

# Child Care Wage Case Wins!

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) handed down their decision on January 13 which will result in significant wage increases for child care professionals in the ACT & Victoria.

A start date for the new wage rates will be decided after the ACT and Victoria reach an agreement on a single classification structure which will provide an appropriate career path for child care workers working under these awards.

Although the exact rates are not yet set, it is estimated that the increases for child care staff in the ACT and Victoria will be approximately:

- \$64 per week for Certificate III staff
- \$82 per week for Diploma staff
- \$100-\$130 per week for Director classifications

Among other issues, the wage case listed the QIAS & OSHCQA as a major impact on the work load of child care staff in recent years. The AIRC accepted that there had been a significant increase in the responsibilities, skill requirements and stress levels of child care workers and acknowledged in their report that "childcare work is demanding, stressful and intrinsically important to the public interest" and that the "limited career paths and low pay had contributed to recruitment and retention problems".

*(Continued on page 2)*



***This newsletter is for everyone connected with your service.***

***Please pass around or put on display:***

- Director**
- Staff**
- Proprietor**
- Management Committee**
- Coordinator**
- Administrator ...**

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The commission considered the critical shortage of qualified child care workers in the industry and recognised that the decreasing numbers of staff had the “potential to jeopardize the future of quality child care in Australia”.

South Australia's wage case was filed in November 2003 and was adjourned awaiting the outcome of the AIRC case. The AIRC handles only federal awards and the Child Care SA Award is a state award, however, now that the AIRC decision has been handed down, the LHMU SA will proceed to have the SA case heard.

Full details of the considerations and findings of the AIRC can be found at the following web page:  
<http://www.airc.gov.au/fullbench/PR954938.htm>

*Michelle Brereton*

### **Choice of super fund legislation – does it affect you?**

From July 1, 2005 many Australian employees will have the right to choose their super fund, however, under this new legislation, there are some employees, including child care workers and clerks, who will still not have a choice.

For employees working under certain State Awards, including the Child Care (SA) Award and the Clerks (SA) Award, the choice of super legislation does not apply and therefore employers and employees do not need to take any action.

Also exempt from this legislation are employees who are working under an Australian Workplace Relations Agreement, or a certified agreement under the Workplace Relations Act 1996 or the Industrial Relations Act 1988.

As an employer, if you find that the legislation *is* applicable to your employees, you must issue a *standard choice form* to your employees prior to 29 July 2005.

For more information on *choice of super fund* including details of the *standard choice form* and information for both employers and employees, visit the website of The Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia Limited (ASFA). [www.superannuation.asn.au](http://www.superannuation.asn.au)

Alternatively, if you are making contributions to Statewide Super, they have introduced a new online service that allows employers and members to ask questions about the Choice of Fund legislation and within a few days Statewide will return a personal answer by email. [www.statewide.com.au](http://www.statewide.com.au)

*Michelle Brereton*

#### ***Draft Leave Policy***

Recently we have been getting quite a few calls asking for clarification on staff leave and information on writing a staff leave policy. In light of this, Bev Pope has written a Draft Leave Policy which we have included as a resource paper insert in this Update newsletter. The sections provided in this draft policy are intended for use as a basis for your own policy development.

## Unified Professional Affiliation (Early Years) Project Preliminary Report Released

This project, which has been funded for 12 months by the Department of Education and Children's Services, is exploring the prospects for the establishment of a unified affiliation for professional organizations and associations representing people working with children from birth to 8 years of age in South Australia.

The Project Officer, Uldis Bruns, having now completed the first six-months of the project has released the Preliminary Report on the concept, based on the feedback received from consultations.

The affiliation's anticipated role would be that of a professional peak body, coordinating professional networking by bringing people together and encouraging a higher level of engagement among professionals across the early years field. Its main roles would be coordinating advocacy/lobbying, facilitating the dissemination of information and providing a secretariat service to potential affiliates as well as professional engagement of early years practitioners.

The UPA has the potential to provide a powerful unified professional voice on critical issues relating to education and care of young children and their families, drawn from wide-ranging expertise. This body, as well as being a forum for sharing information, can inform policy direction and develop

consensus in responses to government. Having a strong affiliation with a high profile will enhance the status and professional view of early years practitioners and enhance the status of the field generally, which may eventually help attract and retain people to the field.

***“Having a strong affiliation with a high profile will enhance the status and professional view of early years practitioners and enhance the status of the field...”***

A Board drawn from potential affiliates, with equal representation and power, would govern the affiliation, which would be incorporated. After an annual strategic planning day to identify common issues, the affiliation would meet quarterly to discuss these and other developing issues and where possible, develop or refine common positions or agree on points of

difference. The affiliation would also provide an opportunity to work collaboratively in areas of interest or concern.

The Preliminary Report has been prepared to share the findings from the initial consultations, for the purposes of discussion among interested people and to encourage further feedback.

A copy of the Preliminary Report can be obtained by telephoning Uldis on (08) 8159 7427.

### A new director starting?

Are you a new director or has your service recently employed a new director?

If so Network SA has recently published a new resource which may be helpful. *“The New Director's Little Handbook”* contains useful tips and resources for new directors of children's services in South Australia. It includes some information on directors' responsibilities, tips on confidentiality and conflict resolution, and contact details for further information and training.

It is always worth remembering that **whether you are new or experienced**, the sector is changing constantly...new legislation, changes to awards and best practice, etc, etc and it is always better to be safe than sorry. Call us anytime you are unsure, need to clarify an issue, or just need a sounding board. If we can't answer your question we will refer you to someone who can.

For a copy of *“The New Director's Little Handbook”* or for help with any matter call us on 8445 8128.

### New version of the Income Tax Guide for non-profit organisations

The Tax Office has updated the *Income tax guide for non-profit organisations*. The new version replaces the one issued in May 2003 and has been updated to reflect changes in the tax law including:

- a statutory extension to the meaning of charity,
- extended endorsement requirements for charities, and
- changes to the Australian Business Register for charities.

The guide helps non-profit organisations understand their income tax obligations and entitlements.

You can view the new version on the Tax Office website using the following link:

<http://ato.gov.au/nonprofit/content/29074.htm>

or order a paper copy by phoning **1300 720 092** and quoting NAT number 7967.

## Creating Rich Environments

At Surrey Downs Child Care Centre the staff teams' commitment to high quality child care led us into questioning our play environments and educational curriculum. The timing was perfect. The core of the staff team are long serving members; two of whom were completing their last two modules for the Diploma of Community Services (Children's Services) and all of us looking forward into the future.

At a Team Leaders meeting the question was asked, "How do we engage the children in more positive play and experiences, rather than spending our time continually re-directing and negotiating challenging behaviours?" We all searched through our playroom curriculum and centre program. On the surface it was meeting the needs for individual children and rating at 'high quality' for the QI&AS, however there was a deeper 'need' to explore our environments further.

Jenny Zada was invited to join our staff meeting and assist our team to re-visit (and in some cases introducing) the basic theories behind designing enriched environments for young children. The whole staff team, including casual relief staff, were involved in the workshop with Jenny, which was crucial to the success of the project. The staff team completed some readings before the workshop and then Jenny discussed the importance and relevance of the 'theorist approach'. Room teams went off and evaluated their own curriculum and environment, resulting in the realisation that this perspective was missing from the current function.

Our homework over the next few weeks was to develop our curriculum and enrich our environments, to fulfill and excite the children's learning and educational development by using a theorist's perspective. The transformation began the next day and the further into change we headed, the further we were driven towards the success of this change. All staff and children are now seeing, feeling and experiencing many benefits of this challenge that started with such a simple question.

*Jenny Malloy  
Director, Surrey Downs Child Care Centre*

## Become an accredited SunSmart centre

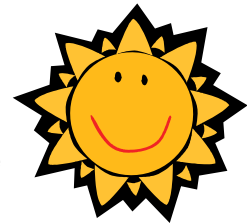
Centres have been implementing comprehensive skin protection policies for some time now, so why not receive some acknowledgement for all the hard work and commitment to this very important health issue.

Through The Cancer Council of South Australia, the SunSmart Early Childhood Program, supports South Australian child care centres in the development and implementation of skin protection policies through the provision of free policy guidelines, material and teaching resources designed for use with this age group.

The policy guidelines include:

- Seek shade between 10am and 3pm.
- Re-schedule activities to minimise time outdoors between 10am and 3pm.
- Wear a broad-brimmed hat.
- Liberally apply SPF30+ broad spectrum sunscreen.

The Cancer Council acknowledges centres who join the program with the presentation of a large aluminium sign which can be displayed on the front fence of the centre advertising that they are a SunSmart centre.



Centres have also fed back to us that as an accredited SunSmart centre they believe they have had more success when applying for sun protection grants which come up occasionally .

If your centre hasn't already joined the SunSmart Early Childhood Program, all you need to do is ensure your centre's policy meets the guidelines and then complete a SunSmart Early Childhood application form and return it, together with a copy of your centre's skin protection policy, to The Cancer Council SA. Both the application form and the SunSmart policy guidelines are available from their website. [www.cancersa.org.au](http://www.cancersa.org.au) or by phoning The Cancer Council SA on 8291 4111.

*Michelle Brereton*

### Interviewing resource:

Included as an insert this month is the 6th Child Care Staffing Resource Paper which offers some tips on planning and conducting interviews.

*If you have missed previous papers we would be happy to send you back copies. Call Sue Pens or Michelle on 8445 8128 or e-mail Michelle at [michelle.brereton@networksa.org.au](mailto:michelle.brereton@networksa.org.au)*

# OSHCQA TRAINING BULLETIN FEBRUARY 2005

*Welcome to a new year – we trust it will be a successful and happy year for your OSHC service. A special thanks to those of you who have worked vacation care – it has been a long program for you all and we hope it went well. Network SA looks forward to helping you where we can in the coming year.*

The list of services that have completed self study reports is continuing to grow and we suspect that over the coming months many more services will join that list.

Recently staff at Network SA undertook to gather feedback from some services that had had validation visits. It is very reassuring to learn that most of these services give very positive reports about the whole process. Some key comments to reflect on include:

- The training and support we had attended was helpful and we were not really surprised by anything in the final process.
- OSHC QA was the impetus for us to “smarten up” our practices and review what we were doing and then make improvements.
- There were financial implications for the service and it was necessary for management to recognise this and support the staff team with extra paid hours.
- There was a lot of work involved but it was really beneficial – the staff team is now motivated to make ongoing improvements.
- The process required us to be very focused and specific in preparing and documenting our evidence, i.e. we had to really consider each principle and determine what was required.
- The information required was out there we simply had to learn where to find it. Within our service we all had to be confident about finding what we needed when the validator was present.

It is important to reflect on this last comment.

**Service staff members must to be tuned in to find the information to support them. QA working groups must keep abreast of new information.**

The NCAC information is very comprehensive and new information is continually being made available.

The quarterly newsletter from NCAC – *Putting Children First* is sent to all services (is also available

online) and contains useful information that will assist services preparing to complete self study report.

There is also information for children on the web site that explains what accreditation is and gives some ideas for how children might become involved in the processes. This web address is - [www.ncac.gov.au](http://www.ncac.gov.au) .

Reflecting on common questions we received at the end of last year we cannot emphasise too strongly how important it is to have systems and structures and the quality areas are logical guides to those structures. The following ideas may help:

- Set aside part of a shelf to store all manuals, awards, etc that deal with meeting legal obligations
- Ensure that all staff have the latest information about the service and day to day issues that may affect their work responsibilities
- Work out a calendar with a variety of ways to inform parents of OSHC and Vac Care happenings throughout the year
- Develop pro-formas for staff recruitment, orientation and induction processes for easy use at any time
- Ensure that confidential staff files are developed and maintained with key information documents such as Job Description, contract, professional qualifications, professional development records, etc.
- Check the professional development records annually to help with planning ongoing development of staff and service needs.
- Develop, review and monitor the grievance procedure and ensure that all staff and parents have access to, or a copy of, the procedure. Children also need to have guidelines or procedures for dealing with grievances. Contributing to the development of these gives children a stake in the process, this usually impacts positively on the negotiation of issues raised during grievances.

The management of information works most effectively when all documentation is clearly labelled, easy to find and accessible to the relevant people. Naturally all confidential information must be labelled accordingly and stored securely.

We recognise that there are a number of services with new staff in leadership positions. The operators of these services should feel free to contact the Network SA if they require any specific QA support or assistance.

Bev Pope, Anne Gawen, Teresa Harnett, Kay Thomas.

**QUALITY OF U.S. CHILD CARE QUESTIONABLE?**

There have been alarming reports from the U.S. regarding deaths and unsafe practices in U.S. child care centres last year.

It seems that the quality of care is so dire in some day care centres that the New York City Council has introduced a bill to create an independent panel of experts and municipal workers to probe child-care deaths in a effort to tackle the rising fatality rate and strengthen inspections of day-care facilities.

According to reports in the New York Post, fifty eight children died from abuse or maltreatment in the first 9 months of 2004, up 37 in the same period in 2003. The council also held hearings on the proposed "Matthew's Law", named after the 7-month-old Queens child who was killed when toys were piled on him by unsupervised children at a day-care centre.

The Tennessee Department of Human Services have indicated that, statewide, 53 child care centers have recently been suspended or put on notice for breaking state rules designed to protect children from being harmed while riding in day-care vans. A recent history of children dying aboard day-care vans from heatstroke has resulted in a series of stiffer state laws and rules.

It is frightening to think that deaths in child care centres can be such a problem in the US, especially considering that we would assume that the level of quality care, licensing inspections and best practice assessments would be similar to ours here in Australia.

*Michelle Brereton*

***Helpful Website***

CommuniT (pronounced commune-I-Tee) is a website which assists the community sector and their clients to address IT (Information Technology) related issues.

The website offers advice and help with computer issues and purchasing computer equipment and has free software download links.

CommuniT often has specials on computer equipment from a range of suppliers and free workshops that you can attend.

They also sponsor BigPaddock, which is a community based Internet Service Provider that can provide personal and business Internet access.

Check it out at [www.communite.info](http://www.communite.info)

**Community Benefit SA grants program**

Applications for Round 19 of the Community Benefit SA grant funding program opens on Monday 31 January and closes on Monday 28 February at 5pm.

Funding Application Workshops will be conducted in early February.

For more information or to download the Application Forms and Funding Guidelines go to [www.dfc.sa.gov.au/cbsa](http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/cbsa) or call 8226 6749.

**Quarterly Superannuation Statements Scrapped**

Employers are no longer required to provide quarterly superannuation statements to staff.

Although this legislation was only in effect for 12 months, it has now been scrapped by the Federal Government in an effort to reduce the paperwork burden on small business.

This change has no effect on the frequency employers must lodge contributions, which is still every quarter.

**WANTED**

**Articles, feedback and interviewees**

We are always looking for interesting articles to include in the Update.

If you or someone at your centre would like to write an article, share ideas or be part of our 'people in the sector' series, let us know.

This month we have included an insert in the Update—a feedback & suggestion sheet for you to copy and use whenever you would like to offer us written feedback or ideas.

Contact Michelle or Maureen on Ph: 8445 8128 Fax: 8268 8065. PO Box 2440, Regency Park SA 5942.

E-mail Michelle at [michelle.brereton@networksa.org.au](mailto:michelle.brereton@networksa.org.au)

Closing date for each publication is the 20th of each month.

## Positions Vacant

### Director L2 Position Vacant

#### The Pines P.S. OSHC & Vacation Care (Parafield Gardens)

Diploma in Children's Services or equivalent is essential.

Start Date 7<sup>th</sup> March negotiable

Please send Resume & a written application  
addressing Job Description to:

The Management Committee  
The Pines OSHC  
P.O. Box 576  
Salisbury South SA 5106

Please ring for more details &  
Job Description - 8258 8337

Applications close Fri 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 5pm

### Para West Community Children's Centre

#### DIRECTOR LEVEL 3

The successful applicant will be the  
Director of a large, dynamic and complex  
Children's Centre that is situated on the  
school grounds of an  
Adult Re-entry Campus.

Applications Close – 4:00 pm 25<sup>th</sup> February 2005

For more information and  
a copy of the Job Specification contact  
Jennie Lees  
at Para West Adult Campus  
8254 6300

## ASSOCIATIONS

### Childcare South Australia Inc

Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of  
the month (4th if the 3rd is a public  
holiday) at the Education Centre, Milner  
St, Hindmarsh at 7.30pm.

Postal address: P.O. Box 406 Hindmarsh  
SA 5007.

Email [accsa@internode.on.net](mailto:accsa@internode.on.net).

Phone: 0407 580 645

### OSHC Association

Meetings for all OSHC staff, parents and  
management committee members are  
held at Education Department Centre  
[EDC] Milner Street Hindmarsh at  
10 -12.00 noon in weeks 3 and 8 on the  
Tuesday.

For further information contact the  
Chairperson, Teresa Harnett, on  
0411 558 050.

### National Association of Community Based Children's Services (SA)

Meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of  
each month at 9.30am at the Gowrie  
Training Centre.

For further information contact Deb on  
8231 0941 or by fax on 8231 0949.

### South Australian Association of Community Based Child Care Centres

Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of  
each month at 9.30am. at the Gowrie  
Resource Centre.

For further information contact Lynne  
Rutherford on 8222 5880.

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ABN : 55 025 418 476.

Network SA and ARMSU are located at The Parks Community Centre, Trafford Street, Angle Park. Enter from Trafford St (car park 4) and follow the path to the centre of the complex. We are in the 2nd building on your left, opposite the Health Centre.