Children work with parents to further develop our ‘Indigenous Bush Foods Garden at our ‘Gardening Party’."
Mt Pleasant and District Kindergarten provides high quality, innovative Preschool Education and Occasional Care programs for 2-5 year old children from the township of Mt Pleasant and the wider surrounding areas including Birdwood, Mt Crawford, Williamstown, Springton, Eden Valley, Sanderston, Tungkillo, Palmer, Milendella and Mt Torrens. Our programs operate over 2 full days, Tuesdays and Thursdays and are staffed by a 0.5 Director, 0.5 Teacher and 0.2 Occasional Care Worker. We offer a Pre-entry group on Thursday mornings in the second half of each term and support a parent run Playgroup operating on Monday mornings.

Five year old children move on from our Kindergarten to a number of schooling environments, ranging from one of 6 government or 5 non-government schools, to a small number of families choosing home education for their children.

As a Kindergarten catering for predominantly rural children & their families (with a small number of our children come from culturally diverse family backgrounds), we value and build on our communities strong links with our local and natural environments. We continue to develop our beautiful, spacious play based Outdoor Learning Environment, with a focus on sustainability and valuing the Indigenous people, plants and animals of our area.

With a 2011 DECS Departmental focus on improving relationships with families and communities, and to listen to young people as we nurture their development we decided to develop a strategic direction in the Respect, Reflect, Relate area of ‘Relationships’. We have also begun implementing the National ‘Early Years Learning Framework’ and to explore the implications of the new National Quality Standards and Universal Access to be implemented in 2012.

Mt Pleasant and District Kindergarten is a vibrant and exciting Learning Community, with supportive parents and a passionate staff team, who are committed to continually striving to build on our culture of inclusion, and of providing quality play based learning environments which are highly supportive of all children’s learning.
Our 2011 learning program began with the excitement of the arrival of three baby rabbits at kindy, together with harvesting of pumpkins, plums and pears. This set the tone for a year interwoven with learning about our myriad of kindy pets, and gardening, baking and making with our produce from our outdoor environment. Our ‘explorations’ have enabled exploring mathematical concepts such as measurement using pumpkins and plums; baking up delicious muffins for our ‘high tea’ parties in conjunction with the celebration of Will and Kate’s Royal wedding; and working together with parents at our ‘Gardening Party’ to begin our ‘Edible Garden Project’ by building and establishing a new, fenced off Vegie garden.

We have further explored our local community with regular visits to the local primary school to participate in fitness with the R/1/2 class, weekly visits from the Year.7 students to provide one on one mentoring for our kindy children, and tree planting and weeding in our Bush Garden with Mt.Pleasant Natural Resource Centre and students from Mt.Pleasant Primary. We were visited by the local Police which provided the opportunity to address Protective Behaviours curriculum and a parent hairdresser which the children created their very own hairsalon.

We followed parents suggestions and held a well attended ‘Grandfriends Day’, had great fun with ‘Hairlairious Day’, baked pastitsies from Bulgaria and washed a truck – to name a few, plus our ever popular excursion to the shearing shed took place once again.
Early Years Learning Framework Implementation:

We implemented the National Early Years Learning Framework ‘Belonging, Being And Becoming’ this year, central to which is the Children’s Learning. Staff have undertaken professional learning about the Principles and Practice which underpin this framework. In order to engage children actively in learning, we identify children’s strengths and interests, choose appropriate teaching strategies and design the learning environment from individual and small group planning discussions we have with them. We are moving towards using the learning outcomes from EYLF to support our planning for children’s learning. Staff have also attended ‘Meaningful Planning’ training using EYLF to further develop understanding of the EYLF to improve outcomes for children. We carefully assess learning to inform further planning. This process is working towards improving Making Data Count:- Collecting and interrogating the key data required to strategically evaluate and improve outcomes (from DECS Improvement and Accountability framework – DIAf).

Outcomes :

We have had a high level of engagement with the DIAf as a tool for reflection and improvement. Both the level 2 environmental scan and level 4 rubrics (Listen and Respond, Make Data Count and Focus on Learning) have been employed as a snapshot of information on which to provide detail about our site.

Recommendations : That we document the ‘other layer of learning’ (the unseen curriculum) from within EYLF that sits above the day to day planning process