



A better future for Children in Port Phillip **Feedback on City of Port Phillip's Children Services Policy** **July 2018**

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre is a not for profit, community run organisation providing integrated services to the community. As an integrated service our purpose is to create better outcomes for families and children aged 0-5 years. In addition to our existing Early Years Program (formerly long day care), integrated kindergarten and sessional kindergarten programs, we are expanding opportunities to support families through our:

- extra-curricular activities
- improved health and wellbeing facilities
- popular playgroup programs
- leading MCH nursing programs
- Foyer – Bubup Pantry, Swap Shop, Parent Zone and recycling station.

Representatives from the Board and management thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the development of the new **City of Port Phillip's Children Services Policy**.

We would like the **Children Services Policy** to consider adopting a collaborative impact approach to creating a better future for children, this would include:

- An understanding of all the learning pathways for children in Port Phillip
- Port Phillip taking a leadership role and bringing together a range of stakeholders to understand the issues and implement solutions
- Shared, local decision making for a coherent social investment
- Shared aspirations for all children in Port Phillip with agreed and measurable outcomes such as:
 - lifting the kindergarten participation rate to 95%
 - all vulnerable children can access the services and programs they need
 - all children achieve developmental milestones
 - all children are proficient in English at primary school entry
- An integrated and multidisciplinary approach across Port Phillip to support families to engage and participate with early learning
- Children experiencing vulnerability and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds have priority to access kindergarten
- Supporting parents in being their child's first educator
- Building a community movement and empowering the community to be mutually supportive
- Council taking responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating the collaborative impact approach.

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre, 85 Liardet Street, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207



Some of the challenges we identified:

- Monitoring the impact of the new Federal Government *Child Care Subsidy* to ensure *families that are struggling are not negatively impacted*. BWFCC's research in April and May 2018 demonstrated that some families will be worse off, both in terms of rebate received and in terms of hours of care provided. Of particular concern are those families who don't meet the *Activity Test* (as stated on page 6 of the *Children's Services in the City of Port Phillip* document 2018). Even those families who are caught by the *Child Care Safety Net* (families earning less than \$65,000, who fail the activity test) will see a decrease in hours of care provided (from 24 hours per week to 12).
- Anticipating and preparing for any new early years policy change that may see universal access to 3-year old kindergarten, as recommended by the report [Lifting our Game, 2017](#).
- Maintaining affordability of early education services without compromising quality.
- Identifying why children from South Melbourne and St. Kilda have lower rates of development than other children in Port Phillip.
- Supporting the needs of children with special needs who are not eligible for NDIS.

Ideas:

- Continue the CoPP Affordability Subsidy for families who will benefit most from ECEC and struggle to pay fees.
- Continue the Quality Subsidy.
- All new services built in the City of Port Phillip should be integrated services.
- Developing outreach integrated education services to support vulnerable families in COPP.
- Understand why vulnerable children are missing out on access to early childhood education and care services and all the other services and supports they need for a great start in life and develop 'joined up' solutions so that no child or family falls through the cracks.
- Maintain the mix of quality council, community run and private childcare centres in Port Phillip
- Pilot supported playgroups for families and children not proficient in English. An Educator led playgroup would provide situational English modelling with lots of opportunities to practise.

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