

MEETING DETAILS

Date	Monday 20 April 2026
Time	9:05am to 10:45am
Location	Barossa Regional University Campus
Chair	Kate Blacksell
Members present	Kate Blacksell (DHS), Melissa Whitrow (Barossa Council), Jenny O'Brien (Barossa Council), Ali Sanderson, Yasmin Harman-Smith (The Kids Research Institute), Jo Hermann (School Ministries), Skye Reimann (SA Health), Bill Gransbury (Enhance Barossa Mental Health)
Apologies	Ali Murch, Steph Woortman, Tarnya Eggleton, Carly Bergen, Vicki Martin, Natalie Gallarello

WHAT WE DISCUSSED

Choosing our Year 1 actions

The group worked through five potential actions identified at the Early Years Conference Day in March, committing to a focused set for Year 1. The guiding principle include three to five well-executed actions. Each action was tested against feasibility, existing momentum, and likely impact for children and families in the Barossa.

NDIS peer mentoring pilot

The group agreed in principle to a peer mentoring pilot for families navigating the NDIS, anchored in schools where those conversations already happen informally. The model connects families new to the process with others who have been through it. Nuriootpa Primary School was identified as the likely lead partner, with Redeemer Lutheran School also flagged. The group noted this action is achievable because the people, the momentum, and existing resources are already in place.

Activating green spaces for families

The group agreed to activate free outdoor spaces for families as a Year 1 action, with a pilot in Lyndoch. The intent is to identify community champions in each town who can carry the activity locally rather than the committee driving it from above. A connection to the Council's District Action Planning work in Lyndoch was noted as a natural alignment point.

Development checks reference document

The group had a detailed conversation about developmental and health checks. The problem is not that checks are unavailable as multiple organisations deliver them. The

challenge is that for some families they do not know what exists, the landscape is confusing even for service providers, and uptake drops significantly after the first year of a child's life. The Year 1 action was simplified to something practical and achievable: produce one clear reference document explaining what developmental and health checks are, who delivers them, what is involved, and where families can access them. This document will sit on the Wellbeing Resource Hub and be shared through playgroups and library programs.

Playgroup Collective

Playgroups came up consistently across the whole meeting. The Year 1 action is deliberately modest: Kate will convene four informal gatherings for playgroup facilitators across the region at different locations and times, including an online option. The purpose is to listen -- to understand what facilitators need, what is working, and where the gaps are. Several live issues were noted: the Greenock playgroup closed this year with no replacement, post-COVID families often do not know playgroups exist, and families with children who have developmental, or disability presentations frequently do not feel comfortable in parent-led mainstream groups. Library children's programs were identified as a potential referral pathway for families who would benefit from a more structured environment.

Caregiver engagement and reducing stigma

The group agreed this action does not need to stand alone in Year 1. The themes it addresses reaching isolated caregivers, building parenting confidence, and reducing stigma, are already woven through the NDIS pilot, the green spaces work, and the Playgroup Collective. The new Barossa Community Centre run by Lutheran Care is still establishing itself and was identified as a potential Year 2 partner.

NEXT STEPS

- Begin conversations with Nuriootpa Primary School to confirm interest in leading the NDIS mentoring pilot
- Start investigating green spaces activation in Lyndoch
- Draft the development checks reference document for the website
- To scope four playgroup facilitator gatherings across the region for the new financial year
- Progress the Lyndoch Library early years proposal and connect to the green spaces action