It is our pleasure to present this Annual Report to the Governing Council of Mt Compass Preschool Centre, families of our preschool children and the Educational Director of the Fleurieu Partnership, Mr Richard Costi.

Mt Compass Preschool has enjoyed another year learning, questioning, wondering, pondering, creating, imagining, hypothesising, singing, experimenting, dancing, wildly jumping, exploring, feeling, thinking, calculating, drawing, and painting!!

Jay Elmslie, Director
On behalf of staff

Britt Baker, Chairperson
on behalf of Governing Council
The Annual Review of our Quality Improvement Plan confirmed improvements in all 7 Quality Areas. In identifying areas of improvement and future directions this review referred to data from: Reflect, Respect, Relate inquiry (RRR); the Annual Self Review; feedback contained the Parent Satisfaction Survey and staff recordings and reflections.

Our inquiry this year was centred around the learning disposition curiosity. We used a three pronged approach inclusive of children, families and staff. Educators developed a deeper understanding of curiosity and how it drives learning. The interactive program involved families who supported and valued the program through their participation. The Involvement Scale (RRR) was used informally to observe and reflect upon children’s curiosity, high levels of involvement were observed. Educators also reflected on their own practice using the list of signals and indicators from Active Learning Environment tool (RRR) to chart self-reflections. Over the course of the inquiry educators shared their sense of wonderment with children. Rather than supplying answers, questions were posed and used to plan the next step in the learning cycle. These processes were recorded and shared with parents, who also started to adopt a more open ended approach when listening and responding to their children.

Self-regulation and self-help skills were a focus of the way children, educators and families worked together this year. Supported by professional development, Educators developed programs for use at preschool and home to support children in their development of self-regulatory skills and self-help skills.

Collaborative partnerships with families and community continued through group structures (council meetings, working bees, social gatherings, network meetings,) resource sharing, individual meetings, and take home programs.

The physical environment has seen great improvement both inside and out. We now have a much more serviceable and attractive kitchen, new carpet and a freshly painted building, boosting the morale of educators and families. The improvements help to address the community’s desire for ‘better facilities’ (as indicated in Parent surveys) as well as supporting our healthy eating program. Work continued in the outside learning environment. This included the addition of large logs, wood rounds, improved garden edging, creation of new play spaces, removal of permapine logs/platform, and the promise of a new swing, thereby supporting both children’s learning and safety.

This was a transition year to Same First Day, enrolments and staffing was reduced over the course of the year. This was managed well due to forward planning and staff flexibility. Strong connections with schools have supported the transition of children and their families into the school environment. Our orientation to preschool program has been revised and revitalised to support Same First Day.

The natural environment rouses children’s curiosity and gives rise to questions and wonderings... driving further learning. Children ponder... why does bark change colour? what will happen when we add more water to the clay?

This year educators explored how numeracy and literacy can grow in everyday activities and play. We shared these stories with families in our Day Book; the Question Book; informative fortnightly newsletters; individual learning stories; parent meetings; parent/educators conversations and room displays.

A fresh approach to healthy eating was also developed, supported by funding and programs from the Alexandrina Council. Regular cooking, sharing fruit and vegetables, and a breakfast program were some of the achievements. There were high levels of family involvement with over 80% of families attending breakfasts at kindy, and 70% plus families participating in fruit and veg trading table. Verbal feedback from parents was supportive of these programs with children making better and more varied food choices at home.

In 2014 we will continue our inquiry into learning dispositions with a focus on imagination and the role it plays in learning especially as a foundation for abstract thought, numeracy and literacy learning and problem solving. Intentional teaching around physical activity and gross motor skills will also be a focus for 2014.

Educators, children, families and the community will continue to plan and develop the outside learning environment and implement some of the planned improvements.

We will continue our focus on self-help skills and collaborative learning, this will be particularly pertinent with the broadened age range of pre-schoolers (3-5yrs).

Our collaborative partnerships with families and community will be recorded in a Community Book in 2014. This will document the many relationships the preschool builds with community in a format that engages children and families.

Transition programs, archiving and a review of staff development plans are also on the agenda for 2014.
During the course of 2013 6 children received Preschool Support from the DECD Educational Psychologist and/or the DECD Speech Pathologist. This support was managed by the Director and the DECD Disability Co-ordinator in consultation with families. Each child had a Learning Plan in place to plan, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. All interventions were found to be supportive of each child’s learning and development. In all cases a meeting occurred between the school and preschool to assist in the smooth transition of the children and their families into the school environment.

The Governing Council organised and hosted a very successful quiz night. The funds raised ($1,900) will be put towards a new swing set. Many families were involved in securing prizes for the night which turned out to be full of laughs and good cheer. Two other major achievements of the Council were the creation of a dedicated parent area in the preschool, and the kitchen upgrade. Governing Council meetings were well attended by a small and dedicated group of parents and staff and children.

The Preschool conducted a parent survey in Term 3. The results below illustrate parents’ responses to questions about various aspects of the service. It is clear that there is a very high level of satisfaction with the preschool across the 5 areas. In the comment section of the survey parents mostly noted qualities in staff they appreciated—friendly, caring, and responsive.