



# Liardet Street Family and Children's Centre Frequently asked questions

## What's happening?

Council, state and federal government are building a family & children's centre in Port Melbourne at the corner of Esplanade West and Liardet Streets. It will house Albert Park College Childcare Centre (APCCC), Lady Forster Kindergarten (LFK) as well as playgroups and maternal and child health services. The centre will accommodate 50 new children's services places, for a total of 135 places.

## Why is the centre being proposed?

Births in Port Melbourne have doubled over the last five years and there is now a shortage of childcare facilities in Port Phillip. There are over 2000 children waiting for care in Port Phillip. Each of the three existing Port Melbourne children's centres have around 650 children on their waiting lists (children are often put on waiting lists for multiple centres). Additionally, when the State Government closed the Albert Park Secondary College, it provided \$1.2M to council to build permanent accommodation for Albert Park College Childcare Centre. The centre will provide more than childcare services. It will house Maternal and Child Health Nurses, provide space for playgroups and parent groups, and have a multi-purpose room for visiting health professionals and community groups. Council along with the State and Federal Governments are committed to providing access to different family services in the one location.

## Why has this site been chosen for the new development?

Lady Forster Kindergarten has been operating in Port Melbourne since 1925 and from this site (across two parcels of land) in Lagoon Reserve since 1928. It is next to the site of the former Catherine Woodruff Centre, so the three parcels of land have historically delivered care and education to families and children for over 80 years.

Space in Port Phillip is at a premium. Combining the three parcels of land creates 3600sqm of space to increase the services available to families and children. The large amount of outdoor space also means children in the centre – long day care in both LFK and APCCC and sessional kindergarten in LFK – have access to double the amount of outdoor space required under State Government regulations. Whilst this is less than the children at the kindergarten are used to, it is significantly more than the children at APCCC currently have. The building will not encroach on the adjacent parkland which remains for all members of the community to enjoy.



### Why is the current kindergarten building not being retained?

The current LFK building has been on site since 1968. A building condition report was commissioned by council to determine whether the building should be retained on site as part of the design solution for the new centre. The condition report shows the current building is in poor condition. The foundation pilings are sinking and asbestos is present. It has a limited lifespan and total renovation costs would exceed the costs of a new building.

### What does the proposed development look like?

The new development is a single storey building, set back at least four metres from Esplanade West, with its main entry on Liardet Street. It will be around 6.4m above ground level at its highest point. Currently the highest point of existing buildings on the site is 5.1m. It has been designed to be environmentally sustainable with rain water collection and reuse for toilet flushing and garden irrigation along with solar or instantaneous gas hot water. The building is north facing and will get good sunlight in the winter while being shaded during summer. Large verandas shade the building façade and provide a covered outdoor play area.

### How has the design been developed?

A Steering Committee was formed to provide advice and guidance to council about the design of the new centre. This advice has been provided at Steering Committee meetings and in direct consultations with individuals and the project architects. Services such as APCCC, LFK, maternal and child health and playgroups have participated on the Steering Committee along with community representatives, councillors and officers from council, and state and federal governments.

### How will parking be accommodated?

The new centre is expected to increase traffic flows by up to 160 car movements a day. The majority of this will be for drop offs at the children's services on site. Currently drop off zones are located in Esplanade West. The proposal will move the drop off zones to Liardet Street. On street parking for visitors and residents in Esplanade West and Dow streets will be increased by 20 places. This will be done by reconfiguring parking in both streets to angle parking.

Parking on the streets is available for all. However, residents can collectively ask council to consider the introduction of time limited parking restrictions from which residents and their visitors with valid council parking permits are exempt. A letter with signatures from three to four residents is required for council to investigate this matter.

### How will traffic be managed in the area?

The anticipated increase in traffic is not considered large in traffic engineering standards. However council, will monitor the situation if a permit is approved. The Bay Street and Liardet Street intersection is currently subject to a design review.

### What's happening with the trees on the site?

Council's is trying to retain as many trees as possible. Thirteen trees are being removed to accommodate the building. A further 15 trees are dead or in poor condition and will be removed. Four other trees will be removed as they are not suitable for a children's playground. Twenty nine trees will remain. A detailed landscaping plan will be developed in conjunction with the users of the centre and replacement of trees will feature in this plan.

### What is the landscaping and fencing plan for the site?

Strong views about screening have been received and will be taken on board. Natural landscaping and plantings will form part of the landscaping plan for the site.

### What will happen to the Kindergarten on the site?

Lady Forster Kindergarten will continue to operate from the site as a community managed kindergarten. Council is working with the kindergarten's committee to find a temporary home whilst the new building is built. Teachers and families at the kindergarten have provided the architects of the new centre with feedback as to how the new centre could be designed to maintain their current practices.

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