



15.2 Lady Forster Kindergarten

I, Councillor Louise Crawford, give notice that I intend to move the Motion outlined below at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 18 September 2019:

That Council:

1. Formalises its support for the continued use of 63B Ormond Esplanade, Elwood by Lady Forster Kindergarten
2. Requests officers develop and implement an advocacy strategy for an extension of Lady Forster Kindergarten's lease beyond January 2024 on the basis that:
 - a) Demand modelling indicates that there is a need for kindergarten services in the area.
 - b) At this time, there are no viable facilities that would adequately meet demand for kindergarten services in the area (particularly with the increase of three-year-old kindergarten).
 - c) Lady Forster Kindergarten provides a high quality kindergarten service to over 100 children and has embraced its beachside location in the development of its curriculum which is dependent on its coastal location.
3. Notes that officers are reviewing all council owned and managed assets in the Elwood foreshore area to inform the development of a strategic management plan for the assets that responds to current and future service needs.

Supporting Information

- 1.1 Lady Forster Kindergarten (LFK) was established in 1924. It relocated to its current site on the Elwood foreshore from Port Melbourne in 2012, when Council developed Bubup Womindjeka.
- 1.2 LFK is situated at the former Elwood Beach Community Centre, 63B Ormond Esplanade, Elwood. It is sited on Crown land designated for public recreation.
- 1.3 The Elwood Beach and Community Centre was constructed in 1925 as the Elwood Bowling Club and then was used as a community centre for many years. It was extensively refurbished to convert it to a restaurant and kindergarten facility. The overall condition and function of the facility is rated as Good.
- 1.4 The relocation was initially intended as a temporary arrangement for a period of two years whilst Bubup Womindjeka was developed. In 2012, the kindergarten requested to stay at its current location and the Department of Sustainability and Environment consented to an extended temporary lease (8 years with a 2-year extension). Their temporary lease will expire in January 2024.
- 1.5 When the lease was negotiated, DELWP granted the option of a further two-year term on the proviso that a plan to relocate LFK was provided. All discussions with DELWP have indicated that this would be granted once the report detailing the transition plan has been provided, e.g. premises identified.



- 1.6 LFK have embraced their beach location and have developed a Coastal Curriculum that draws on the principles of 'bush kinder'. Recently they hosted delegates from South Korea who were guests of the Department of Education and Training to see their curriculum in action.
- 1.7 LFK advises that they have 115 children enrolled at the centre across the programs that they offer (three year and four year old sessional kindergarten program, extended hours four year kindergarten, Friday occasional care and holiday program - up to 7 years old). They are licenced for 49 places at any time.
- 1.8 LFK and Poets Grove Family and Children's Centre are the only centres offering sessional kindergarten programs in the southern end of the municipality. St Kilda/Balaclava Kindergarten offer extended hours within a long day care setting (similar to the recently opened Barring Djinang Kindergarten). The nearest alternative sessional kindergarten program is outside the municipality in North Brighton.
- 1.9 Demand modelling developed for *Every Child, Our Future: Policy Issues and Options Paper* indicates that demand and supply for four-year kindergarten places in Elwood is currently evenly balanced (approximately 50 places) but that demand will increase by 2030 (with an additional 19 places required). This is based on an assumption that 60% of four-year olds will attend kindergarten in a long-day care setting and 40% in a kindergarten program.
- 1.10 This modelling does not account for increased demand that is likely to arise due to the introduction of universal access to three-year-old kindergarten (anticipated to commence in 2022).
- 1.11 There are three centres owned by Council that provide early childhood/kindergarten in the Elwood area; LFK, Poets Grove and Elwood Children's Centre.
- 1.12 LFK have advised Council on a number of occasions that they are interested in extending the lease beyond ten years and exploring options to introduce a mixed use of space to meet DELWP requirements.
- 1.13 In late 2018, DELWP advised that the "the use of the existing hall ...for kindergarten and associated activities would not be detrimental to the purpose of the reserve, however, the hall must be made available to the public or particular user groups wherever possible". They also reiterated that the terms of the current lease outline that "the City of Port Phillip are to provide a report on the relocation site of Lady Forster Kindergarten Incorporated before the further term of 2 years is granted" and that they would require this report to "assess the appropriateness of Lady Forster Kindergarten Incorporated remaining at the site in the long term".
- 1.14 At this point in time, there are limited relocation options for Lady Forster Kindergarten within the Elwood area. A facility strategy is currently under development that will consider all viable options to support community-managed children's services in municipality. This will consider options for relocating Lady Forster Kindergarten.
- 1.15 Officers will also be developing a masterplan for the Elwood foreshore precinct that considers community needs and appropriate use over the next 12-18 months.
- 1.16 There are some compliance works that would need to be undertaken in the short-medium timeframe that could trigger a complete upgrade. A high-level estimate of the cost to upgrade the building is estimated at \$2.54M. It would be possible to substantially increase spaces at the site.