

6.7 ADDITIONAL PLAYGROUP FACILITATOR

Submitting Councillors: Cr Klisaris & Cr James

MOTION

That Council support the increase of 1.00 FTE for an additional Playgroup Facilitator which will allow the creation of a second Child and Family Centre to be located in Glen Waverley.

INTRODUCTION

In light of the highly successful supported playgroup program at Cabena Crescent Chadstone, the purpose of our joint motion is to seek our colleagues support for an increase of 1.00 FTE to employ a second Playgroup Facilitator, to enable the establishment of a second Child and Family Centre in Glen Waverley.

BACKGROUND

As you are aware, the Cabena Child and Family Centre located at 22 Cabena Crescent Chadstone has been open since April 2018, following funding from the Department of Education and Training for a full time playgroup facilitator for Monash. The model of the Cabena Centre is flexible and inclusive of all, but has a particular focus of support for our most vulnerable families. This support comes from the range of professionals who attend on a regular basis such as Maternal & Child Health, Immunisation program, speech pathologist, dietitian, occupational therapist, domestic violence service, drug and alcohol service, libraries, toy libraries, music groups etc. All of these services are provided on an informal basis to provide families with advice and pathways to follow as needed. Small group parent education is also offered. A further important facet of this program is the Facilitator providing some in-home support for families to model parent/child interactions and home play experiences.

Importantly, this model is able to directly impact social isolation through peer to peer support. The parents/grandparents who attend are not only role models for adult child interaction, but they also provide along often needed friendship.

An additional benefit of the Child and Family Centre is to provide an opportunity for some of our community members to volunteer. This is particularly beneficial to some of our older community members who are able to act as 'grandparent' figures to the children and families. Social connectedness is one of the preventative factors in positive aging.

The second playgroup model offered by Cabena Child and Family Centre is the more targeted *Bubs and Sibs* playgroup which is for families who have a second or subsequent baby, to come together for support and to share their experience during this major change in their family environment.

The Cabena Child and Family Centre has been operating for seven (7) months and has more than 450 families registered, with 40 to 60 families accessing the service each of the three days per week that it is operating.

DISCUSSION

The usage statistics of the Cabena Child and Family Centre are showing that an additional Child and Family Centre in our city is required. Being able to open a second centre in another part of Monash would allow families and carers to attend a centre closer to their home, rather than travelling to Cabena in Chadstone for their supported playgroup experience. It will also allow those families who are unable to reach Chadstone the option of a different venue.

We are aware that there is one kindergarten in Glen Waverley which will be running a joint three and four year old kindergarten over two days per week for the 2019 year due to significantly reduced numbers. This kindergarten is a Council owned facility. Bestchance Child and Family Care manages the kindergarten and has agreed to Council offering a Child and Family Centre three days per week from this facility.

For this to occur, we urge our colleagues to support this request for an additional 1.00 FTE for the playgroup facilitator to run this essential community program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Playgroup Facilitator position requires a Bachelor of Education qualification as a minimum. This ensures the highest quality education/play program and also the skills to effectively communicate with all parents/grandparents and volunteers. It is expected that this position will commence in January 2019 when the kindergarten building is available.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that there is a significant community demand for the model of service offered by Council through the Cabena Child and Family Centre. This demand cannot be met by a single facility. A second Playgroup Facilitator is required to allow us to provide a further Child and Family Centre for our community in Glen Waverley opening in 2019.

We seek Council support for the creation of a second Child and Family Centre in Glen Waverley and the additional 1.00 FTE to staff the new service and provide the funding of \$46,000 for the first half of 2019, and then of \$92,000 per annum after that time.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil