

# **YARRALEA CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

## **Sustainability Policy**



*Darebin Parklands Bush Kinder Site*

### **1 Purpose**

The purpose of Yarralea's Sustainability Policy is to maintain and promote the service's existing practices, to continuously seek further ecological harmony to mitigate and adapt to ecological risks and reflect the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) 2.0 sustainability principle..

## **2 Policy Statement**

Yarralea Children's Centre aims to lead and demonstrate best practice sustainability in early childhood education by nurturing a sense of responsibility, respect, belonging and curiosity for the natural environment and all its inhabitants.

### **Commitments**

- Educate staff, children and families about sustainable practice and nature
- Develop positive attitudes about the environment
- Engage staff in sustainable practices during the operation of the service
- Create meaningful play spaces that are environmentally friendly
- Encourage the use of environmentally friendly products
- Purchase natural educational resources that support ethically-sound, local businesses
- Provide a clean environment free of harsh chemicals
- Encourage sustainable and active travel
- Minimise waste through the five R's: Refuse, Reduce, Repurpose, Recycle and Rot
- Encourage children and families to avoid single use food packaging
- Reduce our carbon emissions and natural resource consumption

### **Values**

- Belonging to nature
- Working with nature
- Responsibility for nature
- Utilising nature
- Playing with nature
- Respecting nature

*Section 7* considers these values in more depth.

## **3 Scope**

This policy applies to all members of the Yarralea Community including parents/guardians, children, the Committee of Management, staff, volunteers and friends who are involved in the early childhood programs at Yarralea Children's Centre.

## 4 Definitions

*Environmentally Friendly*- products that contain plant-based formulas that minimise the risk to the waterways and ecosystem.

*Ethically Sound Business* – Business that supports the environment through use of recycled or natural materials, fair trade, organically produced materials and/or makes donations or supports re-generation or sustainable charities.

*Sustainability Sub Committee*- a small group of staff, children and parents that meet throughout the year to discuss sustainability matters

*Committee of Management (Committee)* – The group of volunteer parents that are elected to govern the children’s centre in collaboration with staff

*Service* – Yarralea Children’s Centre

*Exceeding the National Quality Standard* – Practice is embedded in service operations, informed by critical reflection and shaped by meaningful engagement with the community.

*Environmental education* - learning about the environment and how natural systems function. In an early childhood setting, environmental education is integrated into everyday decisions made as part of the curriculum.

*Sustainability* – can be defined in a broader and more holistic context of education for the environment. The complexities of social, environmental and economic systems are acknowledged, and their implications for sustaining life are considered.

*Sustainable Practice* – Humanity living in ways that meet their immediate needs without jeopardising the potential of future generations to meet their own needs.

## 5 Relevant Legislation, Standards, Policy and Resources

### Legislation and Standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*

*Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

Standard 3.2.3 - The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

### Yarralea Children’s Centre

- Quality Improvement Plan
- Yarralea’s Philosophy
- Environmental Sustainability Action Plan on Trello
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Bush Kinder Policy
- Nutrition and Active Play Policy

## Resources

- Early Years Learning Framework v2,0 Sustainability Principle
- Environmental Education for a Sustainable Future, National Action Plan, Commonwealth Government, 2000
- *Sustainability in Action in Early Childhood Settings*, Sally Sneddon & Anne Pettit, Teaching Solutions, 2016
- ECO SMART for Early Childhood - A sustainability filter for Quality Improvement Plans - NSW ECEEN
- Environmental Education in Early Childhood (Victoria) Inc (EEEC)
- Play Australia
- Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network
- Sustainability Victoria's Resource Smart Schools Modules: [www.sustainability.vic.gov.au](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au)
- Darebin Parklands Association: [www.dpa.org.au](http://www.dpa.org.au)
- Parks Victoria: Early Learning Outdoors and Junior Rangers
- Victorian National Parks Association: Wild Families
- Inner Melbourne Action Plan 2016 – 2026 (IMAP)
- City of Yarra Council Plan 2017-21
- City of Darebin Council Plan 2017-21
- Victoria Walks: [www.victoriawalks.org.au](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au) – family and schools sections contain activities and lesson plans to encourage kids to walk in their neighbourhood.
- Bicycle Network: [www.bicyclenetwork.com.au](http://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au) – tools and initiatives.

Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

- *Plan Melbourne 2017 - 2030*, including but not limited to:

Outcomes 5: Inclusive, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods

Outcome 6: A sustainable and resilient city

- Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017 - 2020
- Victoria's Climate Change Framework
- Protecting Victoria's Environment – *Biodiversity 2037*

## **6 Background**

### **History**

Yarralea Children's Centre has always held strong environmental values, provided rich outdoor play spaces and encouraged nature exploration. To enhance the service's existing practices, The Environment and Sustainability Policy was first written in 2008, at which time it was considered progressive to have such a policy. While it was somewhat unpolished it nonetheless provided a strong foundation for the service to undergo significant improvements and to lead the way in sustainable practice in early childhood education.

In 2018 a ten-year review resulted in amendments that were as much a reflection on the progress made, as about the future of the service and the ongoing leadership role it envisions.

Coordinator, Stephanie Willey, joined the service in 2012. Her passion for nature-play and sustainability has been strongly felt throughout the service. She is a long-standing committee member of Environmental Education in Early Childhood (Victoria) Inc (EEEC).

Stephanie is backed by a similarly passionate team of staff who are dedicated to practicing environmental sustainability. As there is little staff turn-over at Yarralea, the staff feel connected to the environment and teaching practices remain constant. The occasional new staff member quickly picks up on the positive culture, entrenching values and maintaining consistent behaviour at the service.

From 2008 - 2018 some significant developments were the introduction of solar panels, cloth hand towels, bush kinder program and the bush tucker garden.

### **Philosophy**

Many of Yarralea's 15 philosophy principles relate directly or indirectly to sustainability practises, in particular:

- All-weather, indoor/outdoor authentic play programs provide nurturing, stimulating, responsive and adventurous environments for learning.
- Respect for the natural world and connection with sustainability is embedded and underpins practice across the daily program and service operation.
- Home Kinder and Bush Kinder foster essential physical, mental and social/emotional development through regular, unstructured, nature play.
- Positive relationships are supported through learning spaces which encourage aesthetic beauty, culture and respect for the natural environment.

Sustainability at Yarralea Children's Centre is as much about connecting with and protecting the natural environment as it is about the physical and mental health of the children and its staff. It is important for children to understand their place in the world, to be empowered with positive behaviour and to enjoy playing in nature.

Experiences in early childhood help establish lifelong behaviour and values and this reinforces the need for sustainability education to be included in the service's program. Elliot and Davis state that "early childhood educators have an active and significant role to play ensuring children experience connections with the natural environment in a meaningful way which will ultimately promote action for sustainability".

Sneddon and Pettit elaborate with “through our everyday actions – and by building children’s sense of optimism and connection, and their confidence and enthusiasm to be involved – we play a part in influencing how today’s children live in our changing world, and how they will each contribute to sustainability for generations to come...Our childhood experiences influence our whole lives. If we encourage young children to explore the world in simple and enjoyable ways, and to notice what’s happening around them, we are introducing them to some of the things that are at the heart of sustainability. You never know where the learning will take them as they grow and make their mark on the world” P 1 Sustainability in Action in early childhood settings

“Rather than focusing on problems or concerns for sustainability, with young children our emphasis is on involving them in things we can all do to make a difference, and responding with openness when they ask questions.” – p3 Sustainability in Action in early childhood settings

### **Early Years Learning Framework v2.0 (EYLF)**

As per the revised EYLF 2.0 Sustainability Principle, humanity and the planet we share with all living things face some big challenges. Educators and children have important and active roles to play in creating and promoting sustainable communities. Broadly defined, sustainability spans environmental, social, and economic dimensions which are intertwined. Environmental sustainability focuses on caring for our natural world and protecting, preserving and improving the environment. Social sustainability is about inclusion and living peacefully, fairly and respectfully together in resilient local and global communities. Economic sustainability refers to practices that support economic development without negatively impacting the other dimensions. This includes a focus on fair and equitable access to resources, conserving resources, and reducing consumption and waste.

Adopting this broader definition helps to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In sustainable communities, the requirements of humans, animals, plants, lands, and waters can be met now and for generations to come. Educators recognise children’s avid interest in their world, their ability to engage with concepts of sustainability and their capacity to advocate and act for positive change. Children’s agency and their right to be active participants in all matters affecting their lives is supported. Further, children’s understanding of their citizenship, and rights and responsibilities as members of local and global communities, is built through meaningful and relevant educational experiences. Thinking about sustainability means thinking about the future and acting to create healthy, just and vibrant futures for all. Educators encourage children to develop appreciation of the natural world, understand our impact on the natural world, and the interdependence between people, animals, plants, lands and waters. Sustainable practices are created with children and children are supported to take an active role in caring for the environment and to think about ways they can contribute to a sustainable future. Recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have looked after Country for the past 60,000 years, educators and children learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and rich sustainable practices. Educators provide opportunities for children to learn about all the interconnected dimensions of sustainability, understanding that sustainability goes beyond learning in nature and being involved in nature conservation. Children are supported to appreciate that sustainability embraces social and economic sustainability – as well as environmental sustainability – and to engage with concepts of social justice, fairness, sharing, democracy and citizenship.

## **National Quality Framework**

The National Quality Standard 3.2.3 requires “the service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible”.

Yarralea Children’s Centre recognises that its current sustainability practices have a far greater bearing beyond National Quality Standard 3.2.3 and are relevant, to some extent, to all seven quality areas including leadership, partnerships, children’s health and wellbeing and the service’s educational program. The service therefore has a holistic approach that integrates environmental sustainability throughout service operations, decisions and programs.

The Service recognises the ecological footprint and social handprint as outlined in *Sustainability in Action in Early Childhood Settings (P7)*. While this policy focuses on the ecological handprint, it is closely interlinked with Yarralea’s Quality Improvement Plan, which aims to include all aspects of sustainability and to exceed the National Quality Standard.

“Sustainability relates to so many areas of knowledge and to so much of our lives that there are lots of possibilities for exploring it and making a difference...having some knowledge about these aspects and the challenges associated with them helps us understand why we need to take action for sustainability.” P7 *Sustainability in Action in Early Childhood Settings*.

## 7 Current Practice to Maintain

Strategies are built into Yarralea's program that encourage critical thinking. Staff and children collaborate to question and research current issues like where uneaten food scraps go or the concept of drought. Children are more likely to adopt good behaviours if they understand why and how to be sustainable. Staff and children at Yarralea are involved in the planning and decision-making of environmentally focused play with a strong emphasis on community links.

The following outlines current practices at Yarralea which should be maintained.

### **Values expanded as they relate to current practice:**

Belonging to nature: A sense of calm. A sense of invigoration. Understanding the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land). Physical and mental health.

Working with nature: Maintaining the garden, managing the worm farm, composting and community working bees.

Responsibility for nature: protecting and nurturing our flora and fauna. Using environmentally friendly products. Reducing waste. Reducing the use of resources.

Utilising nature: Eating, building, art and fundraising.

Playing with nature: Curiosity, investigation and experimentation are foundations for science. Building resilience. Playing with loose materials

Respecting nature: Respecting the qualities of wildlife big and small and respecting that they need quiet and space, to be left alone at times. Comprehension of the dangers of nature, extreme weather events, staying warm and cool, sun smart and drinking water. Dangers like snakes and dogs. Other hazards like pointy sticks and rolling rocks.

### **Partnerships, Community and Leadership**

- The Sustainability Policy Statement and Commitments are incorporated into the annual parent handbook and displayed on the website.
- Yarralea continues to network with like minded services through the Environmental Education in Early Childhood Inc and Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network, to share ideas and advice.
- The service communicates to families through the letterbox display with current themes, eg World Environment Day and Plastic Free July. The electronic newsletter, Facebook page, parent information night and annual general meeting are also utilised to communicate the service's environmental sustainability values and activities.
- Yarralea hosts events to educate the wider community when opportunities arise. For example, screening the NaturePlay Film in 2017. This event was open to the wider community and teachers from local primary schools were invited.
- Yarralea supports and contributes to local community initiatives such as Boomerang Bags, Minimal Waste 3078, conservation projects at the Darebin parklands, Transition Darebin, Alphington Farmers Market, food swaps, Asylum seekers resource centre
- Partnerships with schools to build and maintain a growing respect for the importance of outdoor nature play for children health and wellbeing
- Maintain a healthy working relationship with the Darebin Parklands Association. For example, the bush ranger visits to Bush Kinder
- Working Bees- emphasis on garden maintenance. Continue employment of a dedicated gardener/maintenance person 2 hours per fortnight



- Bush playgroup- an opportunity for families and pre school children to get together in a natural outdoor setting to engage in all weather nature play. This fosters early environmental connections which in turn support opportunities to build environmental stewardship.
- Annual wildlife presentation as part of children's week enables the bush play group community to join the 3 year old bush kinder community to learn together about Australian animal characteristics and conservation first hand. This demonstrates leadership in the community that this is an important concept to share in early childhood and should be recognised in children's week.
- Continue to acknowledge and contribute to significant environmental days, such as World Environment Day
- End of year parties: at the end of the year, staff provide students with a sustainably minded gift wrapped in old artwork on recycled paper. Decorations are made from old artwork cut into paperchains and the food is provided by families and encouraged to be healthy and unpackaged. Reusable plates and cups are used and the use of glad wrap avoided.



### **Water:**

- Continue water wise practice and education of children. Connect children with the water cycle and the importance of using water carefully in play and on the garden.
- The service has a water pump which it uses to discuss the water cycle and to pursue other conversation in conjunction with pump play.
- Dual flush Toilets and manual taps that children are taught to turn off after use.
- We could assess out water use and aim to reduce.
- 3 water tanks- used for play and watering the garden.

### **Air and Transport:**

- Continue to provide bike and pram facilities that encourage sustainable and active travel.
- Inside air quality is maintained with a chemical free environment by using eco-friendly cleaning products and indoor plants.

## Energy:

- We could assess current electricity and gas use and aim to reduce
  - Continue the 'switch off' policy for equipment and lighting that is not being used

## Solar and usage:

- Solar panels were installed by Yarra City Council in 2009/2010.
- Solar almost meets the service's current energy usage during longer days.
- In 2016 the Yarra Energy Foundation sent Cherry Energy Solutions to give the service a no obligation assessment and quote for a solar upgrade. Cherry advised the solar system was operating well. There is capacity to install more panels, batteries and upgrade the system's ability to monitor usage. These options could be considered in subsequent years and/or in the case of the service growing or its energy consumption increasing.
- The Service receives a 60c feed-in tariff from the State Government until 2024 - called the Premium Feed-in Tariff, which is no longer available to new solar customers. Some energy retailers add an additional feed-in tariff. So Yarralea is currently getting 68c in total for the power it puts back into the grid. Importantly, if Yarralea installs additional panels, the 60c feed-in tariff will be replaced by a significantly lower tariff, as low as 5c, depending on the retailer. The current feed-in tariff means the service makes a good financial return from the power it exports when closed. This financially offsets the cost of the small amount of power that is imported when the service is open.

## Heating and cooling

- Ceiling fans are in each room and are predominantly used instead of air conditioning.
- The service encourages inside/outside play, where children have the freedom to openly explore between both environments without limiting their access. Managing inside temperatures can therefore be challenging. Overnight heat extractors and evaporative cooling were installed with inside/outside play and energy usage in mind.
- Evaporative cooling was installed in 2017 as a response to the increasing risk of heat waves. In making its purchase, the service considered was the most energy efficient option at the time.
- The evaporative cooling system is used only on days where the temperature is above 27 degrees. The fans are to be kept on low and no higher than level three due to noise considerations and energy conservation. Room temperatures 26 degrees and above are considered a risk to children's health and wellbeing and therefore cooling must be turned on.
- Staff close doors when the heater is on and put a "go" sign on the door to let children know when they can go in and out. Heater is only to be used when the temperature is 18 degrees and below inside. It is to be set to no higher than 21 degrees.

## Lighting

- LED light upgrade in 2017 and 2018 veranda lights
- Continue to turn lights off when not required. Light sensors have been installed outside which turn off at 10pm.

## Appliances

- Dishwasher 2017 Bosch
- Small Fridge 2017

- Electric heaters in kitchen, playrooms and office
- Hot water system
- Fridge
- Microwave
- Kettle
- Computers 2017 (left) 2018 (Right) Lap top 2017
- Continue to upgrade old appliances with energy efficient appliances as required.
- Continue to turn computers and screens off when not in use.

### **Waste and Purchasing:**

Philosophy: *Purchasing natural educational resources that support ethically-sound, local businesses.*

Staff have become critical about purchasing decisions from a sustainability perspective, but more can be done. Staff avoid food e.g. bean bags and often seek to make their own if they cannot be sustainably sourced and single use items like patty pans.. Staff also avoid animal items like feathers and resin insects, catalogue natural materials from unknown sources, and environmentally damaging products like glitter. Staff also try hard to seek items that are difficult to find like recycled A1 paper.

Waste auditing/monitoring has been undertaken with the children in the past but could take place each year with the children

- Minimise waste through the five R's: Refuse, Reduce, Repurpose, Recycle and Rot
- Yarralea has a history of frugal spending and has removed equipment catalogues
- Maintain the culture of fixing items and asking families to repair and assist.
- Continue to encourage package free meals and provide lunch box inspiration.
- Continue shared fruit and vegetable snacks as a means to expose children to seeing and tasting a variety of produce, stimulate opportunities for discussion about food production, waste and compost and connect them to agriculture. ie paddock to plate

Art:

- Art as Yarralea is an individual creative pursuit and about process rather than product. Class sets of materials are not purchased and wasted when not used. Materials offered are open ended and used in a multitude of ways which reduces waste. Materials are not used unless a child is actively interested in using them. No activity is mandatory.
- Staff will continue to consider the end life of children's art and how it will be disposed.
- Continue to use reverse art truck for art supplies where possible.
- Family donations of cardboard and other items that can be reused for art and construction are actively sought
- Glue- combination of PVA and cellmix is used
- Paint- powder paint was tried in 2018 but staff have reverted back to liquid do to that lack of quality and cracking. Paint is not washed out each day but kept where possible
- New items are only purchased in the case of need after careful consideration

#### Paper:

- Continue to purchase recycled paper, including office paper, toilet paper and tissues. Yarralea uses reflex 100% recycled office paper and earth care toilet paper and earth care tissues.
- Yarralea resourcefully utilises office waste for art activities. Eg the back of old letter head or the back of a large poster calendar for drawing and painting.
- To reduce paper towel consumption - individual cloth handtowels are used to dry hands and washed, for four-year-old's, staff and guests. Three-year-old's use cloth rags to dry hands, which are washed and reused.
- Correspondence is predominantly email, text and social media, reducing paper usage.
- Reuse of posters for drawing

#### Food:

- Composting/worm farm is actively practiced as an entrenched part of meal times, particularly during shared fruit and veg snack times.
- During the kinder programs, parents are asked to provide a piece of fruit or veg to share for morning and afternoon snack times, reducing waste from processed and packaged snacks. However, some waste is still produced, eg gladwrap and plastic tubs for berries/tomatoes etc.
- Continue to discourage single use packaging for lunch-boxes by utilising Plastic Free July and National Nutrition Week campaigns. Continue displaying pictures for inspiration, educational brochures and communal recipe book.

#### Cleaning products:

Inside, Yarralea maintains a chemical free environment, Eco-friendly cleaning products,

- Refillable and Recyclable
- Trinature bulk Australian cleaning products. Cost effective and they work well
- Contracted cleaners use Trinature also
- Chemical free resources across the service.
- Sponges- Cellulose biodegradable and bamboo scourers

#### **Animal care:**

- Yarralea teaches respect and care for animals within daily routines where children and staff raise silk worms, care for Guinea pigs, worm farm and support a long-term staff member's guide dog training. The care of these builds responsibility and a connection to the animal kingdom and interdependence in nature
- Yarralea has been flexible and open to new learning opportunities, such as when a staff member was caring for a lamb and brought it to the service during its care. Children helped feed and clean up after the lamb.
- Bush kinder is also used as an opportunity to teach respect for animals within the local environment. Children become very connected with the local bird and insect life and use resources like the Museum Field Guide app and Melbirds to look up what they find/see.

## **Meaningful play spaces that are environmentally sustainable, Biodiversity and Garden Maintenance**

- The indoor/outdoor play program provides children with choice about where they will play. Through year round access and long periods of uninterrupted play children are able to connect with the seasons e.g. Autumn which connects them to the natural world?
- Enthusiastically maintain Yarralea's two beautiful, established garden spaces.
- Regular garden maintenance is ensured through a paid consultant under the direction of staff and the committee.
- A green bin is used for council collection of green waste that the Service cannot process on site.
- Staff enjoy pottering in the garden, involving the children, sharing their knowledge with the wider Yarralea community and have been known to bring plants to the service.
- Yarralea encourages community participation and awareness of projects and invites community members to help maintain and improve the service. One or two working bees are organised each year.
- Children are encouraged to help maintain the garden, especially around autumn. Children help rake the leaves, spread mulch, prepare garden beds, vote on what to plan, plant, water, weed, harvest.
- Each year, children sell the worm wee they help create, to raise funds for various projects. For example, funds were used to buy a white mulberry tree, to provide food for the silk worms, which the children raise each year. This gives the children a sense of responsibility and ownership while providing many teaching opportunities.
- The Bush Tucker Garden was installed in 2016 and is a key aspect of Yarralea's outdoor space. The garden includes interpretive signs which specify the name(s) of the plant, how to look after it and what it can be used for. These assist with educating children and new staff about the garden and assist with protecting the plants. Extended to bringing bush tucker to the community via a further landcare grant which enabled veggie beds on wheels to be purchased that can be placed outside the centre, accessible to community.
- Composting and worm farming is taught by intentional teaching using songs, stories, posters, sock hand puppets and movement. Children gather a good understanding of earth worms and their importance

## Bush Kinder and Nature Play

- Play respectfully in the bush kinder site, including awareness of animals. Children are taught that we are grateful to be having bush kinder on Wurundgeri land and in the habitat of many parklands animals.
- Yarralea's bush kinder program began in 2013. As one of the first services to offer a bush kinder program, Yarralea felt a responsibility to demonstrate best practice, with a rigorous process for benefit/risk assessment safety and well considered policies. The bush kinder is now established but continues to evolve to longer days and increased assess for 3 year olds. There is no doubt the service has been an outstanding role model for others to follow, particularly in regard for the sensitivity around sustainability of place. It is the natural setting for rich play and discussions to occur around sustainable principles and connection to country.

## **Staff and Professional Development**

- The employment process requires new staff to fit Yarralea's existing culture of environmentally sustainable awareness and education.
- Staff undergo training in Education for Sustainability and Nature Pedagogy
- Since 2016, as a response to concerned staff, the Committee of Management offers parents a voluntary group gift option, often manifesting as a dinner out for staff to share together and at a venue with an enthical/social enterprise/vegetarian/vegan perspective. This reduces wasteful gift giving and the stress of wanting to say goodbye and thank you in a way that is joyous for everyone. The gift is presented to the staff by a family member at each of the end of year class parties.

## **8 Continuous Improvement Goals**

### **Paper**

Further reduce paper usage by adopting electronic processes where appropriate. In particular; signing in and out, electronic enrolment and forms etc. Sourcing A1 paper with recycled content

### **Waste**

Develop minimal waste guidelines for events / fundraising / centre promotion.

Wet-bags from reclaimed material to replace plastic bag usage.

Consider involvement in local Boomerang Bag groups and Terra Cycle programs.

### **Re-use**

Establish a library box for book exchanges

Consider children's clothes and toy swaps

### **Energy**

Revisit changing energy providers from AGL to Powershop. The committee considered changing energy providers in 2016 and it was determined that Powershop was the best option both ethically and financially.

Consider reviewing and expanding the solar system in 2024. Discuss with Yarra Energy Foundation or Yarra City Council.

### **Purchasing Decisions**

Staff are starting to be more critical about purchasing decisions from a sustainability perspective, but more can be done as some decisions are made without sustainable and ethical consideration

Art supplies can be further investigated.

### **Active Travel**

Investigate improving active travel facilities that are out the way, undercover, secure and accommodate large bikes or parents who wish to leave a detachable bike carriage.

Consider the impact of bush kinder on transport choices for children riding/scootering, noting a full day bush kinder program better supports active transport to and from the site.

### **Centre Development**

If major expansion of the service is considered, incorporate the Sustainable Design Assessment in the Planning Process, 10 Key Sustainable Building Categories. More information can be obtained from the City of Yarra.

## **Data Collection**

Where useful, establish a data collection system for water, energy, waste, means of travel and biodiversity to provide a basis for improvement, future goal setting and ongoing measurement of resource consumption.

Investigate the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) which is currently being used by the Victorian Government. In 2012, the United Nations launched a new environmental accounting system, as a framework for linking the quantity and quality of environmental assets to related socio-economic benefits. The SEEA is a set of accounting principles that can help recognise the interdependence of societies, economies and the environment.

By using the SEEA system, overtime Yarralea Children's Centre could contribute data to inform the benefits of nature play, bush kinder and sustainable education, to the health and development of children in early childhood education.

Further information can be found through the Victorian Government's Environmental-Economic Accounts: [EEA@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:EEA@delwp.vic.gov.au) and <https://iseek-nairobi.un.org>

## **9 Implementation:**

In order to ensure continuous improvement, an Environmental Sustainability Action Plan has been created in Trello and linked with the Quality Improvement Plan processes. The Action Plan will be monitored and implemented by the Sustainability representative (staff), Centre coordinator and willing committee members, drawing on feedback from staff during meetings and professional development conversations, children informally and parents via surveys. A record of completed actions is viewable on Trello.

## **10 Responsibility:**

The parents/guardians are responsible for food packaging bought to Yarralea from home.

All staff are responsible for contributing to existing practice, education and new solutions.

The Sustainability Officer and Sustainability subcommittee are responsible for implementing the Action Plan:

- The Sustainability Representative is a staff member who is allocated responsibility in November for responsibility in the following year and any key dates identified for the following year. This is in line with developing the yearly plan and allocating staff responsibilities and around key dates.
- The Sustainability subcommittee is comprised of staff, committee members and interested children and parents.

## **11 Review and Evaluation:**

To assess whether the policy has achieved its purpose, the Sustainability Subcommittee will:

- Record, monitor and evaluate purchases, energy, water, waste and means of travel.
- Take into account consultation with staff, parents and children, utilising the Parent Survey, Committee Meetings and Staff Planning Days.
- Review the Sustainability Action Plan and completed actions to assess next steps towards continuous improvement.
- Align with the National Quality Standards and consider feedback on Assessment and Rating Reports.



## **12 Authorisation**

This policy was reviewed and updated in 2023

### **REVIEW NOTES:**

2023 Updated to incorporate the new ELYF v2,0 Sustainability Principle