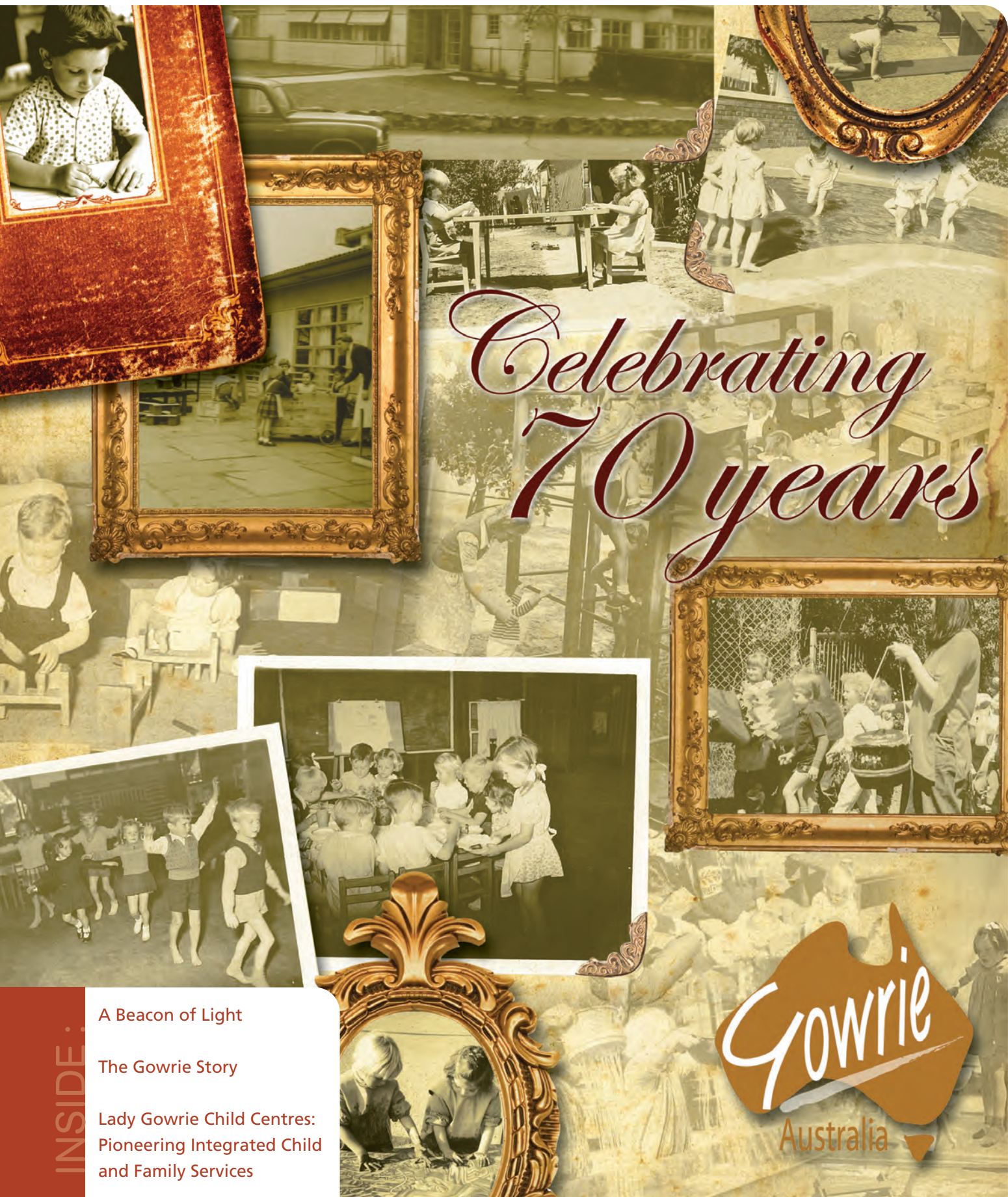


reflections

GOWRIE AUSTRALIA PUBLICATION • WINTER 2010 • ISSUE 39



*Celebrating
70 years*

Gowrie
Australia

INSIDE:

A Beacon of Light

The Gowrie Story

Lady Gowrie Child Centres:
Pioneering Integrated Child
and Family Services

Reflections is a quarterly publication by Gowrie Australia for staff and families in Children's Services.

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The opinions expressed in *Reflections* are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of Gowrie Australia. By publishing diverse opinions we aim to encourage critical reflection and motivate practitioners in Children's Services to respond. Gowrie Australia's privacy policy precludes the use of children's names. Fictitious names are substituted.

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Welcome to our special anniversary edition of *Reflections*. This year, Lady Gowrie Child Centres are celebrating 70 years of providing quality services for young children and their families.

Preparing for this edition, and walking the talk of collective reflective practice, we have enjoyed learning more about our shared history and the early vision of the Gowrie centres. A little self-indulgent? Perhaps. However, the link between past, present and future is always interesting and often illuminating. So what have we discovered?

- Like many early childhood policy decisions, the funding of six Lady Gowrie Centres in 1940 was controversial and marked a new direction in maternal and infant welfare.
- Government policy continues to shape and influence our work – sometimes for the good and sometimes not so good.
- The Lady Gowrie Centres represent early models of integrated child and family services – employing teachers, child health nurses and social workers to work with children and their parents.
- Building positive and reciprocal relationships between children, families and educators has been an ongoing foundation for quality practice at The Gowrie.
- While there is always more to learn, older and established theories and practices continue to inform and support our work (eg. attachment theory, primary caregiving, partnership with parents, play-based learning).
- While proudly community-based, like all early childhood education and care (ECEC) services we are also businesses and need to ensure effective operation and ongoing viability.

It is also clear that, despite ongoing focus and discussion, we continue to grapple with some old and difficult issues and questions:

- What is the essence of quality in ECEC?
- How do we recruit and retain quality educators and properly reward them for their professional work?
- How do we strengthen access and participation in quality ECEC for all children?

We share our history and experiences to promote new insights and discussion about the importance and impact of ECEC in Australia, and the need for proactive, innovative and supportive policies and funding.

We salute our colleagues across ECEC services and thank you for the important work that you do.

Finally, we dedicate this issue to the numerous strong, dedicated and visionary women who fought convention, advocated for the rights of young children and families, and recognised both the immediate and lasting contribution of early education to children's health, learning and wellbeing. Your vision remains our vision, your work our work.

Dr Susan Irvine
CEO, The Gowrie (QLD) Inc

OTHER GOWRIE CEO'S

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
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| Gilda Howard | – Gowrie Victoria |
| Ros Cornish | – Lady Gowrie Tasmania |
| Kaye Colmer | – Gowrie SA |
| Amanda Hunt | – The Gowrie (WA) Inc |



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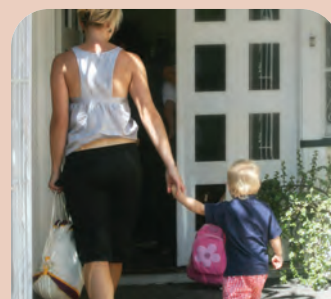
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A Beacon of Light

Authors:

Kaye Colmer & Ros Cornish,
CEO's of Gowrie SA and Gowrie Tasmania

The establishment of the Commonwealth funded Gowrie centres was both the culmination of a ten year campaign by committed individuals and groups, and a contentious decision by Government. Allocation of the infant wellbeing budget to the creation of the six demonstration centres was of itself controversial. Our Gowrie history was built on and extended the already established traditions of early childhood education taking influences from practitioners and theorists such as Montessori, deLissa and Froebel. At the time there were kindergarten unions in each state and a 30-40 year tradition of kindergartens and day care centres as separate programs, each deeply influenced by philanthropic intentions. Many of the state kindergarten unions were fearful that the establishment of Commonwealth funded centres would erode their power and influence – a potential threat!

In recognising the national interest of improving the wellbeing of the poorest and most vulnerable children, there was a failure to acknowledge the broader social and economic structural issues in society that led to the existence of such poverty. In these early days of Gowrie operations the notion of women working to contribute to family income was not accepted, reflecting a broader societal view of the importance of motherhood and the idea that a child required a competent and fully available mother.

In compiling the Gowrie history it is evident that the centres were deeply affected by policy and funding changes. In many ways our history reflects the experience of early childhood program provision in Australia generally. Kindergartens and child care centres have had a turbulent history – not ever really part of core government provision as is the case with schools, but part of an ever-changing landscape of community services that are affected by ideology and political agenda.

As a reflection of this broader struggle, individual Gowries have experienced good times and bad times. Comments such as *"I didn't think that would happen at the Gowrie"* is often heard, but our services experience the same struggle to maintain quality as any other service. Juggling the complex, competing requirements is a constant struggle. Trying to maintain quality, recruit staff, keep morale

high and balance the budgets are all issues faced on a daily basis by the early childhood sector and the Gowrie centres are not immune!

An ongoing priority for the Gowrie centres is to assist the broader field through professional development and support and to work with peak groups and associations to advocate for children and families.

In our professional development we try always to advocate for practice that we know can be achieved, rather than some idealised notion of what might be possible. Reflecting back through our years of advocacy and struggle we find that some of the current issues we face today have been a recurring theme. Issues such as:

- Changing agendas resulting in fluctuating levels of government investment in early childhood.
- The ongoing struggle to achieve just wages and conditions for early childhood educators - we wonder is it really an industrial issue or is it a political issue?
- The potential for integrating services around children and families.
- Early childhood policies being imposed, rather than grass roots consultation and planning that values and respects the knowledge and experience of educators.
- Acceptable and appropriate qualifications of educators.
- The capacity to recruit the right people.
- The potential value of a multidisciplinary team approach.
- The enduring impact of early childhood experiences on children.

The question is often posed - how far have we come? Our years at the Gowrie and our appreciation of the history of those strong, visionary and dauntless women who took their struggle to the top and persevered surely leaves us with hope? Today, we remain a profession committed to the importance of our work and, more than ever, value the need to work together to improve quality.





The Gowrie Story

The Gowrie story begins in 1930 with a group of Melbourne women of remarkable vision and enthusiasm. Realising the impact of children's early experience on their later development and wishing to extend the influence of the growing number of nursery schools, these public spirited women formed The Nursery School Committee to consider ways of furthering the new nursery school experiment in Victoria.

In 1932, the committee was re-named the Demonstration Nursery School Committee and over the next few years guided the establishment of several nursery schools including one at the Children's Hospital. With extraordinary foresight, this voluntary committee formed a working party in early 1938 to "draw up" tentative plans for a demonstration centre for preschool child development in each capital city. A detailed memorandum and plans were taken to Canberra and discussed with the Director General of Health. The need for better care for the very young had also been urged by other influential agencies and valuable support of her Excellency, Lady Gowrie, wife of the Governor General, did much to bring about a quick approval of the scheme. Late in April 1938, the Prime Minister wrote to the Premiers in

each state detailing plans to open Demonstration Centres to establish the best methods of care and education for young children.

Because of the inspiration provided by Lady Gowrie, it was decided that the Centres in each of the six capital cities would bear her name – The Lady Gowrie Child Centre. During the years 1939-1940, Lady Gowrie personally opened each of the Centres at a public gathering.

Over the next seventy years, the value of the Centres in impressing on Australian parents and educationalists the value of early care and education can scarcely be over estimated. The initiative of this enterprising and optimistic group has been the spark of an intensive range of services for young children and families. Subsequent Committees and Boards of Management, with some support from Federal, State and Local Governments and outstanding commitment from volunteers and staff have enabled the growth of services and programs which fulfil the hopes of those dauntless, pioneering women.

Today, all of the Gowries have grown beyond their original centre. Responding to different needs and opportunities, the Gowrie is different in each state. However, together, they span child centres, kindergartens and preschools, family day care, outside school hours care and child and family support.

The History of the Gowrie Centres from 1939 – 2010

A reflection of key milestones together with World and Australian historical events

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
World Events	Germany invades Poland		Japanese surprise attack on US fleet at Pearl Harbor	Declaration of United Nations signed		Anne Frank and her family betrayed and sent to concentration camps
Australian Events	1939 – 1945 Australian troops fight in World War 2		First Italian POWs arrive	Darwin bombed by Japanese planes Welfare measures introduced – old age pensions, child endowment, housing & medical benefits Women campaigned for equal pay		Unemployment and sickness benefits introduced
Gowrie Events	The first Lady Gowrie Child Centre in Melbourne opens	Lady Gowrie Child Centres in Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Sydney & Hobart opened			The Wartime Children's Centre Program commenced from 7am to 7pm. 1943. Gowrie Scholarship Trust Fund set up as memorial to Patrick Gowrie, killed in action in 1942 for WW2 ex-service people or their descendants	



Building on the original integrated service model, they continue to promote partnership with parents and offer a range of parent information, education and family support services. Continuing as demonstration services and centres for learning, they offer a range of pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities, initiate and participate in research projects, work with government to support informed policy decision-making and undertake a range of activities to promote and support the provision of quality services for children and families.

Gowrie Reflections ...

Michael White reflects on the 1980's and his work as Board Member, Chair and Director of Hobart Gowrie

The 1980s was an exciting and challenging time to be involved with the Lady Gowries in Australia. My first involvement was sparked by a financial crisis. As Hobart Gowrie moved from its traditional early childhood education role to more complex "business-like" services such as child care there was a

lot of concern from our funders about whether we were a financially viable organisation. We weathered the crisis, improved the systems, introduced accounting practices which matched what we were actually doing and got back on our feet again. But the real message of all of this was that the demands of early childhood care and education were changing, and that the Gowrie needed to change with it. It was a time when the Gowrie was moving from something of a "cottage industry" to the modern service it is today.

It wasn't all about administration and business planning though. Over the next few years we strengthened the child care program and wrestled with many of the policy issues which are still alive today. What is quality in child care? How do you deliver it? And, most importantly, how do you integrate early childhood care and education when our systems in Australia were designed to keep these apart?

We were able to address quality questions through providing high staff:child ratios (1 to 7 for children over three) and employing qualified staff including early childhood teachers in the child care program. However I can also remember our surprise when parents asked us to move their four year olds out of the child care room across to the Kindergarten for their "dose" of early childhood education.

1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
US launched Atomic Bomb in Japan	Juan Peron president of Argentina	Dead Sea Scrolls discovered	Gandhi assassinated	Sth Africa institutionalises apartheid	The Korean War	Libya independent from Italy
Australia becomes founding member of the United Nations		The Census shows Australia's population is 7.6million • Official reduction in hrs of work from 44 to 40				
		Major change in enrolment policy—children did not need to be Australian born				Introduction of a 'free program' for 5 year olds where the playroom and playground were considered one learning space



While it was of course a good service, our Kindergarten program had lower staff:child ratios and lower numbers of qualified staff than the child care program.

Thirty years later we are still struggling with this concept in Australia and still have much to learn from the models which the Lady Gowries instituted in the early 80s and are still practising.

One of the other key debates at this time was how to provide child care staff with contact free time for program planning. We approached this in two ways. Firstly we took it upon ourselves to establish a new award which incorporated program planning time for care staff. In our naivety we approached the industrial relations commission and told them about plans to change the award. We then learned we had to have a dispute before the commission would consider our proposed award.

Fortunately we found that the union was only too happy to provide us with the basis of a dispute and I still have their letter of demand requesting, amongst other things, extraordinarily high wages and shopping holidays in Melbourne for all staff! The result of all of this was that we established the first federal award for child care staff which provided them with some program planning time.

By linking the Hobart and Perth Gowries we were able to create a national dispute and the resolution became a nationally applicable award. It was our hope that this would become a model for the rest of the country.

The other approach we took was to lobby Federal politicians directly. When the then Federal Minister told me that he could not see the need for program planning time for staff we made a video of the program planning activities being conducted at the Gowrie at that time and sent it to him – perhaps again naively we hoped to change a system which many are still struggling to achieve so many years later.

As well as expanding the services to children through child care programs we actively reached out to find new ways of communicating, new ways of connecting with parents and children. We developed or supported programs such as the Special Needs Resources Team, to better integrate children with disabilities into those services and the family support program to assist parents who were in need of support in their parenting role.

The use of video was also fairly new at the time and we used this (new and at that time bulky!) technology to promote parent education and family support programs.

The History of the Gowrie Centres from 1939 – 2010

A reflection of key milestones together with World and Australian historical events

	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
World Events	George VI of England dies his daughter becomes Elizabeth II	Tito becomes president of Yugoslavia		US starts sending \$216 million in aid to Vietnam	Egypt takes control of Suez Canal	Space Age begins with Russia's launch of Sputnik 1
Australian Events			Royal Visit by the Queen and Prince Phillip	One millionth post war immigrant arrives	The first television broadcast goes to air The Olympic Games held in Melbourne	
Gowrie Events		A major study "Home Background in Relation to Program Planning in a Preschool Centre" commenced		Commonwealth funding to continue "Home Background in Relation to Program Planning in a Preschool Centre" study published		



When the Director took 12 months maternity leave, I stepped down as Chair of the Board and undertook the role of Director for a year. That too was an exciting and challenging step. I was the first male to undertake the role and my other (female) Director colleagues around the country never missed an opportunity to remind me of my place! The fax machine would regularly roll into life with yet another cartoon or wise saying which helped me know my place. I well remember one that reminded me to "Just remember, Ginger Rogers did everything that Fred Astaire did – backwards and in high heels".

I don't know about "backwards and in high heels" but I do remember my time at Lady Gowrie as demanding, exciting and extremely professionally rewarding.

Gowrie Reflections ...

**Life at Lady Gowrie Brisbane over the years:
Lori Douglas and Dr Susan Irvine share
an informal conversation**

Lori's grandmother, the highly respected early educator, Pat Patterson taught at Brisbane Gowrie



from the 1960s through to the early 1980s. Lori would often pop in for a visit, and in 1975 attended the Gowrie kindergarten. In the mid 1990s, she returned to the centre as a parent, eager for her own child Ethan to experience Gowrie. But the story doesn't end there. Influenced by her famous grandmother, and her own experience at Gowrie, Lori studied early childhood education. She returned to the Gowrie in 1997 as an educator and continues to play an important role in the lives of Gowrie children and families. Lori kindly shares her memories of life at Lady Gowrie Brisbane over the years.

1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964
European Economic Community established	Fidel Castro assumes power in Cuba	John F Kennedy becomes US president	East Germany erects the Berlin Wall between East and West Berlin	Cuban Missile Crisis	John F Kennedy assassinated	Nelson Mandela sentenced to life imprisonment in South Africa
			20% of Australian women in the workforce (was 8.6% in 1947) • Home ownership in Australia was 82.3% (was around 55% in 1933)			
Grant income from Australian Preschool Association	A study on the infection rate and general health of children at the centres conducted		The "Australian Pre-School Quarterly" was published & attracted 600 subscriptions in the first year • In-service training program for teachers began • Consideration as to whether the centres should come under responsibility of Minister of Health or Minister of Education			A Special issue of the "Australian Pre-School Quarterly" celebrated the silver jubilee of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres



Lori as a toddler

What are your fondest memories of being a child at The Gowrie?

I was always here and felt part of the place. Everyone knew me and looked after me. I was Pat Patterson's first grandchild. When I close my eyes and think about Gowrie, and being little, everything seemed

really big. The long hallway through the centre. The amazing yard and the magic of the outside playground - the forts and the secret cave. The playground was exciting and challenging. The rockwalls, the tyre stepping stones. The bamboo plantation offered wondrous places and spaces to be. There were always animals around too – rabbits, ducks, penny turtles. It was wondrous to get up close to the animals and we got to look after them. The rules weren't the same and I think we were lucky.

What are your childhood memories of staff at The Gowrie?

Everything was about relationships and experiences. Our commitment to primary caregiving today is based on the sense of love and care that I experienced as a child at the Gowrie. It's more formalised today, but it's what's always been important.

Why did you return to the Gowrie as an adult?

As an adult, knowing what an amazing time this was for me, I wanted the same for my child and others. At Gowrie, we work to develop a deep trust and intimacy with families and there is a strong feeling of connection. For me personally, there is something very special about here – something to be treasured.

How has the Gowrie changed over the years and are there any lessons we can learn from our past?

In the early days, we met the needs of the immediate community. Over the past 20 years, we have grown a lot, and can have a much greater influence – providing services for more children and families and promoting quality service provision. Gowrie continues to offer a very nurturing environment that really looks at individual children. Children are valued and cared for in a close loving way and in partnership with their families. There is this lovely circle. Parents come back because they want the same for their children.

The History of the Gowrie Centres from 1939 – 2010

A reflection of key milestones together with World and Australian historical events

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
World Events	The first US combat troops arrive in Vietnam	Mao's cultural revolution begins in China		Martin Luther King Jnr assassinated	Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi deposes King Idris of Libya	Earthquake kills more than 50,000 in Peru
Australian Events	Australian troops sent to the Vietnam War		Australia's first Satellite is launched Referendum on Aboriginal Rights is held			
Gowrie Events			Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt disappears		The responsibility for the Gowrie centres was transferred from the Minister for Health to the Minister for Education and Science and the Commonwealth grant was increased by \$30,000 (divided by the 6 centres)	Gowrie 30th Anniversary Responsibility for Gowries moved to Minister of Education and Science



And lessons to be learned? The old playground was magic and full of challenge. The wooden fort seemed massive. You could test yourself and try different things. I think that this supported children to learn to take risks and to make good decisions. This has changed – and I think we worry too much now.

In taking part in this interview, Lori drew a parallel between the Gowrie journey and her grandmother's well-loved book "On my way: A collection of stories and poetry for children" (Patterson, 1987: Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Brisbane). As a community – we are on our way.

Gowrie Reflections ...

Kaye Colmer reflects on life at Lady Gowrie South Australia – 70 years and counting

At a staff meeting some months ago we were talking about our history in anticipation of our 70th anniversary. We had the entire Gowrie SA staff team in attendance and asked people to stand along a continuum of how many years they had been 'connected' with the Gowrie. Of course we had anticipated this in years of service. We had not expected that 3 of our staff had attended the centre

as children. Our biggest surprise was that one of our relief staff, Sev, an early childhood teaching student had been here in the mid 90's and with some prompting, a couple of staff made the connection to the little girl they remembered. Some of us felt rather old!

I wondered what it felt like for these women to be working as adults in the very same rooms that they themselves had memories of from their childhood.



Sev, on the left, painting with a friend – and she's forgotten her smock!

Sev produced photos of herself as a three year old at the easel, an experience that is somehow timeless. Sev remembers her early childhood experience at the Gowrie with fondness and recalls her excitement when chocolate junket was served. Another of her vivid memories was of running away from the centre, when as a three year old her 'big' brother, (four) told her he was going home. Although she says she distinctly recalls that she didn't want to

1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Mao Zedong invites the US ping-pong team to visit Beijing	Israeli athletes killed at Munich Olympic Games	US troops pull out of Vietnam Mobile phone is invented	US president Richard Nixon resigns following Watergate	Bill Gates and Paul Allen found Microsoft	Jimmy Carter elected US President	Scientists identify "legionnaire's disease"
	Gough Whitlam elected	Sydney Opera House opens Maternity Leave introduced for Commonwealth Public Servants	Colour TV is introduced	Australia's Governor General dismisses Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister		Australian scientists develop world's first system for storing Solar Energy on a mass scale
Review of the work of the six Gowrie Centres by Dr. Scott		Submissions provided to Federal Government Committee investigating needs of Australian preschool children (Fry Report)				A new Terms of Reference and Functions document was approved by the Commonwealth Government. • Programs offered included 3 & 4 year old kindergarten, mothers and toddlers groups and school transition programs for 5 & 6 year olds.



leave she did as she was asked. The children took off down the street, but fortunately not unnoticed and two teachers were close on their heels. She remembers her mother being summoned and insisting on taking them both back to the Gowrie – each child clinging to a side of their mother's apron. She remembers crying when her mother left. Such enduring memories from such an early age provide a poignant reminder of how important it is for us to do all within our power as early childhood educators to support children's emotional world as well as their learning.

I vividly recall my first formal function after being appointed as CEO of the Gowrie in SA. It was a meeting of the Friends of the Gowrie and I was to enjoy a meal with them and talk about my vision for the future. Most of the women were retired, early childhood teachers many of whom had been teachers at the Gowrie or had been involved in the Kindergarten Union. I recall asking an elderly woman about her first connection with the Gowrie – she replied dryly that she had been at the opening in 1940, which at the time struck me as remarkable. She commented from her many years experience of early childhood, that there are cyclical patterns where old theories are rediscovered and where government funding changes impact on possibilities. I can see now that her advice to me was so wise.

In preparation for our 70th anniversary we decided to map a history of the SA Gowrie with a particular focus on the nature of the programs that were available for children and families. What we discovered was that changes in program structure were indeed directly linked to funding. Some of these changes were pragmatic, some reduced the services available, some may have had a detrimental impact on quality and others took advantage of new funding opportunities. Of course this is the reality of life for any organisation, the need to adapt to the external environment, to changing community needs and to emerging research in order to adapt, grow and revitalize. And, not unexpectedly, some of the challenges actually created new opportunities. It proved an interesting experience to reflect on the level of change that has faced kindergartens and child care services over the past 70 years.

One of the really interesting facts we discovered was that in 1940, when the centre was opened, there was an assumption that all children, regardless of age, required qualified teachers. When the centre first opened there were three rooms - 4 year olds, 3 year olds and 2 year olds - and each room was staffed by two early childhood teachers. This is a far cry from current funding assumptions that the younger the child the less qualified the staff need to be. In reflecting on what we now know about our history, I can see that some of the 'so called changes'

The History of the Gowrie Centres from 1939 – 2010

A reflection of key milestones together with World and Australian historical events

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
World Events	World's first test-tube baby is born	Margaret Thatcher first female Prime Minister in Britain	Actor Ronald Regan elected US President	IBM introduced the PC for general office use	Princess Grace dies in a car crash	Sally Ride first woman astronaut in space
Australian Events		The bionic ear is developed in Melbourne Maternity leave granted to all women in the Australian Workforce		Australia's population reaches 15million Rise of Women in Management & single parent & blended families		Bob Hawke becomes Prime Minister of Australia
Gowrie Events		Christine Heinig, who was instrumental in the planning and direction of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres from 1939 – 1944 passed away	Gowrie 40th Anniversary		Increase in role of Gowries as Resource & Advisory and Demonstration Programs increased	



we have introduced were revisiting previous approaches but with new information and a current research base. Primary caregiving was not as new as I thought it was, as child records reveal that it had been a term in use at least in the eighties; attachment theory had also been used in the past; likewise had I known that there had already been a successful 3-5 kindergarten program I may have been able to bring staff on board with the integrated program earlier!

Gowrie Reflections ...

Anne Houghton reflects on the first 70 years at Gowrie Victoria

As we contemplate our future, it is only fitting to look back at the past. Although there has been a recent name change to Gowrie Victoria, The Lady Gowrie Child Centre in Melbourne also continues to be known by its original name, no doubt due to public awareness of seventy long years of rich history.

In the year 2000, we were extremely fortunate to have author Joan Waters capture our history from 1939 to 1999 in a book titled *The Lady Gowrie Child Centre: The Place, the People, the Programs 1939 – 1999*. It is now out of print, and I suspect we've been caught off guard without realising we've just

come to the end of another decade without the next chapter - yet to be written!

Life seems to be at such a fast pace today and reading Joan's book enabled me to reflect on what might be different now from the origins of our establishment in 1939. Photographs certainly depict change over the years, in our building development, our playrooms, play equipment and playgrounds, which all look different now. There are some familiar faces within the book too, some being renowned early childhood professionals with past connections to the Lady Gowrie Child Centre. Some are now retired, some have moved in new directions, but there are also a few who are still working at our centre today. Since the book is devoted to the history of our centre, it makes us aware that time has passed and that there has been change. But it also makes us aware of the importance of our strong foundation and the elements that we still witness today.

Those before us had visions, principles and values that have stood the test of time. There was much voluntary effort from management committees, but also other organisations and professions who served on committees. Parents too, raised funds and committed hours of time maintaining play spaces for children. Staff also worked countless hours of overtime providing exemplary service. By recording our history, Joan gave us an insight into a very

1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Apple Mac introduced with the Macintosh 128k CD-ROM introduced	Hole in ozone layer	Challenger space shuttle explodes Chernobyl nuclear accident	Black Monday Stock Market Crash	Benazir Bhutto first Islamic woman prime minister	Berlin Wall falls • Tiananmen Square Massacre in China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden Anniversary of the Gowrie Centres • Expansion of in-service training to include staff development was started to meet demands of the field and government • Former CEO of Gowrie Melbourne
Freehold title including Ayres Rock and Mt Olga is granted to the Mutitjulu people				Australia celebrates Bicentenary New Parliament House opens in Canberra		
Child Care places at Gowrie					Sue Harper worked to introduce a National Accreditation system for child care centres. She was a member of the interim National Accreditation Council established at the end of 1991	
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 52 year relationship between the LGCC's and the Australian Early Childhood Association ended and the Gowrie RAP (Resource and Advisory Programs) was formed linking all the LGCC's throughout Australia to provide resourcing and programs on a national basis 	



different time. A glimpse into Friday 8th December 1939 tells the story of three hundred guests gathering in Carlton as Lady Gowrie, wife of the Governor-General, was opening Australia's first model kindergarten. This was also at a time that fears of war were spreading and in just three months, Robert Menzies, Australia's Prime Minister, would announce Australia's entry into World War 2. It is fitting here to read the words Lady Gowrie expressed at the opening:

"Our children are our greatest hope, and anyone doing work for children these days is doing national work and giving splendid war service. Not only must we certainly stand by our soldiers but we must also stand by our soldiers' children. I am enchanted with this lovely building. It is the expression of so much thought and knowledge on the part of those who have planned it, and it is just what is needed to bring up children healthy in both mind and body. Every thinking person must realise that when this bitter strife is over we must build up a better world, and it is only (through) the children that this can be done."

From concept to completion, through wartime programs to peacetime plans, a mysterious fire and second beginning, there have been significant events during our seventy years of history. From kindergarten to long day care programs, and through the

contributions of dedicated staff and of each new Director and CEO, Gowrie Victoria honours those before us that paved the way for what we are today.

Gowrie Reflections ...

Jill Cameron reflects on her time as Director of the Lady Gowrie Perth

What was my most memorable achievement at the Gowrie?

I started work as Director of the Gowrie at a time when the service had moved to encompass a new and broader community development focus.

Catering for children from birth to 12 years our programs covered long day care, regular part time care/ kindergarten, occasional care, after school hours care and vacation care. In addition, our neighbourhood centre responded to needs identified by parents and the local community with its ever-changing population. Activities included the weekly child health clinic, monthly immunisation, parent run playgroups and toy library, a parent resource centre and library, classes ranging from craft, cooking and aerobics, to English for newly arrived refugees and adult literacy and numeracy. People were welcome to drop into the neighborhood centre

The History of the Gowrie Centres from 1939 – 2010

A reflection of key milestones together with World and Australian historical events

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
World Events	USSR dissolves into 15 separate republics		Nokia sends text messages between mobile phones	Thousands dead in Rwanda massacre	Nerve gas attack in Tokyo subway	Outbreak of "mad cow" disease in Britain
Australian Events	Paul Keating becomes Prime Minister of Australia following a leadership challenge		High Court Mabo decision established native title for the Meriam people over the Murray Islands			John Howard becomes Australian Prime Minister
Gowrie Events			The Gowrie RAP consortium was formerly established	The long awaited Quality Improvement and Accreditation System was introduced into all Australian long day care centres on January 1 and was a major step in quality improvement.		



– to chat and plan new ventures, and help with production of a regular community newsheet. Friday 'contact lunches' provided opportunities for parents, local community members and staff from a wide range of agencies in the region to jointly identify solutions to challenges. New organisations evolved from contact lunches – most have since grown and prospered.

The centre brought together staff with qualifications in early childhood education, child care, nursing, play-leading and community development as well as staff with no formal qualifications whose skills and experience were highly valued.

Together, we embraced the opportunity to create an environment which promoted quality and innovation, respect, shared understanding and mutual learning - and in so doing, developed a centre that provided quality early childhood education and care – and was a working model of integration in all respects.

What was one of the greatest challenges in ECEC at this time?

In the 1980s, there was the serious undersupply of child care places and community prejudice about mothers in the workforce was not uncommon. Perth Gowrie was given the challenge of providing a children's service in an integrated neighbourhood setting - a good way of concurrently addressing

supply and attitudinal issues. Parts of the model developed in the Perth Gowrie were replicated in new community-based child care services subsequently established through Commonwealth/ State Child Care Agreements.

What is your aspiration for the Gowrie for the future?

My hope is that the Gowrie will be a proud provider of high quality early childhood education and care, that it will build on its past, and respond and adapt to ever-changing needs and challenges.



1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
British colony of Hong Kong returned to China	Google search engine emerges	Y2K scare of computer failure	World Economic Forum Held in Melbourne George W Bush elected US President	Terrorists attack the World Trade Centre in New York		Space Shuttle Columbia explodes during take-off
			Sydney Olympics held Introduction of GST	Australia celebrates a centenary of Federation		
			60th Anniversary of the Gowrie Centres celebrated at Cocktail Party hosted by Governor General at Government House Canberra Gowrie RAP consortium is rebranded as Gowrie Australia with each state Gowrie as members	Gowrie Australia publishes first edition of "Reflections" magazine		



Gowrie Reflections ...

Karen Dresser, present day Director of Gowrie Erskineville, Sydney, shares stories of belonging and becoming

As I look back over my years at Sydney Gowrie, I am constantly drawn to the special relationships and connections made with the centre and how they have continued over time. There are many people I have met at the centre and in the Early Childhood community who feel a bond with Gowrie through their professional association, or through being part of our centre community – here they share some of their memories:

I first came to Gowrie as a student in 1987. I recall being aware of the warmth and sense of community and I felt really welcomed. People remembered you and cared about who you were and what you were doing. At Gowrie there is a strong sense of relationships with a genuineness and sincerity. When I began later as Director there were still people who I had met years before who remembered me and again made me feel welcome. (Lynn Farrell –Director 1994-2003)

I think of Gowrie like family. I first brought my daughter here to preschool in 1976. We felt very

welcome and even if she didn't speak English they really tried to understand her. Teresa recalls the Director sitting on a lounge at the front door wishing everyone a good morning and chatting with them as they arrived. Families were free to make tea in the kitchen or sit and chat with staff which made them feel very much at home. (Teresa Ferandes – CCW 1988-present)

There was lots of support and encouragement at Gowrie to be creative, experiment and research. One of the things that I recall was when another teacher and I were interested in family grouping we opened up and joined 2 of the rooms together. We felt some professional freedom if we presented a worthwhile idea and knew that we would be supported to explore it whether we succeeded or failed. I felt professionally valued and that, in turn, helped me to feel connected. I also recall that we had a "multicultural section" in our program; this was quite innovative at the time. Families and staff felt valued and respected through this as we shared things like cultural celebrations. There are families I still catch up with 20 years later and we remember those events. (Nina Kyte ECT 1988 – casual contract ECT /project officer 2009)

Everyone at Gowrie thinks a lot about the children – they really care for children as if they are their own family. It is very calm and relaxed, I really value that, and it fits with how I feel and I would like to bring my own children here. It is very friendly and I always

The History of the Gowrie Centres from 1939 – 2010

A reflection of key milestones together with World and Australian historical events

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
World Events	Athens hosts the Olympic Games	London hit by Islamic terrorist bombings	Release of Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth"	Apple launches the iPhone		Barack Obama becomes the first African-American US President
Australian Events				Kevin Rudd elected as Prime Minister	Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivers formal apology to the stolen generations	COAG agreement on National Reform Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care
Gowrie Events			Gowrie Board of Director Chairs inaugural meeting Gowrie Australia study tour to New Zealand			



feel listened to. I feel like it is like a family and I feel comfortable and I can talk and do things my way.
(Arunima Saha CCW – 2000 – present)

Reflecting on my years at Lady Gowrie Child Centre I can look back with truly fond memories. I feel that I have learnt so much from so many wonderfully supportive staff, from the people I have worked with directly in the playrooms through to the many other professionals in our organization. I feel that I have been allowed to be me and have been respected for who I am as well as what I have achieved. I remember when I was offered a place at TAFE and when I notified the Director, Lynn seemed so very enthusiastic and happy for me. I also deeply value the honest relationships that I have developed over my time at Gowrie with children, their families, extended families and a broad range of staff across all of Lady Gowrie.
(Belinda Rawlings – Childcare worker 1996 –present)

In my time at Gowrie Sydney I found that belonging and connectedness amongst the staff developed from a strong sense of shared values about children, families, one another, our work and the organisation. For me this always helped build bridges, promoted co-operation and mutual support and inspired people to give their best together!
(Margaret Young former CEO 1990 -2008)

This connection to the centre runs deeper than staff and reaches out to the community. A taxi driver told me he had attended the centre as a child and could

recall friends he played with, pointing out where they lived. The grandmother of a child who attended last year told me her memories of coming here as a child herself and loves that her granddaughter can create her own fond memories, hopefully not involving being forced to eat tripe, she exclaims!

These stories reveal Gowrie as a place to question and reflect on practices and embrace change so as to provide quality services. There are many opportunities for staff to build relationships with children, their families, other staff and our community which enables us to be a strong cohesive team ready to take on the world! We look forward to continuing our proud tradition.

A RESOURCE TO SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Assessment in the Early Years:

A resource from Gowrie Australia drawing on the Early Years Learning Framework

ORDER FORMS are available from your state Gowrie's website – see page 2 for contact details

WATCH OUT for professional development sessions - coming soon!



2010



Publication of Gowrie Australia resource: "Assessment in the Early Years: A resource from Gowrie Australia drawing on the Early Years Learning Framework"

Celebrating 70 years

70th anniversary of the Gowrie Centres to be celebrated with an afternoon tea hosted by the Governor General Hon. Quentin Bryce at Government House, Canberra in August 2010



Lady Gowrie Child Centres: Pioneering Integrated Child and Family Services

investment of public funds. The investment to build the SA Gowrie was in the vicinity of £15,000 and at the time this was viewed as a controversial decision in some quarters (Carmichael, 2002). However, even then, well before the research of James Heckman, there was an understanding that investment in the early years was in the national interest and one of the best that society could make with immediate and lasting social and economic benefits to individuals and the broader community. According to Carmichael (2002) the Commonwealth's stand as to the value of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres was vindicated and the centres went on to make substantial contributions in "impressing on Australian parents and educationalists the possibilities of pre-school education" (Gardiner, 1982 cited in Carmichael, 2002:103).

Drawing on research from a number of interrelated disciplines, the aim of the centres was to test and demonstrate methods of care and education, with particular emphasis on child health and nutrition. The policy intent is summarised in the commitment given by the Prime Minister of the time, the Honourable John Lyons:

...it has been decided that a Demonstration Centre should be established in each capital city in which not only will the methods of the care and instruction of young children be tested and demonstrated, but also the problems of physical growth, nutrition and development will be studied (Roberts, 1990:1).

It is interesting to note the emphasis here on care and education, although the usage of the term 'care' does not mean 'child care' as a service as we know it today. According to Brennan (1994) the Gowries continued the philanthropic model of the early kindergartens but included 'scientific ways of monitoring children's development'. The vision for achieving optimal outcomes for children included an understanding of the value of early education and maternal care. This was seen as most likely to be achieved from mothers who were well informed about child health, nutrition and family wellbeing.

The original Lady Gowrie Child Centres were all situated in extremely poor, industrialised inner-city areas. There was significant concern about the poor living conditions of families in these areas, including young children who may have been left to their own devices while mothers worked by necessity. However, under the original guidelines, mothers were not expected to be employed while their children attended the centre. The only exception to this during the first thirty years of Gowrie operations was the need for women to be employed during the war effort. The Gowries were conceptualised as early

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Kaye Colmer, CEO, Gowrie SA

In our search for innovation and improved ways of providing services for young children and families, it is important that we do not overlook lessons from our past. Reflective practice is about looking back as well as forwards, building on what works and strengthening this through new knowledge, pedagogy and practices.

The current focus on integrated services for young children and families offers a case in point. While the terminology of integrated services is drawn from contemporary research and policy, the concept of 'joined up' services for children and families is not new. In fact, the notion of holistic and integrated service provision underpinned the establishment of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres. Here we look at some of the similarities between this early service model and contemporary models of integrated child and family services.

The establishment of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres as 'model kindergartens' heralded an innovative approach to maternal and infant welfare in Australia. The establishment of these centres as "demonstration centres" represented a significant step forward for early childhood education and care and were the first example of Commonwealth initiatives in providing funding for children's services. The centres were established from efforts by a group of strong and dedicated women, initially through the kindergarten unions and then under the umbrella of the Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development (AAPSCD) which was formed in 1937 (Waters, 2000). Development of the six centres was overseen by the AAPSCD and required significant

education centres and were open for similar hours to kindergartens (9am-3pm). It was not until the late seventies and onwards that the Gowries recognised the needs and rights of women to access child care services and commenced offering child care services as we understand them today (Gowrie SA, Annual Report).

What the Gowries did offer that was different to the early kindergartens was the concept of a 'one-stop shop' for families, recognising the value of providing a range of family and child services in one location. The service model placed equal weight on the value, contribution and complementary nature of each of the disciplines. Supporting this focus, the centres engaged a multidisciplinary team of professionals, including a child health nurse, a social worker, a team of early educators who were all qualified teachers, a range of visiting professionals including medical and dental services and supporting staff including a cook-housekeeper.

The buildings were generous in size and thoughtful in design, providing a range of spaces for children, parents and staff, with spaces that flowed from indoors to outdoors. While there is variation in design, the interior commonly included a separate nurse's clinic, a meeting place for mothers, children's play rooms, a kitchen and a communal dining area. The needs for professional learning were recognised and there were dedicated work areas for staff and observation booths to study child development and learning.

A key emphasis was education – for children and mothers. It was understood that this would empower children and families to improve their circumstances and reach their potential. As demonstration centres, the Gowries focused on quality service provision, and considerable emphasis was placed on linking theory and practice to ensure the best outcomes for children and families. Staff shared their knowledge and expertise, undertaking a range of parent education activities to build the capacity of mothers to care for their children at home. Teachers convened mother's groups on a regular basis, and while children attended the centre, mothers were offered instruction on matters of care, education, health and nutrition. There were parent libraries, social activities, sewing and cooking classes and a second hand shop where families could exchange clothing. These were further supported by home visits to build relationships and to provide opportunity for the teacher to see and understand the child within their family context.

Children, were organised into 'classrooms' by age (two year olds, three years olds and four year olds) with each group having two qualified early childhood teachers. This represents a remarkable appreciation by government of the importance of qualified teachers to deliver programs for very young children when compared with standards for qualified staff today. Despite significant funding difficulties throughout the sixties and seventies, Gowrie continued to staff the program with qualified teachers (Gowrie SA Annual Reports).

Building on this foundation, and the growing evidence-base, the Gowries continue to strive to offer holistic and integrated services for young children and families.

So, looking back, and then looking forward, how does the original Lady Gowrie service model relate to contemporary models of integrated child and family services today? There are, in fact, a number of consistent themes and shared features. These include:

- A focus on universal (non-stigmatised) service provision (ie. families choose to use these services because they see benefit for their child and family);
- Linking fundamental early years services, in particular, child health, early education and parenting information and support;
- The benefits of a multi-disciplinary team and setting up structures that facilitate dialogue, collaboration and planning between members of the team;
- Respecting staff requirements for preparation and planning space;
- Recognising and promoting the inextricable link between care and education;
- Delivering programs for children in an integrated way so that children are not moved between settings (or rooms) to receive their kindergarten or child care component;
- Working in partnership with parents to achieve and sustain the best outcomes for children;
- The need for supportive and flexible facilities and resources;
- Embedding the service within the local community and linking children and families.

While still forming, the evidence-base underpinning integrated service provision suggests the efficacy and benefits of this approach for children and families. It is suggested that integrated services improve access and participation, and support more relevant and responsive service provision. It is also suggested that integrated services can achieve and sustain better outcomes, working holistically with children and families, and linking them to their local community.

The continuing experience of the Lady Gowrie Centres adds weight to this evidence.

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