

Submission

No 100

## INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 9-14 YEARS IN NSW

Organisation: Lismore Outside School Hours Care Centre

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## **Presentation to Committee on Children and Young People** **Lismore OOSHC**

**Philosophy of the Centre** The philosophy of the centre is to provide a safe quality child care service that is affordable to the families in the Lismore and surrounding areas. The Centre expectations are: Peaceful, Cooperative, Responsible and Respectful. This creates a safe environment for the children. The daily program is divided into activities before afternoon tea and after afternoon tea usually 3-4 activities each session.

**Afternoon Tea** is provided at 4pm each day after the last bus has arrived. The **staffing** includes the service Director, Assistant Director, one permanent child care worker, food preparation worker and casual child care staff. The service has 6 Inclusion Support Workers (ISS) for Children with disabilities. The service is accepts enrolment from children and teenagers with disabilities up to the age of 18 years if still attending school. The current daily fee is \$14.50 per day.

**The Community we serve** Lismore covers an area of 1267 square kilometres with a population of 44600 coming from 4 villages and 6 suburbs, 5% of this population having profound or severe disabilities with a 9.2% unemployment rate. We currently have 13 local schools using the service, 7 public schools and 6 private schools including 3 high school students. We provide care for working parents, studying parents, single parents, grandparent carer's.

**Issues providing OOSHC for 9-12** The lack of a purpose built facility so children can create and projects that the service can store securely. Children in this age bracket tend to want to be treated as young adults and resent being placed into childcare which can result in challenging behaviours which effects younger children by exposing them to inappropriate language/concepts - inappropriate role modelling. Often a lack of interest and boredom can be a factor. It is a difficult age group to be caring for as they are not as easily entertained as the younger group. The issue is that some children in this age group are not responsible enough to be left unsupervised at home this leaving them at risk of harm and having to occupy themselves.

**Issues for 12 plus.** The service accepts enrolments for post Primary school students. Developmentally this age group can challenging as they are beginning to feel 'too big' for primary school and start to resent the fact that they are attending a care group with so many young students present. This can be compounded by the fact that some may have been attending since their first years at school and are getting sick of the setting. These things, if not addressed can manifest themselves as behavioural problems (defiant antisocial behaviour) and disengagement from the program which can often filter down to the younger students who look up to the older kids and copy

these behaviours. The 12 plus age group requires specialist youth workers rather than child care workers to assist in social and group interaction and facilitate a means for getting their options heard and valued. Simple tools such as internet access, printing access, publication of their artistic and written works, musical instruments, guests artists and community sports people and ability to watch age appropriate movies together.

**Issues for children with disabilities.** The major issues for children with disabilities is the inability of services to meet the gap between the funding subsidy of wages for staff and actual wages. The current wages subsidy is \$15.61 per hour and the hourly wage rate is \$22.42. This leaves a gap of \$6.81 per hour per ISS staff member. The service operated at a deficit for the 2007/08 year of some \$21000.00 of which \$11995.29 was the gap in ISS wages. Additional funding needs to be provided for appropriate resources; such as providing stimulating play equipment while also meeting their physical needs regarding any mobility issues and medical issues.

**Links between OOSHC services and other services** Our service accesses the Inclusion Support Agency for Inclusion Support referrals and funding (this service is provided by Ballina District Community Association). We have clients who are on the Brighter Futures Program funded by Department of Community Services. We work closely with Wilson Park Public SSP School on individual management plans for our children/teenagers with disabilities. Lismore Taxi Company who transports clients, Kirkland' buses who transport children to the service. Commonwealth Carer's respite and Interchange Respite services support our additional needs clients. In 2006 and 2007 our service worked with the Australian Sports Commission in implementing the Active After School Hours Program, however due to the additional voluntary coordination required to implement the program to over 60 children per day we were unable to continue.

**Department Rent Increase** The NSW Department of Education has decided to centralise the leasing arrangements for OOSHC services through Sydney Head Office. Historically, the school principal and the OOSHC service manager would sign the lease with an agreed payment amount. The new system is determined on square metres and use of facilities and in our service's case will increase the current rent paid at \$3100 to \$6000. The impact this will have on NGO or community based service providers is possibly detrimental to the service operations. The service's will be forced to increase the fees to parents and families.