



## YMCA CHILDREN'S SERVICES



### External Audit of YMCA Policies and Procedures

#### Context

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

#### Action Taken

The YMCA contacted Network of Community Activities in late November 2011 to seek their support and advice re conducting an audit of YMCA Children's Services Policies and Procedures. Network referred us to the Commission for Children and Young People whom were also unable to undertake audits of this nature. At this time, the Commission confirmed that under the National Quality Framework, such audits would be undertaken by the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC). The DEC are independent of the YMCA and more information on their purpose and position in the Industry can be found at <http://www.educationandcommunities.nsw.gov.au/>

In the first week of the January Holiday Adventures Program, Caringbah YMCA received a visit by two Compliance and Assessment Officers from the DEC. Prior to this visit, very early into the court case; the DEC was made aware of the allegations against Jonathon 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 staff and management about recruitment practices including Working with Children Checks and reference checks, centre visits made by management, staff training and external reporting of major incidents. In addition, YMCA Children's Services Policies were reviewed during the visit.

The Childcare Industry is in the early roll out stages of NQF implementation across NSW. 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

**THIS IS ANNEXURE "C"  
TO THE STATEMENT OF  
LIAM JOSEPH WHITLEY  
DATED 22 OCTOBER 2013**



to policy, management felt assured that we have, and continue to, operate at best practice.

## **Amended Policies**

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.

In addition, 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 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012. As this Policy has had significant changes I have attached a copy for your perusal.



## Transportation of children during OSHC

### Context

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 (with a single staff member) to transport children to an excursion rather than a bus.

### Action Taken

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 all vehicles travel together. It was clearly pointed out by management that all buses and cars travel together and if a vehicle needed to stop, all YMCA vehicles would stop and wait. This is a method used across the Children's Services Unit.

Methods of transport for Before and After School Care were also discussed along with the Parent Consent Letter if there were 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 meeting detailed the current practice of placing the child towards the back of the bus with one staff member having access to a phone if problems were to arise and the other staff member checking the length of time the bus run is taking; and contacting the bus driver to discuss any concerns.

### Action Taken

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. This is 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 Transportation Policy the wording included references made to a 'bus' or 'buses'. To ensure that all methods of YMCA transport were included they had asked the use to be changed from 'bus /buses' to 'vehicle'.

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



## Implementation of National Quality Framework

### Context

Implementation of the National Quality Framework in particular the roll out processes by staff of the YMCA and individual staff responsibilities.

### Action Taken

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 continuing 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 the last three years as we value the input of our families.

Further to this all centre 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 have 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



Service. Staff have access to the necessary reporting forms and the authority to complete when necessary and forwards 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 childcare team is working together to implement NQF within their services.

## Amended Policies

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.