



FINANCE, OPERATIONS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the FINANCE, OPERATIONS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE will be held at Waverley
Council Chambers,
Cnr Paul Street and Bondi Road, Bondi Junction at:

7.00 PM, TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily Scott', is positioned above the printed name.

Emily Scott
General Manager

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Delegations of the Finance, Operations and Community Services Committee

On 10 October 2017, Waverley Council delegated to the Finance, Operations and Community Services Committee the authority to determine any matter **other than**:

1. Those activities designated under s 377(1) of the *Local Government Act* which are as follows:
 - (a) The appointment of a general manager.
 - (b) The making of a rate.
 - (c) A determination under section 549 as to the levying of a rate.
 - (d) The making of a charge.
 - (e) The fixing of a fee
 - (f) The borrowing of money.
 - (g) The voting of money for expenditure on its works, services or operations.
 - (h) The compulsory acquisition, purchase, sale, exchange or surrender of any land or other property (but not including the sale of items of plant or equipment).
 - (i) The acceptance of tenders to provide services currently provided by members of staff of the council.
 - (j) The adoption of an operational plan under section 405.
 - (k) The adoption of a financial statement included in an annual financial report.
 - (l) A decision to classify or reclassify public land under Division 1 of Part 2 of Chapter 6.
 - (m) The fixing of an amount or rate for the carrying out by the council of work on private land.
 - (n) The decision to carry out work on private land for an amount that is less than the amount or rate fixed by the council for the carrying out of any such work.
 - (o) The review of a determination made by the council, and not by a delegate of the council, of an application for approval or an application that may be reviewed under section 82A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.
 - (p) The power of the council to authorise the use of reasonable force for the purpose of gaining entry to premises under section 194.
 - (q) A decision under section 356 to contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons,
 - (r) A decision under section 234 to grant leave of absence to the holder of a civic office.
 - (s) The making of an application, or the giving of a notice, to the Governor or Minister.
 - (t) This power of delegation.
 - (u) Any function under this or any other Act that is expressly required to be exercised by resolution of the council.
2. The adoption of a Community Strategic Plan, Resourcing Strategy and Delivery Program as defined under sections 402, 403, and 404 of the *Local Government Act*.

Statement of Ethical Obligations

Councillors are reminded of their oath or affirmation of office made under section 233A of the Act and their obligations under Council's code of conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

Live Streaming of Meeting

This meeting is streamed live via the internet and an audio-visual recording of the meeting will be publicly available on Council's website.

By attending this meeting, you consent to your image and/or voice being live streamed and publicly available.

AGENDA

PRAYER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

The General Manager will read the Opening Prayer:

God, we pray for wisdom to govern with justice and equity. That we may see clearly and speak the truth and that we work together in harmony and mutual respect. May our actions demonstrate courage and leadership so that in all our works thy will be done. Amen.

The Chair will read the following Acknowledgement of Indigenous Heritage:

Waverley Council respectfully acknowledges our Indigenous heritage and recognises the ongoing Aboriginal traditional custodianship of the land which forms our Local Government Area. 1.Apologies/Leaves of Absence

2. Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

3. Addresses by Members of the Public

4. Confirmation of Minutes

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5. Reports

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6. Urgent Business

7. Meeting Closure

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FC/4.1/23.06



Subject: Confirmation of Minutes - Finance, Operations and
Community Services Committee Meeting - 2 May 2023

TRIM No: SF23/17

Manager: Richard Coelho, Executive Manager, Governance

RECOMMENDATION:

That the minutes of the Finance, Operations and Community Services Committee meeting held on 2 May 2023 be received and noted, and that such minutes be confirmed as a true record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Introduction/Background

The minutes of committee meetings must be confirmed at a subsequent meeting of the committee, in accordance with clause 20.23 of the Code of Meeting Practice.

Attachments

1. Finance, Operations and Community Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 2 May 2023 .



**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, OPERATIONS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT WAVERLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CNR PAUL STREET AND BONDI ROAD, BONDI JUNCTION ON
TUESDAY, 2 MAY 2023**

Present:

Councillor Dominic Wy Kanak (Chair)	Bondi Ward
Councillor Paula Masselos (Mayor)	Lawson Ward
Councillor Elaine Keenan (Deputy Mayor)	Lawson Ward
Councillor Sally Betts	Hunter Ward
Councillor Ludovico Fabiano	Waverley Ward
Councillor Leon Goltsman	Bondi Ward
Councillor Michelle Gray	Bondi Ward
Councillor Tony Kay	Waverley Ward
Councillor Steven Lewis	Hunter Ward
Councillor Tim Murray	Waverley Ward
Councillor Will Nemesh	Hunter Ward

Staff in attendance:

Emily Scott	General Manager
Sharon Cassidy	Director, Assets and Operations
Tara Czinner	Director, Corporate Services
Fletcher Rayner	Director, Planning, Sustainability and Compliance
Ben Thompson	Director, Community, Culture and Customer Experience

At the commencement of proceedings at 7.00 pm, those present were as listed above, with the exception of Cr Keenan who arrived at 7.03 pm during apologies.

Crs Betts, Kay and Keenan attended the meeting by audio-visual link.

PRAYER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

The General Manager read the following Opening Prayer:

God, we pray for wisdom to govern with justice and equity. That we may see clearly and speak the truth and that we work together in harmony and mutual respect. May our actions demonstrate courage and leadership so that in all our works thy will be done. Amen.

The Chair read the following Acknowledgement of Indigenous Heritage:

Waverley Council respectfully acknowledges our Indigenous heritage and recognises the ongoing Aboriginal traditional custodianship of the land which forms our local government area.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cr Angela Burrill.

2. Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

The Chair called for declarations of interest and none were received.

3. Addresses by Members of the Public

- 3.1 Y Kendall (chief petitioner) – FC/5.1/23.05 – Petition – St Catherine's School, Waverley – Kiss and Ride Parking Reduction.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

FC/4.1/23.05 Confirmation of Minutes - Finance, Operations and Community Services Committee Meeting - 4 April 2023 (SF23/17)

MOTION / UNANIMOUS DECISION

Mover: Cr Wy Kanak

Seconder: Cr Murray

That the minutes of the Finance, Operations and Community Services Committee meeting held on 4 April 2023 be received and noted, and that such minutes be confirmed as a true record of the proceedings of that meeting.

5. Reports**FC/5.1/23.05 Petition - St Catherine's School, Waverley - Kiss and Ride Parking Reduction (A05/0908)****MOTION / UNANIMOUS DECISION**

Mover: Cr Masselos

Seconder: Cr Keenan

That Council:

1. Refers the petition requesting a reduction in 'kiss and ride' parking in Macpherson Street, Waverley, to the St Catherine's Development Community Consultative Committee (CCC) for consideration at the next CCC meeting.
2. Notes that:
 - (a) The CCC is a requirement of the State Significant Development of St Catherine's School, which is required to run the Committee for two years from the date of the occupation certificate (30 March 2022).
 - (b) Council will resume responsibility for the 'kiss and ride' parking zone from April 2024, at which time a report with options for improvements to the operation of the zone will be prepared for the Waverley Traffic Committee if required.

*Y Kendall (chief petitioner) addressed the meeting.***FC/5.2/23.05 Arts and Culture Advisory Committee Meeting - Minutes - 24 November 2022 (A23/0237)****MOTION / UNANIMOUS DECISION**

Mover: Cr Masselos

Seconder: Cr Keenan

That Council notes the minutes of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee meeting held on 24 November 2022 attached to the report.

FC/5.3/23.05 Public Art Committee Meeting - Minutes - 6 March 2023 (A20/0160)**MOTION / UNANIMOUS DECISION**

Mover: Cr Keenan

Seconder: Cr Masselos

That Council notes the minutes of the Public Art Committee meeting held on 6 March 2023 attached to the report.

FC/5.4/23.05 Bondi Beach Mobile Vendor Licences - Exhibition (SF22/4119)**MOTION / UNANIMOUS DECISION**

Mover: Cr Goltsman

Seconder: Cr Gray

That Council:

1. In accordance with section 47A of the *Local Government Act 1993*, publicly notifies and exhibits for 28 days the proposal to grant four licences of up to five years to mobile vendors at Bondi Beach for the provision of beach-related services.
2. Officers prepare a report to Council following the exhibition period should any submissions be received.
3. Subject to no submissions being received, approves in principle the granting of the licences.
4. Notes that a tender process will be undertaken to seek licensees, with a report to be prepared to Council to grant the licences to the preferred tenderers.

6. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

7. Meeting Closure**THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.23 PM.**

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SIGNED AND CONFIRMED
CHAIR
6 JUNE 2023

REPORT

FC/5.1/23.06



Subject: Bondi Junction Cycleway and Streetscape Upgrade - Operational and Safety Update

TRIM No: A14/0193

Manager: Nikolaos Zervos, Executive Manager, Infrastructure Services

Director: Sharon Cassidy, Director, Assets and Operations

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes the operational and safety update on the Bondi Junction Cycleway and Streetscape Upgrade, as set out in the report.

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the ongoing operational management of the recently completed Bondi Junction Cycleway and Streetscape Upgrade.

2. Introduction/Background

The Bondi Junction Cycleway and Streetscape Upgrade is Council's largest active transport project to date. The first sections of the cycleway were opened in June 2021, with the final section on Oxford Street fronting the Waverley Bus Depot and Centennial Park opening in December 2022. The entire 1.3 km separated cycleway is operational.

Two bike counters have been in place on Spring Street and Oxford Street west since 2021, with usage numbers growing year on year. Peak weekly combined trips on Oxford Street have grown from 5,000 in 2021, to 6,000 in 2022 and 8,000 in 2023. Numbers on Spring Street have similarly grown from 2,500 peak weekly trips in 2021, to 5,000 in 2022, and 6,000 in 2023.

3. Relevant Council Resolutions

Meeting and date	Item No.	Resolution
Council 15 March 2022	CM/8.3/22.03	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Notes that the Bondi Junction Cycleway is nearing completion, with only the section in front of the bus depot on West Oxford Street yet to commence. The cycleway from St James Road to Waverley Mall is expected to be operational from late March/April 2022. Notes that 'Safety by Design' initiatives will be introduced into the Oxford Street Mall in the second half of 2022. Investigates ways to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in Bondi Junction resulting from the

		<p>introduction of the new cycleway, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Clearly distinguishing between the footpath and the cycleway on Spring Street by, for example, tactile paving, blisters and/or spaced planter boxes. (b) Installing temporary educational cyclist 'Give Way and Stop' signs on the cycleway at conflict points. (c) Installing 'No Cycling' and 'Cyclist Detour' signage at each end of the Oxford Street Mall at an appropriate time to allow transition for using the new cycleway. (d) Reducing the regulatory speed limit in the Oxford Street bus transit lane between Bronte Road and Adelaide Street from 50 km/h to 30 km/h. (e) Commencing an education campaign to encourage cyclists to ride through Spring Street rather than through Oxford Street Mall. (f) Improving compliance with bin placement on Spring Street. (g) Improving 'No Entry, Buses, Taxis Excepted' compliance into Grosvenor Street by additional signage in Bronte Road, both on poles and on the road. <p>4. Immediately commences the process to update the Bondi Junction cycle route in the Waverley Bike Plan 2013 to reflect the new cycleway route via Spring Street.</p> <p>5. Takes appropriate steps to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Move commercial rubbish bins placed on the Spring Street cycleway. (b) Educate owners and occupiers in Spring Street of the correct location to place commercial bins. (c) Issue fines for repeated offenders if appropriate. <p>6. Officers prepare a report on the above matters for Council, and where relevant Traffic Committee, consideration.</p>
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4. Discussion

The following discussion is in response to Council resolution CM/8.3/22.03.

Clause 2 – Notes that ‘Safety by Design’ initiatives will be introduced into the Oxford Street Mall in the second half of 2022.

The ‘Safety by Design’ works at the two ends of Oxford Street Mall have resulted in the installation of raised planters with seating, and both fixed and hydraulic bollards. These treatments have provided considerable additional narrowing of openings and have made access to the Mall less attractive for bike riders. Further works in this area including the activation of the hydraulic bollards in the central (driveable area) for both ends will create additional narrowing.

Officers are currently investigating options to declassify Oxford Street Mall from its current ‘road’ status to allow for easier prohibition of bike riding through, and within, the Mall. A separate report will be presented on this matter to Council in the near future. The report will include signage options, land classification, education and compliance options. It already appears that the majority of bike riders are using Spring Street for through trips.

Separately, officers will prepare a report to Waverley Traffic Committee proposing to install cyclist dismount signage at each end of Oxford Street Mall. This would act as a precursor to the above investigation into declassification of the Mall.

Existing bike parking/racks will remain within Oxford Street Mall, given the Mall itself is a destination. Relocation of these facilities towards the end of the Mall was assessed as part of the Safety by Design project and not deemed feasible due to spatial constraints. Officers are working with Transport for NSW on a bike parking shed underneath Syd Einfeld Drive parking on Grafton Street. This is unlikely to be complete before the end of the year and its purpose is to service northern access to the interchange and its unlikely to decrease demand for bike parking in Oxford Street Mall.

Clause 3(a) – Clearly distinguishing between the footpath and the cycleway on Spring Street by, for example, tactile paving, blisters and/or spaced planter boxes.

The cycleway is currently visually distinguished as from the adjoining footpath areas with the following treatments:

- Darker asphalt surface.
- Edge delineation via line marking or concrete hob.
- Internal line marking and directional bike logos with arrows.
- Green paint on approach to Newland Street, Bronte Road, and the mid-block crossing at Eastgate.

The cycleway infrastructure within Spring Street was largely completed in 2020. However, the cycleway was not opened until June 2021 in order to allow the connection via Oxford Street west to be completed. During this time, it was observed footpath users became used to walking on the unopened cycleway. Since the cycleway has opened and usage numbers have steadily grown, the observed wandering behaviour of pedestrians into the cycleway has reduced.

Interventions to further distinguish the cycleway from the adjoining footpath have been considered and Officers propose ‘Phase 1’ intervention to install a ‘rumble strip’ along the cycleway’s footpath edge. This is a relatively low cost initiative that provides an additional visual and tactile delineator, assisting with clear delineation of the footpath area and the cycleway for visually impaired persons.

This would be monitored after installation and if unsuccessful other interventions could be considered, such as:

- Installation of planter boxes. Planter boxes would act as a physical barrier but could not be continuous due to the business loading requirements on Spring Street. Further, they would take up footpath space and do not solve an issue with greenery on Spring Street given the new trees and landscaping already installed. For this reason, they are not proposed as an initial intervention.
- Paint the entire flush cycleway green. The green paint currently installed in the cycleway is based on its use as a method to highlight key conflict points or changes of operation of the cycleway. The green paint has been used on approach to intersections, pedestrian crossings and in the location of driveway crossovers. Applying green paint throughout the flush Spring Street cycleway would diminish its current use of highlighting key conflict locations. For this reason, it is not proposed as an initial intervention.
- Tactile paving such as studs in the footpath pavers or bespoke tactile pavers are likely to prove difficult to maintain due to loading demands on Spring Street, and may also impede loading operations. For this reason, they are not proposed as an initial intervention.
- Bin presentation areas will be marked so that bins do not spill onto the cycleway and don't create additional impediment on the footpath areas.

Clause 3(b) – Installing temporary educational cyclist ‘Give Way and Stop’ signs on the cycleway at conflict points

Footpath decals were chosen as the preferred treatment in this scenario to avoid cluttering the streetscape with more signs and line marking. Eight decals per design in Figure 1 were installed throughout the cycleway route at the identified conflict points (refer Figure 2) in June 2022.



Figure 1. Footpath decal (300 x 300 mm).

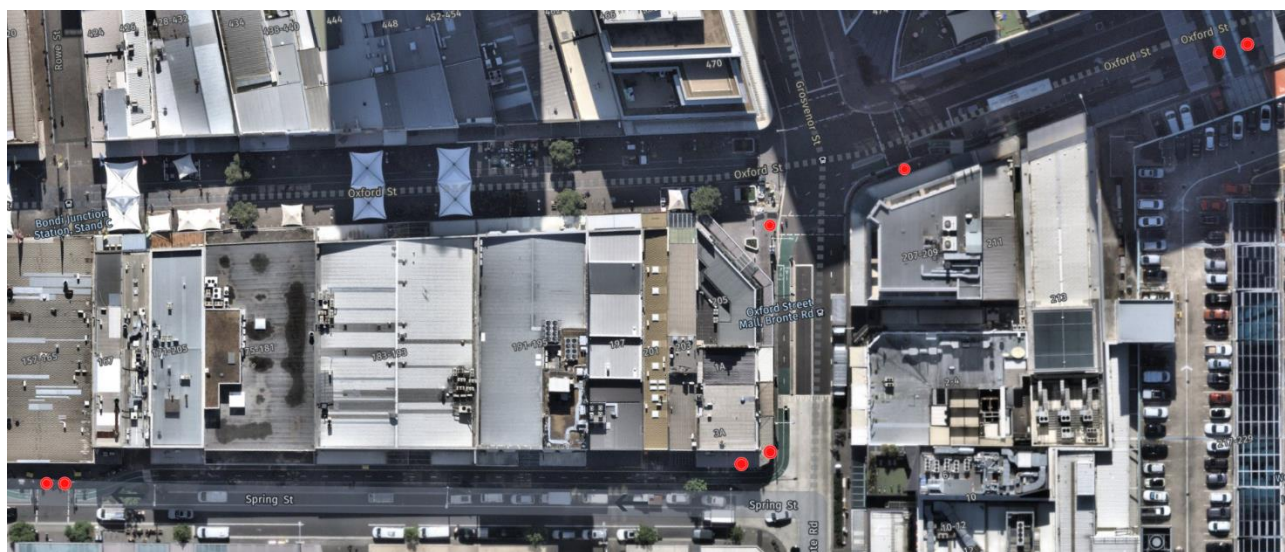


Figure 2. Decal locations along Spring Street, Bronte Road, and Oxford Street.

Since installation, some decals have deteriorated, and some have come off the pavement surface entirely. Officers are developing new and larger decals which will be placed at the same locations as above. These are expected to be installed by the end of June 2023.

Additional initiatives planned to be rolled out include:

- Installing an information board at the Oxford Street and Mill Hill Road and Oxford Street and Ruthven Street intersections. This information board will include key messaging as to the use of the intersections and display a QR code which when scanned will direct to a webpage with further explanation. This webpage also includes informational videos on the operation of the intersections.
- Develop additional FAQs and messaging on letter drops throughout the local government area (LGA), which will refer to the webpage referenced above.

That said, with the greater exposure of road users to these intersections and infrastructure since the cycleway opened, and the greater roll out of such treatments throughout Greater Sydney, road users are becoming more aware of how to use these facilities.

Clause 3(c) – Installing ‘No Cycling’ and ‘Cyclist Detour’ signage at each end of the Oxford Street Mall at an appropriate time to allow transition for using the new cycleway.

As noted in response to clause 2, officers will prepare a report to Waverley Traffic Committee proposing to install cyclist dismount signage at each end of the Oxford Street Mall. The report to the Traffic Committee will be presented in the first quarter of the 2023-24 Financial Year.

As mentioned previously, the usage numbers on Spring Street continue to grow and lack of community awareness of the cycleway on Spring Street is no longer considered to be an issue. For that reason, it is not proposed to install ‘detour’ signage at each end of Oxford Street Mall.

Clause 3(d) – Reducing the regulatory speed limit in the Oxford Street bus transit lane between Bronte Road and Adelaide Street from 50 km/h to 30 km/h

Bondi Junction, as a high pedestrian activity area, will be switching to 40 km/h as part of the greater 40 km/h Speed Limit Changes project south of Bondi Road. Officers are awaiting direction from Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to begin signage roll-out. This is anticipated in the next few months.

Once the 40km/h speed limits are installed, officers will review the speed limit roll-out and install speed counts to monitor speed/compliance throughout the LGA including within the Oxford Street transit mall between Bronte Road and Adelaide Street.

TfNSW does not currently support 30 km/h zones.

Clause 3(e) – Commencing an education campaign to encourage cyclists to ride through Spring Street rather than through Oxford Street Mall

As noted in the introduction, combined weekly trip numbers on the Spring Street section of the cycleway have grown to a peak of 6,000 in 2023. This can likely be attributed to greater comfort and awareness of the facility, but additionally the finalisation of key links at the eastern and western extremity of the overall route which were not operational when the Spring Street section first opened.

The Strategic Transport and Communications and Engagement teams will soon be organising brochures to be made available to the public, handed out to schools, businesses and public buildings such as the Library and Customer Service centre. These brochures will include FAQs regarding the cycleway and promotion of Spring Street and the route in general. It is anticipated that this education campaign be timed along with the introduction of formal cyclist dismount signage.

Clause 3(f) – Improving compliance with bin placement on Spring Street

Officers identified key bin placement areas on Spring Street and all Spring Street businesses were issued letters by hand to notify of these locations. Since the letters were issued, there was improvement in compliance with bin placement, however over time this compliance has decreased. This could partially be due to the changing of businesses and owners.

In that regard, Council officers will:

- Visually delineate the bin placement areas on site via discrete markings that complement the streetscape such as those installed to delineate outdoor dining areas. This work will be undertaken in July 2023.
- Reissue a letter to all Spring Street businesses to re-enforce the bin placement locations and advise of the new markings to help distinguish these locations.

The new multi-function poles and Council-owned electrical and communications network installed as part of the streetscape upgrade readily facilitates installation of CCTV cameras. CCTV cameras and supervision would assist in improving compliance and observation of bin placements. Officers are reviewing CCTV options within this area and will consider suitable placement of cameras to assist with bin placement.

Clause 3(g) – Improving ‘No Entry, Buses, Taxis Excepted’ compliance into Grosvenor Street by additional signage in Bronte Road, both on poles and on the road.

Since the Council resolution, two measures have been implemented:

- Line marking applied to the Spring Street and Bronte Road intersection to promote the left turn movement from Bronte Road into Spring Street.
- Replacing the existing ‘No Entry’ signs on Bronte Road with larger signs, and installing a new and additional ‘Left Turn Only’ sign on the eastern side of Bronte Road on approach to the intersection

From site observations and feedback from Police, these measures appear to have been effective in improving compliance.

Clause 4 – Immediately commences the process to update the Bondi Junction cycle route in the Waverley Bike Plan 2013 to reflect the new cycleway route via Spring Street.

An update to the Waverley Network Map to reflect implemented bike paths, including the Bondi Junction bike path has been drafted. Once approved, this will be incorporated into the latest version of the Bike Plan 2013 and replace the existing version on Council’s website.

Clause 5(a) – Move commercial rubbish bins placed on the Spring Street cycleway and clause 5(b) Educate owners and occupiers in Spring Street of the correct location to place commercial bins

Refer to commentary above regarding clause 3(g).

Clause 5(c) – Issue fines for repeated offenders if possible

Technically, offenders could be infringed. However, to do so officers would need to have concrete evidence as, without this, offenders could easily claim the bins were placed correctly but had been moved by person(s) unknown.

Refer to commentary above regarding clause 3(f). The introduction of CCTV cameras and relevant resource allocation would allow fines to be issued.

5. Financial impact statement/Time frame/Consultation

With the project complete and operational, costs to install or action the above items will be funded by operational budgets within each relevant Department. These additional costs can be absorbed by operational budgets.

Refer to section 4 for expected time frames of the various elements proposed.

6. Conclusion

The Bondi Junction Cycleway and Streetscape Upgrade project has rejuvenated the Bondi Junction CBD. The streetscape now fosters a more welcoming and sustainable environment for all road users and community members, featuring new greenery, trees, greater accessibility and improved safety in the public domain.

Council officers will be implementing the above-mentioned measures to help improve operation of the cycleway and adjoining road users. The cycleway's operation will continue to be monitored and improvements implemented where possible, in line with ongoing best practice and general operational management.

7. Attachments

Nil.

REPORT
FC/5.2/23.06

Subject: Tuckeroo Trees in Myuna Road, Dover Heights

TRIM No: SF19/2986

Manager: Ben Kusto, Executive Manager, Open Space and Recreation Operations

Director: Sharon Cassidy, Director, Assets and Operations

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council prunes all 16 Tuckeroo trees in Myuna Road, Dover Heights, in accordance with the Tree Management Policy and Tree Management Guidelines.

1. Executive Summary

Council Officers completed a visual tree assessment (VTA) or inspection of all 16 Tuckeroo trees on the southern side of Myuna Road in April 2023. These trees were also assessed independently in 2022 as part of the Public Domain Tree Inventory audit (PDTI) conducted by Mosaic Insights.

Officers identified general maintenance and selective crown reduction pruning to subject trees that could potentially assist reinstating pre-existing views.

2. Introduction/Background

The Tuckeroo Trees on the southern side of Myuna Road range in height between 3 m to 6 m, are semi-mature to mature and are assessed in good condition. These trees were planted in or around 2007 and pre-date Council's first Tree Management Policy (TMP) 2012.

On 18 April 2023, Council requested a report be prepared that identifies which of the Tuckeroo trees in Myuna Road, Dover Heights, required maintenance pruning and selective crown reduction pruning that will assist in the reinstatement of pre-existing views.

In 2014, Council Officers responded to two requests asking for pruning to be undertaken to reinstate views of Sydney Harbour.

In 2019, Council Officers responded to one request asking for pruning to be undertaken to reinstate views of Sydney Harbour.

In 2022, Council Officers responded to one request from a non-resident of Myuna Road asking for pruning to be undertaken to reinstate views of Sydney Harbour.

Each request was actioned in accordance with Council's Tree Management Policy and Guidelines for trees and views, and finalised.

3. Relevant Council Resolutions

Meeting and date	Item No.	Resolution
Council 18 April 2023	CM/8.2/23.04	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Notes that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Tuckeroo tree (<i>Cupaniopsis anacardioides</i>) is listed in Council's Street Tree Master Plan. The Tuckeroo tree is a commonly used tree species for street planting throughout Dover Heights due to its survival rate and adaptability to soil and weather conditions. Tuckeroos trees were planted along the odd numbered (south) side of Myuna Road, Dover Heights, in or about 2007. A Merit request review of all properties in Myuna Road has identified only two residents in the street and one resident living nearby who have requested pruning in respect of views dating from 2014, 2015 and 2019. Undertakes an inspection of the Tuckeroo trees on the south side of Myuna Road. Officers prepare a report to Council identifying which of the Tuckeroo trees in Myuna Road require maintenance pruning and selective crown reduction that will assist the reinstatement of pre-existing views.

4. Discussion

Since the introduction of a Tree Management Policy, each policy has stated that 'View pruning will only be considered where it is requested to retain a previously established view and there is a history of the identified tree(s) being pruned to restore the pre-existing view.'

After extensive community and Council consultation during last year's review of the Tree Management Policy 2012, Council also inserted the following provision: 'New plantings in the public domain will always consider the impact on views and an appropriate size species will be selected and placed as not to impede on pre-existing views' (Tree Management Policy, section 5.4.5, Tree Planting and Selection).

However, the guidelines for view pruning remain the same (Tree Management Guidelines, section 3.5, Trees and Views).

When the Tree Management team receive a request to prune to reinstate views, the resident or requestor is required to provide history or evidence the identified tree(s) being pruned are to restore the pre-existing view.

Council Officers are trained to use specific pruning techniques to reduce a canopy while also maintaining that the tree remains in a healthy, safe, stable, and aesthetic condition.

These techniques are:

- Raising – The removal of lower branches to allow for clear sightlines.
- Thinning - Selective branch removal to increase light penetration and air movement through the crown. General tree tolerances are no greater than 10% or branch diameter no greater than 90mm concentrated on outer canopy spread to promote a more upright vase effect.
- Reduction – The pruning back of branch leaders and branch terminals to secondary branches that are large enough to assume the terminal roles, whilst maintaining the form and structural integrity of the tree.

All pruning techniques are to Australian Standard AS 4373-2007 – Pruning of Amenity Trees to maintain tree structure, health, and condition. Percentage of overall canopy thinning can vary slightly subject to each individual tree and may require pruning for desired effect over more than one growing season to minimise health impacts.

Based on using the three pruning techniques discussed and adhering to the Tree Management Policy and Tree Management Guidelines, Tree Officers identified all 16 Tuckeroo trees on the southern side in Myuna Road would benefit from individual maintenance pruning works.

Each tree would have specific pruning techniques conducted that would consider the health and condition of each tree in accordance with the Australian Standards, address pedestrian access and potentially assist in the reinstatement of pre-existing views of Sydney Harbour. It is noted that this pruning could be used as future evidence that pruning occurred to reinstate a view.

5. Financial impact statement/Time frame/Consultation

The pruning works would be undertaken by Council's Tree Officers within existing budget. The works would be undertaken in mid-June and take 1-2 days dependent on weather conditions.

6. Conclusion

Tree Officers identified that all 16 Tuckeroo Trees on the southern side in Myuna Road would benefit from maintenance pruning works. Each tree would have specific pruning techniques conducted that will consider the health and condition of each tree in accordance with the Australian Standards, address pedestrian access and potentially assist in reinstating pre-existing views of Sydney Harbour.

7. Attachments

Nil.

REPORT
FC/5.3/23.06

Subject: Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee - Community Membership

TRIM No: A14/0173

Manager: Annette Trubenbach, Executive Manager, Community Services

Director: Ben Thompson, Director, Community, Culture and Customer Experience

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Appoints the following individuals to the Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee for a term of two years from June 2023 to June 2025:
 - (a) Kirsty Beller.
 - (b) Brad Franks.
 - (c) Earl Weir.
 - (d) Walangari Karntawarra.
 - (e) Michael Mahoney.
2. Increases the community membership of the Committee from eight to 10 members for this term of the Committee.
3. Extends the term of the Committee members who were appointed in 2022 to June 2025 to align with the new term of the Committee.
4. Acknowledges the contribution of Aunty Barb Simms, who is not seeking a new term.

1. Executive Summary

Expressions of interest (EOI) were invited for membership of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee for a term of two years. The EOI was open from 12 April–10 May 2023.

Five applications for four vacant positions were received and reviewed by the assessment panel. The panel included Community Programs Officers with oversight by the Director, Community, Culture and Customer Experience. All five applications were assessed as eligible for membership, displaying a strong interest and commitment to reconciliation. As there were more applicants than vacant Committee positions (one additional), this report seeks Council approval of all applications for membership on the Committee and to increase the number of Committee members to ten for this term of the Committee. Currently, the terms of reference provide for up to eight members for a term of two years, which this report seeks to extend, so that the term of all members, existing and newly appointed, will conclude in June 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

In 2021, Council received and approved six applications for membership of the RAP Advisory Committee. For various reasons, two of these members resigned from the Committee and one member unfortunately passed away in 2022. This meant that in April 2023 three original members remained who had completed their two year term.

The terms of reference allow for up to eight community members, who may be an individual or a representative of a community organisation. The existing members of the Committee were Walangari Karntawarra, Auntie Barbara Simms and Michael Mahoney. Council appointed three more members at the Finance, Operations and Community Services Committee meeting in September 2022, being Gene Ross, Liz Tierney and Dr Sarah Jane Moore for a two-year term. Damian Barnes became a member following the Council meeting in October 2022.

The current EOI for new membership of the Committee was open from 12 April to 10 May 2023 and widely promoted via:

- An update on Council's website.
- Social media channels.
- Have Your Say subscribers.
- *Wentworth Courier*.
- Council's newsletters and networks.
- Emails to previous enquirers.

3. Relevant Council Resolutions

Meeting and date	Item No.	Resolution
Council 18 October 2022	CM/7.7/22.10	That Council appoints Damien Barnes to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee for a two-year term from October 2022 to October 2024.
Finance, Operations and Community Services Committee 6 September 2022	FC/5.3/22.09	That Council appoints the following community members to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee for a two-year term from August 2022 to August 2024: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elizabeth Tierney 2. Sarah Jane Moore 3. Gene Ross
Council 25 May 2021	CM/7.10/21.05	That Council appoints the following individuals to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee for a two-year term from June 2021 to June 2023: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chris Bonney. 2. Peter Cooley. 3. Walangari Karntawarra. 4. Michael Mahoney.

		5. Barbara Simms.
		6. Sally Walker.

4. Discussion

Five applications were received for membership of the Committee:

- Kirsty Beller.
- Brad Franks.
- Earl Weir.
- Walangari Karntawarra.
- Michael Mahoney.

Of these, two were current members and three were new applications. According to the terms of reference, the maximum number of Committee members is eight who meet the following criteria:

- Traditional Custodians and Elders of the Waverley area
- Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who live, work or have a connection to the Waverley and surrounding areas.
- Representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups and organisations that operate and/or are located within the jurisdiction of the La Pouse Local Aboriginal Land Council.

The applicants all meet at least one of the required criteria, and one meets all three. They also demonstrate a range of skills, experience and personal and professional backgrounds of benefit to the Committee.

All applicants have displayed a strong interest in and commitment to reconciliation, to support and advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in and around the Waverley local government area, and to promote, share and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Additional information about the applicants has been distributed to Councillors separately from the agenda.

At the most recent RAP Advisory Committee meeting in March 2023, the members indicated that they would like to increase the maximum number of members to accommodate more people and to provide consistent support to the Committee. For this reason, and because the number of applications exceed the number of vacant positions, it is recommended that all five applicants are endorsed as members for the new term.

As four new Committee members were endorsed in 2022 due to vacancies, it is recommended that the term of all Committee members will end in June 2025. This will provide consistency and avoid recruitment of new members part way through this new term.

5. Financial impact statement/Time frame/Consultation

Council has approved a payment for each member of \$200 per meeting, which has been included in the operational budget for 2023–24. The next Committee meeting is due to take place on Thursday, 22 June 2023.

6. Conclusion

Following an EOI process, this report recommends the appointment of five applicants to the RAP Advisory Committee for a period of two years from June 2023 to June 2025 by increasing Committee membership to ten members and to align the current term for all members, existing and newly appointed, to end in June 2025.

Aunty Barb Simms is not seeking a second term on the Committee and her contribution should be recognised and gratefully acknowledged.

7. Attachments

Nil.

REPORT
FC/5.4/23.06

Subject: Early Childhood Education and Care Inquiries - Submissions

TRIM No: A23/0291

Manager: Annette Trubenbach, Executive Manager, Community Services

Director: Ben Thompson, Director, Community, Culture and Customer Experience

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approves:

1. The submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal on the Review of Early Childhood Education and Care attached to the report (Attachment 1).
2. The submission to the Productivity Commission on the Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care attached to the report (Attachment 2).

1. Executive Summary

This report updates Council on two major inquiries into the early education and care sector and seeks endorsement of two submissions under the IPART and the Productivity Commission's public inquiries into the early education and care sector. The submissions have already been provided to IPART and the Productivity Commission, pending approval by Council.

2. Introduction/Background

There is widespread agreement that the early education and care sector is in crisis. The lingering impacts of the Pandemic and other challenges facing providers include increased costs, staff shortages, inequitable funding and, more recently, due to hybrid working environments, changing usage patterns Australia wide. Two extensive public inquiries undertaken by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART - NSW State Government) and the Productivity Commission (Australian Government) are seeking to understand how service provision is impacted by cost and other barriers to formulate recommendations for significant improvements to the sector.

3. Relevant Council Resolutions

Nil.

4. Discussion

Council provides early education and care services in four early education centres and a family day care service and is recognised as industry leader and provider of choice by many families in the community.

Lack of a universal model and unified system, with different national and state regulations and funding streams operating side by side, as well as legacy issues, inequities and structural imbalances prevent the early childhood sector from performing well. It is widely acknowledged that the system is broken and

requires significant reforms. It is one of the most expensive childcare systems in the developed world with costs spiralling out of control. However, families say their needs are not being met and despite federally funded fee subsidies, childcare is for many too expensive to access. Providers, particularly not for profit services, have complained that viability and long-term sustainability has become a significant concern for many.

Council is not immune to these trends and impacts. The high cost of quality care is an issue for many – families, providers and decision makers. The scope of these two inquiries is extensive and provides a good opportunity for Council to document and report on recent challenges and specific issues impacting on local government providers. Participation in these reviews enables Waverley Council to have a voice and to connect with other providers around common themes to inform advocacy and reform. Feedback by Council officers has also informed the submission prepared by the Local Government Children's Services Managers Group, and the Local Government NSW Senior Policy Officer, Social and Community Advocacy.

The importance of universal access to childcare has been well documented. It contributes to healthy child development, social cohesion, labour market productivity, gender equality and community wellbeing outcomes. While specifics differ depending on service type, the sector is united in calling for an overhaul of the early education and care sector. The impact of the COVID pandemic has only exacerbated what had already been experienced by many providers as widening cracks in the system. The sector has expressed concerns about lack of planning, inadequate funding, particularly for family day care, and the provision of the (more expensive) care for babies; overly complex, bureaucratic and labour-intensive administration and payment systems; federal and state inconsistencies around policy and resourcing; discrepancies with the assessment and rating process administered by the national body, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

The terms of reference of the two inquiries are similar, covering the same themes and issues, based on federal and state perspective respectively. It is hoped that Council's submissions contribute to better outcomes for early education and care services.

5. Financial impact statement/Time frame/Consultation

A draft submission was circulated to Councillors prior to the deadline to seek feedback on the draft.

6. Conclusion

Across the nation, the early childhood education and care sector has been challenged over the recent past. Local government is an important player due to its planning, coordination, service delivery and advocacy functions. When the market fails, Council's role is critical as a gap provider particularly relating to infant care (six weeks to two years), quality education and care at a price families can afford; and provision of services catering for children with additional needs. The submissions contribute to a better understanding of issues and potential solutions that can support a stronger and more equitable sector for all.

7. Attachments

1. Submission to IPART [📄](#)
2. Submission to Productivity Commission [📄](#) .

**Waverley Council**

PO Box 9, Bondi Junction NSW 1355
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IPART Submission

Early childhood education and care affordability, accessibility, and consumer choice

Issues paper - Review of early childhood education and care - April 2023

Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to provide input into this inquiry.

Nearly 50 years ago, Waverley Council in the eastern suburbs of Sydney was one of the first councils to work in partnership with the community to plan, coordinate, fund and deliver children's services. Over decades, Council has pursued a strong social justice agenda and invested in social and affordable housing, services for people with disability and support for vulnerable communities. This legacy has endured, and Council is committed to deliver on measures that improve the affordability, accessibility and quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Waverley Council's services delivered by 70 permanent staff to approximately 400 local families include:

- Provision and management of 230 places in four Early Education Centres (EEC) and 239 places in Family Day Care (FDC) for children 0-5 (3 x exceeding; 2 x meeting rating National Quality Standards).
- High quality & accessible early education and care services, supporting working families through extended hours Preschool & Early Education program.
- 8 work-based places for staff.
- Online wait list as well as priority wait list for children with additional needs and /or high family support issues.
- Specialist Family support services delivered with grant funding from Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).
- Holiday Program during Christmas holiday break.
- Children's services RAP endorsed by Nurragunnwali, Dharawal language program supported by Gujaga Foundation & Intergenerational research program supported by UNSW.
- Incursions/excursions.
- Inclusion support (Disability Discrimination Act 1992) – children with additional needs are being supported by referrals to health specialists to support successful transition to school.

Apart from local government as provider of affordable and accessible care, Council can also stimulate and enhance provision of diverse care options through its grant programs and subsidies to eligible organisations under its community tenancy policy. Three types of children's services have been supported by Waverley Council in this way.

The current challenges affecting the early childhood sector have impacted Council significantly. We value our staff and believe Council's work culture and employment conditions help attract and retain staff. Post COVID, however, services are struggling to absorb the impacts of significant sector shortages. This and other budget pressures makes the provision of quality care at a price families can afford extremely difficult.

Council advocates for:

- Improved sector funding for better wage and conditions to increase supply of ECEC educators.
- Better access to ECEC via equitable funding support to providers, so that services are better able to support workforce participation; struggling families; families with children who have additional needs; and young infants under 2.
- Improved coordination, planning and support of services offering affordable ECEC for families.
- A unified system that supports universal access to quality education and care.

Access to and choice of services

Given the diversity of family types, household stage/formation and often culturally determined individual preferences, providing Australian families with choices over the education and care environment is very important and enshrined in some of the principles guiding the development of early childhood services. Unfortunately, the history of changing government policies that regulate status, funding and assessment of services have resulted in significant inequities between service types. These are notable in relation to whether a service is delivered by local government, community based or commercial/for profit and determines the extent to which funding and government support can be accessed.

Historically, despite great popularity particularly with families with very young children, FDC has always struggled to have its status recognised so it can participate on a level playing field with other providers. The withdrawal some years ago of the federal government's community support program funding, which had provided Waverley FDC with annual operational subsidy payments has exacerbated this. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, FDC is faced with serious viability challenges which limit accessibility and choice for families.

The re-introduction of government support, targeted to assist properly screened and monitored FDC providers in their delivery of quality programs, would increase access and choice for families.

Key features of local government FDC programs

FDC delivered by local councils offer locally focused, fully regulated, affordable and well-managed services:

- High quality care is supported by qualified, experienced, and well-resourced coordination staff whose capacity to oversee compliance and regulatory requirements is strengthened by strong organisational governance.
- FDC offers choice to families, filling existing gaps caused by high demand in our local communities. Children aged 0-3 years, for example, and children with additional needs due to family preference or suitability of small group size 1 adult:4 children ratio.

Waverley FDC has consistently provided more under 2s care than all the four EECs combined over the last three years.

- During the Covid-19 pandemic FDC was sought by essential/front line workers due to small groups, flexible hours, and days. Waverley FDC operated at capacity through both lockdown periods and had minimal Covid-19 closures.
- Waitlist demands for the 0-3 age group are once again high across metropolitan areas, as a direct result of the current sector staffing challenges. This, coupled with funding incentives favouring the preschool age group, has resulted in a reduction of 0-2 rooms in (mainly) private early childhood provider settings as this age group have a higher staff:child ratio and is more expensive to run.

Waverley FDC have supported gaps through the placement of very young children (under 12months).

Issues and barriers to expanding or operating services

Family Day Care

- FDC is not supported through similar funding opportunities accessed by Long Day Care (LDC). FDC services are not eligible for Start Strong funding (3-year trial, preschool funding, and fee relief) and the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) hourly rate cap to families is lower for FDC (FDC's rate is \$11.80, compared to \$12.74 in LDC).
- Loss of operational funding (Community Support Programme - Family Day Care) effective 30 June 2015, caused impacts to viability and sustainability of FDC, resulting in the closure of some not for profit and local government services.
- Privatisation of FDC has reduced quality and caused reputational damage to the FDC model. Successfully prosecuted cases where fraud or corruption has been substantiated are captured through the Australian Government Child Care Enforcement Action Register. Concerned about the serious consequence of malpractice and non-compliance, NSW government has intervened and closed several private services in the last 18 months.
- Cost of living relief and business funding opportunities are not accessible to FDC educators. Significant increases well above CPI of private rentals in the eastern suburbs (reported by some services to be as high as 30%) has had a direct impact on the viability of FDC. This is a distressing, well documented situation in many parts of Australia, affecting essential workers everywhere. The escalating rentals costs and reduced availability of private rentals due to the impact in tourist areas of short-term accommodation (e.g. Airbnb) makes finding a suitable home challenging and impacts on the cost of family day care.

Parent feedback

"I'm very pleased to have sent my child to Family Day Care - very reassuring framework. Keep up the great work that you do!"

"While we would pay what we need to pay to be at our FDC (as we love it), it seems quite expensive when compared to other day care options when speaking to friends."

Provider cost – a significant barrier to maintaining access and choice

Staffing is by far the single largest expenditure for services. The steeply rising cost of care partially due to increased labour costs have placed pressures on providers, including local government. The cost burden includes high overheads, significant regulatory and reporting requirements, risk, safety and compliance actions, complex administration and assessment/rating procedures, lack of government funding to support capital renewal and insufficient offsets in areas of high cost of land/leases in metropolitan residential suburbs.

Increasing capital and operational cost has resulted in budget shortfalls made worse by the impacts of the Pandemic. Waverley Council is committed to supporting local families and has kept fees fair and reasonable during the economic downturn and beyond. This is having significant impacts on the long-term viability of Council's children's services.

Both the Federal and state governments have recently implemented reforms aimed at families to help with the cost of care. This is important but does not assist service providers to recruit/retain staff, increase wages, and fund essential infrastructure supports. Unless the two levels of government commit to serious reform of the sector and remove structural barriers, sustained access to quality and affordable ECEC will not be achieved.

All levels of government need to play a role. The March 2023 Senate Select Committee Final Report on Work and Care recommends the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet consider the operation of markets in the aged, disability and ECEC sectors and the effectiveness of current models of provision (including profit and not-for-profit models) in delivering quality care. Central to the Committee's considerations (p172) is:

A universal, high quality ECEC system

8.20 The committee heard that Australian ECEC costs, as a share of family income, are among the highest in the developed world. This is actively disincentivising working parents from accessing ECEC and is prohibiting women who want to work, or work more, from participating in paid employment and progressing their career.

8.21 The evidence to this committee shows that there is a clear and compelling case for the implementation of a universal, high-quality, child-centred and community-based ECEC system. Such a system would support both the positive development of children in their first five years, and help working carers to better engage with ongoing, fulfilling employment, and, importantly,

8.24 A more affordable ECEC system would reduce incentives in the for-profit childcare sector to focus only on those geographic areas where the largest profits can be made, with inadequate consideration given to quality service provision and staff remuneration.

Inclusion

Some of the issues in ECEC relating to inclusion include:

- Post COVID high demand/increased need for placement and inclusion support of children with additional needs related to poor socialisation, and poor access to health services during COVID and ongoing long wait lists for specialist intervention.

- Without appropriate support, our workforce, already experiencing significant stressors, is challenged in their ability to support inclusion.
- Successful inclusion requires consistency and continuity of trained educators – this is difficult for services to invest in and maintain due to workforce shortages.
- Skilled and trained educators who would support inclusion is difficult to achieve within existing time and ratio constraints, staff turnover for training and professional development.
- The Inclusion Support Program (ISP) aids with eligible early childhood services to address barriers to inclusion under the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF). IDF funding covers a proportion of wages for an additional staff member to support inclusion, however, does not cover full costs which need to be covered by the service. This has led to many services not providing this level of support to the families in their care.

We therefore welcome the recommendation made in the final report of the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care:

- *that the Australian Government request the Productivity Commission to immediately review the Inclusion Support Program and consider appropriate action including, but not limited to the commitment of additional funding of the program, with a view to provide extra support to children who have additional needs to participate in ECEC. Indexation of funding should also be considered (Recommendation 7, March 2023).*

Preschool Program in Long Day Care (Start Strong)

Waverley Council's comprehensive preschool program is fully integrated into the service and delivers as benefits:

- ✓ Extended hours 7:30am to 6pm, open 49 weeks of the year, siblings can be accommodated in the same service, supporting convenience, and lowering cost/travel time for working families.
- ✓ Qualified, experienced teachers, NESA accredited.
- ✓ Education programs – Dharawal language, PALS, Intergenerational, etc
- ✓ School readiness and transition to school: developmental outcomes through quality services by qualified early childhood teacher has achieved better outcomes for school transition and ongoing success in learning.

Challenges for services

- Family/community perception that preschool programs can only be delivered in a dedicated standalone preschool setting.
- Families who move children from LDC to separate preschool create utilisation gaps in the 3 to 5 age group for LDC.
- More government supported community information/education is required to support Preschool in a LDC setting.

Affordability of services

How do families judge whether a service is affordable?

Many factors come into play when families make choices over which services to enrol in. For families working to a limited budget, cost is a determining factor, particularly at this time when cost of living pressures and changing labour markets post COVID are beginning to impact on affordability considerations. How families judge if a service is affordable is difficult to ascertain and varies from family to family. Individual preference may well mean a family is prepared to sacrifice other household expenditure if it means they can access a centre of their choice.

Annual surveys have indicated families place importance on qualified staff, low turnover, community connections, natural outdoor environments and nurturing, inclusive education, and care settings that value diversity and individual differences.

Utilisation patterns in early education centres are reported to be lower across the board as families adapt and adjust to more flexible 'working from home' and hybrid environments where that is possible.

Families have told us that they appreciate Council providing high quality education and care at a price point many say they can afford. There are also families whose individual circumstances have changed and who have commented on successive fee increases they believe have made our services unaffordable for them.

Parent feedback

"It's expensive! But that is childcare in general, not just your services."

"All childcare fees are high in Australia, but I appreciate Waverley's are relatively good for the service provided in the area."

"Childcare should be free.... but this should come from a government level. Thank you for keeping your fees competitive."

"Fees are in line with other services in the area but has caused some budgeting challenges for a family whose income has been affected by a self-employed mother because of COVID also the birth of our child last month."

"They've increased substantially since we started at the centre 2.5 years ago (almost \$40/day)."

"The fees are at the lower end so happy with them."

"We are given plenty of notice when they were being increased."

Important factors when comparing prices for early childhood services.

Consideration of factors would include:

- The CCS percentage is a national average daily fee limit, not based on the total cost of care. All families will have an out of pocket 'Gap Fee'. Depending on the location and type of service, these gap fees can be significant out of pocket costs and impact on families judging a service to be affordable.

- Families often consider convenience as important– close to home or work and this can influence their assessment of ‘affordable care’. Most families attending Waverley Council services live in Waverley or neighbouring areas – this helps deliver on Council’s organisational sustainability goals as we have many families walking to their services.
- Quality of relationships, both within the services and in the broader context of community connections.
- Satisfaction with the service environment: their child is happy and cared for. Their progress with learning & development milestones is evident. Families feel engaged and included and are encouraged to provide feedback on all facets of the service.
- Quality of education and care: Local government is often recognised as providing higher quality care than other providers and this is documented in rating information comparing different types of services (ACECQA NQF Snapshot Q1 2023 – 51% state/territory and local government managed – rated exceeding compared to 15% of private for profit).
Waverley Council’s five services include three ‘Exceeding’ and two ‘Meeting’ National Quality Standards
- National assessment and rating system: Council supports a robust and rigorous rating system that provide good information and education to families about the quality of any of the services they may choose to access. However, the current system is seen to be inconsistent and subjective, heavily influenced by the views, experience or perspective of the assessor which can have detrimental impacts on the service.

Parent feedback

“If it doesn't cost the council, it should expand its offering in different locations. So many parents are sending their kids to terrible for-profit centres in the area and I'm sure would love a community option.”

“Fees are cheaper than private centres, excellent food is provided, and the staffing is excellent and more stable.”

- Quality of staff – qualifications, experience, professional development, low turnover – level of confidence and professionalism.
- Lower staff turnover - Local Government services are reported to have lower staff turnover than private services – educator continuity three years plus is shown to have positive impact on children
- Governance and Leadership; Safety – robust governance systems and in-built access to supporting infrastructure local government provides has created confidence in families accessing the service.
- Facilities – upkeep, cleanliness, resources, presentation, provisions.

Waverley Council’s fees for its early childhood services are competitive and support accessibility to families, however staffing costs and increased capital and operational costs including maintenance and upkeep have placed additional financial pressures on viability.

Supply of services

Affordability, accessibility, and consumer choice

There is great inconsistency across the sector and no uniform approach to measuring supply of services across regions.

- Supply of services is measured by utilisation rates, waitlists, parent feedback, id./census demographic data, parent/community surveys.
- The cost of land and high development costs impacts on supply, and cost of care
- Consistent measurements should be applied (eg at LGA level), supported by good population and usage data to enable better planning.
- Working families, cost, and school readiness/transition are drivers of service.
- Inclusions integrated into the cost of care, e.g. meals, nappies, incursions/excursions.

Factors that cause supply shortages in the sector

- Workforce shortages in past 18 months cause impact on service continuity and quality – educators leaving the sector due to pay not equating to demands of the work.
- There is tension between staffing ratio and quality provision: staffing requirements for quality require staff to be covered for programming, professional development, training, and inclusion.
- High staff turnover reduced continuity of care and reduced confidence in service.
- Cost and staffing are a concern to any provider considering service expansion.
- In a fast-changing environment with different utilisation patterns emerging, consideration of supporting different types of services that support greater flexibility may be of benefit. For example, FDC and Occasional Care are options that can be scaled up or down in response to the need of parents choosing to work from home who are looking for service adaptability.

Qualifications

Qualifications and experience have direct links to positive outcomes for children (Siraj et. al., 2023)

- Quality of educators at recruitment is not always of the standard required – this is due to fast tracking qualifications; some educators are entering the workplace with a Master qualification in early childhood teaching with little on the job experience, practical skills, or knowledge. This places additional stress on Diploma or Degree qualified experienced educators who may be earning less than the new staff member they are mentoring.
- Unregulated RTOs where qualifications are expedited has resulted in a poor-quality workforce, TAFE previously offered excellent training for early education but funding cuts to TAFE have meant that students have looked elsewhere for flexible RTOs who have lower expectations.
- Traineeship programs are not well run and again there is little support from the RTOs to support the trainee, meaning that all the pressure is back on the service to mentor, train and guide the trainee. There is no incentive for services or salary support for the time consideration of mentoring the funding for this goes directly to the RTO.

Supply of Services 0-3 age group

Importance of accessibility

As reported earlier, the demand for education and care services for children 0-3 has outstripped supply for many years now. While there are many providers in the Eastern suburbs, there often is a mismatch between the needs of families (under 2's; additional needs; affordable) and what the market can offer.

- High community demand – 337 'active' families with children 0-3 are currently on Waverley Council's waitlist. As services are at capacity, this will be a long wait.
- Lack of places reduces opportunities for women to return to the work force – gender equality, workforce participation, national economic growth, participation, and support of Waverley's local workforce and more generally, productivity.
- Quality care, interactions and family support that focuses on child attachment theory through continuity of skilled and trained educators particularly in the first three years is crucial. This is described in the First 2000 Days Framework (NSW Health): "emotional development begins early in life, that is a critical aspect of the development of the overall brain architecture, and it has enormous consequences over the course of a lifetime".
- Provision of adequate access results in better outcomes related to early intervention and inclusion support for families, including transition to school.

Factors causing supply shortages 0-3 age group

- Cost – no operational funding (Start Strong funding not available for this age group), higher ratio's = higher staffing costs and consumables.
- Staff shortages – some educators are reluctant to work in the infants' room due to additional physical workload and the potential for increased injury.
- The closing of under 2s rooms in metro centre-based services, as the ratios are higher making them more expensive to keep open. NSW state funding for Preschool means there is a financial incentive to move staff from the under 2s rooms to rooms to build capacity where the funding is directed.
- Strong focus on 3 to 5 has overlooked the importance on provision of places for 0-3s and the impact this is having by keeping a large proportion of women out of the workforce.
- No operational funding for Local Government FDC: Educators having to leave due to high costs of rent, and other operational expenses absorbed by FDC educators. This means that this important 'gap filler' for the 0-3 age group is in decline.

Provider costs and revenue

Operational costs of services

- Staffing costs and building repairs/upkeep (particularly where the facilities/assets are ageing) are the most challenging costs for providers.
- As a not-for-profit we invest more than 80% of costs to staffing (salaries, casuals, agency staff, professional development, oncosts).
- Administration costs, including navigating systems are now much higher, resulting in more complicated and labour-intensive processes and increased staff responsibilities. The expansion of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) system was put in place to replace operational

funding which previously went directly to service providers rather than to parents. Added to current complexities are Start Strong and Inclusion Support funding streams.

- Consistent feedback from families indicates that the current CCS system is confusing and difficult to navigate and access their legitimate entitlements. There is no doubt the money spent on mitigating the risks associated to poor or illegal practices could cover the return of operational support to Local Government and not for profit services.
- Operational funding needs to be reflective of service model and fees charged. Privatisation of services has had a detrimental impact on early education and care and resulted in structural imbalances and lack of oversight and planning as the market is strong where profit is to be made. The impact of increasing privatisation of the early education sector has been commented on in research and various inquiries. According to ACECQA and based on provider management type, 51% are private for-profit and 33% are private not-for-profit services. A further 11% are managed by state or local governments and 4% by non-government schools ([ACECQA, Q4 2022](#)).
- Private providers tend to charge higher fees, often cutting costs to minimum requirements, when the actual quality of education and care would not result in the best outcomes for children. However, these providers receive the same government funding as not for profit community based and local government services. This is not an equitable model. Access to education and care should be universally available and not exploited by profit making businesses and shareholders with little concern for quality.
- These inequities were brought into stark focus during the Pandemic. There was a huge demand for essential services during Covid lockdowns and many large private providers either closed rooms or closed services entirely during this period. Yet these providers still received federal funding through Jobkeeper aimed at retaining staff. This funding was not available to local government, yet all our EEC services remained open and FDC operated at capacity taking on new families who were working at our local hospitals and medical facilities.
- The findings of several federal and state government reviews of early childhood and the factors impacting on services, including one NSW Coroner's report, have not comprehensively been addressed. Many believe that as a sector we are at a crisis point.

Management of costs and revenue

As not for profit services within local government, there is great variance in the way councils manage costs and revenue and how children's services are reflected in pricing policy and fees.

Waverley Council's pricing policy describes early education centres service where fees are set to enable full cost recovery. Historically, due to the different service model and associated community benefit, the fees set for FDC services aim to make a partial contribution toward the total cost of providing the service.

As already described earlier, Council has a strong commitment to social cohesion and continues to invest in community health and wellbeing outcomes. Council has absorbed many of the service disruptions and resulting budget impacts of the recent past.

Within the broader context of financial sustainability, Council revenue has continued to decline in line with reduced economic activity while simultaneously being called upon to provide rate, fee and rent relief as part of support to local business and the community. Children's services have remained open throughout the Pandemic with Council supporting fee waivers and fee relief measures despite the lack

of government assistance available to other providers. Budget shortfalls are a concern for Waverley Council and as it aims to contain operating expenditure within operating income. Inflationary pressures, the impact of staff shortages and increasing cost burden on services will remain a significant challenge.

Historically, while various issues have impacted on cost increases, it is widely acknowledged that the single most important factor was the result of privatisation and the inequities emerging from that. For example, the removal of operational subsidy from Family Day Care has caused a significant structural imbalance which despite amalgamation with another program has not been able to be absorbed by Council. FDC is a model Council is currently reviewing due to concerns about long term viability. This will likely limit choice and accessibility of flexible, high quality care options for families.

We consistently operate at regulatory level to ensure quality outcomes of education and care for young children and their families and to meet our governance responsibilities. The ratings under the National Quality Framework for our EECs and FDC service reflect the quality standards expected within our community. Quality care and education is expensive. If universal, equitable access is to be achieved, government investment at federal and state levels – funding, planning, coordination, evaluation - will have to be improved.

**Waverley Council**

PO Box 9, Bondi Junction NSW 1355

DX 12006, Bondi Junction

ABN: 12 502 583 608

Productivity Commission Submission

Early Education & Care - accessible, equitable, affordable, and high-quality

Issues paper - Review of early childhood education and care - May 2023

Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to provide input into this inquiry.

Nearly 50 years ago, Waverley Council in the eastern suburbs of Sydney was one of the first councils to work in partnership with the community to plan, coordinate, fund and deliver children's services. Over decades, Council has pursued a strong social justice agenda and invested in social and affordable housing, services for people with disability and support for vulnerable communities. This legacy has endured, and Council is committed to deliver on measures that improve the affordability, accessibility and quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Waverley Council's services delivered by 70 permanent staff to approximately 400 local families include:

- Provision and management of 230 places in four Early Education Centres (EEC) and 239 places in Family Day Care (FDC) for children 0-5 (3 x exceeding; 2 x meeting rating national quality assessment).
- High quality & accessible early education and care services, supporting working families through extended hours Preschool & Early Education program.
- 8 work-based places for staff.
- Online wait list as well as priority wait list for children with additional needs and /or high family support issues.
- Specialist Family support services delivered with grant support from Department of Communities and Justice
- Holiday Program during Christmas holiday break.
- Children's services RAP endorsed by Nurragunnwali, Dharawal language program supported by Gujaga Foundation & intergenerational program supported by UNSW.
- Incursions/excursions.
- Inclusion support (Disability Discrimination Act 1992) – children with additional needs are being supported by referrals to health specialists including for successful transition to school.

Apart from local government as provider of affordable and accessible care, Council can also stimulate and enhance provision of diverse care options through its grant programs and subsidies to eligible organisations under its community tenancy policy. Three types of children's services have been supported by Waverley Council in this way.

The current challenges affecting the early childhood sector have impacted Council significantly. We value our staff and believe Council's work culture and employment conditions help attract and retain staff. Post COVID, however, services are struggling to absorb the impacts of significant sector shortages. This and other budget pressures makes the provision of quality care at a price families can afford extremely difficult.

Council advocates for:

- Increased sector funding for better wages and conditions to increase supply of ECEC educators.
- Better access to ECEC via equitable funding support to providers, so that services are better able to support workforce participation; struggling families; families with children who have additional needs; and young infants under 2.
- Improved coordination, planning and support of services offering affordable ECEC for families.
- A unified system that supports universal access to quality education and care.

Accessible, equitable, high-quality services

Given the diversity of family types, household stage/formation and often culturally determined individual preferences, providing Australian families with choices over the education and care environment is very important and enshrined in some of the principles guiding the development of early childhood services. Unfortunately, the history of changing government policies that regulate status, funding and assessment of services have resulted in significant inequities between service types. These are notable in relation to whether a service is delivered by local government, community based or commercial/for profit and determines the extent to which funding and government support can be accessed.

Historically, despite great popularity particularly with families with very young children, FDC has always struggled to have its status recognised so it can participate on a level playing field with other providers. The withdrawal some years ago of the federal government's community support program funding, which had provided Waverley FDC with annual operational subsidy payments has exacerbated this. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, FDC is faced with serious viability challenges which limit accessibility and choice for families.

The re-introduction of government support, targeted to assist properly screened and monitored FDC providers in their delivery of quality programs, would increase access and choice for families.

Key features of local government FDC programs

FDC delivered by local councils offer locally focused, fully regulated, affordable and well-managed services:

- High quality care is supported by qualified, experienced, and well-resourced coordination staff whose capacity to oversee compliance and regulatory requirements is strengthened by strong organisational governance.
- FDC offers choice to families, filling existing gaps caused by high demand in our local communities. Children aged 0-3 years, for example, and children with additional needs due to family preference or suitability of small group size 1 adult:4 children ratio.

Waverley FDC has consistently provided more under 2s care than all the four EECs combined over the last three years.

- During Covid-19 pandemic FDC was sought by essential/front line workers due to small groups, flexible hours and days. Waverley FDC operated at capacity through both lockdown periods and had minimal Covid closures.
- Waitlist demands for the 0-3 age group are once again high across metropolitan areas, as a direct result of the current sector staffing challenges. This, coupled with funding incentives favouring preschool age children, has resulted in a reduction of 0-2 rooms in (mainly) private early childhood provider settings as this age group have a higher staff:child ratio and is more expensive to run.

Waverley Council FDC have supported gaps through the placement of very young children (under 12months).

Barriers to access, equity, and inclusion

1. FDC inequities

- FDC is not supported through similar funding opportunities accessed by Long Day Care (LDC). FDC services are not eligible for Start Strong funding (3-year trial, preschool funding and fee relief) and the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) hourly rate cap to families is lower for FDC (FDC's rate is \$11.80, compared to \$12.74 in LDC).
- Loss of operational funding in 2015/6 (Community Support Programme - Family Day Care) caused impacts to viability and sustainability of FDC, resulting in the closure of some not for profit and local government services.
- Privatisation of FDC has reduced quality and caused reputational damage to the FDC model. Successfully prosecuted cases where fraud or corruption has been substantiated are captured through the Australian Government Child Care Enforcement Action Register. Concerned about the serious consequence of malpractice and non-compliance, NSW government has intervened and closed several private services in the last 18 months.
- Cost of living relief and business funding opportunities are not accessible to FDC educators. Significant increases well above CPI of private rentals in the eastern suburbs (reported by some services to be as high as 30%) has had a direct impact on the viability of FDC. This is a distressing, well documented situation in many parts of Australia, affecting essential workers everywhere. The escalating rentals costs and reduced availability of private rentals due to the impact in tourist areas of short-term accommodation (e.g., Airbnb) makes finding a suitable home challenging and impacts on the cost of FDC.

Parent feedback

"I'm very pleased to have sent my child to Family Day Care - very reassuring framework. Keep up the great work that you do!"

"While we would pay what we need to pay to be at our FDC (as we love it), it seems quite expensive when compared to other day care options when speaking to friends."

2. Provider cost

Staffing is by far the single largest expenditure for services. The steeply rising cost of care partially due to increased labour costs have placed pressures on providers, including local government. The cost burden includes high overheads, significant regulatory and reporting requirements, risk, safety and compliance actions, complex administration and assessment/rating procedures, lack of government funding to support capital renewal and insufficient offsets in areas of high cost of land/leases in metropolitan residential suburbs.

Increasing capital and operational cost has resulted in budget shortfalls made worse by the impacts of the Pandemic. Waverley Council is committed to supporting local families and has kept fees fair and reasonable during the economic downturn and beyond. This is having significant impacts on the long-term viability of Council's children's services.

Both the Federal and state governments have recently implemented reforms aimed at families to help with the cost of care. This is important but does not assist service providers to recruit/retain staff, increase wages, and fund essential infrastructure supports. Unless the two levels of government commit to serious reform of the sector and remove structural barriers, sustained access to quality and affordable ECEC will not be achieved.

All levels of government need to play a role. The March 2023 Senate Select Committee Final Report on Work and Care recommends the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet consider the operation of markets in the aged, disability and ECEC sectors and the effectiveness of current models of provision (including profit and not-for-profit models) in delivering quality care. Central to the Committee's considerations (p172) is:

A universal, high quality ECEC system

8.20 The committee heard that Australian ECEC costs, as a share of family income, are among the highest in the developed world. This is actively disincentivising working parents from accessing ECEC and is prohibiting women who want to work, or work more, from participating in paid employment and progressing their career.

8.21 The evidence to this committee shows that there is a clear and compelling case for the implementation of a universal, high-quality, child-centred and community-based ECEC system. Such a system would support both the positive development of children in their first five years, and also help working carers to better engage with ongoing, fulfilling employment, and, importantly,

8.24 A more affordable ECEC system would reduce incentives in the for-profit childcare sector to focus only on those geographic areas where the largest profits can be made, with inadequate consideration given to quality service provision and staff remuneration.

3. Inclusion

Some of the barriers in early education and care services relating to inclusion include:

- Post COVID high demand/increased need for placement and inclusion support of children with additional needs related to poor socialisation, and poor access to health services during COVID and ongoing long wait lists for specialist intervention.

- Without appropriate support, our workforce, already experiencing significant stressors, is challenged in their ability to support inclusion.
- Successful inclusion requires consistency and continuity of trained educators – this is difficult for services to invest in and maintain due to workforce shortages.
- Skilled and trained educators who would support inclusion is difficult to achieve within existing time and ratio constraints, staff turnover for training and professional development.
- The Inclusion Support Program (ISP) aids with eligible early education services to address barriers to inclusion under the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF). IDF funding covers a proportion of wages for an additional staff member to support inclusion, however, does not cover full costs which need to be covered by the service. This has led to many services not providing this level of support to the families in their care.

We therefore welcome the recommendation made in the final report of the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care:

- *that the Australian Government request the Productivity Commission to immediately review the Inclusion Support Program and consider appropriate action including, but not limited to the commitment of additional funding of the program, with a view to provide extra support to children who have additional needs to participate in ECEC. Indexation of funding should also be considered (Recommendation 7, March 2023).*

4. 0-3 age group

Importance of accessibility

The demand for education and care services for children 0-3 has outstripped supply for many years now. While there are many providers in the Eastern suburbs, there often is a mismatch between the needs of families (under 2's; additional needs; affordable) and what the market can offer.

- High community demand – 337 'active' families with children 0-3 are currently on Council's waitlist. As services are at capacity, this will be a long wait.
- Lack of places reduces opportunities for women to return to the work force – gender equality, workforce participation, national economic growth, participation, and support of Waverley's local workforce and more generally, productivity.
- Quality care, interactions and family support that focuses on child attachment theory through continuity of skilled and trained educators particularly in the first three years is crucial. This is described in the First 2000 Days Framework (NSW Health): "emotional development begins early in life, that is a critical aspect of the development of the overall brain architecture, and it has enormous consequences over the course of a lifetime".
- Provision of adequate access results in better outcomes related to early intervention and inclusion support for families.

Factors causing supply shortages 0-3 age group

- Cost – no operational funding (Start Strong funding not available for this age group), higher ratio's = higher staffing costs and consumables.
- Staff shortages – some educators are reluctant to work in the infants' room due to additional physical workload and the potential for increased injury.

- The closing of Under 2s rooms in metro centre-based services, as staff ratio costs are higher to keep open.
- Strong focus on 3 to 5 has overlooked the importance on provision of places for 0-3s and the impact this is having by keeping a large proportion of women out of the workforce.
- No operational funding for Local Government FDC: Educators having to leave due to high costs of rent, and other operational expenses absorbed by FDC educators. This means that this important 'gap filler' for the 0-3 age group is in decline.

5. Start Strong Preschool Program in Long Day Care

Waverley Council's comprehensive preschool program is fully integrated into the service and delivers as benefits:

- ✓ Extended hours 7:30am to 6pm, open 49 weeks of the year, siblings can be accommodated in the same service, supporting convenience, and lowering cost/travel time for working families.
- ✓ Qualified, experienced teachers, NESA accredited.
- ✓ Education programs – Dharawal Language, PALS, intergenerational, etc
- ✓ School readiness and transition to school: developmental outcomes through quality services by qualified early childhood teacher has achieved better outcomes for school transition and ongoing success in learning.

Challenges for services

- Family/community perception that preschool programs can only be delivered in a dedicated standalone preschool setting.
- Families who move children from LDC to separate preschool create utilisation gaps in the 3 to 5 age group for LDC.
- More government supported community information/education is required to support Preschool in a LDC setting.

Affordability of services

Many factors come into play when families make choices over which services to enrol in. For families working to a limited budget, cost is a determining factor, particularly when cost of living pressures and changing labour markets post COVID are beginning to impact on affordability considerations. How families judge if a service is affordable is difficult to ascertain and varies from family to family. Individual preference may well mean a family is prepared to sacrifice other household expenditure if it means they can access a centre of their choice.

Annual surveys have indicated families place importance on qualified staff, low turnover, community connections, natural outdoor environments and nurturing, inclusive education, and care settings that value diversity and individual differences.

Utilisation patterns in early education centres are reported to be lower across the board as families adapt and adjust to more flexible 'working from home' and hybrid environments where that is possible.

Families have told us that they appreciate Council providing high quality education and care at a price point many say they can afford. There are also families whose individual circumstances have changed

and who have commented on successive fee increases they believe have made our services unaffordable for them.

Parent feedback

"It's expensive! But that is childcare in general, not just your services."

"All childcare fees are high in Australia, but I appreciate Waverley's are relatively good for the service provided in the area."

"Childcare should be free.... but this should come from a government level. Thank you for keeping your fees competitive."

"Fees are in line with other services in the area but has caused some budgeting challenges for a family whose income has been affected by a self-employed mother because of COVID also the birth of our child last month."

"They've increased substantially since we started at the centre 2.5 years ago (almost \$40/day)."

"The fees are at the lower end so happy with them."

"We are given plenty of notice when they were being increased."

Important factors when comparing the cost of care

Consideration of factors would include:

- The CCS percentage is a national average daily fee limit, not based on the total cost of care. All families will have an out of pocket 'Gap Fee'. Depending on the location and type of service, these gap fees can be significant out of pocket costs and impact on families judging a service to be affordable.
- Families often consider convenience as important– close to home or work and this can influence their assessment of 'affordable care'. Most families attending Waverley Council services live in Waverley or neighbouring areas – this helps deliver on Council's organisational sustainability goals as we have many families walking to their services.
- Quality of relationships, both within the services and in the broader context of community connections.
- Satisfaction with the service environment: their child is happy and cared for. Their progress with learning & development milestones is evident. Families feel engaged and included and are encouraged to provide feedback on all facets of the service.
- Quality of education and care: Local government is often recognised as providing higher quality care than other providers and this is documented in rating information comparing different types of services (ACECQA NQF Snapshot Q1 2023 – 51% state/territory and local government managed – rated exceeding compared to 15% of private for profit). Waverley Council's five services include three 'Exceeding' and two 'Meeting' National Quality Standards
- National assessment and rating system: Council supports a robust and rigorous rating system that provide good information and education to families about the quality of any of the services they may choose to access. However, the current system is seen to be inconsistent

and subjective, heavily influenced by the views, experience or perspective of the assessor which can have detrimental impacts on the service.

Parent feedback

"If it doesn't cost the council, it should expand its offering in different locations. So many parents are sending their kids to terrible for-profit centres in the area and I'm sure would love a community option."

"Fees are cheaper than private centres, excellent food is provided, and the staffing is excellent and more stable."

- Quality of staff – qualifications, experience, professional development, low turnover – level of confidence and professionalism.
- Lower staff turnover - Local Government services are reported to have lower staff turnover than private services – educator continuity three years plus is shown to have positive impact on children
- Governance and Leadership & Safety – robust governance systems and in-built access to supporting infrastructure local government provides has created confidence in families accessing the service.
- Facilities – upkeep, cleanliness, resources, presentation, provisions.

Waverley Council's fees for its early childhood services are competitive and support accessibility for families, however staffing costs and increased capital and operational costs including maintenance and upkeep have created additional budget pressures.

Supply of services

There is great inconsistency across the sector and no uniform approach to planning and measuring supply of services across regions.

- Supply of services is measured by utilisation rates, waitlists, parent feedback, id./census demographic data, parent/community surveys.
- The cost of land and high development costs plays impacts on supply, and cost of care
- Consistent measurements should be applied (eg at LGA level), supported by good population and usage data to enable better planning.
- Working families, cost, and school readiness/transition are drivers of service.
- Inclusions integrated into the cost of care, e.g., meals, nappies, incursions/excursions.

Investment in a professional early childhood workforce

- Traineeship pathways are a positive entry into the early education and care sector as the trainee learns on the job while studying for their qualification at TAFE. However, improvements need to be made to the level of support trainees receive, for example support to services to fund mentoring the trainee.
- Federal and state governments need to work together in support of a review of the wages and conditions of the early education and care sector. This would deliver wages and conditions in

line with the qualification level, expectations, and contributions of the sector to economic growth and workforce participation.

- Similarly, more support is needed to ensure quality, accredited, professional development for early education and care staff. Achieving quality education outcomes takes time - fast tracking or cutting corners to complete qualifications quickly will not result in quality outcomes.

Factors that cause supply shortages in the sector

- Workforce shortages in past 18 months cause impact on service continuity and quality – educators leaving the sector due to pay and conditions not equating to demands of the work.
- There is tension between staffing ratio and quality provision: staffing requirements for quality require staff to be covered for programming, professional development and training, inclusion.
- High staff turnover reduced continuity of care and reduced confidence in service.
- Cost and staffing are a concern to any provider considering service expansion.
- In a fast-changing environment with different utilisation patterns emerging, consideration of supporting different types of services that support greater flexibility may be of benefit. For example, FDC and Occasional Care are options that can be scaled up or down in response to the need of parents choosing to work from home who are looking for service adaptability.

Qualifications

Qualifications and experience have direct links to positive outcomes for children (Siraj et. al., 2023)

- Quality of educators at recruitment is not always of the standard required – this is due to fast tracking qualifications; some educators are entering the workplace with a Master teaching degree in Early Education but little practical skills or knowledge. This places additional stress on qualified experienced educators at a Diploma level who may be earning less than the new staff member they are mentoring.
- Unregulated RTOs where qualifications are expedited has resulted in a poor-quality workforce, TAFE previously offered excellent training for early education but funding cuts to TAFE have meant that students have looked elsewhere for flexible RTOs who have lower expectations.
- Traineeship programs are not well run and again there is little support from the RTOs to support the trainee, meaning that all the pressure is back on the service to mentor, train and guide the trainee. There is no incentive for services or salary support for the time consideration of mentoring the funding for this goes directly to the RTO.

Provider costs, revenue & quality

Operational costs of services

- Staffing costs and building repairs/upkeep (particularly where the facilities/assets are ageing) are the most challenging costs for providers.
- More than 80% of costs relate to staffing (salaries, casuals, agency staff, professional development, oncosts)

- Administration costs, including navigating systems are now much higher, resulting in more complicated and labour-intensive processes and increased staff responsibilities. The expansion of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) system was put in place to replace operational funding which previously went directly to service providers rather than to parents. Added to current complexities are Start Strong and Inclusion Support funding streams.
- Consistent feedback from families indicates that the current CCS system is confusing and difficult to navigate and access their legitimate entitlements. There is no doubt the money spent on mitigating the risks associated to poor or illegal practices could cover the return of operational support to Local Government and not for profit services.
- Operational funding needs to be reflective of service model and fees charged. Privatisation of services has had a detrimental impact on early education and care and resulted in structural imbalances and lack of oversight and planning as market are strong where profit is to be made. The impact of increasing privatisation of the early education sector has been commented on in research and various inquiries. According to ACECQA and based on provider management type, 51% are private for-profit and 33% are private not-for-profit services. A further 11% are managed by state or local governments and 4% by non-government schools ([ACECQA, Q4 2022](#)).
- Private providers tend to charge higher fees, often cutting costs to minimum requirements, when the actual quality of education and care would not result in the best outcomes for children. However, these providers receive the same government funding as not for profit community based and local government services. This is not an equitable model. Access to education and care should be universally available and not exploited by profit making businesses and shareholders with little concern for quality.
- These inequities were brought into stark focus during the Pandemic. Despite significant demand for essential services during Covid lockdowns, many large private providers were reported to have closed rooms or services. Yet these providers still received federal funding through Jobkeeper aimed at retaining staff. Local government were ineligible to receive this support, yet all our EEC services remained open and FDC operated at capacity taking on new families who were working at our local hospitals and medical facilities.
- The findings of several federal and state government reviews of early childhood and the factors impacting on services, including one NSW Coroner's report, have not comprehensively been addressed. Many believe that as a sector we are at a crisis point.

Management of costs and revenue

As not for profit services within local government, there is great variance in the way councils manage costs and revenue and how children's services are reflected in pricing policy and fees.

Waverley Council's pricing policy describes early education centres service where fees are set to enable full cost recovery. Historically, due to the different service model and associated community benefit, the fees set for FDC services aim to make a partial contribution toward the total cost of providing the service.

As already described earlier, Council has a strong commitment to social cohesion and continues to invest in community health and wellbeing outcomes. Council has absorbed many of the service disruptions and resulting budget impacts of the recent past.

Within the broader context of financial sustainability, Council revenue has continued to decline in line with reduced economic activity while simultaneously being called upon to provide rate, fee and rent relief as part of support to local business and the community. Children's services have remained open throughout the Pandemic with Council supporting fee waivers and fee relief measures despite the lack of government assistance available to other providers. Budget shortfalls are a concern for Waverley Council as it aims to contain operating expenditure within operating income. Inflationary pressures, the impact of staff shortages and increasing cost burden on services will remain a significant challenge, particularly if service affordability and accessibility are to be achieved.

Historically, while various issues have impacted on cost increases, it is widely acknowledged that the single most important factor was the result of privatisation and the inequities emerging from that. For example, the removal of operational subsidy from Family Day Care has caused a significant structural imbalance which despite amalgamation with another program has not been able to be absorbed by Council. FDC is a model Council is currently reviewing due to concerns about long term viability. This will likely limit choice and accessibility of flexible, high quality care options for families.

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REPORT

FC/5.5/23.06



Subject: Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel Meeting - Minutes - 23 March 2023

TRIM No: A21/0096

Manager: Annette Trubenbach, Executive Manager, Community Services

Director: Sharon Cassidy, Director, Assets and Operations

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes the minutes of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel meeting held on 23 March 2023 attached to the report.

1. Executive Summary

This report provides information about the Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel meeting held on 23 March 2023. The minutes of the meeting are attached to this report.

2. Introduction/Background

On 16 March 2021, Council established the Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel to provide feedback and advice to Council about disability access and inclusion. The Panel builds on the work of the former Access Advisory Committee. Its objective is to promote an inclusive community and enhance the inclusion and participation of people with disability in community life. Members provide advice from a lived experience, carer or service provider perspective.

3. Relevant Council Resolutions

Meeting and date	Item No.	Resolution
Council 16 March 2021	CM/7.3/21.03	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Thanks the following members of the Access Advisory Committee 2014–2021 for their contribution: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Sellman. Mary Doyle. Rachel Lazarov. Ben Alexander. Meredith Coote. Ben Whitehorn. Adopts the Terms of Reference for the Access and

		<p>Inclusion Advisory Panel (formerly Access Advisory Committee) attached to the report.</p> <p>3. Notes that the development of the 2022–2026 Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be integrated into engagement activities of the new Community Strategic Plan.</p> <p>4. Sets a fee of \$200 per meeting to be paid to community members and community organisations/groups for attendance.</p> <p>5. Notes that funding of up to \$6,250 for the payment of the fees referred to in clause 3 above has been included in the draft 2021–22 Operational budget.</p>
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4. Discussion

This report updates Councillors on items discussed at Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel meeting held on 23 March 2023. The minutes attached to this report were confirmed at the subsequent meeting of the Panel.

5. Financial impact statement/Time frame/Consultation

The minutes, once noted, will be placed on Council's website.

6. Conclusion

This report provides information about the Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel meeting held on 23 March 2023.

7. Attachments

1. Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel - Minutes - 23 March 2023 [↓](#) .

ACCESS AND INCLUSION ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

Thursday 23 March 2023
6.00 pm – 7.30 pm
Zoom



Present
Councillors Clr Elaine Keenan Clr Ludovico Fabiano
Community Members Ben Whitehorn, Zoe Dunn, Petra Pattinson, Mia Capitanelis, Andre Cioban, Danny Hui
Council Officers Sharon Cassidy, Director, Assets and Operations Sam Samadian, Manager Assets, Systems and Planning, Infrastructure Services Annette Trubenbach, Executive Manager, Community Programs Chris Bath, Manager, Older People and Disability Services Annabelle Hayter, Community Development Officer, Access and Inclusion - Minutes
Guest Tim Williams, Manager, Urban Design and Heritage
Apologies
Ben Alexander, Community Member Rachel Lazarov, Community Member Clr Paula Masselos Clr Angela Burrill Clr Leon Goltsman Clr Tony Kay

Item	Summary	Action officer
1. Welcome & Acknowledgement of Country	Clr Keenan welcomed everyone	
2. Introductions and Apologies	New members introduced themselves. Sharon Cassidy, Director Assets & Operations will join the Panel as a member of Council's Executive Leadership team. Sam Samadian is a Manager in Sharon's Infrastructure Services team and will be available to discuss issues raised at meetings.	

ACCESS AND INCLUSION ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

Thursday 23 March 2023
6.00 pm – 7.30 pm
Zoom



Item	Summary	Action officer
3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest	No conflict of interests was declared.	
4. Parklets Timothy Williams, Manager Urban Design and Heritage	<p>Bondi Bounce was funded by the New South Wales Government's Streets as Shared Spaces program.</p> <p>It provides opportunities to improve the pedestrian connection from Bondi Junction to Bondi Beach and Council also combined it with World Pride celebrations.</p> <p>There are several streams to the project:</p> <p>Parklets – Five temporary parklets installed on 22 February 2023 are strategically placed off Bondi Road and Campbell Parade to break up the walk from Bondi Junction to Bondi. They are free spaces to sit, relax and socialise.</p> <p>Wayfinding - colourful dots were installed on the pavement from Bondi Junction all the way down to Bondi Beach.</p> <p>Games - in certain places help activate and engage young people.</p> <p>New Lighting - installed in Waverley Mall to activate the space and make it safer.</p> <p>Stories - Stickers with QR codes take you to a website that has different cultural and heritage stories. There are 40 stickers with stories all the way down to the beach and a logo that was developed for World Pride that was placed on the bins all the way down to the beach.</p> <p>As this is a trial, there is opportunity to make the parklets permanent structures.</p> <p>The wayfinding dots were part of World Pride and will not be permanent. The stickers with links to stories will remain in place longer.</p>	

ACCESS AND INCLUSION ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

Thursday 23 March 2023

6.00 pm – 7.30 pm

Zoom



Item	Summary	Action officer
	<p>Feedback on the project is currently being sought and is open until 30 April on the Have your Say website. So far 70% of the comments have been positive. Local children have been following the dots along footpaths and people have been using the parklets as gathering spaces. Panel members were positive about the dots and parklets and some members have made use of the parklets.</p> <p>Disability Access – Comments were made on behalf of a community member not present. Some of the parklets have lips, small steps up and they are not accessible to people in wheelchairs. It was acknowledged that while efforts were made to make parklets flush with kerbs, some are not.</p> <p>It was suggested that if they do become permanent, they should be modified so they are accessible to wheelchairs users. Installing a small handrail on the parklets may make them easier to use for older people and people with limited mobility. A roof for shading and protection from the elements may make them more useable in all conditions.</p> <p>Clrs Keenan and Fabiano thanked Tim and his team for the great work on this project.</p>	
5. Minutes of last meeting and business arising	<p>Minutes of the last meeting: Accepted.</p> <p>It was requested that the minutes be sent out within ten working days after the meeting as stipulated in the terms of reference.</p> <p>See Action log for actions from previous meetings. For Bronte Surf Club Actions see Other Business.</p>	
6. DIAP Progress Report Annette Trubenbach Chris Bath Annabelle Hayter	<p>The progress report was tabled. Members were invited to provide suggestions on the format to improve the report. A snapshot of the key projects was provided:</p> <p>Focus Area 1. Inclusive Attitudes and Behaviours</p> <p>Internal training</p>	

ACCESS AND INCLUSION ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

Thursday 23 March 2023
6.00 pm – 7.30 pm
Zoom



Item	Summary	Action officer
Community Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing on raising awareness with Council staff about the importance of disability inclusion and internal promotions through the staff newsletter about disability inclusion and the Disability Confidence e - learning modules. Updated workplace and diversity pages on the intranet. The unconscious bias training was held, and disability inclusion was included in the training including WCLP video 'Living the Dream' which was one of the highlights of the training. <p>Community Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regional disability expo was held at Maroubra Beach on 1 December on International Day for People with Disability which received positive feedback. Fun and Fitness Day was held late January with Randwick Council. It was a relaxed community event at Centennial Park. <p>Focus Area 2. Liveable Communities</p> <p>Walking and Mobility Group A cross council walking and mobility group has met. The initial focus is on parking and social infrastructure. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Access and Inclusion Grant Wairoa School was the successful applicant for the Disability Inclusion Grant. The grant funds will be used to provide an arts program for students making use of the Bondi Pavilion facilities. All the applications received were strong.</p>	

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Item	Summary	Action officer
	<p>Focus Area 3. Meaningful Employment</p> <p>A grant application for a Disability Employment – Tourism Local Navigators Pilot, funded by the Department of Social Services was submitted. We'll likely find out in April if we are successful.</p> <p>We are planning an inclusive business forum at the Bondi Pavilion with Randwick Council, La Trobe Local Area Coordination, SSI Zero Barriers. More information will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Q: Is the Disability E Learning Module compulsory for staff and is disability inclusion part of staff induction?</p> <p>A: Staff are encouraged to do it, but it is not compulsory. We are speaking with HR about this.</p> <p>Action: Discuss with Learning and Development about how disability inclusion is addressed at staff induction</p>	
<p>7. Other Business Sharon Cassidy, Director</p>	<p>Bronte Surf Club Update</p> <p>Updated plans will be on public exhibition in the next few days. The plans have been reviewed and from an access perspective, we are looking at upgrading the path that runs from the back of the bus stop down to the club, which is close to but not accessible. It is the most accessible path, but it does not comply, so it is likely that Council will upgrade this path in parallel with the redevelopment of the surf club. It is not a condition yet, but it is likely to be. It is complex with all the trees and levels, but the design team is looking at it.</p>	

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Item	Summary	Action officer
	<p>Design of the building</p> <p>Feedback received is that the winter garden, which is on the high side of the building, seemed to be an area that is just for the club.</p> <p>Council had a consultant look at accessibility options for an accessible continuous pathway, from the top end of the park to the bottom end. The updated design has been resubmitted and will go out on exhibition in the next few days. There is potential for the path from the top area to go around the building and connect near the stairs and the pumphouse at the back. This gives Council the opportunity to connect an accessible path of travel towards the playground, which is the most logical accessible route as it is where the gradients work best.</p> <p>Q: Just to clarify, is there a step-free way of going from the top park to the bottom, with the current proposed design?</p> <p>A: We are getting closer. The design that has been resubmitted gets us most of the way and then Council will need to add the final link with park upgrades. It is a positive outcome compared to what we saw in the first submitted design.</p> <p>Q: What about increasing the number of accessible parking spots at Bronte Beach so people with disability can use the surf club facilities?</p> <p>The use of the building would trigger a certain number of spots so, it's very likely to be a DA condition that will have to be complied with. We'll see if that's progressed to work out the required number of spots and whether it is feasible to have an accessible parking spot down at the building. Operationally we need to be careful about how vehicles move in and out of the park to minimise risk.</p> <p>Action: Follow up with the Major Projects team to determine how many accessible parking spots are</p>	Sharon Cassidy

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Item	Summary	Action officer
	<p>required and whether accessible parking can be installed near the surf club.</p> <p>Q: What is the Club going to provide to people who are not members and for people with diverse abilities?</p> <p>A: The Council part of the building provides public amenities, showers, staff areas for Council's Parks staff. Council's lifeguard facility is also located within the building.</p> <p>The Club provide rooms for meetings and community events. They also have a Dippers Program for children who are neuro diverse. Several clubs in the Eastern Beaches run these types of programs. Bondi Surf Club have Silver Salties for older people.</p> <p>Community Programs staff are thinking of listing all the different sports and activities happening in the local area as there is often a lot happening we could promote. Cllr Keenan supported this idea.</p> <p>Cllr Keenan thanked Sharon and team for the work they have put into making the design of the building and the park more accessible and inclusive.</p> <p>Action: Send the DA link to community members when it goes on the Have Your Say website.</p> <p>Action: Send any comments for inclusion in the in the Community Programs DA referral internal submission.</p>	Annabelle Hayter Community Members
Sam Samadian, Manager Assets, Systems and Planning Infrastructure Services	<p>Overview of streetscape upgrades</p> <p>Sam Samadian provided a short presentation on recent street upgrades. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenayr Avenue at Roscoe Street • Glenayr Avenue at Beach Road • Intersection of Ocean Street at Birrell Street • Tamarama Marine Drive • Rickard Avenue at Lamrock Avenue • Macpherson Street and Lugar Avenue • Pacific Street at Bronte Road 	

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	<p>Curlewis Street is the next major streetscape upgrade.</p> <p>In Tamarama, the first accessible bus shelters are being installed. Council is trialling a few different ones in different locations. It will be good to get feedback on these once they have been installed and are operational.</p> <p>Q: Cllr Fabiano has received complaints from residents in wheelchairs, about the yellow stick-on tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs) at some bus stops. They are lifting and impeding access for wheelchair users.</p> <p>A: These are an old type of TGSIs. They do become degraded overtime and lift off the pavement. A more durable version of TGSIs is now used.</p> <p>Action: Cllr Fabiano to send the details to Sam Samadian so the hazard can be fixed.</p>	
8. Next Meeting	<p>11 May @ 6.00pm.</p> <p>Suggested main topic of discussion: Overview of Plans of Management with a focus on Waverley Park and Bronte Park.</p> <p>Action: Carl Nugent to be invited as guest speaker.</p> <p>If the next meeting is face to face, people also need to be able to attend online.</p>	
Meeting closed	7.30 pm.	