

## **Public Question Time and Submissions**

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### **Question from Jennifer Edge**

When will Councillors resume meeting regularly in real time in wards like we used to, to give us the opportunity to talk to our elected representatives about serious issues that impinge on our ability to live, grow and connect in the City of Port Phillip. These are all things to do with what I call Community education which is fundamental to capacity building. Peter Smith, Chief Executive Officer took the question on notice. The Mayor requested that the response include information about accessibility in our centres.

### **Response**

Concerns raised at the Council meeting in response to a lack of information on the item relating to Childcare Centres are noted.

Planning is underway to boost the capacity and functionality of the North St Kilda Children's Centre, including its ability to accommodate children with a disability. This is part of Council's efforts to ensure that the childcare centre properties it owns are fit for purpose and meet legislative and building compliance requirements. Relatedly, Council is currently seeking community feedback (<https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/proposal-sell-council-properties>) on its proposal to sell three properties currently leased as children's centres that do not meet contemporary standards of functionality and compliance, and are not well suited to rebuilding. None of these three centres meet the legal requirements for access for people with disabilities. Council intends to use the proceeds of the potential sales to improve its portfolio of children's services properties.

On the specific statement regarding access to ward councillors, all councillors have been required to limit their face to face interaction with constituents over the past 2 years due to COVID-19 and importantly, to comply with the Chief Health Officer's directions. Additionally, the significant spread of the latest variant Omicron indicates it will be some time before councillors are able to consider a return to any type of Neighbourhood Meetings as occurred previously and referred to in your statement to council.

Councillors will, as a matter of course, be available to constituents to respond to any questions, concerns or comments you may have. The contact details for all ward councillors can be provided via Council's ASSIST Customer Service Centre on 9209 6777.

*\*Please note: answers to any questions in Public Question Time and Councillor Question Time which were answered at the meeting are included in the minutes of that meeting.*