CHILDREN’S SERVICES
IN THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP
A BETTER FUTURE FOR PORT PHILLIP CHILDREN

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

Compiled by MosaicLab

13 July 2018
The City of Port Phillip is in the process of reviewing Council’s children’s service provision. Council currently provides four main services for families and children:

toy libraries  
childcare  
playgroups  
kindergarten

As part of the Engagement process during June and July 2018, Council staff and MosaicLab have been talking with the community about the challenges and opportunities involved in this service area as well as seeking the community’s input into developing ideas in relation to Council’s future role in children’s services.

The goal for this project is to develop a Children’s Services Policy. The engagement is providing valuable information to Council in develop this policy.

This report is a summary of the feedback that has been received (by the time of publication) via a series of drop in sessions, facilitated workshops and children's workshops (see table 1). The feedback received includes a vision for children's services, challenge prioritisation, ideas for improvements to the service areas, and recommendations for policy objectives.

**WHO PARTICIPATED?**

We ran a number of community engagement activities for the community to participate in. The activities and the number of people involved is shown in table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. of adult participants</th>
<th>No. of children participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drop in sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bubup Womindjeka (Dutch Playgroup)</td>
<td>Friday 22 June</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elwood Toy Library</td>
<td>Sat 23 June</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Park Library (2x storytimes)</td>
<td>Monday 25 June</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Kilda Library</td>
<td>Friday 29 June</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skinners Playground</td>
<td>Thursday 5 July</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Melbourne Library</td>
<td>Thursday 12 July</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitated Workshops</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Workshop - Bubup Nairn</td>
<td>Tuesday 26 June</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Workshop Port Melbourne Town Hall</td>
<td>Wednesday 27 June</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Workshop, St Kilda Town Hall</td>
<td>Tuesday 3 July</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school Story Time at St Kilda Library</td>
<td>Tuesday 26 June 2018</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarendon Children’s Centre</td>
<td>Friday 6 July 2018</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barring Djinang Kindergarten</td>
<td>Tuesday 10 July 2018</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN IN OUR CITY

We asked participants at the drop-in sessions to vote on the challenges that they would like Council to prioritise. Each participant saw the list of challenges below and placed up to 5 votes each. The City of Port Phillip website – Have your Say, had the same list of challenges that users could vote on (refer to table 2) as well as the opportunity to add their own (refer to table 3). New challenges could also receive a vote by online users.

Table 2 - Votes received on challenges to prioritise (F2F= Face to Face).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges prioritised</th>
<th>F2F</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring an adequate supply of childcare for children under three</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting children and families experiencing vulnerability</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring children with additional needs are able to access services</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating old buildings</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing the gap in kindergarten participation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting children from disadvantaged backgrounds</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring children are ‘school ready’</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping families find the services they need</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring children starting school are proficient in English</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing leadership and funding to projects which have cross-sector involvement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sure we have enough children’s services for growth areas</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using collaborative planning to address challenges together</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 - New challenges listed from Have Your Say Webpage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New challenges</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Social Media Is Bad For Children</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The addiction of children (and young adults) to social media is alarming. The Communication Minister should close down sites like facebook, twitter and all the rest. Most of these sites are controlled by Americans whose main interest is making money from advertising. Facebook reminds me of a totalitarian states control of the people. Emails, texts and phone conversation are fine though.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Reliance Not State Reliance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and relatives need to help more with babysitting. I am a bachelor and baby sat my nephew in the 1980/90's for a number of years mostly at weekends. I have offered to do the same for his daughter when she is aged 2 or older in 18 months time. I see many grandparents minding children in Middle Park too.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for alternatives to full day child care</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Port Phillip there is only one occasional care centre that provides an alternative to full day child care services. Southport Playhouse is not supported by the Council or Government and it's completely reliant on the attending families and community. This centre provides a hybrid option/alternative that helps children get ready for kinder and school. More of these options for families I think would help raise kinder participation and provide options for those who cannot afford full day child care.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children In Street At Risk With Social Media And Possible Push Polling</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting story in a Melbourne metropolitan newspaper today (23 jun 18) about children and adults with ear plugs in when in the street. Not only is this anti social and dangerous, if not paying attention to your surrounding, constant use of ear plugs can send you deaf just as constant loud music in discoteques send some deaf too. Hearing and sight are a humans most useful asset. Incidentally there are lots of entries here from City of Port Phillip (I assume this means Port Phillip City Council staff) which is fine as long as its not push polling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affluent Port Phillip Residents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Phillip is an affluent municipality therefore parents can afford a private kindergarten or a nanny. Not much need for state or council services for children. If you have children, preferably no more than two per couple, you look after them rather than the state. We dont live in a state controlled Marxist state.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer children, parents and educators a programme to foster tools for better resilience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most parents and educators grew up without social media, but our children are exposed to it before they even talk (how many babies are plastered all over Instagram and facebook??). There is a gap between the adult's experience of growing up and current children's experiences. With childhood anxiety on the rise, understanding how to combat the pressures of social media and bridge the gap of understanding should be everyone's responsibility. There are programmes such as the Resilience Project doing just this with great success; it should be accessible to all.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a service for sustainable giving and repurposing...</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've talked a lot with other parents about living more sustainably and know many of us care deeply about it. A lot of us have excess stuff that we are given and accumulate rapidly as the children grow up so quickly (toys, clothes, books, baby stuff, bedding, utensils, high chairs, etc). Many of us struggle to know what to do with it all. Organisations such as St Kilda Mums take a portion of this excess. Could the council also offer such a service, in conjunction with the child care centres? Child care centres, community centres, independent groups, disadvantaged children, refugee children, shelters, and everyone else, could all benefit from such a service.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derelict buildings fixed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fix the derelict buildings - they have been left burnt out and abandoned for years - attracting criminal behaviour and showing a presence of little respect. Force the owners to fix/seil/build - local council allowed for the demolition of The London, however these derelict buildings I the area are still standing (at least 1/2 dozen).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High schools</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short- we need high schools for the growing population in the area. One campus schools, not spread out over 3 sites - AFC. Prepare for the growth in the area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHALLENGES

PARTICIPANTS AT THE DROP IN SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS WERE ASKED IF THEY WOULD ADD ANY CHALLENGES TO THE ONES THAT CITY OF PORT PHILLIP LISTED. BELOW IS THE LIST OF ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES RECEIVED.

Access & Equity:


Disadvantaged children + access to facilities / services: Council outreach. Better connection post parental group + linking services pre-school. More info on parents to be about wait times. Council leasing with primary schools.

Have regular activities facilitated by a psychologist, where mums can get a support group feel, perhaps where the kids are otherwise occupied. A safe space where they can share and talk through things.

Supporting families experiencing vulnerabilities: Identify chain effects that may perpetrate vulnerabilities (poverty - no access - no children - poor education engagement - poverty etc.) Refer to council management chain to facilitate long term policy change.

Aging buildings and integrated services:

Have the council focus on the value of children's services + invest in centres to maintain the buildings.

Aging facilities / lack of supply: Co-locating with schools in catchment.

Shortage of buildings, improve participation: We need to introduce public private partnership so that new building can be built. Special needs and children experiencing vulnerability, population growth issues will be solved since private public partnership could manage and are good to provide speedy services.

Bubup Nairrm open access indoor play area (no places in walking distance of East St Kilda for indoor play).

Growing food / Natural play / Diverse families / Art and craft. Cost of children and low income of workers - more flexible opening hours.

Aging buildings: Having a facilities plan that is regularly reviewed / updated considering where hubs might be located in future (future planning). Being ready to respond to grant opportunities (hub development).

Buildings need upgrading and not meeting community needs - disability access. Community space with computers and resources for parents to use - even a cup of tea!

Communication

Lack of knowledge re available services - toy libraries work / playgroups etc. Celebrate these services, special events, marketing by other council services e.g. MCH, libraries.

Under 3s

Adequate childcare for children under 3: Obtaining more spaces / property / aggregate services.
POLICY OBJECTIVES

IN THE WORKSHOPS, IF PARTICIPANTS FINISHED A TASK EARLY, THEY MOVED ON TO START TO THINK THROUGH WHAT THEY WOULD RECOMMEND AS THE KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES. THE GROUPS THAT COMPLETED THIS TASK USED THE COUNCIL’S LISTED CHALLENGES AS A STARTING POINT TO COME UP WITH THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS.

- Creating a network for the staff in different centres to facilitate sharing of ideas.
- Continue to provide low cost buildings to playgroups, childcare + kindergarten.
- Developing communication strategies to inform people of the services available + the benefits of the different services.
- Ensure that maintenance levies raised are reinvested in each centre (i.e. money paid by centre A is reinvested in centre A) + increase transparency about where money is being spent.
- Ensuring low cost, quality services remain a viable for residents of Port Phillip.
## VISION

**PARTICIPANTS AT THE WORKSHOPS WERE ASKED TO DESCRIBE THEIR VISION FOR CHILDREN IN PORT PHILLIP IN 2024.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every child is supported by world class services delivered from a centralised and integrated hub to maximise their health and happiness.</th>
<th>Connected community that shares resources.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For our children to grow in a safe, inclusive, sustainable, environment inspired by play. For families to feel supported and connected with our community + each other.</td>
<td>The infrastructure is in place to support outdoor living e.g. Parks have toilets, cafes, play equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making parenthood easier.</td>
<td>Resourcing to enable + streamline inclusion for all (physical + social environment).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing together - Championing diversity.</td>
<td>Meaningful engagement - feel safe - being connected to the community - children and their support networks supported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More facilities/services - children who are connected to our community - equality for all children - priorities for children who reside within PP.</td>
<td>Facilities/Parks have a level of free play. Safety (domestic violence). Education. Sustainability. Consultation with CM in decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A community that supports and respects all children as individuals - in safe, healthy and inclusive environments.</td>
<td>Link services together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An inclusive environment where children can play, learn and grow.</td>
<td>Accessible, high quality, inclusive services for all (affordable) - marginalised disadvantaged have the same opportunities. The voice of children included in council decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with children in decision making. Streamlined + easier access. Support for change in legislation. Valued + developed workforce (early intervention).</td>
<td>All children's needs are met. Deficiencies are addressed. Access to nature. Grow services such as APGs. Equitable access to all. The best possible early education for all. Good programs. Improved AEDC data/outcomes - vulnerabilities are addressed and stats going down. Continuous improvement / best practice. Space for every child who needs it. Programs/education designed in consultation with children and their families. More males in ECEC. Rites of passage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IDEAS FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE ASKED TO RECORD THEIR IDEAS TO IMPROVE ANY OF THE FOUR SERVICE AREAS, CHILDCARE, KINDERGARTEN, PLAYGROUPS AND TOY LIBRARIES (OR OTHER).

**Buildings and Infrastructure**

Improve infrastructure.

Wet Weather Indoor Play - Bubup Nairrm open access indoor play area. (no places in walking distance of East St Kilda for indoor play).

Providing more baby rooms in childcare centre. As there is not enough room in the great centres.

Help update old buildings. Elwood children’s centre operates from an outdated dwelling which impacts on service delivery.

Less cobble stones in the footpaths e.g. Albert Park very difficult with buggies. Can be hazardous in places.

**Administration and staffing**

Council facilitated consortium of children’s services in Port Phillip - to share ideas and to offer PD for staff and identify skills gaps.

We currently use a small, non-profit, community run centre in Elwood. It has been vital for our small children’s learning and growth. I would particularly like to see this type of service continue and to be supported by council.

More government funded subsidised childcare and kindergarten options of places. I have found that staff are more supported of trained and child focused in government funded services.

We have used two council run childcare centres in Port Phillip. There is a huge variation in staff satisfaction between centres. If you ask staff what the main factors are to improve their satisfaction this would have significant flow on effects for the community and our options for great care etc. Beyond salary increases, they need to be appreciated e.g. through xmas parties or profession development opportunities and days off.

Cheaper community care.

More childcare for working mums + studying. We want more sessional kindergarten options.

Base new / future childcare centres around the model used in Bubup in Port Melbourne - a fantastic centre with beautiful outdoor area.

Sponsored by council - accessible to low income families.

Easier transfer between childcare. Centres in other areas.

Providing support for administration for better quality.

**Service provision**

Centre with play area for short term care (1-2 hrs).
I think that with the change in childcare subsidy there is going to be a higher demand for sessional kinder places, as low-income parents who are not working / studying have their funding cut / suspended at long day care cut. There are not enough places in council childcare kinder with the growing population. The excessive private place out the cost p/h is up to $14.50 with lunch out of pocket costs.

**Waitlisting and enrolment**

The waitlist for childcare needs addressing. I put my name down and never heard back. We had to use the service in customer area which was not as convenient.

Waitlist is so long for children, vulnerable families get priorities, which can mean other families get pushed back, even if we have been on the waitlist since 10-weeks gestation. Council investigate how they allocate places to be equitable to all!

Simple service to enrol- too complicated - too many forms, Poets Grove - one section for short day, then different system for long day - centralised system - much simpler - need guarantee to get in because you go through this long process without knowing that you will get in!

Better management of waiting lists for childcare (I put my name down in 2010 and have never been contacted).

Prioritise children that live in CoPP for childcare + kindergarten. Give priority or % of priority to locals.

Prioritising families in public housing / low income / pensions etc with waiting list places for childcare: even if there was a certain percentage of places at centre allocated for these families.

**Affordability and access**

Affordable childcare for all families.

More childcare centres at non-private and more help to non-permanent resident.

I don’t think that the families that aren’t engaging in kinder are doing so out of no interest. I think that there are financial barriers for families that have parents working / studding sessional kinder doesn’t work and if low-income families can’t access council, kinder sessional / long day care then their children miss out due to the cost associated with private childcare prioritising which services are better for each section of the community - would mean children who miss out may otherwise get sessional places.

**Operations**

Use apps for daily updates for parents.

Children love routines but most childcare centres don’t have one except for snack times. At German childcare centres they have sing a song together both in the morning and at the end of the day and also before snack and nap times so that children can easier follow what’s happening next.

**Support for alternatives to full day child care**

In Port Phillip there is only one occasional care centre that provides an alternative to full day child care services. Southport Playhouse is not supported by the Council or Government and it’s completely reliant on the attending families and community. This centre provides a hybrid option/alternative that helps children get ready for kinder and school.

More of these options for families I think would help raise kinder participation and provide options for those who cannot afford full day child care. (online contribution)
Kinder Accessibility and Hours

Align Kinder wait lists with DET wait lists for schools - priority should go to those who live closest to the Kinder, not those who put their name down first.

Improve / get rid of waiting list for these facilities - let each centre have their own list + clear guidelines re priorities / criteria for access to council / community run centres.

More spaces + bigger building. Currently turning families away. Would love to offer more?

Kindergarten - The 3rd and 4th kinder system is confusing. It also provides away of children with different ages to start prep. Why not skip 3yr kinder and make 4yr kinder mandatory and more hours? Make sure everyone is about the same age when to start school.

Mainstream hours extending Kindergarten uniformed time pattern. ‘Parent friendly’.

Holidays programs for children.

Access to better information about kinder options to families in long day care. Care options for before and after kinder hours to allow parents to work a full day.

I think that with the change in childcare subsidy there is going to be a higher demand for sessional kinder places, as low-income parents who are not working / studying have their funding cut / suspended at long day care cut. There are not enough places in council childcare kinder with the growing population. The excessive private place out the cost p/h is up to $14.50 with lunch out of pocket costs.

Prioritise children that live in CoPP for childcare + kindergarten. Give priority or 3% of priority to locals.

Involve children in design

Services for children designed by adults: Engage primary school children - old enough to articulate their needs and generate ideas - young enough to remember when they were younger.

Specialist Skills and offerings

Professional development for educators specifically to support children with special needs and parents from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Kindergartens need to be more affordable and time appropriate. An increase in playground facilities.

Would like to have a Montessori kindergarten option in Port Phillip, currently have to travel out of municipality to access this service.

Kindergarten needs to be more affordable especially single parents or parents on low wages. If lower middle class, still can’t afford childcare / kindergarten.

Staff are trained in non-threatening communication and are able to manage bullies effectively - extra training to support this.

Operations

More smocks! Child comes home covered in paint!
CHILDREN’S CONSULTATION ST KILDA PRE-SCHOOL STORYTIME

DATE AND LOCATION
Tuesday 26 June 2018 - 11am – 11:45am Pre-school Story Time at St Kilda Library

PARTICIPANTS
Children’s Librarian: Alyssa McDonald
Children: Approx. 40 children, including 10 kindergarten children from Bubup Nairn Children’s Centre
Council Staff: Michelle Adams, Janice Robinson, Mandy Bow and Hayley Crawford
Film maker: Sue Roberts

ACTIVITY
1. The usual Story Time session with a brief introduction about the activity following the session
2. Activity sheet: What would the best kinder look like? What would it have in it?
3. Follow up discussion with Bubup Nairn children

SUMMARY
Keywords and quotes were captured during the drawing activity about their ideal kindergarten: what would the best kinder look like, what would it have in it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toys/kids playing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing/monkey bars</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing/songs/dancing/a stage</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book corner/stories/books</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano/violin/music</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cubby/house</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansion/house/lots of rooms for all the kids</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number station/numbers/shapes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen/bake/cook/experiment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide/Indoor slide</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School bus/train station</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming pool</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pet (puppy/kitten)/Chickens</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids office</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People/Lots of people</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformers/lego</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food/pizza</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home corner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers/garden/planting things</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fire thing in case of fire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninjas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock climbing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space/astronaut</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and sand</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couch</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bat and ball</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION

On Tuesday 10 July 2018, a follow up discussion was held with a small group of 6 children at Bubup Nairrm Children’s Centre who attended the Story Time session two weeks prior. The aim was to expand further on their ideal kindergarten and to provide some suggestions for challenges it might face. Specific questions and their responses included:

What would we do if all the children wanted to come to this kinder but there wasn’t enough room?
“Make an extra room.”
“Make a million hundred thousand rooms”

How would we choose who came to the kinder?
“I would say eeny, meeny, miny mo.”
“We can just point to the person who can come.”
We role played that scenario and I said whoever I pointed to could come but the rest could not, and asked if that was fair. They all said “no!” Other solutions were then discussed.
“I would let the teacher decide, she would know.”
“We would just let everyone come.”
“My sister can come!”
“You can get a dangerous animal to bite the people who can’t come.”

What would happen if someone was in a wheelchair, how would they move around the kinder?
“They can have a lift... my building has a lift.”

How could we make someone who doesn’t speak English feel welcome?
“You can teach them English... the kids and the teachers would help them with that.”
“My kinder can do that because I have a kid’s office and an adult’s office.”
“You can help them if they are scared or worried.”
“If they’re scared you can guard them.”
“If they’re angry you can show them to the calm corner... it’s where you go to calm down.”

The children then posed their own questions on their own accord.
What would you do if someone got sick at the kinder?
“They bring their own medicine and they get an icy pole.”
“You call their mums and dads.”
“You give them an icy pole.”

Another child asked, What would happen if something breaks?
“If something breaks, you can fix it. You just call the builder.”
I asked, Who would pay?
“Whoever breaks it pays for it.”
I asked, What if they didn’t have enough money?
“You can just get it out of the bank.”
“I seriously don’t have any money.”
CHILDREN’S CONSULTATION CLARENDON CHILDREN’S CENTRE

DATE AND LOCATION
Friday 6 July - 10am – 10:45am Clarendon Children’s Centre

PARTICIPANTS
Kindergarten teacher: Kathryn Bertram
Children: 10 x 3 and 4 year olds in Magic Room (kindergarten)
Council Staff: Michelle Adams and Hayley Crawford
Film maker: Sue Roberts

ACTIVITY
1. Read two books: The Best Thing About Kindergarten, and On the First Day of Kindergarten
2. Floor map discussion: what do you like about this kinder? What could make it even better? If we could make the best kinder in the world, what would it be like?
3. Activity sheet: What would the best kinder look like? What would it have in it?
SUMMARY

Keywords and quotes were captured during the floor map discussion and drawing activity about their ideal kindergarten: what it would look like, what they could do there. From this, three key themes were identified.

◆ THEME 1: Safety, allowing children in and keeping “bad guys” out.

When discussing if the kinder needed to have walls and a roof, one child said it needed a door. Another child excitedly said, “What about a trap door?” Another child jumped up and said, “What about if you step on the trap door and there is a booby trap.” A third child didn’t like this idea, and said “No, a booby trap will get you, it won’t get you in, it will trap you.” The teacher helped explore the idea further, by asking how the children will get in. The group discussed how it would work best, and they thought the “bad guys” will go in the trap door but the children and parents will just go around it and use the stairs. The concept of safety was represented in one child’s drawing, who drew a circle on the roof of his ideal kinder. When asked what it was, he said it was an alarm.

Keywords captured on activity sheet:
“Booby trap.”
“A crocodile for getting the bad guys.”

◆ THEME 2: Grand size, large scale items.

When asked how their kinder could be even better, a few responses focused on making it bigger, perhaps associating the “best” kinder with the grandness of it. When asked what we would do if all the children wanted to come to their ideal kinder but not everyone would fit, a child who was engaged in another activity yelled out “Make a bigger one.” The group engaged in the conversation agreed, and no further ideas provided.

Keywords captured on the activity sheet:
“A hippopotamus, a big building like a giant.”
“A long building, a castle.”
“A big giant house school.”
“A big and giant school.”

◆ THEME 3: Positive emotions, love.

Three out of the nine drawings featured love heart images. Love and positive emotions were also spoken about by these children when describing what they drew. This could be because they were reflecting on what they liked about kinder, but it could also describe the feeling they would have at their ideal service.

Keywords captured on the activity sheet:
“People with a love heart.”
“Love hearts.”
“Love heart windows.”
“Happy”
OTHER MENTIONS:

**Animals** - “A camera for taking pictures of the animals.” “Pet turtle.”

**Building design** - “Roof on the kinder.” “It has to have stairs.” “Kinder with windows.” “Rainbow roof.”

**Outdoor play** - “Pathway for running.” “See-saw, slide, cubby house.” “Build a treehouse.”

**Aesthetics** - “Decorations.” “Yellow bit of paint.” “Maybe we can paint a little bit... but not on the floor, maybe on the walls.” “Paint a rainbow and a statue... paint the rainbow on the wall like Izy thought.” “We paint some suns and clouds on the wall.” “It will have a superhero picture.”


**SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:**

**Transport and moving around** - When asked how children would get to the kinder: “Maybe drive their car.” “They would just have to walk” (if they didn’t have a car). “What happens if you don’t have a car and your legs are tired, you could take a bus.” “Maybe you could cycle, I like cycling to school.” “What about a jet aeroplane.” “On a tram.”

**Built environment** - When asked if the kinder would have walls and a roof, the children said it was important for the kinder to have walls and a roof, one child explained “so no rain gets in or a storm.” They were also in agreement about it being important to have a fence and a gate, and “you need a door.” However, when explaining why it was important to have these things they would refer back to their current building, for example (pointing) “we have a gate here.”
toy libraries

Service offering

Greater integration of Library networks + other services (children's). Providing support for administration for better quality.

Online toy library with pick up from homes app (funded by City of Port Phillip).

Bridge the communication gap between us & council, provide more support around regulation, legislation.

Utilise community bus stop at each toy library / playgroup location etc. To give disadvantaged families opportunity to travel free to location.

Updating the computer system to enable reservations.

Use toy libraries sessions to offer services such as vaccinations, screen services etc... A place parents can get advice from a MCHN.

We have been members of the Elwood for almost 5yrs. It has been a vital resource for connecting with other families + accessing our range of resources for our kids, at a very affordable rate.

We need toy libraries in Port Phillip.

More! And open more hours and days.

Longer opening hours - more selection of toys. Not too many complaints - pretty well run.

We would like to have more toys for our children.

Introduce one learning toy to the child of certain age, say 2 - 4 and make them learn and understand. Sometimes I feel the parent is from overseas need help and assistance in deciding the correct toy for their child.

Opening hours and space

Make toy libraries open at 8am - kids are up 9.30 too late - other things happening.

Increase opening hours to make it easier to get there and borrow toys.

Increase size of space given to toy libraries to - the Middle Park is completely overloaded with toys and very hard to get in / out of on Saturdays.

More space please! Amazing facility just so little space.

Open more evenings or days. Maybe rotate the additional days to match lean duration (3weeks?) e.g. week 1+4 open Mondays / Week 2 + 5 open Tuesday / week 3 + 6 open Wednesday.

Membership fees

Joining fee $60 a bit too high - is there a way you don't need to join and still hire party packs? Could there be tiered payment options?

Make them free, at least those toys that are donated.

Option to pay extra to reduce volunteer hours - which pregnancy / work becomes too much it can be difficult.

Types of toys

Should have more wooden toys instead of mainly plastic.
Attachment 4: Childrens Services - Summary Data Report

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**playgroups**

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**Flexibility and access**

More flexible hours with playgroups so parents working fulltime can attend. Weekends etc. Parents, mum + dads being able to attend more flexible hours.

More flexible hours and longer hours.

We have been members of both Elwood and St Kilda playgroups. These are severely under-utilised and have high dropout rates because the Elwood one is very poorly coordinated (2016 - 2017) and use is based on specific times for specific groups whereas what the great majority of families need (after 12mths age of child!) is flexibility connectedness to community and new people and somewhere to meet or play on a rainy / too hot day

More sessions on more days! My child doesn't attend childcare so we'd love more play groups in the Albert Park / Middle Park area. Please don't shut the Middle Park Library!

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**Staffing and service provision**

I am from New Zealand and we have something called 'play centre' there. It is like playgroups except the mums take turns to look after the kids, on a rotation. It gives mums a break, is free and is really fun for kids. I have wished for it here! And still have warm memories of loving it when I was 3/4.

We were at a birthday at the weekend at Bauman's play house - a community run centre where the members pay a small fee and have access to the play group in day-care setting (toys, dress up swings etc.)

Some face to face contacts with the group would be good. It's impersonal, via email and we had some issues that weren't resolved. Perhaps a check in at the session once per quarter.

More supported playgroups via council services - adventure playgrounds- family support.

Support toy libraries with more funding. Bring all Toy libraries together under one umbrella.

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**Options for fathers**

Workforce is changing and there are stay at home fathers, fathers work less hours to spend more time with kids, so there must be a fathers group or parental (mam and father) groups.

Provide father more fathers groups e.g. my husband really loved Town Hall dad and wants to be involved with dad group more than once a year, please do more often to support dads!
Maternal Child Health:

Only for first time parents - extend this to siblings. More MCH to increase visits - parent groups.

More access to support for new-borns 4 weeks / 8 weeks - need more support.

Communication and Information

All: keep all child education / health / activity related data publish on council website with detailed information. A simple interactive website update.

Carparking

Pregnant mothers: Special car park access for pregnant ladies or mother with children less than one-year old infants.

Schools

Schools would be encouraged to embrace the latest research to embrace all learning styles. More emphasis on making sure the kids who don’t ‘fit the system’ don’t get left behind. Appropriate education creates good citizens.

School holiday programs

More activities for under 3yr olds during school holidays or activities which are suited to children of multiple ages, so that siblings can all participate.

Gardens

Community garden in Albert Park / Middle Park area designed for children to learn about gardening / growing own veggies etc.

Playgrounds:

University church playground has a secure section for children to play freely. St Vincent’s Gardens, Edwards Park don’t have secure play sections for runaway toddlers.

Under cover play grounds - sheltered areas and cover over playgrounds for winter.

More adventure playgrounds - lights - shelter

Allergies

Understanding of allergies, my son has anaphylaxis to wheat and it is not treated the same as nuts - staff need awareness.

Library

Story time 0-18months option for all libraries currently only offered in South Melb. We would go twice a week if our local library had 0-18 month option.

More organised groups such as story time etc. For families to get involved in. Haven’t got to kinder level yet but childcare systems seem great.

Libraries: Improved toilet facilities across libraries incl. upgrades, cross sector engagement, facilitation of events and programs. Budget for additional funding for library outreach work. CoPP is currently offering more - Kinders, school etc. would benefit enormously.

World Leaders

We would like much greater vision of big ideas - one wants to be world leaders (OCCD) - start with where Scandinavian countries are leading in 2030 and do it
now - we need to not just react - we need to create actual world leadership + advocate from a well funded position of strength.

**Support for families**

Additional support for families experiencing illness - there are not really any options currently available. (Mum was diagnosed with cancer and support was not available - she had private health but she knows others would struggle).

**Offer children, parents and educators a programme to foster tools for better resilience**

Most parents and educators grew up without social media, but our children are exposed to it before they even talk (how many babies are plastered all over Instagram and Facebook?!). There is a gap between the adult’s experience of growing up and current children’s experiences. With childhood anxiety on the rise, understanding how to combat the pressures of social media and bridge the gap of understanding should be everyone’s responsibility. There are programmes such as the Resilience Project doing just this with great success; it should be accessible to all. (online contribution)
PLEASE NOTE: While every effort has been made to transcribe participants comments accurately a small number have not been included in this summary due to the legibility of the content. Please contact Kate Henderson at kate@mosaiclab.com.au for any suggested additions.