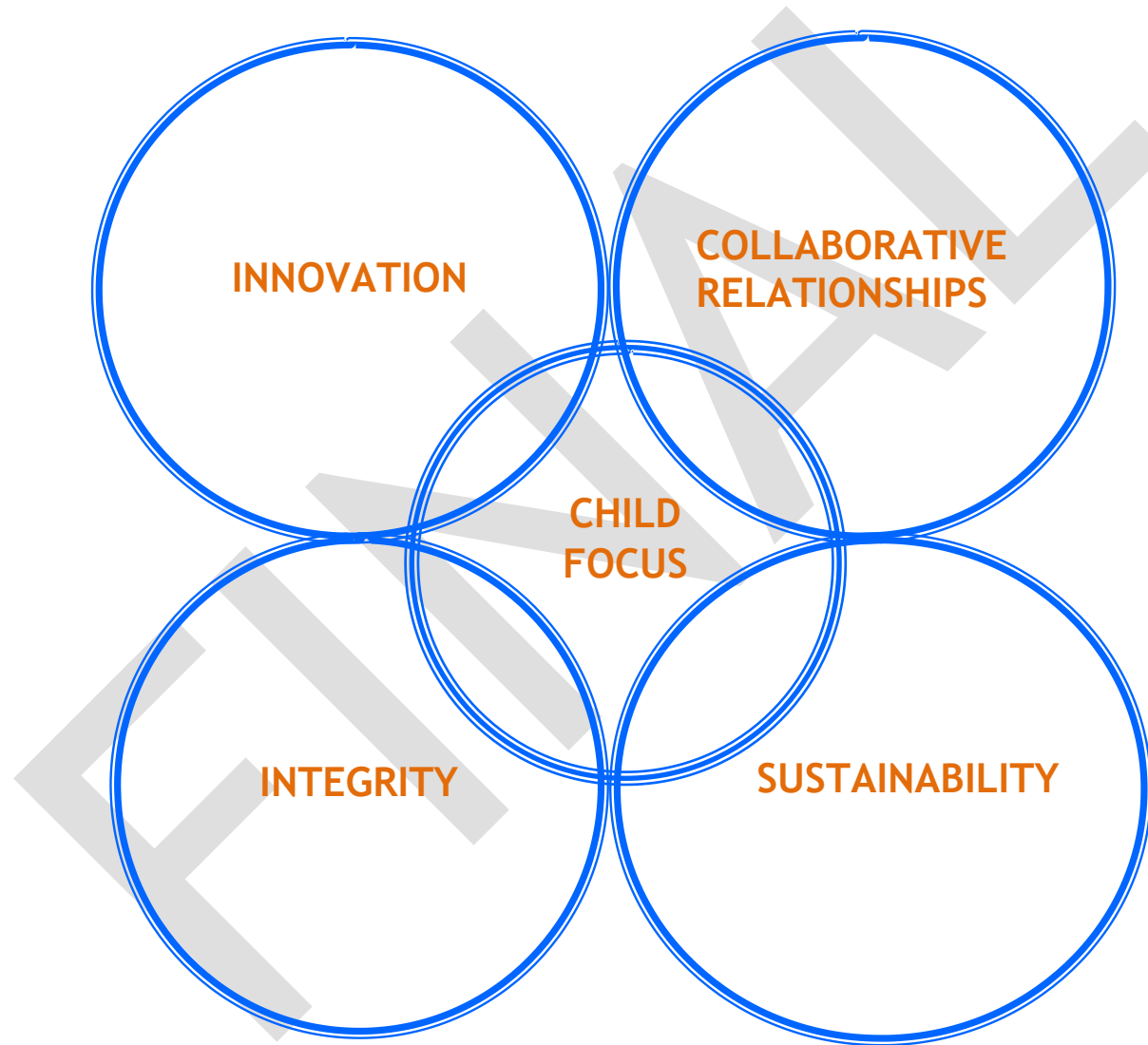




Strategic Plan 2015-2018



Introduction

Alpine Children's Services (ACS) is a proud not-for-profit organisation that provides quality early childhood services to families throughout the Alpine Shire in North East Victoria. Our main centres are in Bright, Mount Beauty and Myrtleford. Services include the provision of long day care, outside school hours care, family day care and pre-school / kindergarten programs. Our 2015-2017 Strategic Plan was developed based on feedback received from:

- Children attending our centres via floor book activities & sessions with children;
- Parents & families attending our services via annual ACS Family Surveys;
- ACS Staff via annual ACS Staff Surveys;
- ACS Board of Management & Leadership team via strategic planning sessions & discussions; and
- Alpine Shire Council Municipal Early Years Plan 2012 - 2016.

NB

The ACS Strategic Plan 2015 - 2017 has been extended to include 2018. Completed actions from the original 2015-2017 plan have been noted in italics and shaded in grey.

Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Detail | Additional information |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| ACS Board | ACS Board of Management | Responsible for the management of ACS, made-up of parent representatives from each ACS service and two Alpine Shire Council representatives |
| AVCC | Alpine View Children's Centre | Located in Bright, offering kindergarten & long day care services |
| BM | Business Manager | Jeanette McLaren |
| BOSHC | Bright Outside School Hours Care | Located in Bright, offering after school care and holiday care, Lead Educator = Carolyn Ryan |
| EL | Educational Leader | AVCC = Dianne Berton / LVCC = Helen Zirnstein / MVCC = Shaneen Mills / FDC = Kate Kovesy |
| FDC | Alpine Family Day Care | Family day care located within the Alpine Shire |
| FFG | Family & Friends Group | LVCC & AVCC have a FFG. The FFG is made-up of parent & staff representatives from the centre. Each FFG is focused on supporting families, children & staff via fundraising activities, working bees, social events & providing parents with a voice |
| FWO | Family Wellbeing Officer | AVCC = Debbie Dyball / LVCC = TBC / MVCC = Melissa Brown |
| GM | General Manager | Jenny Griffiths |
| KT | Kindergarten Teachers | AVCC = Marlene Steiner, LVCC = Eloise Fountain & TK = Jane Barter |
| LVCC | Lake View Children's Centre | Located in Mount Beauty, offering kindergarten & long day care services |
| MOSHC | Myrtleford Outside School Hours Care | Located in Myrtleford, offering after school care and holiday care, Lead Educator = Arlene Zozula |
| MVCC | Mountain View Children's Centre | Located in Myrtleford, offering long day care services |
| SWO | Staff Wellbeing & Contact Officer | AVCC = Leah Williams / LVCC = TBC / MVCC = Julie Newlands |
| TK | Tawonga Kindergarten | Located in Tawonga offering 3YO and 4YO kindergarten |
| CC | Centre Coordinator | AVCC = Helen Crutchett / LVCC = Isabelle Raw / MVCC = Nicole Buckland |
| SC | Service Coordinator | FDC = Kate Kovesy |

1. Collaborative Relationships - CHILD focus

Uniting with others to ensure the delivery of quality early childhood care and education

| Initiative | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|--|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Support successful FFGs at each service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued involvement from CC & EL with each LVCC & AVCC FFG • Continue with staff fundraising at MVCC and encourage support /involvement from families | Ongoing 2018 | CC & EL CC & EL |
| ACS to support each community's access to early childhood education and care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support each community's Birth to Eight Years Old Network • Ensure each ACS service continues to meet the needs of each community now & for the future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning for expected population growth & therefore additional kindergarten / childcare places for the Upper Ovens Valley; and ○ Redevelopment of the Myrtleford & District Children's Centre including additional kindergarten places & co-location of all 0-5YO services (Playgroup & Toy Library). • Apply to become an Early Years Manager with the Victorian Department of Education & Training | 2018 2018 Feb 2018 | KT & EL GM & Board |
| Improve connections with local Community groups | Each centre to implement at least two projects with local Community groups such as Landcare, aged care facilities, Men's Shed etc. | Dec 2018 | EL |
| Improve engagement with the Community | ACS to sponsor a Community run event in each of Bright, Mount Beauty & Myrtleford: 1 event per Community per annum (refer Community Event Support program) | Dec 2018 | CC |

| Initiative | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Improve communication with staff, families and other stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a communication strategy (external consultant may be used to provide assistance): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define communication issues / concerns & ongoing requirements e.g. ACS website out of date, staff / family communication & interaction ○ Develop a plan to address issues / concerns and requirements e.g. website upgrade and mentoring • Implement Storypark (online platform for the documentation of children's learning) to strengthen communication with families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extend Storypark across AVCC ○ Implement Storypark within all programs at MVCC ○ Consider Storypark for LVCC, TK and OSHC services for possible 2019/2020 implementation • Improve face to face communication with families at drop off and collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educational Leaders to develop and implement program to improve educator's communication skills ○ Implement strategy to support educators' communication with families | Mar 2018 | GM |
| | | Jan 2018 | CC |
| | | June 2018 | EL |
| Support the Alpine Shire Council to deliver early years related services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of the Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP) • Provide feedback & support in relation to the Alpine Shire Council Maternal & Child Health Service • Assist in the delivery of the supported playgroup program throughout the Alpine Shire | Apr 2018 | GM |
| <i>Improve engagement with the Community</i> | <i>ACS to sponsor a Community run event in each of Bright, Mount Beauty & Myrtleford: 1 event per Community per annum (refer Community Event Support program)</i> | <i>Completed 2015, 2016 and 2017</i> | <i>Coord</i> |
| <i>Improve transition process for children within the service</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop a 'room induction process' similar to our new family orientation process which will include educators welcome, background, tour of room, description of indoor and outdoor play spaces & flow of day</i> | <i>Completed Mar 2015</i> | <i>Coord & EL</i> |

| Initiative | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|---|---|--|--|
| <i>Commitment to positive team culture</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll-out Staff Wellbeing & Contact Officer roles at each centre • Document & communicate ACS response to each service's annual staff survey results including ACS / staff initiatives to address feedback / areas for improvement • Develop a Team Effectiveness Plan (TEP) for each service to address "areas for improvement" based on annual staff survey results • Implement TEP at each service including allocating tasks to individual team members | <i>Completed Feb 2015</i> | <i>GM / Coord/ SWO GM / Coord GM / Coord Coord</i> |
| <i>Increase support for families with children with additional needs.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll-out Family Wellbeing Officer roles • Investigate all support networks available for families with vulnerable children & how ACS can assist with the creation of a support network for Alpine Shire families | <i>Completed Feb 2015 Completed Dec 2016</i> | <i>GM / Coord / FWO</i> |
| <i>Improve Coord's capacity to lead their team.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MVCC Team Leader, MVCC Educational Leader and LVCC Kindergarten Teacher to apply for the Leading People in Early Childhood Settings program with the Bastow Institute • Undertake professional development as per the 2015 Training Plan | <i>LVCC KT (June 2015) and previous MVCC TL (Aug 2015) & previous MVCC EL (AUG 2015) completed the Bastow training</i> | <i>MVCC Coord, MVCC EL, LVCC KT</i> |
| <i>Develop a Communication Strategy</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACS Board to families & staff • Educators to families • ACS to families: e-Communication including social media, SMS, e-newsletters etc. • ACS to Community | <i>May 2017</i> | <i>GM</i> |
| <i>Improve engagement with the Community</i> | <i>ACS to sponsor a Community run event in each of Bright, Mount Beauty & Myrtleford: 1 event per Community per annum (refer Community Event Support program)</i> | <i>Completed 2015, 2016 and 2017</i> | <i>Coord</i> |
| <i>Implement ACS Communication Strategy</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the agreed Communication Strategy | <i>June 2017</i> | <i>GM</i> |

2. Innovation - CHILD focus

To become an organisation that fosters both fundamental and incremental changes resulting in improved and service offerings & organisational processes.

| Actions | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|--|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Create inspiring play environments to promote children's learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the development of ACS's revolving library with inspiring publications Renew the closed (internal) FB page (for educators) that encourages educators to share their own learning environments (with links to the Educational Framework). Educators to include images and text from visiting other services. Review the Inspiring Play Space Checklist | June 2018 Dec 2018 Sep 2018 | EL |
| Continue with outdoor play space improvement for each ACS Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AVCC: install cover on outdoor pergola for an outdoor classroom in inclement weather LVCC: install outdoor blinds on covered outdoor play spaces MVCC: install an adventure playground | Dec 2018 | CC |
| ACS to host biannual Conference & Family evening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop topic & engage high-level presenters on chosen topic Develop conference website and on-line registration Promote conference across Hume region Coordinate conference Present report to the ACS Board | Feb - March 2018 March - April 2018 May - Sep 2018 Oct 2018 Nov 2018 | GM & AVCC AO |
| Consider each child's voice when purchasing equipment and planning activities, incursions & excursions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational Leaders to use the 'Guide to Making Decisions' to improve educator's skills in involving children in decision making Engage children to express their views and implement their suggestions when possible e.g. conversation, observation, floorbooks and group session Embed this process into 6-monthly activities & share findings with Early Years Networking Groups and ACS Board Incorporate and action children's feedback in ACS Strategic & Annual plans, Outdoor play space improvement plans & Inspiring play environment plans e.g. through the use of floorbooks and small group sessions. | Ongoing | ELs & Educators ELs & Educators |
| <i>Create inspiring play environments to promote children's learning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Each room leader to use the Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments to assess their current play spaces (both internally and externally)</i> <i>Undertake a gap analysis and develop a plan (for each service) to address the gaps</i> | Completed Feb 2015 Completed Apr 2015 | EL & RL EL & RL |

| Actions | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Improve educator's ability to engage with each child</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction of interruptions logs into each room, programming time and room meetings to record all interruptions over a two-week period to determine where key interruptions take place, for what & by whom</i> | <p><i>Completed Jul 2015</i></p> | <p><i>Coord</i></p> |
| <i>Ensure each service meets the needs of the Community</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consider integrated services at AVCC - is this meeting the needs of the Community? ACS will be evaluating the 3-5 preschool program during July/August 2015 via a series of surveys & sharing sessions with families & engagement with children in the program. These results will be communicated to families in September 2015</i> • <i>Consider implementing forest kindergartens (sessions held in the nature on a regular basis) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_kindergarten or similar</i> • <i>Increase regular Community focussed excursions</i> | <p><i>Completed Dec 2015</i></p> <p><i>AVCC has a weekly nature program MVCC focussed on supporting children with trauma and outdoor play space LVCC focussed on facility development project</i></p> <p><i>All services have increased community excursions including OSHC programs</i></p> | <p><i>GM / Coord</i></p> <p><i>ELs</i></p> <p><i>ELs & Educators</i></p> <p><i>GM</i></p> |
| <i>Implement innovative teaching methods</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ELs to research & engage all educators in developing & implementing innovative teaching methods</i> • <i>Consideration of an internal ACS "innovation expo" to enable all educators to showcase innovative teaching methods e.g. present to each other on something new, big or small, they have implemented</i> • <i>Present report to the ACS Board</i> | <p><i>ACS held conference on innovative teaching methods in 2016</i></p> | <p><i>EL</i></p> <p><i>GM</i></p> |
| <i>ACS to host biannual conference</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop topic</i> • <i>Engage high-level presenters on chosen topic</i> • <i>Develop conference website and on-line registration</i> • <i>Promote conference across Hume region</i> • <i>Coordinate conference</i> • <i>Present report to the ACS Board</i> | <p><i>Conference successfully held in October 2016</i></p> <p><i>Report presented to the Board in Nov 2016</i></p> | <p><i>AVCC AO and GM</i></p> <p><i>GM</i></p> |

3. Integrity - CHILD Focus

Basing actions on a consistent framework of principles that reflect ACS core values

- *Offering a professional service based on quality programs & sound financial management*
- *Demonstrating commitment and sincerity to the provision of excellent services for children & their families*
- *Being fair and respectful to ourselves & others*
- *Being open, honest, accountable, responsive and consistent in all our actions - doing what we say we will do*

| Actions | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|------------------------|--|--|----------------|
| Improve ACS governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document & implement a Board induction process • Engage Alpine Valleys Community to deliver ACS Board Governance training • Review the current Board / Organisational / Governance structure • Improve ACS Board Induction Manual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include feedback from the 2017 Board Health Check ○ Include information from the Institute of Company Director's Governance & Finance Manuals ○ Highlight the legislative responsibilities of being a board member and include the ACS values ○ Consider a Board Code of Conduct • Undertake annual skills survey of Board members to identify gaps, report to the Board and develop a strategy to address gaps • Policy review & development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a Board Conflict of Interest Policy ○ Review the ACS Delegated Authorities Policy | Feb 2018 March 2018 April 2018 June 2018 July 2018 Sep 2018 | GM & ACS Board |

| Actions | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|
| Implement a Policy Renewal Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Policy Register for all policy documents (including the ACS CoC, Board Manual & Philosophy) that includes date of last review, date of Board/GM approval & date of next scheduled review • Implement a Policy Renewal Program (an external consultant maybe engaged to provide assistance with this subject to a business case) to review all policies (incl. ACS CoC, Board Manual & Philosophy) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Correct referencing of legislation, consistency of layout & terminology, inclusion of hyperlinks between policies, new ACS EA & the revised ECA Code of Ethics; ○ Incorporate acknowledgement of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people into relevant documents; and ○ Consider development of an ACS Board Finance Policy & ACS Asset Management Policy | <p>Mar 2018</p> <p>Mar - Oct 2018</p> | GM & External Consultant |
| Develop ACS 2019-2022 Strategic Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review ACS's vision, purpose and values • Identify the strategic priorities of ACS • Identify ACS's stakeholders and how best to engage them with the plan e.g. use of floorbooks with children, focus groups / online surveys for families, meetings / online surveys for staff • Develop the key goals for ACS in collaboration with the stakeholders | Sep 2018 | GM & ACS Board |
| Assess the level of satisfaction of ways of working within ACS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a 6-monthly 'Health Check' review with MVCC • Continue with on-line annual survey for staff for the ACS 'Health Check' • Develop a summary of survey results including achievements and areas for improvements • Provide report to staff and ACS Board of Management | <p>Aug/Sep 2018</p> <p>Sep/Oct 2018</p> | GM & AVCC AO |
| Review OHS, CO, SWO & FWO roles | Are these positions meeting the needs of families, staff & ACS? | June 2018 | GM |

| Actions | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|---|---|--|-----------------|
| Develop & implement an annual ACS training plan to meet the needs of all staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Education & Care training requirements • Professional (corporate) & IT training requirements • Consider staff & parent feedback from annual surveys • Contact Officer training requirements • OHS training requirements • Incorporate requirements from each staff member's performance appraisals | June 2018 | GM |
| Report on the progress of the Quality Improvement Plan of each service | Present the report to the ACS Board biannually | May & November 2018 | GM |
| Risk monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide quarterly reporting of the ACS Risk Register to the ACS Board with monthly reporting by exception • Undertake an annual review and provide a report to the ACS Board | 2018 Dec 2018 | GM |
| All payroll functions are accurately, efficiently & effectively maintained & recorded | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement minor improvements noted by Crowe Horwath from payroll audit • Undertake an audit of the payroll system once the new EA has been approved by FWA. | January 2018 April 2018 | BM |
| Implement rostering & timesheet system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine new system & provide business case to the ACS Board • Implement new system (as determined by business case) • Undertake post-implementation audit / review | May 2018 July 2018 August 2018 | BM |
| <i>Establish an overall ACS philosophy</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review all ACS centre philosophies & combined to create an ACS philosophy</i> | <i>Completed in Mar 2015</i> | GM |
| <i>Apply for 'Excellent' rating for LVCC</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complete the application form for the 'Excellence' rating for Lake View Children's Centre and submit to Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)</i> | <i>Submitted in Jan 2016 (unsuccessful)</i> | GM & LVCC Coord |
| <i>Ensure staff & families understand how to provide feedback & make</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promote new family feedback and Complaints process (policy & flowchart document)</i> | <i>Completed June 2015</i> | GM |

4. Sustainability - CHILD focus

To create a sustainable organisation through the adoption of practices that demonstrates a commitment to innovative practices in environmental protection, social responsibility and economic progress.

| Actions | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|--|---|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Successfully negotiate & implement ACS EA 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACS EA 2018 approved • Submit EA to FWA • Implement EA terms and conditions • Report to the Board on implementation | Mar 2018 | GM & ACS Board |
| Undertake a review of the ACS administration & finance functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if any functions can be outsourced • Consider external consultant to undertake a review of process and controls i.e. internal audit of specific functions | June 2018 | BM |
| Support families & children access to nutrition, healthy eating and oral health education. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental nurses to visit all ACS centres & services to educate children on oral health • Implement an oral health education campaign directed at parents • Catering officers to network with other Early Childhood Services in our region for new ideas and ways of providing healthy and delicious food | Dec 2018 | CC Catering Officers |
| Undertake a review of the fee structure across ACS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity, affordability and ACS sustainability • Consider the new Child Care Fund (new program of child care subsidies to be introduced in July 2018 by the Federal Department of Education & Training) • Comparison to other local providers • Consider the following: different sessions offered by ACS, kinder session fees and staff discounts | April 2018 | GM & External Consultant |

| Actions | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|--|--|--|--|
| Undertake a review of all ACS procedures and controls e.g. Finance & administration, HR / IR, Education & Care and OHS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what is already documented and what is outstanding Develop plan for documenting key processes e.g. process for family invoicing and the effective management of debts Determine a plan for implementation including timeline | June 2018 | BM |
| Undertake a review of expenses to determine ways to reduce costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of service operations, staffing model & organisational structure Review of current procurement arrangements | June 2018 | ACS Board, GM & External Consultant Admin |
| <i>Reduce energy consumption</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Involve the Alpine Shire Council in an energy reduction plan that identifies and implements methods to reduce energy consumption.</i> | <i>Not completed, Council no longer has an Environmental Officer</i> | <i>Green Team</i> |
| <i>Service offering expansion</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Advertise FDC throughout the Alpine Shire Council</i> <i>Myrtleford Preschool</i> <i>OSHC Cluster Manager: undertake due diligence investigations into OSHC services and develop a plan to take-on the following:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bright P-12 & Porepunkah</i> <i>Upper Kiewa Valley Cluster (UPKC)</i> <i>Myrtleford (new)</i> | <i>Recruitment for FDC Educators undertaken annually & 1 new FDC Educator commenced in Dec 2016</i> <i>Myrtleford OSHC opened in Sep 2015 and Bright OSHC in June 2017</i> <i>GM held talks with Porepunkah & UKVC in 2017</i> | FDC Coord & GM GM |
| <i>Build a reserve fund to ensure long-term financial sustainability</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Determine an appropriate reserve fund for the organisation</i> <i>Develop a 4-Year financial plan to maintain the target reserve amount</i> | 2017 | BM & ACS Board |
| <i>Plan for the introduction of the 2016 3-5YO ratios</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Needs of each service e.g. number of available staff, size of rooms</i> <i>Cost analysis</i> | <i>Successfully implemented 1:11 ratios in Jan 2016</i> | GM |

| Actions | Actions / Considerations | Target Date | Who |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p><i>Improve governance of ACS</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Update the ACS Statement of Purpose & Rules to be in line with Consumer Affairs template Constitution document</i> • <i>Create & implement delegated authorities between ACS Board & the GM</i> • <i>Implement a stronger induction, training & succession program for ACS Board members including ACS Board code of conduct, roles & responsibilities & confidentiality requirements</i> • <i>Organisational Chart needs to include ACS Board & FFG</i> • <i>Implement updated position descriptions across ACS</i> • <i>Develop performance appraisals to align with the updated position descriptions</i> • <i>Finalise GM performance appraisal process</i> • <i>Implement updated ACS Family & Staff Policies and Procedures</i> | <p><i>ACS Rules of Incorporation submitted in Nov 2015 & May 2017</i></p> <p><i>Delegated Authorities Policy in Nov 2016</i></p> <p><i>Board Induction Manual reviewed in 2015 and Feb 2016</i></p> <p><i>Organisational chart updated in Feb 2016</i></p> <p><i>All ACS position descriptions and performance appraisals update</i></p> <p><i>GM Performance Appraisal & Salary Review Policy developed in Mar 2015 and reviewed in Nov 2016</i></p> <p><i>Family P&P Handbook and Staff P&P Handbook developed in March 2015</i></p> | <p><i>ACS Board</i></p> |
| <p><i>Increase & integrate sustainable practices at each centre</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continued involvement with the Seedlings Program (if the program continues) or if program ceases, investigate other programs to meet the need for Education in Sustainability within each service?</i> • <i>Each centre to introduce 1 new sustainable practice e.g. kitchen garden</i> • <i>Review current sustainable practices & teachings e.g. composting at each centre</i> | <p><i>ACS completed Seedlings Program in June 2016</i></p> <p><i>Each service introduced new practice annually</i></p> | <p><i>Green Team & relevant staff depending on initiatives</i></p> |