



Position Description – Early Learning Area Manager

Dept/Location	Award/Agreement & Classification	Report to	Direct Reports
Early Learning Office location to be determined Regular travel across Gowrie Victoria's early learning services	Award Free, GV level 7	Executive Manager, Early Learning	Early Learning Managers; Kindergarten Managers; leaders of new services as assigned – grouped by local government areas

Scope

The Early Learning Area Manager provides strategic, operational and people leadership across a portfolio of Gowrie Victoria early learning services. This role ensures high-quality educational programs, positive workplace cultures aligned to Gowrie's purpose and values, strong financial and operational performance, full regulatory compliance, child safe environments and practice, and consistent implementation of Gowrie Victoria's strategic goals.

Grounded in Gowrie Victoria's culture of **curiosity, authenticity and commitment**, the Area Manager supports leaders and teams to provide child-centred, inclusive, and high-quality early childhood education in diverse communities.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership and People Management

- Lead in accordance with the paramountcy principle: the safety, wellbeing, rights and best interests of children are the primary consideration in every decision and action.
- Support Service Managers to lead their services, while ensuring they keep their legal authority and responsibility as Nominated Supervisors.
- Partner with People & Culture on people and employment matters including workforce planning, recruitment, induction, performance, professional development, succession planning and industrial matters.
- Lead, coach and develop service managers and service leaders to build engaged, reflective and high-performing teams.

- Lead performance improvement and organisational change across the portfolio in collaboration with relevant functional leaders.
- Participate in organisational projects and lead committees and working groups as requested.

Service Quality and Educational Excellence

- Ensure services deliver inclusive, high-quality programs aligned with Gowrie Victoria's philosophy, approved learning frameworks and the National Quality Standards.
- Monitor, review and inform development of Quality Improvement Plans, Service Improvement Plans, Early Years Manager Growth Plans, assessment and rating readiness and service data, while brokering support from Operations, Curriculum and Practice, Finance and People & Culture as required.
- Work with curriculum and practice leaders to strengthen pedagogy, educational leadership, First Nations perspectives, outdoor play and community engagement.
- Endorse service programming in partnership with curriculum leaders, operations and service managers.
- Support all services to exceed the National Quality Standard and maintain robust Quality Improvement Plans and Service Improvement Plans, identifying services with potential to pursue an Excellent rating.
- Work with the Head of Curriculum and Practice strengthening outcomes in pedagogy, educational leadership, First Nations perspectives, outdoor play, curiosity-based learning and community engagement.
- Coordinate and lead collective approaches to planning and implementation of School Readiness Funding in partnership with curriculum, service leaders and the People and Culture and Finance Business Partners.

Compliance, Risk and Incident Management

- Ensure services meet obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, National Quality Framework, Child Safe Standards and Gowrie Victoria's policies and procedures.
- Support Service Managers to respond to parent complaints at service level and broker additional support where required.
- Participate in Critical Incident Review Team (CIRT) activity, where needed.
- Contribute accurate service-level context and support follow-through at the service following notifiable incidents.

Financial and Business Performance

- Ensure each service's financial sustainability, budgeting discipline and workforce utilisation within approved delegations, in collaboration with the service manager, People and Culture and Finance Business Partners.
- Reinforce consistency in service practice and ensure Finance business partners and People & Culture business partners are effectively supporting services, without duplicating or complicating their functional accountabilities.
- Identify growth and optimisation opportunities while protecting quality and child safety.
- Contribute to annual business planning and translate approved priorities into clear portfolio and service-level actions.

Strategy and Organisational Alignment

- Translate Gowrie Victoria's strategy into measurable portfolio and service priorities.
- Develop strategies that improve service quality, support targeted growth, good governance approaches and continuous improvement, in partnership with service support teams.
- Use evidence, service insights and stakeholder feedback to inform Executive recommendations, reports and delegation framework uplift.

- Prepare background information, service context, data insights and draft inputs for Executive and Board reporting as requested.

Family, Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- Understand each service's community context, families' needs, enrolment patterns and local stakeholder environment.
- Follow consistent, approved communication approaches with external stakeholders as per Gowrie Victoria's Advocacy Plan.
- Represent Gowrie Victoria in local networks where appropriate, including Department of Education regional meetings, local government meetings, CRES-related discussions, RSTO partnerships and allied health/service partnerships.
- Assisting the Early Learning Executive Manager / CEO prepare for departmental meetings as required.
- Analyse service data and local context to inform recommendations about enrolment strategy, number of days of care offered, community need, partnerships and service improvement priorities.

Child Safety and Work Health and Safety

- Promote and model child safe practice and ensure concerns, hazards, incidents and near misses are identified, reported, investigated and followed through.
- Ensure services meet Child Safe Standards and work health and safety obligations, including consultation, hazard identification, incident reporting and risk control.
- Support substantial decisions regarding equipment purchases and facility upgrades by providing service-level context, risk insights and quality considerations as per delegation level.

Key Selection Criteria

Qualifications and Clearances

- Bachelor qualification or higher in Early Childhood Education, Education, Leadership, Management or a related discipline is strongly preferred.
- Current Victorian Working with Children Check, National Police Check, unrestricted Victorian Driver Licence, right to work in Australia and capacity to travel regularly.
- Post-graduate qualification in education, leadership, management or business (desirable).

Experience, Knowledge, Skills and Attributes

- Significant experience supporting multiple early learning services, regional portfolios or complex multi-site service environments in a quality improvement or service leadership role.
- Demonstrated experience, capability and aptitude in people leadership, financial management, workforce planning, quality improvement, stakeholder engagement, change leadership and data-informed service improvement.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the National Quality Framework, National Quality Standard, approved learning frameworks, Child Safe Standards and relevant legislation.
- Highly developed coaching, communication, negotiation, influencing and stakeholder engagement skills.
- Strategic and analytical thinking, sound judgement, practical problem solving and strong follow-through.
- Resilience, emotional intelligence and commitment to child-centred, inclusive and respectful practice.
- Embodies Gowrie Victoria's values of Curiosity, Authenticity and Commitment in leadership style and daily practice.

Key Relationships

Internal

Executive leadership; Service Managers and service leadership teams; Curriculum and Practice; Operations; People & Culture; Finance; Property; Marketing; and other support functions.

External

Families, community representatives, Department of Education, government, regulators, schools, universities, allied health professionals / services, family support services, sector networks, researchers and community partners.

Commitment to Child Safety

As part of your role, you will be working in an environment with children. It is your obligation to always ensure their safety and report any concerns that you have, in line with our duty of care obligations. You will be required to regularly provide the necessary working with children, police records and reference checks. We have zero tolerance when it comes to abuse of any kind and will take disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment, should we determine that abuse has taken place or there has been a failure to report any suspected or alleged abuse.

Employee Acceptance

I acknowledge that I have read and understood this position description and accept the responsibilities, accountabilities and requirements of the Early Learning Area Manager role. This position description should be read with my employment agreement and Gowrie Victoria policies and may be updated in consultation with me.

Employee signature _____	Print name _____
Date _____	Manager signature _____