

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2008 - 2012



The Gowrie (Qld) Inc.

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# Purpose, Vision and Values

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## Our Purpose

The Gowrie (Qld) Inc. is a community-based organisation that promotes the best outcomes for children and families by:

- Providing high quality, affordable, early childhood education and care, school age care and family support services;
- Supporting families in their parenting role and enabling workforce participation;
- Sharing knowledge and promoting the value of high quality services for children and families.

## Our Vision

Families are supported...

Children realise their full potential...

Children's services are valued and supported ....

Everyone in the community benefits.

## Our Values

- High quality services - we strive for consistent high quality across all of our services.
- Reciprocal relationships - we seek to build strong, respectful and trusting relationships between children, families, staff and management.
- Community participation - we promote and facilitate community participation in service provision and decision-making.
- Respecting difference - we value, work with, and promote acceptance of diversity in the community.
- Integrity and accountability - we ensure informed, ethical and transparent use of all funds.
- Innovation - we reflect on our work to continuously improve practice and ensure relevant and responsive service provision.
- Collaboration - we share knowledge and work with others to achieve the best results for children, families, staff and the community.



# Our History

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The Gowrie (Qld) Inc. is a community-based not for-profit organisation with a proud and substantial history in the provision of high quality services for young children and their families.

The Brisbane Lady Gowrie Child Centre began as one of six Lady Gowrie Centres established in 1940 by the Commonwealth Government in each of the state capitals. The original Brisbane Centre was developed at St Paul's Terrace, Fortitude Valley to "test and demonstrate methods of care and education of young children, with particular emphasis on child health and nutrition".

Building on this history, and a pervading commitment to holistic, responsive, high quality services for young children and their families, our organisation has grown substantially over the years.

We currently provide a diverse range of child and family support services, including: four child centres, a range of sessional early childhood services, six family day care schemes, three in home care schemes, two integrated child and family support services and training and consultancy services to the children's services sector.

In 2007, we provided care and education for approximately 2000 children each week and supported families in their parenting and work-related roles.

Setting us apart as a leader and innovator within our field, The Gowrie Queensland:

- Provides a diverse range of universal child and family support services, including centre-based and home-based services both for children prior to school entry and for school age children;
- Promotes secure attachment, trusting relationships, and intellectual vitality as the foundation for high quality service provision across all services (regardless of the age of children, setting or duration of the service);
- Continues to forge new directions within integrated child and family support services, including provision of some targeted services to improve outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and families;
- Strives to build a strong sense of community, where children, parents, staff, management and other community members work together and benefit from being part of the Gowrie community.
- Continues to be an active member of the national network of Gowrie services, and an advocate for enhanced services and support for children and their families;
- Contributes new knowledge and supports improved practice across the children's services sector through the conduct of research and other related projects.

# Outcomes for Children

As a community, we aspire to nine broad outcomes for children attending our services. To determine our success in promoting these outcomes, we have decided to review these upon the transition to school. However, we see these outcomes as relevant to all children, regardless of age, and strive to continuously promote these outcomes across all of our services.

In all of our work with children and their families, we seek to promote:

- **A sense of emotional wellbeing** including a sense of belonging, self worth, an understanding of personal feelings and a developing sense of empathy for others;
- **Secure attachments and social awareness**, including confidence to explore and the skills needed to make friends and enjoy relationships with adults and peers;
- **Intellectual curiosity** including the desire and skills to investigate interests and learn more about the world;
- **Thinking and problem solving skills** including informed risk taking, exploring and trialling solutions, and general mathematical concepts;
- **A capacity to listen and communicate** thoughts and feelings in different situations using a range of literacy skills, eg. oral, written and the creative arts;
- **A sense of physical wellbeing** including enjoyment of physical activity, a range of physical competencies and capacity to make healthy choices;
- **Respect for others** and acceptance and valuing of diversity within the community;
- **Increasing competence with a range of technologies** and interest in using these to support learning;
- **Resilience** including capacity to cope with change, accept failure and overcome setbacks.

These are broad outcomes to be nurtured and strengthened over a number of years in collaboration with parents and families. These broad outcomes recognise and allow for different learning patterns and pathways, individual strengths, interests and needs, and different teaching and learning contexts, within our services and at home. From the moment a child enters a Gowrie service, as a young baby, toddler or preschooler, we seek to promote these outcomes. Recognising these as the basis for ongoing success at school and throughout life, we continue to promote these outcomes for school age children across our services.

# Philosophy

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At the Gowrie we believe that childhood is a unique time of life, to be valued and enjoyed in its own right. We also recognise that this is the time where foundations are laid for future health, learning and wellbeing. We value children growing up with the understandings, skills and dispositions to be caring people and effective learners, able to contribute to their world and to enjoy rich and successful relationships with others.

## **In our work with children we:**

- Acknowledge children as active and competent learners;
- Create a safe, welcoming and stimulating learning environment to encourage thoughtful play;
- Promote secure attachments and warm trusting relationships and interactions;
- Seek to strengthen resilience, critical thinking and informed risk taking;
- Promote communication and problem solving skills, together with social learning and awareness, and capacity to express and acknowledge feelings.

## **Working in partnership with parents and families we:**

- Recognise parents as their child's first and most influential teachers;
- Share knowledge and promote confident parenting;
- Seek to develop and maintain positive relationships based on trust and mutual respect, two way communication and participation in service decision-making;
- Respect and value the individual backgrounds and unique culture and customs of families;
- Build genuine reciprocal relationships between children, families, staff and carers that are strengthened and sustained over time.

## **As a community of learners we:**

- Encourage children's learning by providing for their interests and expanding their knowledge and skills;
- Document children's experiences, and share these with children, parents and colleagues;
- Promote sharing of information and expertise between parents, staff and carers;
- Reflect on our practice, commit to continuous quality improvement, and support each other's ongoing professional and personal development.

## **With regard to our wider community we:**

- Connect children and families with each other and local child and family support services;
- Share our expertise with the field;
- Seek to inform and influence government decision-making;
- Promote the value and contribution of our services within the community.

## Strategic vision for the next 5 years

### **As a community we aspire to the following future vision. By 2012...**

Gowrie is offering a diverse range of holistic and integrated services for children and their families. We respond to the differing needs of children and families and promote parent choice.

We continue to be recognised in the community as a provider of high quality services for children and families, and the educational context of these services is acknowledged. Gowrie is seen as 'the place to be prior to prep entry' and offers a range of options for school age children.

Gowrie is an extension of the family and we all work together, as one community, for the benefit of children, parents and families, staff and the broader community.

Our services are inclusive, culturally competent, flexible and responsive to different needs.

We attract qualified and quality staff and carers and invest in their training, job satisfaction and retention. Staff see Gowrie as an employer of choice and carers seek to be a part of a Gowrie family day care or in home care scheme.

We are particularly known for our innovative and flexible practice, integrated service provision, meaningful partnerships with parents and evidence-based practice.

Our advice and services are sought by parents, colleagues, other services, government and the tertiary sector. Our influence extends beyond our own services to promote high quality across the sector.

Our business is solid, viable and growing. We have an operating profit and capital reserves, and a reinvestment plan. We are a not for-profit organisation with a reputation for commercial competence.

Community is at the heart of our decision-making process, and we strive for better outcomes for children and families.



# Strategic directions

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To achieve our future vision, and continue the work that we are passionate about, we must ensure high quality service provision, planned growth and sound business practices. With this in mind, we have identified six strategic directions and set ourselves a number of short, medium and longer-term strategic goals under each of these.

## 1. **Our services**

- Demonstrating consistent high quality across all Gowrie services;
- Promoting early learning and the educational context of all of our services;
- Strengthening our pre-prep services by leveraging new funding opportunities;
- Leading integrated service provision;
- Growing our training and consultancy business.

## 2. **Leadership and reputation**

- Supporting strong and wise leadership at all levels across all services;
- Engaging in new projects, research and partnerships to improve services for children and families;
- Sharing our knowledge with others to promote and advocate for better services for children and families.

## 3. **Our business**

- Ensuring the most effective use and management of resources;
- Enhancing financial viability and sustainability;
- Developing a strong Governance framework.

## 4. **Our people**

- Recognising, valuing and investing in our staff and carers;
- Improving systems and support for staff and carers;
- Sharing expertise and skills across our services.

## 5. **Our values and culture**

- Reviewing The Gowrie values and culture and ensuring these are reflected across services;
- Working toward 'One Gowrie'.

## 6. **Our community**

- Sharing information about child development and learning to support families in their parenting role;
- Promoting 'The Gowrie' brand - and the contribution we make to child, family and community wellbeing;
- Strengthening communication, consultation and participation in service activities and decision-making across the Gowrie community;
- Planning for our 70th Anniversary celebrations.