

MAY/JUNE 2023

GORDONNEWS

GORDON COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL'S NEWSLETTER
HELPING US TO STAY CONNECTED



Pizza made by some of the Y2 children, Bee week shenanigans and R3 at the Walkabout Wildlife Excursion.

GORDONNEWS - OUR MAY/JUNE NEWSLETTER

Our newsletter - "The Gordonews", aims to keep you informed about what's happening at preschool, upcoming events, classroom news, as well as articles or information of interest.

Pages 1,2,3,4 - a look at the topic of Resilience in young children.

Pages 5-15 - what's been happening in our classrooms?

Page 16 - we meet two of our team members - Kirsten and Lisa N

Page 19 -Some Reminders.



It's a bumper issue - so grab a tea or coffee and read about what's going on at GCP!



BUILDING RESILIENT CHILDREN

THE ABILITY TO COPE AND TO BOUNCE BACK WHEN THINGS GO WRONG.

Resilience helps us to deal with obstacles, challenges, problems and setbacks that inevitably come into each person's life.

People who lack resilience may become easily overwhelmed, frustrated and anxious and may ultimately turn to unhelpful coping mechanisms to deal with their emotions.

Most parents would like to see their children lead a positive, happy and successful life. Supporting children to develop resilience can go a long way toward achieving this goal.

I asked a group of Early Childhood Teachers and Educators what they would like parents to know about building resilience in preschoolers. Here's what they said:

Teachers talk about the ways to support the development of resilience in young children

"In simple terms I would say, not to fix everything for them, don't do everything for them, let them learn from mistakes and perhaps more than anything, a bit old school but some tough love, not saying yes and giving in for a peaceful life or fear that they won't love you. Children thrive with strong routine and lots Of love and it is up to us as adults to provide the boundaries, support and love whilst they are fully immersed in the rollercoaster of life."

Ariane

"I'd suggest that all stress is not bad...[take a look at] the Centre of the Developing Child Harvard University and that there is such a thing as positive stress... a very normal and typical part of navigating life with supportive relationships. Somehow we've come to believe that all stress is bad but neurologically our brains in a supportive relationship can handle stretching by a little in our normal day to day lives."

Susan F.

"I teach preschoolers and I'm teaching them to play board games. You have to take turns, sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, or can be fun but sometimes disappointing, but it's all part of the game. Lots of explicit discussion about how even if we lose, it's still fun to play etc etc. Let them experience loss, frustration and disappointment, and talk them through how to handle it."

Leanne



You Are Resilient

What Teachers Say about Resilience... continued...

Teachers talk about the ways to support the development of resilience in young children...

"Allow children to do it themselves and fail... allow them to make mistakes" Leanne T

"You can't go under it. You can't go over it. You've got to go through it." Allow them to experience life's ups & downs, this builds resilience.
Tanya

Let them face challenges independently and support them through times when the world does not go to plan. Mistakes and errors form a very big part of our learning process. Donna



"My belief is that children have the right to play based environments where they can experience failure without fear. Failure leads to creativity, it leads to mastering skills and it leads to building our resilience." □

Loretta

"Role model making mistakes and moving through them (mistakes) as an adult" Amy

"Don't let your child always win in games.

Try not to reward attention seeking or anxious behaviours - for example avoid saying things like

"I will buy you a treat if you go to preschool".

Acknowledge your child's feelings.

"I can see you are a bit worried but I am right next to you so you can have a go at climbing."

Support your child's development of self help skills and give them jobs and tasks to do to help them to become independent.

Focus on positive elements of the task and avoid negative comments. Example: Small child climbing up a net. Instead of saying **"you're too small to climb that and you will hurt yourself"** say, **"I really like how you are moving your arms and legs to pull yourself up."**

If your child is going to give up on an activity - let them know that they can keep trying with you there. Use positive comments and feedback to help them to keep going. **"Great, you have the scissors in your hand! That's what we need. Now let's see what comes next".**

The Triple P - PPP parenting course is free! Worth checking out and it can be done online.

[Triple P click here](#)

Katie

Resilience

Helping Children To Deal With Life's Challenges

R

Relationships are a key factor in helping children to develop resilience. Feeling secure in a responsive, consistent, loving relationship gives children a sense of belonging and security.

E

Executive functioning is a term used to describe a set of skills that for preschool aged children may include working memory, (holding information in your mind while working on a new task), following multi part directions, learning to control impulses and emotionally regulate, and shifting attention when required. It may also include learning how to negotiate and compromise. Research shows a link between those with strong executive functioning and resilience.

S

Sleep - As adults, we all know that our capacity to multi task, to remember things, to make decisions as well as our capacity to manage our emotions can be compromised if we are over tired and not getting an adequate night's sleep. It is the same for children. It is crucial for the developing brains and bodies of young children that they have a regular and consistent sleep pattern. The Australian Department of Health recommends that children aged 3-5 years need 10-13 hours of good sleep each night with consistent sleep and wake up times. Research also indicates a link between improved sleep and better executive functioning and the development of resilience.

I

Instill a "growth mindset" in your children. There is quite a lot of literature around the notion of a growth versus a fixed mindset. In simple terms, we aim to help children to understand that we can all learn and improve and change over time. We can role model to children when we are learning new skills. We can speak honestly about mistakes we have made and what we have learned from those mistakes. We acknowledge that taking risks and making mistakes is part of the learning process. We embrace mistakes as opportunities rather than regarding them as failures.

L

Language Matters - Our conversations, the words we choose when talking with or about children says a lot about the way we think. The words we choose can be internalised by children and can play a significant role in shaping their identity and future capacity for resilience. Consider the difference between "You're naughty" and "Was that a good choice?". Or "He's just stubborn" versus "He's learning about boundaries".

I

Implement self care for parents. Consider some of these strategies for building resilience in children and apply them to yourself. Prioritising the development of your own resilience will, in turn help your children. Are you getting enough sleep? Are you gentle with yourself when you make mistakes? Do you have some trusted, close people in your life? What are the things that will help "fill your cup" so that you can in turn help fill your child's?

E

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It's about putting yourself in someone else's shoes and seeing the world from their perspective. Empathy helps connect us to others, helps to reduce conflict and ultimately helps lay the groundwork for positive relationships in families, among peers and others. We know that positive social relationships supports the development of resilience. Adults can play an important part in modelling empathy and in encouraging children to develop empathy too. Try putting yourself in your child's shoes as a helpful strategy towards connection.

N

Nurture your child - the word "nurture" means to encourage, care for, support, protect, provide attention, help, and support them to develop. Enjoy a story together, express warmth, kindness and love. Establish predictable routines - this helps children to feel safe. Spend time and play with your child. A nurturing, responsive environment helps children develop across a number of developmental domains as well as supporting the development of resilience.

C

Co-regulation needs to occur before a child can self regulate. Self regulation is the capacity to manage emotions, behaviours and attention in ways that are socially acceptable, conducive to positive relationships with others and which allows for learning and a sense of wellbeing. Co- regulation is where an adult helps a child to develop these skills. Staying calm, using words and gestures to redirect children when they are upset is one way of co-regulating. Co- existing in a calm state (rather than reacting in stress or anxiety) helps children to mirror this state and can actually re - wire the brain so that over time children can learn the skills to self regulate.

E

Exercise - Physical exercise can induce positive psychological and physiological benefits. It can boost our self esteem, give us the opportunity to persevere, to push ourselves and to experience a sense of achievement. Take a walk with your child, visit the local park, throw a ball. This will provide opportunities for connection and the building of resilience for both you and your child.

News From Our Classrooms

B2 Beats - News from Blue Room 2 day group Monday/Tuesday

Preschool incursions allow hands-on teaching and learning - making learning interactive and fun and encourages focus and engagement.

Incursions and Excursions offer a different learning environment from the usual. Children are mixed together with another class which encourages an increase in confidence and self-esteem and opportunities for socialising with a range of peers.

During this term Helen came to entertain us with her drum playing from “Drum Beats”. B2 and Y2 gathered together in the Yellow Room for an hour of singing, clapping out rhythms and playing the drums!

The children were introduced to what a ‘beat’ was through beating out the rhythm of words on drums, including how we say “hello” in different languages, including Mandarin, ‘ni hao’ and ‘konnichiwa’ in Japanese and ‘kia ora’ which is how you say hello when in New Zealand.

The children were all asked to choose their own drum to sit on and asked to sit on the back of the drum to make the perfect sound. Helen asked us to warm up our hands by clapping and rubbing them together and then the children were ready to start drumming! We sang and drummed out some songs, including “The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round”, the “A, B, C” song, “BINGO”, “Incy, Wincy Spider” and “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”.

The children were then given the chance to beat out a rhythm on Helen’s large drum, drumming out the beats! What a great way to spend an hour and learn a bit about rhythm and drumming!



Walkabout Park Wildlife Sanctuary



On Thursday 25th May, classes Y3 and B3 went on an excursion to the Walkabout Park Wildlife Sanctuary at Calga. We enjoyed a great few hours looking at many animals, mainly Australian, but also a Serval (African Wild Cat), Meerkats and Peacocks. It was an exciting place to visit as the emus and kangaroos and wallabies were just wandering around where we were all walking. We listened to some informative rangers about farm animals, including a large pig called Waffles who loved eating tomatoes, Meerkats, Pythons and Blue Tongue Lizards. We were all able to pat a koala called Gumnut and listen to some very loud cockatoos! It was a great experience for the children and we all had a very enjoyable time, with many of the children falling asleep on the 40 minute bus ride home!

Thank you again to all our parent helpers whom without your help, excursions such as these are not possible.



Yacking on with Y2 - Yellow Room Mon/Tues group

APPLES



Monday 1st May 2023
Over the weekend Ethan went apple picking in Bilpin with his family and kindly brought in a huge bag of apples for us to enjoy at preschool. After telling everyone about his apple picking adventure and showing us some great photos, we sliced up some of the apples and everyone had the opportunity to taste the delicious sweet apples Ethan had picked.



Yacking on with Y2 continued...

Tuesday 2nd May 2023

In order to extend the children's exploration of apples further, we decided to bake some apple and cinnamon muffins together. Everyone had the opportunity to add ingredients, stir the mixture and explore the ingredients. This experience also provided many more learning opportunities for the children, such as learning about solids and liquids (we had to melt the butter), turn taking, measuring a specific quantity and how to follow a recipe.

EYLF Learning Outcome: 4 – Children are confident and involved learners.

Children develop a range of learning and thinking skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching and investigating.



Yacking on with Y2 continued...

Apple and cinnamon muffins

Ingredients:

- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 2 medium apples chopped
- 125g melted butter
- 2 eggs whisked
- ¾ cup milk

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees.
2. Mix flour, baking powder and cinnamon in a bowl.
3. Stir in brown sugar and apples.
4. In a separate bowl whisk butter, eggs and milk.
5. Combine dry and wet ingredients.
6. Spoon mixture into muffin trays.
7. Bake for 20 minutes.



Yellow Room Yarns - 3 Day group Wed/Thu/Fri



Y3 has been coming together once a week to sing along to Felicity playing the keyboard. Felicity has been introducing the children to some basic musical concepts. We have been learning about high and low notes, that our songs might have an "introduction" which is a little clue from the keyboard or piano as to what the song is going to be. We have been tapping the beat to music on our heads, our knees, the floor - learning to listen for changes in tempo and feeling the beat on our bodies. We have been learning some fairly complicated songs "You are my Sunshine", "Waltzing Matilda", "I can Sing a Rainbow" and "A little Echo". We finish each session by listening to some quiet instrumental music played on the keyboard. It's been lovely to see the way some children are quite responsive to the emotion or feeling in the music - allowing their bodies to relax as they listen.



R2's Rant - Red Room Thurs/Fri group

Last term we focused on building close and trusting relationships and how to respect our peers, teachers, and ourselves. It was lovely to strengthen our partnership with individual families. This term, R2 children and teachers are exploring the following.

- **Munch and Move** – Each week, the children will have opportunities to explore, practice and develop fundamental movement skills such as jumping, hopping, and skipping through demonstration, games, and songs.

As a group, we will start our time with a warm up, observing and listening to the instructions, then participating and having fun. We will wrap up each session with a cool down and stretching exercises!

- **Group story writing** – The children became authors, illustrators, and publishers to actively share their ideas to create a title, main characters, and a storyline. The children will learn the structure of composing a story and vote to make decisions and take turns to share their ideas in a bigger group confidently. We cannot wait to share our book called, "Win, the strong pet dragon".

- **Exploring nature** – Gardening our flowers and vegetables that we planted in Term 1. We started to explore more about worm farms and beehives too. The mud kitchen is one of our popular areas for our children to develop imagination skills using natural items such as bark, dirt, water, sticks and pebbles. We believe it is our role to teach our children (our future citizens) to appreciate and respect the natural environment.

- **Visual arts** – Visual arts help the children with expressing, communicating, mediating their thinking, and engaging in aesthetic exploration. This term, a new layering technique has been introduced. The children painted on A3 paper with various printing resources, drawing different shapes on black paper. They then stuck their shapes on their painting pages. The children used the shapes to draw a story using textas and pencils.



A RAVE FROM R3 - RED ROOM MON/TUES/WED

R3 - Early Writing/Literacy Skills

Scaffolding is a term coined by the Education Theorist Lev Vygotsky and refers to changing the level of support required to meet a child's ability.

At the beginning of each day we encourage the children to 'sign in' after completing their morning jobs and before selecting the first experience for the day. We encourage the children to just have a go at first tracing the NSW Foundation dotted print, then writing without 'guidance' if they would like to and we aim to make this a fun and non pressured means to practice their writing without too much focus on the end product .

We view this as one way to regularly visualise and attempt the correct make up of their names.

After observing many of the children we decided it would be beneficial to show the children the correct way to hold their writing/drawing implement and provide intentional instruction on the make up of each of the letters (writing from top to bottom).

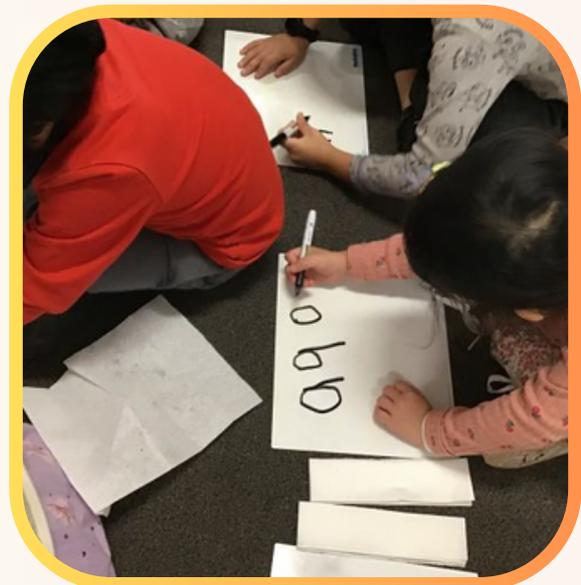
We did this by demonstrating on a large white board and by providing each child with their own whiteboard to practice writing letters.

As a group we discussed Capital Letters/Upper case and small letters/lower case and that everyone's name starts with a capital letter and then contains all lower case letters after.

We shared that the letter C is a 'magic letter' as it is the foundation for writing many other letters, which were the letters we began to write first, as once the letter C is mastered the following letters are a natural progression (O, a, d , q , g and s). We have also done and will continue doing numerous other foundational literacy experiences such as; Magnetic letters with picture/word cards for word making, Scrabble junior, Letter templates on playdough table for letter making, Rhyming stories such as "Oi Dog" to hear letter/sound relationships, 'Group story writing', 'Go fish' with upper and lower case letters, Puzzles, Transitions such as 'If your name starts with 'D' go to the bathroom

What learning is taking place?

Children are learning foundational writing and literacy skills within a play based environment. They are mostly exposed to incidental and fun experiences that assist them to be engaged with letters and sounds as well as intentional structured teaching to begin to visually recognise, write and spell their names. They are also beginning to understand key literacy concepts and processes, such as letter sound relationships, concepts of print and the way that text is structured.



The G2 Grapevine - Thur/Fri

What has been happening in Green 2 room this term?



Term 2 has been very busy and we have been building on our relationships. We are seeing a lot more cooperative play as the children make connections with their peers.

Our sharing bag is always a focus for the term. This term we are exploring letters with the aim of making an alphabet book for our class room. The children are becoming very good at recognizing letters especially those in their own name.

We have also made a classroom book with photos from our week. The children avail themselves of this throughout the day. This has provoked a lot of discussion regarding who is in the photo, what is happening and recalling activities.

This term we also enjoyed learning all about bees in conjunction with World Bee Day on the 20th May. To celebrate we set up a table to explore the concept of bees. How they interact with the environment, features and characteristics of bees, how they are necessary in pollination and the production of honey. Several stories were read and activities thoughtfully planned. The children made a group project for the hallway where we recorded what we learnt about bees. A beehive was constructed from a box and cylinders used to make the cells of the hive.

Some children cut and pasted flowers to form a field of blooms and all the children constructed a bee from cardboard and wool. We all enjoyed making a tasty honey sandwich. The children are very proud of their efforts so please remember to come and view the mural.



The G2 Grapevine continued....



A Gander at G3 - Green Room Mon/Tues/Wed

Learning about Autumn

Green Room (G3) children have been celebrating the Season of Autumn through a variety of activities, still life painting of autumn fruits and vegetables, making a leaf man with autumn leaves, fruit tasting, and making fried rice with Autumn vegetables. The children learned about seasonal produce and were given the opportunity to appreciate the flavours of the season. We were amazed by the vibrant colors of Autumn leaves that the children had been collecting. They explored the colors, shapes and textures of fruits and vegetables while painting with their friends.



Meet the team



Last newsletter we met Katharine, Annie and Tina. This time we meet Kirsten (R3) & Lisa N (Preschool Office)

KIRSTEN -R3

My name is Kirsten Hoolahan, I am an Early Childhood Teacher and have had the privilege of being a part of the GCP team since January 2017. I love my role as an Early Childhood educator it is so rewarding to witness the growth and development of the children in my class, to build relationships with them and their families and to be a part of the children's education journeys.

This year I will be working in the Red Room with R3 from Monday to Wednesday and will be taking on a new Professional challenge in the role as Educational Leader for GCP on a Thursday and Friday.

I initially completed my Diploma in Early Childhood Education at TAFE and then went on to complete my Degree in Early Childhood Teaching at Macquarie University. Prior to working at GCP for the past 6 years, I worked at another Preschool for 9 1/2 years and a Long Day Care Service for 1 year. Before becoming an Educator I worked as a Pharmacy Assistant/Dispensary Technician for 12 years.

I live with my husband of 22 years Martin and our 19 year old twins Blake and Abbey as well as our 3 1/2 year old Beaglier puppy Indiana (Indi) and our 4 month old kitten Loki, who keep us all very busy. In my spare time I enjoy travelling, swimming, reading, eating out and spending time with my extended family and friends (I currently have 5 nieces and 4 nephews), so family gatherings can be extremely loud and lively.



My name is Lisa Nelsen and I have been employed at the preschool in the capacity of Office Manager for 20 years. My daughters Madeleine and Mikaela who are now in their mid to late twenties attended Gordon Community Preschool and I spent time on the social and fundraising committee. I therefore have many happy memories of the centre, both as a parent and an employee.

I am originally from New Zealand and met my husband Chris in Sydney, also a Kiwi. I love spending as much time as possible with my family. During my spare time I like to attend the gym, go bush walking and camping and having dinner with friends.

We like to travel as often as possible to see family and friends, located in many different countries, but especially to New Zealand, where the bulk of our family are.

As you can imagine I have seen hundreds of children pass through the doors of the preschool. I love watching the children learn, explore, make friends and most importantly have FUN during their preschool journey.



Your Questions answered...

We had a few commonly occurring questions from parents during our recent parent:teacher meetings.

We address some of those here.



We had a lot of questions about how many activities children should be doing during the week in addition to preschool. Some parents thought their children were doing too many and others thought their child wasn't doing enough.

How do we work this out?



How do I say No to my child?



A number of parents asked this question in a variety of ways. We get it! It can be tricky to say no to a preschooler when this may result in crying, shouting or a ding dong tantrum. It can be hard to say no when we just want to keep things happy and easy going.

It can be hard to say no if we are already feeling a bit guilty about not spending enough time with our children.

However, we don't all get what we want in life. The answer is not yes all the time. Children need to begin learning this reality in early childhood.

However, if we say "No" *all* the time, it loses its potency. So how do we get the balance right?

Our goal is to keep the lines of communication open. We can use positive language when guiding behaviour or problem solving. For example instead of saying "Don't spill your drink", we might say **"I can see you are using two hands on your cup - good idea!"**.

Instead of saying "No I am not buying that toy", you could try saying **"I know you really want that toy, but we won't be buying it today"**.

Setting boundaries when all is calm is also a good idea. Instead of waiting for the melt down to occur and *then* implementing the boundary, talk to your child ahead of time.

"I know you really want me to bring you a treat each day after preschool. I'm not going to do that tomorrow. Even if you yell and scream, I won't buy the treat. I don't really like yelling and screaming. Instead, we can talk about your preschool day together - That would be nice. "



We think that children today are far too over scheduled. Children are involved in too many structured, formal activities and we worry about the impact that this will have on their development. It is very important for children to experience unstructured time at home. They need time to "just be". This is actually **neurologically important** so that they have **time** to solve problems, imagine, think and plan through play and to consolidate the learning they have been doing at preschool in an unstructured, fun and free way by themselves within the context of their home and family.

It's important for children to learn to swim - as this is a safety issue. Consider one other activity (for example, soccer or music), however any more than this for a 3-5 year old is probably too much.

continued next page

Save the word "No" for when you really need it. For example if your child is going to hurt themselves, another person or property - **"No you can't kick the ball inside. It might hurt someone or break something. If you want to kick the ball you can do that outside."**

"No you can't go to the party today because you're sick. I know you are disappointed but it might make other people sick if you go and your body needs a chance to get better . We can do some quiet inside activities at home today."

Similarly, plans change - we might arrange to do something special, but a meeting, appointment or other situation causes our plans to change. That's life. **"I know I said we would make popcorn this afternoon, but mum needs to go to work. I can see you are disappointed. Let's aim to do it on Tuesday afternoon"** If your child starts fussing - **"I know you are disappointed - I am too, but No - we are not going to make popcorn this afternoon. We can aim for Tuesday"**.

Q₁₀

We have had a number of parents ask about learning to read, phonics programmes, alphabet learning, writing and numeracy.

Do you do this? When will you teach "the alphabet"? "When will they learn to write?" "When will he learn his numbers?"

A₁

Our children here at GCP *are* learning many of the foundation skills that are necessary for reading, writing and early numeracy. They are learning these things through play and through a range of carefully intentioned activities and experiences. Please do not expect your child to learn to read while at preschool. From time to time we might have some children who are beginning to read at preschool, but these children are the exception. It is **not necessary** for children to master these skills before they go to school.

Every day in each class at GCP we engage in play based experiences that lay the foundation for literacy and numeracy learning. We sing rhyming songs, read stories with rhyming words, we might make up our own stories. Children sign themselves in - and even those who are not yet writing letters, might just make a mark on a page or attempt the first bit of the first letter of their name. This is all OK. I encourage you to read through the contributions from our teachers in this newsletter where they share *classroom news*. All of the experiences mentioned will support learning within areas of literacy and or numeracy, science, the arts to name a few. Not to mention that these experiences also support the development of social skills, problem solving, self esteem, a love of learning. These types of experiences are occurring in *every* classroom. They are modified accordingly for our 3 year old groups and 4 year old classes. However, rest assured, all children have the opportunity to engage in a range of experiences which will help support their transition to school.

REMINDERS

Please remember to exit the playground as soon as you collect your child in the afternoon. We are finding equipment that has been packed away earlier in the day all around the playground.

The afternoon is also a time when children are tired, ready to go home and the risk of outside accidents is heightened. The teachers have meetings and preparation to organise in the afternoons and we would appreciate your assistance.

Please try to arrive at preschool before 9.30AM.

We are finding that if children arrive after this time, they are missing key times to connect with each other and they are missing part of the programme.

Remember our "visitor's mornings" are on during the week 5th-9th June. Check with your children's teachers if you have missed the information about this. Remember to fill in the reply form!

Our 2 day groups will be going on a community walking excursion in a couple of weeks. Please look out for an information note coming soon.

Remember - no lollies or sweets at preschool. Healthy food only please.

That's all for this edition of the Gordonews. If you would like more information on any of our topics, please don't hesitate to email me felicityb@gordonpreschool.com.au

If you have any comments, questions or concerns you can email or we can arrange to meet.

Kind Regards

Felicity Barclay

