

## Kindy Conversations Campaign Review

National and international research shows the importance of attendance at high quality kindergarten for successful achievement and lifelong learning. Based on data from the Australian Early Development Census, children who attend high quality kindergarten programs are also more likely to transition to school effectively, and were found in an Australian study to perform better on NAPLAN tests (Warren and Haisken – De New, 2013).

According to baseline information in 2016, 44.7% of Logan children do not attend kindergarten (Australian Bureau of Statistics). Logan also has areas of underutilisation of kindergarten, particularly from children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Pasifika and other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Logan Together's goal, is to see 1200 more children enrolled in kindy each year. More Logan children enrolled in kindergarten will be a significant step forward in reducing developmental vulnerability and breaking the cycle of disadvantage that exists for many of these children.

The *Kindy Conversations* campaign, which launched in November 2017, is part of a broader program of work by Logan Together to deliver on its kindy commitment. It aligns with the Logan community's *Roadmap for Change* - "On track at five" life stage to increase the attendance of Logan children at high quality kindergarten. *Kindy Conversations* is a behaviour change campaign that uses a series of animated and informative resources, to increase awareness amongst parents/caregivers of the importance of kindergarten, improve kindergarten attendance rates, and assist parents/caregivers to navigate the enrolment process.

### Purpose and scope

The *Kindy Conversations* campaign was briefly evaluated by Clear Horizons Consulting, as part of the *Logan Together Progress Report* in November 2018, and some pleasing early results were observed. The report highlighted evidence of early instances of impact resulting from the campaign, including but not limited to small-scale instances of kindy enrolments, changes in practices for service providers and strengthened networks.

The information provided in the progress report provides a sound case for continued investment in the *Kindy Conversations* campaign. However, as recommended in the report, further data collection, measurement and evaluation of impact are needed. Logan Together has undertaken additional enquiries to add to this picture of progress, identify any emerging needs, gaps and priorities, and to determine any improvements that may be needed to the campaign going forward. These enquiries examined year 1 of the campaign (which officially launched in Nov-2017), and the first four months of year 2 (Dec-2018 to Mar-2018). They focus on the key campaign resource – the *Family Kindy Guide* and training in the use of the guide. The cinema commercials promoting the importance of kindergarten were not examined.

### Methodology

A face-to-face survey was administered to service providers using the *Family Kindy Guide* to facilitate conversations with parents/caregivers to gauge provider's overall opinions on the campaign, campaign processes and outcomes. The survey contained a Likert Scale that presented service providers with a series of closed ended questions and pre-populated answer choices. A number of open-ended questions were also presented to service providers to elicit richer information and a more detailed understanding of the issues.

A document-scan of the *Logan Together Progress Report* and *Most Significant Change Stories* prepared by Clear Horizon Consulting was also completed.

### Sample size

A total of 16 service providers were invited to participate in the survey/interview with 6 taking up this offer. The service providers included ParentsNext workers, a Community Hub Leader, Family Worker, and a Child Health Nurse.



## Key Findings

- There was evidence from multiple providers that Kindy Conversations led to parents/caregivers enrolling their children in kindergarten, however exact numbers are not able to be quantified due to data gathering limitations.
- Kindy Conversations has helped to improve parental/caregiver knowledge of the importance of kindergarten, kindergarten enrolment processes and the differences between kindy and other forms of care. However some parents/caregivers are still confused about the later.
- The *Family Kindy Guide* has enabled parents/caregivers to make informed decisions about their child's care, and according to some service providers, has empowered and improved parental/caregiver confidence as a result.
- One service provider also reported the guide helped to improve their knowledge of different types of kindergarten programs and quality issues.
- The *Family Kindy Guide* and *Kindy Helps Children Get Ready For Big School* poster currently do not adequately reflect the ability levels and circumstances of children with additional needs and their families.
- The *Family Kindy Guide* is content heavy, which has limited its use with refugee and asylum seeker families, and other families with language and literacy difficulties.
- Both the *Family Kindy Guide* and the *Kindy Conversations* training were rated highly by all service providers.
- The campaign has not been as well supported operationally in Year 2 and has been slower to progress as a result.
- The visibility and reach of the campaign have been limited by a focus on facilitated Kindy Conversations between parents/caregivers and service providers. Many families do not access services and often its these families we need to reach the most. At the same time, embedding Kindy Conversations in the work of service providers is needed to sustain the approach long term, and to ensure kindy promotion continues beyond the life of the campaign.
- There is a lack of reliable data on the number of facilitated Kindy Conversations undertaken to date, and the number of kindergarten enrolments that have resulted from those conversations. There is also an absence of supporting processes to enable efficient and timely collection of this data.

## Limitations

Enquiry results are limited by the small sample size and the absence of parents/care givers from the sample. Attempts were made to identify parents/caregivers who would be willing to share their experiences of the campaign, however this was unsuccessful. For this reason it has not been possible to assess the benefits of the campaign from the perspectives of families. The lack of data on the campaign's impact and reach is another limitation that has implications for evaluation more broadly.

## Key Recommendations

1. The visibility and reach of the campaign are increased to maximise its impact and to give the campaign the best chance of achieving citywide change.
2. Campaign distribution is to occur via multiple avenues and methods (rather than provider facilitated conversations alone) and also targets families who don't access services. Promotional opportunities at natural meeting places such as shopping centres, sporting events and local parks are maximised, and use of video marketing on social media platforms is explored.
3. A strategy is implemented to grow the pool of "Kindy Advocates" who can promote kindy in the community. The use of volunteers including parents/caregivers (peers) and students on prac is recommended.
4. Campaign activities commence early in the year prior to commencement for the greatest effect.
5. Consideration is given to using a Kindy Ambassador (preferably a local legend) to give the campaign greater prominence and put a relatable face to the campaign – one that parents/caregivers connect with.
6. In addition to the *Family Kindy Guide*, quick campaign tools/resources are developed and circulated more broadly to promote key kindy messages "on the go".

7. Campaign resources are adapted and/or new resources are developed, that are more inclusive of children with additional needs, refugee and asylum seeker families and other families with language and literacy difficulties.
8. The information in the guide on the Child Care Package is reviewed, and if necessary adapted, or a supplementary resource is developed, to help families better understand kindergarten costs, and how they can increase the number of hours of subsidised care they can access.
9. A monitoring and evaluation strategy is developed for the campaign and supporting processes and relationships for data collection are established. Arrangements are negotiated with kindergarten providers to obtain key data and information for evaluation purposes at the point of enrolment, to improve accuracy and efficiency of data collection.

