Question from Cr Voss

Councillor Voss asked why Council does not utilise parent committees in the management of childcare service providers?

Response

Historically, Clark Street is the only Council managed child care centre that has had a parent committee in operation for many years in a fundraising and social capacity.

Parent committees have not managed childcare services in the City of Port Phillip because Council is already the Approved Provider and Early Years Manager of the services. In the latest ACECQA Quarterly Report, August 2019, a snapshot is provided of service management. Local government managed services continue to operate early years services with a greater proportion of Exceeding NQS (56%) than community managed services (43%) and this outcome is historically true since Early Years Management commenced, which is perhaps the reason that a change to community managed has not been considered. Since the implementation of the National Quality Framework, management of services and service quality has become more onerous. Increasing numbers of volunteer committees are delegating these responsibilities to an Early Years Manager and maintain a PAG role.

Council has worked in close partnership with the Department of Education and Training (DET) in the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) process and has had regular discussion in my tenure about the future establishment of a Parent Advisory Group (PAG). DET understands that when the Children’s Services Policy decision has been made about the future of children’s services, development of PAGs in services will be addressed.

PAGs require appropriate resourcing and support and the partnership between families and Council will be negotiated as per the Early Years Management Policy Framework. We will be introducing PAGs for Council run centres but in the interim, Councillors should be assured that DET is satisfied with the opportunities for parent engagement which are built into the SIP and reflected in Assessment and Rating outcomes.