1. CONTEXT

Preschool Name: Willow Close Preschool  Preschool Number: 4675
Preschool Director: Beryl Barnard  Partnership: Heyson

- Willow Close is situated in the southern sector of the rapidly expanding town of Mount Barker in the Adelaide Hills.
- High enrolments throughout 2014 with maximum 80 children.
- Staff team - 1 full time Director, 1 full time teacher, 1 full time ECW, 1 part time ECW in mainstream. 1 full time teacher, 1 full time ECW in the Inclusive Preschool Program.
- The families are from varied socio-economic backgrounds.
- There are a high proportion of children with additional needs.
- The pre-school provides: 15 hours of Pre-school including half and full-days with a lunch care program; an Inclusive Pre-School Program to support children with disabilities and high support needs; Preschool Support in mainstream for children with additional needs; and Playgroup for families.
- We foster close liaison with the local child care centres and the centre is used by Anglicare to support parents with access visits.
- Strong supportive Governing Council - 8 members.

2. REPORT FROM GOVERNING COUNCIL

See attached report.
Core focus: To improve the culture of inclusivity and respect.

Progress was evident in many areas in particular the following:

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

Inclusive Preschool Program

This learning environment is structured to incorporate specific teaching strategies that support each child's learning plan. Sensory integration and functional skills were the two main areas of focus throughout 2014.

Some of the achievements included:

Staff observed a growth in the children's ability to self-regulate. This was achieved through structured sensory time following lunch and throughout the day in the outdoor learning environment where the children had opportunities to access the sensory activities and motor planning activities.

Functional skills - promoting independence with self help skills eg putting their belongings away, washing their hands and eating independently.

The children responding to the routines including transitions to and from activities.

Strong parent partnerships were developed and maintained with daily contact. This is crucial to a successful Inclusive Preschool Programme.

Partnerships and input from intervention has support the children, parents and staff throughout the year. Some of these included DECD, Adelaide Hills Community Health Service providers, SERU, Private Speech Pathologists, Disabilities SA and Autism SA.

Mainstream children regularly asked to participate in planned Inclusive Preschool Program activities such as group time where they willingly modeled and supported their peers with additional needs. Throughout the day staff observed communication and cooperative play across the IPP and mainstream program.

Focus on Inclusivity and Respect

Respect has been a primary focus through both structured and child-initiated learning experiences. Floor books were introduced in both the Inclusive Preschool Program and mainstream to capture the children's thinking about respect for each other and the environment. We have developed a sense of belonging to our park next door this year.

The children were involved in inquiry into trees and their structure - the children created representative drawings of their observations and understandings. The majority of the children have actively displayed care and support of their peers - from helping find puzzle pieces to assisting children with more specific learning needs.

Gardening and caring for the outdoor environment has provided practical nature-based learning and an opportunity for the children to develop respect for the environment. A noteworthy learning experience was the nature-play opportunity that rose from the
felling of the trees around the kindergarten following a storm when the children redesigned the fairy garden using logs and sawdust for paths and quiet areas.

**Literacy**

A focus on word recognition, rhyme and first sounds of words was implemented primarily through songs and games. During Term 2 an oral language project based on the story *Possum Magic* was implemented in conjunction with a DECD speech pathologist. Recall of the story and characters, along with rhyme, syllables, first sounds of words and targeted vocabulary, were explored through the story and interactive games. Following the project, staff recorded an increase in extended, more complex and sustained dramatic play in both the indoor and outdoor environments, 70% of the children detected rhyme, initial sounds of words and clapping syllables.

**Numeracy**

A focus on numeracy was implemented primarily through songs and games. Board games were popular with the children requesting them daily. Children have further developed understandings of mathematical language, symbols and concepts such as shape, colour, pattern, spatial awareness, and number. Additionally they have practiced social skills such as sharing and turn-taking. A focus on patterning enabled the children to demonstrate their strong understanding in this area, in particular how patterns repeat. This learning was demonstrated during an activity when the children created their own patterns on paper and then copied that pattern with beads, making necklaces.

**Friday Morning Program**

Rich cultural experiences were featured on Fridays that enabled the children to explore German language, food, clothing and customs. Parent feedback indicated that at home children shared songs, counted and talked about the engaging activities. The children made lanterns for St Martin’s Day, and helped to make traditional German dishes. Throughout Term 4 the children learnt German songs about colour, body parts and Christmas songs at the parents’ request in preparation for the end of year kindergarten celebration at Keith Stevenson Park - with a hearty singing voice the majority of children joined in, many knowing all the words.

**Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety**

**Lunch Care Program**

Throughout the year we focused on routines, manners, healthy eating and hygiene habits, independence and responsibility for belongings. The children actively took part
in relaxation activities before lunch giving them opportunities to begin developing this important skill and settle before eating.

**Cooking**

The majority of children volunteered to take part in our many cooking activities. Learning included healthy eating, food preparation and utensil skills along with numeracy (number and measurement). Activities initiated by the children included breakfast at kindy, cooking with an emu egg, pumpkin scones, juicing oranges, stir fry, pumpkin soup and Herman the friendship cake.

**Quality Area 3: Physical Environment**

Throughout 2014 at Willow Close the outdoor learning environment allowed for creativity and extended projects involving natural resources including the park adjacent to the kindergarten. Using fallen trees from the car park and broken tree branches from the fairy garden the children created cubbies, paths, campfires, Grug’s house and rainbow. Clearly the children developed a sense of ownership and respect for the playground through having a voice in their learning.

**Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements**

Our staff team at Willow Close Preschool organised and co-ordinated a Hills District Professional Learning day focusing on Floorbook Training with presenter Niki Buchan from Sydney. Following this we have developed a culture of incorporating children’s voice as a priority when programming and implementing our emergent curriculum. The children were given a stronger voice as their interests, thoughts and developing understandings were documented in a visual and authentic way through photos, drawings and annotations. Staff reflective practice identified the varying needs and interests of each day’s cohort and a new floor book was created for each day of the week providing opportunities for continuity of learning.
Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Staff focused on improving quality of relationships with all children in the centre. Using the Relationships scales in our document Reflect Respect Relate staff worked through their positive interactions with children and the quality of verbal exchanges with them. Clearly this learning strengthened our relationships with the children and improved documentation of their learning and planning for extending their learning.

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Our priority: to improve communication and partnerships with parents. This was achieved through end of Term 1 child reflections/report given to every parent with offer for follow up conversation and or feedback. 95% of parents presented written feedback all positive responses. Surveys were conducted throughout the year to involve parents in decision making eg excursions. Floor books were introduced and made available daily to parents to communicate children's learning. Staff availability on a daily basis for parents to approach and 'catch up' on their children's progress and emails were clearly the preferred option this year.

Quality Area 7: Leadership and Management.

Successfully initiated programming format change to include daily reflections, evaluation and planning for children's learning through their voice. Streamlined staff meetings to include whole staff team through manageable agenda/reporting.

Next steps

We will continue these practices in 2015 as learning outcomes for the children underpin the whole curriculum.

Initially informed by the successes of 2014, staff will begin by fostering positive relationships with the children and working in partnership with parents. Documented observations of children's learning will identify their interests, strengths and needs. This evidence informs the emerging Quality Improvement Plan that provides a big picture focus; from this we implement all areas of Belonging, Being Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia and Respect, Reflect, Relate (assessing for learning and development in the Early Years).

4. INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

- 14 children were referred to DECD special services for speech and language, receiving preschool support enabling staff to work 1:1 and in small groups. Individual Learning Plans (One Plans) were developed and implemented for
each of these children in consultation with their parents and the special services team. DECD and private speech pathologists worked with the families and preschool support worker to model and further support their learning. Their learning progress has been assessed and noted through anecdotal evidence, observations, parent input, photographs and children’s artifacts.

- The children's learning outcomes included increase in the amount of language used, conversational turns, increase in their confidence and development of social skills and in their enthusiasm for learning, ability to detect rhyme and initial word sounds.

5. STUDENT DATA

6.1 Enrolments and Attendance

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<tr>
<td>Attendances</td>
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Both enrolments and attendances throughout the year were high. Parents were responsive informing the centre of any child absences.

6.2 Destination – Feeder Schools

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<th>Feeder Total</th>
<th>Est. No Of Enrolments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total % to Govt Schools</td>
<td>% to Non Govt Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>4675 - Willow Close Preschool Centre</td>
<td>80</td>
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6. CLIENT OPINION

Throughout the year we surveyed parents with a purpose to involve them in decision making in the kindergarten. Some of these included: excursions; Christmas celebrations; a meet and greet night for families; children's reporting end Term 1 with feedback; and conversations with parents.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY

At Willow Close we have established a spreadsheet to record staff and volunteers who are involved in the centre. Records of criminal history checks are kept in a folder with the spreadsheet.
### 8. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

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<td>Parent Contributions</td>
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See attached Profit and Loss Statement for 2014.