarring Preschool is a time of reflection as we begin to look back on the year we have had and plan for the time we still have together. As teachers Karen, Jill, and myself (Ann) we talk with each other about the many wonderful adventures and experiences that are happening within each of the four groups. We share stories about the many special times within our groups, the insights offered by the children, the quiet moments of learning, funny happenings and times of wonder shared together. Being together and belonging to Manameet, Gareeal, Djeembana and Weelam group has become important to the sense of identity for each child and their family. We share our observations of how the relationships between the children, their teachers and the Land have strengthened. How each group has created their own sense of community built with respect and care, and the many friendships that have developed between the parents, the children, and the teaching teams. We feel pride how the children have committed to and now take responsibility to care for each other and Country. Being Welcomed to Country, participating in smoking ceremonies and the many learning times we have engaged with First Nations Peoples as our teachers has supported all of us to deepen our sense of belonging, community and knowing the

importance of all relationships beyond your family. Throughout this year all the children have been challenged to learn new routines and ways to be. For many of the children this learning has happened within previously unfamiliar environments. They have learnt to be with teachers and educators beyond their families, supported to develop trust within new relationships and move beyond their familiar (safe spaces) within the rhythm of each the sessions. Each child has been supported to become confident in their sense of belonging, being and becoming both independently as well as knowing the feelings, security and emotions of interdependence that supports them to know they are part of a caring community. Think back to this time a year ago, when you were just thinking about 2022, wondering about the group you were about to join, with many questions about what you needed to know and how would child be at kinder. These many unknowns, feelings of nervousness and shyness were all very genuine for both you and your child and you probably are starting to feel them again now. These are all understandable and real feelings. As much as we might not like to go through them at the time and to protect our children from them, when viewed and reframed as learning opportunities for life and the many more changes and transitions to come there is much, we can do to support the children to feel OK.

It is the reality, at this point in time in the year, we start actively talking about changes again. Whether your child (and family) is transitioning from Manameet and Gareeal to Djeembana or Weelam group or from Djeembana or Weelam group to school it is a major change for all of us. These changes are often spoken about as exciting milestone for your child and family, we believe it is also important to acknowledge it can be a time of many other feelings as well. All of you will be experiencing these changes in your own way as parents and your child will be feeling their own emotions too. We are asking them to leave the stability of what has become familiar to them and now be excited about and settle into new learning environments, develops new friendships, and spends time with new teachers. There are many ways you can support your child during these times of change. We have plenty of time and it is important that talk of change does not dominant over what is still happening now. It is important that you as parents inform yourselves as much as possible so you can confidently offer information, caring assistance and engage in positive conversations that support feelings of these transitions being OK. You can help by modelling flexible behaviours; going for informal visits to familiarize your child with the environments. You can create visual stories with photos and drawings and there are many storybooks that talk about emotions and transitions. These provide visual cues of what you can do and how to manage the changes.



*The birds we have been watching in Weelam group are teaching us to be brave*



The ducklings all jumped from the high nesting box last week and the young Falcons on Collins Street are practicing their flying skills. We are watching to see when they will be brave enough to jump. Please remember you do not have to go through transitions alone, please speak to the teaching team and together we will help your children to fly.

Written by Ann on behalf of the teaching team.