



2006 has ended on a fantastic note for Childcare Queensland and we would like to take the opportunity in our first newsletter for 2007 to welcome all our members and associate members.

Childcare Queensland has been working actively with our members and associate members to keep them informed and up-to-date about issues impacting on the childcare sector both in Queensland and nationally. We have been taking a proactive role in working with the government and the media to promote Childcare Queensland and our member centres.

2007 is poised to be an exciting year for Childcare Queensland as we take the association to a new level. Due to expansion and the proactive approach the Association has taken towards issues facing the sector over the past 12 months, Childcare Queensland has taken the next step in its development process and acquired our own premises in Springwood which will be staffed full-time from February.

While it is sad to say goodbye to the support and services provided by Agenda Management over the past 12 months, it is an exciting step forward for Childcare Queensland. The new Springwood premises will provide members and associate members with facilities equipped for training purposes, meeting facilities and on-site parking, allowing members to attend Association functions and events with ease.

Focusing on a commitment to assisting professional childcare providers to offer all children access to early learning opportunities, we look forward to a fantastic year in which we are:

- Increasingly pro-active on all political issues
- Prepared for the coming Federal election
- Actively monitoring and replying to media
- Providing members with support across all areas
- Providing members with updates of information as it comes to hand
- Actively recruiting membership

There are a number of major events scheduled for 2007, in particular the Federal Election. Childcare Queensland will be working actively with member and associate member centres in the lead up to the Federal Election and this year's federal budget to ensure the early learning needs of children and the role of private providers of long day care centres are fully recognised in this process. In order to successfully work towards achieving our political goals, we have engaged a public relations firm with expertise in education, childcare and government lobbying to assist us in this process.

When our new office is fully operational in February, we will make contact to ensure that we have correct email and postal addresses. It would be beneficial if we could email to you information as it occurs – rather than have you wait until a newsletter is compiled.

We look forward to a very active year for Childcare Queensland as we develop stronger communication with all members, have a great conference in June and lobby progressively for a childcare sector that is strong and viable, whilst providing children throughout their early years with high quality education and care.

Childcare Queensland is looking forward to an exciting 2007.

Gwynn Bridge
Childcare Queensland President

2007 is set to be a very active year for Childcare Queensland... moving to new offices is just the beginning.

Staffing

As part of our revamp, Childcare Queensland has made the decision to move away from Agenda Management and take the exciting step of employing an Office Administrator to manage our new Springwood premises and provide immediate support and advice to our members and associate members. As our membership base continues to grow and the Association is actively promoting itself as the peak body representing long day care centers in Queensland, the committee felt there was an immediate need to provide our members with services at call at a location that can be utilised for meetings and other purposes when needed.



Ensuring Your Message is Heard

On Saturday 4 November Childcare Queensland President Gwynn Bridge was one of 10 prominent business and community leaders invited to attend a lunch hosted by the Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard. The lunch provided the opportunity to discuss in detail some of the more pressing issues facing the childcare industry and to significantly raise the profile of Childcare Queensland on a national level.

For PR and Political Advice we have Turned to the Experts

Childcare Queensland has contracted *Strategic Campaign Associates* and its sister company, *Australian Public Affairs* to provide public relations and political advice to the Association and its membership over the next 12 months.

2007 presents some exciting opportunities for the Childcare Industry in Queensland, and professional assistance in raising our profile, generating a more informed public debate about childcare issues, and presenting our case publicly and to politicians, will ensure we maximise every opportunity.

Strategic and *APA* have a decade of experience in government and media relations as well as publications and design, and we welcome them on board to help us tackle funding, policy and regulatory issues impacting on our industry.

Our partnership has borne early fruit, with a Pre-Budget Submission already being presented to the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Mal Brough MP and the Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer, the Hon Peter Dutton MP.

In future editions of this newsletter we will keep you informed of other areas of progress as the team at *Strategic* and *APA* help us with this area of communication as well.

Childcare Queensland Website

Strategic and *APA* are actively working with us to develop an exciting new look and feel for the Childcare Queensland website which will provide a portal to key news in the childcare sector and increase member value. While this was scheduled to take place this year, its deadline has been brought forward with the crashing of the old site and an inability to restore the lost data.

This is part of the ongoing work we are doing to promote Childcare Queensland as the peak association and the 'expert' on childcare.



Gwynn Bridge (centre) is pictured opening the new premises of Childcare Queensland with Rachel Saunders (left) from *Australian Public Affairs* and Anna Day (right) from *Strategic Campaign Associates*. The new premises, located in Springwood, will provide all Childcare Queensland members with high level facilities for events, training activities, meetings and general activities.

Pre-Budget Submission

Childcare is going to be an emotive and important topic for the upcoming Federal Election. Childcare Queensland has lodged a Pre-Budget Submission with Minister Brough and Minister Dutton. In this submission we have suggested a considerable increase in the Child Care Benefit (CCB) for families with children in care in the 0 – 3 ages. We see this as a most important step for the provision of adequate places and affordability for families. We have also asked for an increase in CCB for families with children in childcare in the higher age groups. Evidence is clear that the cost of providing childcare is far greater than the CPI increases that have been given since 2000 which is again causing affordability issues for families.

Release of Vacancy figures from FaCSIA

The vacancy numbers released last week were no surprise to those of us working in the long day care sector. Whilst we do not wish for these figures to cause any alarm as to the viability of the sector, these figures are vital to ensure that those who are constantly seeking press regarding “shortage of childcare places” are not given such credibility. This will also be a guide to developers of the need to conduct a thorough demographic study of any area in which they wish to build. Childcare Queensland was interviewed on several radio stations and also in the print media on this issue.

Review of the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System

In December, Gwynn Bridge attended workshops in Canberra where the review of this system was discussed. The intention of the Government under the direction of FaCSIA is that the current system will be revamped to include LDC, FDC and OOSH. It was evident that the intention is for the system to be simplified to some degree, particularly in areas that are overlapped by State/Territory legislation. A working group has been appointed to progress these changes.

Childcare Management System

Gwynn Bridge also attended a workshop in Canberra on this topic. This will be a huge change as many of you who attended the traveling workshops throughout Queensland will understand. The intention is for the submission of “acquittals” for CCB to be done on-line on a weekly basis. Childcare Queensland has major concerns regarding the turn around time when the process will be completed by FaCSIA and the money actually deposited in our bank. It was never the intention that childcare providers carry the finance for CCB at any time and we must ensure that this does not occur in the future. Gwynn Bridge has been appointed to the Reference Group working on the implementation of this system.

Any feedback or suggestions you have on the childcare management system please forward to us so that we can accurately represent our members.

Review of Qualification Provisions (State Government):

This is an important review of the qualifications that we must consider very carefully in conjunction with current wage increases. This review will be discussed at upcoming general meetings and we urge you to attend so that we can receive your input.

Please note the closing date for this review has been extended until Friday 30 March 2007.

Risk Management Policy for Child Protection

It is expected that this will be incorporated into services policies forthwith. Childcare Queensland is working on a Risk Management Policy and will make this available to members in the near future.

2007 Conference - A Focus on Innovations

The 2007 Childcare Queensland Annual Conference will be held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre on the Queen’s Birthday long weekend from Saturday 9 June to Sunday 10 June. The 2007 conference theme of “Embracing the Future: Innovations in Childcare” is built around the current issues facing our industry now and into the near future – something we all need to be conversant with.

The conference program is well underway with guest speaker David Koch of the ‘Sunrise’ and ‘Money’ programs set to inspire us with his small business and finance knowledge. Frank Oberklaid and Carolyn Fewster are just some of the speakers booked into our extensive professional development program planned for licensees, owners and centre staff.



The trade exhibition and social calendar is shaping up to be the best yet. This will be available on our newly revamped website in early 2007. Regular conference updates and a more extensive program overview as the conference preparation develops will be available online shortly.

Contact the Childcare Queensland office on 07 3808 2366 for more information.

Leasing Update

Childcare Queensland members have been asking a number of questions about leasing their childcare premises. Porta Lawyers provided the following response to assist members with their leasing enquiries.

Question

"I am a Childcare Centre operator and I am currently leasing my premises. I have been leasing the premises for 12 years and the lease is about to expire and I do not have an option to renew it. I would like to renew the lease. The landlord has agreed to renew my lease, but on the condition that I pay to them an additional \$60,000.00. What can I do?"

Answer

This unfortunate situation has started to arise more frequently in recent times. Unfortunately, as a tenant in this situation, you have a limited number of options available to you. The landlord could be seen as taking advantage of the fact that you have built up a successful business operating from the premises, which cannot be relocated easily.

While the landlord cannot make you pay the extra money, they can make you vacate the premises at the expiration of the lease term. You will have to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of staying in your current location as opposed to relocating your business. You might want to consider whether you can negotiate with the landlord an amount that you think is reasonable to secure a new lease of the premises. Alternatively, you might consider whether you can afford to purchase the land and the building from the landlord.

How to avoid this situation

In order to prevent this unfavourable situation happening to you, make sure that you receive specialist legal advice prior to entering into a leasing arrangement. You should ensure that you have a lease in place that will adequately protect your interests and secure one or more option periods. Additionally, your lease should specify that in the event that there are no option periods, the landlord will not impose any unrealistic or monetary obligations on the tenant in deciding whether or not to renew an expired lease.

In future, you should look to address these questions long before the lease is about to expire so that if you have to relocate, arrangements can be made in good time.

Industrial Awards

There appears to still be some confusion as to the appropriate award for staff payment – Workchoices or the State Award. Livingstones are available for discussion on this subject for any of our members and they will also be providing workshops to assist members to clarify their positions. Dates will be provided within the next three weeks.

Childcare Queensland also has developed a draft AWA that will be available to members,



GIOVANNI PORTA
B.Ed. LLB (Hons)

LEGAL SERVICE
PERSONAL & BUSINESS

Unit 3, 420 Newman Road
Geebung Brisbane Qld 4034

Telephone (07) 3265 3888
Facsimile (07) 3265 3588
Email: giovanni@portalawyers.com.au

2007 General Meeting Dates:

Brisbane	12 February 2007, 7.00pm 11/6 Vanessa Boulevard Springwood
Sunshine Coast	6 February 2007, 7.15am Horton Lakes Golf Course
Gold Coast	14 February 2007, 7.15am Woodchoppers Inn, Mudgeeraba

Our Contact Details

Location: 11/6 Vanessa Boulevard, Springwood
Mailing: P.O. Box 137, Springwood QLD 4127

Website: www.childcareqld.org.au
Email: info@childcareqld.org.au

Telephone: 07 3808 2366
Fax: 07 3808 2466
CQ Mobile: 0418 194 685
Toll free: 1300 365 325
(outside of Brisbane Metropolitan area)