

**ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
18 DECEMBER 2008**

ORDER OF THE DAY

ORDER 5

**FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SPECIAL PROJECTS - PROGRESS
REPORT**

LOCATION/ADDRESS:

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: **DAVID YEOUART, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY ASSETS AND
SERVICES**

AUTHOR: **GREG WOOD MANAGER, COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

FILE NO.:

ATTACHMENTS: **NIL.**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the progress of key projects in family and children's services.
- 1.2 Information is provided on the following:
 - 1.2.1 St Kilda Family and Children's Centre
 - 1.2.2 Liardet St Family and Children's Centre
 - 1.2.3 Childcare Waiting List
 - 1.2.4 Other family and children's services infrastructure works
 - 1.2.5 Non council infrastructure developments

2. BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting of 26 May 2008 council determined the following (Item A1):
 - 2.1.1 Council re-affirms its responsibility to plan and coordinate the provision of family and children's services, including long day childcare, within the municipality. This responsibility includes ensuring an appropriate match between supply and demand and that appropriate location and planning criteria are met.
 - 2.1.2 Council notes that the State government is fully committed to the integration of Family and Children's services for the early years and that the Federal Government is rapidly moving in the same direction. The move by these two levels of government is consistent with the City of Port Phillip's Municipal Early Years Plan and Council's Childcare Review.

- 2.1.3 Council commits to working in partnership with the other two levels of government and the community to establish new integrated family and children's centres in St Kilda and Port Melbourne."
- 2.2 A special projects coordinator (Sheena Frost) has been appointed to coordinate the implementation of these two projects
- 2.3 The following staff have assisted in the preparation of this report:
 - 2.3.1 Jo Smale, Coordinator Family and Children's Services
 - 2.3.2 Sheena Frost, Special Projects Coordinator Community Services
 - 2.3.3 Virginia Lloyd, Operations Coordinator Children's Services
 - 2.3.4 Rina Mercieca, Systems Administrator Community Services
 - 2.3.5 Simon Gutteridge, Senior Urban Planner City Development

St Kilda Family and Children's Centre

- 2.4 With respect to St Kilda Family and Children's Centre council also determined on 26 May 2008:
 - 2.4.1 That Council supports the development of a new family and children's centre on the existing children's centre site at 171 Chapel Street, St Kilda. Council notes that this proposal has been subject to a feasibility design, costed at \$7 million, but that the final design, including the configuration of services, will be determined by Council following advice from the St Kilda Family and Children's Centre Steering Committee established below.
 - 2.4.2 That Council supports the future development of the St Kilda Parish Mission site, consistent with the objectives of the precinct plan including facilitating the co-location of community services, as defined by the Carlisle St Structure Plan.
 - 2.4.3 That Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate the purchase of land owned by the Uniting Church and currently used by the St Kilda Children's Centre.
 - 2.4.4 That, as part of negotiations with the Uniting Church, Council considers its capacity to make available a number of car parking spaces to support development of the Mission site.
 - 2.4.5 That Council notes that there is \$100,000 proposed in the 2008/2009 capital works budget to support a project to analyse the future needs of the St Kilda Library. This project also includes an assessment of how best to treat the forecourt area on Carlisle St, in order to both physically and strategically link the library with the newly redeveloped St Kilda Town Hall.

2.4.6 Council resolves to establish the St Kilda Family and Children's Centre steering committee, which would advise council on detailed design and configuration of the proposed centre. The steering committee will include representation from:

- Users of St Kilda Children's Centre and Maternal and Child Health
- St Kilda Playgroup Inc
- City of Port Phillip Family and Children's Services
- State and federal government officers, as appropriate"

2.5 The steering committee for St Kilda Family and Children's Centre has been established and formally met once. Membership consists of:

Group represented	Names
St Kilda Primary School	Diane Pekin (Principal)
Port Phillip Community Group	Sandy Joffe
St Kilda Parish Mission	Rev John Tansey
Children's centre parents	Donna Brzezinski, Yelena Beylin, Keren Vesely, Maria Stamatelatos
Maternal & child health service users	Kathrin Gullan, Maya Donevska Sally Cunningham, Zoe Pappas
St Kilda Playgroup	Trev Ward, Sam Durban, Susie O'Neill
Maternal and child health and children's centre staff	Cathie Arndt, Mel Edwards
Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD)	Louise Rodot, Selina Halton
Councillor, Junction Ward	John Middleton (formerly Cr Gross)
CoPP officers	Jo Smale, Virginia Lloyd, Brad Morgan (project manager), Sheena Frost (executive officer)

2.6 The state government has committed \$500,000 to the project and the federal government has pledged \$1.6M. Current projected cost (excluding car parking) is \$6.5M.

2.7 A competitive tender process was undertaken and Woodhead architects in collaboration with Mary Featherston design were appointed

- 2.8 The architects have been meeting with the individual stakeholders and meet with the steering group at the next meeting scheduled for late January.
- 2.9 Negotiations are proceeding with the parish mission on the land purchase. The parish has appointed an architect for their project but planning is preliminary. However, it is clear that car parking will be a requirement of their new development and the land purchase is likely to be conditional on car parking being made available for mission users.
- 2.10 Additional car parking will also be required for users of the new family and children's centre, so a separate capital works case is being prepared for council consideration during the 2009/10 budget process.

Liardet St Family and Children's Centre

- 2.11 With respect to Liardet Family and Children's Centre council determined on 26 May 2008 the following:
- That the Council notes and re-affirms the following parts of its decision of 23 October 2007 on the Albert Park College Precinct Master Plan, where council resolved
 - "... to adopt, in principle the following elements of a Albert Park College Precinct Master Plan
- 2.12 Albert Park College Childcare Centre would be relocated to 83 – 85 Liardet St Port Melbourne.
- 2.13 A re-located and enhanced Albert Park College Childcare Centre should be planned to complement the existing Lady Forster Kindergarten, which adjoins the Liardet St site. Possible enhancements would consider Maternal and Child Health and Playgroup requirements.
- 2.14 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development funding, which would otherwise be used for childcare at the APC site, would be used for the development of the new Family and Children's Centre at Liardet St."
- 2.15 That Council supports the development of a new family and children's centre at 85 Liardet St, Port Melbourne. Council commits to continuing ongoing consultation with all the relevant stakeholders in developing a proposal for the new centre."

- 2.16 A steering committee has also been established for Liardet St. Membership of the committee is as follows:

Group Represented	Name
Albert Park College Childcare Centre	Di Perazzo (director) plus a parent (yet to be identified)
Dept of Education and Early Childhood Development	Selina Halton
Assistant Regional Director DEECD	Denise Ramus
Lady Forster Kindergarten	Fiona Hehir (President), Alison Prasser (teacher)
Maternal and child health	Cathie Arndt
Port Phillip Rostered Playgroup	Bernadene Voss
Councillor, Sandridge Ward	Cr Janet Bolitho
CoPP officers	Jo Smale, Virginia Lloyd, Brad Morgan (project manager) Sheena Frost (executive officer),

- 2.17 A competitive tendering process was conducted for architectural services and Perkins Architects were appointed.
- 2.18 The steering committee has met once formally and the process of consultation by the architects with individual stakeholders has begun. The committee of Lady Foster Kindergarten indicated on 9 December 2008 that they did not wish to participate in the consultation or take further part in the steering committee. The next meeting of the steering committee is scheduled for early February 2009.
- 2.19 The state government has indicated, informally, that the funding for replacement of the Albert Park College Childcare centre would be available for this project and the federal government has reacted favourably to this project for federal government funding but no formal announcements have been made.

Childcare Waiting List

- 2.20 Family and Children's Services established a 'childcare register of demand' in 2004 in an attempt to better understand the unmet demand for childcare in the city. On an annual basis Council manually collated the council and community managed centres waiting lists (13 in total).
- 2.21 The 'register of demand' was established as an interim measure as it was onerous to administer, subject to error and had a number of significant limitations in terms of the data Council had access to at that time. For example it did not capture the number of children that were already attending a childcare centre in the municipality but were on the list for care at an alternative centre.
- 2.22 Given these limitations, Council was actively seeking alternative ways to understand the true unmet demand in the city. Through its Children's Services Best Value Review in 2005 CoPP was instrumental in engaging the State Government's involvement in this issue. CoPP, along with Darebin City Council, was subsequently a member of the State Government's Childcare Task Force 2006 and the MAV centralised childcare waitlist pilot project 2006/07.
- 2.23 These projects reiterated the need for a centralized system that identified both the supply and demand for childcare at the local level, aggregated at the state level, to understand the true unmet demand for childcare. However such a system did not eventuate out of either of these initiatives.
- 2.24 In the absence of a statewide system council has invested significant resources to develop their own system. This has been achieved in collaboration with community managed centres. It has been a complex project requiring the development of a sophisticated software program and an agreed, common approach across all services to issues such as what and how data is collected, how priority of access is managed, how offers of places are made etc.
- 2.25 A competitive process was undertaken and Open Office was the successful bidder and commenced building the system in mid 2008. The coordinator of Ada Mary A'Beckett Children's Centre has been an 'external partner' in the development of the system.
- 2.26 Council determined at its meeting of 26 May 2008 the following:
- 2.26.1 Council notes that the new childcare waiting list, currently under test, will provide valuable information to assist in the evaluation of the need for additional childcare places, in the City of Port Phillip. Council therefore requests that the Chief Executive Officer gives the highest priority to bringing forward the implementation of the new waiting list software"
- 2.27 Additional temporary staff have been employed to implement this decision and waitlists for the four council managed centres, home based childcare and six out of the eight community managed centres have now been entered into the system and new registrations are being managed by council.

- 2.28 Clarendon Children's Centre will join in the new year. Council is continuing its consultation with South Melbourne Co-operative Children's Centre (Carter St).
- 2.29 Offers of a place for 2009 have been generated from the centralized waiting list for the 11 participating services.
- 2.30 The waiting list and the utilisation details in centres and home based childcare are currently in a state of flux as families consider their offers of a place for 2009 and will continue to be so until February 2009. More accurate data about the number of children who remain on the waitlist will be possible once offers have been finalised.
- 2.31 Current childcare users will be entered into the system early next year. Waiting lists themselves are not a true indication of unmet demand. The wait list data is only meaningful if it is understood within the context of the service usage of current users. Ideally we would also have this data for the private centres in the municipality and for all services across local government boundaries.
- 2.32 We intend to conduct a 'census' type process using the new centralized waitlist system in March and September of each year in order to provide meaningful data about childcare supply and demand in the municipality.
- 2.33 Other councils are in the process of purchasing the Open Office system which could open up the possibility of sharing data and therefore understanding demand across LGA boundaries in the future.

Other Family and Children's Services Infrastructure Works

- 2.34 Major renovation works commenced on 1 December 2008 at the Elwood Children's Centre (Tennyson St). Works will include:
- replacement of roof at rear of building (\$125K)
 - plastering of storeroom
 - internal repaint
- 2.31 Permits have also been submitted for additional work including:
- demolishing and replacing the side and back fence
 - demolishing a damaged pergola
- 2.32 The committee of management has engaged a consultant to redesign the outdoor play area/landscaping works. The Committee intends to submit an application for an infrastructure levy credit for these works (estimated at \$82K).
- 2.33 When landscaping plans are finalised and the works approved, landscaping, drainage work and surface replacement will also happen during relocation, time permitting.
- 2.34 CoPP have provided an alternative facility (West St Kilda Children's Centre) for the service to operate from while works are completed.

- 2.35 Clarendon Children's Centre is currently licensed for 40 long day care places and operating at 100% utilisation.
- 2.36 This centre was considered for expansion in the 2005 childcare capital works 5 year plan but was considered a low priority as the expansion area was leased by chiropractor. A new lease is in the process of being finalised, but this has been put on hold whilst expansion is reconsidered.
- 2.37 The expansion of the children's centre into the section leased to the chiropractic service would enable the service to increase its licensed places by up to 20. Current revenue from the lease is approximately \$50K per annum.

Non Council Infrastructure Developments

- 2.38 A planning permit has been approved at 5 Ingles St Port Melbourne (Crockford St corner) for construction of a 3 storey building with associated landscaping works and car parking (28 spaces accessed off Raglan Street), and use for a 160 place child care centre.
- 2.39 Preliminary work for this development has commenced and needs to be completed before the planning permit expires on 14 December 2009.
- 2.40 Council has been advised that substantial construction is anticipated to begin in January 2009 and operational by September 2009.
- 2.41 Council officers have been advised a lease agreement with a private operator has been secured.
- 2.42 Works have commenced on a five storey building at 77 Bay St, Port Melbourne, which includes a 90 place childcare centre, ground level retail, first floor offices and a rooftop deck. Under the permit conditions it must be completed by June 2010.
- 2.43 Works at Bay St have been temporarily halted whilst Council's planning department considers an application for minor amendments to the centre plans to incorporate revisions required by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- 2.44 A permit to commence building at 101 Salmon St, Port Melbourne was issued June 2008. Works must commence by 18 January 2009 or a permit extension will be required.
- 2.45 It is Council's understanding the Salmon St premises was for an ABC Learning childcare centre as well as an ABC Learning administration office. Given the financial collapse of ABC Learning this development is considered to be at risk.
- 2.46 The permit issued was for a single storey, 120 place childcare centre with associated car parking, and a two storey office building and associated car parking.

- 2.47 A permit to construct a 75 place childcare centre at 216-222 Normanby Road was issued 27 November 2007 and is still valid.
- 2.48 A permit for a childcare centre and kindergarten was issued for 365-385 Ferrars Street, Albert Park - the eastern side of the former Albert Park railway station – on 18 August 2008. Permit conditions allow a maximum of 82 children to occupy the site.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the Council receives and notes the report regarding Family and Children's Services Special Projects.