



The Hon. Tony Kelly, ALGA MLC

Minister for Planning
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Lands
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

20th October, 2010

Dear **Mr. Kelly**,

I write this letter in support of Bambi Kindergarten Association Incorporated of Stevens Road Ingleburn.

Bambi Kindergarten is an Iconic institution within Ingleburn's history and many of our leading community leaders have roots that started at this humble but community impacting establishment. It was the community of the Ingleburn Army Camp that initiated this fine organisation and in fact it should be a national treasure.

During the Korean Campaign 1950 - 1953 Bambi Kindergarten came into being after wives of servicemen formed a support group to assist each other while their partners were on active service in Korea.

Since 1952 the kindergarten opened its doors to the children of defence force and civilian families, reflecting Bambi's importance as a meeting place for our community.

Bambi Kindergarten began as a "one room" building with a second room being added on several years later. In 1988 Bambi acquired another building and this became our library. With the employment of trained staff and the implementation of programmed activities, the kindergarten has become licensed as a preschool by the Department of Community Services. Originally Bambi was a sessional kindergarten open for children four mornings (with Monday morning being used for staff preparation) and five afternoons.

As the needs of the community changed so did Bambi.

In **1981** two full days (Thursday & Friday) of preschool for children in one room opened up. By the **mid 80's** full days were introduced across the centre in response to family needs.

Bambi Kindergarten was **accredited** as a "**centre of excellence**" with the **Australian Early Childhood Association's pilot accreditation program** in **1993** - being the first centre in the area to be recognised as such. This reputation has taken the dedication and persistence of the staff and families over many years to develop, upgrade and maintain the centre to such a degree.

In **1997** a **memorial plaque, for 22 soldiers reported "Missing in Action" during the Korean War (1950-1953)**, was unveiled by the Honourable Bronwyn Bishop, the current Minister for Defence, Industry, Science & Personnel. The plaque honours the 22 soldiers whose bodies were never recovered and now remain in graves somewhere in the Korean battlefields.

The play area is one of Bambi's most outstanding features, being greatly admired by all visitors and a great asset to the growth and development of our young children with its established gardens and shade trees. This was recognised by Campbelltown Council's Garden Competition - Bambi being highly commended in "Best Educational Facility" category.

Ingleburn Military Camp began to close in the **1990's**. Whilst defence force families moved out of the area, Bambi Kindergarten continued to operate for civilian families. Bambi's reputation as a high quality early childhood service has spread throughout the area so that we have families travelling from Liverpool in the North down to St Helen's Park in the South, Five Dock in the East across to Harrington Park in the West. Bambi was voted the proud winner in the **1997** Macarthur Small Business Awards.

In **2001** Bambi again saw a need for change. We could no longer afford to operate for children on Mondays as demand was low and Bambi was forced to reduce to four days - Tuesday to Friday.

On the 19th May 2002 Bambi celebrated its 50th Anniversary with an afternoon tea. Past families, children and staff were invited, with a special guest and ex student, Councillor Steven Chaytor from Campbelltown City Council.

A "**Community Action Group**" was formed in **2003** to represent Bambi in its campaign to remain on our current premises with the proposed development of Edmondson Park. Our Community Action Group comprises of ex management committee members who lobby council and local politicians.

In **2004** the preschool introduced the "**Emergent Curriculum**" program, allowing children to freely explore their learning environment. Our hours of operation were extended from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm, offering a longer pre school day catering to the needs of our community. We were pleased to offer our service to two year old children, initially for one day per week increasing to two days (Monday and Tuesday), which opened a new chapter in the history of Bambi. Whilst our future remained uncertain, Bambi was able to reopen five days - Monday to Friday and continues to offer a high quality pre school early childhood education to children in our community.

Bambi was again winner in the **2005** Macarthur Chronicle Small Business Awards under the “Specialised Business” category.

Campbelltown City Council presented Bambi Kindergarten with the “Jubilee Award” in **2007** for its recognition of our service to the community for over 50 years.

Due to the high demand for younger children requiring a preschool service, in **2008** Bambi found it necessary to open an additional day for two year old children on a Wednesday. This year, the Emergent Curriculum blended with a child focused learning program, allowing for staff to plan and document for the individual strengths and needs of each child.

As part of Bambi’s vision and philosophy, we pride ourselves in offering and encouraging children of all abilities to attend our centre as we are able to accommodate every child’s needs. This includes provision of an Additional Needs Support Teacher who works in conjunction with the families and outside agencies, to provide a personalised program for these children.

Through the efforts of Management Committee and staff, we continue to remain a preschool of excellence, valued by educational institutions, by offering work experience to local high schools and practicum placement for students at TAFE and university.

In **2010** – Bambi Kindergarten continue to remain on a yearly lease with the Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Defence), currently extended to December 2011.

We rely heavily on the support of families and the community to maintain a high quality early childhood preschool service.

We at the Ingleburn Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc. implore a rational decision be made and we seek your support to maintain the presence of Bambi Kindergarten at its original location and guarantee the future of this community icon and service for generations to come.

Yours faithfully

Robert Bushby
President
Ingleburn Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc.