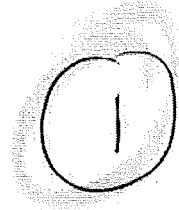


YMCA of Sydney

"RT4"



16 May 2012

AT

Via email: [REDACTED]

AW

Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear AT and AW

Child Protection in OOSH Care

Thank you for your letter dated 30 April 2012.

Please find following responses to your queries, following your format.

1. YMCA Meeting 23 November 2011

External audit of YMCA Policies and Procedures as discussed in the parent sessions for families in the Sutherland region aimed at providing information in relation to the John Lord Incident.

YMCA Response

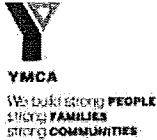
The YMCA contacted Network of Community Activities in late November 2011 to seek their support and advice re conducting an audit of our Policy and Procedures. Network referred us to the Commission for Children and Young People. The Commission advised that they were unable to undertake audits of this nature. They confirmed that under the National Quality Framework such audits would be undertaken by the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

In the first week of the January Holiday Adventures Program Caringbah YMCA received a visit from two Compliance and Assessment Officers from the Department of Education and Communities (DEC). Very early into the court case the DEC was made aware of the allegations against John Lord and his involvement with the YMCA. The purpose of their visit was to undertake an investigation into YMCA operating practices and policies to ensure that they were compliant in relation to the National Quality Framework (NQF).

During the visit the Compliance and Assessment Officers spoke with YMCA staff and management about recruitment practices including Working with Child Checks and reference checks, centre visits made by management, staff training and external reporting of major incidents. Policies were also reviewed during this visit.

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As the childcare industry is in the early roll out stages of NQF with licensing paperwork being lodged and Quality Improvement Plans being developed for each service, we will be expecting further visits from regional Compliance and Assessments officers to all of our individual services in the near future. These visits will again review operating practices for quality and compliance.

With the visit from the Compliance and Assessment Officers happening so early in the year and deeming the YMCA compliant with minimal wording changes required to policy, management felt assured that we were operating at best practice.

After a review of policies, the Compliance and Assessment Officers requested that in regards to our Child Protection Policy we change the name of the Quality Assurance governing body from the National Childcare Accreditation Council and that it be replaced with a reference to the Department of Education and Communities and the National Quality Framework (NQF). A further review of this policy will take place in early June as part of our scheduled policy update in line with our NQF timeline.

A further request was made to change the Child Safe Code of Conduct policy to include information regarding the DEC and NQF. This amendment has been made along with a number of others that clearly link the policy to Regulation and to the Quality Standards both of which were introduced on the 1st January 2012. As this Policy has had significant changes I have attached a copy for your perusal.

Your Query regarding Document circulated to parents dated 23 November 2011 – specifically slide 5 regarding External Audit

YMCA Response

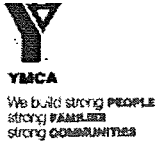
Please see above for clarification on this query.

Transportation used by YMCA for children whilst in care was an issue tabled at the parent sessions run by the YMCA for parents of the Sutherland Region. Of particular concern was the use of a car to transport children to an excursion rather than a bus.

YMCA Response

In a visit from Compliance and Assessment Officers from the Department of Education and Communities (DEC), early in January, particular attention was given to reviewing the Transportation Policy. As YMCA staff transport children to a variety of venues, in Before, After and Vacation Care, the Excursion Policy was also included in this review.

Whilst reviewing the policies, current practices were discussed with staff and management. A clear explanation was given of the vehicles used to transport children whilst in programs along with the practices used by staff. The process of using YMCA buses and cars was discussed at length along with the fact that whilst on an excursion that all vehicle travel together. It was clearly pointed out by management that all buses



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and cars travel together and if a vehicle needed to stop that all YMCA vehicles stop and wait this is a method used across the Children's Services Unit.

Methods of transport for Before and After School Care were discussed along with the parent consent letter if there was to be only one child needing to be taken to or picked up from school. The Parent Consent Form, used in situations where only one child travels on the bus was tabled. The practice of placing the child towards the back of the bus, the staff member having access to a phone if problems were to arise and the other centre staff member checking on the length of time the bus run is taking and contacting the bus driver to discuss concerns were detailed.

At the request of the Compliance and Assessment officers, wording changes will be made to both the Transportation Policy and the Excursion Policy to where there was any reference made to the National Childcare Accreditation Council making sure that this is changed to Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and the National Quality Framework (NQF).

While the Excursion Policy has had a recent extensive review a further review will take place by June for the Transportation Policy to ensure that it is linked more closely to the *Quality Standards and Curriculum – My Time Our Place*.

A further suggestion by the Compliance and Assessment Officers was to change the wording used to describe the type of transportation that would be used. In the Policy that they were reviewing the wording included references made to a bus or buses. To ensure that all methods of YMCA transport was included they had asked use to change bus /buses to vehicle.

Other than the wording changes and reference to DEC and NQF the policy and practices were deemed as being compliant.

2. Parent forum 24 November 2011 at Cronulla

Your query regarding policies in relation to single driver's transporting children

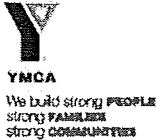
YMCA Response

(Please see above addressing your query.

Child Protection Manager Position

YMCA Response

In December the YMCA Board approved funding for the role of Child Protection Manager. Research and analysis of the requirements for the role were undertaken in February. Findings were that after an initial focus on Children's Services the role would be a whole of organisation position.



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In line with the National Quality Framework requirements the role title was changed to Child Protection and Compliance Manager. The role will report to the General Manager – Children's Services. A position description has been developed by the YMCA of Sydney HR department for review by the General Managers of our Camping and Recreation Divisions in the coming week. An advertisement will be placed as soon as this process is complete. Interviews for the position will take place in May.

3. Parental Consultation

Parental consultation as a requirement under the National Quality Framework / Implementation of the National Quality Framework in particular the roll out processes by staff of the YMCA and individual staff responsibilities.

YMCA Response

Currently the YMCA is completing the first roll out stage of the National Quality Framework. This involves the completion of the initial paperwork that will secure a service approval and license. As there are over two thousand services in NSW, the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) has a staged roll out of this process where they are inviting services in regional groupings to lodge their forms. The staff at Caringbah YMCA is working to collect all the necessary documentation that is required by the DEC.

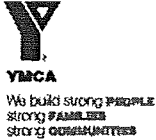
As part of the service approval process, each individual centre will be visited by the regional Compliance and Assessment Officer who will complete a checklist to ensure the individual compliance to a set of regulations.

Staff across all YMCA OSHC services are busy working on Quality Improvement Plans which are required to be lodged once service approval has been given.

Once these processes are completed, families at individual services will be asked to attend parent sessions where they will be asked for feedback and opportunities for parent participation will be discussed. Currently families are asked for feedback or to participate in their child's centre through newsletters. This has been in place for approximately last three years as we value the input of our families.

Further to this the staff has been undertaking training specifically in relation to NQF. In January all childcare staff from across the services came together to attend a training session with Jennifer Cartmel – the author of the National Curriculum – My Time Our Place. Jennifer did large and small group sessions with the staff to assist them with the implementation of NQF. Staff have done external training sessions through Network of Community Activities the NSW peak Body for Outside School Hours Care and briefing sessions with Department of Education and Communities.

Management has worked closely with the team to ensure that they are aware of the DEC reporting requirements in regards to any incidents that may occur in the



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service. Staff have access to the necessary reporting forms and the authority to complete when necessary and forward it directly to the DEC.

The YMCA is taking a whole team approach to the implementation of NQF. While the Children's Service Management Team is organising the relevant paperwork, training, resources and policy reviews the whole team is working together to implement NQF within their services.

A clear timeline has been developed in relation to a policy review schedule. The first quarter of this year had been dedicated to reviewing specific policies as listed by the DEC as requiring review. These policies have been formally reviewed and endorsed by the YMCA Board and are currently in the Policy folders at all services.

The policies reviewed to date are as listed:

- Accidents, Incidents, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedures
- Confidentiality
- Emergency Procedures
- Enrolments including Authorisations
- Excursions
- Fees
- Food Handling and Nutrition
- Illness and Infectious Diseases
- Maintenance of Records
- Positive Guidance of Children's Behaviour
- Safe Environment
- Sun Protection
- Volunteers and Students

A clear list of policies has been developed for the next stage of the review process which will be completed by the end of June.

I trust that the above satisfies your queries.

I appreciate you taking the time to write to us in regards to your concerns and urge you to contact us again with any future concerns.

Yours faithfully

Phillip Hare
CEO
YMCA of Sydney