



Chileans see childcare the Kurri way

Kurri Preschool recently hosted a group of visiting Chilean early childhood education professionals.

The visit was set up by the University of Western Sydney and the University of Newcastle who are involved in a research project to improve early childhood education outcomes in Chile.

The Chilean government has established 3500 early childhood centres in the last three years in order to provide free education for

children from lower-income families.

The group attended several centres in the Hunter, western and south-west Sydney during its three-week stay, funded by the Fundacion Minera Escondida.

Project leader, Associate Professor Christine Woodrow of the University of Western Sydney, said the study has been set up in Australia as a country of similar population size that has also recently experi-

enced education reform.

Dr. Woodrow said Kurri Preschool was chosen for its reputation in the region as a high quality provider of early childhood education.

"The centre has a focus on children as active learners across all areas of the curriculum," she said.

Kurri Preschool director Jannelle Gallagher said the preschool was "very lucky" to host the group, and paid tribute to her staff for their hard work.

"The girls have worked

very hard to be recognised, and we are becoming renowned in the area and further afield," she said.

Mrs. Gallagher also addressed the group at a forum at the University of Newcastle on Friday evening.

The Chilean visitors were from Antofagasta, a city on the edge of the Atacama Desert, one of the driest regions on Earth. Some of them experienced heavy rain for the first time in their lives while in Australia.



■ VISIT: Kurri Preschool students Lana Kearney and Isabella Fuentes enjoy play time with Chilean early childhood professionals (left to right) Marcela Arancibia Lopez, Nathaly Carmona Martinez, Claudia Orellana Arancibia, Stephania Salfate Maya and Carla Ramos Moreno. Story and photo by Krystal Sellars.